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NOMINATIONS OF THE 113TH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JANUARY 16 THROUGH DECEMBER 2, 2014

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations

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113TH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION

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[1] Senator Casey served on the committee until July 16, 2013.
[2] Senator Markey joined the committee on July 16, 2013.

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NOMINATIONS OF ROBERT BARBER, GEORGE TSUNIS, COLLEEN BELL

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Robert C. Barber, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland
George James Tsunis, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway
Colleen Bradley Bell, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to Hungary

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Chris Murphy presiding.

Present: Senators Murphy, Cardin, Kaine, Markey, Johnson, and McCain.

Also Present: Senator Charles E. Schumer.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS MURPHY, U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator MURPHY. Good afternoon, everyone. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will now come to order.

Today, the committee is considering three nominations—George Tsunis, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway; Robert Barber, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland; and Colleen Bell, to be Ambassador to Hungary.

Let me begin this afternoon by welcoming our nominees and welcoming your families. I will let you introduce any family members that may be here.

I am going to give some brief opening remarks, followed by Senator Johnson, our ranking member. I will introduce you. I understand that Senator Schumer is likely going to be here to introduce you, Mr. Tsunis. So if he is not here yet when we are done with our opening remarks, I will introduce Ms. Bell and Mr. Barber, and they might begin. And then when Senator Schumer comes here, he can introduce you, Mr. Tsunis. But we are glad to welcome Senator Schumer when he can arrive.

I want to congratulate all of you on your nominations. If confirmed, you are going to be called upon to serve and advance the interests of the American people in your respective missions. And

I thank you and your families for your willingness to serve this country in this important capacity.

The moment is unique in the sense that we have a number of irons in the fire with our European partners. You are going to be there at a very important time to talk about our communal mission to promote global security, whether it be as NATO partners or in our joint efforts to combat terrorism. You are going to be there at a really important time for the growing economic partnership between the United States and Europe, a moment at which we hope during your tenure we will negotiate and perhaps enter into a new trade agreement, now referred to as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

And we know that there is going to be continued interest in our very complicated, but very necessary intelligence relationship. I and a few members of the House were just in Europe over the holidays, talking about the importance of both clarifying our intelligence relationship going forward, but also preserving it because we have a communal interest to prevent grievous attacks against both the United States and Europe.

Mr. Tsunis, let me begin with a few words about Norway. The United States and Norway enjoy a long tradition of friendly relationships based on democratic values. We also share an increase in addressing the problems posed by climate change, particularly with respect to the Arctic and building a cooperation in the region through the Arctic Council.

On the security side, Norway, as you know, is a founding member of NATO, has been a partner with us in Afghanistan, Libya, the Balkans, and in counterterrorism. In her visit to Washington earlier this month, Norway's Defense Minister emphasized the importance of European nations stepping up to the plate at a larger scale to take a share of global political and economic burdens.

Norway is also the world's seventh-largest petroleum exporter, and the Norwegian economy has enjoyed some pretty impressive growth in recent years. so we look forward to hearing your thoughts on how to continue these very important partnerships with Norway, particularly in the lead-up to next year's NATO summit.

Mr. Barber, another nation that is very important to this committee is Iceland. The United States is one of Iceland's main foreign investors and trading partners. We were the first country to recognize Iceland's independence in 1944, following Danish rule.

It is another founding member of NATO. And although we no longer have U.S. military forces permanently stationed in Iceland, Iceland and the United States have worked closely again on missions in Afghanistan and Lebanon and the Balkans.

And as we talked about privately, the Icelandic economy has been a success story for much of the past two decades, although it encountered deep financial problems in 2008. The collapse of these major banks, coupled with the global financial crisis, it had a ripple effect throughout Iceland's economy, and we look forward to your thoughts on how the United States can continue to allow Iceland to recover.

And finally, Ms. Bell, let me turn to Hungary. Since the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the United States and

Hungary have maintained strong bilateral ties, particularly in security matters through NATO. Hungary is a member of the European Union. It has successfully transitioned from a centrally planned economy to a market-based one since the fall of communism. Like the other countries represented here, the United States is among the top foreign investors in Hungary.

But notwithstanding our close cooperation on economic and security matters, there have been some legislative and constitutional changes in Hungary since 2010 that have prompted concerns from the United States and included controversial legislation granting citizenship to ethnic Hungarians living outside the country's borders, changes that could reduce the independence of Hungary's central bank, and restrictions on the constitutional court.

The United States has shared these concerns that have been expressed also by the Council of Europe, and we look forward to a discussion with you about how we can continue to work with Hungary on promoting democratic ideals.

We thank you all for being here today to share with us your thoughts. We look forward to your swift confirmation.

And let me now turn to our ranking member, Senator Johnson.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RON JOHNSON, U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to join you in welcoming our nominees and also thanking you and your families for your willingness to serve. I appreciate the fact that you all took time to meet with me in my office, and as we discussed, these positions of ambassadorships is extremely important to not only convey to the countries that you are going to represent us Americans' exceptionalism, our values, but then also you report back to us the concerns that those countries have in terms of U.S. actions.

And so, incredibly important posts. I truly appreciate your willingness to serve, and I will look forward to your testimony.

Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

Why do we not do this? I will introduce briefly Mr. Barber and Ms. Bell, and you can begin testimony. And when Senator Schumer gets here, he can introduce Mr. Tsunis.

Robert Barber is our nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland. Mr. Barber, a leading attorney and litigator, has been a partner at Looney & Grossman in Boston, MA, since 1985. Known for his legal acumen and community service, he specializes in the needs of startup businesses, small and medium-sized companies, and commercial litigation, serving many companies in the role of outside general counsel. He is also an expert in the formation and early development of business ventures.

A proven and experienced leader, Mr. Barber will bring essential skills to the task of furthering bilateral economic relations with the Government of Iceland. Mr. Barber previously practiced law in a variety of other roles, including as an assistant district attorney in the New York County District Attorney's Office, and he has served in a number of community positions, as a trustee of the Phillips Brooks House Association of Harvard College, as a treasurer and

trustee of the Social Law Library in Boston, MA, and director of the Abbott Academy Association in Andover, MA.

He attended Harvard College and Boston University School of Law, and he even holds an MCRP from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Welcome, Mr. Barber.

Ms. Bell, we are pleased to have you here today. Ms. Bell is a producer at Bell-Phillip Productions in Los Angeles, CA, has a strong history of accomplishment in the television industry. Known for her successful leadership of high-profile and influential social service, environmental, and arts organizations, she has a wealth of experience in a wide range of fields from the economy to human rights and the environmental, foreign policy, public health, and education. Ms. Bell will bring essential skills to the task of furthering our relationship with the Government of Hungary, who is a key U.S. ally in NATO and the EU.

Previously, Ms. Bell worked for Bell-Phillip Television Productions as an associate producer. She also serves on, again, a number of institutions. She has been on the board of the JFK Center for the Performing Arts, the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Children's Institute, the Music Center, and the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, just to name a few.

Senator MURPHY. With that, why do we not do this? We will go to Mr. Barber for your opening remarks, then to Ms. Bell, and then we will have Senator Schumer here to introduce Mr. Tsunis.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT C. BARBER, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE THE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ICELAND

Mr. BARBER. Chairman Murphy and Senator Johnson, it is a great privilege for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Ambassador to Iceland.

I am truly honored by this nomination and very grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their trust in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with each of you and with your colleagues in Congress to further U.S. interests in Iceland.

My oldest son, Nicholas, is with me today, representing his brothers, Ben and Alexander, and my wife and his mom, Bonnie. And if you would permit me, I would like to introduce Nick to you.

Senator MURPHY. Welcome.

Mr. BARBER. I am also delighted that two members of the Icelandic Embassy are present today, and I very much appreciate their appearance today. I am pleased to meet them, and if confirmed, I certainly would look forward to working with them.

I am very thankful for and appreciate the support of my family and my friends.

The opportunity to serve the United States, if confirmed, means quite a lot to me. Both my father and my maternal grandfather were career Army officers. In fact, I was born at Fort Benning, GA.

I grew up in Charleston, SC, where the greatest influence on my life was my mother, Kathleen. A teacher, after having gone back to college while raising four kids, she guided gently, making sure I was aware of opportunities that were available to me and trusting me to make good decisions.

I feel as though I have been lucky all my life, being able to attain great schools on scholarships, which opened up even more wonderful opportunities. So knowing how lucky I have been, I look forward—I look for chances to help out, to pay back, and indeed to pay forward. And I believe that if I am confirmed, representing my country as the U.S. Ambassador to Iceland would be the ultimate opportunity for service.

I am hopeful, too, as the chairman mentioned, that my experience in leading organizations, including my law firm and as well as political and nonprofit groups, will enable me effectively to represent the United States. By nature, I am a team player, a firm believer in team development, for it is through collaborative effort that the most productive and, I believe, the most fulfilling outcomes are achieved.

As well, my years acting as outside general counsel to entrepreneurs and their companies, from startups to mid-sized firms, have helped me develop an ability to find solutions and to connect parties with common interests and complementary capacities.

The United States and Iceland have long enjoyed a strong bilateral relationship. When Iceland declared its independence on June 17, 1944, the United States, as you mentioned, was the first country to recognize it. In the last decade, this friendship has evolved from one dominated by political-military issues to a broader partnership that reflects our shared global agenda.

Iceland is a stalwart ally and friend of the United States. As a charter member of NATO, Iceland has made contributions to peacekeeping operations around the world. And although the Keflavik Naval Air Station closed in 2006, NATO continues to operate an important radar defense system in Iceland, highlighting that country's continuing contribution to our overall security.

A close partner on law enforcement issues, Iceland has recently helped break up the illegal narcotics network known as Silk Road and actively engages with the United States in antitrafficking in persons efforts. Iceland is also a staunch supporter of humanitarian causes, as its search and rescue teams provided lifesaving services following earthquakes around the world.

So following its banking sector crisis of 2008, Iceland is reemerging with a stable economy. While it is still recovering, Iceland has made through a series of confidence-building measures steady progress in putting its economy on sounder footing.

Our business relations with Iceland are strong and growing. The reinvigorated American-Icelandic Chamber of Commerce is now up and running, working on behalf of American companies in Iceland. Raw materials and renewable energy are just some of the promising new horizons in our trade and investment relationship.

As businesses are looking to invest in Icelandic renewable energy, the United States and Iceland are cooperating to develop the technology we need for a green, sustainable future. And Iceland is also growing in importance as a potential strategic partner in the development of Arctic natural resources.

Iceland is a world leader in the use of geothermal and hydroenergy for electric power and heat generation, presents a great opportunity for energy diplomacy in the years ahead. If confirmed, I shall look for ways the United States can strengthen con-

nections among the energy industry, the Icelandic Government, and relevant U.S. institutions, and I shall diligently pursue all opportunities for collaboration.

In sum, Senators, the United States-Icelandic relationship yields benefits to both countries in security, in energy, trade and investment, the environment, and humanitarian causes. If confirmed, I will work to broaden our cooperation in these areas and to protect and further U.S. interests and safeguard American citizens.

Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Barber follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT C. BARBER

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Ambassador to Iceland. I am honored by this nomination, and very grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their trust in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to further U.S. interests in Iceland.

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I am hopeful that my experience in leading organizations, including my law firm, as well as political and nonprofit groups, will enable me to effectively represent the United States. I am a team player, a firm believer in team development, for it is through collaborative effort that the most productive, and fulfilling, outcomes are achieved. As well, my years acting as outside general counsel to entrepreneurs and their companies, from startups to midsize firms, have helped me develop an ability to find solutions and to connect parties with common interests and complementary capacities.

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A close partner on law enforcement issues, Iceland most recently helped break up the illegal narcotics network known as Silk Road and actively engages with the United States on antitrafficking in persons efforts. It also works closely with the U.S. Coast Guard to improve port security for vessels transiting to the United States.

Iceland is a staunch supporter of humanitarian causes. Icelandic Search and Rescue teams have provided life-saving services following earthquakes around the world. Most recently, Iceland has provided monetary assistance through the U.N. to help Syrian refugees in Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon.

Following its banking sector crisis of 2008, Iceland is reemerging with a stable economy. While it is still recovering, Iceland has made, through a series of confidence-building measures, steady progress in putting its economy on sounder footing.

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If confirmed, I shall look for ways the United States can strengthen connections among the energy industry, the Icelandic Government, and relevant U.S. institutions, and I shall diligently pursue all opportunities for collaboration.

Mr. Chairman, the U.S.-Icelandic relationship yields benefits to both countries in security, energy, trade and investment, the environment, and humanitarian causes. If confirmed, I will work to broaden our cooperation in these areas and to protect and further U.S. interests and safeguard American citizens.

Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Barber.

Let me now welcome Senator Schumer here. So pleased to have you to introduce Mr. Tsunis. I know your time is limited. So we will allow you to introduce our next witness.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW YORK

Senator SCHUMER. Thank you, Chairman Murphy and Ranking Member Johnson, Senator Markey.

And first, Mr. Chairman, it was not too long ago in this body that you would wait years and maybe even decades to become chairman of the European Affairs Subcommittee, and here you are, one of our brightest, most capable freshmen, chairing it already. Progress is being made, I would say to the public.

It is a privilege for me to introduce George Tsunis, the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Norway. Mr. Tsunis is a lifelong New Yorker, born and raised on Long Island. He currently lives in Cold Spring Harbor, and he has had a long and distinguished career in both public service and the private sector.

And that leaves no doubt he is well qualified to take on this great task that awaits him if he is confirmed as the next United States Ambassador to Norway. His career and commitment to the community is an exemplary one, and I believe that New Yorkers, and particularly those on Long Island, have greatly benefited from Mr. Tsunis' intelligence, his generosity, and his philanthropic pursuits. So he is an outstanding choice to be Ambassador to Norway, where he is going to represent the United States, should he be confirmed, in a country that values democracy and is a strong ally.

Mr. Tsunis is a lifelong Long Islander, raised in Commack. He attended Commack High School. I have given many a graduation speech there. He then earned his undergraduate degree at NYU, his juris doctor at St. Johns University.

He is born to parents who emigrated from Greece. He is like so many New Yorkers, comes from overseas and just in one generation becomes an American and contributes so much to this great country of ours.

He is a true tale of the American dream. He has never forgotten his roots. He is very active in the Greek American community. He

is an archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchic in the Greek Orthodox Church, the highest lay honor, serves as the national counsel of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. And he and I are the grand marshals of the Greek Independence Day Parade in New York City in March. Yiasou.

A highly successful entrepreneur and philanthropist, Mr. Tsunis first started out as an attorney where he rose through the ranks to become a partner in Long Island's largest law firm. He has also had an illustrious career in public service as an attorney. He was a legislative attorney on the New York City Council, special counsel to the town of Huntington's Environmental and Open Space Committee, and counsel to the Dix Hills Water District.

Today, he is chairman and CEO of Chartwell Hotels, which owns, develops, and manages Hilton, Marriott, Intercontinental Hotels across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic United States, and he has also been very active in foreign policy issues. He is a member of Brookings Institution's Foreign Policy Leadership Committee and its Metropolitan Leadership Council and is a director of Business Executives for National Security.

So he has been extremely successful in the hotel and real estate businesses, but what is most impressive about Mr. Tsunis is the time, investment, and commitment he has shown to the people of New York, people of Long Island particularly, who suffered tremendously as a result of Superstorm Sandy.

His philanthropic efforts and humanitarian causes have had a tremendous impact. As a result, he has received a number of well-deserved honors from groups as diverse as Dowling College, Long Island Cares, WLIW Channel 21, the Long Island Children's Museum. The Cyprus Federation's Justice for Cyprus Award he received, presented personally by President of Cyprus Christofias.

He has made generous contributions to Stony Brook for the creation of the George and Olga Tsunis Center in Hellenic Studies and the James and Eleni Tsunis Chair in Hellenic Studies. The latter are in honor of his parents.

In short, he is just a perfect candidate for Ambassador. He is smart. He is successful. He is practical. He has a knowledge of foreign affairs. He has a generous heart.

I know him. I know George a long time. We are good friends, and I can tell you that all of these nice things that it says in his biography do not equal the goodness of the man. He is just a decent, honorable, caring person.

And that matters a lot when you are Ambassador. Because when the people of a country, particularly a relatively small country like Norway, see who you are, they are going to understand and have a special appreciation. So I think he is going to be a great Ambassador to a very important relationship, that between United States and Norway.

We work closely as NATO allies, trading partners. U.S. companies invest in Norway in critical products. And so, this is a great nomination, and I would urge the committee to approve him with alacrity and with unanimity.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Schumer. Thank you for being here.

And with that ringing introduction, Mr. Tsunis, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE JAMES TSUNIS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE THE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

Mr. TSUNIS. Thank you, Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson——

Thank you, Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and esteemed members of the committee.

Let me first thank Senator Schumer, who has been a mentor. I thank him for his support, his guidance, his imprimatur. It has been very meaningful to me.

I am both honored and humbled to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. I thank the President for his trust and confidence in me, and I am grateful to this committee for considering my nomination.

I am also grateful for this opportunity to serve our country, and I would be remiss in not acknowledging a few of the many people who have made this journey possible.

First, my parents, who emigrated to this country of opportunity and meritocracy, seeking to build a better life for their family. My parents sacrificed a lot to give my sisters and I the opportunities they never had. So it is with gratitude that I acknowledge my mom today. I would have loved to introduce her, but she had recently been in the hospital. My mom, Eleni, who had the foresight and determination to ensure that my sisters and I received a sound education and a reservoir of love.

Today, I would also like to remember my father, James, who passed away 12 years ago. My dad was the embodiment of the American dream, starting out as a busboy at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City, eventually opening his own small coffee shop and then a landmark restaurant that we still operate 43 years later.

He has embraced our country with open arms, teaching my sisters, Anastasia and Vicki, both who are public school teachers, the importance of hard work, the value of a good education, which is America's great equalizer.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Olga, and our three children, James, Eleni, and Yanna, who are behind me, this afternoon. They are my bedrock of support and living reminders of the legacy my parents started here in the United States.

After attending law school, I worked in government, as an associate in a small law firm, and then as a partner in a large law firm until I founded Chartwell Hotels. During my tenure as CEO, Chartwell not only weathered this great recession, but experienced unprecedented growth. It taught me how to operate in a stressful environment.

My company's success was not the result of one person's effort. Whether public or private, a successful organization is built through teamwork and a collaborative sense of mission. If confirmed, I will draw on this experience to make the best case for my country, cognizant that I will be working with a terrific American and Norwegian team at Embassy Oslo.

Throughout my career, I have maintained a strong interest in foreign and economic affairs. I have had the pleasure of contributing to public policy as a member of the Brookings Institution Foreign Policy Leadership Committee and as a trustee of Business Executives for National Security. If confirmed, I look forward to putting these experiences to work for the American people.

We share strong bilateral ties with Norway, steeped in shared values, such as commitment to promoting human rights, democracy, and freedom throughout the world. Norway is a proactive global peace builder. Its influence and reputation in the international community far exceed its size.

The most notable of these efforts are, of course, the Oslo Accords, although Norway has mediated a number of prominent conflicts. Norway is a strong supporter of the current negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, which I believe reflects Norway's strong desire to contribute to world peace and its reputation as an honest arbiter.

As a cofounder of NATO, Norway is a reliable and fully engaged ally. American and Norwegian soldiers fought together and have stood together in Afghanistan to support its transformation into a sovereign and secure nation.

During NATO's operations in Libya, Norwegian F–16s were amongst the alliance's most effective air assets. Norway will further deepen its commitment to military readiness and interoperability with U.S. forces through its plan to purchase 52 Joint Strike Fighters from Lockheed Martin, something I deem of great importance.

Norway is an important business partner of the United States, and if confirmed, I will seek to expand the U.S. economic export opportunities and create American jobs. I will also work to deepen people-to-people ties between Norway and the United States through public diplomacy efforts. If confirmed, I will also seek to strengthen what is already a very strong relationship between our two countries and maintain the Embassy's proud tradition.

As I mentioned at the start, at my core, I am grateful for this opportunity to serve my country. I have an obligation to give back, and I look forward to answering any questions you have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Tsunis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEORGE J. TSUNIS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and esteemed members of the committee, I am both honored and humbled to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. I thank the President for his trust and confidence in me, and I am grateful to this committee for considering my nomination. I am also grateful for this opportunity to serve our country, and I would be remiss in not acknowledging a few of the many people who have made this journey possible. First my parents, who immigrated to this country of opportunity and meritocracy, seeking to build a better life for their family. My parents sacrificed a lot to give my two sisters and me the opportunities they never had. So it is with gratitude that I introduce my mother, Eleni, who had the foresight and determination to ensure that my sisters and I received a sound education and a reservoir of love.

Today I would also like to remember my father, James, who passed away 12 years ago. My dad was the embodiment of the American dream, starting out as a busboy at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City, eventually opening his own small coffee shop and then a landmark restaurant that is still open today, 42 years later. He embraced our country with open arms, teaching his children the importance of hard work, family, and the value of a good education. These are not lessons that I or my

sisters, Anastasia and Vicki, took lightly. My sisters took that lesson one step further and became public school teachers. Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Olga, and our three children James, Eleni, and Yanna, who are my bedrock of support and living reminders of the legacy my parents started here in the United States.

After attending law school, I worked in government, as an associate in a small law firm, and then as a partner in a large firm, until I followed my father into the world of business and entrepreneurship when I founded Chartwell Hotels. During my tenure as CEO, Chartwell not only weathered the recession but experienced unprecedented growth. Having personally witnessed the strength and resiliency of U.S. business and its success in the international marketplace, I feel I understand the importance of expanding our global business and trade.

My company's success was not the result of one person's effort. Whether public or private, a successful organization is built through teamwork and a collaborative sense of mission. If I am confirmed, I will draw on this experience to make the best case for my country, cognizant that I will be working with a terrific American and Norwegian team at Embassy Oslo.

Throughout my career, I have maintained a strong interest in foreign and economic affairs, and I've had the pleasure of contributing to public policy as a member of the Brookings Institution's Foreign Policy Leadership Committee and as a trustee with the Business Executives for National Security. If confirmed, I look forward to putting this experience to work for the American people.

We share strong bilateral ties with Norway, in large part because we share a commitment to promoting human rights, democracy, and freedom throughout the world. Norway is a proactive, global peace-builder and for a country of just 5 million people, its influence and reputation in the international community far surpasses its size. The most notable of these efforts is the Oslo Accords, although Norway has mediated a number of prominent conflicts, including those in Sri Lanka and Colombia. Norway is a strong supporter of the current negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. This reflects Norway's strong desire to contribute to world peace, and its reputation as an honest arbitrator.

In addition to peace and reconciliation efforts, Norway is a generous contributor to international development and humanitarian relief efforts. Norway is a strong partner on environmental matters, and a leader in the area of global climate change. With our common strategic interest in the Arctic, Norway is a natural partner in these fields. If confirmed, I will work to preserve and expand this invaluable partnership with Norway.

A cofounder of NATO, Norway is a reliable ally. American and Norwegian soldiers and civilians have stood together in Afghanistan to support its transformation to a safe, sovereign, and secure nation. During NATO operations in Libya in 2011, Norwegian F–16s were among the alliance's most effective air assets. Norway will further deepen its commitment to military readiness and interoperability with U.S. forces through its plans to purchase 52 Joint Strike Fighters from Lockheed Martin.

Norway is an important business partner of the United States. We are Norway's sixth-largest trading partner and our trade relationship is free of major disputes. My focus, if I am confirmed, will be expanding economic development opportunities both for U.S. companies in Norway, and encouraging Norwegian firms' investments in the United States. The energy sector is at the heart of the U.S.-Norwegian economic relationship, and it is expected that U.S. energy companies will expand their interests in the Norwegian oil and gas sector, creating new export opportunities and jobs for American businesses.

With the Senate's confirmation, I will work to expand European support for the transatlantic relationship to deepen people-to-people ties between Norway and the United States. I will give my full support to public diplomacy efforts to reach out to people throughout Norway and to provide educational exchange opportunities for Norwegians to study in the United States, and expand these opportunities wherever possible. There is no better way to build understanding than to expose someone directly to life in America and direct engagement with the American people.

If confirmed, I will work side by side with my outstanding Embassy team to strengthen this already strong relationship between our two countries and maintain the Embassy's proud tradition, serving U.S. interests. As I mentioned at the start, at my core I am grateful for this opportunity to serve my country—I have an obligation to give back—and I look forward to answering any questions you have.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Tsunis.

Now finally, Ms. Bell, welcome.

STATEMENT OF COLLEEN BRADLEY BELL, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE THE AMBASSADOR TO HUNGARY

Ms. BELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Johnson, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

It is an honor for me to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Hungary. I am deeply grateful for the confidence and trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. I am humbled by this opportunity, and if confirmed, I will proudly represent our country abroad.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to acknowledge some of my family members. I would particularly like to thank my husband, Bradley, and our four children—Chasen, Caroline, Charlotte, and Oliver—for their steadfast and unwavering support in this new endeavor.

I would also like to thank my father, who is here with me today. A former United States Marine, he instilled in me the importance of hard work and integrity in achieving my goals. My passion for public service is driven by our shared hopes for a better world for our next generation, a world that we build with the friendship and cooperation of our partners and allies.

Hungary is a strong ally of the United States. We enjoy a close partnership embedded in our common commitment to two bedrock Transatlantic organizations, the OSCE and NATO. Inspired by shared interests and common values, Hungary has been a generous and reliable contributor to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Hungary also contributes peacekeeping troops to the international mission in Kosovo and to EU operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Hungary has been an active and constructive supporter of U.S. efforts to broker a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine Authority and of the ongoing international program to disarm the Syrian chemical weapons program. Police and civilian security cooperation has been excellent, as exemplified by the presence of the U.S.-sponsored International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest.

Last year marked the 90th anniversary of the United States-Hungarian diplomatic relations. That anniversary gave us an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on our partnership, a relationship which extends beyond our common interest in security as NATO allies, and is anchored by deep economic ties and common values shared by the citizens of our two nations.

At the same time, we have been open over the last 2 years about our concerns about the state of checks and balances in Hungary and the independence of some key institutions. Many argue that sweeping legislative and constitutional changes have hurt the international investment climate, undermined property rights, weakened the judiciary, and centralized power in the hands of the executive.

The United States has not been alone in this regard. The perceived erosion of democratic checks and balances has garnered scrutiny from various bodies within the European Union. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to uphold American and European democratic values, to express our concerns where appropriate, and

to urge our Hungarian partners to work collaboratively with international partners and civil society on these issues.

The idea of pluralism is integral to our understanding of what it means to be a democracy. Democracies recognize that no one entity, no state, no political party, no leader will ever have all the answers to the challenges we face. And depending on their circumstances and traditions, people need the latitude to work toward and select their own solutions.

Our democracies do not and should not look the same. Governments by the people, for the people, and of the people will reflect the people they represent. But we all recognize the reality and importance of these differences. Pluralism flows from these differences.

The United States has also expressed concern about the rise of extremism, which, unfortunately, is a trend not unique to Hungary. However, the rise in Hungary of extremist parties is of particular concern. If confirmed, protecting and promoting a climate of tolerance will be one of my key priorities.

The Hungarian Government has undertaken a series of steps to address lingering hatred and the legacy of the Holocaust to include planned events in 2014 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the large-scale deportation to Auschwitz and the 2015 assumption of the presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. If confirmed, I look forward to working with government organizations, civic and religious groups, and other stakeholders to confront and to beat prejudice and hatred in all of its forms.

We have enjoyed and benefited from our close relationship with Hungary for over 90 years. Just as we continue to work together in Afghanistan and around the world to uphold freedom and democracy, so, too, will we work to maintain an open and at times difficult dialogue on the importance of upholding our shared values at home.

I bring to the table two decades of experience as a businesswoman, executive manager, and leader in the nonprofit arena. As a producer, I have been an integral part in developing a U.S. product that we export to more than 100 countries for the daily consumption of over 40 million viewers.

The demands of producing a daily show have honed my managerial skills and required me to carefully coordinate the diverse activities of a very large staff. My work in the nonprofit sector has left me with a deep appreciation for the role and the importance of civil society in a healthy democracy.

If confirmed, I will give the highest priority to ensuring the well-being of U.S. citizens living, working, and traveling in Hungary, and I will also seek opportunities to enhance our cooperation on international security issues and to expand commercial opportunities for American firms while also firmly promoting and protecting our shared values and principles.

If confirmed, I pledge to do my best in advancing America's interests and values. I look forward to working with this committee and Congress in that effort.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF COLLEEN BRADLEY BELL

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

It is an honor for me to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Hungary.

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With the Chairman's permission, I would like to acknowledge the presence of some of my family members who were able to join me here today. I would particularly like to thank my husband, Bradley, for his steadfast and unwavering support in this new endeavor. I would also like to thank my father. A former United States Marine, he instilled in me the importance of hard work and integrity in achieving my goals. My passion for public service is driven by our shared hopes for a better world for our next generation, a world that we build with the friendship and cooperation of our partners and allies.

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At the same time, we have been open over the last 2 years about our concerns about the state of checks and balances in Hungary and the independence of some key institutions. Many argue that sweeping legislative and constitutional changes have hurt the international investment climate, undermined property rights, weakened the judiciary, and centralized power in the hands of the executive. The United States has not been alone in this regard. The perceived erosion of democratic checks and balances has garnered scrutiny from various bodies within the European Union. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to uphold American and European democratic values, to express our concerns where appropriate, and to urge our Hungarian partners to work collaboratively with international partners and civil society on these issues.

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If confirmed, I pledge to do my best in advancing America's interests and values. I look forward to working with this committee and Congress in that effort.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Ms. Bell.

Just to my colleagues, I told all of our nominees here not to be disappointed if it was only Senator Johnson and I here today, and I just want to assure you that this is not a coordinated sneak attack on this panel to have five Senators. [Laughter.]

Let me direct my first question to Mr. Tsunis and Mr. Barber because two countries that you are going to be representing us in have some common concerns in the Arctic region, and given that Iceland has chosen not, for the time being, to align themselves with the EU, they do that in part because they see themselves as a gateway to the Arctic for a variety of industries and resources.

Of course, Norway has had a connection, historic connection to the Arctic. And as a neighbor of Russia, also wonder what their views are on Russia's new $600 billion military modernization and increased activity in the Arctic.

So I wonder if you might both talk a little bit about how Norway and Iceland view the future of governance in the Arctic and perhaps how the United States and both of these countries can work together as we try to figure out a pathway forward?

Mr. TSUNIS. Thank you for your question, Mr. Chairman.

Governance in the Arctic in Norway's view is through the Arctic Council. It was established in 1996. Norway is one of eight full-fledged members on the council. Actually, it was very important to Norway that the permanent Secretariat to the council be located in Tromso, which occurred last year.

The Arctic is a very important foreign policy priority for both the United States and Norway. As oil and gas continue to be found as we go further up the Norwegian Continental Shelf, there are tremendous opportunities for both the United States, Norway, and our respective companies in those fields. There are also shipping lanes, which are now starting to open up, and that could mean very significant trade opportunities for both our countries.

As regarding Russia, Norway has always had a posture of constructive engagement. I will tell you there is some concern with problems in their civil society, problems in restricting their media, an uneven business climate at times, and the military buildup that you mentioned. But it continues to have constructive engagement.

And last year, both former Presidents of Russia and Norway entered into a cross-border cooperation, the Barents Euro Cooperation Agreement. And I think that was a very positive step.

So, clearly, if confirmed, I am going to look to continue my engagement with Norway on all of these issues and to work with them in constructive engagement with Russia.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Barber.

Mr. BARBER. Senator, I will add just briefly to Mr. Tsunis' comments and reinforce the comment that you, yourself, made, as well as Mr. Tsunis, that the United States and Iceland share an identity as Arctic nations, and they are two of the eight Arctic Council members. The Arctic Council has a mission to promote cooperation and coordination among its member states, including the six others, and this is a forum in which the United States believes it is important to engage not only with Iceland, but the other Arctic nations on issues that are of common importance to them.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Bell, you touched briefly on the same subject that I talked about with respect to Hungary, which is some of these concerning developments regarding the rollback of certain democratic institutions and the relative independence of the bank and of the court.

And I do not want to overstate the concern as you look at each one of these issues individually, but when you roll them all together, one of the worries is that it starts to create a little bit of a dangerous precedent within the OSCE and within NATO, as we are preaching to people who want to join these associations as to the democratic reforms that they have to undertake. It is a little bit difficult when you look at the totality of what is happening in Hungary to continue to hold that line.

So we do not normally get into the business of telling our European partners through our embassies what they should be doing with respect to internal and domestic policy. So what do you think our levers are here? What is the appropriate intervention, the appropriate push and pull that we can give our partners in Hungary as they work through the future of some of these issues?

Ms. BELL. Thank you, Senator.

If confirmed, one of the key priorities will be to build upon the mutually beneficial economic, diplomatic, and security partnership that we have with Hungary. At the same time, there are governance issues that have been addressed over the past 2 years. And these have not come strictly from the United States, but they have also been concerns that have been expressed by the European Union.

As you mentioned, this erosion of checks and balances and the centralization of executive authority and also the freedom of and independence of the judiciary. And to name another would be media freedom. I absolutely do think that given the fact that Hungary is a strong and valued NATO ally of ours, a strong ally means an ally who has strong democracy in existence.

So this is not always an easy conversation to have, but it is a necessary one. And if confirmed, I will continue to participate in a constructive and effective dialogue with our Hungarian partners about the values necessary to maintain and build a robust democracy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I guess I would just like to go down the table there and just ask a question from your standpoint. What are the greatest commercial opportunities we have with the country you are going to be Ambassador to, if confirmed?

Mr. Barber, I will start with you.

Mr. BARBER. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

I think that Iceland is a country remarkable, for one, in its pioneering and innovation in the development of renewable power, geothermal and hydropower. Indeed, 85 percent of all energy used is sourced from renewables.

Iceland is fortunate that its geological location is such that these resources are pretty readily available. But beyond that, Iceland has utilized its own ingenuity and resourcefulness of its peoples to develop these resources, to develop the technology to exploit them.

And there are a number of both scientific collaborations that are in place as we speak, as between our two countries, our governments, and indeed between and among commercial enterprises in both countries to develop this technology and to employ it not only in Iceland, not only in the United States, but actually in other places around the world. There is great potential there, and that is just simply one area where I hope that our countries can work together.

Senator JOHNSON. So there are opportunities for us to import the advanced technology from Iceland or vice versa, that they actually would be importing technology from the United States?

Mr. BARBER. I would say both, quite frankly, Senator. But the Icelanders are out in front of the rest of the world in the effort to exploit geothermal renewable energy power here.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Tsunis, you talked about obviously Norway and oil. Are there other opportunities there between our two countries?

Mr. TSUNIS. Sure. Although the heart of our business ties are in the energy field, there are—we have a $15 billion annual trade partnership with Norway. It is very important to them. We are their fifth-largest trading partner.

There are 300 businesses that are currently operating in Norway. Sixty percent of our investments in Norway have to do with energy, and there is a huge, huge American community in Stavanger there.

But in this trade relationship, we have a slight deficit in manufactured goods. We have a slight surplus in services, but there are a lot of things that we will be getting to—there are a lot of markets that will continue to open up.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, let me just ask, as Ambassador, how would you promote those trade cooperations?

Mr. TSUNIS. Thank you for that save, Senator Johnson.

There has—prior Ambassadors have been very, very engaged in this issue. It is important that we continue—interesting.

Senator JOHNSON. Let me move on to Ms. Bell.

Mr. TSUNIS. Please, thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. What are you looking at in terms of those commercial opportunities between the United States and Hungary?

Ms. BELL. Thank you very much for the question.

The United States and Hungary have a strong commercial and business relationship. Nine billion dollars of U.S. investment are in Hungary right now. There will be opportunities to increase our trade relationship. I look forward to advocating for TTIP and ultimately using TTIP as a tool to promote the trade relationship, which will ultimately grow U.S. jobs and simultaneously improve the Hungarian economy.

I look to work—I think there are opportunities, business and commercial opportunities in a variety of different business sectors in Hungary. I will look to promote commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses in manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, health and welfare, and energy at some point.

Senator JOHNSON. Ms. Bell, you talked about in your testimony the rise in Hungary of extremist parties, that that was a particular concern. Can you just describe that in a little more, greater detail?

Ms. BELL. Yes. Thank you very much, Senator, for the opportunity to touch on this.

It is important for us to continue to confront bigotry and intolerance at all times. There is an extremist group in Hungary. They are the third-largest political party in Hungary, and they hold 11 percent of the seats in Parliament. They are responsible for a large percentage of the incidents of anti-Semitism and the vitriolic language that is coming out of Hungary.

The Hungarian Government has stated that they will not cooperate with this party, Jobbik Party. Embassy Budapest and the United States has clearly and consistently expressed to the Hungarian Government the need to condemn these incidences immediately.

I do believe and I hope that there is a chance that these—with the improvement in the economy and an engaged citizenry and effective diplomacy that we can reduce these rates.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. Well, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me thank all three of our nominees for their willingness to serve our country. It is not easy. It will demand a lot of time and certainly family sacrifice. So I thank you all, and I thank your families for your willingness.

In all three of the countries that you have been nominated to represent the United States, they are all members of the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I had the honor of chairing the U.S.-Helsinki Commission, which is the U.S. participation in the OSCE.

The OSCE is the largest regional organization by number of countries in the world. It includes both the United States and Russia, which gives us a unique opportunity to advance the good governance issues that Ms. Bell was talking about as it relates to Hungary. I think it is fair to say that Norway and Iceland are strong members that share the U.S. commitment in all those areas and are our key allies.

In regards to Hungary, which is a key strategic U.S. ally, as you point out—no question about that, a NATO partner—their commitments to the Helsinki principles are somewhat of concern.

Ms. Bell, you mentioned in your statement the fact that their constitutional and statutory changes are problematic. You were a little diplomatic in your written statement. I think much stronger in your response to our questions, which I appreciate very much. Maybe you are learning diplomacy.

But let me point out that Hungary is a friend, and we have an obligation to be pretty direct about this. And what is happening in Hungary today is very concerning. You mentioned the Jobbik Party, which is the third-largest party, as you point out, in Hungary. And it is true that the government has not embraced the Jobbik Party, but they have not condemned it. They played politics with it locally.

So we have not seen the strong government action that we would like to see. Instead, we see activities taking place in Hungary that really raises major concern for us. They are now setting up this museum to commemorate the German occupation of Hungary. And quite frankly, there is major concern here because it looks like it is trying to say that everything that happened in Hungary during World War II was the responsibility of the Germans, whereas we know there were many Hungarians that were complicit as to what happened in Hungary during World War II.

And I mention that because, yes, we have seen, as you point out in your statement, the rise of extremism. It is not just Jews and Jewish community in Hungary. It is the Roma community, which is being very much singled out.

And we have seen a rise of anti-Semitism and extremism, but we found governments have stood up against it. And in Hungary, we are concerned that we have not seen the strength in its government to condemn those activities.

So if you are confirmed as our Ambassador, you have got to be a strong voice on this. You cannot equivocate at all. And to know that if the relationship between our two countries will continue to grow stronger, we expect their government to take action and not just to say one thing to the local constituency in Hungary and another thing to our Ambassador.

So I will give you one more opportunity to respond on this. I very much appreciate your responses to Senator Murphy and Senator Johnson. I think they were right on. But I hope you understand that you have a responsibility to be very direct when a friend is not taking the right course.

Ms. BELL. Thank you very much, Senator Cardin.

I do understand this, and I appreciate the responsibility that I will be taking, if confirmed. You have my word that I will continue to maintain a very strong and constructive dialogue with the Hungarian Government about the importance of drowning out this hate speech and these incidences of anti-Semitism.

And as I mentioned, the Government of Hungary did say that they would not engage with Jobbik, and this is something that we will hold them at their word.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

I hope also you will work closely with us in Congress and keep us informed and be prepared to accept advice from us as this issue unfolds because it is a major concern.

Mr. Tsunis, I have known of your record for a long time, and I thank you for being willing to allow your talent to be used to represent our country in Norway. It is a very important country, and as you have pointed out, the opportunities between our countries only can get stronger.

Mr. Barber, Iceland is a very interesting country and I think maybe may lead the world in its ability to take care of its energy needs with renewable sources. And it offers incredible opportunity for us, and of course, it is pretty close by. So it really is a country that we think can become a much stronger ally.

We have had some difficulties on military facilities, but it seems to me that there is a lot of promise for growth, and we thank you very much for your willingness to step forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Barber, I take it you have been to Iceland?

Mr. BARBER. Sir, I have not. I have not had the privilege yet. I look forward to——

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Tsunis, have you been to Norway?

Mr. TSUNIS. I have not.

Senator MCCAIN. I guess, and Ms. Bell, have you been to Hungary?

Ms. BELL. Yes, Senator, I have.

Senator MCCAIN. When?

Ms. BELL. I was in Hungary in March.

Senator MCCAIN. Good. Thank you.

Ms. Bell, do you think that United States-Hungarian relations are in a good place?

Ms. BELL. Senator, thank you very much for this important question.

I think that there are aspects of our bilateral relationship that are very strong. We do have a strong military cooperation. Law enforcement cooperation is also very strong. Hungary works on a variety of different peacekeeping missions in Kosovo and a long-term peacekeeping mission in the Balkans, and also they have provided troops to Afghanistan and continue to do so.

That being said, I do think that there is opportunity to improve the bilateral relationship. I think that there are a variety of ways of doing so and are not necessarily all mutually exclusive.

If confirmed, I look——

Senator MCCAIN. For example?

Ms. BELL. For example, to work to build the military cooperation that we do have at this point and also promote business opportunities for U.S. companies and also continue to work these governance issues, discuss these governance issues.

Senator MCCAIN. So what would you be doing differently from your predecessor, who obviously had very rocky relations with the present government?

Ms. BELL. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the broad range of society——

Senator MCCAIN. My question was what would you do differently?

Ms. BELL. Senator, in terms of what I would do differently from my predecessor——

Senator MCCAIN. That was the question.

Ms. BELL [continuing]. Kounalakis, well, what I would like to do, if confirmed, I would like to work toward engaging civil society in a deeper, in a deeper——

Senator MCCAIN. Obviously, you do not want to answer my question. Do you think democracy is under threat in Hungary?

Ms. BELL. I think that there are absolutely signs of an erosion of checks and balances in Hungary. I do think that. I think that there is a centralization of executive authority that has taken place. I do think that the media freedoms are compromised.

Senator MCCAIN. Do you think our—what are our strategic interests in Hungary?

Ms. BELL. Well, we have—our strategic interests, in terms of what are our key priorities in Hungary, I think our key priorities are to improve upon, as I mentioned, the security relationship and also the law enforcement and to promote business opportunities, increase trade.

Senator MCCAIN. I would like to ask again what our strategic interests in Hungary are.

Ms. BELL. Our strategic interests are to work collaboratively as NATO allies, to work to promote and protect the security for both countries and for the world, to continue working together on the cause of human rights around the world, to build that side of our relationship while also maintaining and pursuing some difficult conversations that might be necessary in the coming years.

Senator MCCAIN. Great answer.

Mr. Tsunis, following last year's parliamentary elections, Norway's conservative party now had a center-right coalition, as you know, that will include the anti-immigration party called the Progress Party. What do you think the appeal of the Progress Party was to the Norwegian voters?

Mr. TSUNIS. Thank you, Senator. That is a very seminal question.

Generally, Norway has and is very proud of being a very open, transparent, and democratic parliamentary government. One of the byproducts of being such an open society and placing such a value on free speech is that you get some fringe elements that have a microphone, that spew their hatred, and although I will tell you Norway has been very quick to denounce them, we are going to continue to work with Norway to make sure——

Senator MCCAIN. The government has denounced them? They are part of the coalition of the government.

Mr. TSUNIS. Well, I would say—you know what?

Senator MCCAIN. I doubt seriously that they——

Mr. TSUNIS. I stand corrected. I stand corrected. I stand corrected and would like to leave my answer at they are—it is a very, very open society and that most Norwegians, the overwhelming amount of Norwegians and the overwhelming amount of people in Parliament do not feel the same way.

Senator MCCAIN. I have no more questions for this incredibly highly qualified group of nominees.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Barber, talk a little bit about—and I am sorry that I missed your opening statement. But just talk a little bit about the state of the Icelandic economy recovery after the financial collapse. I know it affected Iceland in a very significant way. So what is the current economic status in the country?

Mr. BARBER. Well, Senator, thanks for the question.

And I can tell you that from the depths of the fall of 2008 and the extreme difficulties that both the banks and the country as a whole experienced as a result of the financial collapse, Iceland has recovered thus far remarkably well. It has now modest, though positive GDP growth, reduced unemployment, and inflation is now in check.

All of those are parts of the problems that the country experienced in 2008, 2009, and indeed into 2010. They have got a ways to go, but as there are still some capital controls that are in place, restrictions on money leaving the country, and some credit issues still to be tackled on the commercial side, on the home residential side. But they are making great progress, and there are several indicators that are looking very positive.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Barber, one of the things that, you know, when I hear Americans talk about Iceland, most often Iceland is in a sentence or paragraph dealing with a place to go to see the effects of climate change, you know, if I talk to colleagues in the United States. So I know in the United States there is a significant awareness of climate issues in Iceland, and Iceland is sort of an example.

Talk a little bit about, to the extent that you can, about the sort of internal—is there a lot of internal environmental activism in Iceland around climate issues? Because we are grappling at the congressional level of moving from talking about it to what the right policies are. I am kind of interested into how big an issue is that inside Icelandic society.

Mr. BARBER. Well, I think it is. I think that Icelanders and citizens of the United States share a great number of values, and some of those are in the arena of the climate and the changing nature of our climate.

There is a little bit of a pivot here. Well, I should say certainly concern about climate in Iceland kind of goes hand-in-hand with a desire for energy independence, and that, as I mentioned earlier in response to a question from Senator Johnson, that the Icelanders have done a great deal of work in developing geothermal resources and are, indeed, in collaboration with commercial enterprises in the United States exporting that technology and know-how.

In fact, there is a joint Iceland-American company that has just won a billion-dollar contract to build a geothermal facility in Ethiopia. So, so there is awareness certainly of climate change as an issue, but also a desire to help not just within its own country and, indeed, in ours, but around the world to help to combat some of those effects by developing renewable resources where they are able to be developed.

Senator KAINE. And innovative strategies. Thank you, Mr. Barber.

Mr. Tsunis, a thank you and then a question. So a thank you to convey.

Norway has really been one of the great partners in the world on humanitarian relief in Syria, both in terms of dollars put into humanitarian effort, but also Norwegian personnel have played a major role in the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile in Syria. And so, first, that is an important thing to acknowledge to the country when you are there that we recognize it. We appreciate them. We need more partners like Norway in this humanitarian issue.

Increasingly, finding ways to make sure that humanitarian aid gets delivered in Syria is occupying more and more of our time, and Norway has been a good asset. So I hope you will convey that.

And then the question that I wanted to ask you is, Norway has also been a really good ally for us in NATO and U.N. missions. So it is one thing to be a NATO member, but in terms of putting people into the field for both NATO missions with the United States or U.N. missions, whether they be in Libya or Mali or elsewhere, Norway has been a strong ally.

Is your understanding that the Norwegian public remains supportive of involvement with international institutions like NATO and U.N. in these kinds of missions? Is there still popular will to continue that?

Mr. TSUNIS. Thank you for your question, Senator.

As you know, they are a founding member of NATO. They are very, very engaged. NATO remains very popular in Norway, and it is considered the cornerstone of their defense strategy.

In November, Foreign Minister Brende and just last week the Defense Minister reiterated that at its core foreign policy and defense strategy is its relationship with the United States and with NATO. They have been a very effective ally. Some of the most effective—some of the most effective air resources in the Libyan conflict had been the Norwegian F–16s.

They are continuing their commitment to defense and NATO. They are in the process of purchasing 52 F–35 Joint Strike Fighters, which really shows their commitment to interoperability. They have—also on the humanitarian effort not only are they a very active participant in the Lifeline Fund, which gives emergency funds to organizations that are under stress in civil societies, they chair the ad hoc liaison committee, which distributes humanitarian effort to the Palestinian state.

And in Syria, Foreign Minister Brende just announced in Kuwait an additional $75 million in humanitarian aid for the people of Syria. That comes on top of $85 million for civil society and two $43 million commitments for humanitarian efforts that they previously have done.

They have written off $500 million in loans in Burma, and throughout the world, they have shown themselves to be a very active facilitator of conflict but have also been very generous in humanitarian efforts, for development funds as well so these societies they are helping can stand on their own.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Chair, with permission, could I ask one question of Ms. Bell?

Ms. Bell, it strikes me that as I was hearing you chat about some of the civil institutional challenge in Hungary, particularly with the press, that you bring a really interesting expertise to this, having a background in media and press. You know, what better person to be able to speak to the values of an open society from a press standpoint and the reason to have a strong press climate than somebody who kind of comes out of that world.

And so, I am just really going to offer you an opportunity to just kind of comment upon that. I think some of the best work we do are our Ambassadors individually, but also our Nation as a nation is the example that we set. When we set the right example, it speaks louder than any words we could say.

You have been part of an industry in the communications side. You know what a free press, free and vigorous, robust, contentious, you know, press environment is like here. I would think that that would be something that in a diplomatic way you could, you know, bring to the table in encouraging Hungary to move more in that direction.

Ms. BELL. Thank you very much, Senator.

Yes, I do believe that freedom of the press is a core democratic value, and it is one that we all have to work, you know, to fight for the freedom of the press. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging the full range of civil society on this issue.

I know that in Hungary right now there are watchdog groups and citizens who are working hard to bring back these freedoms and promote that very important core value of media and free press in Hungary.

Senator KAINE. And finally, the State Department also has great assets and a special envoy that deals with anti-Semitism, wherever it is to be found throughout the world. And so, that is an asset also that you could draw on. Sadly, we see in too many countries in Europe, but elsewhere as well, anti-Semitism just still kind of a toxic brew that keeps stirring, and possibly it gets more challenging when there are difficult economic times. It seems to kind of spike.

But we see that throughout European countries as well as a little bit in the anti-immigrant strain that was mentioned with respect to some others. So I would just encourage you to use those assets at State and your own personal assets in the industry to help in making the case for progress.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Mr. Barber, you are from Massachusetts, and I know you well, and I know you are going to do a great job as Ambassador. And I know that you do a lot of work with start-ups, and clearly, this is an opportunity to use your expertise in terms of the business relationship between the United States and Iceland.

And you just mentioned this partnership that we have for a billion-dollar deal, and so maybe you could talk a little bit about this incredible energy resource, which Iceland has. They are 100 percent hydro or geothermal in terms of the production of their electricity. So it is a 100-percent renewable country.

What can that mean for us in terms of partnerships from a business perspective?

Mr. BARBER. Thank you very much, Senator Markey, for your kind words. I hope that if I am confirmed, I will prove to be worthy of them.

I think that the—thus far what I have learned about the collaboration between our two countries, both on the commercial side as well as the research, educational components, there is a great deal of collaboration happening, and I would hope, if confirmed, to be witness to—indeed, aid as I am able—further collaboration.

It is, indeed, a very exciting opportunity. There is a good deal more that can be done. The efforts that are underway right now are very exciting ones. The university exchanges are among them.

And I think that one of the great opportunities that if I am confirmed I would like to be a part of is to engage U.S. manufacturing companies in the effort to apply this technology to be the providers of some of the hard resources that get utilized in the exploiting of the renewable resources not just in our country, certainly in Iceland, but in other parts of the world.

Senator MARKEY. Beautiful. Thank you.

You know what I would like to do? I would like to give each one of you 1 minute to tell us what it is that you want to achieve. Just a 1-minute summary. What is your goal when you all left? What is it that you hope to have achieved as the Ambassador to the country that you are going to be our Ambassador?

So we will begin with you, Ms. Bell, and then we will go right down, and we will finish up with Mr. Barber. So you have 1 minute. Just tell the committee what your goal is.

Ms. BELL. Thank you very much.

Hungary and the United States share many common values and positions on foreign policy. As I mentioned earlier, they are a strong and valued member of NATO. If confirmed, I look forward to furthering our security cooperation. Hungary contributes regularly to allied operations and peacekeeping missions.

I would also like to work to promote commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses and advocate for TTIP and ultimately use TTIP as a tool to increase our trade relationship, which will ultimately grow jobs for the United States and simultaneously improve the Hungarian economy.

I also think it is an important time to continue the dialogue on energy security and the need for energy diversification to provide the energy security.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. One minute, that is great.

Mr. Tsunis.

Mr. TSUNIS. Thank you, Senator, for your question.

We do not have the challenges in our bilateral relationship with Norway that we do with some of the other countries, but there are opportunities where we can do things that are better. We have opportunities to grow trade, provide greater investment opportunities for Norwegian companies in the United States, which are beneficial to our companies and workers. Statoil has a $27 billion investment with the United States.

We want to open up markets and continue to open up markets in Norway for our American companies, which will also benefit

companies and workers. We want to continue our close intelligence, military relationships with Norway because we will counter threats together. We need to do this together, which is very, very important.

And on the last point is just balancing energy security with environmental concerns. Norway does it very, very well. We need to continue to engage them to do that together.

Senator MARKEY. And finally, Mr. Barber.

Mr. BARBER. Thank you, Senator.

I have got three—broadly stated, three priorities. One is the protection of the interests of United States citizens in Iceland, to build upon the very strong, already strong bilateral relationship to promote security of the United States and of Iceland.

The second is along the lines of what has been discussed earlier, to promote those—seek out and promote those opportunities for bilateral trade and investment. One of the functions, I think, of an Ambassador is he or she gets to be a convener, a facilitator, a matcher of resources with opportunities.

That is a very exciting prospect for me. It is part of what I have been doing in my life heretofore, and I look forward to that as an opportunity, if confirmed as Ambassador to Iceland.

The third is, is to using the tools that are available, the tools of public diplomacy, to engage audiences across Iceland and to encourage the already-strong educational—Fulbright, for example—educational and cultural exchanges because I think this is good, in and of itself. But it broadens and deepens the bilateral relationship.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Barber.

And thank each of you for your willingness to serve our country. I am sure each of you is going to do an excellent job. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Markey.

What I love about this panel here today is that it represents the best of what we hope our Ambassadors will be, and that is representing the true diversity of the American experience. We have people with diverse background in law, in hospitality, in media, who have done philanthropic work in about 10 times as many different fields.

We really appreciate you being willing to serve and appearing before us today. We look forward to your quick confirmation in this committee and then on the floor so you can get to work.

We are going to leave the record open on this hearing until Tuesday at 6 p.m. If there are any additional questions, we hope that you will turn them around as quickly as possible to this committee.

Senator MURPHY. And with that, we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:50 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

NOMINATIONS OF MAX BAUCUS, ARNOLD CHACON, AND DANIEL SMITH

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Hon. Max Baucus, of Montana, to be Ambassador to China
Hon. Arnold Chacon, of Virginia, to be Director General of the Foreign Service
Hon. Daniel Bennett Smith, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez, Cardin, Coons, Durbin, Udall, Murphy, Markey, Corker, Risch, Rubio, Johnson, McCain, and Barrasso.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning.

Clearly one of the biggest opportunities before U.S. foreign policy today is getting the relationship between the United States and China, in the context of our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific, right. And I can think of few individuals more able and qualified at this important moment in history than our friend and colleague, the Senator from Montana, to help provide advice and guidance to the President and to Congress about how to get that relationship right.

As you are well aware, China is likely to become the world's largest economy and all of us need to embrace that fact. Six of the world's 10-largest container ports are in China, as are numbers 11 and 12 on that list, which presents tremendous opportunities for American exporters. U.S. exports to China have increased by almost $40 billion in the past 4 years alone, from $67 billion to $106 billion, creating and sustaining millions of U.S. jobs in sectors across the board from automobiles and power generation, machinery, aircraft, and other vital industrial sectors.

Through the rest of the 21st century and beyond, much of the strategic, political, and economic future of the world is likely to be shaped by the decisions made in Washington and Beijing and the capitals of Asia over the next 4 to 5 years.

The key challenge you will face as Ambassador, should you be confirmed—and I am sure you will be confirmed—is how to recognize the strategic and economic realities unfolding with the rise of China. You will play an integral role in reconceptualizing the problems we face and how to turn them into opportunities. In my view, the strategic decision by the Obama administration during its first term, described "as a Rebalance to Asia," was absolutely right. If confirmed, you will be a central player in conveying a clear message to the entire region that America is an Asia-Pacific player and will be part of the region for the long haul, that we will continue to extend the efforts to rebalance our foreign policy to the Asia-Pacific, making sure the resources are there to work with allies and partners to shape the broader regional environment in the context of China's rise, that disagreements need not lead to conflict, neither should any of us labor under any false pretense that we are not going to safeguard and promote our national interests, and that we need to work with China and our other allies in the region to construct a new rules-based order for the Asia-Pacific community built on open and inclusive diplomatic, security, and economic mechanisms and institutions.

And so we look forward to hearing from you, Senator Baucus, shortly.

With that, let me introduce the distinguished ranking member, Senator Corker, for his opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the way we work together, and I want to thank both of you for being here today: Senator Tester for introducing and, obviously, Senator Baucus for being willing to serve in this way. And I appreciate the relationship we have had in my 7 years here in the Senate. I appreciate the very frank conversation we had in our office about this post that you are getting ready to assume. And again, I thank you for your willingness to do it.

You know, probably the most important—I think you know this—relationship we, as a nation will have over this next decade, will be with China. And my guess is that it is not a relationship that is not particularly well defined. So you will be going to China in a period of time and in a position to really shape that relationship.

Many Americans today wonder whether China is friend or foe, and candidly, you are going to have a big impact on how that outcome emerges. So I think it is an important relationship. I think we should do everything we can to strive to make sure that we complement each other's countries, and I think you are going to really strive to do so. I know as the Finance Committee chairman, you have worked on so many trade issues, have been an advocate for free trade. And I know you are going to continue to do that in this position, and yet we need to shape it in such a way that the Western values that we care so much about are front and center.

Stability in the region is very, very important, and that is probably an area that you have spent less time on in your post as head of Finance. And yet, with China doing what it is doing right now

in the South and East China Seas, there are a lot of tensions that are being created and obviously new tensions between Japan and China.

So we hope to see greater global integration take place. We have opportunities right now to help shape that as a nation. You will be leading those efforts. And again, I thank you for your testimony, which will take place in just a moment, and your willingness to serve in this way.

So I will stop, Mr. Chairman, and look forward to a very productive session.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Corker.

We are pleased to welcome to the committee a friend and colleague, the junior Senator, soon to be, possibly, the senior Senator from Montana, Senator Tester.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN TESTER, U.S. SENATOR FROM MONTANA

Senator TESTER. Thank you, Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker, Senator Murphy. It is my pleasure today to introduce Max Baucus to the Foreign Relations Committee. Max is a legend in Montana. His commitment and his passion for the State is second to none. That is why Montana has trusted him to represent that great State for nearly 40 years.

Max is also a legend in the U.S. Senate. As a longtime leader of the Senate Finance Committee, Max knows the issues affecting our relationship with China better than anyone. Max has been to China eight times. He has led trade and agricultural missions there. He has fought to normalize our trade relations, and he knows the Chinese leadership well.

As chairman of the Finance Committee, Max also knows trade issues inside and out, a skill that will serve him well as he represents our interests to our second-leading trade partner.

Max's commitment to greater economic opportunity has paid off for Montanans and Americans for literally decades. As Ambassador, he will have the opportunity to take his passion, his work ethic, and his knowledge to the next level. If Max is confirmed as the next Ambassador to China, he will join a fellow Montanan overseas. Our current Ambassador to Russia, Michael McFall, also hails from the Big Sky State.

But it is really the footsteps of another Montana legend that Max is prepared to walk in. After 24 years in the Senate, including a record 16 as majority leader, Mike Mansfield became America's Ambassador to China in 1977. As a teenager, Max memorably met Senator Mansfield who became a lifelong mentor to Max. With his deep knowledge of China, international trade, and a work ethic that Senator Mansfield would be proud of, it is my pleasure today to introduce you to Max Baucus.

Finally, I would just say this. It is with mixed emotions today that I introduce to you Max Baucus. As a U.S. Senator, Max has been a friend and a mentor of mine since I have gotten here, since before I have gotten here, in fact. I remember when I was thinking about running for the United States Senate. Max Baucus was one of the first people that I went and visited here in his office in Washington, DC. Max looked at me and said, do you have the fire

in the belly because if you do not have the fire in the belly, do not do it.

I can tell you unequivocally here today Max Baucus has the fire in the belly to be the next Chinese Ambassador, and he will represent this country very well in that capacity.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I introduce to you, Senator Max Baucus.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Tester. We know your schedule, so you are welcome to leave when you feel you must.

Senator TESTER. Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, Senator Baucus, the floor is yours. Your full statement will be included in the record. Do not hesitate to summarize it as you choose. And, of course, I see your lovely wife is here. If you want to introduce her to the committee as well and any other family or friends, you are welcome to do so at this time.

STATEMENT OF HON. MAX BAUCUS, OF MONTANA, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO CHINA

Senator BAUCUS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to thank my colleague, John Tester. No one could be more lucky than I to have such a good colleague and such a good friend. He is an amazing man.

I would like to introduce my wife, Melodee, and my daughter-in-law, Stephanie. Would you guys please stand so we can see you? Melodee and Stephanie. Stephanie is my daughter-in-law, Stephanie Baucus. And they are just wonderful, wonderful. They are family and mean so much to me. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Welcome to the committee and thank you for your willingness as well. We understand that when our ambassadors go abroad, it is also a commitment of their families. So we appreciate that.

Senator BAUCUS. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

I thank the President for his support and trust. He is a true friend with whom I have been honored to get to know and work with closely over the years. I also appreciate the support and the confidence of Vice President Biden and Senator Kerry, friends with whom I served here in the Senate for many, many years.

I am also grateful to Ambassadors Jim Sasser, Jon Huntsman, Gary Locke, for their friendship and counsel. These distinguished statesmen, along with many others, have worked hard to build a strong relationship between the United States and China. I am humbled to have the opportunity to expand on that foundation.

The United States-China relationship is one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world. It will shape global affairs for generations to come. We must get it right. If confirmed, I look forward to working with members of this committee and with other Members of Congress to achieve that goal and strengthen ties between our two countries.

My fascination with China goes back 50 years to my days as a college student at Stanford. I was a young man and grew up on a ranch outside of Helena, MT, full of youthful idealism and curi-

osity. So I packed a backpack and took a year off from my studies, hitchhiked around the world. I set out to visit countries I had only imagined: India, Japan, China, just to name a few.

Before I departed, I had never thought about a life in public service, but that trip opened my eyes. I realized how people across the globe were interconnected, how we are all in this together, basically the same values, the same wishes, put food on the table, healthy lives, taking care of our kids. We are all in this world together. We are all interconnected. I saw the vital role America plays as leader on the world stage. We are the leader. I returned to the States with a focus and commitment to a career where I could improve the lives of my fellow Montanans and my fellow Americans.

I came to Washington in 1973 with a goal of working with my colleagues in Congress to address the challenges facing our Nation. Throughout my career, I have tried my best to do just that.

I am proud of the role I played spearheading environmental protection, strengthening America's health and safety net programs, and fighting for Montana. I am especially proud of the work I have done to build ties and foster collaboration between the United States and countries around the world.

In my capacity as Senate Finance Committee chair and ranking member, I led the passage and enactment of free trade agreements with 11 countries: Australia, Bahrain, Jordan, Chile, Colombia, Morocco, Oman, Panama, Peru, Singapore, and South Korea.

My position has also allowed me to travel to emerging and established markets on behalf of the United States. And since 2010, I have been on the ground working to advance U.S. trade interests in Germany, Spain, Belgium, Russia, Japan, New Zealand, Brazil, Colombia, and China.

I have learned some core lessons along the way. One of the most important, I have become a firm believer that a strong geopolitical relationship can be born out of a strong economic relationship, which often begins with trade.

In fact, America's relationship with China began with trade. In 1784, a U.S. trade ship called the "Empress of China" sailed into what is now the port of Guangzhou. That visit opened a trade route that moved small amounts of tea, silk, and porcelain. Today, United States-China trade accounts for more than $500 billion in goods and services each year.

From my first official visit to China in 1993 to my most recent in 2010, I have worked through economic diplomacy to strengthen ties between the United States and China. I look forward to continuing that work to build a stronger, more equitable economic relationship between our countries.

If confirmed, I hope to accomplish two overarching goals, goals that are critical to our relationship with China and can help achieve our shared interest in a safer, more prosperous world.

First, to develop our economic relationship with China in a way that benefits American businesses and workers.

And second, to partner with China as it emerges as a global power, encourage it to act responsibly in resolving international disputes, respecting human rights, and protecting the environment.

When I visited China in 2010, I met with President Xi Jinping, who was then Vice President. We discussed a range of topics, in-

cluding Chinese current policies, its enforcement of intellectual property rights, its barriers to U.S. exports. I remember President Xi stressing that the United States and China have more common interests than differences. In his words, cooperation between our nations could help drive peace and stability. In fact, he used that word, "cooperation," repeatedly.

Leaders from both sides have recognized that we have much more to gain from cooperation than from conflict. I believe that as well, and I see many areas of our relationship where cooperation is not only possible, it is vital.

China must be fully invested in a global rules-based economic system. Its economy continues to expand rapidly. It grew 7.7 percent last year. And China is the world's second-largest economy and one of our largest trading partners.

So how do we continue to bring China into the fold? By engaging the Chinese through bilateral talks and regional forums. Engagement will allow us to identify shared goals. It will allow us to achieve concrete results.

As Finance Committee chairman, I worked to bring China into the global trade community. I met with Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji in 1999 and pushed to extend permanent trade relations with China and supported its entry into the World Trade Organization. The strategy has already paid dividends.

Last year, China agreed to negotiate a bilateral investment treaty with the United States, one that adopts our high standard approach to national treatment protections. The treaty will mark an important step in opening China's economy to United States investors and leveling the playing field for American businesses. We have much more to do, though.

Cooperation is also critical on geopolitical issues. As China emerges on the global stage, it has a responsibility to contribute more to preserving the regional and global security that has enabled its rise.

The North Korea nuclear issue is just one example where close United States-China coordination is clearly in both sides' interests. And if confirmed, I would work to urge my Chinese counterparts to redouble their efforts to press North Korea to denuclearize.

Countries in the Asia-Pacific have expressed concerns about China's pursuit of its territorial claims in maritime disputes along the periphery. And if confirmed, I will urge China to follow international law in maritime issues and other international standards and stress that all sides must work together to manage and resolve sovereignty disputes without coercion or use of force.

I will continue to make clear that the United States welcomes continued progress in cross-strait relations. I will also encourage China to reduce military deployments aimed at Taiwan and pursue a peaceful resolution to cross-strait issues.

As the United States encourages cooperation with China, it must also remain loyal to the values that define us as Americans. If confirmed, I will urge China's leaders to protect the universal human rights and the freedoms of all its citizens, including ethnic and religious minorities. I will call on Chinese authorities to reduce tensions in Tibet and Xinjiang and restart substantive talks with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions.

If confirmed, I will not be an Ambassador confined to the Embassy in Beijing. I will be out in the field working to solve the challenging issues facing our two nations and building relations between our two peoples.

I look forward to visiting with the people of China and have the honor to be a guest in their country to listen and to learn from them.

Ambassador Locke has told me of the outstanding team at the Embassy in Beijing and in our consulates across China. If granted the privilege to serve as Ambassador, I will be fortunate to have a dedicated team of hardworking professionals at my side.

Later this week, Chinese and other communities around the world will celebrate the start of the lunar new year. It will mark a time of renewal, of new beginnings. The opportunity to serve as Ambassador will mark a new beginning for me as well, and if confirmed, I will strive to strengthen the United States-China relationship for the benefit of our two countries and the world.

Chairman Menendez, Senator Corker, all members of this esteemed committee, thank you so much for the opportunity to appear before you.

And I will submit my remaining testimony for the record and welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Senator Baucus follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAX BAUCUS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

I thank the President for his support and trust. He is a true friend with whom I've been honored to closely work with over the years. I also appreciate the support and confidence of Vice President Biden and Secretary Kerry, friends with whom I served here in the Senate for many years.

Before we begin, I'd also like to take a moment to introduce my wife, Melodee. My family is the most important thing in my life. I want to thank them for all of their support.

I'm also grateful to Ambassadors Jim Sasser, Jon Huntsman, and Gary Locke for their friendship and counsel. These distinguished statesmen—along with many others—have worked hard to build a strong relationship between the United States and China. I'm humbled to have the opportunity to expand on that foundation.

The U.S.-China relationship is one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world. It will shape global affairs for generations to come. We must get it right.

If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with members of this committee and with other Members of Congress to achieve that goal and strengthen ties between our two nations.

My fascination with China goes back 50 years to my days as a college student at Stanford. I was a young man who grew up on a ranch outside Helena, MT, full of youthful idealism and curiosity. And so I packed a backpack, took a year off from my studies, and hitchhiked around the world. I set out to visit countries I had only imagined—India, Japan, and China, to name a few.

Before I departed, I had never thought about a life of public service. But that trip opened my eyes. I realized how people across the globe were interconnected. And I saw the vital role America plays as a leader on the world stage. I returned to the States with a focus and commitment to a career where I could improve the lives of my fellow Montanans and all Americans.

I came to Washington in 1973 with the goal of working with my colleagues in Congress—both Republicans and Democrats—to address the challenges facing our Nation. Throughout my career, I have tried my best to do just that.

I am proud of the role I played spearheading environmental protections, strengthening America's health and safety net programs, and fighting for Montana. I am

especially proud of the work that I have done to build ties and foster collaboration between the United States and countries around the world.

In my capacity as the Senate Finance Committee's chair and ranking member, I led the passage and enactment of Free Trade Agreements with 11 countries: Australia, Bahrain, Jordan, Chile, Colombia, Morocco, Oman, Panama, Peru, Singapore, and South Korea.

My position has also allowed me to travel to emerging and established markets on behalf of the United States. Since 2010 alone, I've been on the ground working to advance U.S. trade interests in Germany, Spain, Belgium, Russia, Japan, New Zealand, Brazil, Colombia, and China.

I have learned some core lessons along the way. Among the most important, I have become a firm believer that a strong geopolitical relationship can be born out of a strong economic relationship, which often begins with trade.

In fact, America's relationship with China began with trade. In 1784, a U.S. trade ship called the Empress of China sailed into what is now the port of Guangzhou. That visit opened a trade route that moved small amounts of tea, silk, and porcelain. Today, U.S.-China trade accounts for more than $500 billion in goods and services each year.

From my first official visit to China in 1993 to my most recent trip in 2010, I have worked through economic diplomacy to strengthen ties between the United States and China. I look forward to continuing that work to build a stronger, more equitable economic relationship between our countries.

If confirmed, I hope to accomplish two overarching goals that are critical to our relationship with China and can help achieve our shared interest in a safer, more prosperous world.

- First, to develop our economic relationship with China in a way that benefits American businesses and workers.
- Second, to partner with China as it emerges as a global power and encourage it to act responsibly in resolving international disputes, respecting human rights, and protecting the environment.

When I visited China in 2010, I met with President Xi Jinping, who was then the Vice President. We discussed a range of topics, including China's currency policies, its enforcement of intellectual property rights, and its barriers to U.S. exports. I remember President Xi stressing that the United States and China have more common interests than differences. In his words, cooperation between our nations could help drive peace and stability. He used that word—cooperation—repeatedly.

Leaders from both sides have recognized that we have much more to gain from cooperation than from conflict. I believe that as well, and I see many areas of our relationship where cooperation is not only possible, but vital.

For example, China must be fully invested in the global rules-based economic system. Its economy continues to expand rapidly—it grew 7.7 percent last year. China is the world's second-largest economy and one of our largest trading partners.

So how do we continue to bring China into the fold? By engaging the Chinese through bilateral talks and regional forums. Engagement will allow us to identify shared goals. It will allow us to achieve concrete results.

As Chairman, I worked to bring China into the global trade community. I met with Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji in 2000, and pushed to extend permanent trade relations with China, and I supported its entry into the World Trade Organization. The strategy has already paid dividends.

Last year, China agreed to negotiate a bilateral investment treaty with the United States that adopts our high-standard approach to national treatment protections. The treaty will mark an important step in opening China's economy to U.S. investors and leveling the playing field for American businesses.

It's also critical for the United States and China to work together to develop a shared understanding of acceptable norms and behavior in cyber space, including a cessation of government-sponsored cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property. Such behavior hurts China as well as the United States, because American businesses are concerned about the cost of doing business in China. If confirmed, I will work with Chinese counterparts to ensure meaningful actions are taken to curb this behavior so that it does not undermine the economic relationship that benefits both of our nations.

As the largest energy consumers, greenhouse gas emitters, and renewable energy producers, the United States and China share common interests, challenges, and responsibilities that cut across our economic, national security. Last year our countries announced new commitments to work together on climate change and clean energy. During Vice President Biden's last visit, for example, our two governments volunteered to undertake fossil fuel subsidy peer reviews this year. If confirmed, I

will endeavor to build on our existing cooperation with China, including collaborative projects on energy efficiency, smart grids, transportation, greenhouse gas data, and carbon sequestration.

Cooperation is also critical on geopolitical issues. As China emerges on the global stage, we believe it has a responsibility to contribute more to preserving the regional and global security that has enabled its rise.

The North Korean nuclear issue is just one example where close U.S.-China coordination clearly is in both sides' interests. If confirmed, I would work to urge my Chinese counterparts to redouble their efforts, along with us and our partners in the 6P process, to press North Korea to denuclearize.

Countries in the Asia-Pacific region have expressed concerns about China's pursuit of its territorial claims in maritime disputes along its periphery. If confirmed, I will urge China to follow international law, international rules, and international norms on maritime issues, including by clarifying the international legal basis for its claims. I will stress that all sides must work together to manage and resolve sovereignty disputes without coercion or the use of force.

I will continue to make clear that the United States welcomes continued progress in cross-strait relations and remains committed to our one China policy based on the three joint communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. I will also urge China to reduce military deployments aimed at Taiwan and pursue a peaceful resolution to cross-strait issues in a manner acceptable to people on both sides of the strait.

As the United States encourages cooperation with China, we must also remain loyal to the values that define us as Americans, including our commitment to universal values, human rights, and freedom.

If confirmed, I will urge China's leaders to protect the universal human rights and freedoms of all its citizens, including ethnic and religious minorities. I will call on Chinese authorities to allow an independent civil society to play a role in resolving societal challenges; take steps to reduce tensions and promote long-term stability in Tibet and Xinjiang; and restart substantive talks with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions.

The free exchange of information, including over the Internet, is essential to the growth of modern societies. Yet in China, we have witnessed a government crackdown on free expression that is limiting areas of domestic debate. If confirmed, I will work to convince China that open debate and the free flow of information is in its own interest, enabling the type of creativity and innovation that will lead to a more stable and prosperous society.

I also look forward to visiting with the people of China. I would be honored to be a guest in their country—to listen and learn from them. If confirmed, I will not be an ambassador confined to the Embassy in Beijing. I will be out in the field, working to solve the challenging issues facing our two nations and building relations between our two peoples.

Ambassador Locke has told me of the outstanding team at the Embassy in Beijing and in our consulates across China. If granted the privilege to serve as Ambassador, I will be fortunate to have a dedicated team of hard-working professionals at my side. I will do everything possible to ensure that the dedicated officers and staff working at the U.S. mission in China have the tools and support they need to continue performing the important work of the United States abroad.

Later this week, Chinese and other communities worldwide will celebrate the start of the Lunar New Year. It will mark a time of renewal and new beginnings. The opportunity to serve as Ambassador will mark a new beginning for me as well. If confirmed, I will strive to strengthen the U.S.-China relationship for the benefit of our two countries and the world.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome the opportunity to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Baucus, for that pretty comprehensive introductory statement, and your entire statement will be included in the record.

Let me start off. You are extremely well versed in all of the economic, trade, and related issues. And I think as someone who has had the privilege of sitting on the Finance Committee under your chairmanship, I have seen that firsthand. But as you recognized in your opening statement, this is a pretty comprehensive portfolio with China. And in that regard, I would like to visit with you on one or two things.

One is China continues to refer to a new type of great power relationship, and I wonder what you think China means by that. Is that China laying down a marker for saying, hey, we have a greater say in our back yard, so to speak? And what should America's counter be? Should we even be using that phrase? What are your views on that?

Senator BAUCUS. Mr. Chairman, as you have said in your opening statement and I in mine, a view that is shared by all members of this committee and Congress, most who think about this question, it is imperative that we, America, be deeply involved in the Asia-Pacific. The rebalancing mentioned by our President and others referred to I think is critical. It is because the United States and Chinese interrelationship is so valid to solving problems not just in China and America but worldwide.

China talks about a new relationship. I think it is always interesting and somewhat helpful to talk about new relationships, to look forward, to try to find something new and something fresh like the Chinese new year, the first of any new year. But China's interpretation of the new relationship, as I understand it, says its core interest is one which I think we should be very wary of. As I understand China's interpretation of the new relationship and focusing on its core interests, it is frankly one that suggests that China take care of its own issues in China, whether they are human rights issues or whether it is Taiwan, the Senkaku Islands, Diaoyu in their version, in the South China Sea. That is essentially a version where China takes care of its part of the world and the rest of the country takes care of their parts of the world. That is not an approach that makes sense to me. It is not an approach which makes sense, I am sure, to the President, although we have not talked specifically about this.

The approach that makes sense is for the United States to urge China to be a full member of, and to participate fully in, the United Nations rule of law, to resolve issues according to international rule of law principles and norms. And that includes work with the United Nations with respect to North Korea, the United Nations with respect to Syria, Iran. It means open skies, open seas, to maintain security in the world. Half of the commercial tonnage shipped in the world today across the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea—it is extremely important that the United States stays engaged in the world and helps work with China. And the approach to China should be it is very simple. It is one that is positive, that is cooperative. We work to constructive results about one grounded in reality. We stand up for our principles. We stand up for our principles, but as we work and engage China.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Baucus, there are a couple of areas on the economic front and the security front that are, I think, critically important, and I would like to get your commitment to the committee that once you are confirmed and in Beijing, that you will work toward these goals.

One is the question of cyber security and theft, which of course has been part of the strategic dialogue that has been had between the administration and the Chinese leadership.

The other one is intellectual property. A 2013 American Chamber of Commerce China survey found—and I was there this past Au-

gust and talked to them about this—that 72 percent of respondents said that China's IPR enforcement was either ineffective or totally ineffective. And the U.S. International Trade Commission estimated that U.S. intellectual property-intensive firms that conducted business in China lost over $48 billion—billion dollars—in sales, royalties, and license fees in 2009 because of IPR violations.

So can you commit to the committee that upon your confirmation, these are areas that you will work to improve with our Chinese counterparts?

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I absolutely will. As you asked the question—and I thought about this before. When I sat where you are now in the Finance Committee, I have asked many questions along those lines of witnesses of the administration. Why are you not doing more to protect intellectual property, get going here, get moving? It now dawns on me that as a member of the administration, I am going to have to, along with others in the administration, do what we can to address intellectual property theft. It includes not only trademarks and other traditional IP, but also it is cyber theft. It is industrial espionage, which obviously is becoming more rampant. I have heard figures that are even greater than the ones you mentioned. It is a huge problem.

And it is really an opportunity for the United States to keep reminding China that China has benefited so much by our open rules-based economy, and China will benefit more in the future the more China protects its own intellectual property and follows more rules-based solutions to its economic and political problems. It is a huge issue and you have my commitment, if confirmed.

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, I appreciate you raising us standing up for our principles because I think in any relationship, one that is honest, straightforward, but that stands up for our principles is important. And while we obviously are fixated on the economic challenges and opportunities, on the relationship to engage China in a rules-based system that ultimately observes international norms as disputes seek to be resolved, the question of human rights, the question of Tibet where your immediate two predecessors, Ambassadors Huntsman and Locke, went to visit Lhasa, Tibet, I hope you will do the same when you have that opportunity. The question, as we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Taiwan Foreign Relations Act. These are standing up for principles that make it very clear that we seek to engage, we seek to find cooperation, but that we will also stand up for some fundamental human rights issues and imperatives that I think are important. And I am glad to hear it in your statement, and I look forward to seeing it in your actions as Ambassador.

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, thank you for being here today and for your opening comments and our prior meetings.

I know we talked just a little bit in our office about some of the security situations, and I know you are very aware that China has recently named an air defense identification zone that overlaps with commonly known Japanese territory. And under article 5 of

our security agreement with Japan, we would come to their aid if certain provocations occurred there.

I know you have had a lot of briefings with the administration in preparation for this. And again, I know it is an area that has been outside, generally speaking, of the great trade issues and other kind of things you pursued in Finance. But what is your sense of what China intends by taking these steps that they have recently taken?

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, I think the best approach, if confirmed, one I will pursue, is I will do all I can to reduce tensions in the East China Sea. It is unfortunate that China set up the ADIZ. The United States has not recognized nor confirmed that action. And I think that it is important for the United States to let China know that so as to discourage other potential actions that China may take.

Having said that, it is a delicate relationship between China and Japan. And it is, I think—and I have done this frankly with the Prime Minister when I was recently in Japan—to counsel caution, counsel reduced tension, counsel to back off here a little because otherwise we run the risk of a major dispute, of a major problem where, if tensions are high, there could be a miscalculation or easily a miscalculation. It is important, again, to remind China that it is in China's best interest to maintain a peaceful Asia-Pacific, including the East China Sea, because if relations deteriorate significantly, that will inure to the detriment of all countries involved, in this case primarily China, primarily Japan, but also Korea and other Asian nations in the Asia-Pacific. And it is just in everyone's interest to just reduce the tension, and that is an effort I will undertake.

Senator CORKER. On December the 5th in the South China Sea, a Chinese warship crossed right across the bow of the USS *Cowpens.* I know that Chinese officials have been critical of our "pivot to Asia" with many of the comments that they have made. Again, what is your sense of what they were attempting to do with that episode?

Senator BAUCUS. Well, Senator, if I knew, I am not sure I would be sitting here. It is hard to know exactly what China's intentions at that time were.

I suspect that China was probing a little bit, pushing a little bit, seeing how far it could go. That is very risky. That is very dangerous. There was bridge-to-bridge communication between the *Cowpens* and the ship, the frigate, that crossed the bow of the *Cowpens,* as well as the aircraft carrier that was somewhat in the vicinity.

But it raises the point of the importance of engagement at all levels. In this case, we are talking about military to military. Our Government is attempting to ramp up military-to-military exchanges with China at various levels. It is fairly rudimentary at this point. We have a lot further to go, but everything begins with a first step somehow somewhere, and this is I think very, very important. I speak to Admiral Locklear, for example, and others. They explain to me what they are trying to do. And I, if confirmed, will do what I can to encourage the Chinese to follow up at a next higher level.

That is important in many ways, to encourage transparency with the Chinese and with American transparency, to encourage more communication at military levels so that it eventually, at higher levels, a U.S. commander can get on the telephone and talk to a Chinese commander. What is going on here? What is up here? If they know each other in advance, the communication channels are set up, it is going to help. It is not going to solve all the problems, but it is going to help.

And the rebalancing that I think is very appropriate is one that engages China at all levels. It is not just military. It is economic. It is political. It is human rights. And I believe, as we all know as people who represent our States work to get stuff done, that the more we can talk to people, even if we are just talking about their kids, just talking to people, getting to know them better and make it regular, more and more often the more likely it is that we are going to develop trust and better understand each other to minimize misunderstandings and minimize adverse actions that otherwise would take place.

So I believe that we will just keep working at it. We have no choice. Keep working at it and we will make some headway here.

Senator CORKER. I know that somebody is going to bring up—I would hope anyway—the issue relative to journalists in China. We were there recently and met with a number of journalists that were concerned about what now is actually happening there. And I am sure you will address that at some point through questions here from the dais.

One last question and then I would like to make a brief statement.

What are the areas, Senator Baucus, that you think are the best suited for improvements between us and China at present, today? You know, when you get over there, in the very first days of being there, you are going to begin to set an agenda. Where do you think the areas of improvement best lie?

Senator BAUCUS. Well, Senator, I mentioned two, broadly, in my statement. One is pursuing economic relations and the second is the overall geopolitical.

I do think that economic, commercial efforts do help significantly. By that I mean the more we can have an actual level playing field in China, the more American businesses are actually able to do business in China in a nondiscriminatory way, where China does not discriminate, whether it is their regulations, whether they are denying access for whatever reason. The more that Americans are engaging Chinese people, engaging Chinese companies, whether more importantly it is the private sector, the more that helps because the goal here is to get us talking to each other, getting to understand each other and know each other.

Now, people counsel me, if I have the opportunity and the privilege and if confirmed, to come up with two or three main initiatives. And I am working on that right now. I do not want to, at this point, be presumptuous and say what they might be. It would be a bit premature. But I do not want to be, if confirmed, an ambassador that just has his talking points and goes around and meets with all different folks in China just parroting the talking

points and so forth. Rather, I want to be one, if confirmed, to make a difference.

Senator CORKER. I actually had just a comment I would like to make, and I will be very brief.

As I mentioned, we had a good meeting in our office. And I think the administration has been long on making statements, you know, like a new era of power relations or a pivot, without much definition or policy to go behind that. I do not think you are the type of person to take direction from some 25-year-old at the White House calling you and telling you what to do, which I know oftentimes happens in these positions.

So for that, I am very upbeat about the fact that you are taking this position. I think you have shown independence. And I just would ask you to take full advantage of the fact that I do not think the administration has a defined policy toward China, to take advantage of that, develop one that really allows us, over this next decade, to have the kind of relationship, both pro and con, with China to help shape their future, but also to build on the economic opportunities that our Nation has and to strengthen the security issues that we both are going to have to deal with.

So I thank you for this. I look forward to your service. I look forward to your continued independence in this position, and I look forward to seeing you on the ground there. Thank you.

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you, Senator. If I might first thank you. I read your April statement focused on security, which I deeply appreciated and agree with you and will work to follow up with the points you made in that statement.

But second, I am part of a team here working for the President and this administration. And I will do everything I can to help implement administration policy.

Senator CORKER. You can help them most by showing strength as an ambassador and developing that policy, which I hope you will do.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Baucus, thank you for your extraordinary public service and your willingness to continue that public service as our Ambassador in China. I want to thank Mel and your family, because this truly is a family commitment, for your willingness to continue to serve our country. This is a critically important position, the Ambassador to China.

You have already heard mentioned by my two colleagues many issues. Our relationship with China is complex, and there are a lot of important matters.

As the chair of the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, I was in China last year and had a chance to meet with many of the government officials. And I agree with you. People to people are critically important. I found the meeting with the students to perhaps be some of the most enlightened discussions that I had, and they had already met with U.S. students that were over there, and I think that had a great impact on a better understanding between our two countries.

Clearly, the economic issues are very, very important. I could not agree more with your statement about dealing with intellectual

property and the chairman's comments about intellectual property and the amount of theft that goes on in that country. China needs to have confidence in its own people and its own creativity.

And the currency manipulation is a matter that has to be dealt with. And I concur in that.

And the security issues are critically important. Maritime security and China's unilateral declaration was extremely unhelpful. And we will get to some of these other issues.

But I want to bring up the matter of human rights. The chairman mentioned it. And your statements are what I would have hoped to have heard, and I thank you for that. My concern is will good governance and human rights be always on the table in our discussions with China. This is a country in transition. They have made a lot of progress. Recently they decided to—we will see if they carry it out—eliminate the reeducation labor prisons. I hope that is the case. That is a step in the right direction. They have opened up some of their system allowing people some opportunity.

You mentioned the Tibetan Buddhists or the Uighur. The discrimination against minorities goes to any minority—any minority—in that country. From the point of view of trying to practice your religion, you cannot do it. They will not let you. So many of the Chinese people are held back because of where they are born, not really having any opportunity for advancement. The journalists are absolutely being denied. The United States Embassy's Web site was even compromised by the Chinese Government for being able to get out information.

So I just really want to underscore the importance of the statement you made that representing not just U.S. values but international values of good governance so that American companies that want to compete and work in China can get a fair deal. They do not have to worry about whether there is an implied problem with dealing with a local government official that they are not allowed to participate in that puts them at a disadvantage.

So can you give us that assurance that good governance, human rights will always on the agenda of your discussion as our Ambassador?

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, you have that assurance. It is extremely important.

I am very proud of an action I took a good number of years ago. When I was in China, I met with the then-President, Jiang Zemin, and raised with him and asked him to release a dissident in Tibet. He said I did not know what I was talking about basically. But I went to Tibet, went to Lhasa and raised the same point there. And sure enough, within about 2 or 3 weeks, this person was released. And I do not know what I had to do with it, but I raised the point strongly a couple—three times—because I thought it was so important and was very heartened with the results.

Protection of human rights is the bedrock. It is the underpinning of American and world society. We have some blemishes in our country, but we are the leader in human rights. People look to America, look to America to lead on so many issues, including protection of human rights, religious freedoms, freedom of the press, all the rights that are enumerated in the universal declaration. It is what most progress springs from.

And the answer is, "Yes", Senator. You have my commitment.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for that strong statement.

I want to mention one other area where you are going to have a special interest in dealing with, and that is breathing the air over in China. When I was there—I do not know what the chairman's experience was—I was there for 3 days. There was not a cloud in the sky, but I could not see the sun.

When we tried to deal with climate change in the past, we have always been concerned as to whether China would also do its fair share. Well, we have China's attention right now. This is a problem they cannot hide from because people see that China must do a much stronger job in reducing their carbon emissions.

How do you see working with China to provide universal leadership so that we can have responsible policies to deal with carbon emissions?

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, we are making some headway. We have a lot more to do. Recently Vice President Biden met with Counselor Jiang Ze Xi to put together a climate change working group addressing several points. One is pollution from heavy, larger automobiles. Second is building efficiencies through different finance incentives. Another was the smart grid systems. It is basically technologies that the Chinese can use that we can help provide and work with them to help achieve their objective.

The point you made is obvious. It is the air pollution. I have seen up to a million people die in China a year due to air pollution.

Senator CARDIN. I might point out you are responsible for the safety of our personnel that are there.

Senator BAUCUS. That is correct.

Senator CARDIN. They have to breathe that air. Literally they have to have breathing devices on certain days. I mean, I think it is critically important not just for the safety of Americans that are in China. It is obviously a universal issue. And as Ambassador you can make progress in that regard.

Senator BAUCUS. No question. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN Thank you.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Congratulations. Your appointment comes at a pretty exciting time and place in terms of the issues that are going on with regard to China. Their growth in their economy and their influence in the world is really an amazing development to watch from a historical perspective.

And by the way, I would just share, as I did with you on the phone when we spoke about this. And I think the President has said this. Our policy is not to contain China. On the contrary, I think we see a growing economy that we can be trade partners with, a billion people we can sell our products and our services to. We look, hopefully, to a China that uses its increased influence and its military capabilities to be a partner in addressing some of the global issues that our world confronts. Just think about how much easier the issue of Iran and North Korea and Syria would be if China were engaged in a positive way in trying to influence the direction of that.

But there are also some real challenges, some of which have been highlighted here today. In particular, I think the Chinese use the term "the new model of major country relations." And it seems that the way, at least, they define it right now is that, No. 1, the United States would basically begin to erode or abandon some of its regional commitments that it has made to places like Japan and the Philippines and Taiwan and even South Korea to some extent.

And the other is something you will hear them often say. In fact, I think at Davos Senator McCain was asked this question by someone in the audience. Why is the United States always interfering in the internal affairs of other countries? And when it comes to China, that usually is this issue of human rights.

The late Ambassador, Mark Palmer, in a book, "Breaking the Real Axis of Evil," argued that United States ambassadors in places like China should be freedom fighters and that United States embassies should be islands of freedom open to all those who share the values of freedom, human rights, and democracy.

You have begun to answer that question here today, and it was asked on some specific topics. But do you agree that the United States Embassy in China should be an island of freedom and that one of your primary jobs there will be demonstrating to China's peaceful advocates of reform and democracy that the United States stands firmly with them?

Senator BAUCUS. Going to your earlier point, Senator, I read your speech in Korea. I thought it was very perceptive and it made points which I would like to work on with you.

Clearly the United States symbolically is an island of freedom. You asked to some degree the specific question, should it apply physically to the Embassy. That is a question I am going to have to take back and work with the administration on. I do not know the administration policy precisely on that point, but I will determine to find it. My basic principle is you bet. We are there to stand up for human rights and freedoms generally in the world. But with respect to your specific question, let me take that back.

Senator RUBIO. Well, just as you do take that issue back, I think you will find broad consensus on this committee and I hope in the administration that our embassies should be viewed as an ally of those within Chinese society that are looking to express their fundamental rights to speak out and to worship freely, et cetera.

On that point, the Chinese Government has detained over 1,000 unregistered Christians in the past year. They have closed what they term illegal meeting points. They have prohibited public worship activities. And additionally, by the way, unregistered—and this is amazing—Catholic clergy—unregistered with them—that remain in detention. Some have even disappeared.

I would ask would you be open, if you are confirmed, to attending a worship service in an unregistered Catholic or Protestant church within China.

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, I am going to do my very best to represent our country constructively, seriously engage, and listen in a way which I think is most effective. I will take actions which I hope accomplish that objective.

With respect to where I go and do not go, that is a matter of judgment, and it is one I am going to be thinking about very carefully about where I go and where I do not go.

The goal here is to be effective. A major goal, as we discussed here today, is the protection of human rights, probably the bedrock, fundamental goal because so much springs from that. And it is a goal that I will espouse fully and use whatever way I can to accomplish that goal effectively.

But let me not answer that directly because I do not know the degree to which that makes sense at this point. First of all, I am not confirmed. I am not there. And this is frankly not a point that I have discussed with the administration, but I will take that back too.

Senator RUBIO. And I am respectful of the reality that in order to have the operating space to be effective, you do not want to necessarily be in direct and constant conflict with the host government. On the other hand, there comes a point, I would argue, Senator—and I hope you keep this in mind—where that effectiveness cannot come at the expense of the fundamental rights of the people of that country and in particular what we stand for as a nation.

And I would just caution that, again, as you see the Chinese attitude toward some of these issues, their attitude basically is mind your own business on these issues. If you want to have a good relationship with us, you need to stop speaking out on these grotesque human rights violations. And I hope it never becomes the policy of the United States to look the other way on these issues for the purpose of achieving a more friendly operating environment because that, I hope, is not the definition of this new model of major country relations.

I think if the Chinese are willing to use their new-found economic and even military abilities to be a productive member of the global community, committing themselves to things like freedom of navigation, respect for human rights, I think that would be an extraordinary development for mankind. If, on the other hand, this new-found power is used to turn their neighbors into tributary states and to continue to impress people within their own country, I think we have a big problem and a major, major challenge.

I know you need to go back to the administration on some of these issues, but I hope this is not a matter of debate. I hope that it is clear that we want a good relationship with China but not at the expense of the fundamental human rights that define us as a nation and as a people. And I think you are going there at a very unique time where freedom activists in that country are looking for an advocate and a spokesperson that will stand with them strongly. They look to America to be that, and you have a unique and historical opportunity to do that and I hope it is one that you will embrace.

But thank you.

Senator BAUCUS. I appreciate that very much. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez.

I want to thank Senator Baucus for your 35 years of remarkable service to this body and this institution and express my confidence that, Senator, you could not have found a better nominee—Presi-

dent Obama could not have found a better nominee in the United States Senate. Your long work and leadership on the important and difficult trade issues that will dominate much of your service as Ambassador—I hope you are swiftly confirmed—makes you, I think, a great representative for the United States, and your grounding in our values and your appreciation of the difficulties and the tension between advocating for human rights and for our values while still addressing the issues of real concern to our home States and to our country's future. I think you are very well grounded in the challenges ahead.

We both come from meat-producing States. Lots of beef comes from Montana. Lots of poultry comes from Delaware. And it is my hope that you will keep at the head of your agenda open access to the market of China.

Let me, if I could, speak to two intellectual property issues and then to one regarding Africa.

There have been some real changes recently in China's trade policy that are creating real barriers to innovations in biotechnology in the American agricultural sector particularly in grain. And if confirmed, I am hoping you can speak to how you would use your position as Ambassador to work with USDA and USTR to address the important issue of innovations in biotechnology and how we harmonize and sustain a good relationship with China. What sort of time will you invest in that particular area?

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, it is an issue that has become of greater concern—the recent actions you just referred to. I think the answer to some degree is just to keep pushing but especially with respect to sound science because there are too often countries—and China is one—which limit agricultural products for political reasons, not reasons based on science. And I think the more we can point out what the science is and that the poultry that is attempted to be introduced into China from your State is perfectly safe, it is fine, and to keep pushing, to keep talking.

It is my experience, frankly, with respect to another product, in this case beef, with other countries, South Korea and Japan, just keep talking, keep pushing over and over and over again. And finally, we are at the point where both Japan and South Korea take a lot more American beef. They are not 100 percent yet, but huge progress from where they were about 10–15 years ago. So I will push strongly.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

I have heard similar concerns. Our second-largest agricultural product is corn, and I have heard similar concerns broadly, nationally from corn growers.

Let me move to ways in which the Chinese Government has used their anti-monopoly law and recent actions by their National Development Reform Commission to extract concessions from American companies, even those that do not operate in China, in terms of making concessions in patent cases. The standard they are suggesting is that any United States company that files a patent infringement lawsuit against a Chinese company will then be barred from their market and coerced to make concessions whether it is in patent law or trade secrets or other areas. If you would just speak briefly to the importance you attach to strengthening the in-

tellectual property regime within China and continuing to make progress on their respect for IP rights here in the United States.

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, I do not know if you were here, but earlier I explained how often on the other sided of the dais I pushed so strongly for the administration to do a better job of protecting intellectual property worldwide, often China. And now that I am on this side of the table, I have got to put my money where my mouth is and do something about it, at least working with the administration to do the best I can. I will push, obviously, as strongly as I possibly can.

But it is important for China to understand—and I do not mean to be presumptuous here—that the more China goes down that road under its antimonopoly law, the more it is going to hurt its economy, the more it is going to hurt the living standards of people in its own country. And China, like all nations, has a lot of issues it has to deal with internally, and a lot of them are economic. There is environmental. There is pollution, but there are also economic issues within China. The Chinese people and the country of China in the long run will be a lot better off the more they open up, the more there is more transparency, and the more the playing field is actually level. It is extremely important that that also is a point we make over and over again. We could compete. Chinese companies can compete, but we want a level playing field.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

My last question will be about exactly that, a level playing field. Africa—as you know, I chair the Africa Subcommittee here in Foreign Relations—is I think a continent of immense importance to the United States, to China, and to the world as the greatest storehouse of remaining mineral reserves for the world. The recent discoveries of oil and gas and minerals all over the east coast, the west coast have sparked a real aggressive move by China to take a dominant position in access to Africa's natural resources. In fact, they have eclipsed the United States as the leading trading partner for Africa, and their dramatic investments in infrastructure and in economic development are often done in ways that are not on a level playing field, concessionary loans and relationships that do not follow the same trading rules that we do. And frankly, to the extent we try to advance a values agenda in Africa that promotes human rights and open society and commitment to democracy, we often find ourselves in some real tension with the Chinese and how they are pursuing their interests on the continent.

It is my hope that as Ambassador you will seek ways that we could partner with the Chinese constructively and positively in some countries like South Sudan and Sudan where they could play a positive role, but you will also hold up this vision of fair trade, of a level playing field moving forward.

If you would, just speak to your concerns about the Chinese role in Africa and how you think as Ambassador you might add to the forward movement we need to see here.

Senator BAUCUS. Frankly, Senator, with respect to Africa, I have a little bit to learn. I see the press reports—we all do—of Chinese investment in Africa and the concerns that you have just outlined. And we will push for, obviously, rules-based, value-based investment. If China wants to invest in Africa, that is fine. That is Chi-

na's right and should, just as we should. But I also think we Americans—American businesses—look for ways to invest more aggressively in various African countries.

I will keep your point very firmly in mind, Senator, and go back and try to find a better answer.

Senator COONS. I am confident that your rich and deep experience and long service here has equipped you better than anyone who could possibly be nominated, and I look forward to your service. And I am grateful for you and your family and for everything you have already given this country.

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator COONS. I am confident your service will be exemplary. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN Thank you.

Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to join Senator Coons in thanking you for your past service to the country and your willingness to serve in this capacity.

I also appreciate the time you spent with me yesterday, and I enjoyed the conversation.

As a business person, I always seem to frame these issues from a businessman's perspective. Taking a look at our relationship with China, to me it seems like just one long, ongoing negotiation. And one of the things I certainly learned in negotiating in business was I first like to understand the motivation of the person I am negotiating with and then I like to spend a lot of time on the front end figuring out what we agree on before we get into the areas of disagreement. So I kind of want to structure my questioning along that framework.

Again, in our meeting you said you have been to China a number of times on different trade missions and you have met with a lot of leaders. How would you assess their motivating factors? What motivates Chinese leadership?

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, I think like most leaders in most countries they want to do well, provide for their people, but also people like their jobs and want to do what they can to provide for their people but also undertake actions so they do not lose their jobs, frankly. My experience is basically yours. Often though, to be honest, when I talk to leaders worldwide, it is because I do not know them well, it is hard to get past the pleasantries and get past the talking points. It takes a lot of time to get past pleasantries and talking points that one does get past only when one is able to spend quite a bit of time with that person.

In this case, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, theoretically I have a lot of time to spend with a lot of different people in China and do my best to figure out which ones are the most effective, which ones will make the most difference so that I can be most effective. That is going to be a goal of mine.

And I agree with your general approach, just figure out what you agree on, put that aside, mark that as progress as it is progress, and figure out what you do not yet agree on. But then the next point is to, when you are talking, try to understand the other person's assumptions, the other person's premise, asking questions,

just listening because the more you ask questions, positive questions, nonadversarial questions, and try to figure out where they are coming from, the more likely it is you are going to find little insights and new ways to find a solution here.

My approach in this job since I have been here in the United States Senate has been to do my very best to work with Senators on both sides of the aisle to get results, just be pragmatic, and that would be my approach here, too, to just do the best I can, listening, being forthright. I am the kind of guy, too, who likes to talk straight. This is what it is and not be angry about it. This is just what it is. This is what we can do, this is what we cannot do, and to listen and to convey the impression that we want to solve problems.

Senator JOHNSON. I appreciate that. And I tend to agree and I hope it is true that their primary motivating factor is improving the condition of the people of China.

But then let me ask a question. So what do you think would motivate them to initiate the air defense identification zone? How does that further that goal?

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, I am no real expert on China, but it is my strong belief that Chinese people are just as proud as we Americans are proud. I think, unfortunately, the Chinese leadership has taken advantage of that pride to test America in the South China Sea or the East China Sea, and it means we have got to stand up. It is the old thing in life, being fair but firm, be fair to show that you can work with people and they can trust you but firm, uh-uh, we are not going to be taken advantage of. And that is vitally important here for the United States in my judgment.

And we would be fair but firm by engaging them in a constructive conversation, for example, with respect to the Senkakus, say uh-uh, we do not recognize that, the ADIZ, but kind of cool it, calm it. The same with the South China Sea, say we do not countenance potential air defense identification zones in the South China Sea. That is not a good thing to do for a lot of reasons. Our basic is that our national security is No. 1 to us, as their national security is to them, but also our commercial, economic security is so important not just to the United States but also to China and other countries in the world. Half the tonnage travels through the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea, and it is vitally important that that commerce continue so that companies can grow and prosper.

So in answer to your question, I cannot really tell you the motivation of the Chinese leadership, but I can tell you that the approach that we should take, if confirmed, is one that I will pursue, namely constructive engagement, talking but standing up, positive, constructive engagement grounded in reality and make sure they understand both sides of that. It is constructive and positive but also grounded in reality. And I think the general rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific is important, but again, it is at all levels. It is not just military but also economic and political.

Senator JOHNSON. I would just like to quick hear your thoughts on—I think the latest figures, China owns or holds $1.3 trillion worth of U.S. Government debt. What are your thoughts on that? From my standpoint, the primary problem with that is if anybody holds $1.3 trillion of U.S. Government debt. But can you just kind

of give me your thoughts in terms of the potential dangers of that or positive aspects?

Senator BAUCUS. Yes. Well, the biggest concern, frankly, is that anyone holds so much of our debt. It is important to get our debt down.

Actually the percentage of United States debt that is held by China I think is pretty small, smaller than most people think, but nevertheless, it is very important. The real key here is to get our trade imbalance down so that China is not continuing to accumulate such currency reserves. That is the big point here, so they are not then, therefore, investing so much in U.S. treasuries.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Max, one of the issues that affects my State and is going to affect a lot of the IT industry in America is the Chinese Government with their propensity to subsidize businesses that are supposed to be competing in the open market, but as we all know, as soon as the government starts subsidizing, the market lists badly.

The chip industry and particularly the prices have been volatile over the years because of different governments' subsidies of their own industries. I am speaking now of Micron Technology, which is one of Idaho's largest private employers. Their success has been up and down because of other governments' interference with a free market price for chips.

You are probably aware that the Chinese Government is spending billions to prop up their semiconductor industry, and indeed, they are finalizing a policy right now to provide additional government support for that. That is going to harm U.S. producers that are out there in the marketplace trying to do the right thing as far as producing semiconductors. What are your thoughts on that? What can you do about that as far as reining back the Chinese efforts in that regard?

Senator BAUCUS. Well, Senator, it is a big problem. The United States Government is undertaking some actions. We have seven actions before the World Trade Organization with respect to China, most of them revolving around the Chinese Government subsidizing favored industries, SOV's for example, and it is important that we follow up on those actions.

The new bilateral investment treaty, which is not finalized yet, will help. China is engaging with the United States and has agreed to a bilateral investment treaty which recognizes national treatment which helps. We have been spending a lot of time trying to get China to sign up to the procurement agreement it earlier agreed to when it entered the WTO. It has not yet fully signed on to the procurement agreement because the terms it wants to sign up with are inadequate. They are insufficient. And we just keep chipping away. No pun here. Keep working at the problem here. This bothers me, Senator, as much as it does you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you much. I appreciate your commitment to that because this is—the size and the magnitude of the Chinese Government and the economic power that they have is a real problem. And I am glad to hear your commitment to that, and I would

urge you to urge them in the strongest terms that they have got to compete fairly in the marketplace or there are going to be some serious problems.

Let me turn to another product that is close to my State and to your home State and that is beef. We have been working hard to try to get the Chinese to accept U.S. beef. And I am very concerned about the difficulties in the East and South China Seas are going to cause problems with these negotiations that we are having. And I know you touched on that, but I wondered if you could comment just a little bit about your thoughts as far as the upheaval and us trying to get the Chinese to open their markets to U.S. beef.

Senator BAUCUS. You have my commitment, Senator. I have worked very hard on this with respect to South Korea and Japan, and I am now starting to try to get China to take our beef. China does not take much American beef right now.

The potential disturbances in the East China Sea and the South China Sea are extremely concerning. However, I do believe that with very strong, measured, statesman-like discussions with China, we can minimize the potential adverse development in those two oceans.

But you have my commitment to work on beef.

Senator RISCH. Thank you so much, Senator. I appreciate that.

The CHAIRMAN Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Max, we congratulate you and look forward to, at our arrival at the Beijing airport, seeing you.

Senator BAUCUS. If confirmed, I will be there with warm greetings.

Senator MCCAIN. I look forward to that. I am sure Chairman Menendez will appreciate that.

Obviously, we are supportive of your nomination.

I must say I am a little concerned at some of your answers. It is not that the Chinese are proud as we are proud. It is not that the Chinese want to keep their job. It is not that we can work things out with China, which we can. But it is not that they are proud people. It is not that they are wanting to keep their job.

The Chinese leadership has a sense of history that they believe that the last 200 years was an aberration and that China has to be the leader and the dominant force in Asia. And you have to appreciate that if you are going to deal with them. And the fact is that the South China Sea has implications which could lead to another "Guns of August," and their aggressive behavior, whether it be a near collision with a United States ship or whether the imposition of the ADIZ or whether it be many of the other actions they have taken are part of a pattern of their ambition to dominate that part of the world.

I suggest one guy you go see in Singapore is Lee Kwan Yew. I suggest to you that he will give you the perspective of China and their ambitions and their behavior and what you can expect from them because he knows them better than anybody. And I will tell you what he will tell you. He will tell you that the Chinese will say, well, we will take the western Pacific and you can have the eastern Pacific. The construction and acquisition of an aircraft carrier is a statement of a desire to be able to project power.

The role that China is playing in Asia today should be of great concern to all of us, not to mention the fact that they have continued to repress and oppress and to practice human rights violations on a regular basis in Tibet, and the tensions between China and India on the China-India border continue to be ratcheted up. The more penetrations of China across the border between China and India are real.

So we have to understand that this is not a matter of being proud as we are proud. This is not a matter of they want to keep their job. This is a matter of a rising threat or challenge to peace and security in Asia because of the profound belief of the Chinese leadership that China must and will regain the dominant role that they had for a couple thousand years in Asia. And unless you understand that, you are going to have trouble dealing with them. Well, you are going to have trouble dealing with them effectively.

That does not mean we preach confrontation. That does not mean that we believe that a clash is inevitable with China in Asia. But the best way to have that be prevented is a close alliance with our friends in Japan, with China, and the countries in the region that are now united because of the threat that China poses to them with their aggressive behavior in the South China Sea and the East China Sea.

When the United States of America ran two B–52s over the area after the declaration of the ADIZ, I thought that was great until they then advised American airliners to observe it. What if the Koreans want the same thing? What if other countries want the same thing? We are seeing a time of rising tensions in Asia, and unless you understand Chinese ambitions and Chinese perspective and view of history and recognize that they are continuous human rights abusers on a daily basis, then I think you will have difficulty being an effective representative in this very important job.

And you may disagree or agree with my comments, but I do not base my comments to you on John McCain's opinion. I base it on the opinion of every expert on Asia that I know of in China, and that is that there is a growing tension, there is a growing threat of another "Guns of August," and there is a need for us to not only make the Chinese understand that there are boundaries but also to work more closely with the other nations in the region, whether it be Vietnam or the Philippines or Indonesia or other countries that the Chinese, because of their hand-fisted behavior, have united in a way, the likes of which I have never seen or anticipated.

I would be glad to hear your response.

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you, Senator.

I do not disagree with you. You make very important points which I largely do agree with. I applauded the B–52s flying over the ADIZ. I thought that was a very important message the United States send. It was the right thing to do.

And I have met twice with Lee Kwan Yew. On the way over again, I hope to talk to him again. He is a very, very important man. No question.

Senator MCCAIN. And by the way, one more.

Senator BAUCUS. Yes.

Senator MCCAIN. I would check in with Kissinger also.

Senator BAUCUS. Yes, he is on my list. We are scheduled to meet very soon actually.

Your point is basically, I think, accurate. It is kind of the old thing in life: you hope for the best; assume the worst. And it is just important for us to maintain our alliances and firm them up with the countries you have mentioned, and there are some others.

But the overarching goal here for us as a country, I think, is to engage China with eyes wide open, to try to find common ground. We have talked about the military-to-military exchanges. There are other things we can do to help minimize a potential confrontation, say, in the South China Sea. I am a realist. Believe me. And I understand the version of Chinese history which you have just espoused, and it has a large ring of truth to it. But as we work with China, as I said earlier several times, it is going to be grounded in reality. No. 1 is the United States of America, we find a relationship with China where we can make some headway.

And I do believe how we manage this relationship—we are very much determined that living standards of Americans and Chinese and other people in the world—we have got to get this relationship right. But if we work with China, we stand tall. We protect our rights, maintain our friendships and our alliances and keep our naval fleet strong over there so that we can protect our interests but in a way that for us is nonconfrontational too. We just have to work together the best we can, standing up for our rights.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Baucus, congratulations to you, to your family. Congratulations.

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you, John.

Senator BARRASSO. You have had a chance to talk a little bit about trade issues and concerns. A number of others have asked the question regarding specifically China's trade practices. As I have discussed in this committee before, soda ash continues to face significant trade barriers around the world. The United States is the most competitive supplier of soda ash in the world due to the abundance of this in this country. Green River Basin in Wyoming is the world's largest-known deposits of this naturally occurring trona. It is a component of glass, detergents, soaps, and chemicals.

In May 2007, you specifically hosted a meeting with members of the Finance Committee with the Chinese Vice Premier at the time, Wu Yi. And at that time, my friend and predecessor, U.S. Senator Craig Thomas, was undergoing treatment for leukemia. He was unable to attend the meeting with you as a member of the Finance Committee. But on his behalf, you specifically hand-delivered a letter written in both English and Mandarin from him to the Vice Premier that asked China to eliminate their value-added tax rebate on soda ash exports. I am grateful for your assistance.

In July 2007, China actually eliminated their 13-percent value-added tax rebate on soda ash exports. Very welcome news in this country.

Unfortunately, on April 1 of 2009, so 2 years later, China reinstituted a 9-percent value-added tax rebate for soda ash exports.

So I would just ask, if confirmed, to serve as our Ambassador to China, if you will work to highlight and eliminate market-distorting subsidies like the value-added tax rebate on soda ash exports that I believe harm U.S. workers and producers.

Senator BAUCUS. You bet, Senator. I remember that exchange back then. Madam Wu Yi is a very impressionable person. And I am sorry that the value-added rebate was reimposed, and I will do my best to get that turned around again.

Senator BARRASSO. You also raised the issue of beef, and I know Senator Risch has talked a bit about beef. U.S. beef producers take great pride in providing a healthy and safe product. The United States exported $5.5 billion in beef sales across the globe this past year. And I am concerned about the U.S. beef industry, as I know you are, continuing to face what is to me an unscientific trade barrier with China. In 2003, China banned all U.S. beef exports after the discovery of a BSE-positive cow in the State of Washington. Prior to 2003, the United States was China's largest beef supplier.

China's continued ban on U.S. beef imports has allowed Australia to take our place as the leading foreign beef supplier to China by value.

In 2011, you and I both signed a letter, along with 36 Senators, to the Secretary of Agriculture and to the U.S. Trade Representative on the need to take steps to eliminate these unscientific trade barriers to U.S. beef exports. Recently there have been articles indicating that China may ease some restrictions on imports of U.S. beef, but we do not have details. We do not have timelines. And I believe this issue needs to be raised at the highest levels with Chinese officials.

I would ask you what immediate action, if you have anything planned that you would do with this, and would you work with our U.S. Trade Representative and our Secretary of State and the Chinese Government officials to address this issue?

Senator BAUCUS. Senator, I certainly will. I care a lot about beef.

Senator BARRASSO. I know you do.

Senator BAUCUS. We will make some headway here.

Senator BARRASSO. I am curious, Senator. Did you have any conversations with the Governor of Montana prior to your nomination about the appointment of your replacement to the Senate?

Senator BAUCUS. I have not.

Senator BARRASSO. Any conversations with your former chief of staff, Jim Messina, prior to your nomination about your successor?

Senator BAUCUS. I have not.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN Well, Senator Baucus, I think you have had a full exposition of the issues that you are going to be facing and I think you have acquitted yourself extraordinarily well, which is no surprise to those of us who know you.

It is the intention of the chair to hold a business meeting, a markup, next Tuesday. That will depend upon questions for the record being answered. The record will remain open untill noon tomorrow. I would urge you, if you do receive questions for the

record, to answer them as expeditiously as possible so that we could proceed with your nomination.

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you.

If I might, Mr. Chairman, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I meant what I said in my opening remarks, that is, I want to work with you and the committee on issues that are important to the committee and to keep a dialogue and a conversation going.

The CHAIRMAN We appreciate that commitment.

With that, Senator Baucus, you are excused.

And we are going to call up the next panel. We have two nominees before the committee: the Honorable Arnold Chacon, of Virginia, to be Director General of the Foreign Service; and the Honorable Daniel Bennett Smith, of Virginia, to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research.

We are going to ask the members of the audience who are leaving to please do so quietly so we can begin the next panel.

With that, to both Ambassador Chacon and Mr. Smith, your full statements will be included in the record without objection. We would ask you to summarize those statements in around 5 minutes or so and then to have a dialogue with you after that. So we will start off with you, Ambassador Chacon.

STATEMENT OF HON. ARNOLD CHACON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE

Ambassador CHACON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to be here today before you as President Obama's nominee to be the next Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources at the Department of State. I deeply appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in nominating me for this key position.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to advance American diplomacy through strengthening the Department of State workforce. If confirmed, I look forward to directing the recruitment, hiring, assignment, welfare, professional development, promotion, and retirement processes of the Civil Service, the Foreign Service, and our locally employed staff and other colleagues who work at the Department of State.

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to take a moment to introduce my wife, Alida, who is also a member of the Foreign Service. And I am also pleased that my daughter, Sarah; brother, Michael Chacon; and my brother-in-law, Michael Fonte, could be here today as well.

My wife Alida and I have had the privilege of serving together with our three children throughout Latin America and Europe, as well as in a number of positions in New York and in Washington, DC. And as a Foreign Service family, we care deeply about promoting the U.S. interests abroad and the future of the Department and its people.

Secretary Kerry said, "Global leadership is a strategic imperative for America, not a favor we do for other countries. It amplifies our voice, it extends our reach. It is key to jobs, the fulcrum of our influence, and it matters to the daily lives of Americans. It matters

that we get it right for America, and it matters that we get it right for the world."

Mr. Chairman, diplomacy and development are ever more important to safeguarding national security and prosperity of our people in the United States because if we can successfully manage or solve problems diplomatically, we save the lives and money that would otherwise be spent in dealing with conflict.

I believe the men and women of the Department of State are among the most talented, loyal, and hardworking people I have ever met. They and their families deserve the best possible support. And if confirmed, I will work hard to equip them with the training, tools, and supportive personnel policies they need to fulfill our critical mission.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to acknowledge and express my sincere gratitude for your perseverance and unwavering support for increasing minority recruitment and retention. As my predecessor before me, I pledge to work closely with you to achieve a more diverse workforce. I have personally seen, Mr. Chairman, that as our embassy teams engage with foreign audiences, our support of the American values of social inclusion and freedom resonates far better when they see that we walk the talk by employing a workforce that includes people of all cultures, races, and religions drawn from across the United States. With innovative outreach and bold action, the Department of State is making inroads that will help us reach our diversity goals.

The Foreign Service represents the United States around the world at embassies, consulates, and increasingly at less traditional missions where diplomatic skills play an important role in promoting our priorities and safeguarding our Nation. The Department remains focused on filling positions in priority staffing posts—our embassies and consulates in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Libya—while ensuring that we adequately staff our other posts around the world and advance major initiatives in such areas as economic diplomacy, food security, energy security, climate change, and nuclear nonproliferation.

If confirmed, I will work with others in the Department to ensure that all employees have the support they need to serve in these high-stress assignments and to cope with the pressures such service places on them and their families.

While the Department's Foreign Service employees spend most of their careers overseas, the Civil Service employees provide the institutional continuity and expertise in Washington, DC, and in offices throughout the United States. The Civil Service has an admirable record of volunteering for service in Iraq and Afghanistan and in hard-to-fill positions overseas.

The Department of State has also expanded its use of limited noncareer appointments to meet urgent needs, including unprecedented visa adjudication demand in Brazil and China. Backlogs for visas in China and Brazil have been eliminated, facilitating international travel for business and tourism for 1.8 million Brazilians who visited in 2005 and nearly 1.5 million Chinese which, according to Department of Commerce calculations, helped create approximately 50,000 new jobs in the United States.

Our 46,000 locally employed staff represent the largest group of employees of the Department of State and an essential component of our teams around the world. They often serve under dangerous and challenging circumstances with sometimes hyperinflated currencies, and they continue to help advance our Nation's goals. If confirmed, I will continue to build on the concept of one team/one mission.

I was proud to learn from the Partnership for Public Service that the State Department placed 4th among 19 large Federal agencies in the 2013 Best Places to Work rankings. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to make State an even more attractive employer.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address you and the members of the committee. If confirmed, I ask for your help in strengthening the security and prosperity of America by leading and building an effective civilian workforce in the Department of State. I look forward to helping the Secretary to ensure that we are prepared to do just that.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Chacon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT AMBASSADOR ARNOLD A. CHACON

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources for the Department of State. I deeply appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in nominating me for this key position.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to advance American diplomacy through strengthening the Department of State workforce. If confirmed, I look forward to directing the recruitment, hiring, assignment, welfare, professional development, promotion, and retirement processes of the Civil Service, Foreign Service, Locally Employed Staff, and other colleagues who work at the Department of State.

Mr. Chairman, for over 30 years, I have had the pleasure of working with highly motivated Department of State employees serving both overseas and domestically. I am excited about the prospect of helping to ensure that my colleagues are ready and able to meet the diplomatic challenges of today and tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take a moment to introduce my wife, Alida, who is also a career member of the Foreign Service. We have had the privilege of serving together with our three children throughout Latin America and Europe, as well as in a number of positions in Washington, DC. Growing up in Colorado, I learned from my parents the values of justice, compassion, and service to a cause greater than myself. My family gave me a moral compass based on love of God and country, which has guided my life. My wife and I share these values with our children. As a family, we care deeply about promoting U.S. interests abroad and the future of the Department and its people.

The global environment has changed over the past several decades. The world has become more interconnected, but also more dangerous. I believe that our approach toward managing our workforce also must evolve. Diplomacy today requires flexibility, creativity, and a diversity of ideas that reflect the conscience of America in deploying the talents of all of our people to ensure success in an ever more complex environment.

As Secretary Kerry has said, "Global leadership is a strategic imperative for America, not a favor we do for other countries. It amplifies our voice, it extends our reach. It is key to jobs, the fulcrum of our influence, and it matters to the daily lives of Americans. It matters that we get this moment right for America, and it matters that we get it right for the world."

The Department and its diplomats are, in the words of Secretary Kerry, "an enormous return on investment. Deploying diplomats and development experts today is much cheaper than deploying troops tomorrow."

Diplomacy and development are ever more important to safeguarding national security and the prosperity of our people and the United States, because if we can successfully manage or solve problems diplomatically, we save the lives and the money that would otherwise have to be spent in dealing with conflict. Today, as the

United States and the world face great perils and urgent foreign policy challenges, we must use all of the diplomatic, economic, political, legal, and cultural tools at our disposal, along with military tactics when needed.

Like Secretary Kerry, I believe that the men and women of the Department of State are among the most talented, loyal, and hard-working people I have ever met. They and their families deserve the best possible support. If confirmed, I will work hard to equip them with the training, tools, and supportive personnel policies they need to fulfill our critical mission.

The increase in personnel through the Diplomacy 3.0 hiring surge over the last 5 years has had a major, positive impact on diplomatic readiness. First, the mid-level staffing gap, a result of reduced hiring in the 1990s, is shrinking. Our overseas vacancy rate has dropped from 16 percent to 10 percent. Second, we have a strong commitment to provide training, particularly in foreign languages. In the last fiscal year, 79 percent of employees assigned to language-designated positions met or exceeded the proficiency requirement. And third, we have been able to support new and important initiatives, from Economic Statecraft, which promotes efforts by U.S. companies and foreign investment and leads to jobs and opportunities here at home, to the empowerment of women politically, socially, and economically around the world.

Our mission has also grown significantly. Our responsibilities overseas continue to expand, as does our presence. In recent years, we opened a new Embassy in South Sudan, and a new consulate in China; in Brazil, we have plans to open consulates in Belo Horizonte and in Porto Alegre. The Department has also added three new domestic bureaus to strengthen our expertise and diplomatic efforts in the fields of energy, counterterrorism, and conflict and stabilization operations. If confirmed, I will seek your support for staffing increases that are critical in meeting the President's foreign policy objectives.

I will continue our hard work to hire, develop, and retain a diverse, skilled, and innovative workforce—one that truly represents America. As Secretary Kerry has said, "Our commitment to inclusion must be evident in the face we present to the world and in the decisionmaking processes that represent our diplomatic goals." I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude for your unwavering support for increasing minority recruitment and retention. As my predecessor before me, I pledge to work closely with you to achieve a more diverse workforce. I have personally seen that as our embassy teams engage with foreign audiences, our support of the American values of social inclusion and freedom resonates far better when they see that we "walk the talk" by employing a workforce that includes people of all cultures, races, and religions, drawn from across the United States.

The Department's Diversity and Inclusion Plan provides a useful framework for action, but we have a ways to go. We continue to seek ways to reach out toward new audiences. After learning that many underrepresented groups rely heavily on mobile communications, the Department developed and released "DOSCareers," a mobile app that educates and engages aspiring Foreign Service candidates and others to familiarize them with diplomatic careers. Launched in March and available on Google Play and the App Store, this app expands our outreach to these populations and helps candidates link up with our DC-based recruiters, as well as our 16 Diplomats in Residence at colleges across the United States, learn about upcoming recruitment events, and even practice for the Foreign Service Officer Test. I was delighted to learn that in the first few months, DOSCareers had more than 10,000 downloads. With innovative outreach and bold action, we can make the inroads that will help us reach our diversity goals.

The Foreign Service represents the United States around the world—at embassies, consulates, and, increasingly, at less traditional missions where our diplomatic skills play an important role in promoting our priorities and safeguarding our Nation. Throughout history, there has always been a need for diplomats, but now, as we face issues such as terrorism, violent extremism, and widespread economic instability, the need is greater than ever.

The 14,000 members of the Foreign Service and 11,000 Civil Service employees are vital to America's national security. They play essential roles in: advancing peace, security, and freedom across the globe; pursuing economic opportunity overseas; creating jobs at home; and protecting Americans from the dangers posed by drug trafficking, weapons proliferation, and environmental degradation.

Mr. Chairman, operations at our high-threat posts are increasingly demanding and changing. The Department remains focused on filling positions in priority staffing posts (PSPs)—our Embassies and consulates in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Libya—while ensuring that we adequately staff our other posts around the world and advance major initiatives in such areas as economic statecraft, food security, energy security, climate change, and nuclear nonproliferation. The Depart-

ment expects to fill more than 700 jobs in these five PSP countries in summer 2014. Since September 2001, the number of unaccompanied positions overseas has increased from 200 to more than 1,000. We are asking our diplomats to serve in more difficult and dangerous places, increasingly without the company and comfort of living with their families.

If confirmed, I will work with others in the Department to ensure that all employees are fully trained, prepared, and compensated for the mission we have assigned them, and that they have the support they need to serve in these high-stress assignments and to cope with the pressures such service places on them and their families. This support must include the requisite staffing, training, and accountability to provide our employees the world over with the safest possible working conditions. In this regard, full implementation of Foreign Service overseas comparability pay continues to be a top priority.

While the Department's Foreign Service employees spend most of their careers overseas, our Civil Service employees provide the institutional continuity and expertise in Washington, DC, at passport agencies, Diplomatic Security field offices, and other offices throughout the United States.

Civil Service employees contribute to accomplishing all aspects of the Department's mission, encompassing human rights, counternarcotics, trade, environmental issues, consular affairs and other core functions.

The Department of State is broadening the experience of its Civil Service workforce by offering opportunities to serve in our missions abroad. This flexible approach not only helps close the mid-level gaps resulting from the below-attrition hiring of the 1990s, it also provides employees with additional development opportunities that expand their knowledge and experience base. The results of such workforce flexibilities have been very positive and we hope to expand these in the future.

The Civil Service has an admirable record of volunteering for service in Iraq and Afghanistan and in hard-to-fill positions overseas. If confirmed, I will continue to build on the concept of "one team, one mission," to ensure that Civil Service employees are well trained, and that we benefit fully from their skills.

The Department of State has also expanded its use of limited noncareer appointments (LNAs) to meet unprecedented visa adjudication demand in Brazil, and China. Backlogs for visas in China and Brazil have been eliminated, facilitating international travel for business and tourism that in turn will help boost our economy. In fact, according to the Department of Commerce, every additional 65 international visitors to the United States generate enough exports to support an additional travel and tourism-related job. As a result of our increased staffing in Brazil and China, nearly 1.5 million Chinese and 1.8 million Brazilians visited in 2012, helping to create approximately 50,000 new jobs in the United States.

Our 46,000 Locally Employed (LE) Staff represent the largest group of employees in the Department of State and are an essential component of our 275 embassy and consulate teams around the world. LE Staff fulfill many functions critical to our overseas operations, and we could not accomplish our mission without them. Our LE Staff often serve under dangerous and challenging circumstances, with sometimes hyperinflated currencies, and they continue to help advance our Nation's goals, even as they have endured the same 3-year pay freeze as American Federal Government workers. We want to provide them with the very best support. If confirmed, I will strive to properly recognize their contributions to our missions and U.S. interests by ensuring, to the extent that our budget allows, that their compensation keeps up with market trends and attracts the best and the brightest.

I was proud to learn that Washingtonian magazine just named the State Department as one of the "Great Places to Work" for 2013, noting that "employees at the State Department feel that their work makes a difference in foreign affairs, helping to make the world more secure." We also ranked in the top five in the Partnership for Public Service's 2013 "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" survey, placing fourth overall and second in strategic management among the 19 large Federal agencies. A poll of liberal arts undergraduates placed State among the top three ideal employers because we provide the opportunity to do challenging work, make a positive difference in people's lives, and develop skills. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to make State an even more attractive employer.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address you and the members of the committee. If confirmed, I ask for your help in strengthening the security and prosperity of America by leading and building an effective civilian workforce in the Department of State. I look forward to helping the Secretary to ensure that we are prepared to do just that.

Thank you. I respectfully request that my full statement be entered into the record, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN Thank you.

Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL BENNETT SMITH, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Ambassador SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a great honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary of State Kerry for their confidence in nominating me for this position, as well as to the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, for his support of my nomination.

I want to thank my wife, Diane, for joining me here today. My three sons could not be here.

Mr. Chairman, INR is a unique and invaluable asset both to the Department of State and to the Intelligence Community, of which it is part. The Bureau has a long and celebrated history in providing information and in-depth, all-source analysis that have helped to guide our Nation's foreign policy. INR's strong reputation derives not from the size of its staff or its budget, but from the tremendous expertise and skills of its personnel. Indeed, the Bureau has some of the greatest regional and subject-matter expertise anywhere in the United States Government.

Mr. Chairman, it is less well known but INR also plays a critical role and function in ensuring that intelligence and sensitive intelligence-related law enforcement activities are consistent with and support our foreign policy and national security objectives.

Throughout the course of my 30 years as a Foreign Service officer, I have worked closely with members of the Intelligence Community, overseen and coordinated intelligence and law enforcement activities, and witnessed firsthand the role that intelligence and analysis can and should play in the formulation of foreign policy. Like many professionals within INR, I also have a strong academic background and appreciate very much the importance of drawing on the insights and expertise found in our Nation's outstanding academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector. As a leader in the Department and as a chief of mission abroad, I have also worked hard to enhance interagency cooperation, to improve communication and information sharing, and to ensure that we are all working together to advance our national security.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will work tirelessly to ensure that INR continues to make its unique analytical contribution, as well as continues to ensure that our intelligence activities support our foreign policy and national security objectives.

I thank you for having me here today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL BENNETT SMITH

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary of State Kerry for their confidence in nominating me for this posi-

tion, as well as to the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, for his support of my nomination.

INR is a unique and invaluable asset both to the Department of State and to the Intelligence Community, of which it is part. The Bureau has a long and celebrated history in providing information and in-depth, all-source analysis that have helped to guide our Nation's foreign policy. INR's strong reputation derives not from the size of its staff or budget, but from the tremendous expertise and skills of its personnel. Indeed, the Bureau has some of the greatest regional and subject matter expertise anywhere in the U.S. Government. INR has approximately 200 analysts who have an average of 13 years of government and nongovernmental professional experience directly related to their current INR portfolio. If confirmed, I will work hard to ensure that INR continues to recruit and retain the highest quality staff and provides them with the training, professional development opportunities, and overseas experience they need to ensure the best possible analysis. Equally important, I will vigorously defend the integrity of the analytical process to ensure the independence and unbiased analysis for which INR is justly famous.

Mr. Chairman, it is less well known but INR also plays a critical function in assuring that intelligence and sensitive intelligence-related law enforcement activities are consistent with, and support, our foreign policy and national security objectives. The Bureau has a dedicated staff of professionals with significant expertise in this area, which encompasses many highly technical issues as well as practical ones. They help define the Department's intelligence requirements, seek cleared language for use in diplomatic communications, ensure that Department policymakers understand and can evaluate proposed intelligence activities with potential foreign policy consequences, and support our chiefs of mission overseas.

I myself have direct experience in this regard, and, if confirmed, I look forward to helping the Bureau support the Secretary of State and the State Department in assuring that foreign policy concerns are taken fully into consideration in the decisions and activities of the Intelligence Community.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I believe I will bring extensive experience and relevant skills to the position of Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research. I have served successfully in a variety of demanding leadership positions both in Washington and overseas, including most recently as Executive Secretary of the State Department and as Ambassador to Greece. I know firsthand the challenges facing senior policymakers as well as the incredible demands on their time and attention. I thus appreciate the critical contribution that INR has made and can continue to make in providing the President, the Secretary of State, and other senior policymakers with timely, independent and well-focused analysis on a broad range of regional and global challenges.

Throughout the course of my 30 years as a Foreign Service officer, I have worked closely with members of the Intelligence Community, overseen and coordinated intelligence and law enforcement activities, and witnessed firsthand the role that intelligence and analysis can and should play in the formulation of foreign policy. Like many of the professionals within INR, I also have a strong academic background and appreciate very much the importance of drawing on the insights and expertise found in our Nation's outstanding academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector. As a leader in the Department and as a chief of mission abroad, I have also worked hard to enhance interagency cooperation, to improve communication and information-sharing, and to ensure that we are all working together to advance our national security.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will work tirelessly to ensure that INR continues to make its unique analytical contribution as well as continues to ensure that our intelligence activities support our foreign policy and national security objectives. Thank you for having me here today. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN Well, thank you both very much. Welcome to your families. As I said earlier, service of those in the Foreign Service, particularly our ambassadors and other positions, is also a family commitment. I know that you will be here in D.C., but nonetheless, it is still a commitment. So I appreciate their willingness to share you with the country.

Ambassador Chacon, we are very proud of your service to date, and I would expect that the service that you have had will now be reflected in this new position.

As you and I had an opportunity to discuss yesterday, there are some things that I am concerned about with the State Department.

It is a concern that has lasted 21 years since I first came to the Congress and the House of Representatives and has transcended various administrations and still does not seem to be getting it right. And that is the nature of diversity in the Foreign Service and in the overall presence in the State Department, of which—I am concerned about it all, but one of the worst elements of the State Department is the Hispanic workforce at State, which would have to grow exponentially in order to fairly reflect the Hispanic component of the overall U.S. population. Yet, this is a goal that has proven elusive even when the Department had the resources to conduct large-scale hiring programs.

For example, in fiscal year 2011, the State Department was one of only five Federal agencies that saw a decline by percentage in the number of Hispanic employees. And your immediate predecessor, Director General Greenfield, made a genuine effort to address this issue and worked with my office in making minority communities aware of opportunities at State and in the Foreign Service. This is something that I raise with Heather Higginbottom in her role in management.

And I think why we have not achieved in this goal is because it is my belief that State needs direct guidance from the top that this is a priority. If you do not establish from the top, from the Secretary to the Under Secretary, throughout this whole effort to say part of how you will be evaluated is whether or not you are working to diversify within your field the workforce of the State Department and the Foreign Service. Then it will not be carried out because unless people know that it is part of their overall review—this is an important equation—it will be maybe for another 20 years aspirational.

And this is not just about doing the right thing from my perspective, although it is. This is also about a powerful message across the world. When I was in China—we just had our nominee for the Ambassador to China—I was meeting with human rights activists and lawyers who are struggling to represent a nascent effort to create change for basic human rights inside of China with a bunch of lawyers and human rights activists and dissidents. And the member of our team from our Embassy who was leading this effort in this group, in terms of engaging them and having set up the meeting for many who did not come because they were threatened not to come by the state security, was an African American. And the powerful message that was being sent to these human rights activists and political dissidents as someone who expressed some of the history of the United States and the change for basic human rights and dignity of African Americans in this country and now representing the United States of America in a country in which they were going through similar challenges cannot be measured. So this is not just simply about doing the right thing. It is a powerful message, the same powerful message when you have been able to represent our country in different parts of the world.

And so what I want to hear from you is, one, a commitment to me about making this a priority as the Director General and, two, what is the plan. I do not expect you to give me the 10–15 point plan right now, but I do want to hear some—you must have given

this some thought. I do want to hear some outlines of what you envision having to happen in order to change these dynamics.

Do you believe you have a commitment from the Secretary to change this reality? Because I have been doing this for 20 years, trying to change the course of events in this particular regard, and I really consider it one of those things that I have not been very successful at. The difference is 20 years ago I was not the chairman.

Ambassador CHACON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me begin by saying you most definitely have my commitment, and we most definitely have the commitment from the Secretary. As a matter of fact, I met with the Secretary yesterday. We talked about this in preparation for my coming here, and he wanted me to reiterate yet again, as he has told me personally on a number of occasions, his commitment to diversity that extends to his entire top staff, including Deputy Secretary Higginbottom that will be leading a second review of our Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. And I want to say as a member of the Foreign Service, a proud member with over 30 years of experience there, I have seen the culture change. We can do a much better job clearly.

I personally am not satisfied but I am very impressed with the steady progress that we have made. And it is my team that will be working very hard because this is an important imperative and priority.

We are doing some novel things like a mobile app to be able to communicate with underrepresented populations to be able to demystify, if you will, what the Foreign Service is.

My personal case is somewhat emblematic. I come from Colorado, New Mexico, 350 years, never really did much international travel in my youth, did not know anything about the Foreign Service, happened to run into a recruiter on campus who talked about it. When I did volunteer work overseas in Latin America, I became engaged with talking to Foreign Service officers, felt instantly smitten with this. And it helped me prepare better and pursue this career.

And that is what I hope to do is to take this story outside the traditional stream and to go to areas where we have people that are genuinely interested in public service and that have major contributions to make.

We hope to launch this spring as well a Foreign Service exam online that gives immediate feedback to people that are taking it. It guides them in areas where they can improve their score. We have diplomats in residence at over 16 universities, many of those serving historic institutions that serve Hispanics or African Americans. And again, their mandate is to go out and to find these people, not just to do it by chance.

It is an exciting career. I know that we have people interested in second careers, accomplished people. I have observed some of the examination process. We have bankers and lawyers that want to start in public service, and I would like to tap into underrepresented groups and minority professional organizations to be able to tell this story and to bring in those talents.

So we have a lot of work to do, but I think it is exciting because we are all working as a team. The Secretary has some innovative programs in terms of outreach to veterans. I would like to look at public-private partnerships to sponsor more internships like our Rangel and Pickering fellowships because it is a process. It is getting access to this lifestyle and understanding it so that they can compete on a level playing field when they do take the exam.

The CHAIRMAN Well, I appreciate that answer. The one thing I might disagree with you on is progress. I guess progress is all relative. But certainly we have not had the type of progress over two decades that I think is commensurate with the growth in this country of a critical part of the population. So I will look forward to having a more in-depth opportunity to work with you.

I am going to tell you four points that I think are essential to any plan.

First of all, it starts with measurement, making sure that at the very top it is very clear that the process by which those who are going to be reviewed will have as one of the measurements what they have done to promote this diversity.

Secondly is if we continue to recruit at the traditional places that we recruit at, we are not going to get a diverse pool. So I can bring you to New Jersey and some great schools that are very diverse, but that recruiting does not take place there. And that is just by way of one example. Now, if we go to the Fletcher School of Diplomacy, which is a fantastic school, or ISIS or others, we are going to get some really talented people, but we are not going to necessarily get the most diverse pool. So we need to diversify where we send these recruiters.

Thirdly, we need to actually engage, if we really want to make this happen, to not only recruit those individuals but to lead them in some process that prepares them for the written exam and then the oral exam.

And then lastly, I continuously am concerned about an oral exam that is very subjective and in which some people have said you can communicate effectively orally and others cannot. Obviously, oral communication is incredibly important in this job, but with all due respect, I have had those appear before this committee and I have met others who evidently must have passed the oral exam, and I have known others who have been rejected who, from my point of view, are equally competent in their ability to orally express themselves. So we need a less subjective and more objective standard so that we actually get the cadre that we want.

So we will look forward to working with you on this. This is something that I am actually considering looking at something that we have not done in this committee for some time, which is a State Department authorization bill so that we can lay out this, among many other elements, of course—there are many important elements that we have not been able to do. And I think it is time for the committee to consider doing that. I know the challenges with it but I think it is important.

Finally, I would hope that as we deal—something that I have taken to heart since I became the chairman, something that began with the tragedy of Benghazi, something that the ARB has laid out a roadmap on, that we are looking at the staffing necessary in ful-

filling the human capital needs and language requirements and other critical elements to make sure that our embassies abroad, which are particularly in high-threat, high-risk positions, have the staff necessary to be able to meet those challenges. Is that something that you are committed to as we move forward here?

Ambassador CHACON. I certainly am, Senator, and we have taken those recommendations of the ARB to heart and have created 150 new security positions. We have created language proficiency programs for security personnel, in particular in Arabic. We are looking at using all of our hiring authorities to bring on immediately qualified personnel, for instance, that are retired or family members or other experts that can immediately begin contributing to this. It is our highest priority and one of my top goals, of course, is ensuring that we have the staff necessary for the 720 positions in the five priority staffing areas which include Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Libya. So, yes, you do have my commitment there. And we have gone a long way but we certainly can do a much better job.

The CHAIRMAN Mr. Smith, I do not want you to feel left out of the conversation. Let me ask you, can you describe for me how INR participates in the formulation of threat assessment against U.S. posts by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security? You know, one of the things that came out was looking at threats in a different way than we had where it was not just a question of immediate actionable intelligence where we had a specific threat, but an environment that could have created—from which a threat could arise from. Could you give me a little sense of how INR goes about that and how you will, as the Assistant Secretary, upon confirmation, look at that issue?

Ambassador SMITH. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

INR works closely with our colleagues in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, as well as in the regional bureaus and elsewhere in the Department, to ensure that they have access to the intelligence and information they need to make assessments about the security and safety of our personnel on the ground in a given position or a given place.

One of the things I want to do, if I am confirmed, Senator, is make sure that we are working as collaboratively as possible, that they have access, as I understand, to all the information they need, but also that INR is providing the broader intelligence assessment and analysis to put these things in a broader context. I think you are absolutely right that in many cases we need to see the bigger picture sometimes and to step back, and I think INR's contribution can be significant in that regard.

The CHAIRMAN Let me ask you, if you were to be confirmed, would you, in essence, become the Secretary's chief intelligence briefer?

Ambassador SMITH. I am the Secretary's representative to the Intelligence Community, and I will ensure that the Secretary has access to the information that he needs, but also that the Intelligence Community is focused on the priorities of the Secretary and the State Department.

The CHAIRMAN So that does not mean that you are necessarily the chief intelligence briefer. You would be his representative in

the Intelligence Community to try to rivet their attention on things the State Department cares about. But how does that play back to the Secretary? Any Secretary, this one or any other. How does that play back to the Secretary? In what role do you interface with the Secretary in that regard?

Ambassador SMITH. Well, I will, if confirmed, be attending the Secretary's senior staff meetings and other events in order to provide information but also to take back information to INR and to the Intelligence Community on the priorities and concerns of the Secretary on an ongoing basis. I think one of the strengths of INR as an institution is that proximity to the Secretary of State and to other policymakers in the State Department to provide an ongoing dialogue in order to anticipate their needs and to provide feedback to the Intelligence Community about priorities and objectives.

The CHAIRMAN To what extent does INR engage in personnel rotations with other agencies of the Intelligence Community and vice versa with them and INR?

Ambassador SMITH. INR is a small organization, as you know, Senator. We have about 200 analysts, about 360 positions in INR, but we, within those constraints of being a small organization, I think try our best to ensure that our analysts, our employees have opportunities within the Intelligence Community at large, whether it is serving and being detailed to other parts of the Intelligence Community, but also that they can take advantage of opportunities abroad. One of the things I think that enhances our value and certainly enhances the insights and experience of our analysts is to be able to serve abroad. We look for TDY assignments and other opportunities so that they can spend time abroad.

The CHAIRMAN I got your answer on how many people you have, and I recognize the size of it compared to the challenge.

Can you quantify it for me? Do you have an understanding of the component? Is it 10 percent or 5 percent or 2 percent that rotate into other intelligence agencies or other intelligence agencies that rotate into INR?

Ambassador SMITH. Well, I would say, on hand—I do not know the exact statistics, Senator, but I would say that we have a substantial number of detailees. I know, at any given time, perhaps as many as 5 to 10 percent of the Bureau are detailees from other Intelligence Community organizations and institutions. We try to, as I say, make available our staff and allow them to do rotations within the Intelligence Community as much as possible. I do not know at any given time how many it is. Last year we had, in terms of overseas assignments though I know, seven who were out, enabled to go out on TDY's of our employees.

The CHAIRMAN Would you, for the record, get us an answer as to what is the nature of the rotations? Because it seems to me that it would be valuable for all concerned by getting exposure to and experience, and the responsibilities, the tradecraft, and the organizational cultures of other agencies that would help your specific task within the Department be enriched. So if you could get us an answer on that, I would appreciate it.

Ambassador SMITH. I would be delighted, Mr. Chairman, but I give you my commitment as well, if confirmed, that is going to be one of my priorities, to ensure those opportunities.

The CHAIRMAN Well, thank you both for your appearance.

Seeing no other members, this record will remain open until noon tomorrow. If you have questions submitted to you for the record, I would urge you to respond to them expeditiously so that the chair can consider your nominations at the next business meeting.

And with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MAX BAUCUS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What do you view as the biggest challenges to the relationship? I am very concerned about Chinese actions and current trend lines on a range of security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. On Japan, China appears to be trying to use its differences with Japan as a wedge between the United States and an important ally and is increasingly aggressive in its rhetoric and behavior toward the Senkakus, including with its recent Air Defense Identification Zone declaration. What is our proper response? In the South China Sea, China appears to be continuing to drag its feet on the negotiation of a Code of Conduct, recently announced that it was going to enforce a whole host of fisheries regulations in the South China Sea, including in areas under dispute with other nations, and seems intent on trying to coerce the nations of the region—including the Philippines and Vietnam—to force a resolution of these issues in a way favorable to PRC interests. What role should the United States play on these issues? Given China's new assertiveness, is our carefully calibrated balance between "cooperation and competition" still the right approach? Should we be putting "a little more hair" on the competition side?

Answer. The U.S.-China relationship contains elements of both cooperation and competition. The United States should continue to make clear and promote our values, interests and principles, work with China to manage our differences, and seek to build a cooperative partnership across the range of bilateral, regional, and global issues that confront us today. If confirmed, I would speak clearly to Beijing regarding not only issues of shared interest, but also our differences, and faithfully represent the values we hold dear as Americans—including respect for international law and the freedom of navigation. I am clear-eyed about the growing U.S. and regional concerns regarding Chinese behavior with its neighbors over territorial and maritime matters.

China's announcement of an "East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)" caused deep concerns in the region. China announced the ADIZ without prior consultations, even though the newly announced ADIZ overlaps with longstanding Flight Information Regions (FIRs) and other ADIZs and includes airspace and territory administered by others. If confirmed, I would remind the Chinese that the United States does not recognize and does not accept the ADIZ, which we believe should not be implemented. I would make clear to China that it should refrain from taking similar actions elsewhere in the region. I would also encourage China to work with other countries, including Japan and the Republic of Korea, to address the dangers its recent declaration has created and to deescalate tensions.

In the South China Sea, the past 2 years have witnessed a troubling trend of provocative and unilateral activities, including Chinese restrictions toward long-held fishing practices at Scarborough Reef and its update of the Hainan provincial fishing regulations that purport to cover vast areas of the South China Sea. The United States has pressed China and ASEAN to rapidly agree on a meaningful Code of Conduct in the South China Sea to manage incidents when they arise, and I will continue to do so, if confirmed.

Question. What kind of dialogue do we currently have with the Chinese on cyber theft? What will you do as Ambassador to deepen this dialogue? What actions could we take if we discover state-directed theft of corporate or national secrets?

Answer. Cyber security is one of the administration's top priorities. Administration officials have repeatedly raised concerns about Chinese state-sponsored cyber-enabled theft of trade secrets and confidential business information at the highest levels with senior Chinese officials, including in the military, and will continue to do so. The United States engaged China on this and other key cyber-related issues

during the Strategic Security Dialogue (SSD)—including during the January 23 interim round of the SSD—and through the first two meetings of the U.S.-China Cyber Working Group (CWG), conducted in July and December 2013. The two sides have agreed to schedule the next meeting in the first half of 2014.

The United States and China are among the world's largest cyber actors, and it is vital that we continue a sustained, meaningful dialogue and work together to develop an understanding of acceptable behavior in cyber space. Through the CWG, the United States will continue to emphasize U.S. cyber policy objectives, including the applicability of international law to state behavior, the importance of norms of responsible state behavior, concerns about cyber activities that can lead to instability, the role of transparency in domestic civilian and military cyber policy, and the importance of practical cooperative measures to prevent crises in cyber space. If confirmed, I am committed to making the advancement of these issues a high priority.

Question. A 2013 American Chamber of Commerce China survey found that 72 percent of respondents said that China's IPR enforcement was either ineffective or totally ineffective. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimated that U.S. intellectual property-intensive firms that conducted business in China lost $48.2 billion in sales, royalties, and license fees in 2009 because of IPR violations there. In certain sectors, such as wind power, where American Superconductor has been severely harmed by IP theft by its Chinese "partner," Sinovel, the damage to U.S. businesses has been particularly acute. It also estimated that an effective IPR enforcement regime in China that was comparable to U.S. levels could increase employment by IP-intensive firms in the United States by 923,000 jobs.

- ♦ Where does intellectual property protection rank on your list of priorities as Ambassador?

Answer. I am very concerned by high levels of trade secrets theft and violations of intellectual property rights in China. If confirmed, I will advocate forcefully on behalf of U.S. rights holders for greater protection and enforcement of their intellectual property, trade secrets, and commercially sensitive information. I will seek to ensure that this critical issue is addressed at the highest levels between our two governments. U.S. companies derive tremendous value and competitive advantage from the billions of dollars they invest in research and development, and intellectual property is part of the bedrock of our economy. It is critical for American innovators to know their intellectual property and trade secrets are being protected.

If confirmed, I will also make it a top priority to work closely with U.S. rights holders, innovators, and entrepreneurs to make sure that they fully understand the risks and take appropriate measures to protect their intellectual property doing business with China. I will also work with other foreign governments to underscore the need for the Chinese Government to take stronger measures to protect intellectual property in China.

Question. It's not at all clear that the new Chinese leadership is as welcoming to foreign investment as its predecessors have been for over two decades. In your chairmanship of the Finance Committee and for many years here in the Senate, you've pushed for open markets and export opportunities for U.S. firms.

- ♦ Do we face a fundamental change in how the Chinese Government views the role of foreigner companies, and what can you, as Ambassador, do about that?

Answer. There is no doubt that two-way trade and investment have benefited both the United States and China enormously, and both countries expect that they will continue to contribute to economic growth and prosperity. China has committed itself to an ambitious set of reforms, including in the area of investment, but this reform process is in early stages. The United States needs to continue to use bilateral dialogues and other engagements to press for continued reform, including calling on China to further liberalize its market and to establish a level playing field for foreign companies relative to domestic companies.

In a positive development, China announced at the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) in July 2013 that it would negotiate a bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with the United States that, for the first time in China's treaty practice, will cover all phases of investment, including market access, and all sectors of the Chinese economy (except for any limited and transparent negotiated exceptions). The BIT will mark an important step in opening China's economy to U.S. investors and leveling the playing field for American businesses. China also committed at S&ED to open up further to foreign investment in services, including through the establishment of the Shanghai Free Trade Zone pilot.

If confirmed, I would seek to make further progress on a BIT while emphasizing the need for China to make simultaneous headway on market access and other pri-

ority issues in the short term, including through ongoing reform efforts such as in the Shanghai Free Trade Zone.

Question. What do you hope to accomplish during your tenure in Beijing? What do you see as the proper role of the Ambassador? How will you work to get real influence on U.S. policy?

Answer. Engaging in frank discussions while seeking to collaborate and narrow our differences with China is essential to having a healthy bilateral relationship. My primary job as Ambassador, if confirmed, will be to continue expanding cooperation where U.S.-China consensus and shared interests exist—such as on environmental issues—and to narrow our differences to promote common goals and interests, such as agreeing to a rules-based framework for our economic relationship that establishes a level playing field for healthy competition and innovation.

If confirmed, I would continue to work with China on important regional and global security issues, such as the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the importance of a nuclear-weapons-free Iran, and achieving a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Equally important, I would seek to advance important U.S. interests on more contentious concerns, such as human rights and maritime security issues.

Question. Is there a threat to the interests of the United States and our allies and friends from a militarily strong China that seems to be pushing others around as its military modernization proceeds and capabilities increase?

Answer. The United States seeks a healthy, stable, reliable, and continuous military-to-military relationship with China. If confirmed, I would support the continued development of military-to-military relations as a key component of the U.S.-China bilateral relationship. Deeper cooperation is necessary to further reduce mistrust and the risk of miscalculation between the U.S. and Chinese militaries. We urge China to resolve regional issues peacefully through dialogue. We oppose unilateral actions that raise tensions or could result in miscalculations that would undermine peace, security, and economic growth in this vital part of the world. The U.S.-China relationship is not zero-sum, and we continue to pursue greater cooperation and engagement on our common interests.

If confirmed, I would encourage China to exhibit greater transparency with respect to its capabilities and intentions and to use its military capabilities in a manner conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. I would reiterate that the United States has national interests in the Asia-Pacific region, including an interest in preserving the freedom of the seas and airspace.

Question. How do we get America's message (who we are, what our values are) across to the Chinese public in ways that transcend the filters the leadership has constructed to block us? Are there particular human rights issues that you intend to champion as Ambassador?

Answer. The best way for us to get America's message across to the Chinese public is through public diplomacy outreach programs and U.S.-China people-to-people exchanges. Fortunately, our Embassy and consulates in Mission China have a robust public diplomacy outreach strategy and one of their primary objectives is to strengthen engagement with the next generation of Chinese leaders. They achieve this objective through English-language training programs for teachers throughout China, partnerships with U.S. universities that are working with universities in China, as well as academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchanges. The U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange, an annual high-level dialogue, is a prime example of how the United States and China are working together to forge stronger ties between their peoples.

Mission China also has an extensive social media outreach program, utilizing local Chinese social media platforms, with over 4 million followers, throughout China. Mission China continues to look for innovative ways to reach our target audiences through social media and new technology.

One of the most effective ways for the Chinese public to understand who we are and what we value is to experience our culture firsthand as a student. According to the 2013 Open Doors Report, there are over 235,000 Chinese students in the United States. Through the EducationUSA program, Mission China is reaching out to students throughout China to provide timely and accurate information so students can find the best fit for their study abroad program. Also, through President Obama's 100,000 Strong Initiative, we focused on increasing the number of Americans studying in China. In fact, the U.S. Department of State funds more Americans to study in China than in any other country. Approximately 900 students, scholars, and teachers will conduct research, teach or study Chinese through Fulbright and our other exchange programs. The exchanges we sponsor bridge language barriers,

open lines of communication, and connect people in the United States and China in immediate and lasting ways.

Human rights are integral to U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I would use my position as the U.S. Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens, particularly the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, and religion, and would communicate our support for these principles directly to the Chinese people.

I would raise our human rights concerns with Chinese officials at the highest levels and would raise specific cases of Chinese citizens who are being persecuted for the peaceful expression of their political or religious views. I would also make clear to China that the United States considers China's upholding its international human rights commitments to be vital to our bilateral relationship. I strongly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights in China are in our national interest and should be an integral part of every high-level conversation we have with Chinese officials.

If confirmed, I would plan to continue outreach to Chinese citizens, including activists and public interest lawyers, as well as ethnic minorities and religious groups in China, and will urge the Chinese Government to cease restrictions on religious practice and to address the counterproductive policies in minority areas that have fostered grievances and have prevented long-term stability.

Question. April 10, 2014, will mark the 35th anniversary of the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), which was passed by the United States Congress and signed into law in 1979. This legislation provides an institutional framework and legal basis for our continued relations with Taiwan after the end of formal diplomatic ties. The 35th anniversary not only represents an important milestone in our longstanding relationship with Taiwan, it also consolidates the foundation on which our bilateral security, economic, and trade relations will continue to grow and flourish and reassures our commitment to maintain peace and stability in the region. In my view, the Taiwan Relations Act, just as much as our One China Policy or the Three Joint Communiques, forms the basis of our successful policy toward China and is critical to maintaining cross-strait stability.

♦ What is your view of the Taiwan Relations Act?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to underscore the commitment to the U.S. one-China policy based on the three Joint Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). The TRA has provided the basis for Taiwan's unofficial but stable, friendly, and robust relations with the United States since 1979, allowing Taiwan to be an important economic and security partner in the Asia-Pacific region. The TRA allows the United States to continue to provide Taiwan with the means to develop a sufficient self-defense capability, which contributes to stability in the region and gives Taiwan confidence to engage China. Maintenance of cross-strait stability is essential to promoting peace and prosperity in the entire Asia-Pacific region.

If confirmed, I will encourage continued constructive cross-strait dialogue, which has led to significant improvements in the cross-strait relationship, at a pace acceptable to people on both sides.

Question. How do you assess China's cooperation with the United States on Iran, including sanctions enforcement?

Answer. China is an important partner in the P5+1 process and in the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action. The United States and China share the goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I would work to ensure there is continued and close cooperation between our two countries. As Ambassador, I would work with China to ensure we continue to address the international community's concerns about Iran's nuclear program in the P5+1 and press China to prevent proliferation-related transfers to Iran. If confirmed, I would work with China as we pursue a long-term comprehensive settlement with Iran. I would urge China to keep Iranian oil imports flat, instruct Chinese companies to refrain from sanctionable transactions with Iran, and boost its efforts to prevent illicit transfers of proliferation-sensitive technology to Iran.

Question. How can we get China to work more closely with responsible members of the international community on North Korea? Is there a future for the six-party talks?

Answer. The United States remains open to authentic and credible negotiations to implement the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and to bring North Korea into compliance with applicable Security Council resolutions through irreversible steps leading to denuclearization. The United States shares

with China a common goal of achieving a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, which is essential to both regional stability and broader international security. China is a vital partner with a unique role to play due to its longstanding economic, diplomatic, and historical ties with North Korea. The administration continues to work with all U.N. member states, including China, to ensure the full and transparent implementation of UNSC sanctions.

As Ambassador, if confirmed, I would urge China to use its influence to convince North Korea that it has no choice but to denuclearize. The United States and China need to continue to work together to hold the DPRK to its commitments and its international obligations, including those to abandon its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. One important way to do this continues to be robust PRC implementation of U.N. Security Council sanctions and other measures.

If confirmed, I would continue to encourage Beijing to ensure the full and transparent implementation of U.N. Security Council sanctions targeting North Korea's nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related, or other weapons of mass destruction-related programs.

Question. The Chinese Government is demonstrating increasing determination and sophistication at using the law as a means to compel citizens to either support government policies on an ever wider range of issues, or to remain silent (and compliant). This trend is accelerating and is especially noticeable across the terrain of fundamental human rights. We routinely hear Chinese Government officials dismiss foreign accusations that they disregard the freedoms of speech, association, assembly, and religion by asserting that government actions are "according to the law."

- As Ambassador to China, how will you work to champion the function of law to protect citizens' freedoms, instead of protecting the government's ability to suppress those rights?

Answer. Human rights are integral to U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I would use my position as the U.S. Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens and would communicate our support for these principles directly to the Chinese people. Promoting respect for universal human rights and the rule of law is integral to U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I would urge China's leaders to undertake key legal reforms and respect the rule of law and underscore the importance of an independent judiciary, a robust civil society and the free flow of information to China's prosperity and stability. I would also strongly support the annual U.S.-China Legal Experts Dialogue, which provides an important channel to discuss our concerns about the rule of law and specifically the role of lawyers in Chinese society by bringing together judges, legal scholars, lawyers and prosecutors to discuss key legal issues.

If confirmed, I would continue outreach to ethnic minorities and religious groups, including members of house churches, in China. I would also continue outreach to legal scholars and universities to emphasize the importance of rule of law and an independent judiciary. Such outreach would be conducted in a way that is effective and promotes our values.

If confirmed, I would raise our human rights concerns with Chinese officials at the highest levels and would raise specific cases of Chinese citizens who are being persecuted for the peaceful expression of their political views or religious beliefs. I would also make clear to China that the United States considers China's upholding its international human rights commitments to be vital to our bilateral relationship. I strongly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights in China are in our national interest and should be an integral part of every high-level conversation we have with Chinese officials.

Question. How should the United States respond to Chinese security officials' recent detention of Uyghur scholar, Ilham Tohti, who has given a voice to Uyghurs' concerns over inequality and discrimination and who has sought to foster understanding between Uyghurs and China's dominant Han population?

Answer. If confirmed, I would urge China's leaders to immediately release Uighur scholar, Ilham Tohti, remove all restrictions on his freedom of movement, and guarantee him the protections and freedoms to which he is entitled under China's international human rights commitments. I would ensure that our Embassy continues to be in close communication with Tohti's family members and supporters. I would also work closely with other embassies in China to ensure that China hears a consistent message from the international community on his case.

I am deeply concerned by ongoing reports of discrimination against and restrictions on Uighurs and other Muslims and, if confirmed, would urge the Chinese Government to cease restrictions on religious practice. I would also press Chinese

officials to address the counterproductive policies in Xinjiang that have fostered grievances and have prevented long-term stability.

Question. Human rights is often considered a separate issue from our trading relationship with China. But in many ways, they are interconnected. For example, a free press and vibrant civil society are essential to holding the Chinese Government accountable on issues such as food and product safety, and the right to organize independent unions is key to ensuring workers in China are not exploited at the expense of American workers.

- How will you ensure that human rights concerns are integrated with our trade and economic discussions with China?

Answer. Promotion and protection of human and labor rights in China are in our national interest in all facets of the bilateral relationship, including our trade, economic, and development interests with China. If confirmed, I would use my position as the U.S. Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens, including the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. I would make the case to China that the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and a robust civil society will help China address challenges such as food safety and food and nutrition security, while enabling it to continue its economic growth and maintain stability. I believe that the free flow of ideas, on all topics, is essential for fostering creativity and building the kind of innovative economy that will help China continue to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living.

I would raise our human rights concerns with Chinese officials at the highest levels and make clear that the United States considers China upholding its international human rights commitments vital to our bilateral relationship. I strongly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights in China are in our national interest and should be an integral part of high-level conversation with Chinese officials.

If confirmed, I would engage regularly with companies in both countries, as well as with labor and civil society organizations, to promote responsible business conduct and to focus on sustainable development. Companies can further our efforts by encouraging broad respect for human and labor rights and leading efforts to improve transparency, while reducing their own reputational risk, leveling the playing field, and improving the overall business environment.

RESPONSES OF ARNOLD CHACON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The Department has increased personnel significantly within the last decade. Today, more than 50 percent of the Foreign Service joined within the last 10 years. What does this mean for career paths, promotion numbers, and workforce development? Please describe the Department's workforce planning and efforts to create career paths for these new employees.

Answer. The Department is committed to an orderly, predictable flow of talent through the Foreign Service ranks. In our up-or-out system, promotion opportunities depend on the number of employees who separate (e.g., retire or resign) as well as the overall number of positions at each grade. Under the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative and Diplomacy 3.0, the Department hired a large number of entry-level officers (ELOs), helping to narrow a previous deficit in Foreign Service employees. As more and more of these employees move into the mid-levels, we have undertaken efforts to increase mid-level positions, in line with our mission requirements, which should alleviate some of the projected slowdown in promotion rates and increase in time in class for this cohort. Moreover, to meet mid-level staffing and assignment gaps, many of those employees progressed in grade at faster than historic rates. While we expect to now be able to return to earlier rates, we are acutely cognizant that building experience and managing expectations for our recently hired employees is a priority. We are also concerned that with the current less than attrition hiring, our flow-through will once again be disrupted, likely recreating the staffing gaps that DRI and Diplomacy 3.0 were meant to close and impacting our new staff as well as we strive to defend U.S. interests abroad.

The Department takes an active interest in the development of its most important resource, its people. Since 2005, the Department has used Career Development Plans (CDPs) for Foreign Service Generalists and, more recently, Specialists, as a tool for mapping career development and developing skills needed at the senior ranks. The CDP builds on four principles to meet the Department's mission: operational effectiveness, including breadth of experience over several regions and func-

tions; leadership and management effectiveness; sustained professional language and technical proficiency; and responsiveness to Service needs. Mandatory requirements and a menu of electives help guide employees in developing the skills and experience to demonstrate their readiness for the senior ranks.

The CDP also reinforces the importance of excellence in foreign languages, fundamental to the work of the Foreign Service. Professional foreign language use is also highly valued in considerations for promotion, across all grades and skills. Long-term language training does generally slow promotion while the student is enrolled, but makes promotion more likely later on. Every 3 years, the Department updates the criteria for assigning a language designation to a position. The next triennial review should be completed by July 2014. The number of overseas language-designated positions (LDPs) grows every year; for FY 2013, it was 2,241.

The Department is committed to developing the wider skills for today's diplomacy. In addition to tradecraft skills, we are also focused on the leadership and management skills critical to the Department, both internally and in an increasingly interagency overseas environment. In recent years, for example, we instituted mandatory leadership training as a prerequisite for promotion at each rank and, in 2014, we expect to launch a new program of mandatory supervisory training for all new supervisors.

Question. In the 21st-century it is critical that America has a professional, innovative, and diverse workforce. I understand that the Department has established recruitment programs targeting individuals with in-demand language skills, but once hired they may be prevented from serving in those countries due to assignment restrictions and preclusions. Please describe efforts currently underway to improve the Department's assignment restriction and preclusion program—which may be disparately impacting certain ethnicities—including the introduction of a robust appeals mechanism and increased internal reporting and oversight.

Answer. The Department of State hires all Foreign Service officers and Specialists to be worldwide available, and we have worked diligently to maintain a diverse workforce. One way to reduce the risk of possible exploitation by a foreign intelligence service is to restrict an individual from assignment in that specific country. This is by no means punitive, but rather it serves to protect both the national security and the individual. If confirmed, I will work with the Assistant Secretary of Diplomatic Security to bring a common sense review of restrictions, and provide an outreach initiative so all personnel understand the rationale for these crucial security decisions.

Question. The Hispanic workforce at State will have to grow exponentially in order to fairly reflect the Hispanic component of the overall U.S. population, yet this goal has proven elusive—even when the Department has had the resources to conduct large-scale hiring programs.

- ♦ If confirmed will you make minority recruitment and retention a top priority? What is your plan? How will you make the Department's staff reflective of our rich cultural and ethnic diversity?
- ♦ If confirmed will you put together a high-level team to develop a specific proposal and plan—in consultation with this committee—to improve minority retention, recruitment and hiring?

Answer. In order to represent the United States to the world, the Department of State must have a workforce that reflects the rich composition of its citizenry. We recognize that we can, and must do, more to improve minority hiring. If confirmed, you have my personal commitment to redouble the Department's efforts to ensure that we represent the full cross-section of America. I look forward to working with you, as well as other members of the committee and community leaders, to do so.

At the same time, I would like to point out the efforts already underway in this area, and what has thus far been accomplished. The culture of the Department has changed dramatically in the past few decades; when Congress passed the Foreign Service Act of 1980, more than 80 percent of FS generalists and specialists were male, and close to 75 percent were white males. Now females constitute 35 percent and minorities over 22 percent. To echo the testimony of Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom, diversity is now a central Department commitment, and the Secretary has told me personally that he considers it a high priority. In the past 11 years, FS generalist minority hiring increased from 12.3 percent in 2002 to 28.7 percent in 2013. Furthermore, minority hires for FS generalists are up from last year: Hispanic, from 8.5 percent to 11 percent; Asian-American, from 8 percent to 11 percent; and African-American from 6 percent to over 10 percent. This represents important if insufficient progress as we continue

to strive to ensure the face of the FS and Civil Service (CS) includes people of all cultures, races, and religions, drawn from across the United States.

The Bureau of Human Resources (HR) promotes diversity through a wide-range of plans, programs, and initiatives through its Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (DISP). Beginning its third year of implementation, the DISP identifies practices to recruit, hire, train, develop, promote, and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce. Significant recruitment, outreach, and improvement activities include:

- Assigned 16 senior and mid-level Foreign Service officers as Diplomats in Residences (DIRs) to college campuses around the United States to recruit for student programs and careers. Of which:
  - Four went to Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs, University of New Mexico, Florida International University, University of Houston and City College of New York);
  - Three assigned to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs, Howard, Spellman/Morehouse and Florida A&M).
- Dedicated a second Washington-based recruiter to Hispanic outreach and another (also a second) recruiter to African-American recruitment;
- Hosted or attended nearly 700 events, coast to coast, and beyond, including Puerto Rico and Hawaii;
- Targeted minority communities through Diversity Career Networking Events aimed at reaching professional communities in regions where the Department is less well-known;
- Signed an MOU with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to access the Veterans' Resume Database, searchable pool of veteran candidates for civil service direct hire using special hiring authorities;
  - Resulted in seven requests for veteran referrals where four veterans received offer letters.
- Increased hiring of persons with disabilities through the Disability and Reasonable Accommodations Division, which aids in the recruitment, assignment, and support of applicants and employees with disabilities;
  - Provides over 4,500 reasonable accommodations annually, with the majority for sign language interpretation services for one overseas and 20 domestic employees;
  - Operates a Computer Accommodations and Technology Center, where employees requiring reasonable accommodation may be assessed for technological solutions.
- Launched DOSCareers iPhone mobile app to reach underrepresented groups and educate them about careers in the Foreign Service (FS) and practice taking the FS exam;
- Enhanced the "I am Diplomacy, I am America" diversity recruitment campaign so that future prospects may envision themselves as potential representatives of the Department;
- Evaluated the overall program effectiveness for two of the largest premier diversity scholarship programs, the Thomas R. Pickering and Charles B. Rangel Fellowship student programs, where approximately 60 graduate and undergraduate fellows are selected to participate in each year. There have been 612 Pickering Fellows and 163 Rangel Fellows since the programs began. Of this number, 387 Pickering Fellows and 114 Rangel Fellows—totaling 501 Fellows—are currently in the Foreign Service. A number of them have risen to significant positions, such as Deputy Chiefs of Mission, while others have received prestigious awards and/or public recognition for their outstanding service.

As a result of these efforts, we have realized steady gains in diversity, although we agree that we still must do more to reach our goals.

We are also working to improve diversity among the Senior Executive Staff (SES) of the Civil Service through a number of measures planned for 2014, including:

- On-board a new Diversity Program Manager to promote the development and implementation of diversity and inclusion in the SES and senior leadership equivalent talent pools across the Department;
- Analyze a GS–14/15 SES Interest survey that we conducted to help develop diverse SES talent for future leaders;
- Revise SES Merit Staffing processes to ensure diversity among SES Qualification Review Panel members and mandatory interviews for all SES candidates referred;
- Invite key diversity offices and affinity workgroups to share ideas about improvements to our existing DISP metrics, measures, and strategies;

- Focus efforts on activities to strengthen workplace inclusion and sustainability goals and simultaneously update the existing plan metrics, measures, and strategies.

It is worth noting that factors beyond agency control, including potential decrease in Federal spending due to sequestration, limited/delayed hiring, reduced travel/awards/pay freezes, are all circumstances that could potentially hinder or weaken our ability to meet our diversity goals.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to achieve our mutual goal of enhanced diversity in the Department's ranks. We would like to invite you to accompany me or one of our recruiters at an event in your state.

RESPONSES OF MAX BAUCUS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. Our relationship with China is one of the most complex and increasingly significant bilateral relationships globally. How do you propose to navigate the complexities of the bilateral relationship, including balancing our mutual desire to expand economic opportunities for our respective commercial interests, while simultaneously making clear our expectations that Beijing adhere to international norms, including in the maritime domain?

Answer. The U.S.-China relationship contains elements of both cooperation and competition. The United States should continue to make clear and promote our values, interests and principles, work with China to manage our differences, and seek to build a cooperative partnership across the range of bilateral, regional, and global issues that confront us today. If confirmed, I would speak clearly to Beijing regarding not only issues of shared interest, but also our differences, and faithfully represent the values we hold dear as Americans—respect for the rule of law, the promotion of universal values and human rights, guaranteeing a level playing field for healthy economic competition, ensuring the free flow of information, and respect for international law, including freedom of navigation.

Question. Beijing has been critical of the administration's rebalancing or "pivot" to Asia, accusing the United States of pursuing a policy to contain China.

♦ (a) How do you intend to explain the administration's Asia-Pacific "pivot" to the Chinese public?

Answer. If confirmed, I would make clear that the rebalance is a multifaceted approach that recognizes the importance of the entire Asia-Pacific region to America's long-term prosperity and security. A key element of the rebalance is our pursuit of a positive, comprehensive, and cooperative relationship with China; the rebalance is not a strategy to contain China.

If confirmed, I would use the public diplomacy tools at my disposal, including use of social media and public events, to communicate to the Chinese public that the United States welcomes the rise of a stable and prosperous China that assumes the responsibilities of a great power, respects the rights of its people, and plays a key role in world affairs. By pursuing a robust program of bilateral dialogue and exchange, I would, if confirmed, work to advance cooperation in areas of common interest to demonstrate that the United States has a stake in China's success, just as China has a stake in ours.

♦ (b) What areas do you see as having the most potential for improvement in our relationship with China, and how do you personally plan to approach them? What are your top priorities for your time in China?

Answer. Engaging in frank discussions while seeking to collaborate and narrow our differences with China is essential to having a healthy bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I would work to continue expanding cooperation where U.S.-China consensus and shared interests exist—such as on environmental issues—and to narrow our differences to promote common goals and interests, such as agreeing to a rules-based framework for our economic relationship that establishes a level playing field for healthy competition and innovation.

If confirmed, I would continue to work with China on important regional and global security issues, such as the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the importance of a nuclear weapons-free Iran, and a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Equally important, I would seek to advance important U.S. interests on more contentious concerns, such as human rights and maritime issues.

♦ (c) What, if any, opportunities exist for the United States and China to work together to address North Korea's destabilizing behavior? As Ambassador, how

will you persuade China to assert greater economic and political pressure on the North Korean regime to abandon its nuclear weapons programs?

Answer. The United States and China share a common goal of achieving a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, which is essential to both regional stability and international security. China is a vital partner with a unique role to play due to its long-standing economic, diplomatic, and historical ties with North Korea. The administration continues to work with all U.N. member states, including China, to ensure the full and transparent implementation of UNSC sanctions.

As Ambassador, if confirmed, I would urge China to use its influence to convince North Korea that it has no choice but to denuclearize. The United States and China need to continue to work together to hold the DPRK to its commitments and its international obligations, including those to abandon its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. One important way to do this continues to be robust PRC implementation of U.N. Security Council sanctions and other measures.

If confirmed, I would continue to encourage Beijing to ensure the full and transparent implementation of U.N. Security Council sanctions targeting North Korea's nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related, or other weapons of mass destruction-related programs.

Question. Since the political transition last year, Beijing has engaged in a widespread crackdown on dissent and introduced a series of new controls on the media, undermining China's international human rights commitments. Several peaceful dissidents have been arrested and imprisoned, including a 4-year prison sentence handed down this past Sunday for Xu Zhiyong for organizing a series of protests against corruption last year in Beijing.

♦ As Ambassador, how will you promote U.S. core human rights values and interests in our bilateral relationship with China? Do we need to reevaluate our approach to the U.S.-China human rights dialogue?

Answer. If confirmed, I would use my position as the U.S. Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Chinese citizens and raise specific cases of concern, including that of legal scholar Xu Zhiyong and other individuals associated with the New Citizens Movement that have been detained, harassed and prosecuted by Chinese authorities. I strongly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights in China are in our national interest and, as such, should be an integral part of every high-level conversation we have with Chinese officials. I would continue the Embassy's strong record of meeting regularly with a wide range of human rights activists and their family members to gain a better understanding of their concerns and to express our support for respect for human rights in China.

I would also continue to work closely with other embassies in China in order to ensure that China hears a consistent message from the international community on human rights.

The promotion and protection of human rights are critical components of U.S. foreign policy, and the U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue (HRD) is an important part of the United States overall human rights effort regarding China. The HRD presents an opportunity to engage Chinese officials in an extended, in-depth discussion of key human rights concerns and individual cases. It is not, however, a substitute for consistent high-level engagement from across the U.S. Government. I strongly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights in China are in our national interest and, as such, should be an integral part of every high-level conversation we have with Chinese officials. The rule of law, an independent judiciary, a robust civil society, the free flow of information and respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms are key to China's ability to deal with domestic and global challenges and improve its standing as a reliable international partner.

Question. Foreign journalists working in China have come under increased scrutiny and pressure. China has withheld visas and threatened local staff working with foreign journalists to deter publication of stories critical of Chinese policies or officials. In addition, China has blocked the Web sites of several U.S.-owned publications.

♦ How should the United States address China's media censorship and discriminatory practices?

Answer. I am deeply concerned that foreign journalists in China continue to face restrictions that impede their ability to do their jobs, including extended delays in processing journalist visas, restrictions on travel to certain locations deemed "sensitive" by Chinese authorities and, in some cases, violence at the hands of local authorities. These restrictions and treatment are not consistent with freedom of the

press—and stand in stark contrast with U.S. treatment of Chinese and other foreign journalists.

I was disappointed that New York Times reporter, Austin Ramzy, was required to leave China because of processing delays for his press credentials. Mr. Ramzy and several other U.S. journalists have waited months, and in some cases years, for a decision on their press credentials and visa applications.

If confirmed, I would urge China to commit to timely visa and credentialing decisions for foreign journalists, unblock international media Web sites, and eliminate other restrictions that impede the ability of journalists to practice their profession. I firmly believe that our two countries should be expanding media exchanges to enhance mutual understanding and trust, not restricting the ability of journalists to do their work.

Question. As you know, the United States and China are currently negotiating a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). A BIT with China would greatly benefit a broad segment of U.S. exporters currently subject to a number of ownership restrictions in China. With an ambitious treaty, we could eliminate many of these restrictions and help U.S. companies to compete fairly with Chinese companies. Both U.S. and Chinese Government officials have publicly expressed strong support for a BIT.

The BIT negotiations could represent an important opportunity, as many observers believe President Xi views the BIT as a mechanism to push through important domestic economic reforms that were rolled out at last year's Third Plenum. This could be one of the more significant developments in the bilateral economic relationship since China's accession to the WTO in 2002.

- ♦ Will you make completing a BIT with China a high priority during your tenure as Ambassador to China?
- ♦ As U.S. Ambassador to China, would you commit to pursuing a high-standard Bilateral Investment Treaty with China, ensure that there are no restrictions in businesses data flows, and bring down the competitive barriers for our companies so they can compete fairly with state-owned enterprises?

Answer. A high-standard U.S.-China Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) would play a significant role in addressing key concerns of U.S. and other foreign investors, including the need to level the playing field and ensure that U.S. companies do not suffer from unfair disadvantages. The United States is taking an ambitious approach in the BIT negotiations with China, and one of our top priorities is to seek disciplines to help level the playing field between American companies and their Chinese competitors, including state-owned enterprises and national champions. The United States is also seeking to address other top-priority concerns in the China market, including protecting trade secrets from forced transfer and enhancing transparency and the rule of law. Negotiations are at an early stage, and I know the U.S. Government will continue to address these important issues as negotiations proceed. If confirmed, I am committed to making the advancement of these negotiations a high priority.

Question. The Chinese Government in 2013 committed to resume bilateral investment treaty negotiations with the United States using the U.S. approach to BITs—one based on preestablishment, using a negative list. This is a significant change in approach, which China has not used before in this type of negotiation.

As you know, the BIT will ultimately be considered by the Senate under our advise and consent process. We will be looking for a strong agreement with significant market openings for American companies. As part of our process, though, we will also evaluate China's actions to implement such openings in the immediate term rather than waiting for the BIT to be implemented. A delay in taking good faith steps to implement changes could be interpreted by some as a lack of commitment by China to making the changes that the BIT will require.

- ♦ What are your plans to advance the BIT negotiations and push China's Government to act on market openings now rather than only after implementation of the BIT has begun?
- ♦ And will you work to ensure that this committee, which must approve all treaties negotiated by the United States, is fully consulted and apprised on your progress on this important issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I would seek to make further progress on a BIT while emphasizing the need for China to make simultaneous headway on market access and other priority issues in the near term. The administration looks forward to consulting with this committee and other key congressional committees as negotiations continue.

Question. China has stated its intention of becoming an innovative economy by 2020. This policy is being aggressively pursued by high-level political commitments, substantial financial support and strategic policies. China's Government is using a variety of policy tools to implement these policies to reduce a perceived dependence on foreign intellectual property and to protect and promote national champions. I am concerned these policies will have a negative effect on U.S. companies and U.S. competitiveness.

- ♦ If confirmed, what are your plans to combat these market access barriers that are adversely affecting U.S. companies?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue our high-level engagement to press the case that discriminatory and retaliatory practices and regulations are unacceptable and harm not only U.S. companies but also China's own competitiveness and development goals. The U.S. economy is one of the most open in the world, and I would encourage China to recognize our openness as one of our key strengths. U.S. companies introduce international best practices and high-quality goods and services into the global market, and it is in China's interest to allow our firms to participate on a level playing field, with appropriate protections for intellectual property, in China's growing domestic market. Chinese companies are also beginning to devote significant resources to develop new products and technologies, and many of these companies have their own growing concerns about others in China illegally copying their ideas and technology. It is important that a technologically advancing China realize that robust IP protection and enforcement are critical for innovation.

In addition to pushing China both bilaterally and multilaterally to increase its regulatory transparency and to adhere to international economic rules-based norms and standards, if confirmed, I also intend to engage the U.S. business community in China and advocate on behalf of U.S. firms, workers, farmers, and ranchers so that unacceptable trade, investment, and market access barriers do not stand in the way of their participation in the Chinese market.

Question. The Chinese Government's newly announced indigenous innovation policies are particularly concerning. They appear designed to provide a clear advantage to Chinese domestic champions and create an unbalanced playing field for foreign companies in China.

- ♦ If confirmed, will addressing China's indigenous innovation and strategic emerging industries policies be a priority for you? How will you plan to tackle these competitiveness challenges facing U.S. companies?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to ensure U.S. companies can compete on a level playing field in China by addressing China's indigenous innovation and strategic emerging industries policies as well as other market barriers for U.S. companies.

If confirmed, I will advocate forcefully on behalf of U.S. companies by leveraging our high-level engagements with China on how to align its policies on innovation, including standards and technology transfer, with global best practices. The U.S.-China Innovation Dialogue, which the administration established in 2010 immediately after China launched discriminatory "indigenous innovation" policies, has been an important mechanism for raising innovation concerns with the Chinese.

If confirmed, I will continue U.S. Government engagement through the Innovation Dialogue, through other bilateral and multilateral channels, including bilateral investment treaty negotiations, and through the efforts of our mission in China, which has worked closely as an interagency team to press China to make tangible progress eliminating the discriminatory aspects of its indigenous innovation policies.

RESPONSES OF ARNOLD CHACON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. Please explain what concrete steps you intend to take, as Director General of the Foreign Service, to ensure that language training is expanded to a greater pool of Foreign Service officers and other embassy personnel, and to change or recalibrate the Foreign Service Institute's overall approaches to language training?

Answer. Foreign language proficiency is a hallmark of the professional Foreign Service employee. It enhances an employee's ability to improve the U.S. national image abroad, advocate foreign policy objectives, and engage foreign audiences in discourse on a broad range of subjects. For this reason, foreign language proficiency is integrated into the Foreign Service Career Development Program as a requirement for tenure and entry into the Senior Foreign Service. A multibureau Language

Policy Working Group is dedicated to ensuring that the Department's employees have the language skills to meet our policy needs.

In accordance with the Department's strategic plan for foreign language capabilities, the Department conducts a review of all language designated positions every 3 years to align language proficiency designations with foreign policy goals. The Language Policy Working Group is overseeing the triennial review that began in November 2013 and will be completed by midsummer 2014. The group recently revamped Language Incentive Programs to encourage officers to use and improve their skills in critically needed languages and is overhauling the Department's language training strategy and updating training delivery methods. We are regularly increasing the number of Language Designated Positions (LDPs) at our posts; as of January 2014, there were 4,498 LDPs total worldwide. Among officers assigned to LDP positions in FY 2013, 80 percent fully met, and 13 percent partially met, the designated language proficiency requirement.

The Department created Career Development Plans (CDPs) for Foreign Service members to map their long-term professional growth and acquire the skills the Department needs at the senior ranks. The CDPs reinforce the importance of foreign language proficiency for all Foreign Service members and require that generalists seeking promotion into the Senior Foreign Service have current foreign language skills.

The Foreign Service Institute's model for foreign language instruction emphasizes communicative skills, with professional tradecraft training that prepares Foreign Service personnel to perform on the job. FSI also invests significantly in language learning technology, in professional development of instructional staff, and providing resources for continuous learning after formal training. If confirmed, I will make it my priority to work closely with FSI to ensure that all FSOs receive the language training that they need to do the best job possible.

Question. Will you seek to change the Foreign Service application criteria to permit applicants with preexisting language skills to receive an admissions edge?

Answer. The Department has for years used the tool of additional points for a candidate's score on the Register of eligible candidates for demonstrated language skills. Candidates who have a verified level of fluency in any one of the 69 languages used in the Foreign Service receive extra consideration in the hiring process. Those who have competency in the eight priority languages, (Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, Dari, Farsi, Pashto, Urdu, and Korean) receive additional consideration. Responding to the Accountability Review Board's suggestions after the Benghazi attack, the Department instituted lump-sum hiring bonuses of 10–20 percent of base salary for Foreign Service specialists with proficiency in Arabic.

Recruitment of candidates with language skills is an integral part of our outreach. We use paid and unpaid advertising on educational, recruitment, and social media sites to target U.S. citizen speakers of priority languages. Our 10 DC-based recruiters and 16 Diplomats-in-Residence at universities around the country reach out to potential candidates with proficiency in priority languages. Under the Department's Recruitment Language Program (RLP), applicants who receive additional consideration for speaking one of the eight priority languages agree to a one- or two-tour commitment, depending on the level of fluency and consideration received in the hiring process, to serve in a position requiring those skills. These priority languages are reviewed periodically depending on strategic policy goals.

Question. Please explain specific steps you intend to take, as Director General of the Foreign Service, to reduce the attrition rate of the Foreign Service.

Answer. The Department has one of the lowest attrition rates in government and Foreign Service attrition has remained fairly stable over the years with no significant spikes. While attrition numbers may have gone up due to hiring increases over the past 10 years, the relative percentage has actually declined in recent years (generalist rates remain under 4 percent), which keeps FS attrition stable. We have seen no difference between the "Diplomacy 3.0" and Diplomatic Readiness Initiative cohorts' attrition rate and our historical averages.

We are nevertheless cognizant of the need to maintain a reasonable and stable attrition rate, while at the same time ensuring we do not lose good talent prematurely. With that in mind, if confirmed I will work to ensure that the Human Resource Bureau continues to:

- Evaluate employee viewpoint surveys, and other surveys, to gauge and address employee concerns. (Note: In the 2013 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, the Department of State ranked fourth overall among the 19 large federal agencies, and is only federal agency to remain in the top 10 since 2005.)

- Administer the FS promotion and compensation systems transparently and fairly.
- Improve communication with employees to enhance understanding of mission needs, necessary policy changes, and new requirements as well as manage expectations.
- Improve HR services to employees through automation of HR systems and a fully implemented tiered services delivery system.

RESPONSES OF DANIEL BENNETT SMITH TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. The recently released, bipartisan SSCI Benghazi report found it "unsettling" that INR failed to disseminate any independent analysis regarding the Benghazi attacks a full year after the incident. INR officials, during interviews, stated that unless INR has something unique to add, they merely repeat what the rest of the intelligence community has to say about it. However, INR should always have something unique to add, especially when it involves the Department, as the Bureau has access to Department information and perspectives that the rest of the IC does not have.

- ♦ Do you agree with the SSCI finding that the lack of independent analysis from INR is unsettling?
- ♦ What will you do to ensure INR is not irrelevant in times of crisis such as the aftermath of the Benghazi attacks?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure not only that we are providing real time access to the intelligence information and analysis that our colleagues in Diplomatic Security and elsewhere need to do their jobs, but that we are also providing the broader perspective on overall trends and developments that only INR can provide.

In the aftermath of the tragic events in Benghazi that resulted in the deaths of four of our colleagues, there were a number of efforts made to look back at what happened and draw lessons learned. The primary focus in this regard was the work of the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board, in addition to the law enforcement-focused analysis and investigation of the attacks led by the FBI. While it would not have been appropriate for INR to duplicate these efforts or conduct a separate investigation looking back at the attack itself, I understand that INR played a critical role through its coordination of and contribution to a number of intelligence community products in the aftermath of the Benghazi attacks that sought to shed light on developments on the ground and the ongoing political and security environment. INR actively coordinated with Diplomatic Security, State Department Principals, and the IC not only to ensure that State Department perspectives were accurately portrayed in vital intelligence products, but also that the flow of intelligence to State Department policymakers, security professionals, and others remained smooth and effective.

I agree that INR provides a unique perspective and that we need to ensure our voice is heard. In particular, INR's analysis of the broader political and economic context in which our missions operate can help inform the more operational focus of our colleagues in the Bureaus of Diplomatic Security and Counterterrorism, and elsewhere in the State Department, on immediate and near-term threats to our missions and personnel. We ensure this perspective is reflected through our coordination of intelligence community products, the publication of independent INR written products, and frequent oral briefings and consultations with Department policymakers and interagency partners.

- ♦ Are you committed to ensure the SSCI recommendations are carried out—to (1) have an independent audit of how quickly and effectively INR shares intelligence within the Department and (2) have DNI and State carry out a joint review of INR in order to make the Bureau more timely and responsive to world events?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to engage early with DNI Clapper and INR's State Department customers—including those responsible for security—to review how we are sharing intelligence and intelligence products, the timeliness and responsiveness of INR products to world events, and what improvements we might make. I understand that INR already conducts yearly customer surveys based on rigorous polling methodology to determine the timeliness, quality, and relevance of its analytical products and intelligence support, including the flow of intelligence originating elsewhere in the intelligence community. I intend to build on these efforts. In 2013, the survey was executed by an independent outside firm, ensuring even further rigor.

Those surveys, which are shared with ODNI, indicate a high degree of confidence in INR products and intelligence support services, and appreciation for their outstanding quality, timeliness, and insight into world events. Other reviews have also indicated that INR is quickly and effectively sharing intelligence with its customers throughout the Department.

- The Benghazi attack was seen by many as a failure to properly appreciate and act on intelligence. As the chief intelligence office for the Department of State, how would you learn from these intelligence failures and prevent them in the future?

Answer. The independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board and the SSCI Benghazi Report confirmed that there was never a specific warning that the attack was coming, only a general understanding that the security situation was difficult. The challenge for all of us is to determine whether, even in the absence of a specific "tactical warning," there are indicators that should trigger additional security measures or other actions to reduce our vulnerability. That is something the State Department must do, and does, every day, but we must always strive to improve. We owe that to the diplomats and development experts who are advancing America's interests abroad everyday—often in dangerous places.

INR's role in this regard is to ensure not only that policymakers and colleagues in Diplomatic Security have real time access to all the relevant intelligence, but also to provide our analysis of the broader context in which our missions are operating. As I noted, if confirmed, I will review with ODNI the timeliness and responsiveness of INR products to ensure we are doing just that.

- In your opinion, how can the intelligence community more effectively manage the massive amount of intelligence data being reported to ensure that crucial intelligence is emphasized and appreciated?

Answer. This is a central role that INR plays for the Department of State's leadership and policymakers. Our job is not only to provide timely access to intelligence data, but also to highlight for busy policymakers key pieces of intelligence and analysis. A key part of this is ensuring that INR's analysts and staff have access to training and professional development opportunities to further develop their skills, as well as ensuring that analysts are provided with robust analytic IT tools. If confirmed, I will work hard to ensure that INR continues to effectively "push" crucial intelligence to policymakers, including in Diplomatic Security, in a timely fashion and that analysts have access to training and IT tools they need.

RESPONSES OF MAX BAUCUS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. U.S. Embassy Air Pollution Monitoring: The U.S. Embassy in Beijing provides daily air quality monitoring to measure particulates (PM 2.5) as an indication of the air quality in the city.

- As Ambassador to China, will you continue to ensure this data is available through social media and other means? What can be done to expand this monitoring to other U.S. State Department consulates and diplomatic missions throughout China?

Answer. U.S. Embassy Beijing and the U.S. consulates in China provide air quality data and additional information on their public Web sites and through their Twitter feeds as part of the administration's commitment to protect U.S. citizens. This information allows the mission community and American citizens living in China to make informed decisions to decrease exposure to air pollution. During hazardous air situations—such as the January 2013 air episode—the U.S. Embassy issues messages to U.S. citizens to address the high levels of pollution indicated by air quality indexes and to provide U.S. citizens information resources on air quality and protective measures. If confirmed, I will ensure that air quality data and messages continue to be released and updated in a timely fashion.

Question. Promotion of U.S. Environmental Technologies: In a January 27, 2014, study published in the "Proceedings of the National Academies of Science," researchers from China and the United States quantified the effects of air pollution from Chinese industrial sources used to manufactured goods exported to the United States. The study found that the air pollution attributable to export-related Chinese activities amounted to up to 10 percent of annual average surface sulfate concentrations (a pollutant that leads to the formation of dangerous fine particulate matter and acid rain) and 1.5 percent of ozone over the Western United States in 2006.

♦ As U.S. Ambassador to China, will you make opening Chinese markets to American air pollution control equipment and other environmental technologies a priority?

Answer. The United States has long recognized that air pollution can be transported over long distances and that China, as a major industrial player, has high emissions of air pollutants. Those emissions affect air quality in the United States and other countries downwind of China. What was new in the article was that the authors quantified how much air pollution from Chinese manufacturing is transported to the United States. The information contained in the January 27 article reinforces how important it is for the United States to work with China to mitigate emissions of air pollutants, whether that is through cleaner production processes, pollution prevention, end-of-pipe technologies, or other mitigation measures. Air pollution is clearly a concern for China's Government and its citizens, and if confirmed, I will work with the Chinese to improve air quality in both our countries.

China's air pollution problems will invariably trigger commercial opportunities. U.S. air quality monitoring equipment is well received and is often considered high-quality in terms of data accuracy, timeliness, and product lifecycle. In order to seize these emerging opportunities, U.S. companies should develop suitable market-entry and pricing strategies. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Commercial Service at Embassy Beijing and the Consulates General in Shenyang, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and Chengdu to help U.S. exporters interested in exploring the Chinese market.

Question. As you know, the continued detention of political prisoners is one of the most pressing human rights challenges in China. Tragically, the situation remains unchanged for many Chinese prisoners of conscience—including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo and his wife Liu Xia, and prominent rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng.

♦ If confirmed, how will you work to change the status quo for Chinese prisoners of conscience and other victims of human rights abuses in China?

Answer. If confirmed, I would use my position as Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Chinese citizens and raise specific cases of concern, including those of Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, his wife Liu Xia, rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, and the many others who have been detained and imprisoned for peacefully exercising their universal human rights. I strongly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights in China are in our national interest and, as such, should be an integral part of every high-level conversation we have with Chinese officials. I would continue the Embassy's strong record of meeting regularly with a wide range of human rights activists and their family members to gain a better understanding of their concerns and to express our support for human rights in China. I would also coordinate with like-minded countries to raise individual cases to ensure that China hears a consistent message from the international community about human rights in China.

Question. I am deeply concerned about the continued detention of Chinese lawyer and human rights activist, Gao Zhisheng. As you know, he has been arrested and detained numerous times. According to his wife and human rights advocates, he has also been brutally tortured.

♦ If confirmed, how will you encourage the Chinese Government to immediately and unconditionally release Gao Zhisheng? If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that Gao Zhisheng is allowed to reunite with his family in the United States if he is released?

Answer. I strongly believe that China has an obligation to abide by the 2011 decision by the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention that judged rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng's imprisonment to be in contravention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and called for his immediate release. If confirmed, I would urge China's leaders to immediately release Gao Zhisheng, remove all restrictions on his freedom of movement, and guarantee him the protections and freedoms to which he is entitled under China's international human rights commitments. I would ensure that our Embassy continues to be in close communication with Gao's family members and supporters. I would also continue to work closely with other embassies in China in order to ensure that China hears a consistent message from the international community on Gao's case.

RESPONSES OF MAX BAUCUS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. On December 5, 2013, the USS *Cowpens* had been lawfully operating in international waters in the South China Sea, when a PLA Navy vessel crossed its bow at a distance of less than 500 yards and stopped in the water, forcing the USS *Cowpens* to take evasive action to avoid a collision. This is only the latest in about a dozen U.S.-China incidents at sea in the last decade.

- (a) Do you agree that the actions of the PLA Navy ship in the USS *Cowpens* incident, as publicly reported, violate China's obligations under the October 1972 multilateral convention on the international regulations for preventing collisions at sea (also known as the COLREGs or the "rules of the road"), to which both China and the United States are parties?
- (b) Can you describe Chinese attitude toward the framework of bilateral (U.S.-Chinese) dialogue enshrined in the 1998 Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA)?
- (c) Do you agree that Chinese respect to the 1972 "rules of the road" and behavior in the MMCA framework should have implications on the administration's expectations about the value of a binding Code of Conduct between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China for the South China Sea?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the continued development of military-to-military relations as a key component of the U.S.-China bilateral relationship. Deeper cooperation is necessary to further reduce mistrust and the risk of miscalculation between the two militaries. The U.S.-China Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) is an important forum for the discussion of maritime safety issues in general.

While the December 5 USS *COWPENS* incident underscored concerns about China's efforts to restrict freedom of navigation at sea, it also highlighted important recent progress we have seen in bridge-to-bridge communication between the United States and PLA Navies. In a complex tactical environment, bridge-to-bridge communication was instrumental in defusing the situation and preventing a collision.

In order to minimize the potential for an unintentional accident or incident at sea, it is important that the United States and China share a common understanding of the same rules for operational air or maritime interactions. From the U.S. perspective, an existing body of international rules, norms, and guidelines—including the 1972 COLREGs—are sufficient to ensure the safety of navigation between U.S. forces and the forces of other countries, including China. If confirmed, I will continue to make clear to Beijing that these existing rules, including the COLREGS, form the basis for our common understanding of air and maritime behavior, and encourage China to incorporate these rules into ongoing conflict management tools. We have pressed China and ASEAN to agree to a rapid, meaningful Code of Conduct in the South China Sea to manage incidents when they arise, and I will continue to do so if confirmed. I will also support the further development of the MMCA and press China to agree to other tools that manage interactions at sea or in the air.

Question. Since the first meeting of the U.S.-China Cyber Working Group in July 2013, has cyber theft originating from China decreased or continued? Has the working group affected the People's Liberation Army, and how has the PLA participated in the working group?

Answer. Cyber security is one of the administration's top priorities. Administration officials have repeatedly raised concerns about Chinese state-sponsored cyber enabled theft of trade secrets and confidential business information at the highest levels with senior Chinese officials, including in the military, and will continue to do so. The State Department, including the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) and the Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Affairs (S/CCI), plays a key role in these discussions, including by leading the Cyber Working Group (CWG). The United States and China sent interagency delegations, which included military representatives, to both CWG meetings.

The United States and China are among the world's largest cyber actors, and it is vital that we continue a sustained, meaningful dialogue and work together to develop an understanding of acceptable behavior in cyber space. Through the CWG, the United States will continue to emphasize U.S. cyber policy objectives, including the applicability of international law to state behavior, the importance of norms of responsible state behavior, concerns about cyber activities that can lead to instability, the role of transparency in domestic civilian and military cyber policy, and the importance of practical cooperative measures to prevent crises in cyber space.

Question. The late Ambassador Mark Palmer, in his book "Breaking the Real Axis of Evil," argued that U.S. Ambassadors in places like China should be "freedom fighters" and U.S. embassies "islands of freedom" open to all those who share the values of freedom, human rights, and democracy.

- ♦ Do you agree that the U.S. Embassy in China should be an "island of freedom" and that one of your primary jobs should be demonstrating to China's peaceful advocates of reform and democracy that the United States stands firmly with them?

Answer. Human rights are integral to U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I would use my position as the U.S. Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens and would communicate our support for these principles directly to the Chinese people.

I would raise our human rights concerns with Chinese officials at the highest levels and would raise specific cases of Chinese citizens who are being persecuted for the peaceful expression of their political or religious views. I would also make clear to China that the United States considers upholding its international human rights commitments to be vital to our bilateral relationship. I strongly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights in China are in our national interest and should be an integral part of every high-level conversation we have with Chinese officials.

If confirmed, I would plan to continue outreach to ethnic minorities and religious groups, including members of house churches, in China. Such outreach would be conducted in a way that is effective and promotes our values.

I would also continue to work closely with other embassies in China concerned with China's worsening human rights record in order to ensure that China hears a consistent message from the international community.

Question. On January 25, the State Department's spokesperson issued a statement expressing "deep disappointment" about the conviction of Mr. Xu Zhiyong, a leading advocate for fiscal transparency and fighting official corruption. The spokesperson described Mr. Xu's prosecution as "retribution for his public campaign to expose corruption and for the peaceful expression of his views." This is just the latest in an ongoing crackdown by Chinese authorities against activists.

- ♦ If confirmed, what steps would you take to highlight the plight of these activists and elevate their cases with the Chinese Government?

Answer. If confirmed, I would use my position as the U.S. Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Chinese citizens and raise specific cases of concern, including that of legal scholar Xu Zhiyong and other individuals associated with the New Citizens Movement that have been detained, harassed and prosecuted by Chinese authorities. I strongly believe that the promotion and protection of human rights in China are in our national interest and, as such, should be an integral part of every high-level conversation we have with Chinese officials. I would continue the Embassy's strong record of meeting regularly with a wide range of human rights activists and their family members to gain a better understanding of their concerns and to express our support for respect for human rights in China.

I would also continue to work closely with other embassies in China in order to ensure that China hears a consistent message from the international community on human rights.

Question. As you know, there is an effort under way in the Senate to impose visa and financial sanctions on individuals responsible for extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of human rights in any foreign country. I have been concerned that in some authoritarian countries, there is a growing tendency to use selective justice and government institutions to prosecute human rights advocates and critics.

- ♦ Would you support the application of visa and financial sanctions on individuals responsible for the use of selective justice to prosecute anticorruption and human rights advocates in China?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support using a variety of mechanisms to encourage greater respect for human rights in China. There is a range of statutory and policy-based grounds for denying visas to, and barring entry of, human rights violators. I would take our role seriously in not permitting entry to those who are ineligible due to direct involvement in human rights abuses, such as the enforcement of forced abortion and sterilization. I am particularly concerned by the recent crackdown on anticorruption activists, and, if confirmed, would make progress on human rights and rule of law a top priority during my tenure in Beijing.

Question. The United States has designated China as a Country of Particular Concern, or CPC, since 1999 for its systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of freedom of religion or belief. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has recommended that, in addition to designating China as a CPC, additional measures should be taken to encourage Beijing to respect this fundamental freedom.

- How would you use the CPC designation to strengthen human rights and religious freedom diplomacy as part of the bilateral relationship?

Answer. If confirmed, I would use my position as the U.S. Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect human rights, including religious freedom. The Chinese Government's respect for, and protection of, the right to religious freedom fall well short of its international human rights obligations. As Ambassador, I would support efforts by the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom to explore new and innovative ways to encourage China to improve its record on religious freedom. I would stress to Chinese leaders that China will remain a CPC until it implements fundamental reforms to allow all people freely to practice their faith, without restrictions such as requiring registration with the Chinese Government.

China's CPC designation is an important part of our efforts to urge China to fulfill its international commitments to protect and respect religious freedom, along with our "International Religious Freedom Report," high-level dialogues such as the Human Rights Dialogue, exchange programs among our citizens, and grants to organizations working to improve religious freedom.

Question. According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, the Chinese Government has detained over a thousand so-called "unregistered" Christians in the past year, closed "illegal" meeting points, and prohibited public worship activities. Additionally, unregistered Catholic clergy remain in detention or disappeared.

- If confirmed, would you commit to raise awareness of this situation in China by outreaching to this beleaguered community and attending a worship service in an "unregistered" Catholic or Protestant church in China?

Answer. Promoting religious freedom is a core objective of U.S. foreign policy, including in our relationship with China. If confirmed, I would use my position as the U.S. Ambassador to urge China's leaders to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people and encourage China to permit everyone to worship, regardless of whether they affiliate with a government-recognized religious association. Freedom of religion is critical to a peaceful, inclusive, and stable society.

If confirmed, I would continue outreach to both registered and unregistered religious groups, including members of house churches and the Catholic community, in China. Such outreach would be conducted in a way that is effective and promotes our values.

Question. China recently announced that it would abolish the reeducation through labor penal system which allowed people to be held up to 4 years without a judicial hearing. UNHCR estimated up to 190,000 people were held in these camps. However, human rights activists worry that the closure of these forced labor camps is merely cosmetic and they have been relabeled as drug rehabilitation centers.

- What is the status of the closures of the forced labor camps? Since the beginning of the closure of the camps, has there been an increase in people committed to drug rehabilitation centers in China?

Answer. While we welcome China's December 28, 2013, announcement that it would abolish the "reeducation through labor" system as a positive step if it results in the shutdown of an abusive system that allows Chinese authorities to imprison individuals without due process, the ongoing use of arbitrary administrative detention, extralegal detention in black jails, and other forms of forced labor remains a concern. If confirmed, I would urge Chinese officials to ensure that reeducation through labor is not replaced by other forms of arbitrary detention or "rehabilitation" that deprive citizens of their rights. I would emphasize that we believe that respect for rule of law and protection of human rights will benefit the long-term stability and prosperity of China.

If confirmed, I will also work closely with my interagency colleagues, particularly the Department of Homeland Security, to ensure that we are taking all necessary steps to ensure that products of forced and prison labor are not entering the United States.

Question. The Chinese Government recently announced a limited relaxation of their longstanding "One Child Policy" for Chinese couples in which at least one parent is an only child. However, this change to the "One-Child Policy" does not apply

to all couples and circumstances, and reports of government-approved forced abortions continue to arise.

- How will you engage with Chinese officials on the issue of government-sanctioned forced abortions in China?

Answer. I strongly oppose all aspects of China's coercive birth limitation policies, including forced abortion and sterilization. If confirmed, I would urge China's leaders frequently and at all levels to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Chinese citizens and to end the one-child policy immediately.

RESPONSES OF ARNOLD CHACON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. A group of former Ambassadors recently underlined the shrinking proportion of Foreign Service officers (FSOs) in senior positions at the State Department relative to Civil Service or political appointees, and observed an accompanying diminution of Foreign Service input into the foreign policy process and management of the Department.

- How does this administration compare to previous ones regarding the nomination of political appointees to senior positions at the State Department?
- How does this situation impact the morale of FSOs?
- What impact does this situation have on the need to improve the professional skills of FSOs?

Answer. The Department benefits from the strengths of a diverse workforce: Civil Service, Foreign Service, and political appointees. Each brings unique experience, skills, and perspectives. There are career employees in many senior leadership positions domestically and overseas, including the Deputy Secretary, the Counselor, and a number of Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries. The majority of ambassador positions are filled by career FSOs. The ratio has been fairly consistent over the course of multiple Presidential administrations: approximately 70 percent career, 30 percent noncareer. The Foreign Service Act of 1980 recognizes the value of appointment of qualified noncareer individuals as COM.

Regarding morale, it is to be expected that a diversity of opinion regarding internal policies will be represented among employees. It would not be possible to guarantee 100 percent acceptance of any Department policy. I would note, however, that in the 2013 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, the Department of State ranked fourth overall among the 19 large federal agencies, and is only federal agency to remain in the top 10 since 2005. Please see my answers below regarding the Department's work to improve the professional skills of FSOs.

Question. As you know, the 2010 QDDR acknowledge State's shortage of key skills necessary for modern-day diplomacy.

- What steps, if any, has the administration taken to institute a Professional Diplomatic Education Program to systematically develop the professional skills of FSOs?
- If so, what particular skills does the program seek to enhance?
- To what extent is participation in such programs a prerequisite for FSOs' promotions?

Answer. The Department takes an active interest in the development and training of its most important resource, its people. The skills demanded of a diplomat are always shifting, and never more so than now in the 21st century. Showing the priority we place on training our officers, the Department strives to maintain a training complement sufficient to ensure that officers may acquire necessary skills, without leaving important overseas positions vacant. The assistance of Congress in providing us with the necessary resources for this complement is greatly appreciated.

The primary locus of education for the foreign affairs community is the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), which develops the men and women our Nation requires to fulfill our leadership role in world affairs and to advance and defend U.S. interests. Created in 1947, FSI provides more than 700 classroom courses, including some 70 foreign languages. In addition, 270 custom-developed distance learning products and about 2,700 commercial distance learning courses are available worldwide 24/7 through the Internet. Annual course completions currently exceed 104,500. These courses are designed to promote successful performance in each assignment, to ease the adjustment to other countries and culture, and to enhance the leadership and management capabilities of the U.S. foreign affairs community. Customers include State and 47 other USG entities.

Since 2005, the Department has used Career Development Plans (CDPs) for Foreign Service Generalists and, more recently, Specialists, as a tool for mapping career development and developing skills needed at the senior ranks. Certain requirements must be met before an employee can elect to compete for the senior ranks. The CDP builds on four principles to meet the Department's mission, all critical to meet today's diplomatic requirements: operational effectiveness, including breadth of experience over several regions and functions; leadership and management effectiveness; sustained professional language and technical proficiency; and responsiveness to Service needs. Mandatory requirements and a menu of electives help guide employees in developing the skills and experience to demonstrate their readiness for the senior ranks. FSI also launched a Training Continuum in 2005 which allowed officers of different career tracks to tailor their training to meet the needs of their particular specialty.

The CDP also reinforces the importance of excellence in foreign languages, fundamental to the work of the Foreign Service. Professional foreign language use is also highly valued in considerations for promotion, across all grades and skills. Long-term language training does generally slow promotion while the student is enrolled, but makes promotion more likely later on.

The Department is committed to developing the wider skills for today's diplomacy. In addition to tradecraft skills, much of which is assignment-specific, we are also focused on the leadership and management skills critical to the Department, both internally and in an increasingly interagency overseas environment. In recent years, for example, we instituted mandatory leadership training as a prerequisite for promotion at each rank and, in 2014, we expect to launch a new program of mandatory supervisory training for all new supervisors.

Question. Are there any efforts underway to facilitate the attendance of mid-level FSOs to one of our military's Professional Military Education Programs? Would such a cross-service education be valuable the modern FSOs?

Answer. We have long, productive relationships with our Nation's military educational institutions, both the War College and Commands. In this academic year, for example, 24 mid-level employees at the FS–02 and FS–03 levels are enrolled in the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, VA; Army Command and Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth, KS; Naval Command and Staff College in Newport, RI; Air Command and Staff College in Montgomery, AL; Marine Corps War College in Quantico, VA; Inter-American Defense College in Washington, DC; and National Intelligence University (NIU) in Washington, DC. The Department has a close and longstanding relationship with the National Defense University (NDU), where our officers can both study and teach. In one NDU program, an FSO at the 01 rank serves under the general direction of the Commandant as Associate Professor and State Chair at the Joint Forces Staff College. The JFSC prepares 1,300 selected field-grade officers and civilians each year for command and staff responsibilities in multinational, governmental, and joint national security jobs. Students come from all branches of the armed services (including international military students), the Department of State, and other U.S. civilian agencies. The College has several schools that offer joint professional military education mandated by Congress, including a master's degree program in Joint Advanced Warfare.

The Foreign Service Institute also manages an online Army War College Master of Strategic Studies Distance Education Program for FS–01 and FS–02 employees that awards a Master of Strategic Studies.

These highly competitive training opportunities are considered career-enhancing for Foreign Service personnel, offering opportunities for professional growth and the development of skills and knowledge critical to working and leading in the interagency environment.

Question. Consular activities are vitally important, but they draw a lot of manpower from within the State Department ranks. What can be done to buttress our consular activities overseas in order to shift additional personnel to staffing shortfalls in other areas?

Answer. Many of our consular positions are entry-level officer (ELO) positions, focused on immigrant and nonimmigrant visas. The number of visa adjudication positions needed overseas is influenced by visa demand which, in turn, is impacted by frequently changing country-specific and worldwide political, economic, social, and national security conditions. Our ability to meet those needs through traditional methods, i.e., ELOs, is dependent on the Department's budget and the ability to hire.

Unfortunately, in today's resource-constrained environment with attrition or less hiring and continuing growth in demand for visas, we estimate that by FY15 ELO

hiring will be unable to provide enough officers to fill entry level consular positions. Consular staffing shortfalls are projected to exceed 400 by FY17.

To support the economic growth that foreign visitors foster in the United States, we are expanding existing programs for our career Civil Service employees, including Passport Adjudicators, to serve overseas in Foreign Service Limited Non-Career Appointments (LNA). We have also developed other innovative LNA hiring programs to meet these urgent, specific mission-critical needs that cannot be met by the Foreign Service (FS), including a pilot program to bring in noncareer, highly qualified, language ready Consular Adjudicator LNAs to fill entry-level nonimmigrant visa adjudicator positions in China, Brazil, and several Spanish-speaking countries. Additionally, we are expanding opportunities for fully qualified appointment-eligible family members to serve in entry-level consular positions overseas.

We are using these programs to buttress our vitally important and growing consular responsibilities but with at attrition or below hiring, entry-level officers will continue to be needed to complete that critical task.

RESPONSES OF MAX BAUCUS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

Question. Conservationists estimate that some 62 percent of the elephant population in central Africa has been slaughtered in the past decade to satisfy the resurgent demand for ivory. Experts agree that the demand for ivory is fueled by China—where the nation's economic expansion has made the treasured product accessible to a growing middle class. Not only does this demand create a market that is leading to the decimation of the African elephant, it also undermines U.S. military and development objectives in Africa by fueling armed conflict and violence. Murderous bands of thugs like the Lord's Resistance Army and terrorist group al-Shabaab have turned to ivory to fund their reigns of terror.

- How can the United States work with China to reduce its demand for ivory that is helping fuel such horrific violence?

Answer. The United States is engaging China to reduce demand for illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products. Recently the United States and China each destroyed more than six tons of illegal ivory stockpiles seized through law enforcement action. I understand the United States plans to continue efforts to raise global awareness, including in China, of this pernicious trade and its devastating effects on wildlife. U.S. law enforcement agencies are working with Chinese authorities to improve wildlife law enforcement. At the 2013 U.S.-China Joint Liaison Group on Law Enforcement Cooperation, the U.S. cochairs proposed that the United States and China explore ways to cooperate further on wildlife trafficking. Law enforcement entities of the United States have joined with China, and other countries, including several African nations, in collaborating and exchanging information through Operation COBRA 2, a follow-on operation to the highly successful Operation COBRA 1 in 2013, which targets wildlife traffickers at all points in the trade chain. In addition, the United States continues to encourage China, as APEC 2014 chair, to support the ongoing work of the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts Task Force on combating corruption and illicit trade, including wildlife trafficking, and to join U.S. workshops focusing on demand reduction under APEC's aegis.

Question. China is investing in Africa by the billions—building large-scale roads and infrastructure projects. It uses concessional financing and other favorable loan and grant terms to undercut American companies, making it very difficult for our businesses to compete. This is leaving a continent with 7 of the 10 fastest-growing economies and with huge potential to grow jobs in the United States largely inaccessible to American investors and companies. For its part, China gains access to natural resources and gains political and diplomatic influence. African consumers are subject to inferior Chinese products, as well as weak labor, governance, and environmental standards.

- How can the United States do more to help American businesses compete in Africa, particularly against aggressive Chinese tactics?

Answer. Foreign investment is essential to Africa's economic development, and there is room for both the United States and China to engage in public and private investment opportunities. The United States offers a compelling narrative for Africa. Our firms introduce international best practices, export top-quality products, provide employment opportunities, and promote economic growth in Africa, while also generating benefits for the U.S. economy.

China will continue to seek a role in Africa and elsewhere, and we must maintain our engagement with China in this regard. The United States has pressed China

to adhere to international labor, human rights, transparency, and economic standards as China pursues investment and development projects globally.

If confirmed, I would press China not to undermine local and international efforts to promote healthy competition, good governance, transparency, and responsible natural resource management in Africa and elsewhere. I would welcome Chinese investment that is consistent with international standards, that promotes good governance and sustainable development, and that maintains a level playing field for all companies, and I would urge my Chinese counterparts to ensure that China's engagement plays this positive role.

RESPONSES OF MAX BAUCUS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM UDALL

Question. China has some of the most unique natural features in the world, from the mountains of the Tibetan Plateau to the Indus, Mekong and Yellow Rivers that flow from it and sustain all of Asia. Yet China is now famous for having some of the worst air quality on the planet. The Chinese people are increasingly pushing back through activism accelerated by new social media tools and aided by the real-time air quality data provided by the U.S. Embassy.

How will you advance collaboration between China, the American private sector, and U.S. agencies such as the EPA to reduce pollution there?

Answer. Growing environmental awareness in China, driven partly by episodes of severe air pollution, has increased Chinese interest in enhanced cooperation on air pollution, climate, and clean energy. Air pollution does not stop at the border; by working with China, the United States can improve air quality in both our countries. To promote cooperation, the United States developed an Air Action Plan under the Ten-Year Framework for Energy and Environment Cooperation (TYF). Collaboration on air quality is also included in the memorandum of understanding between the U.S. EPA and China's Ministry of Environmental Protection and was expanded in 2013 through a U.S. Trade and Development Agency-funded cooperative project. Our two nations also boast significant bilateral climate cooperation, including through seven clean-energy initiatives launched in 2009—including the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center—and the five new initiatives of the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG). The TYF and CCWG in particular are State Department-organized platforms for cooperation that bring U.S. agencies, including DOE, EPA, USTDA, DOT, and FERC, together with their Chinese counterparts.

If confirmed, I would work to support these existing programs and encourage their expansion. For example, at the next Strategic and Economic Dialogue in China, we are working to include new partners—including American industry participants—into the EcoPartnership Program. EcoPartnerships bring together U.S. and Chinese organizations—local governments, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and/or companies—to conduct innovative projects that promote U.S. priorities on energy security, economic growth, and environmental sustainability, including addressing air pollution.

Question. If confirmed, what measures will you take to protect the health of the hundreds of Americans who serve at Embassy Beijing and consulates around the country?

Answer. U.S. Embassy Beijing and the U.S. consulates in China provide air quality data and additional information on their public Web sites as part of the administration's commitment to protect U.S. citizens. This information allows the mission community and U.S. citizens living in China to make informed decisions to decrease exposure to air pollution. During hazardous air situations—such as the January 2013 air episode—the U.S. Embassy issues messages to U.S. citizens to address the high levels of pollution indicated by air quality indexes and to provide U.S. citizens information resources on air quality and protective measures.

If confirmed, I would ensure that air quality data and these messages continue to be released and updated in a timely fashion. In addition, embassy and consulate residences have been provided multiple room air cleaners, resulting in significant reductions in particulate levels indoors.

Mission China makes influenza vaccines (aka "flu shots") available for Embassy and consulate personnel and dependents in accordance with standard State Department policies.

Question. Like many of my fellow Senators, I am appalled by the recent surge in the ivory trade, especially the increased demand in China leading to the growth in elephant killings in Africa.

- How will you address this issue with the Chinese, and what can the United States do to help China tighten its exports rules and punishments for acquiring illegal ivory in order to dissuade would-be buyers?

Answer. The United States is engaging China to reduce demand for illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products. Recently the United States and China each destroyed more than 6 tons of illegal ivory stockpiles seized through law enforcement action. I understand the United States plans to continue efforts to raise global awareness, including in China, of this pernicious trade and its devastating effects on wildlife. U.S. law enforcement agencies are working with Chinese authorities to improve wildlife law enforcement. At the 2013 U.S.-China Joint Liaison Group on Law Enforcement Cooperation, the U.S. cochairs proposed that the United States and China explore ways to cooperate further on wildlife trafficking. Law enforcement entities of the United States have joined with China and other countries, including several African nations, in collaborating and exchanging information through Operation COBRA 2, a follow-on operation to the highly successful Operation COBRA 1 in 2013, which targets wildlife traffickers at all points in the trade chain. In addition, the United States continues to encourage China, as APEC 2014 chair, to support the ongoing work of the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts Task Force on combating corruption and illicit trade, including wildlife trafficking, and to join U.S. workshops focusing on demand reduction under APEC's aegis.

Question. I think it is fair to say that we have seen an increasingly active Chinese Navy attempting to assert authority in sea-lanes that have been open for navigation for all countries for years. This behavior increases the risk of confrontation between countries in the region.

- What will you do to send a message to the Chinese that the international community and the United States, in support of its allies, will continue to support freedom of navigation in the region and how will you work specifically to de-escalate tensions and improve military to military communication between the United States and China and our partners and allies in the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage China to exhibit greater transparency with respect to its capabilities and intentions, and to use its military capabilities in a manner conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. I will reiterate that the United States has national interests in the Asia-Pacific region, including an interest in preserving the freedom of the seas and airspace. For over three decades, the U.S. Government has maintained a Freedom of Navigation Policy and Program. The U.S. Freedom of Navigation Program aims to preserve all of the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace for the United States and all nations by demonstrating that the United States does not accept maritime claims of other nations, including China, that are inconsistent with international law and impinge on the rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea that belong to all nations. The U.S. FON Program is global and is not directed at any single country. The U.S. FON Program is a multiagency effort, including both diplomatic activity and operational activity. As part of that diplomatic activity, I will do my part to encourage China to conform its maritime claims to international law, and encourage China to fully respect all of the rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea and airspace by other nations, including the United States. When appropriate, I will communicate to China the lawfulness of and need for the activities of U.S. military forces to preserve those rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea and airspace in the Asia-Pacific region.

If confirmed, I will support the continued development of military-to-military relations as a key component of the U.S.-China bilateral relationship. Deeper cooperation is necessary to further reduce mistrust and the risk of miscalculation between the U.S. and Chinese militaries.

Question. It is well known that China is hard at work conducting industrial espionage and attempting to acquire information on U.S. defense systems in order to both counter U.S. systems, but also to attempt to catch up to the U.S. military's technological superiority.

- What will you do as Ambassador to work with and send a message to the Chinese, that these export violations are unacceptable, and how will you work with U.S. companies doing business in China to ensure that they are following all applicable export laws meant to protect sensitive U.S. military and dual use technology when doing business with Chinese companies?

Answer. The United States is committed to facilitating normal trade with China for commercial items for civilian end-uses and end-users. Export controls, which affect only a very small amount of total bilateral trade (less than 1 percent), are not just an economic issue, but also a national security issue. China remains a pro-

scribed destination under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, the federal regulation that implements the Arms Export Control Act, and is also the subject of separate statutory restrictions commonly referred to as "Tiananmen sanctions," requiring a Presidential waiver prior to the issuance of any export license to China for any defense article on the United States Munitions List. China's status in this regard is firmly established and well-known to U.S. and foreign defense companies engaged in legitimate and authorized defense trade.

The United States will continue to engage China on export control issues through the High Technology and Strategic Trade Working Group (HTWG), as reflected in the July 2013 Strategic and Economic Dialogue joint outcome statement. The HTWG is a longstanding dialogue under the Joint Committee on Commerce and Trade designed to further cooperation on export controls and high technology trade issues.

If confirmed, I would reinforce U.S. policy on export controls in discussions with Chinese officials and in meetings with U.S. businesses as appropriate. I would also raise export issues and cases of export violations as they arise.

RESPONSES OF MAX BAUCUS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. What leverage does the U.S. Government have to promote the development of human rights and rule of law in China? Are sanctions effective in encouraging China to comply with human rights standards? Are sanctions useful in persuading China to develop the rule of law? If confirmed, what actions will you take to help end the Government of China's policies of oppression and support the rights and freedom of the people of China? How do you plan to balance the engagement of China on economic issues with demonstrating serious concerns about China's human rights violations?

Answer. The greatest leverage we have is China's own desire to achieve greater international respect, a more innovative economy, and a prosperous and stable society. Our consistent message to China's leaders, and to the Chinese people, is that greater respect for universal human rights is key to achieving these goals. The United States does not hesitate to speak out when we believe that China is engaging in policies and practices, such as in Tibet or Xinjiang, that contravene China's international human rights commitments. The United States public advocacy for human rights causes no small amount of friction with the Chinese leadership. However, it is important that we continue to speak out, as we have with respect to the continued imprisonment of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, the recent sentencing of legal activist Xu Zhiyong, the disappearance of lawyer Gao Zhisheng, and ongoing repression in Tibet and Xinjiang.

If confirmed, I will not hesitate to speak out and advocate for the respect for universal human rights and rule of law, but the use of economic sanctions to attempt to bring about human rights improvements is not likely to be effective with China. I believe economic sanctions would alienate us from the majority of Chinese people who have benefited from China's economic reform and integration into the global economy.

Promoting respect for universal human rights and the rule of law is integral to U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I would urge China's leaders to undertake key legal reforms and respect the rule of law and underscore the importance of an independent judiciary, a robust civil society and the free flow of information to China's prosperity and stability. I would also strongly support the annual U.S.-China Legal Experts Dialogue which provides an important channel to discuss our concerns about the rule of law and specifically the role of lawyers in Chinese society by bringing together judges, legal scholars, lawyers and prosecutors to discuss key legal issues.

If confirmed, I would raise our human rights concerns with Chinese officials at the highest levels and would raise specific cases of Chinese citizens who are being persecuted for the peaceful expression of their political or religious views. I would also make clear to China that the United States considers upholding its international human rights commitments to be vital to our bilateral relationship.

Question. What is the total cost of China's theft of U.S. intellectual property to the U.S. economy each year? Why hasn't the Government of China been able to establish an effective intellectual property rights enforcement regime? Is it based upon a lack of desire or ability on the part of the Government of China?

Answer. The protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR) in China are critical to maintaining a mutually beneficial trade relationship. According

to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, China remains the leading source of counterfeit and pirated goods coming into the United States. My understanding is that China has taken some positive actions to improve IP legislation and enforcement in recent years; however, piracy and counterfeiting levels in China remain unacceptably high, and stronger enforcement mechanisms are needed. As the Commerce Department has reported, IP-intensive industries support at least 40 million U.S. jobs and annually account for approximately $5 trillion in the U.S. economy.

If I am confirmed, one of the top priorities for the U.S. mission in China will continue to be to advocate for the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights that are so critical for U.S. businesses.

Question. What role should the United States play in the territorial disputes in the East China Sea? In November, the U.S. Air Force flew two bombers through the East China Sea without notification after China declared an air defense identification zone. Do you support additional U.S. military operations that assert freedom of movement and show support to U.S. allies in the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I would speak clearly to Beijing regarding not only issues of shared interest, but also our differences, and faithfully represent the values, interests, and principles of the United States—including respect for international law and the freedom of navigation. I am clear-eyed about Chinese behavior vis-a-vis its neighbors over territorial and maritime matters.

China's announcement of an "East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)" caused deep concerns in the region. If confirmed, I would remind the Chinese that the United States does not recognize and does not accept the ADIZ, which we believe should not be implemented. I would make clear to China that it should refrain from taking similar actions elsewhere in the region. I would also encourage China to work with other countries, including Japan and the Republic of Korea, to address the dangers its recent declaration has created and to deescalate tensions.

If confirmed, I would reiterate that the United States has national interests in the Asia-Pacific region, including an interest in preserving the freedom of the seas and airspace. Where appropriate, I would communicate to China the lawfulness of, and need for, the activities of U.S. military forces to preserve those rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea and airspace in the Asia-Pacific region. For over three decades, the U.S. Government has maintained a Freedom of Navigation Policy and Program. If confirmed, I would support the continued development of military-to-military relations as a key component of the U.S.-China bilateral relationship. Deeper cooperation is necessary to further reduce mistrust and the risk of miscalculation between the U.S. and Chinese militaries.

Question. Do you believe that Taiwan should be invited to participate in U.S.-led military exercises? Do you support arm sales to Taiwan?

Answer. Taiwan and the United States enjoy unofficial but robust economic and cultural relations, and Taiwan is an important security partner to the United States. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and the United States one-China policy, the United States makes available to Taiwan defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

Taiwan does not formally participate in international coalitions or exercises. However, Taiwan does regularly train on weapons or platforms bought from the United States, which increases not only Taiwan's deterrence but also its humanitarian assistance capacity. Taiwan plays an increasingly significant role in disaster relief enterprises, such as relief to Palau and the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013.

If I am confirmed, my job will be to express to Chinese officials and people continuing U.S. support for improving cross-strait relations at a pace acceptable to people of both sides of the strait and to make clear the United States abiding interest in peace and stability across the strait.

Question. How would you characterize China's political and economic relationship with North Korea? What type of policy changes and actions would you like to see from China regarding North Korea? In what ways can the United States work with China to pressure North Korea on denuclearization?

Answer. The United States shares with China a common goal of achieving a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, which is essential to both regional stability and broader international security. China is a vital partner with a unique role to play due to its longstanding economic, diplomatic, and historical ties with North Korea. The administration continues to work with all U.N. member states, including China, to ensure the full and transparent implementation of UNSC sanctions.

As Ambassador, if confirmed, I would urge China to use its influence to convince North Korea that it has no choice but to denuclearize. The United States and China

need to continue to work together to hold the DPRK to its commitments and its international obligations, including those to abandon its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. If confirmed, I would continue to encourage Beijing to ensure the full and transparent implementation of U.N. Security Council sanctions targeting North Korea's nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related, or other weapons of mass destruction-related programs.

Question. If confirmed, what policies will you support to address Internet censorship and promote media freedom in China?

Answer. I am concerned that Internet restrictions in China have worsened. It is troublesome to see the blocking of so many Web sites due to the "Great Firewall," which limits access to information, including international media Web sites; new restrictions on social media, including a crackdown on what the Chinese Government terms "online rumors"; and the censorship of Internet search engine results. If confirmed, I would raise objections over the blocking of media and social media Web sites with Chinese counterparts, making clear that these actions are inconsistent with China's international commitment to respect freedom of expression. If confirmed, I would express to Chinese officials that obstructing the free flow of information undermines the kind of open environment for free debate and discussion that supports innovation and economic dynamism.

I am deeply concerned that foreign journalists in China continue to face restrictions that impede their ability to do their jobs, including extended delays in processing journalist visas and press credentials, restrictions on travel to certain locations deemed "sensitive" by Chinese authorities and, in some cases, violence at the hands of local authorities. These restrictions and treatment stand in stark contrast with U.S. treatment of Chinese and other foreign journalists.

If confirmed, I would urge China to commit to timely visa and credentialing decisions for foreign journalists, unblock international websites, and eliminate other restrictions that impede the ability of journalists to practice their profession.

NOMINATIONS BATHSHEBA CROCKER, MICHAEL LAWSON, AND ROBERT WOOD

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs

Michael Anderson Lawson, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Representative on the Council of the International Civilian Aviation Organization

Robert A. Wood, of New York, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:05 p.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Edward J. Markey, presiding.

Present: Senators Markey and Barrasso.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator MARKEY. Good afternoon. Welcome to this hearing in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Today, we will hear from three highly qualified nominees who will represent our country's interests before international organizations.

The first is Mr. Michael Lawson, the United States Representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, which is headquartered in Montreal. This is an intergovernmental organization that oversees the safety, security, and economic sustainability and environmental impact of civilian air travel.

Air navigation, the safety of air travel, and the security from terrorist attack have been the focuses of this organization for many years. More recently, environmental and energy issues have become a priority, especially aviation's contribution to climate change. Air travel is currently responsible for 2 percent of carbon dioxide pollution worldwide and about 13 percent of all transportation-sector carbon dioxide. As air travel increases, especially in rapidly developing economies, emissions are projected to grow in the coming years.

In early October 2013, it was agreed upon that the goal of—should create a global market-based system to curb airline pollution emissions by 2016. Mr. Lawson is extremely well qualified to represent the United States in these discussions. He received his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1978. He has over 31 years of experience practicing law, most of it as a partner at the firm of Skadden Arps, here in Washington and around the world. Since 2005, Mr. Lawson has served on the Board of Airport Commissioners for the four airports of the L.A. area, including Los Angeles International Airport. He was president of that board from 2010 to 2013. While on the board, he helped manage major improvements to the LAX, including a new terminal.

Our next nominee is Bathsheba Nell Crocker, President Obama's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. She will be responsible for overseeing and advising Secretary Kerry about the U.S. Government's relationships with the United Nations—U.N. agencies, such as the IAEA, peacekeeping missions, UNICEF, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and a number of other international agencies and organizations.

Ms. Crocker's expertise on foreign policy and her dedication to public service are truly impressive. She has over 15 years of relevant experience at the State Department, the United Nations, and the private sector. At the State Department, she is now the Principal Deputy Director of the Office of Policy Planning. At the United Nations, she worked as the Special Assistant on the Peacebuilding Issues and as the Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, former President Bill Clinton.

In the private sector, she has served as a senior policy advisor for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and as a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Her credentials are impressive in their own right, but she is also carrying on a family tradition. With us here today is her father, Chester Crocker, who was the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs under President Reagan.

Could you please stand, Mr.—right over here? Thank you so much for being here.

Could we give him a round of applause for his tremendous service to our country? [Applause.]

We thank you.

He served as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs under President Reagan, and helped lead the negotiations that led to independence for Namibia and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

Mr. Crocker, thank you for your service to our country.

I am told that when Ms. Crocker is confirmed, you will be the first father-daughter pair to serve as Assistant Secretaries of State in our country's history.

Our third nominee is Robert Wood, nominated to represent the United States to the Conference on Disarmament, the international agency responsible for negotiating arms treaties. Mr. Wood is a 25-year veteran of the Foreign Service who has served in Mexico, Ni-

geria, Pakistan, and South Africa. Recently, he served as Chargé d'affaires in the U.S. Mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency, where he defended American interests and tried to help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and fissile material. He was also the Deputy Spokesman of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, a position he began the day after the September 11th attacks.

If confirmed, one of Mr. Wood's most pressing responsibilities would be a preparatory conference this April for the 2015 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Mr. Wood will be an essential spokesman, explaining and defending our country's significant efforts to create a world in which nuclear weapons no longer exist.

Also, Mr. Wood has the opportunity to start serious negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty which would ban the production of nuclear materials for use in nuclear weapons.

And we thank each of you for your service, and we thank each of you for everything that you are going to do for our country.

And I will begin by recognizing you, Ms. Crocker, in order to lay out your case to become our representative.

STATEMENT OF BATHSHEBA NELL CROCKER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINEE TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS

Ms. CROCKER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.

More than 30 years ago, as you have noted, my father appeared in front of this committee as President Reagan's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. I have learned a great deal from my father's remarkable career about the importance of public service, the art of American diplomacy, and the promise of American leadership. It would be an honor of a lifetime to carry these lessons forward and help advance American interests and values at the United Nations and beyond.

I have also learned a great deal from my mother, who is also here with us today, a woman who proved that you could have a successful career and be an extraordinary mother. I am so pleased they could both be here today.

I also want to recognize my husband, Milan, my daughters, Asha and Farrin, who are here. I owe them more than I could ever say. And I have a number of other family members here, as well, today: my sister, Rennie Anderson; my brother-in-law, Kai Anderson; my nieces, Tala and Avey; my nephew, Caleb; my brother-in-law, Anand Vaishnav; and my cousin, John Putnam.

I began my public service——

Senator MARKEY. May I say that your mother is the first woman to ever be the wife of, and the mother of, an Assistant Secretary of State——

[Laughter.]

Senator MARKEY [continuing]. Which I think is also a distinction. That might actually be the hypotenuse in this whole story. [Laughter.]

Ms. CROCKER. Well said.

I began my public service career as an attorney advisor at the State Department more than 15 years ago. I have seen firsthand how ably our diplomats represent our country. I have seen their courage on the front lines of conflict, their resilience and strength in the aftermath of natural disasters, and their steadfast commitment to standing up to injustice all over the world. I have also seen firsthand the same determinations and skill in the peacekeepers, development professionals, humanitarian workers, and health practitioners I worked with during my time helping lead the U.N. Asia tsunami recovery efforts and peace-building programs. That is why I share President Obama's conviction that America's national interests are best served by a robust, responsive, and responsible international system. The challenges of today, from terrorism to nuclear proliferation, and climate change to development and food security, cannot be solved by any one country on its own. And in an age of fiscal austerity, we need to work harder than ever to ensure that international organizations are able and willing to meet today's many global challenges.

Thanks to the administration's efforts, the United States today is a more engaged, effective, and successful leader in international and multilateral organizations than it has been in a very long time. If confirmed, I pledge to work with this committee to identify and pursue new opportunities to advance our interests throughout the U.N. system. In particular, I will focus on three major priorities: efficiency, effectiveness, and evolution.

First, safeguarding and maximizing U.S. taxpayers' investment in International Organization will be my unflagging preoccupation. There is no question that, despite progress, there are continuing challenges with management and oversight at the United Nations. As the largest contributor to the U.N., we have a special obligation and influence to promote reform throughout the U.N. system.

Second, I will work to increase the effectiveness of multilateral institutions. In so many of our foreign policy priorities, from our sanctions on al-Qaeda, Iran, and North Korea, to our efforts to support political transitions in Iraq and Afghanistan, to preventing atrocities and building peace in war-torn countries, to sounding the alarm on human rights abuses, the U.N. and international organizations play a vital role. But, all too often, political posturing by states leads to political paralysis and inaction, sometimes with devastating consequences. If confirmed, I will push other governments to ensure these organizations can deliver on their promise.

Finally, just as the international landscape continues to evolve, so our international institutions, and the United States should shape that evolution. It is time for the U.N. system to do away with preoccupations and processes whose days have long past, especially the disproportionate and unjust attention paid to Israel. In the U.N. General Assembly, at the U.N. Human Rights Council and elsewhere, Israel is subject to one-sided resolutions and politically motivated investigations. If confirmed, I will fight bias against Israel whenever and wherever possible. At the same time, I will continue the administration's efforts to promote full and equal Israeli participation in international bodies and support its positive contributions to the U.N.

All over the world, people's lives depend on the system of international organizations that the United States helped conceive and lead. In the Philippines, the U.N. is directing the global humanitarian response effort to Typhoon Haiyan. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, U.N. Blue Helmets are helping secure the peace and rekindle the hopes of tens of millions in the Great Lakes region. And in schools, health clinics, and refugee camps all over the world, the U.N. is making sure that future generations will know a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Mr. Chairman, we have a deep stake in shaping the continual renewal of the system of international cooperation and making sure it is as efficient and effective as possible. I look forward to working together with you and with this committee to sustain our leadership in international organizations and our promotion of U.S. foreign policy priorities.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Crocker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BATHSHEBA N. CROCKER

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. More than three decades ago, my father appeared in front of this committee as President Reagan's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. I have learned a great deal from my father's remarkable career about the importance of public service, the art of American diplomacy, and the promise of American leadership. It would be an honor of a lifetime to carry these lessons forward and help advance American interests and values at the United Nations and beyond.

I have also learned a great deal from my mother—a woman who proved that you could have an extraordinary career and be an extraordinary mother. I could not ask for better role models than my parents and I am thrilled that they could both be here today. I also want to recognize my husband, Milan, and my daughters, Asha and Farrin. I owe them more than I could ever say.

I began my public service career as an Attorney-Adviser at the State Department more than 15 years ago. I have seen first-hand how ably our diplomats—Civil and Foreign Service officers alike—represent our country. I have seen their courage on the front lines of conflict. I have seen their resilience and strength in the aftermath of natural disasters. And I have seen their steadfast commitment to standing up to injustice all over the world.

I have also seen firsthand the same determination and skill in the peacekeepers, development professionals, humanitarian workers, and health practitioners I worked with during my time helping lead the U.N.'s Asia tsunami recovery efforts and peacebuilding programs.

This is why I share President Obama's conviction that America's national interests are best served by a robust, responsive, and responsible international system—and by strong and sustained U.S. multilateral engagement and leadership. The challenges of the 21st century—from terrorism to nuclear proliferation, and climate change to development and food security—cannot be solved by any one country on its own. And in an age of fiscal austerity, we will need to work harder than ever to ensure that international organizations are able and willing to meet today's many global challenges.

Thanks to the administration's efforts, the United States today is a more engaged, more effective, and more successful leader in international and multilateral organizations than it has been in a very long time. If confirmed, I pledge to work with this committee to identify and pursue new opportunities to advance our interests throughout the U.N. system. In particular, I will focus on three major priorities: efficiency, effectiveness, and evolution.

First, safeguarding and maximizing U.S. taxpayers' investment in international organizations will be my unflagging preoccupation. There is no question that, despite progress, there are continuing challenges with management and oversight at the United Nations. But these challenges should not lead us to disengage. Instead, they should lead us to redouble our efforts to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability throughout the U.N. system. As the largest contributor

to the U.N., we have a special obligation and influence to promote reform. And if confirmed, I will continue to voice our concerns and lead reform efforts.

Second, I will work to increase the effectiveness of multilateral institutions. In so many of our foreign policy priorities—from our sanctions on al-Qaeda, Iran, and North Korea, to our efforts to support political transitions in Iraq and Afghanistan, to preventing atrocities and building peace in war-torn countries—the U.N. and international organizations play a vital role. They prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. They prevent war and keep the peace. They sound the alarm on human rights abuses. And they promote global commerce and universal values we hold dear. But all too often, political posturing by states leads to political paralysis and inaction—sometimes with devastating consequences. If confirmed, I will push other governments to ensure these organizations can deliver on their promise.

We need active and sustained diplomatic efforts at the International Atomic Energy Agency to maintain the integrity of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. We need to continue our active engagement at the Human Rights Council to hold regimes accountable for the violation of human rights. We need to continue the progress made to improve U.N. peacekeeping. We need to work with partners and institutions to shape the Post-2015 Development Agenda. And we need to continue to push U.N. humanitarian aid agencies to provide more flexible, timely, and coordinated responses to humanitarian emergencies. American leadership in these and other bodies of international cooperation is essential to achieving our broader policy objectives.

Finally, just as the international landscape continues to evolve, so are international institutions. The United States should shape that evolution, working with allies and partners to define a shared vision of international norms and cooperation for this century.

It is time for the U.N. system to do away with processes and preoccupations whose days have long past—especially the disproportionate and unjust attention paid to Israel. In the U.N. General Assembly, at the U.N. Human Rights Council, and elsewhere, Israel is subject to one-sided resolutions and politically motivated investigations. We cannot allow these counterproductive actions by member states to undermine the institutions themselves. If confirmed, I will fight bias against Israel whenever and wherever possible. At the same time, I will continue the administration's efforts to promote full and equal Israeli participation in international bodies and support its proactive and positive contributions to the U.N.

All over the world, people's lives depend on the system of international organizations that the United States helped conceive and lead. In the Philippines, the U.N. is directing the global humanitarian response effort to Typhoon Haiyan. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, U.N. blue helmets helped secure the peace and rekindle the hopes of tens of millions in the Great Lakes region. And in schools, health clinics, and refugee camps all over the world, the U.N. is making sure that future generations will know a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Mr. Chairman, we have a deep stake in shaping the continual renewal of the system of international cooperation and making sure it is as efficient and effective as possible. I look forward to working together with you and with this committee to sustain our leadership in international organizations and our promotion of U.S. foreign policy priorities.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you so much.

Our inability—Shakespeare said that the will is infinite, but the execution is confined. So, I would like to continue the hearing right now, but they have called a rollcall on the floor of the Senate. And so, I have 5 minutes to run over to make the rollcall, and I will return as quickly as possible, and then we will recommence this hearing.

So, this hearing stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Senator BARRASSO [presiding]. Well, thank you so much for your patience in dealing with the floor votes. I just passed Senator Markey. He was on his way to the floor; I was on my way back here. He said that he had been through the opening statements and the comments, so he suggested I just go ahead, in the interest of your time.

And so, if I could, I just wanted to congratulate all of you on the appointments, welcome each of you and family members who are here with you. I appreciate you taking time to be with us to answer the questions. And, should you serve our Nation in these important positions, it is important that each of you provide strong stewardship of American taxpayer resources, demonstrate professionalism and good judgment, and vigorously work to advance the priorities of the United States. I hope you will lay out your vision and goals in each of these positions, and what your plan is to achieving them.

So, I thank the chairman, and I thank the President for nominating you.

If I could, Ms. Crocker, start with you—oh, OK, sorry. Well, I wanted, perhaps, Mr.—I am happy to hear your testimony, at this point, Mr. Lawson. I do not—and I do not want to shortchange the chairman from hearing that testimony. So, you have already spoken?

Ms. CROCKER. I have already provided my opening statement, yes.

Senator BARRASSO. All right. So, perhaps if I could just ask you a few question, and then, as the chairman returns, finish, and then I will add my questions to that if I—thank you.

I want to talk about Israel and U.N. Human Rights Council, the—in your testimony, you talked about the—Israel being subjected to one-sided resolutions, political investigations, and U.N. Human Rights Council. In September 2013, Senator Gillibrand and I sent a bipartisan letter to Secretary Kerry about the pervasive anti-Israel bias that we see at the United Nations. I think item 7 of the U.N. Human Rights Council's Standing Agenda is used to attack Israel. It is the only permanent agenda item that is exclusively reserved for an individual member state. While terrible atrocities are being committed in Syria, human rights abuses are taking place in Iran; the Council will be neglecting serious issues while, I believe, wasting hours singling out Israel.

So, could you just talk a little bit about your views on agenda item No. 7, what steps you would take to accomplish its removal from the agenda?

Ms. CROCKER. Thank you, Senator, for that question. And, as you note and as I indicated, fighting for the full and equal participation of Israel throughout U.N. bodies will be one of my top priorities.

As you note, Israel continues to be subject, among other things, to agenda item 7 at the Human Rights Council. And this is something that the administration has taken great steps so far to try to get rid of, and we will continue to do so, and I will, as well, should I be confirmed.

At the same time, I think, over the last 4 years that the administration—that the United States has been a member of the Human Rights Council, we have been able to make some good progress in battling back against the bias against Israel at the Human Rights Council, but also, importantly, making sure that the Council turn its attention to other important issues, including a Commission of Inquiry that has been set up on Syria and that is collecting valuable evidence on Syria; a Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran; a Special Rapporteur on Belarus, on Eritrea, on Sudan; a Commission of Inquiry on Libya; and other issues. We

have been able to run two resolutions successfully on the situation in Sri Lanka.

So, while there still remains a disproportionate focus on Israel at the Council, we have really been able to reduce that focus. And I think it is one of the important—one of those signs that—of why it is so important for the United States to be an active and engaged member at the Human Rights Council.

Senator BARRASSO. Yes. During the confirmation hearing for Secretary Kerry, you know, I asked specifically about his views on the need for management reform at the United Nations. He stated—he said, "In an era of fiscal crisis and austerity, the U.N. must learn to do more with less."

In your testimony, you expressed your commitment to safeguarding and maximizing U.S. taxpayers' investment. I made a reference to that in my opening statement. Could you talk a little bit about your plans to ensure the United Nations limits growth in U.N. regular budget and is making more efficient use of existing resources?

Ms. CROCKER. As you know, Senator, that has been a special focus of the administration. And, if confirmed, I will certainly do my part to try to continue that focus.

We have been able to make some good progress over the last 5 years, in terms of management reform, including budget reform at the United Nations; and including, most recently, in the budget discussions about the 2014–2015 budget, we were able to successfully reverse the decades-long trend of annual growth in the U.N. regular budget.

That said, it remains a continuing conversation, and it is a difficult one up there. Among other things that we were able to accomplish this time around was a 2-percent staff reduction, which is obviously an important accomplishment. It is not enough, but it is a start.

At the same time, we have been able to make good progress on other important management reforms, such as financial disclosure requirements, audits being publicly available online for most of the U.N. funds in specialized agencies. We have clamped down on some of the abuses in the travel budget of the U.N., including overuse and misuse of business-class travel by U.N. staff. We have remained focused, and, if confirmed, I will be particularly focused on, on trying to constrain the growth in the budget. And a lot of that will be a focus on constraining the growth in staff costs, which, as I indicated, we have had some success on so far, but more work remains to be done.

Senator BARRASSO. Agreed.

Mr. Lawson, just waiting for the chairman to return, I just have a couple of questions, if it is all right with you if I could proceed——

Mr. LAWSON. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO [continuing]. With those.

I want to ask you a little about carbon trading. The European Union established, in a missions trading scheme that applies to all flights arriving and departing from European Union airspace. In September 2012, the Senate unanimously passed S. 1956, the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme Prohibition Act, at that

time. It was signed into law by the President, November 2012. The law provides the Secretary of Transportation the authority to ensure that U.S. aircraft operators are not penalized, or are not harmed, by the Emissions Trading Scheme unilaterally created by the European Union.

Can I—I just—what you believe is the appropriate role for the International Civil Aviation Organization to play on the issue of dealing with this, reducing emissions in the aviation sector.

Mr. LAWSON. Well, thank you for that question.

ICAO is at the center of this issue right now. In the last Assembly, September 2013, we successfully—and we worked very hard to help this happen, but they—the Assembly passed a resolution that established a framework for ICAO to put together a comprehensive scheme for dealing with emissions trading worldwide. The goal is to have a complete scheme put together—not scheme, rather, but program put together for the 2016 Assembly, that is coming up, that would include dealing with, not only a market-based measure worldwide, a global market-based measure, but also dealing with issues such as alternative fuels, dealing with operation efficiencies, and other matters that will reduce the amount of emissions generated by the aviation industry. The goal is to have this approved in 2016, in place for 2020, and to work with respect to 2005 levels, if at all possible.

The framework—the procedural framework for doing that is in place—is not in place now, but is in the process of being put together. And so, if I am confirmed, I will work diligently to make sure that—to help us meet that goal. And it is a very aggressive goal, especially for an organization with 191 members, 36 member councils that are going to be working very hard to make that happen.

So, yes, ICAO is in the—is right in the center of that. If we are successful, it will be a tremendous accomplishment to have a global market-based measure—structure that the entire aviation industry will abide by. And, in the meantime, the issue with respect to the EUETS is that we are—the resolution that was passed did not prohibit organizations like the EU from setting up some sort of regional or national market-based system, but we are concerned about exactly what the Europeans are trying to put together right now.

It is unclear as to what exactly is going to come out of the legislative activities. The Commission has proposed an air-based system. There is not unanimity among the Council and Parliament and the Commission as to what exactly should be done. We are doing what we can to engage in our—with our counterparts in Europe to, hopefully, come up with something that does not create a distraction to what ICAO is trying to do. And we will sees what happens.

If they do not come up with legislation, unfortunately what would happen in April 2014 is that the current stop-the-clock legislation would expire and the legislation that the EU had passed some years ago that would have imposed an ETS—Emissions Trading Scheme—on the totality of flights going in and out of Europe would come into play. And that is the type of legislation that the Thune bill, that you mentioned, was designed to give us the ability

to protect our airlines against. We do not know whether that is going to happen. We hope that it does not happen. As a matter of fact, there is optimism that that will not happen. But, ICAO is in the center of that, and, if I am confirmed, I will work diligently to make sure that we get that done.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Lawson.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY [presiding]. Thank the gentleman very much.

And, Mr. Lawson, I am now going to recognize you for an opening statement, although, for the purposes of your opening statement, you should feel free to delete anything that was just used as material in response to Senator Barrasso's questions. [Laughter.]

And that way we can save some time. So, please go forward for up to 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL ANDERSON LAWSON, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINEE FOR THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Mr. LAWSON. Well, thank you.

Much of my opening statement, actually you gave. [Laughter.]

Senator BARRASSO. Feel free to delete that, too. [Laughter.]

Mr. LAWSON. But, I do want to take a few minutes to welcome members of my family who are here: Kisha and John Lewis, Marcus Mason, and my wife of 34 years, Mattie McFadden Lawson. My sons could not make it, but I am told that they are watching.

But, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the Representative of the United States at the International Civil Aviation Organization. I am honored to be here and am grateful to President Obama for the trust and confidence he has shown in nominating me for this important position, and for the opportunity to serve my country as a Permanent Representative to ICAO.

From the time of the negotiations in the United States at the end of World War II that resulted in the Chicago Convention and the creation of ICAO as a specialized agency of the United Nations devoted to civil aviation, the United States and ICAO have enjoyed an extraordinarily close and mutually beneficial relationship. ICAO is the only forum in which global standards can be set for all aspects of international civil aviation. Whatever the new developments or challenges in the areas of civil aviation—safety, security, and the environment—ICAO provides the mechanisms and the opportunity to address them effectively through the cooperation of member states.

If confirmed, I will bring the cumulative skills and the totality of my professional experience to this role. And, as suggested, I will skip the part of my resume that you effective described.

As a direct result of my experiences on the Board of Commissioners—Board of Airport Commissioners for Los Angeles, I am keenly aware of the many challenges associated with ensuring the safety and security of airline passengers. For this reason, I am proud to have been actively involved in the selection of the excellent team providing on-the-ground leadership at LAX, including ex-

ecutive director Gina Marie Lindsay and the current chief of Airport Police Department, Chief Patrick Cannon. That team was tested on November 1, 2013, when a gunman entered Terminal 3 of LAX, with the apparent intent of attacking and killing TSA employees. While I have no official insights into the tragic events of that day, it is clear to me that the exceptional professionalism and integration I saw among the various Federal and local law enforcement agencies that are present at LAX saved many lives.

Senator Markey and members of the committee, if confirmed, I believe that the experience I have gained as a member and president of the Board of Commissioners, as well as the skills accrued over three decades in the legal profession, will prove relevant and valuable in representing the United States as Permanent Representative to ICAO.

Throughout its history, ICAO has principally devoted its attention to activities involving air safety and air navigation issues. The recent events at LAX only underscore that aviation security is an unceasing task. If confirmed, I will work diligently to advance America's priorities at ICAO and ensure that ICAO continues to play an active and leading role in developing and implementing international aviation security standards.

My experience has also made me keenly aware of the environmental impact of air travel. ICAO has already undertaken a great deal of work in this regard. Technical groups are developing noise and efficiency standards for aircraft and are beginning to work on the development of a global-market-based measure for international aviation CO_2 emissions.

If confirmed, I will also be committed to bringing continued attention to good governance and increased efficiency at ICAO. I will actively pursue the U.S. Government's goals with respect to budget discipline, transparency, and accountability in all areas, including ethics rules, fair procurement practices, financial disclosure for senior officials, and whistleblower protection.

The agenda of the United States and ICAO is extensive and vitally important. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to advance our Nation's interests.

And thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lawson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT MICHAEL A. LAWSON

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the Representative of the United States to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). I am honored to be here and am grateful to President Obama for the trust and confidence he has shown in nominating me for this important position and for the opportunity to serve my country at ICAO.

From the time of the negotiations in the United States at the end of World War II that resulted in the Chicago Convention and the creation of ICAO as the specialized agency of the United Nations devoted to civil aviation, the United States and ICAO have enjoyed an extraordinarily close and mutually beneficial relationship. ICAO is the only forum in which global standards can be set for all aspects of international civil aviation. Whatever the new developments or challenges in the areas of civil aviation safety, security, and the environment, ICAO provides the mechanisms and the opportunity to address them effectively through the cooperation of member states.

If confirmed, I will bring the cumulative skills and totality of my professional experiences to this role. I have spent the majority of my professional career as a transactional attorney at the international law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate Meagher & Flom LLP where I served for 31 years.

In addition to that experience, I have served since 2005 on the seven-member Board of Airport Commissioners of the Los Angeles World Airports, which oversees the operations of Los Angeles International Airport, Van Nuys General Aviation Airport; Ontario International Airport; and Palmdale Airport. In December 2010, I was asked to serve as the President of the Board, a position in which I remained until August 2013.

The Board of Airport Commissioners is responsible for promoting the safety and security of the more than 60 million passengers who travel through its airports on an annual basis. Those responsibilities extend to the efficient and effective day-to-day operations of the airports, including environmental sustainability issues.

I am proud to say that during my tenure on the Board, we initiated the largest public works project in the history of the city of Los Angeles—a $6 billion capital improvement program designed to return LAX to a world class status worthy of the third-busiest airport in the country and the sixth-busiest airport in the world. Those improvements include a new international terminal, 19 new gates, and upgrades designed to accommodate the next generation of large passenger aircraft. Given the program's enormous and complex scale, I take particular pride in highlighting the responsible, efficient, and transparent manner in which it has been managed.

As a direct result of my experiences on the Board of Commissioners, I am keenly aware of the many challenges associated with ensuring the safety and security of airline passengers. For this reason, I am proud to have been actively involved in the selection of the excellent team providing on the ground leadership, including executive director, Ms. Gina Marie Lindsay and the current chief of the airport police department, Chief Patrick Gannon. That team was tested on November 1 when a gunman entered Terminal 3 of LAX with the apparent intent of attacking and killing TSA employees. While I have no formal insights into the tragic events of that day, it is clear to me that the exceptional professionalism and integration I saw among the various federal and law enforcement agencies that are present at LAX saved many lives.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I believe the experience I have gained as a member and president of the Board of Commissioners as well as the skills accrued over three decades in the legal profession will prove relevant and valuable in representing the United States as the permanent representative to ICAO.

Throughout its history, ICAO has principally devoted its attention to activities involving air safety and air navigation issues. The recent events at LAX only underscore that aviation security is an unceasing task. If confirmed, I will work diligently to advance America's priorities at ICAO, and ensure that ICAO continues to play an active and leading role in developing and implementing international aviation security standards.

My experience has also made me keenly aware of the environmental impact of air travel. ICAO is already undertaking a great deal of work in this regard. Technical groups are developing noise and efficiency standards for aircraft, and are beginning work on the development of a global market-based measure for international aviation CO_2 emissions. If confirmed, I will continue my predecessor's focus on ensuring that ICAO's environmental standards are technologically feasible, environmentally beneficial, and economically sustainable with continued expansion of international aviation.

If confirmed, I am also committed to bringing continued attention to good governance and increased efficiency at ICAO. I will actively pursue the U.S. Government's goals with regard to budget discipline, transparency, and accountability in all areas, including ethics rules, fair procurement practices, financial disclosure for senior officials, and whistleblower protection.

The agenda of the United States in ICAO is extensive and vitally important. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to advance our Nation's interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Lawson—in 3 minutes and 50 seconds. Excellent.

Mr. Wood, welcome. Whenever you feel comfortable, please begin.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT A. WOOD, OF NEW YORK, NOMINEE FOR THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Mr. WOOD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

It is a great honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, or CD, in Geneva. I am also grateful to Secretary Kerry and Acting Under Secretary Gottemoeller for their support and for giving me this new opportunity to serve our country.

I also wish to thank my wife, Gita, and son, Jonathan, for their love and support.

Five years ago in Prague, President Obama committed the United States to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, a goal he reaffirmed last June in Berlin. The President emphasized that achieving this goal will not be easy and may well take many more years of effort. Step by step, practical multilateral arms control is an essential part of this process in which the CD has a valuable role to play.

Throughout its history, the CD and its predecessor bodies have made significant contributions to global arms control and nonproliferation efforts. The Outer Space Treaty, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty all were negotiated there on the basis of consensus and with the benefit of American leadership.

The U.S. priority for the CD continues to be the negotiation of a treaty banning the further production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the so-called Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, or FMCT. An FMCT is in the national security interests of the United States because it would end the production of weapons-grade fissile material needed to create nuclear weapons in the states where it is still ongoing with capped stockpiles worldwide and provide the basis for future reductions in nuclear arsenals. For these reasons, an FMCT is one of the President's arms-control priorities and the logical next step in the multilateral nuclear disarmament process.

While fellow CD member state Pakistan has resisted efforts to begin FMCT negotiations, the United States continues to discuss with Pakistan and others possible ways to break the longstanding CD impasse. Moving forward on an FMCT will not be easy, but, if confirmed, I look forward to using my many years of multilateral diplomatic experience to achieve this important U.S. objective.

As part of my disarmament portfolio, if confirmed, I will also play a role in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, review process. Specifically, I will have responsibility for issues related to the NPT's article 6, which addresses nuclear disarmament.

This spring, a preparatory meeting will set the stage for the NPT's next 5-year review conference, in 2015. If confirmed by the time of this meeting, I will remind our partners and friends around the world of the enduring United States commitment to our arms control and nonproliferation obligations, and explain our strong record of accomplishment in this regard. I will also make clear that

the road to a nuclear-weapons-free world is only possible through a realistic, step-by-step approach, with each step building on the last and supported with strong verification measures.

This distinguished committee has a long and successful history of supporting such arms-control efforts, on a bipartisan basis, which has made the world a much safer place.

In working to achieve this long-term nuclear disarmament objective, the CD remains an essential multilateral institution. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to make the CD an active contributor to international peace and security.

If confirmed, I plan to consult closely with this committee and other Members of Congress, as well as their staffs.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to come before you today. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wood follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT A. WOOD

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. It is a great honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, or CD, in Geneva.

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The President emphasized that achieving this goal will not be easy and may well take many more years of effort. Step by step, practical multilateral arms control is an essential part of this process, in which the CD has a valuable role to play.

Throughout its history, the CD and its predecessor bodies have made significant contributions to global arms control and nonproliferation efforts. The Outer Space Treaty, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty all were negotiated there, on the basis of consensus, and with the benefit of American leadership.

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Moving forward on an FMCT will not be easy, but if confirmed, I look forward to using my many years of multilateral diplomatic experience to achieve this important U.S. objective.

As part of my disarmament portfolio if confirmed, I will also play a role in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, review process. Specifically, I will have responsibility for issues related to the NPT's Article VI, which addresses nuclear disarmament.

This spring, a preparatory meeting will set the stage for the NPT's next 5 year Review Conference in 2015. If confirmed by the time of this meeting, I will remind our partners and friends around the world of the enduring United States commitment to our arms control and nonproliferation obligations, and explain our strong record of accomplishment in this regard. I will also make clear that the road to a nuclear weapons-free world is only possible through a realistic, step-by-step approach, with each step building on the last and supported with strong verification measures. This distinguished committee has a long and successful history of sup-

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If confirmed, I plan to consult closely with this committee and other members of Congress, as well as their staffs.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to come before you today. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Wood, very much.

Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will finish up.

Mr. Lawson, I would like to visit just a little about Taiwan. June of last year, the House and the Senate unanimously passed a bill to require the development of a strategy to obtain observer status, as you know, for Taiwan at the Triennial International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly. It was signed. And then, in October, this past October, Taiwan attended the 38th Assembly meeting as a guest. This was welcome news, but, again, Taiwan was only invited as a guest, and only for that specific meeting.

So, I would ask if you support Taiwan joining the International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly and Council as an observer, and, if so, what is your strategy to obtain that status?

Mr. LAWSON. Thank you for that question. The answer is "yes," we are absolutely committed to taking whatever steps, within my power, to achieve that goal.

By way of background, it is United States policy to support membership status in any organization in which Taiwan—in which statehood is not a prerequisite, and to support meaningful participation in any organization in which statehood is a prerequisite.

Statehood is a prerequisite at the U.N., and ICAO is an agency of the U.N. Taiwan does not have observer status at the U.N. Assembly. It can have observer status at the Council. Because of some arcane—"arcane" is probably not the right word—because of some rule, issues with respect to the Assembly, it may be difficult for Taiwan to obtain observer status at the Assembly. I believe that it is possible for Taiwan to obtain observer status at the Council level. But, in each case, it depends on the consensus of the Council and the Assembly. The reason they only got—they were—only would get guest status was an issue with respect to the consensus. We will work diligently to counter that and make sure that they get observer status.

It is very important—Taiwan's participation in the global airspace is highly important, and it is important that they get access to the information that the typical committees and bureaus at ICAO have available, on a timely basis.

So, yes, a short answer, we will do all that we can to ensure that they get that.

Senator BARRASSO. All right. And that will include asking other nations to cooperate and support and——

Mr. LAWSON. Absolutely.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Lawson.

Mr. Wood, just a couple of quick questions. Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty. In your written testimony, you testified that the treaty

is in the national security interest of the United States. And I am just going to ask you how you—how will this treaty prevent countries, like North Korea, from producing more weapons-grade fissile material?

Mr. WOOD. Thank you for your question, Senator.

This treaty, if we are able to reach a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, would halt the production of this very sensitive technology. And we think that is very important and in the national security interests of not only the United States, but other countries around the world. It is the first step, and it is the next logical step, frankly, in the Conference on Disarmament, in terms of our nonproliferation and arms control and disarmament objectives.

So, we do think that this treaty will be very useful, in terms of meeting our national security interests. We hope to be able to get these negotiations going, but, as I mentioned in my statement, Pakistan has opposed starting negotiations in the CD. We hope to be able to try to persuade Pakistan to change its view. And, if confirmed, that will be one of my priority missions when I am in Geneva, because we think, again, as I said, that this treaty is in the best interests of the—the national interests of the United States, and it is the next logical step in moving forward.

Senator BARRASSO. I know you briefly mentioned President Obama's speech in Prague, I think in 2009, in your—at the time, he promised to get rid of the world—rid the world of nuclear weapons. During his remarks, the President also proclaimed, he said, "Rules must be binding, violations must be punished, words must mean something." And I—as you nod your head, I assume you are in agreement with that, as we are.

So, given the New York Times article last week that documented Russia's clear violation of its arms-control obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, why would we continue to negotiate nuclear arms reductions with Russia if we agree with the President's statement that the rules must be binding and arms-control treaty violations must be punished? I mean, it was a, you know, distressing, I think, news for many, the report last week.

Mr. WOOD. Thank you for this question.

The issue of the INF Treaty is something that is not in my portfolio, but let me just say that issues of compliance, or noncompliance, are something that the United States Government takes very, very seriously. And it is important to have, you know, that trust and ability to be able to know that, when you enter into an agreement, that it is going to be abided by.

But, you know, with regard to specific questions of compliance, I would have to refer for—you to the Annual Compliance Report that the Department compiles.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. The Chair will recognize himself.

Mr. Lawson, last year, I led a bipartisan effort in Congress to prevent the TSA from allowing passengers to carry knives onto airplanes. The TSA had proposed a plan to allow knives back on passenger planes in the United States. And that legislation passed on the floor of the House of Representatives, but the TSA decided they changed their mind on that issue. And I think they made the wise decision.

The TSA has proposed a plan, in part to harmonize, now, U.S. standards with that of Europe, which has a more lenient carry-on security standard. Are you committed to ensuring that the U.S. maintains its tougher security and that all planes traveling to American soil from abroad abide by our higher standards? And we can use knives on planes as a good example.

Mr. LAWSON. Thank you for that question.

The short answer is, "yes," I am in favor of the more stringent standard.

Just to be clear, by way of background, ICAO, as a body, sets minimum standards for safety and security worldwide. Countries such as the United States can set standards that exceed the minimum standards that ICAO sets. And so, the United States is still free to impose the no-small-knives standard on flights departing from, or entering into, the United States, and should continue to do so.

I understand the theoretical benefit of harmonizing the standards worldwide. It makes—there are some efficiencies involved in that. There are some issues that cannot be denied in this context, and one of them is that one of the aspects of safety and security is the perception of the passengers. And I believe that the United States citizens are still kind of reeling from 9/11, and one of the issues that we have to consider is their perception of their own safety during this period of time. So, I have no problem with the United States continuing with a higher standard.

Whether we should impose that higher standard on flights that are not coming into the United States or leaving the United States, I defer on that question. I am not sure that there is a U.S. interest in doing so, other than, again, to harmonize and make it more efficient worldwide. But, our goal is to protect U.S. citizens, wherever they are. And so, it is one issue that I will look into, and I will give further thought to it.

Senator MARKEY. Please. Thank you.

The United States—you do agree, though, that the United States does have the authority to impose safety, security, and environmental requirements in U.S. airspace. Is that correct?

Mr. LAWSON. Absolutely, the United States has the authority to so——

Senator MARKEY. And——

Mr. LAWSON [continuing]. With one caveat with respect to environmental issues. Under the—we have the—it is kind of a three-part question—we have the absolute authority to so, under domestic law, but we are also—under the Chicago Convention, we are bound to uphold the standards set by ICAO. And, in this regard, it is important to note that the standards that are set by ICAO oftentimes give us a leeway to set more stringent standards.

Senator MARKEY. OK. So, responding to concerns from the United States and other countries about exerting authority beyond European airspace, the European Union is now proposing to include only aviation emissions from portions of flights within their airspace within the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. This has not satisfied all the critics of the EU's pollution reduction efforts. Even as ICAO works towards a global climate solution for aviation, if the United States were to support new efforts to limit the EU's author-

ity over their own airspace, would we not put at risk our authority over our own airspace?

Mr. LAWSON. Not at all. The issue here is, in part, the interpretation of the resolution that was passed in September 2013 by the Assembly. That resolution does not prohibit national or regional-based—market-based measures established by any particular country. But, the resolution does say that each country—or each region that does this should negotiate or—with the other countries that may be impacted by their market-based measures, to get agreement. It does not say "shall," it says "should."

And so, the resolution itself does not, in and of itself, prevent the EU from establishing an airspace standard. On the other hand, establishing that airspace standard will act as a distraction from what the—what ICAO is bound to do, has, under this resolution, said that it will do by 2016.

And the resolution also does not—so, it does not—the resolution does not endorse the airspace structure that the Commission has proposed. And, by the way, this is not—as you say, there are some factions that do not think they are going far enough, some factions in the EU that think that they are going too far. So, the ultimate resolution is not quite set just yet. But, the fact of the matter is that the way the resolution is drafted, we—by diplomatically and politically trying to get the EU to pull back from its airspace position—does not preclude us, and does not preclude anyone, from moving forward, because the resolution does not mandate that these things not happen.

Senator MARKEY. OK, great, thank you.

My time is expired. Any other questions?

Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Yea, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Crocker, the testimony you stated we need to continue our active engagement at the U.N. Human Rights Council to hold regimes accountable for violation of human rights. Over the years, the Council has lacked some action on a number of serious human rights crises, and disproportionally criticized Israel. The U.N. General Assembly has recently elected China, Cuba, and Russia to be new Council members in November.

In response to—Ambassador Power stated, "Fourteen countries were elected to the Human Rights Council today, including some that commit significant violations of the rights the Council is designated to advance and protect."

In your opinion, does the election of these countries hurt the credibility of the Council? And please identify, perhaps, some examples of how the U.N. Human Rights Council has held regimes accountable for violations against human rights.

Ms. CROCKER. Thank you for that question, Senator.

The administration was obviously disappointed with the reelection of these members to the Council last November, with good reason. The United States has fought to ensure that countries with stellar human rights records, or at least good human rights records, get elected to membership on the Council, and not otherwise.

That having been said, again, this is an example of why it is so important for the United States to be engaged as an active member

on the Council, because we have dealt with these countries being on the Council before. They were on the Council when we joined, in 2009. And, in fact, we have shown that, by virtue of our being an active participant, we have been able to battle back against some of the influence of these countries.

So, as an example, when Cuba was last on the Council, they fought hard against a lot of the things that the United States wanted to put in place. And they lost. We were able to get some of the things that I referenced earlier—the Commission of Inquiry on Syria, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, the Special Rapporteurs on Belarus, on Eritrea, on Sudan, the Commission of Inquiry on Libya, the creation, for the first time in 17 years, of a Special Rapporteur on a functional issue, which is on freedom of assembly and the importance of civil society organizations. All of these things were things that Cuba tried to defeat, and they were not able to defeat, by virtue of the United States successfully working, diplomatically, actively across regional groupings in the Council. And we fully expect that, going forward, we will similarly be able to limit the influence of these countries.

We also work hard behind the scenes to ensure that the countries with the worst human rights records hopefully do not get elected onto the Council. And we were able, for example, last time around, to just persuade Iran not to run in its bid for membership on the Council.

Senator BARRASSO. Thanks.

Mr. Wood, kind of following—you mentioned Iran. I would visit a question there. And I think you said you have a role in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review process in your—it raises a question for me about the issues of Iran as a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The interim deal related to Iran's nuclear program seems to have conceded a very major point, in that it references a future uranium enrichment program in Iran. So, does Iran really have a right to uranium enrichment or plutonium reprocessing technology, in your opinion, under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, specifically, or the nonproliferation regime, you know, just in general?

Mr. WOOD. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I know that Under Secretary Sherman was before the committee earlier today, and I know she addressed that issue. But, let me just say, with regard to the question of the right to enrich, the right to enrich is not explicitly—not stated explicitly in the NPT.

Senator BARRASSO. And your opinion on that?

Mr. WOOD. Having read the NPT document, I would agree with that, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Mr. Wood, I have been a longtime advocate for the policy goals of the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, and I am glad that you mentioned this treaty will be a priority for you. I also believe the best way to achieve this goal is to stop the spread of the dangerous technologies that can create fissile material.

Do you agree that stopping the spread of enrichment and reprocessing technology would help the goals of that treaty?

Mr. WOOD. Thank you for your question, Senator.

The United States, as you know, has a longstanding policy of trying to prevent the proliferation of these sensitive technologies; specifically, enrichment and reprocessing technologies. I would just point out that, when the U.S. engages in bilateral negotiations with countries concerning civil cooperation agreements, we insist that these agreements, without question, have the most stringent nonproliferation conditions that are possible. And, in fact, I would submit that the United States, in terms of our civil nuclear cooperation agreements with other countries, have the most stringent, in terms of nonproliferation conditions, of any country.

Senator MARKEY. Well, hopefully, that will turn out to be the case in the Iranian negotiations we are about to have, because I think it is going to send quite a signal, going forward. And, as you know, unfortunately, in the United Arab Emirate agreement for the transfer of nuclear technology, there is an ability, in the UAE, to enrich uranium as part of the agreement. So, I think that is a problem that we are going to have, going forward.

But, at the end of the day, uniformity, consistency, that is what we are going to have to have on nuclear nonproliferation policy if we are going to be successful.

So, again, I think all three of you are eminently well qualified for your position. Let me ask each of you to give us one minute, in summary, of what it is that you hope to accomplish—one minute—during the time that you will have this incredible privilege to represent our country in the positions that you will be confirmed for.

So, we will begin with you, Mr. Wood, and we will come down the table.

Mr. WOOD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

One of my primary objectives, if confirmed in my job at the CD, is to revive it. It has been 17 years since a treaty has been negotiated at the CD in Geneva. And, as I said in my statement to the committee, that the issue of a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty is the priority for me, you know, if confirmed.

The CD has a lot of potential. As I mentioned also in my statement, there have been a number of agreements, significant agreements, that have been negotiated there, and I think we can still do very, very important work there. And what I hope to do, as I said, is to try to revitalize that institution, because it does have a very important role to play in—you know, for U.S. national security interests.

Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Mr. Lawson.

Mr. LAWSON. Thank you.

I think that the one thing that—well, there are two things that I think are highest on my agenda.

The first is getting the market-based measure and the environmental issues on the table and ready for approval by the Assembly in 2016. That is job one. It is not going to be easy, and it is going to take all of our efforts to get that done in the period of time that we have allotted to do it. It is a tremendous task, it is an important task, and that is going to be job one.

Job number two will be making sure that I do my part to deal with management issues at ICAO, and make sure that they are fiscally responsible for—with the monies that the taxpayers are putting into this organization.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. Crocker.

Ms. CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a few priorities that I will list, and they all lead up to sort of one thing, which I will mention briefly at the end.

The first would be budget and general management reform issues at the United Nations. These are things that have been a major priority for the administration, and that, if confirmed, I will continue to push on. I have worked inside the U.N. system; I have seen the great things about it, and I have seen what needs to be fixed; and I am committed to continuing to work on that.

The second, as I also mentioned in my testimony, will be the defense and the promotion and support of Israel throughout the U.N. system.

I also want to take a hard look at what we are doing on the peacekeeping front, and ensure that we are making the best uses we can out of that tool, which is increasingly important for U.S. national security interests around the world.

I want to keep up an active dialogue with this committee on all issues related to the U.N. and the issues that will fall under my purview, and I look forward to an active conversation on that.

And, most importantly, I want to make sure that the United States and the administration are continuing to use the full gamut of U.N. organizations, agencies, funds, and programs to the best effect that we can to promote and defend U.S. interests and U.S. foreign—U.S. national security interests around the world.

Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Ms. Corker. And thank you for mentioning Israel specifically, as well.

We want to thank each of you for your testimony, your willingness to serve our country. I am proud to support all of your nominations. I hope we can quickly confirm all three of these extremely well-qualified individuals.

As amazing as our troops are, they cannot go everywhere or respond to every crisis in the world, they cannot defend us against a warming climate or the worsening natural disasters that will result if the world fails to act. They cannot force other countries to dismantle and ultimately abolish nuclear weapons. The State Department plays a crucial role in defending and advancing the interests of our country. And Secretary Kerry needs his team in place to do his job, as well.

I ask unanimous consent that the witnesses' full statements be included in the record.

Members of the committee will have until the close of business Wednesday, February 5, to submit questions for the record, with the request to the witnesses that they respond in writing to the committee in a timely fashion.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:10 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MICHAEL ANDERSON LAWSON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER MURPHY

Question. ICAO's effort to craft a strong and effective global market-based mechanism for airline emissions will falter without strong, robust efforts on the part of the U.S. representative to ICAO.

- What specific steps will your office take to rally like-minded nations to consistently push for a strong emissions-capping system at the 2016 ICAO Assembly?

Answer. The United States worked closely with likeminded countries leading up to the 2013 Assembly to adopt an important climate change resolution that committed, among other things, to developing a global market-based measure. If confirmed, I intend to continue to work with likeminded countries directly through their representatives at ICAO and through such regional organizations as the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), and key Asia partners. In the context of this outreach, I will continue to seek the input of the U.S. airline industry in the structure and design of any market-based measure that would be proposed at the 2016 ICAO Assembly, and I will work diligently to ensure that whatever is ultimately adopted will not adversely affect the U.S. airline industry or otherwise put the U.S. airline industry at a competitive disadvantage as compared with other airlines around the world—including airlines of developing member states.

Question. Further, will you actively pursue an agreement that caps emissions at 2020 levels, and will you push for more ambitious targets in the out years?

Answer. We support the ICAO goal of carbon neutral growth from 2020 that is also supported by the international aviation industry. The United States also has a more ambitious domestic target of achieving carbon neutral growth by 2020 compared to the 2005 baseline. With respect to more ambitious targets in the out years, we plan to review targets for the out years, but are not yet at a point of proposing new targets.

Question. What benchmarks should we judge your progress by?

Answer. The benchmark by which we should judge is performance—actually reducing fuel burn and CO_2 emissions. ICAO is tracking fuel-burn information for contracting states. The United States has had a great record of reducing fuel-burn and CO_2 emissions, and we will continue to track our performance in efficiency improvements and CO_2 reductions.

RESPONSES OF BATHSHEBA CROCKER TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. How can the United States try to advance its priorities and respond to crises through the United Nations system when the Security Council is paralyzed? What role does your office play in such situations?

Answer. U.S. engagement throughout the United Nations system allows us to leverage both resources and influence with other like-minded nations toward common goals and to advance American values around the world. Our engagement at the U.N. touches on almost every issue of importance to U.S. national security including maintaining international peace and security, preventing the proliferation of WMDs, responding to humanitarian crises, and addressing threats to global health and stability. The U.N., through the Security Council and other bodies such as the Human Rights Council, is a primary partner in addressing crises of international concern from Syria to the Central African Republic to Haiti to North Korea and many other issues of paramount concern to the United States.

At the Security Council, the United States has differing perspectives with Russia on Syria, for example, but we share an interest in reducing violence; securing chemical weapons; and trying to create a political settlement on the basis of the Geneva Communique. This enabled us to work with Russia in the Security Council to impose on Syria responsibilities and a timeline for the destruction of its chemical weapons. We will continue to use these common interests as the basis for collaboration toward a resolution of the Syrian crisis.

While the Council has struggled to achieve agreement on Syria, it has been highly effective in addressing other issues of importance to the United States. The Security Council has imposed strong sanctions on both Iran and North Korea, built robust

peacekeeping missions in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and helped strengthen fragile states from Afghanistan to Somalia. In 2011, the United States worked with our partners on the Security Council to prevent a massacre in Libya and help the Libyan people begin a transition to democracy after 40 years of brutal dictatorship. In Mali, U.N. peacekeepers have been critical to our efforts to restore stability, which will help prevent the creation of an al-Qaeda safe haven in the Sahel region.

The United States also relies on the U.N. system to help address humanitarian crises that are too big for any one country to face alone. Organizations such as the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF have the expertise, capacity, and networks to reach refugees and conflict victims in highly insecure areas. For example, the U.N. has played a critical role in coordinating and delivering humanitarian assistance to millions of people affected by the violence in Syria, as well as over 2.4 million refugees from Syria who have fled to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. Similarly, U.N. agencies play a critical role in U.S. and international efforts to strengthen global pandemic preparedness, fight infectious disease, improve food security, and promote development to alleviate poverty in the world's poorest regions.

Finally, U.S. engagement in the U.N. helps advance human rights and fundamental American values including freedom of speech, assembly, and association, protection of minorities and the rights of women and children. Through the Human Rights Council, the United States has helped shine a spotlight on the worst human rights abusers, including North Korea, Syria, and Iran. We were also instrumental in helping to pass the U.N.'s first-ever resolution on the human rights of LGBT persons.

The International Organization Affairs Bureau works within the U.N. system to promote U.S. interests, address international crises, and improve the effectiveness of the U.N. system to carry out its mandates. We work with U.N. members in all bodies to advance our mutual interests, engage in frank discussion of our policy differences, and firmly stand by our principles, our partners, and our allies. If confirmed, I will continue both our engagement with the U.N. in pursuit of U.S. interests, and our efforts to make the U.N. a stronger, more effective organization.

Question. Short of a security council resolution, is there anything that can be done to reform United Nations rules that restrict agencies from delivering humanitarian aid and vaccinating children in rebel-held regions where the Syrian Government has tried to deny access?

Answer. We commend the U.N. for carrying out aid deliveries across conflict lines in Syria and continue to urge all parties to allow unhindered humanitarian access so the U.N. can scale up aid for besieged and difficult-to-reach areas. The lack of humanitarian access to many areas in Syria is appalling and most of the blame lies with the Syrian regime.

Despite access problems, humanitarian assistance provided by the U.N. and the International Committee of the Red Cross, funded by the United States, is reaching more than 4.2 million people in Syria, including opposition/contested areas. But these organizations do not have unfettered access to communities in need. This is not acceptable, and the United States, the U.N. and others have been pressing the regime to facilitate the implementation of humanitarian assistance, consistent with Syria's primary responsibility to provide and care for populations in need within its territory.

We continue to engage with the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs to coordinate on how to best improve humanitarian access in Syria, and we are engaged in intensive bilateral and multilateral diplomacy with Russia and other key actors to seek a breakthrough in gaining access to those beyond the current reach of humanitarian organizations.

Unfortunately, the Syrian regime has imposed undue restrictions on the U.N. and other humanitarian organizations, thereby severely curtailing their access to many communities in need. The Syrian regime bears the primary responsibility to protect and provide for its citizens, either directly or by giving humanitarian organizations access to help all those in need. At this time, the regime is failing to uphold such responsibilities. On the contrary, it is blocking access to some of the hardest-hit communities, including Al Hajar Al-Aswad, East Ghouta, Mouadhamiyah, Yarmouk Camp, as well as the Old City of Homs, and thereby preventing more than 250,000 people from accessing humanitarian assistance. The U.N.'s reach is also hampered by ongoing violence, shifting battle lines, and in negotiating for access with multiple armed factions.

Question. If confirmed, will you work to discourage international bodies from upgrading the Palestinian Authority to full member state status outside a peace agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Israel?

Answer. Yes. The administration has been absolutely clear that we will continue to oppose firmly any and all unilateral actions in international bodies or treaties that circumvent or prejudge the very outcomes that can only be negotiated between the parties, including Palestinian statehood. And, we will continue to stand up to efforts that seek to delegitimize Israel or undermine its security.

We will continue to make clear, both with the parties and with international partners, that the only path for the Palestinians to realize their aspiration of statehood is direct negotiations, and that Palestinian efforts to pursue endorsements of statehood claims through the U.N. system outside of a negotiated settlement are counterproductive. The international community cannot impose a solution. A viable and sustainable peace agreement can come only from mutual agreement by the parties.

We remain vigilant on this matter and work in extremely close coordination with the Israeli Government and our other international partners.

Question. Many close allies of the U.S. support anti-Israel resolutions in the U.N. General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. Do you believe the United States can do more to leverage our global relationships to reduce anti-Israel activity at the U.N.?

Answer. This administration has fought hard for fair and equal treatment for Israel across the U.N. system, including lobbying the member states of the U.N. to vote against biased anti-Israel resolutions at the General Assembly, Human Rights Council, and other U.N. fora. We continue to oppose anti-Israel statements, resolutions, and efforts to delegitimize Israel whenever and wherever raised in international organizations. As President Obama and Secretary Kerry have made clear, the United States believes that Middle East peace can only be resolved through direct negotiations between the parties, not through one-sided and provocative statements and resolutions against Israel at the United Nations.

Despite concerted diplomatic efforts at U.N. fora, and in capitals around the globe, we have seen little change in the vote counts on Israel-related resolutions. But we have made some progress in reducing the number of those resolutions. For example, prior to American membership, over half of all of the country-specific resolutions the HRC adopted concerned Israel. This number has been reduced to well under one-third since the United States joined the Council. In bodies including the General Assembly and Human Rights Council, we will continue to use the U.S. voice and vote against anti-Israel resolutions, and in the HRC we use our influence to ensure that these resolutions do not pass by consensus.

We will continue to engage foreign governments and coordinate closely with Israel and other like-minded states to work to shift the vote dynamics on anti-Israel resolutions and to improve Israel's status in various U.N. fora. Israel's recent admission to the Western European and Others Group in Geneva, which the United States lobbied aggressively for, and their subsequent reengagement with the Human Rights Council, will help to create a more positive atmosphere throughout the U.N. system. We will continue to work closely with Israel in this regard on continued efforts to improve their status at the United Nations.

Question. I was disappointed that the government shutdown last fall forced the United States Government to reschedule its appearance before the U.N. Human Rights Committee on its Compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a treaty ratified under President George H.W. Bush that protects core freedoms. Could you describe the role your office will play in preparing for the upcoming review in March, and what other parts of the State Department have responsibilities for preparing for the ICCPR review?

Answer. Preparation for the U.S. Government's presentation of its Fourth Periodic Report on its implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is a collaborative interagency effort. The Office of the Legal Adviser (L) has primary responsibility for preparing the report (submitted in December 2011), and for coordinating an interagency delegation to respond to the committee's questions during the upcoming March presentation. That office coordinates with many different U.S. Government agencies and bureaus within the State Department, such as the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO), the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), the Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT), the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP), among others, to update the committee on developments since the 2011 report and prepare delegation members for questions that are most likely to arise. The IO Bureau also provides, through the U.S.

Mission in Geneva, critical on-the-ground support for the U.S. presentation and related events, including a consultation with civil society organizations on the U.S. report. The IO Bureau will also participate in the delegation that appears before the Committee.

Question. Will you continue the work of your predecessors to highlight in international forums Iran's gross human rights violations and Tehran's support for terrorist organizations?

Answer. Yes. The United States is committed to continuing our efforts to hold Iran accountable for its egregious human rights record and state sponsorship of terrorism at the United Nations.

The United States led efforts with Sweden in the U.N. Human Rights Council in March 2011 to create a Special Rapporteur on Iran, the first country-specific human rights rapporteur created since the HRC was established in 2006. Special Rapporteur Ahmed Shaheed, a former Foreign Minister of the Maldives and respected human rights advocate, serves as an independent and credible voice to highlight human rights violations and abuses in Iran. Each year, the United States works to increase the vote margins on resolutions to renew Special Rapporteur Shaheed's mandate. These actions are more than symbolic, as the Iranian Government has released some prisoners and taken certain other positive steps when it comes under pressure from the United Nations and in other international fora.

Additionally, every year the United States works with Canada on an annual U.N. General Assembly resolution condemning human rights violations and abuses in Iran. The United States plans to work closely with Canada and other allies to secure another strong condemnation of violations and abuses of human rights in Iran at this year's General Assembly. It is resolutions such as these that deepen the Iranian regime's isolation and underscore the international community's condemnation of Iran's abhorrent behavior against its own people, its concern for the rights of all Iranians, and its call for Iranian authorities to respect their government's international obligations.

In the U.N., we will also continue to call attention to Iran's sponsorship of terrorism and work to maintain sanctions pressure on the regime in Tehran. Engagement at the United Nations has been an essential part of creating the toughest, most comprehensive sanctions to date on the Iranian regime. Our U.N. efforts, which include adoption of four U.N. Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on Iran under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter since 2006, have resulted in strong international measures to counter Iran's illicit activities. The Iran Sanctions Committee, with the assistance of the Iran Sanctions Panel of Experts, has investigated and published detailed reports on Iranian noncompliance with its UNSC obligations and its attempts to evade the sanctions imposed on it. It has also outlined for member states through "Implementation Assistance Notices" published on its Web site a number of evasion techniques used by Iran to circumvent sanctions, and made observations regarding member state obligations for implementing the sanctions.

Question. Is there anything that can be done to address situations where countries serve on international bodies while violating the fundamental goals of those organizations—e.g., Iran or North Korea chairing international bodies on disarmament, or one-party dictatorships serving on the U.N. Human Rights Council?

Answer. The United States remains very concerned about such situations. In the case of the HRC, the United States actively encourages countries with strong records to seek seats and promotes competitive elections for the HRC. Elections to the Council are done by secret ballot among all 193 members of the General Assembly. The United States has worked behind the scenes with other countries to successfully oppose the election of some of the worst human rights violators to the Human Rights Council and other important U.N. bodies on numerous occasions in the past, including efforts last year to pressure Iran to drop its HRC bid, which Iran did. The United States will continue to do so.

In the Conference on Disarmament, the presidency of the CD serves to facilitate discussion among the CD member states and rotates among all members of the CD every 4 weeks. Because the CD operates by consensus, no decision can be taken by the CD president without the approval of the United States and other CD member states. While the presidency of the CD is largely ceremonial and involves no substantive responsibilities, the United States has taken appropriate action when a country's policies and actions contravene the fundamental goals of the Conference. For example, during Iran's presidency from May 28–June 24, 2013, the United States was not represented at the ambassadorial level during any meeting presided over by Iran, did not meet with the Iranian President during his 4-week term, and continued to call for Iran to comply fully and without delay with all of its obligations

under the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and to meet its obligations under its safeguards agreement. During North Korea's rotation to the CD presidency in July 2011, the United States also was not represented at the ambassadorial level, did not meet with the DPRK president during the 4 weeks of his term, and called on the DPRK to comply fully with U.N. Security Council resolutions, safeguards obligations, and its commitments under the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement.

NOMINATIONS OF LUIS MORENO, JOHN ESTRADA, AND NOAH MAMET

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Luis G. Moreno, of Texas, to be Ambassador to Jamaica
John L. Estrada, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Noah Bryson Mamet, of California, to be Ambassador to the Argentine Republic

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez and Rubio.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Thank you for your patience. As I think some of you may know, we were on the floor voting, including voting for the next U.S. Ambassador to China. So we appreciate your forbearance.

We have three nominees before us. They are Luis Moreno to be Ambassador to Jamaica; John Estrada, nominated to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; and Noah Bryson Mamet to be Ambassador to the Argentine Republic.

Mr. Moreno is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, as the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. embassy in Madrid, Spain. From 2010 to 2011, he served as Political Military Affairs Minister Counselor, as well as Force Strategic Engagement Cell Director, at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad in Iraq. He has also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Tel Aviv, Israel; Counselor General Principle Officer in Monterey, Mexico; Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; and a list of other experiences. And we appreciate your service.

John Estrada is senior manager for Lockheed Martin Training Solutions, Incorporated. Prior to this career in the private sector, Sergeant Major Estrada served in the United States Marine Corps for 34 years, rising to become the 15th sergeant major of the

United States Marine Corps, the Nation's highest ranking enlisted marine. And so we are pleased to have you here, Sergeant Major, to be the President's nominee as Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago.

Our third nominee is Noah Bryson Mamet. Mr. Mamet is founder and president of Noah Mamet and Associates. He serves as a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, the American Council of Young Political Leaders. He also sits on the boards of the Los Angeles-based Green Dot Public Schools and NatureBridge. And we appreciate having him here as well.

We welcome you all to the committee. We welcome any family, friends who may be joining us today to offer their support. And we know how proud you all must be. We also recognize the sacrifice of families who are willing to share their loved one in the service of the Nation, and we understand that it is an equal sacrifice to them as well. So we thank you for your support and your service.

I understand that our distinguished colleague from Colorado is here to join in the introduction of Mr. Mamet, and I would like to recognize him at this time. Senator Bennet?

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL F. BENNET, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator BENNET. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and it is a privilege to be here with these nominees. And congratulations to you and the committee on the successful vote on our next Ambassador to China.

It is also a privilege to introduce Noah Mamet, the President's nominee to serve as the Ambassador to the Argentine Republic. I have known Noah for a number of years, and I enthusiastically support his nomination.

Throughout his career, Noah has worked to build democracy abroad and support international economic development. He represented the National Democratic Institute in monitoring the first democratic elections in Sierra Leone since the country's civil war.

Noah was instrumental in helping to establish the Clinton Foundation. His work was critical in developing and producing the first Clinton Global Initiative, which has convened leaders from across the globe to create and implement practical, innovative solutions to some of the most pressing challenges our world faces.

Noah's involvement with the U.S. Institute of Peace has helped bolster that organization's ability and reach its mission to help manage and resolve international conflicts through nonviolent means.

He is also a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy. This association's focus on addressing global transformation from an eastern Pacific Ocean perspective I think will serve Noah well in this new role.

These experiences have given him a deep understanding and appreciation of our Nation's role in the world and the challenges that we face abroad.

Just another small point, but Noah also shares my commitment on the question of education and the need to improve outcomes for children living in poverty in this country. He has served on the board of the largest and most prominent public charter school operator in the country, Green Dot Public Schools.

And, Mr. Chairman, with that, I can say I think we will be very well served by Noah Mamet.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Bennet. I appreciate you making the introduction before the committee.

I know your schedule, so please feel free to be excused at any time.

Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection. I would ask you to summarize your statement in about 5 minutes or so so that the members of the committee can engage in a dialogue with you. We will start off with Mr. Moreno and then Mr. Estrada, as I introduced you, and Mr. Mamet.

Mr. Moreno.

STATEMENT OF LUIS G. MORENO, OF TEXAS, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO JAMAICA

Mr. MORENO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Rubio. Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica. I want to express my gratitude to the President and Secretary Kerry, as well as to Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson, for their trust and confidence.

Please allow me the opportunity to introduce my wife, Gloria, who is here with me. Without her patience, unconditional support, and loving understanding, I certainly would not be sitting here in front of you. My oldest daughter, Sabina, is following online from Florida and my youngest daughter, Denise, along with my friends and colleagues from the Embassy, are also following online from Spain.

As I acknowledge the support of my family, I would be remiss not to mention my parents, both deceased, who played a major role in my choice of career. My dad was a refugee, a medical doctor who fled the political violence in his native born Colombia and found refuge in New York City. His medical degree was not recognized and he did not speak a word of English. What followed was a classic American success story. During his career, he became the head of orthopedic surgery at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital and helped develop the artificial hip replacement. With my mom, a nursing student born in Cuba, he raised two boys in the United States, both of whom ended up in the senior ranks of the Department of State and in whom he ingrained a passion for service to their country. My brother Ed recently retired after 25 years of service from Diplomatic Security where he last served as the Assistant Director for Diplomatic Security, Domestic Operations. I know that both our parents would be very proud of the service of both of their sons if they were here today.

I have been privileged to serve my country for 31 years in postings in the Western Hemisphere, the Middle East, Europe, and Washington, including three postings as Deputy Chief of Mission in Port-au-Prince, Tel Aviv, and most recently and presently in Madrid. In fact, in my 28 years of overseas postings, Madrid has been my only nondanger, nonhardship post. I have covered a wide range of issues throughout my career: narcotics and law enforcement, refugee issues in Haiti, and Kurds from northern Iraq that were re-

settled in the United States via Guam, political-military and transitional issues in Iraq, as well as playing a small role in the Middle East peace process while in Israel.

While my assignments have afforded me a diverse and multifaceted background, there is a clear commonality among most of my assignments. I work toward team-building and finding solutions to challenges in tough places. If confirmed as Ambassador, it will be along those same lines that I will lead our mission in Jamaica. I will lead the Embassy team to find solutions to the toughest problems this close friend and neighbor is currently experiencing.

The United States and Jamaica enjoy a strong, cooperative relationship that crosses many spheres, including citizen security, law enforcement, strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights, energy, climate change, and economic development. Jamaica has a well-earned reputation as a tourist destination, hosting over 2 million American visitors every year. The safety and security of these visitors and the 40,000 Americans who currently live in Jamaica will be my highest priority.

Despite this reputation as a tropical paradise, a well-earned one, Jamaica, a mere 51 years after independence, is facing severe challenges which could have a long-lasting impact if we do not help Jamaica mitigate them now. I would like to highlight two of the most daunting challenges we have: the economic reform Jamaica has agreed to undertake as of last year, and ensuring the safety and security of both our nations and citizens. Jamaica, along with much of the Caribbean, is particularly vulnerable not only to these man-made risks but also to natural disasters such as devastating hurricanes or earthquakes.

Mr. Chairman, ensuring stability abroad, both in terms of citizen security and economic development, in countries like Jamaica increases our own security at home. Our current assistance to Jamaica, including through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative and USAID's bilateral assistance, seeks to partner with Jamaica to address shared regional challenges that affect the everyday concerns of Jamaica's citizens. If confirmed, I will work as Ambassador to most efficiently use the available resources to ensure Jamaica continues on the path of sustainable economic and social development. This is in the interest of both Jamaica and the United States.

Last May, Jamaica signed an economic reform package with the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, to help tackle its huge public debt, almost 1½ times its annual gross domestic product, one of the highest ratios in the world. This package, together with loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, adds up to nearly $2 billion. Approximately 3 years of this agreement remain for Jamaica to get its financial house in order and to begin to grow its economy, something it has not been able to do in three decades. If confirmed—most likely I will be there for the majority of that time—let me reassure you that this issue will be among my highest priorities. I will work with our Jamaican partners to encourage them through the difficult economic times that will, no doubt, take place while reminding them about the enduring and sustainable benefits of partnership with the United

States and prospects that will emerge as a result of reform and more economic stability.

I will skip ahead to the end, Senator, in the interest of time.

This is a historic opportunity for Jamaicans to build a stronger, more prosperous country. If confirmed, I pledge to serve our country, just as I have for the past three decades, and to work with our Jamaican friends to continue to strengthen the partnership between our two countries.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Rubio, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I certainly welcome your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Moreno follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LUIS G. MORENO

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Jamaica. I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry, as well as to Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson for their trust and confidence.

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I have been privileged to serve my country for 31 years in postings in the Western Hemisphere, the Middle East, Europe, and in Washington, including three postings as Deputy Chief of Mission in Port-au-Prince, Tel Aviv, and most recently, Madrid. In fact, in my 28 years of overseas postings, Madrid has been my only nondanger, nonhardship posting. I have covered a wide range of issues throughout my career: narcotics and law enforcement in Colombia, Peru, and Panama; refugee issues in Haiti and with Kurds from Northern Iraq that were resettled in the U.S. via Guam; political-military, and transitional issues in Iraq, as well as playing a small role in the Middle East peace process while in Israel. While my assignments have afforded me a diverse and multifaceted background, there is a clear commonality among most of my assignments—I work toward team-building and finding solutions to challenges in tough places. If confirmed as Ambassador, it will be along those same lines that I will lead our mission in Jamaica. I will lead the Embassy team to find solutions to the toughest problems this close friend and neighbor is currently experiencing.

The United States and Jamaica enjoy a strong, cooperative relationship that crosses many spheres, including citizen security, law enforcement, strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights, energy, climate change, and economic development. Jamaica has a well-earned reputation as a tourist destination, hosting over 2 million American visitors every year. The safety and security of these visitors and the 40,000 Americans who currently live in Jamaica, will be my highest priority. Despite this reputation as a tropical paradise for tourists, Jamaica, a mere 51 years after independence, is facing severe challenges which could have a long-lasting impact if we don't act to help Jamaica mitigate them now. I would like to highlight two of the most daunting challenges: the economic reform Jamaica agreed to undertake last year ensuring the security of both our nations and our citizens. Jamaica, along with much of the Caribbean, is particularly vulnerable

to not only these man-made risks but also to natural disasters such as devastating hurricanes or earthquakes.

Mr. Chairman, since 9/11 the U.S. has emphasized the need to strengthen our borders. The Caribbean is our third border. Ensuring stability abroad, both in terms of citizen security and economic development in countries like Jamaica, increases our own security at home. Our current assistance to Jamaica, including through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) and USAID's bilateral assistance, seeks to partner with Jamaica to address shared regional challenges that affect the everyday concerns of Jamaica's citizens. If confirmed, I will work as Ambassador to most efficiently use the available resources to ensure Jamaica continues on the path of sustainable economic and social development. This is in the interest of both Jamaica and the United States.

Last May, Jamaica signed an economic reform package with the International Monetary Fund to help tackle its huge public debt—almost 1½ times its annual Gross Domestic Product, one of the highest ratios in the world. This package, together with loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, adds up to almost $2 billion. Approximately 3 years of this agreement remain for Jamaica to get its financial house in order and begin to grow its economy—something it hasn't been able to do in nearly three decades. If confirmed, I will likely be there during most of that time. Let me reassure you that this issue will be among my highest priorities. I will work with our Jamaican partners to encourage them through the difficult economic times that will no doubt take place, while reminding them about the enduring and sustainable benefits of partnership with the U.S. and the prospects that will emerge as a result of reform and more economic stability. The ingredients for success are evident. For example, through a USAID activity supporting Jamaica's Tax Administration, the Government of Jamaica has identified and recouped over $100 million in unpaid taxes, thereby increasing its revenue base and creating a foundation for sound, transparent, and self-sustaining revenue forecasting and collections.

This is a historic opportunity for Jamaicans to build a stronger, more prosperous country. If confirmed, I pledge to serve our country just as I have been doing for the past three decades and to work with our Jamaican friends to continue to strengthen the partnership between our two countries.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Let me, before I turn to Mr. Estrada, recognize the former United States Ambassador to Haiti and Croatia, James Foley. I appreciate you being here, Mr. Ambassador. I understand Mr. Moreno was your Deputy Chief of Mission in Haiti. So you are still backing him up here. So I appreciate it.

Mr. Estrada.

STATEMENT OF JOHN L. ESTRADA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Mr. ESTRADA. Mr. Chairman, Senator Rubio, good afternoon.

It is an honor to appear before you today. I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me with this nomination to represent my country as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Please allow me the opportunity to introduce my wife, Dr. Elizabeth Cote Estrada, who is here with me today.

I am particularly thrilled at the prospect of representing the United States in the country of my birth, if confirmed. I was born in Trinidad and Tobago, and at age 14, I immigrated to the United States to forge a new life. I brought with me a respect for diversity and an inherent sense of the equal value of all people. I served with honor in the United States Marine Corps, attaining the Corps' highest enlisted rank, 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. After retiring from the Marine Corps, I continued service to my

country as a presidential appointed commissioner on the American Battle Monuments Commission and as a committee member on the Defense Advisory Committee for Women in the Services. In the private sector, I led Lockheed Martin Training Solutions, Incorporated, a company specializing in flight training and logistics solutions for our military.

I firmly believe that one of the greatest aspirations of all free people is to live their lives to the fullest without limitations based on their ethnicity, class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. If confirmed as Ambassador, with that ideal as my guide, I would seek to strengthen the ties between the citizens and elected representatives of our two great nations.

Trinidad and Tobago is an important Caribbean partner of the United States. The relationship between our countries rests on a strong foundation. We share a common language and a firm commitment to democratic principles, the rule of law, and a free market system.

The United States mission to Trinidad and Tobago has three strategic objectives. On security, the mission works with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to improve the capacity of Trinidadian law enforcement and just sector institutions to reduce violent crime and illicit trafficking, safeguard human rights, and create safer communities. The mission promotes increased commerce and a transparent investment climate to enhance our mutual prosperity. On social inclusion, the mission conducts extensive outreach and encourages regional leadership by Trinidad and Tobago to protect vulnerable populations, including at-risk youth. If confirmed, I look forward to leading our efforts in these crucial areas.

The United States and Caribbean partners have developed the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, an ongoing, multifaceted citizen security initiative for the Caribbean, of which Trinidad and Tobago is a key player. In creating the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, the United States and Caribbean partners prioritized three pillars: substantially reducing illicit trafficking of narcotics and arms, increasing public safety and security, and promoting social justice. I will do my utmost, if confirmed, to increase cooperation and encourage Trinidad and Tobago to become a leader in security in the Caribbean.

As a resource-rich country, Trinidad and Tobago is full of opportunities for energy companies. The United States works closely with Trinidad and Tobago to develop new avenues for regional energy and conservation. I am excited Trinidad and Tobago is playing a growing role in the region and promoting business relationships in the hemisphere. If confirmed, I would advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and commercial interests to assure a level playing field and support their engagement with Trinidad and Tobago.

I firmly believe that my service in the Marine Corps and my experience in the private sector, coupled with my personal history, have prepared me to represent the government and the people of the United States to the government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

If confirmed, it would be my great honor to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance our objectives in the Caribbean.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before this distinguished committee. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Estrada follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY JOHN LEARIE ESTRADA

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee, good afternoon. It is an honor to appear before you today. I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me with this nomination to represent my country as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Please allow me the opportunity to introduce my wife, Elizabeth Anne Coté Estrada, who is with me here today.

I am particularly thrilled at the prospect of representing the United States in the country of my birth, if confirmed. I was born in Trinidad and Tobago, and at age 14, I immigrated to the United States to forge a new life. I brought with me a respect for diversity and an inherent sense of the equal value of all people. I served with honor in the U.S. Marine Corps—attaining the Corps' highest enlisted rank as the 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. After retiring from the Marine Corps, I continued serving my country as a Presidential-appointed Commission member of the American Battle Monuments Commission and as a committee member on the Defense Advisory Committee for Women in the Services. In the private sector, I led Lockheed Martin Training Solutions, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary company specializing in flight training and logistics solutions.

I firmly believe that one of the greatest aspirations of all free people is to live their lives to the fullest without limitations based on their ethnicity, class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. If confirmed as Ambassador, with that ideal as my guide, I would seek to strengthen the ties between the citizens and elected representatives of our two great nations.

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The United States and Caribbean partners have developed the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), an ongoing, multifaceted citizen security initiative for the Caribbean, of which Trinidad and Tobago is a key player. In creating CBSI, the United States and Caribbean partners prioritized three pillars: substantially reducing illicit trafficking of narcotics and arms, increasing public safety and security, and promoting social justice. I will do my utmost, if confirmed, to increase cooperation and encourage Trinidad and Tobago to become a leader in security in the Caribbean.

As a resource-rich country, Trinidad and Tobago is full of opportunity for energy companies. The United States works cooperatively with Trinidad and Tobago to develop new avenues for regional energy security and conservation. I am excited Trinidad and Tobago is playing a growing role in regional integration and promoting business relationships in the hemisphere, including by hosting the upcoming 2014 Americas Competitiveness Forum. The United States welcomes and supports Trinidad and Tobago's membership in and chairmanship of the Pathways to Prosperity initiative. If confirmed, I would advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and commercial interests to assure a level playing field and support their engagement with Trinidad and Tobago.

Education is the foundation for economic growth. If confirmed, I will work with the government of Trinidad and Tobago to explore ways in which we can provide

at-risk youth and other vulnerable populations with tools that can help them succeed.

I firmly believe that my service in the Marine Corps and my experience in the private sector, coupled with my personal history, have prepared me to represent the government and people of the United States to the government and people of Trinidad and Tobago.

If confirmed, it would be my great honor to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance our objectives in the Caribbean.Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before this distinguished committee. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Estrada. I am thankful that you did not put us through a Marine Corps drill. [Laughter.]

That is a plus.

Mr. Mamet.

STATEMENT OF NOAH BRYSON MAMET, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

Mr. MAMET. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Rubio, and members of the committee.

It is a privilege and an honor to be here today as the President's nominee to be the Ambassador of the United States to the Argentine Republic. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and trust and for sending my name to the Senate for your consideration. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to work closely with you, Mr. Chairman, this committee, and your distinguished colleagues on our partnership with Argentina.

I would like to thank Senator Bennet for his kind introduction. I believe he is one of the great public servants in the country today.

On a personal note, growing up in California, I was fortunate enough to have two wonderful and supportive parents, Bryan and Millie, who instilled in me the values of hard work, dedication, and love of country. I am thrilled that my mother was able to fly here today and is visiting the U.S. Senate for the very first time.

Although my father is no longer with us, he would be proud beyond belief that I am here today in front of this distinguished committee. Rather uniquely, both my father and grandfather volunteered and served as enlisted men together in World War II. In fact, I believe my grandfather was one of the oldest enlisted men in the Navy at one point. Through them, I was raised to believe that public service in any capacity is the highest calling, so I am deeply honored to be here today.

After spending many years in Washington, I founded my own company a decade ago. I have built a successful business, consulting for many companies, organizations, and NGOs, including the Clinton Global Initiative, the National Democratic Institute, as well as numerous national political leaders such as President Clinton and Secretary Albright. This experience has taught me the power of partnership, that no one sector alone can be as effective as the combined efforts of the public sector, the private sector, and civil society. If confirmed, I look forward to putting all of my experience into furthering our bilateral relationship with Argentina.

The people of the United States and Argentina have a long history of friendship and close collaboration that stretches back nearly two centuries. The guiding principles for today's relationship are based on core democratic values, shared interests, and a natural af-

finity between two societies. If confirmed, I will work to expand cooperation with Argentina on mutually important issues, including energy, human rights, nuclear nonproliferation, and educational exchanges.

Considering that nearly half of Argentina's population is under the age of 35, I will be committed to expanding educational exchange programs for students from both Argentina as well as the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to drawing on my extensive experience working with NGOs in the United States to strengthen our current relationships and build new ones with a vibrant Argentine civil society.

Expanding scientific discovery and technological innovations is another promising area for greater cooperation. Our two countries have more than 60 joint projects underway in energy, health, science, and technology. In fact, a successful trip to Argentina by NASA Administrator Charles Bolden highlighted our longstanding cooperation on earth observation satellites.

In addition to our bilateral partnership, the United States has a strong cooperation with Argentina in multilateral fora such as the U.N. and the IAEA, where Argentina is a strong voice in support of human rights and nuclear nonproliferation.

Argentina's highly educated population and diversified industrial base have attracted more than 500 U.S. companies. The United States is strongly committed to working with Argentina to increase two-way trade that creates jobs in both countries. However, the United States and other governments remain concerned over some protectionist policies. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to address these concerns. I will also urge Argentine officials at the highest levels to resolve such economic legacy issues as Argentina's Paris Club arrears and to normalize relations with all of its creditors, both public and private.

Although there are some challenges, I am optimistic that the future of our relationship with Argentina is bright. As Secretary Kerry has expressed, the United States has a vested and shared interest in a vibrant, strong, and prosperous Argentina. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Argentine Government, their officials, as well as the private sector and civil society, as we further our bilateral relationship and strengthen longstanding ties between our two great nations.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, and your distinguished colleagues and staff to advance U.S. interests in Argentina.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mamet follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NOAH B. MAMET

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to be here today, as the President's nominee to be the Ambassador of the United States to the Argentine Republic. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and trust, and for sending my name to the Senate for your consideration. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to work closely with this committee and with your distinguished colleagues on our partnership with Argentina.

I'd like to thank Senator Bennet for his kind introduction. On a personal note, growing up in California, I was lucky to have two wonderful and supportive parents, Bryan and Millie, who instilled in me the values of hard work, dedication, and love

of country. I'm thrilled my mother was able to fly here today and is visiting the U.S. Senate for the first time. Although my father is no longer with us, he would be proud beyond belief that I am here today in front of this distinguished committee. Rather uniquely, both my father and grandfather volunteered and served together as enlisted servicemen in WWII at the same time. In fact, I believe my grandfather was one of the oldest enlisted men in the Navy at one point. Through them, I was raised to believe that public service, in any capacity, is the highest calling, so I am deeply honored to be here today.

After spending many years in Washington, I founded my own company a decade ago. During these years, I've built a successful business, consulting for many companies and leaders in various sectors. I've also worked with many NGOs including the Clinton Global Initiative and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), as well as with numerous national and international political leaders, including President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. This experience has taught me the power of partnership, the truth that no one sector alone can be as effective as the combined efforts of the public sector, the private sector, and civil society. If confirmed, I look forward to putting all of my experience into furthering our bilateral relationship with Argentina.

The people of the United States and Argentina have a long history of friendship and close collaboration that stretches back nearly two centuries. The guiding principles for today's relationship are based on core democratic values, shared interests, and natural affinity between two societies. In fact, just over a month ago, Argentina celebrated the 30th anniversary of its return to democracy, a very important milestone for the people of Argentina. If confirmed, I will work to expand cooperation with Argentina on mutually important issues, including energy, human rights, nuclear nonproliferation, and educational exchanges.

I have always believed in the importance of public diplomacy and people-to-people relationships. Like much of the world, many Argentines maintain a great interest in American culture, and if confirmed, I look forward to drawing on my extensive experience working with NGOs in the United States to strengthen current relationships and build new ones with a vibrant Argentine civil society.

Considering that nearly half of Argentina's population is under the age of 35, I will be committed to expanding educational exchange programs for students from both Argentina and the United States. If confirmed, I will broaden our ties through our 14 Binational Centers, English language programs, and exchanges.

Expanding scientific discovery and technological innovations is another promising area for greater cooperation. Our two countries have more than 60 joint projects under way in energy, health, science, and technology. In fact, a successful trip to Argentina by NASA Administrator Charles Bolden highlighted our longstanding cooperation on earth observation satellites.

In addition to our bilateral partnership, the United States has strong cooperation with Argentina in multilateral fora such as the U.N. and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), where Argentina is a strong voice in support of human rights and nuclear nonproliferation. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing cooperation with Argentina on these critical issues of mutual concern.

Argentina's highly educated population and diversified industrial base have attracted more than 500 U.S. companies. The United States is strongly committed to working with Argentina to increase two-way trade that creates jobs in both countries. However, the United States and other governments remain concerned over some protectionist policies. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to address these concerns. I will also urge Argentine officials at the highest levels to resolve such economic legacy issues as Argentina's Paris Club arrears and its remaining debts to U.S. bondholders.

Although there are some challenges that have been well documented in the media recently, I am optimistic and confident that the future of our relationship with Argentina is bright. As Secretary Kerry has expressed, the United States has a vested and shared interest in a vibrant, strong, and prosperous Argentina. If confirmed, I look forward to a productive dialogue with Argentine Government officials, as well as the private sector and civil society as we seek to further our bilateral relationship and strengthen the longstanding ties between our two great nations.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your distinguished colleagues and staff to advance U.S. objectives in Argentina.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you all.

Let me start off with a question I ask of all of our nominees, and I would like each of you to answer simply yes or no, if you can. If

you feel you have to equivocate, we will start off on a difficult process.

Do each of you commit to this committee that, if confirmed, you will be responsive to inquiries and questions that the committee poses as you are in your posts?

Mr. Estrada.

Mr. ESTRADA. Mr. Chairman, most definitely. I look forward to working very closely with this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Moreno.

Mr. MORENO. Unequivocally, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Mamet.

Mr. MAMET. Absolutely, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Good. So we are starting off well. [Laughter.]

In recent years, Mr. Moreno, there has been a high level of concern about the increasing use of the Caribbean as a drug transit zone. According to the Department of State in its 2013 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Jamaica is the Caribbean's largest supplier of marijuana to the United States and reportedly an emerging transit point for cocaine passing through Central America destined to the United States.

What is your assessment—I know you are not in post yet, but I am sure you have had discussions with the State Department—of the Jamaican Government's cooperation with the United States on antinarcotic efforts? And if confirmed, will you make this one of your significant issues at your post?

Mr. MORENO. Certainly, Mr. Chairman. With my background, it is kind of a natural that it would be one of my priorities.

I think that there is increasing analytical and anecdotal evidence that, in fact, as a transshipment point, the Jamaican corridor has really picked up. That is due, in a way, to the success we have had with the Merida Initiative, the success we have had in Colombia, and as you know, the balloon effect is now branching out.

I want to take a very close look at resource allocation on our side as well. I want to make sure that we have the right resources pointed in the right direction and doing the right thing. We have a very big INL program, which is bolstered by funding from the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. We work with the constabulary force. We work with the Jamaican defense forces. We have an FMF program that works on small ships and patrol boats that the Jamaican Coast Guard and Navy use.

The cooperation has been good. We are seeing an increase of quite a high percentage, almost double the amount of cocaine seized in 2013 versus 2012, and I think they are probably at a record-setting margin this year.

As you know, from my service in Colombia and Mexico, I have personally witnessed the damage that drug trafficking does to societies. Corruption including—as a matter of fact, many Jamaican politicians and leaders recognize that corruption perhaps is the most destructive facet of drug trafficking, and we are seeing that. But we are seeing the Jamaican Government address that. We have seen a commitment on their part to move with us. We work with the anticorruption force and the constabulary force. We work, along with the British and with the Canadians. We work with the major organized crime task force. We even set up a 1–800 corrupt

cop number that INL pays for. We are also really urging the Jamaicans to move forward and create an independent commission that addresses corruption specifically.

So we are engaged and the Jamaicans are engaged, but it is a tough battle and one which, as we can see what happened in Mexico, as we see the struggles that Colombia went through, that this is a very serious issue. And I think we need to address it and we need to look at resources and the way we allocate them.

The CHAIRMAN. And in that regard, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative that you alluded to—we have spent about $35 million in Jamaica in that respect. I hope that you will look at how Jamaica has used that money and what our evaluation of it is.

One of the things that I am concerned about is law enforcement capacity-building. The other thing is ports and the security at ports and the screening and scanning, I should say, at ports because ultimately we trade with these countries, but they have access to our ports and those drugs end up here.

Mr. MORENO. Yes, sir, absolutely. As a matter of fact, we are using antiterrorist funds administered by the Diplomatic Security to work with the port security program in Jamaica. I started the port security program in Cartagena, Colombia and in Barranquilla. So I am pretty familiar with how port security programs should work.

We are addressing that, and the Caribbean, as you know, Basin Security Initiative, $263 million in total, of which Jamaica, as you mentioned—I am really anxious, if confirmed, to get down on the ground and see, as I said, about how resources are being allocated, how the Jamaicans have used their resources, and how we can continue to be more effective and more efficient in this because this is the kind of problem that once it starts—you will recall back in the 1980s and early 1990s when we put the above-the-horizon radars in and then we forced the traffickers again to go through the Central America-Mexico route, and we are seeing the consequences of that now. Now, as we apply pressure, I think we have to really pay close attention to that and really take a look at our resource allocation.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that. I am very concerned as we squeeze elsewhere that the Caribbean becomes an increasingly large traffic point.

And so that brings me to Mr. Estrada. With Venezuela increasingly becoming a primary transit point for the trafficking of drugs to markets in Europe and the United States, do you have a sense—and I recognize again you are not in post. But do you have a sense of what Trinidad and Tobago's proximity to the Venezuelan coast has made it vulnerable to trafficking operations?

Mr. ESTRADA. Senator, I definitely agree because of the proximity. As you know, the closest point is about 7 miles off the coast of Venezuela. It has become a transshipment point. Just last month, there was a large cocaine bust in the port of Norfolk that originated in Trinidad and Tobago being transported in juice cans. So it shows that they do have a key challenge, and we are partnering with them to address this issue. We will continue to engage. And if confirmed, I will continue to lead our efforts in sup-

porting the improvement of the Trinidad and Tobago law enforcement capacity to address this issue.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, your example, an example of why I care so much about port security, is an example of how drugs end up on the streets of our community. And having the largest port in the Northeast, the Port of Elizabeth in Newark, I can see what, in fact, happens in our communities.

Let me ask you. Also according to U.N. statistics, more than 13,000 people in Trinidad and Tobago are estimated to be living with HIV. In an effort to combat that, the country has received assistance under the President's PEPFAR program, which we recently reauthorized. How would you assess these efforts and the support the United States has provided to Trinidad and Tobago?

Mr. ESTRADA. Senator, thank you for the question.

The assistance that Trinidad has received thus far—a lot of it has to do with their prevention, strengthening their laboratory efforts, public outreach. And the CDC is on the ground in Trinidad and Tobago. Yes, there is a 1.5-percent prevalence in adult HIV rate. And this program thus far—again, through this assistance, it does seem to be working and with the embassy doing the outreach via social media and through other avenues that are available.

The CHAIRMAN. And then finally, I will have questions for Mr. Mamet, but my time has expired. So I am going to turn to Senator Rubio.

How is it going to feel to go back as the United States Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago which was originally your native country?

Mr. ESTRADA. Senator, a great question, and I am glad you asked. As you very well know, I left as a 14-year-old.

The CHAIRMAN. We only ask great questions. [Laughter.]

Mr. ESTRADA. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. At least members here think so.

Mr. ESTRADA. I have been back to Trinidad probably four times since I left in March 1970. The first time I went back to Trinidad was in 2004 as a guest speaker for the Marine Corps Ball. I was a sitting sergeant major for the Marine Corps then. So I had not been.

Yes, I do have family members—small family members still in the country. I respect Trinidad. It is a beautiful country. I look forward to working with the government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago and getting to know them very well. Obviously, I do not know them as much as I did when I left as a 14-year-old.

My loyalty with my distinguished service in the United States Marine Corps—there should be no doubt in anyone's mind where it stands. I am American and I represent the United States of America's interests.

The CHAIRMAN. We have no doubt about that. I just wanted to have the emotional element of it.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Thanks to the chairman.

Thank you all for being here, particularly Mr. Estrada and Moreno for your longtime service to our country. We are very grateful for that, and we are sure you will do a great job at these posts.

Let me just overlay my questions with a general observation that in the Western Hemisphere in general there is this emerging trend, which I find as a direct threat, and that is the growing authoritarianism that really poses a risk to both free markets and the democratic consensus that we find throughout the region. One of the countries that will be discussed here today, unfortunately—Argentina—perhaps falls in that camp.

I thought that situation, by the way, was on full display in Havana a few weeks ago when all these heads of state met under the auspices of the sole totalitarian regime and state sponsor of terrorism in our hemisphere and which yesterday, by the way, arrested, as you know, Mr. Chairman, a well-known dissident. We call him Antunez who had actually met with us. He traveled here to Washington. He was arrested, along with his wife I believe, yesterday.

So for anyone who has fantasies about what Cuba is and to these heads of state that travel there, particularly the President of Argentina about 2 weeks ago, to gain advice from Fidel and Raul Castro, well, I am not sure what you are going to get advice in unless you are looking to become a totalitarian government because that is the only thing they are good at.

And by the way, it is a tremendous hypocrisy. The only head of state in the Western Hemisphere that had the dignity to meet with members of the beleaguered democratic opposition was the President of Chile, Pinera—and I wanted to publicly acknowledge that—as he has done many times in the past as well.

I am also concerned—and I am no longer the ranking member of this subcommittee, but I am glad I am here today—by what best can be characterized as an indifferent foreign policy—and both parties are guilty of this—toward the hemisphere and its issues and at worst is quite frankly negligence, this rising tide of authoritarianism that we find in the region.

There are some issues as well largely focused on Argentina in the time that is permitted here today.

But I did want to ask you, Mr. Moreno. You are an expert in counternarcotics. Jamaica is believed to be potentially the largest Caribbean supplier of marijuana to the United States. Is there any evidence that recent efforts to legalize the use of marijuana in certain States here have had an impact on the situation?

Mr. MORENO. In fact, it has had an impact. There had been movement both in the Jamaican Parliament and in the press to argue for either legalization for medical reasons, religious reasons, or to decriminalize personal possession of small quantities. We have been very clear on what our position is, that marijuana is considered a category 3 dangerous drug and as such, we will continue to enforce all Federal statutes involving marijuana.

Also, the Embassy has been instructed to—and they followed up magnificently in reporting all these developments.

There is a pending piece of legislation in the Jamaican parliament—we are not sure how far that could possibly go—that would decriminalize certain aspects of possession of marijuana. They make the argument that, oh, that is going to improve tourism, that it is going to help the small farmer, et cetera, et cetera. We, of course, reject those arguments and we maintain that mari-

juana is still a dangerous drug and we are going to enforce our Federal statutes.

Senator RUBIO. Marijuana-improved tourism. Will that be in their promotion material?

Mr. MORENO. Not my argument, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. No, I understand. I know that is their argument.

Anyway, more in the form of a statement than a question, the 2003 reporting period for the Trafficking in Persons report found that the Government of Jamaica did not convict any trafficking offenders or any officials complicit in human trafficking. And I would just encourage you, when you are in that post, to be a strong voice on behalf of those victims because Jamaica, I believe it is Tier 2. But in any event, there is a human trafficking problem there as there is here. And I hope that you will be a strong voice.

Mr. MORENO. Absolutely. As a veteran Foreign Service officer I am well aware of how important that is. In the many posts that I have served, it has become a very serious issue.

Senator RUBIO. And then, Mr. Estrada, on the issue of Trinidad and Tobago, there was a citizen from there that was convicted and received a life sentence in U.S. Federal court for a 2007 plot to bomb a jet fuel pipeline at John F. Kennedy International Airport. The individual had ties to Trinidad's militant group that attempted to overthrow the government there back in the 1990s.

By the way, the individual has also been linked by Argentina's special prosecutor to the 1994 terrorist attack that many believe Iran was behind. In fact, there is strong evidence that Iran was behind it.

So my question is, do we have concerns that Islamic radicalism is a problem in Trinidad and Tobago?

Mr. ESTRADA. Thank you for the question, Senator.

The United States Government considers the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to be a committed partner in combating terrorism in the Caribbean and preventing terrorist attacks against the United States. If confirmed, I will continue to work the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to strengthen this partnership.

As of now, there are no known indigenous terrorist groups based in Trinidad and Tobago, but we continue to monitor the situation.

Senator RUBIO. Along the lines of the statement that I made just a moment ago, in the same Trafficking in Persons report, Trinidad and Tobago is a Tier 2 Watch List country for trafficking. It means it is a destination and a transit country for adults and children that are subjected to both forced labor and to sex trafficking. There has been information that public officials there have been complicit in trafficking-related incidents. In fact, the 2013 report states that although the government had infrastructure to screen for trafficking victims, law enforcement officials repeatedly treated victims as criminals and charged them with solicitation charges.

There has also been, by the way, certain public officials that have been identified as severely hampering the government's efforts to combat trafficking.

So I would hope that—and I expect that you will, when you are in that post, be a strong voice on behalf of those victims and be willing to—I know it makes the operating space uncomfortable, but to be willing to be a forceful voice in condemning these actions to

the extent that there is the unwillingness of these government officials to address this very serious human tragedy.

Mr. ESTRADA. Senator, I fully concur. Like all countries, Trinidad and Tobago does face some challenges, but they have shown the will to try to address this issue. We will continue to partner with them. I will lead our efforts. I will be a strong advocate on behalf of human rights for all people in that area.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Mamet, let me ask you. What is our national interest in Argentina?

Mr. MAMET. Thank you, Senator.

I think we have a number of national interests. As you know, number one, there are over 500 U.S. companies that are doing business in Argentina. Some have been there for nearly a century. They have, by all accounts, continued to do relatively well, but they have had issues I mentioned in my opening statement on regulation, on import-export controls, and other areas around that.

I think it is very important to note, as you well know, that they are on the U.N. Security Council. They are at the IAEA and they have been a good, constructive partner with us on nuclear nonproliferation, as well as human rights, antihuman trafficking. So there is, I think, a range of international issues we work well on.

There are a number of issues that we do not have the best relationship with, but as Ambassador, Senator, if I can work with you, work with this committee, and have the full force of the White House behind me, I will bring tough messages, when needed, to allies. I think that it is important to tell the truth. And we obviously have some irritants in our relationship largely around a number of economic issues and financial issues.

The administration has strongly urged the Argentine Government to clear its arrears, both public and private, as well as to normalize its relations with the international financial community, as well as its creditors and investors.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I would have wanted to hear from you, although you alluded to it at the end there, that part of our national interest is having a country that meets its Paris Club debt, of which we hold a significant amount, that we have a series of bondholders that have not been paid and they have done nothing to not merit payment, that we have a real concern about judicial independence and press freedom in Argentina. So I think our national interests are broader, and I hope that you will think about it in that context.

You know, last week, referring to mounting challenges stemming from currency depreciation, rising inflation, recent nationalizations and broader signs of macroeconomic instability, a New York Times editorial stated that Argentina was facing a financial crisis caused largely by misguided government policies. And a Washington Post editorial stated that Argentina is headed for another stretch of economic and perhaps political turmoil.

Do you agree with that assessment?

Mr. MAMET. Well, Senator, as you know, the administration follows very closely economic activity in the country. The Department of the Treasury obviously monitors this very closely.

I agree with what you say. There are a number of issues that are irritants in our relationship. I think they have made some

progress, not nearly as much as we would hope, on a number of fronts, whether that is presenting at least an outline of a payment plan to the Paris Club, which I think just last night, the Paris Club came back and said they want to have those negotiations and have those discussions. It has been a long time coming. No question about it, but that is one of the issues that we have pushed the government on, and I think it is too early. I do not want to prejudge how that comes out. We will see.

I think later this month the Argentine Government is going to present to the IMF a new inflation index, a new CPI, and so obviously, we need to see how that plays out as well.

The ICSID agreements, which you know are the final arbitral ICSID awards that they paid—I believe it was $667 million to three American companies.

So those are, I think, at least positive steps in the right direction. There is a lot more to do. And although I know the Spanish company Repsol is not a U.S. company, that has been an issue on the docket that we have talked to them about. We have urged them, as other governments have as well, because unfortunately when they nationalized that, they did not deal with it for a long time. But now it does look like they are in final stages of a deal with that company.

The CHAIRMAN. I know you mentioned the Paris Club. The offer to negotiate its Paris Club debt—is that any different than past offers? They have made past offers, but they have not followed through.

Mr. MAMET. That is exactly why I said I did not want to prejudge yet to see what happens. I think we are right in the middle of that. I completely agree, Senator. It is an ongoing issue, as I called it an irritant in our relationship, that we need to deal with. I think that is exactly why we need to have an ambassador there to dialogue at the highest levels and deliver those tough messages.

The CHAIRMAN. How does Argentina's default on U.S. Government debt affect other aspects of U.S. relations with the country?

Mr. MAMET. On the Paris Club, among other things?

I think there is that basket of issues, IMF, Paris Club. The ICSID agreements I think did actually move forward the relationship a little bit. But, unfortunately, I think we have to be vigilant and keep an eye every single day on what is going on. I think these import controls, export controls, some of the regulation I think has made it a very difficult place at times to do business, although U.S. businesses, as I understand it, Chairman, are doing OK. But at the same time, I think we really need to be engaged with the country every single day, have the full force of this committee and the White House pushing Argentina to do what is in their own best interest.

The CHAIRMAN. How do you see Argentina aligned within that Western Hemisphere?

Mr. MAMET. Well, Mr. Chairman, as you know, they are the third-largest economy in Latin America. They obviously are a major player on all sorts of issues. Internationally, as I said, they work pretty well with us on a number of issues, nuclear nonproliferation, human rights, antihuman trafficking. So they are a

major country with a major economy that we work with at the U.N., the IAEA, and a number of other multilateral fora.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, to piggyback on Senator Rubio, not only in Cuba, but President Kirchner has taken the country in alliance with those in many respects who do not share our values with Venezuela, with Bolivia, with Ecuador. It seems to be aligned in the universe of those who are willing to change their constitutions in order to perpetuate their existence in government and reelection even beyond the constitutional mandate. So they arbitrarily and capriciously change constitutions. As a matter of fact, is it not true that President Kirchner was looking to do exactly that in Argentina?

Mr. MAMET. Well, Senator, in regards to Cuba, if I can just say that the administration, as you know, respects the rights of all countries to have their own bilateral relations, but this is a very important point. As you know, in my background, I have worked on democracy issues. This is something that is very important to me personally.

And working with this committee, I think that we need to continue to encourage Argentina to show a strong commitment to democracy, the rule of law, freedom of expression, and to hold their partners and their neighbors in the region accountable to the same basic standards that they believe in. As you know, they just had a 30th anniversary of return to democracy. They know, as well as anybody I think, the benefits of democracy, but we have to hold them accountable to make sure they push their neighbors, push their partners on those issues that we cherish that I personally hold dear and I know you do as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, beyond Cuba, certainly the countries they are engaging with and seem to align themselves with are generally not within the universe of U.S. national interests.

I also get concerned at someone who is willing to change the constitution and may have only been thwarted because they did not win the majorities necessary in the Congress to ultimately change the constitution. Otherwise they likely would have.

And then I look at last year's leading human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges, which expressed deep concern about reforms passed by the Argentine Congress and moves taken by the Kirchner administration that pose a risk to the independence of the judiciary in Argentina.

And then I see what has happened with press freedom in Argentina with the Clarin, which is one of the few media outlets to challenge Ms. Fernandez's policies, being besieged by the Kirchner administration.

So I have a larger view about what is happening in Argentina. And just a rosy view that we have business, yes, we have business there, but we have bondholders who do not get paid. We have debt to the United States that they keep playing with by saying we are going to renegotiate and never get to that renegotiation. We have judges that are being interfered with. We have freedom of the press that is being violated. And we have a currency crisis that is going on. So our national interest universe here is much broader.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. I just wanted to take off on that point and say—I think you have stated it accurately, Mr. Chairman. Here is what I would add. Mr. Mamet, have you been to Argentina?

Mr. MAMET. Senator, I have not had the opportunity yet to be there. I have traveled pretty extensively around the world, but I have not yet had a chance.

Senator RUBIO. Well, here is why I ask—and this is with all due respect. You have an impressive resume of work and so forth, and obviously, we are very interested in your testimony and what we learn in the days to come leading up to your nomination. I think this is a very significant post because I think Argentina is right where the chairman is describing. We have this trend in Latin America of people who get elected but then do not govern democratically, and Argentina is an example of this. Now, are they where Venezuela is? Cuba did not even try to have elections. But Venezuela or Nicaragua or Bolivia or Ecuador? That is where they are headed and that is who they align with.

The chairman talked for a moment about the government-sanctioned censorship that you are seeing going on there. For example, Kirchner has replaced independent media regulators with a board charged with overseeing the distribution of media licenses. This was put in effect basically in order to repress opposition media outlets by imposing ridiculous restrictions upon them. You have an antiterrorism law passed in 2011 that now holds the media liable for reporting on issues that could, "terrorize the public." This is a trend throughout the region, and now Argentina is at the forefront of these sorts of things.

I will bring another point up to you. In January 2013, the President of Argentina announced a memorandum of understanding with Iran to create what she calls a truth commission to reinvestigate the 1994 terrorist attack on the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association. This understanding is a reversal of years of work and of exhaustive reporting on that attack by a special prosecutor, whom I have met, Alberto Nisman, who concluded that the attacks were approved by the Supreme Leader of Iran himself and by senior officials in the Iranian Government.

Again, these are things that are very concerning to us, and I bring these things to light because in your answer to the chairman's question a moment ago, you identified Argentina as an ally. Is Argentina truly an ally? I should not say the people of Argentina or even the nation. Is this government under this President in Argentina—is that country an ally of the United States?

Mr. MAMET. Senator, in my perspective, they are an ally who we disagree with and have fundamental disagreements about certain policies. I think mature democracies can disagree and do it very directly and forcefully when needed, either publicly or privately. And I think that is all the more reason that we need to engage. We need to be down there talking to them at the very highest levels.

Senator RUBIO. Well, again, I do not disagree that we should not talk at the highest levels, but again, I take issue with the idea that Argentina is a mature democracy. Mature democracies do not target newspaper and media outlets. Mature democracies do not interfere with the judicial branch. Mature democracies do not take the sort of actions that they are taking. They certainly have elections.

I am not disputing they have elections. But elections alone do not make you a democracy.

Let me give you another example. The Argentine-United States security cooperation between our countries is virtually nonexistent and it is nonexistent because of their unwillingness to work with us. And as I am sure you are aware, even in the agreements that we had with them in the past—I think it was 3 years ago—led by the Foreign Minister himself—they seized American equipment. Those are not the actions of an ally. I do not recall the last time that Canada seized our equipment. I do not recall the last time that Mexico seized our equipment. I do not recall the last time Israel, South Korea, Japan, or any of our other real allies seized our equipment.

Again, this is not a reflection on the people of Argentina or even on the national character of a country that I do believe has strong affinities to our shared culture. But I do take issue with this government who I do not consider an ally of the United States, nor an enemy either. But they need to make a decision about who they are and where they are headed government-wise. And I can just tell you that these signals that we are getting are not the signals of a mature democracy and they are not the actions of an ally.

I did want to raise one more point in particular, and I know the chairman has already raised it, but I have people in Florida that have been impacted by this. And that is, for more than a decade, they have refused to honor their bond obligations. They have repeatedly defied U.S. courts, and they refuse to negotiate in good faith with its foreign stakeholders, including U.S. creditors who hold bonds with a face value of $8.7 billion at the time of the 2001 default.

And by the way, it looks like they are headed for another default because all the actions they are taking today seem to be designed to avoid a short-term default. But long term, their structural problems are extraordinary, which is that I anticipate, quite frankly, that there is a very high likelihood that, if you are confirmed, while you are in that post, you are going to have another similar collapse in Argentina to what you saw economically just a decade ago. This is a very serious problem.

So let me ask you. If you are confirmed as an Ambassador, will you send a clear message to that government in Argentina that it must engage? If it wants to be an ally, if it wants to have a better relationship with the United States, it must engage in good faith negotiations with its creditors, and it must honor its international financial obligations.

Mr. MAMET. Absolutely, Senator, I will do that, and I will have the backing of this committee, this chairman, and the White House as we go in and we talk about the exact issues that you mentioned. The JCET incident from a couple years ago obviously was—it was a very difficult part in our relationship—a very difficult time in our relationship between the two countries. They have been, though—Argentina has twice been a victim of a major terrorist attack. They understand. They are committed to fighting terrorism, and the administration does stand ready to increase cooperation on a number of fronts, if asked. So I think absolutely we need to be engaged. If

you want, we can talk about the AMIA bombing or Iran. There are a lot of other things I know you brought up.

But the answer to your question, whether it is debt to U.S. bondholders or the debt to the Paris Club or whether it is incidents like the JCET incident that you referenced, I think we absolutely have to have a frank and tough discussion. But I think allies can disagree, but at the same time, we need to be in there fighting for our interests. And if confirmed, Senator, that will be my top priority, working with you, to absolutely fight for our interests and, at the same time, look for those areas that we can cooperate on.

Senator RUBIO. This is the most unique ally I think we have in the world then because Argentina is an ally that, according to what you have said, Argentina is an ally that does not pay American bondholders the money they owe them, does not cooperate with our military, and basically is open to reinvestigating and in my opinion potentially reinterpreting the fact that a terrorist attack authorized—according to their own special prosecutor who found this evidence—authorized by the Supreme Leader of Iran was carried out against the Jewish community in Buenos Aires. I mean, if it was not Iran, who else was behind it? And the evidence is pretty compelling. And instead of taking the advice of their own special prosecutor, this ally of ours has now decided to reopen it in the hopes of reinterpreting it. These are, in my opinion, not the actions of an ally. It could change. There could be a new President and a new direction for their government.

But last but not least, I would just say that the antidemocratic direction that Argentina is going reminds me a lot more of Ecuador and Bolivia and Venezuela than it does of Mexico and Chile and Peru and Colombia. Those are allies. I think the Argentinean Government needs to make up its mind what they are toward the United States.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. One final set of questions.

This assignment for which you have been nominated is a big country in terms of the access of—with all due respect to the other two nominees, those are important countries as well. But this is a big to-do about, in my opinion as someone who has followed the hemisphere for 21 years, where the hemisphere goes.

How would you define Argentina's positions vis-a-vis intellectual property and narcotics trafficking and money laundering?

Mr. MAMET. Well, Senator, as I mentioned earlier, we have had a good relationship over the years working with them on a number of fronts. Ever since the JCET incident, we have scaled back and there is little cooperation on whether it is defense-related training exercises or other issues. The administration stands ready to increase cooperation, if asked, on that particular note.

The CHAIRMAN. And on intellectual property rights?

Mr. MAMET. Senator, on that, I do not have a full answer on that, but I would be happy to—because you deserve a full, complete answer on intellectual property. Obviously, it is very important for our companies that are doing business down there. And if I may get back to you on intellectual property, I would be happy to do that.

[The written response submitted by Mr. Mamet to the requested information follows:]

The United States carefully monitors intellectual property rights protection in Argentina and presses for more effective enforcement. Areas of concern include counterfeiting, online piracy, and the unfair commercial use and unauthorized disclosure of data submitted to regulatory agencies to obtain approval for the sale of pharmaceuticals. In these and related matters, Argentine courts have not provided adequate protection. Argentina also does not efficiently address patent issues and applications. For these and other reasons, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative includes Argentina on its Priority Watch List.

Argentina is making progress to better protect intellectual property rights, albeit slowly. In 2012, the number of enforcement raids increased and regulatory officials improved cooperation with industry actors. The judiciary granted a civil injunction related to the online distribution of pirated content, though criminal action has been lacking. We urge Argentina to devote more attention and investigative and prosecutorial resources to this issue. As a consultant to corporations that operate overseas, I recognize the vital role the U.S. Government plays in advocating for the protection of U.S. intellectual property. If confirmed, I would be a vigorous advocate for U.S. companies in Argentina, working closely with the local American Chamber of Commerce to identify and address the most serious intellectual property concerns.

Argentina also should do more to curtail money laundering, which facilitates narcotics trafficking, corruption, and tax evasion. The United States is not alone in making this observation; since 2009, the Financial Action Task Force has been working with Argentina to address deficiencies in its legal framework and enforcement approach.

I recognize the challenge Argentine authorities face in a country where cash is commonly used for transactions and a high percentage of economic activity occurs in the informal sector. Argentina has made progress implementing legislation and building its capacity to address technical deficiencies.

Nevertheless, problems persist. If confirmed, I would urge Argentine officials to pay greater attention to this issue, improve regulatory coordination, and ensure that the appropriate laws and regulations are established and enforced. The Financial Action Task Force recommends that, in addition to technical compliance, effectiveness must be considered when evaluating a national antimoney laundering strategy.

Argentina is an important transit zone for South American cocaine being shipped to Europe. Argentina is also seeing increased domestic consumption and, with it, a rise in violent crime. In my work in impoverished neighborhoods in Los Angeles, I have seen the awful consequences of illegal drugs on communities, particularly on youth, and I support Argentina's efforts to address trafficking and addiction.

Argentina has focused its efforts in Greater Buenos Aires and in vulnerable, low-income communities. It has made new investments in demand reduction. Improved coordination among its federal and provincial law enforcement agencies and deployments in the country's north of additional equipment and personnel would bolster operational capacity. Additionally, Argentine courts face backlogs in drug cases that limit their ability to bring narcotics traffickers to justice and allow their punishments to serve as a deterrent.

Argentina and the United States share an important interest in confronting this alarming increase in illicit drug trafficking. If confirmed, I would urge Argentina to resume the more robust level of information-sharing and case coordination that occurred before Argentina seized a U.S. military plane and cargo in 2011 and subsequently reduced its security cooperation with the United States. Argentina's Ministry of Security reactivated some cooperation with U.S. authorities, including the Drug Enforcement Administration, in 2012. These limited joint efforts led to significant arrests, most notably of Colombian national Henry López Londoño in Buenos Aires in October 2012. However, far greater collaboration is possible given the scope of the challenge and, if confirmed, I would make this a priority.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me inform you a little bit. Argentina has been on the special 301 priority list of the United States for a number of years because of its deficiencies in intellectual property rights enforcement.

And with reference to drug trafficking and money laundering, it is pretty outrageous that our bilateral cooperation on counternarcotics issues has decreased dramatically following Argentina's February 2011 seizure at the Buenos Aires airport of U.S. military

cargo and training materials, materials for an exercise that had been approved by the Argentine Government.

So this is why we have some real concerns about what this relationship is and what our nominee will do in this country because we love the Argentinean people. We think they deserve better, and we think that Americans who ultimately invest in Argentina deserve much better than what they have experienced.

With no other members before the committee and with our thanks to all of you for your testimony, the record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow.

I would urge the nominees, if they receive questions from the committee members who may not have been here today but will submit questions for the record, for you to answer them expeditiously. The sooner you answer them, the more likely we can consider you for a business meeting.

And seeing no other member wishing to ask questions, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:55 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF LUIS G. MORENO TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What is your assessment of the Jamaican Government's cooperation with the U.S. on antinarcotics efforts? If confirmed, what efforts will you take to deepen this cooperation?

Answer. The United States has a history of close and fruitful law enforcement cooperation with the Jamaican Government. If confirmed, I would continue this partnership with the Jamaican Government, working closely with the many U.S. agencies represented in our Embassy, and Jamaican counterparts focused on counterterrorism and counternarcotics activities. I would support Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) funding for programs focusing on capacity-building for security forces and the criminal justice system.

Our joint efforts through the CBSI to counter the growing threat posed by narcotics and weapons trafficking to the security of our citizens and our economies have resulted in the arrest of lottery scammers, the extraditions of drug traffickers, and the seizure of illegal drugs and contraband. In 2013, Jamaican authorities, with U.S. support, seized 1,230 kg of cocaine, compared to 338 kg in 2012.

U.S. relationships with the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) are excellent. Ship container and airport interdiction initiatives have proven beneficial in seizing drugs, identifying targets, and developing leads to the United States and other countries. The Embassy is working to assemble joint training for Jamaicans customs and select law enforcement groups, coordinated by U.S. and British law enforcement/security agencies, particularly in the area of drug interdiction.

Question. What accounts for Jamaica's increased homicide rate in the past year? What is the Jamaican Government doing to curb violence? What role can U.S. assistance play?

Answer. Jamaica recorded 1,197 murders in CY 2013, a 9-percent increase over 2012. Jamaican officials, including National Security Minister Peter Bunting, attributed the 2013 spike in homicides to increased use of violence in robberies, the recent prison releases of alleged gang leaders, a general increase in intragang battles, and a return to Caribbean drug routes—owing to law enforcement efforts in Mexico and Central America that brought with it an increase in weapons and drug trafficking.

To curb this violence, the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) launched Operation Resilience in October 2013, an antigang measure that resulted in hundreds of arrests and seized weapons. The Jamaican Government is building capacity by increasing the JCF's budget, and improving its organized crime and anticorruption task forces and its forensic capabilities.

Jamaica is a partner in the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), through which the U.S. Government has been working in Jamaica since 2010 to increase the capacity of its rule of law institutions as well as address the root causes of crime.

USAID's CBSI-funded Community Based Policing project provided a standard curriculum and training for every member of the JCF on improved interaction with community members and a partnership approach to policing. Other USAID CBSI activities focus on intervening with at-risk youth, who are highly susceptible to choosing a life of crime and violence and providing them with life and job skills training.

CBSI also provides nonlethal equipment and training, institutionalizes community-based policing, and supports the JCF's Anti-Corruption Branch. In 2012, with the assistance of INL-provided equipment the National Forensics Sciences Laboratory's ability to analyze and process ballistic evidence for the prosecution of gun crimes increased by 62 percent; firearms account for 70 percent of all murders in Jamaica.

Question. How would you assess the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative in Jamaica? In your opinion, is this assistance having an impact?

Answer. The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) is positively contributing to improved Jamaican law enforcement responses to increasing transnational criminal activity throughout the region.

As a member of the Caribbean-U.S. Joint Working Group, Jamaica played a key role in developing this initiative and plays a critical leadership role in the region. The initiative is improving the safety of the United States and improving the security of all countries in the region. USAID's CBSI-funded Community Based Policing (CBP) project provides a standard curriculum and training for every member of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) on improved interaction with community members and a partnership approach to policing. The CBP project has also been used as a template for other countries within the region to develop their own CBP activities. The next phase of the CBP project will improve community safety by increasing the capacity of communities, police, and other stakeholders to address the root causes of crime and insecurity. USAID is working with Jamaica's at-risk communities to ensure they play an active role in the fight against crime and violence.

Other CBSI activities focus on intervening with at-risk youth who are highly susceptible to choosing a life of crime and violence, and providing them with life and job skills training. CBSI funding focused on law enforcement professionalization has provided 6,000 frontline JCF officers with nonlethal force equipment and training and supported the JCF internal affairs division.

Question. How would you assess U.S assistance to Jamaica's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS? What progress has Jamaica made in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic?

Answer. The Government of Jamaica has been a robust partner with the United States in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic. While the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program began in FY 2008, Jamaica was making investments with its own limited resources to address HIV/AIDs as far back as FY 2000. However, Jamaica has one of the highest levels of HIV prevalence in the Caribbean. Still, there are fewer deaths due to HIV/AIDS in recent years due to universal access to antiretroviral drugs and the increase in treatment sites.

In 1999, the rate in the general population was 0.7 percent. In the 2012 Global AIDS response report, the figure is 1.7 percent. There has been significant underreporting because it is estimated that 50 percent of the people living with HIV do not know their status as they are reluctant to be tested, even though testing is widely available in Jamaica. Stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS drives the epidemic underground and there are challenges to ensure people adhere to the treatment program.

The U.S. interagency PEPFAR team, along with UNAIDS, Global Fund, and the EU, consults with the Government of Jamaica to discuss strategy and avoid duplication of efforts. USAID works closely with the Ministry of Health to improve the capacity of civil society to respond to the epidemic and to enhance the sustainability of services and programs. The majority of resources and technical inputs have been in HIV prevention through behavioral changes targeting key populations (sex workers and out-of-school youth). The Jamaican Ministry of Health and key nongovernmental organizations are encouraging testing and counseling of the general population as well as supporting the reduction of stigma and discrimination among people living with HIV/AIDS and key populations.

Question. Jamaica has a law that in effect criminalizes homosexuality, and according to Jamaican human rights groups, LGBT people in Jamaica have been singled out and killed because of their sexual orientation. The Guardian newspaper reported that the British honorary consul in Montego Bay was found dead in 2009, with a

note on his body reading "This is what will happen to all gays." What specific steps will you take as the next U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica to promote greater tolerance and acceptance of LGBT rights? And, what specific U.S. programs and assistance will you prioritize to counter anti-LGBT sentiment in Jamaica and to support individuals and organizations working to build a safer environment for the Jamaican LGBT community?

Answer. U.S. support for protecting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons is grounded in our commitment to "the equal and unalienable" human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reflected in our Constitution. If confirmed, I would work closely with our Embassy team and Jamaican partners to advance LGBT rights.

Embassy Kingston maintains excellent access and strong relations with Jamaican officials, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and community leaders. If comfirmed I will continue to engage with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice on human rights issues, including issues of specific concern to the LGBT community.

U.S. programs and activities seek to enhance and expand understanding and appreciation for the human rights of LGBT individuals through internal discussion and dialogue. One important aspect of embassy activity is to meet regularly with local NGOs that engage on LGBT issues to gain insight on issues of discrimination and discuss opportunities for greater U.S. involvement.

Priority programs include funding for "Panos Caribbean" that works to strengthen and improve the livelihoods of those in the gay community through public awareness campaigns. The program promotes tolerance and accountability for those impacted by HIV/AIDS. The Embassy also funded a "Respect and Tolerance" program with a local university that supports activities that promote a culture of respect and social tolerance for diversity.

If confirmed, I will speak out on the needs of LGBT youth, women, and racial and ethnic minorities who often face multiple forms of discrimination. I will also maintain regular contact with academic institutions to stay informed on LGBT issues; ensure that the Embassy's Law Enforcement Working Group addresses LGBT issues in the criminal justice system; and work with other diplomatic missions in Kingston to promote respect for LGBT persons.

RESPONSES OF JOHN L. ESTRADA TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. To what extent can Trinidad and Tobago supply its regional neighbors with natural gas and decrease the Caribbean's reliance on using oil and diesel for electricity generation? To what extent does Trinidad and Tobago have energy efficiency or renewable energy programs to improve environmental outcomes and free up more natural gas for export?

Answer. Trinidad provides significant energy resources, mostly oil, to its Caribbean neighbors and it will continue to play an important role. While oil can be shipped without significant capital investment, the same is not true for natural gas. The capital cost to develop the infrastructure to transport natural gas is an important factor in the Eastern Caribbean energy market. The administration is advocating on behalf of a U.S. company that is working with partners from Trinidad and Tobago to develop a pipeline to Barbados and the neighboring French islands. If feasible, this project could increase energy security in the Eastern Caribbean. As a result of the shale gas revolution in the United States, Trinidad, and Tobago has already shifted its export market for its gas from the United States to Latin America and Asia.

While Trinidad and Tobago is rich in oil and gas resources, its leaders recognize that renewable energy is critical to environmental protection and economic sustainability. They are considering how to expand renewables locally. Trinidad and Tobago has committed itself to renewable energy for the Caribbean region by signing a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Government to launch a regional renewable energy center under the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas.

Question. How would you assess Trinidad and Tobago's cooperation with the United States on counternarcotics programs and what steps would you take as our Ambassador to strengthen this collaboration? To what degree has Trinidad and Tobago's proximity to the Venezuelan coast made it vulnerable to trafficking operations?

Answer. Trinidad and Tobago is an important partner in Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) efforts to stem the flow of illegal drugs from South America. Through CBSI, the United States has instituted a comprehensive interagency anticrime and counternarcotics strategy aimed at assisting local law enforcement agencies to detect and interdict narcotics and to develop the skills to effectively prosecute these crimes. In Trinidad and Tobago, the government has struggled to coordinate and adequately fund its counternarcotics efforts; seizures in 2012 were down from 2011. If confirmed, I would bolster our CBSI programs and those initiated by the Drug Enforcement Administration to disrupt the flow of narcotics to the United States and would work with Trinidad and Tobago to strengthen its capacity to fight transnational criminals. I would also work to support its efforts to convince its youth to turn their backs on the false promise of the drug trade.

Question. What factors account for the high level of violence in Trinidad and Tobago? How is the Trinidadian Government responding to the high murder rate? What steps would you take as U.S. Ambassador to help the Government of Trinidad and Tobago address violence in its country.

Answer. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes violent crime as a key challenge and is seeking taking steps to address it, including to procuring the necessary equipment, training, and personnel to address it. I understand that through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), the United States provides assistance to help the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to address the root causes of crime, which include the destabilizing effects of the illicit narcotics trade and lack of economic opportunity, and also by providing support to demand-reduction programs.

There is no greater priority for a U.S. Embassy than protecting its citizens, including from crime. The U.S. Government has focused its efforts to combat crime by building Trinidad and Tobago's law enforcement capacity. If confirmed, I would seek to bolster the existing U.S. Government interagency efforts to combat crime and build Trinidad and Tobago's law enforcement capacity. Law enforcement efforts targeting other specific types of crime have resulted in a marked decrease in some of those categories of crime, such as kidnappings for ransom. If confirmed, I would promote these existing programs and work for their expansion.

Question. According to U.N. statistics, more than 13,000 people in Trinidad and Tobago are estimated to be living with HIV and the adult prevalence rate in the country is 1.5 percent. In an effort to combat HIV/AIDS, Trinidad and Tobago receives assistance under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). How would you assess these efforts and the support that the United States has provided to Trinidad and Tobago to reduce the incidence and limit the spread of HIV/AIDS?

Answer. Trinidad and Tobago has implemented a national program to combat HIV/AIDS. The country has a 1.5 percent adult HIV prevalence rate, with significantly higher rates among those engaged in high-risk behaviors.

Trinidad and Tobago, along with 11 partnering Caribbean countries, signed the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Partnership Framework in April 2010. The Framework guides the collaboration among the U.S. Government's PEPFAR implementing agencies and the participating host government partners. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has the most active role of the U.S. Government's implementing agencies. CDC's programming focuses on improved data collection, prevention strategies, laboratory strengthening, and building public health capacity.

RESPONSES OF NOAH MAMET TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. A recent New York Times editorial stated that Argentina is "facing a financial crisis caused largely by misguided government policies" and a Washington Post editorial stated that Argentina is "headed for another stretch of economic and perhaps political turmoil." Do you agree with these assessments? Does the current economic situation in Argentina have the ability to potential to affect economies throughout the region?

Answer. A stable and prosperous Argentina is in the best interest of Argentina, the United States, and the region. Encouraging sound economic policies is one of the key U.S. objectives in Argentina, and it would be one of my top priorities if confirmed as Ambassador. I believe strongly in the power of free and fair rules-based trade and the importance of a market-led economy for economic development.

From 2003 to 2007, Argentina was buoyed by high demand and high prices for its agricultural exports. Government policies helped bring about fiscal and current account surpluses and the accumulation of international reserves. Recently, however, growth has slowed and Argentina has experienced imbalances in its fiscal and current accounts, due in part to increasing subsidies for energy. Many informed observers both inside and outside Argentina believe these imbalances must be addressed to put Argentina on a sustainable and prosperous trajectory.

If confirmed, I will encourage the maintenance of a stable, transparent, and predictable investment climate that promotes investment and fair and open competition. I would also ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires continues to serve as a strong advocate for the fair treatment of U.S. companies and investors.

Question. What are the United States primary national interests in its bilateral relationship with Argentina with regard to trade, investment, energy, military, and counternarcotics issues.

Answer. Notwithstanding important areas of disagreement in recent years, including Argentina's failure to honor its international obligations to public and private creditors and its inconsistent security cooperation, the United States and Argentina have a long history of cooperation. If confirmed, I will strongly advocate for U.S. interests in areas where our governments have not found common ground and in areas where we continue to cooperate.

Our countries share many values that provide the foundation for collaboration on peacekeeping, human rights, nuclear nonproliferation, counterterrorism, education, and science. We do not always agree with Argentina's positions in international fora, but it has been a constructive partner at the International Atomic Energy Agency and the U.N. Human Rights Council. If confirmed, I will highlight the interests and values Americans and Argentines share, as well as the potential benefits of closer cooperation between our countries on the regional and global stages.

My emphasis on cooperation should not be mistaken for reluctance to engage in areas of disagreement. Argentina's 2011 seizure of classified U.S. cargo brought into Argentina by a U.S. Army Joint Combined Exercise Training team was completely unjustified and unacceptable. Since this regrettable incident, we have been working to restore the level of trust necessary for more fulsome cooperation on security and counternarcotics.

If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to highlight Argentina's responsibility to meet its international trade and financial obligations, including by removing trade barriers in accordance with WTO rules and addressing other impediments to business and investment.

Despite frustrations and difficulties, our economic relationship with Argentina is significant and mutually beneficial. More than 500 U.S. companies operate in Argentina and employ more than 170,000 Argentines. The United States is Argentina's largest foreign direct investor. The U.S. trade surplus with Argentina was $9.4 billion in 2012. Given Argentina's educated workforce and natural resources, there is room for investment and trade to expand dramatically to the benefit of both economies.

If confirmed, I will strongly encourage Argentina to take all appropriate steps to strengthen our economic ties.

Question. What is your assessment of Argentina's participation in the Mercosur trade bloc and do you see Mercosur as an effective platform for economic integration and growth in South America?

Answer. The administration welcomes all efforts at regional integration that aim to reduce obstacles to trade, further economic development, and increase shared prosperity. We appreciate that support for democracy is enshrined in Mercosur's foundational documents, and its implicit commitment to promote those values in the region.

If confirmed, I would work to increase trade and investment with Argentina and ease market access for U.S. businesses.

Question. In your opinion, who are Argentina's major political allies in Latin America? What is your assessment of relations between Argentina and Chile? And, what is your view on Argentina's closeness with the ALBA countries (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Cuba).

Answer. Argentina is active in a variety of regional multilateral bodies, including the Organization of American States, and it participates in the Summits of the Americas. It is also an active member of the Union of South American Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Argentina's relationship with neighboring Chile is cooperative, including participation in joint military exercises to coordinate potential joint peacekeeping deploy-

ments. Argentina and Chile are demonstrating their regional leadership on nonproliferation by organizing this year a joint exercise on response and mitigation to a potential terrorist attack involving the release of radioactive material.

The Argentine Government maintains close ties to Venezuela, whose President, Nicolas Maduro, visited Argentina in May 2013. Although not a member of the Bolivarian alliance, Argentina has at times associated itself with the group's positions and objectives.

Argentina and Cuba have had bilateral relations since 1973. In 2009, Argentine President Christina Fernandez de Kirchner visited Cuba and signed a range of agreements. She returned to Havana last month to participate in a CELAC summit. Like any country, Argentina is free to choose its bilateral partners. That said, if confirmed, I would urge Argentina to take a stronger and more consistent position internationally on behalf of democratic values and fundamental human rights, consistent with its own national history.

Question. What is your assessment as to why Argentina has been slow to settle its outstanding debts? As Ambassador, what tools will you have at your disposal to encourage the Argentine Government to settle its outstanding debts? Will you urge the Argentine Government to negotiate in good faith with its private creditors?

Answer. Resolution of Argentina's legacy debt issues has dragged on for more than a decade, tarnishing Argentina's reputation among current and potential investors, damaging its international relationships, and resulting in certain restrictions to U.S. assistance.

If confirmed, I will strongly urge Argentina to clear its arrears and normalize relations with all of its creditors, both public and private.

In my outreach to senior Argentine officials, I will strongly emphasize that the settlement of these longstanding financial disputes is in Argentina's interest, as it would send a strong signal that Argentina is a reliable and attractive destination for foreign and domestic investment.

Question. What is your assessment of Argentina's most recent offer to renegotiate its outstanding Paris Club arrears? How does Argentina's default on U.S. Government debt affect other aspects of U.S. relations with the country?

Answer. Argentina's unpaid debt to the U.S. Government is a chronic source of tension in our relationship. If confirmed, I will urge Argentina to clear its $9 billion in outstanding arrears to the United States and other members of the Paris Club, and press Argentine officials to normalize relations with all of its creditors.

Argentina's failure to pay its Paris Club debt has had consequences. The impasse has tarnished Argentina's reputation among current and potential investors, damaged its international relationships, resulted in certain restrictions to U.S. assistance, and a change in U.S. policies toward Argentina at the multilateral development banks and at the Export-Import Bank of the United States. For these reasons, the U.S. and other members of the Paris Club regarded the restarting of negotiations with Argentina as a positive step and a basis for further discussion.

If confirmed, I will urge Argentina to reach an agreement with the Paris Club that brings about the prompt and full repayment of its debts.

Question. Do you believe that judicial independence is under threat in Argentina? What message would you deliver to the Argentine Government regarding the links between upholding judicial independence and its ability to attract international investment and resolve financial challenges in the country?

Answer. The separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and the protection of their independence, are fundamental components of democratic governance. The administration follows this issue closely throughout the hemisphere, including in Argentina.

In 2013, the Argentine Government took steps to alter the size and selection process of the country's Council of Magistrates, which oversees the judiciary. It also sought to limit the use of judicial injunctions against the government, and to establish new appellate courts. The proposals prompted concerns about judicial independence, and provoked criticism from Human Rights Watch and the U.N.'s Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. Argentina's Supreme Court ultimately struck down as unconstitutional the controversial election process of the Council of Magistrates proposed by the executive branch and approved by the legislature.

In the Human Rights Report in 2011 and 2012, the United States cited risks to judicial independence in Argentina, noting in particular political pressure on judges to shape judicial outcomes. If confirmed, I will be steadfast in my defense of judicial independence, and emphasize that any future attempts at judicial reform not undermine its independence and the separation of powers.

Question. Do you believe that the Kirchner administration is taking steps to undermine press freedom in Argentina? If confirmed, will you make issues of press freedom and the defense of internationally recognized democratic principles one of your priorities? What message would you have for the Argentine Government regarding its actions against Grupo Clarin?

Answer. Freedom of expression, including for members of the press, is a fundamental right, and in the words of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, an "essential component" of a functioning democracy. Argentines enjoy a diverse media environment, which facilitates vibrant policy debates across the ideological and partisan spectrums. Journalists generally operate free of intimidation or violence. Criticism of the government is common in the most widely viewed print and electronic media.

In recent years, however, this media environment has come under threat, and journalism advocates have raised concerns about government actions that they believe pose a threat to free expression. A 2009 media law that reduced the concentration of TV and radio ownership was accompanied by a highly polarizing and intensified conflict between the government and certain private media groups, including Clarin. In 2011, counterterrorism legislation also raised concerns about potential constraints to the free exercise of journalism. The Argentine Government has defied local court orders to equitably distribute official advertising across all media outlets, instead favoring those sympathetic to government views. In 2013, the Argentine Government pressured major supermarkets and electronics retailers to cease advertising in certain newspapers, depriving critical outlets of an important revenue source. These and other actions led Freedom House to classify Argentina's media environment as only "partly free" in its 2013 report. The organization warned that the government had "hampered the public's ability to access unbiased information."

If confirmed, I will speak out both publicly and privately about the importance of free expression and the right of citizens to benefit from an independent and diverse media that operates without government interference.

Question. Is the Argentine Government adequately addressing the underlying causes of macroeconomic instability? Are you concerned how the current environment could impact U.S. investment, particularly U.S. companies already invested in Argentina?

Answer. The Obama administration closely monitors Argentina's economy and its macroeconomic policies, including actions related to the country's currency regime. In recent months, Argentina experienced rising inflation and a loss of reserves driven by imbalances in its fiscal and current accounts. As the third-largest economy in Latin America, its economic stability is critically important to the region. It is also important to the many U.S. companies with investments in Argentina; in 2012, two-way trade in goods and services totaled $23 billion, and the U.S. trade surplus with Argentina was $10.4 billion.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Argentine Government to adopt policies that will contribute to economic stability, including policies that promote a stable investment climate to encourage investment, both foreign and domestic. A stable and growing Argentine economy will help bring about shared prosperity in Argentina, while strengthening the 500 U.S. businesses that operate in the country.

Question. What is your understanding of the progress of negotiations between the Argentine Government and Spanish oil company Repsol? Do you believe that the nationalization of Repsol assets in Argentina has implications for U.S. companies seeking to invest in the country?

Answer. The Obama administration has repeatedly expressed its concerns about Argentina's nationalization of Repsol-YPF, which proceeded initially without fair compensation. The administration called it a "negative development" that dampened the investment climate in Argentina.

The administration has noted developments indicating that YPF and Repsol agreed in principle on a mutually satisfactory compensation arrangement. That appears to be a positive step for Argentina. Without question, an open and competitive market for commodities has proved the most successful path to modern, efficient, and innovative development of energy resources across the globe. In the United States, privately owned energy companies are global leaders that use advanced technologies and methods for energy exploration and production. U.S. firms have a lot to offer to countries that present a favorable investment environment.

In Argentina, oil and natural gas production have been declining in recent years, and Argentina has gone from being a net exporter of energy to a net importer. Despite these trends, Argentina has enormous potential to help supply world energy markets and contribute to global energy security. The Department of Energy esti-

mates that Argentina has some of the world's largest shale oil and gas resources. Attracting private investment, including from U.S. firms, will be essential for Argentina to regain energy self-sufficiency. The Argentine Government has demonstrated a clear interest in having U.S. companies act as partners in their efforts to re-invigorate their energy sector; several U.S. firms have begun to make sizable investments, including in Argentina's Vaca Muerta shale oil and shale gas field.

If confirmed, I will continue to raise the administration's concern at the highest levels of the Government of Argentina about actions that negatively affect the investment climate in Argentina. At the same time, I will seek to build a strong bilateral partnership on energy issues, including through our Bilateral Energy Working Group, to advance the common interests of our countries.

Question. How do you assess Argentina's IPR enforcement and what are the most significant efforts that Argentina could make that would take it off the Special 301 Priority Watch List?

Answer. The United States carefully monitors intellectual property rights protection in Argentina and presses for more effective enforcement. Concerns include counterfeiting, online piracy, and the unfair commercial use and unauthorized disclosure of data submitted to regulatory agencies to obtain approval for the sale of pharmaceuticals. Argentine courts have not provided adequate protection. Argentina also does not efficiently address patent issues and applications. For these and other reasons, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative includes Argentina on its Priority Watch List. On February 12, 2014, it singled out Argentina in its Notorious Markets report, noting that Buenos Aires is home to South America's "largest black market."

Argentina is making progress to better protect intellectual property rights, albeit slowly. In 2012, the number of enforcement raids increased and regulatory officials improved cooperation with industry actors. The judiciary granted a civil injunction related to the online distribution of pirated content, though criminal action has been lacking. If confirmed, I would urge Argentina to devote more attention and investigative and prosecutorial resources to this important issue.

Having been a consultant to corporations that operate overseas, I recognize the vital role the U.S. Government plays in advocating for the protection of U.S. intellectual property. If confirmed, I would be a vigorous advocate for U.S. companies in Argentina, working closely with the local American Chamber of Commerce to identify and address the most serious intellectual property concerns.

Question. What is your assessment of Argentina's efforts to confront illicit trafficking networks in the Tri-Border area? What is your assessment of U.S.-Argentine counternarcotics cooperation?

Answer. The Tri-Border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay remains an important regional nexus of arms, narcotics, and human smuggling, counterfeiting, pirated goods, and money laundering—all potential funding sources for terrorist organizations. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to monitor this region closely and maintain close communication with this committee on this important issue.

Argentina recognizes the need for continued to focus on policing its remote northern and northeastern borders—including the Tri-Border area—against such threats as illicit drug and human trafficking, contraband smuggling, and other forms of transnational crime. In my work in impoverished neighborhoods in Los Angeles, I have seen the awful consequences of illegal drugs on communities, particularly on youth, and I support Argentina's efforts to address trafficking and addiction.

Argentina also focuses on Greater Buenos Aires and vulnerable, low-income communities. It made new investments in demand reduction. Improved coordination among its federal and provincial law enforcement agencies and deployments in the country's north of additional equipment and personnel would bolster operational capacity. Argentine courts face backlogs in drug cases that limit their ability to bring narcotics traffickers to justice and allow their punishments to serve as a deterrent.

Argentina and the United States share an important interest in confronting this alarming increase in illicit drug trafficking. The most consistent cooperation to date is Immigration and Customs Enforcement's work with Argentine customs. If confirmed, I would urge Argentina to resume the more robust level of information-sharing and case coordination that occurred before Argentina seized a U.S. military plane and cargo in 2011 that resulted in a subsequent reductionin effective security and law enforcement cooperation with the United States. Argentina's Ministry of Security reactivated some cooperation with U.S. authorities, including with the Drug Enforcement Administration, in 2012. These limited joint efforts led to signifi-

cant arrests, most notably of Colombian national Henry Lopez Londono in Buenos Aires in October 2012. However, far greater collaboration is possible given the scope of the challenge and, if confirmed, I would make this a priority.

Question. In your opinion, what are the factors contributing to money laundering in Argentina? What is the State Department's assessment of the extent of this problem and what steps would you take as Ambassador to develop greater bilateral cooperation to address these issues?

Answer. Argentina should take additional steps to curtail money laundering, which facilitates narcotics trafficking, corruption, and tax evasion. We are not alone in making this observation; since 2009, the Financial Action Task Force has been working with Argentina to address deficiencies in its legal framework and enforcement approach.

I recognize the challenge Argentine authorities face in a country where cash is commonly used for transactions and a high percentage of economic activity occurs in the informal sector. Argentina has made progress implementing legislation and building its capacity to address money laundering.

Nevertheless, serious problems persist. If confirmed, I would urge Argentine officials to pay greater attention to this issue, improve the capacity and coordination among regulatory, law enforcement and judicial elements to ensure that the appropriate laws and regulations are fully implemented and enforced. The Financial Action Task Force recommends that, in addition to technical compliance, effectiveness must be considered when evaluating a national antimoney laundering strategy.

Question. What is your assessment of special prosecutor Alberto Nisman's reports on Iranian involvement in the 1994 bombing of the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association? What is the State Department's position on the Argentina-Iran "truth commission?"

Answer. The U.S. position on the AMIA bombing is clear and consistent. For nearly 20 years, the United States and the international community have joined the Argentine Government and victims of this horrific terrorist attack in demanding justice. I am familiar with Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman's findings, and I know that our Embassy personnel have met with Nisman on a number of occasions. If confirmed, I would reach out to Special Prosecutor Nisman as one of my first acts as Ambassador.

The Obama administration is highly skeptical that a solution can be found to the AMIA case through the January 2013 Argentina-Iran agreement, which includes the establishment of a truth commission. Jewish groups in Argentina share that perspective, and they have expressed concern that Argentina's cooperation with Iran will only cause further delays. In recent months, the Argentine Government itself has acknowledged a lack of progress, though it remains committed to the agreement.

If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Government continues to support the AMIA investigation so that nearly two decades after the bombing in Buenos Aires killed 85 people and wounded 300, the perpetrators might finally be held accountable. I take this issue extremely seriously, and I will do all I can to help bring justice to the victims and their families.

Question. What is the State Department's assessment of Argentina's current nuclear power sector? Also, what is your assessment of U.S.-Argentine cooperation in the nuclear power sector, including issues of safety and research?

Answer. Argentina operates two nuclear power reactors capable of generating up to 10 percent of Argentina's total energy production. Argentina is expected to begin operating a third reactor this year. Both General Electric and Westinghouse are interested in supplying new reactors to Argentina. The United States and Argentina coordinate effectively on nuclear safety, nuclear security, nuclear research and development, nuclear safeguards, and nonproliferation through the U.S.-Argentina Binational Energy Working Group and the U.S.-Argentina Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and at the International Atomic Energy Agency, where Argentina has been a constructive and like-minded partner on issues related to Iran.

The United States and Argentina have long cooperated in addressing our shared energy needs and economic opportunities in the energy sector, and we continue to do so, including at the next meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation, to be held in Argentina later this year.

Question. What is your assessment of the Kirchner administration's claims that the Falklands are Argentine territory? Should President Kirchner seek to refer this

case to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, what position would you recommend that the United States take?

Answer. The U.S. Government acknowledges that there are conflicting claims of sovereignty between Argentina and the United Kingdom. As a matter of long-standing policy, the United States recognizes de facto British administration of the islands, but takes no position regarding sovereignty claims of either party.

If confirmed, I would encourage British and Argentine cooperation on practical matters related to the islands, while urging a peaceful resolution to the core issue.

RESPONSE OF NOAH MAMET TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. The Argentinian Government's ongoing failure to pay past debts remains a significant concern, undermining its credibility in the global marketplace.

The Republic of Argentina has refused to settle debts owed by Caja National de Ahorra Y Seguro (CAJA) to the TIG Insurance Company (TIG) from my home State of New Hampshire. I have written a number of letters to the Argentinian authorities urging them to resolve these outstanding debts. The legitimacy of TIG's claim was validated by two final U.S. District Court judgments in 2001 and 2002, and the company has made five settlement offers to which the Argentine Government has never responded.

- Will you continue to emphasize the importance of resolving outstanding debt issues between the Argentinian Government and American debt holders? What are we doing to encourage Argentina to settle their obligations, including to TIG?

Answer. If confirmed, resolution of Argentina's outstanding debt issues will be a priority for me, just as it has been for the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires and U.S. agencies in Washington, who raise the issue with the Argentine Government at every appropriate opportunity. It is in Argentina's interest to normalize its relationship with the international financial and investment communities by clearing its arrears to the U.S. Government and other public and private creditors. Settling its disputes with U.S. and foreign firms is an important part of that process, and I would strongly urge senior Argentine officials to do so.

Argentina has taken positive steps in recent months, including the settlement of outstanding arbitral awards with three U.S. companies, and the resumption of discussions regarding the payment of Argentina's debts to Paris Club members. These preliminary steps are encouraging, but much more needs to be done. If confirmed, I will press Argentina to honor all of its international financial commitments. The resolution of long-standing financial disputes would improve Argentina's investment climate and strengthen our bilateral relationship.

RESPONSES OF NOAH MAMET TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. During your confirmation hearing on February 6, you repeatedly described the Government of Argentina as an ally of the United States. Please describe the status of our bilateral relations and U.S. interests in Argentina.

Answer. Notwithstanding important areas of disagreement in recent years, including Argentina's failure to honor its international obligations to public and private creditors, the United States and Argentina have a long history of cooperation. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen that partnership, while strongly advocating for U.S. interests in areas where our governments have not found common ground and delivering tough messages when necessary.

Our countries share many values that provide the foundation for important collaboration on areas of mutual interest, such as peacekeeping, human rights, nuclear nonproliferation, counterterrorism, and science. We do not always agree with Argentina's positions in international fora, but they have often been a constructive partner on key issues at bodies like the IAEA in Vienna, and the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

If confirmed, I will highlight the common interests and values Americans and Argentines share, as well as the potential benefits of closer cooperation between our countries on the regional and global stages.

People-to-people connections through education, tourism, science, and business are strong between our countries. During the 2011–2012 academic year, 1,800 Argentine students studied in the United States while 4,500 U.S. students did so in Argentina. U.S. tourism to Argentina has grown in recent years, and our consular section in

Buenos Aires is one of the top visa-issuing posts in the world with more than 600,000 Argentines having visited the United States in 2012. This interchange strengthens the U.S. economy while helping Argentines better understand U.S. culture.

If confirmed, I will seek to bring prominent Americans to Argentina to highlight the dynamism, diversity, and openness of our country. It is my hope that through these efforts, Argentines will increasingly look to the United States as a partner in nurturing a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable global community.

My emphasis on cooperation should not be mistaken for reluctance to engage in areas of disagreement. Argentina's 2011 seizure of classified U.S. cargo brought into Argentina by a U.S. Army Joint Combined Exercise Training team was completely unjustified and should never happen again. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's efforts to highlight Argentina's responsibility to meet its international financial obligations, as well as its need to remove trade barriers and address related policies. I will aggressively address these and other areas of disagreement, while finding opportunities to advance mutual interests.

Question. How would you characterize the current status of media freedom in Argentina?

Answer. Freedom of expression, including for members of the press, is fundamental and in the words of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, an "essential component" of a functioning democracy. I couldn't agree more.

Argentines enjoy a diverse and active media environment, which facilitates vibrant policy debates across the ideological and partisan spectrums. Journalists operate generally free of intimidation or violence. Criticism of the government is common in the most widely viewed print and electronic media.

In recent years, this media environment has come under threat, and journalism advocates have raised concerns about government actions that they believe are obstacles to free expression. A 2009 law reduced the concentration of TV and radio ownership, but was accompanied by a highly polarizing and intensified conflict between the government and certain specific private media groups. In 2011, counterterrorism legislation raised concerns about potential constraints to journalism. In recent years, the Argentine Government has defied local court orders to equitably distribute official advertising across all media outlets, instead favoring those more sympathetic to government views. In 2013, the Argentine Government pressured major supermarkets and electronics retailers to cease advertising in newspapers, thereby depriving critical outlets of yet another important revenue source. These and other actions led Freedom House to classify Argentina's media environment as only "partly free" in its 2013 report. The organization warned that the government had "hampered the public's ability to access unbiased information."

If confirmed, I will speak out both publicly and privately about the importance of free expression and the right of citizens to benefit from an independent and diverse media that operates without government interference.

Question. What is your view of efforts by the Argentine Government in 2013 to provide for the election of magistrates to oversee the judiciary?

Answer. The separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and the protection of their independence, are fundamental components of democratic governance. An independent judiciary provides a vital check on the powers of the other branches of government, and offers a venue for the peaceful and fair settlement of disputes. The administration follows these issues closely in the hemisphere, including in Argentina.

In 2013, the Argentine Government took steps to alter the size and selection process of the country's Council of Magistrates, which oversees the judiciary. It also sought to limit the use of judicial injunctions against the government, and to establish new appellate courts. The proposals prompted concerns about risks to judicial independence, and provoked criticism from Human Rights Watch and the U.N.'s Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. Argentina's Supreme Court ultimately struck down as unconstitutional the controversial election process of the Council of Magistrates proposed by the executive branch and approved by the legislature.

In the Human Rights Report in 2011 and 2012, the U.S. administration cited the risks to judicial independence in Argentina, noting in particular political pressure on judges to shape judicial outcomes. If confirmed, I will be steadfast in my defense of judicial independence.

Question. What is your assessment of the current state of democracy in Argentina?

Answer. Throughout its history, Argentina has experienced episodes of economic turbulence and political instability, with only five Presidents completing their terms over the past seven decades.

Encouragingly, in in 2013, Argentina celebrated the 30th anniversary of its return to democracy following a tragic period of dictatorship and civil conflict. In the so-called "dirty war," as many as 30,000 Argentines died at the hands of the country's security forces. That national trauma instilled in Argentines a deep appreciation for human rights and democratic norms, such as free and fair elections. Argentina has several well-established political parties and movements that hold office at various levels and compete vigorously in elections, most recently, in October 2013, Argentina held free and fair national mid-term elections. Argentina's democratic values are also evident in many of its positions the country has taken at international fora such as the Organization of American States and the U.N. Human Rights Council.

As in all democratic societies, maintaining the proper checks and balances between among Argentina's public government institutions requires vigilance. In recent years, some executive and legislative actions have been seen as providing unfair electoral advantages to the governing party, and in other cases in Argentina have threatened the independence of the judiciary. Democracy consists of more than holding elections. If confirmed, I will promote strong institutions that provide fair and impartial application of national law and citizen rights, supported by appropriate separation of powers that guarantees checks and balances among government branches.

I would also hope that Argentina's national experience over the past three decades with the defense of democratic values would consistently translate into a defense of those same values internationally. Unfortunately, Argentina's foreign policy has not always reflected its domestic commitment to democracy. This is most notably evident in our hemisphere, where Argentina has steadfastly defended one-party rule and the denial of basic human rights for the people of Cuba. It has embraced the authoritarian regime in Havana. By expressing solidarity with that government, where citizens are denied the right to choose their leaders or express opinions on matters of national importance and journalists cannot operate freely, Argentina does a disservice to its own historical legacy and interest in strengthening democracy worldwide.

If confirmed, I would promote continued cooperation with Argentina both bilaterally and multilaterally to spread our shared democratic values, while urging Argentina to hold its neighbors in the region and countries around the world to the same standards for political freedoms and human rights.

Question. Is the Government of Argentina is following a prudent economic model—the "modelo" as it is called?

Answer. A stable and prosperous Argentina is in the best interest of Argentina, the United States, and the entire region. Encouraging sound economic policies is one of the key objectives of U.S. policy in Argentina, and it would be one of my top priorities if confirmed as Ambassador. I believe strongly in the power of free and fair rules-based trade and the importance of a market-led economy for economic development.

From 2003 to 2007, Argentina was buoyed by high demand and high prices for its agricultural exports. Government policies helped bring about fiscal and current account surpluses and the accumulation of international reserves. Recently, however, growth has slowed and Argentina has experienced imbalances in its fiscal and current accounts, due in part to increasing subsidies for energy. Many economists believe these imbalances must be addressed to put Argentina on a sustainable and prosperous trajectory.

It is also important that Argentina normalize its relationship with the international financial and investment communities by clearing its arrears to the U.S. Government and other public and private creditors. The administration has raised these issues at high levels with the Government of Argentina for several years. Recently, Argentina has taken positive steps, including paying arbitral awards to U.S. companies; working toward implementation of a new consumer price index in coordination with the International Monetary Fund to improve its economic data; and resuming discussions regarding repaying Argentina's debts to Paris Club members.

These preliminary steps are encouraging, but if confirmed, I will urge Argentina to deepen its efforts to resolve these longstanding irritants in our relationship. I will encourage the maintenance of a stable, transparent, and predictable investment climate that promotes investment and fair and open competition. I would also ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires continues to serve as an advocate for the fair treatment of U.S. companies and investors.

Question. What will your message be to the Argentine Government relative to their interventionist economic policies and the impact that has had on inflation, business, trade, and commerce?

Answer. In any country, predictable and transparent economic policies offer the best environment for broadly inclusive national development and for attracting investment. Business investment, both local and foreign, generates economic opportunity and promotes shared prosperity.

If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Argentina to adopt transparent and predictable policies and regulations that promote fair and open competition. Policies that protect intellectual property are an important component of a favorable business climate, as is an independent judiciary.

The United States has expressed serious concern, both bilaterally and at the World Trade Organization (WTO), regarding Argentine measures that restrict imports in an arbitrary and nontransparent manner, including in a WTO complaint the United States filed against Argentina in August 2012.

More than 500 U.S. companies operate in Argentina and employ more than 170,000 Argentines. The United States is Argentina's largest foreign-direct investor. Meanwhile, the U.S. trade surplus with Argentina in goods and services reached approximately $9.4 billion in 2012. Given Argentina's workforce and natural resources, there is room for this investment and trade to expand dramatically to the benefit of both national economies. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage Argentina to take all appropriate steps to strengthen our economic relationship.

Question. Argentina relies heavily on the sale of commodities like soy to support their economy. Should there be a decline in soy prices, or the Argentines ability to produce soy for soy hungry nations like China, what impact would that have on the Argentine economy?

Answer. Argentina has long benefited from its remarkably fertile and plentiful agricultural land. Led by agricultural production, including soy, its exports totaled $75.2 billion in 2012.

Agricultural prices are often volatile, and all economies benefit from diversification in exports and trading partners. A decline in soy prices would have a negative impact on Argentina's revenue collection as well as its balance of payments. That said, the Argentine economy exports a range of other products and services, in agriculture, energy, and other sectors. The United States consumes more than 5 percent of Argentine exports; in 2012, it imported $411 million in iron and steel products from Argentina, as well as hundreds of millions of dollars in fresh fruit, wine, and aluminum. Argentina also exports oil and natural gas to the United States and other trading partners.

Question. With alarming government expansion into the private market expected to continue under President Fernandez de Kirchner, what impact do you foresee on the Argentine people and economy? If confirmed, how would you recommend the U.S. engage on these issues?

Answer. Argentines benefit when private economic activity serves as an engine of growth, creates jobs, and provides government revenue to address social needs. U.S. companies have long identified opportunities in Argentina, and more than 500 operate in that country today.

Businesses in Argentina, both domestic and foreign, have faced serious obstacles in recent years. These include nationalizations without prompt, fair, and effective compensation; restrictions on imports; limited access to foreign currency; barriers to the repatriation of profits; price controls; and inadequate protection of intellectual property. These policies discourage local and foreign investment.

If confirmed, I will be a tireless champion for the U.S. business community in Argentina and urge better cooperation between the private sector and the government. As I learned first-hand during my years working for Members of the U.S. Congress and later as a business consultant, an effective partnership between businesses and government is essential for countries to reach their full economic potential. I will work closely with my colleagues throughout the U.S. Government—including at the Departments of State, Commerce, Treasury, Agriculture, Energy, Labor, and Justice, and at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the U.S. Congress—to ensure that our national economic interests are promoted in Argentina and that Argentina honors its international obligations.

Question. In 2012, the Government of Argentina renationalized the country's largest oil company, YPF, which accounts for 35 percent of Argentina's oil and gas market. What impact is this likely to have on energy prices and production?

Answer. The administration has long expressed its concerns about the Government of Argentina's nationalization of Repsol-YPF, which proceeded initially without due compensation. At the time, we called it a "negative development," and we believe it clearly dampened the investment climate in Argentina. More recently, we have noted developments indicating that YPF and Repsol have agreed in principle on a mutually satisfactory compensation arrangement. Without question, an open and competitive market for energy and other commodities has proved the most successful path to modern, efficient and innovative development of energy resources across the globe.

Oil and natural gas production in Argentina are declining. Argentina has gone from being a net exporter of energy to a net importer. Despite these trends, Argentina has enormous potential to help supply world energy markets and contribute to global energy security. Attracting private investment will be essential for Argentina to regain energy self-sufficiency. The Argentine Government has demonstrated a clear interest in having U.S. companies be partners in their efforts to reinvigorate their energy sector.

If confirmed, I will continue to raise the administration's concern at the highest levels of the Government of Argentina about actions that negatively affect the investment climate in Argentina. At the same time, I will seek to build a strong bilateral partnership on energy issues, based upon the common interests of our countries.

Question. There are several failed models in Latin America of nationalized energy firms. How would you work with other agencies of the U.S. Government and American firms to try and prevent Argentina from duplicating mistakes made elsewhere in the region?

Answer. In the United States, privately owned energy companies are global leaders that use advanced technologies and methods for energy exploration and production. U.S. firms have a lot to offer to countries that present a favorable investment environment.

Every country has the sovereign right to decide how to best take advantage of its natural resource endowments. All policies need to adhere to requirements under local and international law. Regardless of the system, what matters most are transparency, efficiency, accountability, predictability, and responsible business practices.

If confirmed, I would encourage Argentina to adopt predictable and competitive policies to attract the level of investment it needs to meet the country's vast energy potential. I would work with U.S. Government agencies—including the Departments of Energy and Interior—to share U.S. best practices with Argentine counterparts on environmental and regulatory matters, including through our Bilateral Energy Working Group. There are several U.S. companies interested in investing and offering their services to develop Argentina's shale oil and gas fields, which are among the largest in the world. I would consult regularly with these and other U.S. firms and when appropriate, advocate with Argentine authorities on their behalf.

Question. U.S.-Argentine security cooperation, particularly between our militaries, has been nonexistent due to Argentine unwillingness to work with us.

- (a) If confirmed, what steps should the Argentine Government take to improve military-military relationship?
- (b) Is the Argentine Government a committed U.S. partner in the fight against terrorism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will try to build renewed trust between our governments and reestablish a constructive partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect, and I will look for similar intent from the Argentine Government. After all, our countries share many security priorities. Defending national borders against the flow of illegal narcotics, for example, is a goal of both our nations. Argentina, twice a victim of major terrorist attacks in the 1990s, also shares the U.S. commitment to combat international terrorism, and cooperation in this area continues.

Security cooperation with Argentina has been limited since Argentina's 2011 seizure of classified U.S. cargo brought into Argentina by a U.S. Army Joint Combined Exercise Training team. The team had proper prior authorization from Argentine authorities, and there was no legitimate reason for the seizure. Differing perspectives in multilateral defense and security fora have further complicated our bilateral cooperation.

While many aspects of our defense relationship today remain challenging, U.S. security and defense cooperation and training are important goals for the administration, including for international peacekeeping capacity-building, emergency response preparedness, and for regional counternarcotics efforts. The United States engages the Argentine Armed Forces through commercial and foreign military sales.

Some exchange of students between our militaries also continues, including through the International Military Educational and Training program.

Question. The intelligence relationship between Argentina and the U.S. is important. The Tri-Border region between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay contains a large illicit trade and trafficking zone where foreign operators like Hezbollah are able to sell counterfeit goods, launder money, and raise funds for Shia groups and Iranian proxies like Hezbollah.

- ♦ If confirmed, will you pledge to focus on the Tri-Border area and work to commit the U.S. to monitor Islamic influence and activities in the Southern Cone and work with Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil on this matter?

Answer. The Tri-Border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay remains an important regional nexus of arms, narcotics, and human smuggling, counterfeiting, pirated goods, and money laundering—all potential funding sources for terrorist organizations. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we continue to monitor this region closely and maintain close communication with this committee on this issue.

Ideological sympathizers in South America and the Caribbean continue to provide financial support to terrorist groups in the Middle East and South Asia. If confirmed, I will work with my U.S. Government colleagues and the Government of Argentina to expose and combat such activity. I will urge Argentine officials to improve domestic law enforcement and regulatory coordination, and to establish and enforce appropriate laws and regulations to curtail money laundering. I will emphasize to Argentina the importance of working with its neighbors, Brazil and Paraguay, as well as others in the region to adopt complementary measures.

If confirmed, I will make heightened cooperation a priority.

Question. In January 2013, President Fernandez de Kirchner announced a memorandum of understanding with Iran to create a so-called "truth commission" to reinvestigate the 1994 terrorist attack on the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA).

The MOU is a reversal of years of work and exhaustive reporting on the AMIA attack by Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman, who has concluded that the attack was approved by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and senior officials in the Iranian Government.

- ♦ (a) What is the U.S. Government's assessment of the work of Special Prosecutor Nisman?
- ♦ (b) Are you familiar with his 2006 and 2013 reports?
- ♦ (c) What are the administration's views on this so-called "truth commission?"

Answer. The U.S. position on the AMIA bombing is clear and consistent. For 20 years, the United States and the international community have joined the Argentine Government and victims of this horrific terrorist attack in demanding justice. I am familiar with Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman's findings, and I understand that our Embassy personnel have met with him on a number of occasions to discuss them.

The Obama administration is highly skeptical that a solution can be found to the AMIA case through the January 2013 Argentina-Iran agreement, which includes the establishment of a truth commission. Jewish groups in Argentina share that perspective, and they have expressed concern that Argentina's cooperation with Iran will only cause further delays. In recent months, the Argentine Government itself has acknowledged a lack of progress, though it remains committed to the agreement.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. Government continues to support the AMIA investigation so that nearly two decades after the bombing in Buenos Aires killed 85 people and wounded 300, the perpetrators might finally be held accountable. I take this issue extremely seriously, and I will do all I can to help bring justice to the victims and their families.

Question. Argentina is a Tier 2 country for sex and labor trafficking according to the 2013 Trafficking in Persons report. Argentine women and children from the rural areas are often subjected to trafficking in the urban centers.

- ♦ (a) If confirmed, how will you engage with the government on the issue of trafficking?
- ♦ (b) What specific steps should the Argentine Government take to prevent the trafficking of rural citizens to urban centers?

Answer. As the Government of Argentina itself has recognized, far too many men, women, and children in Argentina are subjected to sex trafficking, forced labor in sweatshops and homes, and forced prostitution in cities. In spite of progress made

by the Government of Argentina in the fight against trafficking in persons during the past year, serious challenges remain.

Notable recent accomplishments include passage of a federal antitrafficking law, the conviction of 17 trafficking offenders in 2012, and law enforcement efforts to arrest trafficking suspects and rescue victims.

This has been an area of constructive bilateral engagement in recent years. The U.S. Government provided advanced training to national and provincial authorities, facilitated by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, to combat trafficking in persons. We have also provided material support to NGOs engaged in strengthening the protection and rights of victims of trafficking.

Argentina remains a Tier 2 country on the U.S. Government's annual Trafficking in Persons report. If confirmed, I will support the Government of Argentina in its efforts to strengthen its antitrafficking regime, including prevention activities, victim services, and the conviction of criminals who profit from this destructive activity.

NOMINATIONS OF MATTHEW TUELLER, DOUGLAS SILLIMAN, MARK GILBERT, AND JOSEPH WESTPHAL

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Matthew Tueller, of Utah, to be Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen
Douglas Alan Silliman, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the State of Kuwait
Mark Gilbert, of Florida, to be Ambassador to New Zealand and to serve concurrently as Ambassador to Samoa
Joseph William Westphal, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:01 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine presiding.

Present: Senators Kaine, Risch, and Barrasso.

Also present: Senator Susan M. Collins.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. This meeting of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is called to order. I want to thank all who are attending on this day, when both the Federal Government and the Senate are shut down. But this is an important hearing and I am glad we were able to hold it, and I especially appreciate my ranking member, Senator Risch's, willingness to do this hearing today.

The hearing is about ambassadorial nominees to four critical allies and partners of the United States: Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Yemen, and Kuwait. Some of the nominees have waited for a bit and so we wanted to make sure that we could do this today, and I appreciate everyone making this happen.

I will make a few introductory comments about each of our four nominees today. I will ask Senator Risch as ranking member of the Subcommittee on Near East, South and Central Asian Affairs to make opening comments as well. At that point, we are fortunate

to have with us Senator Collins of Maine, who will introduce one of our nominees, Secretary Westphal.

After that introduction—and we would understand if the Senator—everybody is making moves—might need to leave at that point. We would certainly understand that. I will ask each of the nominees, beginning with Ambassador Tueller and just moving across the line, to make opening statements. At that point we will move into 7-minute rounds of questions and we may do that for a bit. But nevertheless, welcome to all.

A word about each of the four nominees in no particular order. Dr. Westphal, welcome, nominated to be the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, a very, very important partner of the United States in the Middle East. Dr. Westphal was appointed Under Secretary of the Army in 2009, has quite a bit of experience across the Federal Government both in the Department of Defense and in other agencies, including the EPA, as well as an extensive academic background.

Dr. Westphal's background as a scholar and public servant will come in handy, and especially his work at the DOD will be important in his position with Saudi Arabia, one of our critical military partners in terms of so many important issues in the Middle East.

Dr. Westphal goes to Riyadh at a very critical time, when there has been some at least public strain in the narrative or friction in the relationship. Dr. Westphal's skills will help us find ways where our countries, who are partners, but who will nevertheless have differences, as all partners do, find ways to communicate those differences and continue to work in partnership. Dr. Westphal, we are glad to have you with us today.

Mark Gilbert is the President's nominee to be Ambassador to New Zealand. I said to Mr. Gilbert, who is a friend: You are kind of—if they look at the lineup of countries, who does not belong here? Well, we have three Middle Eastern countries and New Zealand. But we are rearranging geography because it is important that Mark, whose nomination has been up for a while, is here today, and we are glad to have you and your family.

Mark has an interesting background: a long-time business background in the financial sector for a number of companies—Goldman Sachs, currently Barclay's, where he has done a lot of important economic development work, and with the New Zealand trade relationship that will come in handy. But one of the interesting things about Mark is he also played pro baseball for the Chicago White Sox and other minor league teams, and Mark is somebody who has been a very, very good friend and would bring a lot to bear. He and his family will be wonderful representatives of the country.

Senator Nelson was going to be here to introduce Mark today and was not able to come because of the weather, but submitted a statement. The entire statement will be included in the record, but let me just read an excerpt from Senator Nelson's statement: "I'm very pleased to introduce to the committee an outstanding Floridian, Mr. Mark Gilbert, to be our next Ambassador to New Zealand. Mark has been a friend of mine for many years and is without a doubt a terrific candidate for this important post. Mark has a background in economics, having served as a director of Barclay's Wealth in West Palm Beach, senior vice president of Goldman

Sachs in Miami, and senior vice president, sales manager, of Drexel Burnham Lambert in Boca Raton. Before his successful career in finance, Mark was a professional baseball player for several years, even playing in the major leagues with the Chicago White Sox in 1985.

"Mark's combined skills and professional experience make him an excellent nominee to serve as our next U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand. A major trade and regional partner, New Zealand will continue to pay a crucial role in U.S. efforts.

"I am so pleased that the President has recognized Mark and named him to this important post and I look forward to supporting his speedy confirmation by the full Senate."

The entire statement will be included in the record, but I wanted you to know that Senator Nelson thinks so highly of the nomination.

[The prepared statement of Senator Nelson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR BILL NELSON
INTRODUCING NOMINEE MARK GILBERT

I am very pleased to introduce to the committee an outstanding Floridian—Mr. Mark Gilbert—to be our next Ambassador to New Zealand.

Mark has been a friend of mine for many years and is, without a doubt, a terrific candidate for this important post.

Mark has a background in economics—having served as a director at Barclays Wealth in West Palm Beach; senior vice president of Goldman Sachs in Miami; and the senior vice president sales manager of Drexel Burnham Lambert in Boca Raton.

Before his successful career in finance, Mark was a professional baseball player for several years—even playing in the major leagues with the Chicago White Sox in 1985.

Mark's combined skills and professional experiences make him an excellent nominee to serve as our next U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand.

A major trade and regional partner, New Zealand will continue to play a crucial role in U.S. rebalance efforts toward Asia.

In addition to being a strong economic partner, helping to forge the Trans-Pacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement, we have a significant bilateral trade relationship—totaling $11 billion in 2011.

And while New Zealand is currently our 56th-largest trading partner, I'm certain that Mark will help lower that number once he has settled in the post.

Mark will also represent the United States to a crucial military partner. Like its neighbor Australia, New Zealand has fought alongside the United States time and again.

New Zealand's military commitment in Afghanistan has been vastly importantly. Their special forces have been deployed there since 2001, contributing to ISAF headquarters and the U.N. mission in Afghanistan. They've also contributed to the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan province, strengthening security and stability there.

During the last few years, I've been pleased to see a new chapter in our bilateral, defense cooperation. Joint operations in the region now include maritime security, counterterrorism, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.

New Zealand's participation in recent, multination military exercises has greatly increased our interoperability throughout the pacific.

Our continued security and economic cooperation with New Zealand will continue to be very important. I'm certain that as Ambassador, Mark will reinforce and build upon this strong and mutually beneficial relationship.

I'm so pleased that the President has recognized Mark and named him to this important post, and I look forward to supporting his speedy confirmation by the full Senate.

Senator KAINE. In Kuwait, the nominee we will hear from today is Mr. Doug Silliman of Texas, who has had a superb and an extensive record as a career Foreign Service officer. Both he and the next nominee, Ambassador Tueller, have served in very difficult

and challenging environments, sometimes able to take their families, sometimes not able to take their families. But they relish challenges, and Kuwait is a very important position.

Mr. Silliman embodies a wonderful tradition within the Foreign Service. He speaks Arabic, French, and Turkish and he has years of experience in the Middle East. During a time of growing security tension across the Middle East and concerns over Iran and Syria, our close partnership with Kuwait, formed both in peace and in war, is more crucial than ever.

A career diplomat like Mr. Silliman, who represents the best of our Foreign Service, who is just returning from a posting in Baghdad, where he was able to see what a lot of people thought would not be possible, the reestablishment and actually formation of very strong relations between Iraq and Kuwait, gives him exactly the kinds of experiences necessary to handle our important relationship with our ally in Kuwait.

You follow in the footsteps of an illustrious predecessor, the next man I will introduce, Ambassador Tueller. Ambassador Tueller is just completing service in Kuwait and has been nominated for the important, challenging position of U.S. Ambassador to Yemen. Mr. Tueller is also a career Foreign Service officer. Actually, he had a career before he had a career, because he grew up as the son of a Foreign Service officer and served with his family originally as a child in Latin America.

His career in the Foreign Service has been in both Latin America and in the Middle East, and he has served with distinction, most recently in Kuwait, and is now assuming, upon confirmation, upon vote of the Senate, this position in Yemen.

Every day American diplomats risk their lives around the world and nowhere is that more true than Yemen, a country where political and economic normalization is in the direct security interests of the United States. Mr. Tueller, who most recently served in Kuwait, was previously posted in Yemen at a time in the early 2000s, has familiarity with the country, and brings a great deal of experience to this important task, where there is an ongoing national dialogue about the formation of a new government that might be a federal government—these were just announced earlier in the week—where there are potential issues from the U.S. security and counterintelligence programs to Guantanamo. All impact this mission in Yemen.

We are pleased to have you here, and all the nominees, congratulations on your recommendations, nominations by the President, and we look forward to this hearing today.

With that, I will turn the meeting over to my ranking member, Senator Risch, for his comments as well.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

Senator RISCH. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. From what I can tell, this must be an extremely important hearing, inasmuch from what I can tell everybody left in Washington, DC, is in this room. [Laughter.]

Senator RISCH. Thank you for holding the hearing. Certainly some of these countries are real challenges. I look forward to hear-

ing the testimony of the three nominees and I suspect we will have some exhilarating questions after that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I also appreciate Senator Barrasso for joining us today.

Senator Collins is here, Senator from Maine, to offer a word of recommendation about the nominee to be Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Dr. Westphal. Senator Collins, great to have you here.

STATEMENT OF HON. SUSAN M. COLLINS, U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would expect that your two colleagues and I, because of the States we come from, would be able to brave this weather and think nothing of it. But I am particularly impressed that someone from Virginia, the Commonwealth of Virginia, is able to be with us today and to preside over this hearing. So with that, I will begin my formal comments.

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, I am pleased to appear before you today to introduce Dr. Joseph Westphal, who has been nominated to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I have known and worked with Dr. Westphal in two different capacities, both here in Washington, where he serves as Under Secretary of the Army, and back home in Maine, where he was Chancellor of the University of Maine System from 2006 to 2009.

Dr. Westphal has a reputation as a talented leader and manager in both the Federal and State government. His extensive experience and knowledge of national security policy are just two of the essential skills that he will bring to the task of strengthening our bilateral relationships with the Saudis during what is a turbulent, complicated time in the Middle East.

Dr. Westphal's long career in academia and public service began when he received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Missouri and then taught for 12 years at Oklahoma State University. His career took a turn toward public policy when he went to work for one of our colleagues, Senator Thad Cochran, from 1995 through 1997. He also served as a Senior Policy Advisor at the Environmental Protection Agency, before becoming an Assistant Secretary of the Army in 1998. In 2001 he served as Acting Secretary of the Army, responsible for organizing, training, and equipping the 1.1 million men and women serving in that branch of our military services.

Since being nominated and confirmed as Under Secretary of the Army in 2009, Joe has dedicated his considerable energy to keeping our country safe. I have worked very closely with him on several issues affecting military readiness and personnel and I can attest to his dedication to public service, his pragmatic approach to solving problems, and his unwavering commitment to our troops.

Secretary Westphal is also a charter member of the Deputy Secretary of Defense Advisory Group, which deals with all matters related to strategy, policy, budgeting, acquisition, personnel, and readiness in the Department. This group also provides advice to the Secretary of Defense on matters related to Department activities in support of operations in the Middle East and gulf region,

and it has focused on issues related to Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, and other countries in the Central Command area of responsibility.

Secretary Westphal has been heavily involved in this group and as a result has a deep understanding of the strategic challenges faced by the United States in this region.

Mr. Chairman, again thank you for this opportunity to introduce Dr. Joseph Westphal. I am confident that if confirmed he will carry out the duties of this important position with the same commitment and unique set of practical and policy skills that he has brought to every position that he has held in his extensive previous public service.

Thank you very much, and I thank the members of this committee.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Collins. We understand that you may need to depart, but we appreciate you being here today to offer those words on behalf of Dr. Westphal.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. We will now move into opening statements by our nominees. I think we will start with Ambassador Tueller and move across the table. Your entire written statement will be included in the record. Iwould like to ask you to make your opening comments to about 5 minutes. The entire written statement will be included.

Ambassador Tueller, welcome.

STATEMENT OF HON. MATTHEW TUELLER, OF UTAH, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Ambassador TUELLER. Thank you. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, let me first extend my personal gratitude, and I think I can speak on behalf of all my fellow nominees, for your dedication in ensuring that this hearing goes ahead today despite the weather conditions.

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen. I am grateful to the President for his nomination and to Secretary Kerry for his continued trust and confidence. I am sorry that my wife Denise and our five children are unable to attend today's session, but thank them for their continued love and support.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss Yemen today and ask that my full testimony be submitted for the record.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed I will work to advance critical U.S. foreign policy and national security interests in Yemen. My top priorities will be to support the people of Yemen in their ongoing transition to democracy, to bolster U.S. security cooperation with the Yemeni Government, to foster greater regional and global security, and ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens and embassy employees.

The United States has a strong and growing partnership with Yemen. Since the November 2011 signing of Yemen's transition agreement, the people of Yemen have accomplished what many thought impossible. Under the leadership of President Hadi, Yemen has embarked on a serious reform effort to better meet the political, economic, security, and social aspirations of its citizens.

If confirmed, I will work to promote the various reforms underpinning this transition. A successful transition will also bolster our domestic security as the Yemeni Government develops its capacity to directly counter the threat of terrorism and root out the underlying causes of violent extremism.

President Obama underscored last May that AQAP is the most active organization plotting against the United States. This threat emanates from Yemen. The Yemeni people have borne the brunt of AQAP's vicious attacks. President Hadi and the Yemeni people stand strongly committed to stamping out this threat to the peace and security of their country. If confirmed, I will work to deepen our two nations' commitment to close coordination in this shared fight by continuing strong United States support for programs that develop the capability of Yemen's security forces, counter violent extremism, and build the capacity of law enforcement.

Despite Yemen's transition accomplishments, significant humanitarian challenges remain. The gains in political and security sector reforms have not yet translated into large-scale improvements in the daily life of average Yemenis and over half of the population is in need of some form of humanitarian assistance.

Yemen's transitional government is working to address these issues, but the support of the international community will remain critical to prevent these acute needs from derailing the transition process. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to address Yemen's most pressing needs while assisting Yemen on its path to sustainability and self-sufficiency through economic reform and development.

Above all, if confirmed my most important responsibility will be to protect our Embassy and our mission staff. We must continue to have a strong presence in Yemen despite the threat environment.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving as a Foreign Service officer for nearly 30 years now, currently as Ambassador to Kuwait. Growing up as the child of a Foreign Service officer, I learned early of both the privileges and responsibilities that come from a commitment to service to one's country. My formative years in North Africa, Europe, and Latin America inspired a desire to pursue a career building ties between the United States and our partners around the world. My service in Baghdad, Riyadh, Cairo, among other challenging posts, has helped prepare me to represent our country in Yemen.

In October 2000 after the attack on the USS *COLE*, I was given the task of opening and heading a U.S. office in Aden in support of the investigation. For me that was an early indicator of the pressing need to develop partnerships across the region so that the United States could meet the threat posed by violent extremists. It is gratifying to see how much progress has been made in this respect in our counterterrorism cooperation with the Government of Yemen. If confirmed, I pledge to continue this important work, furthering United States interests in Yemen and in the region.

Again, I am honored by this nomination and greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Tueller follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR MATTHEW H. TUELLER

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen. I am grateful to the President for his nomination and to Secretary Kerry for his continued trust and confidence. If confirmed, I will work steadfastly to advance critical U.S. foreign policy and national security interests in Yemen. In service of those U.S. interests, my top priorities will be to support the people of Yemen in their ongoing transition to democracy, bolster U.S. security cooperation with the Yemeni Government to foster greater regional and global stability and combat the threat posed by al-Qaeda, and, of course, ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens and Embassy employees.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has a strong and growing partnership with Yemen. Yemen, itself, is in the midst of a historic transition. Since the November 2011 signing of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered political transition initiative, the people of Yemen have accomplished what many thought impossible. Under the leadership of President Hadi, Yemen has embarked on a serious reform effort to better meet the needs of its citizens, facilitate a democratic process, and participate more fully as a partner in supporting regional security. If confirmed, I will work to expand our broad engagement to continue promoting the various political, economic, and security sector reforms underpinning this transition, which support our U.S. foreign policy and national security interests of a stable, secure, and democratic Yemen. The ultimate success of Yemen's transition will not only impact our interests in the region, but also our domestic security as the Yemeni Government develops its capacity to directly counter the significant threat from Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and root out the underlying causes of violent extremism, in part, through a bolstered ability to meet Yemeni citizens' economic, humanitarian, and political needs.

On January 25, the people of Yemen achieved a critical milestone in their ongoing transition process, with the conclusion of the National Dialogue Conference. The dialogue marked the first time representatives from diverse segments of Yemeni society—including political elites, tribal elders, women, youth, civil society, former disenfranchised southerners, and religious minorities—met for substantive discussions about the country's political future. This conversation represented a seachange in Yemeni politics. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that these varied groups continue to have a voice in the political process—particularly since it is these voices that call most loudly for equality, for prosperity, and for the rights of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. In addition to working to ensure that these groups have a voice in the political process, I will also work to ensure that the rights of women, children, and all individuals in Yemen are respected and protected.

As Yemen works to shape its future, I will work to guarantee that the United States and the international community—particularly Yemen's GCC neighbors—remain firmly supportive of Yemen's efforts, despite the myriad hot-spots in the region. U.S. and international engagement will continue to be essential as Yemen moves forward with the next steps in the transition process, including constitutional reform, a constitutional referendum, and, ultimately, national elections, expected within the next year.

A democratic, unified, and stable Yemen will also be able to participate more fully as a partner in supporting regional security and combating terrorism. Yemen continues to face frequent terrorist attacks by AQAP operating within its borders. President Obama underscored in May that AQAP is the most active organization plotting against the United States—and that this threat emanates from Yemen. The Yemeni people have borne the brunt of AQAP's vicious attacks. The assault on the Ministry of Defense hospital in December 2013 underscored the deplorable tactics employed against civilians by this terrorist group. The Yemeni people and the international community were horrified at video footage of terrorists shooting unarmed patients in their beds, viciously murdering doctors and nurses, and stalking through hallways to kill survivors. President Hadi and the Yemeni people stand strongly committed to stamping out this threat to the safety of their families, the peace and security of their country, and the citizens of its international partners.

If confirmed, I will work to deepen our two nations' commitment to close coordination in this shared fight against terrorism. To this end, our assistance programs to Yemen seek to develop the capacity of Yemen's security forces to conduct counterterrorism operations and to secure maritime and land borders and territorial waters. We also support programs to counter violent extremism in Yemen, including a focus on the role that civil society can play in speaking out against violence. And we are assisting Yemeni efforts to build the capacity of law enforcement to better respond to the security concerns of Yemeni communities. The United States will continue to

employ the full range of counterterrorism tools to support Yemen's fight against AQAP.

With U.S. support, President Hadi has also taken important steps toward restructuring the military and security services and to enhance the professionalism and capacity of Yemen's Armed Forces. If confirmed, I will encourage the Yemeni Government to continue progress on this important aspect of the transition, which will strengthen Yemeni capacity to secure the country against threats and enhance regional security. I will also support international efforts to assist the Yemenis in countering the spread of violent extremism. The establishment of a credible, sustainable extremist rehabilitation program would be an important step for the Yemeni Government toward bolstering its counterterrorism capabilities.

Finally, there still remains the significant challenge posed by the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. More than half of the remaining detainees at Guantanamo are Yemeni nationals. If confirmed, I will work with the administration and with Congress to support efforts to responsibly close the facility while protecting our U.S. national security interests.

Despite Yemen's transition accomplishments to date, significant challenges remain. The gains in political and security sector reform have not yet translated into large-scale improvements in the daily life of average Yemenis. Almost 15 million Yemenis—over half the population—are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance. More than 13 million do not have access to safe water and sanitation, 10.5 million are food-insecure, and more than 1 million children do not have access to education. As the result of years of conflict, there are also more than 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are in desperate need of assistance. Large-scale migration will continue to present humanitarian and security challenges. There are nearly a quarter million refugees and 147,500 migrants, mostly from the Horn of Africa, many of whom arrive destitute and in poor health. In addition, Yemen is now coping with the return of approximately 400,000 Yemeni laborers recently deported from Saudi Arabia.

Yemen's transitional government is working to address these issues, but the support of the international community will remain critical in the near-term to help meet acute needs and prevent them from overwhelming the transition process. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to address Yemen's most pressing needs to create the space for the transition to succeed, through bilateral assistance and partnership with the international community through the Friends of Yemen and the U.N. Humanitarian Response Plan. Focusing on the longer term, I will also work to assist Yemen on its path to sustainability and self-sufficiency through economic reform and development.

Economic reform will be an essential underpinning of the ongoing transition's ultimate success. Without significant structural reform and the development of a sustainable private sector, many of the Yemeni citizens' key economic demands will not be met. These key reforms will include rebalancing government spending priorities, transitioning toward a more targeted and efficient social safety net, and increasing investments in long-term growth. The development of a robust private sector will also be critical to addressing Yemenis' demands for jobs and economic development. I will steadfastly support the President and Secretary's agenda in bolstering regional economic integration and reform. I will build on my predecessor's successful efforts at expanding ties between the Yemeni and American business communities. I will also look for ways to maximize the benefit from Yemen's WTO accession as an opportunity to boost regional economic development cooperation. Economic development and reform will not only help the Yemeni Government meet the needs of all Yemeni citizens, but it will also empower Yemenis to build better lives for themselves through private enterprise while developing long-term relationships with American and international partners across the fields of science, health, technology, and commerce.

I take seriously our obligation to protect our embassies and embassy staff abroad and am satisfied to know that, if confirmed, I would lead an embassy with an excellent security team. We must continue to have a strong presence in Yemen, despite the threat environment, and remain firmly committed to our comprehensive partnership with President Hadi and the Yemeni people.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving as a Foreign Service officer for nearly 30 years, currently as Ambassador to Kuwait. Growing up as the dependent of a Foreign Service officer, I learned early of both the privileges and responsibilities that come from a commitment to service to one's country. My formative years growing up in North Africa, Europe, and Latin America inspired a strong desire to pursue a career building ties between the United States and partners around the world. Service in Baghdad, Riyadh, and Cairo, among other challenging posts, has helped prepare me to represent our country in Yemen.

In October 2000 after the attack on the USS *Cole* in the Port of Aden, I was given the task of opening and leading a U.S. Office in Aden in support of the investigation into the attack. For me, that was an early indicator of the pressing need to develop partnerships across the region so that the U.S. could meet the threat posed by violent extremists. Serving in Riyadh on September 11, 2001, highlighted for me that the threat to our interests and our citizens posed by terrorists was a critical foreign policy priority and that our ability to counter this threat would be enhanced by the extent to which we could engage our partners in the region in standing with us against the threat. It is gratifying to see how much progress has been made in this respect in our counterterrorism cooperation with the Government of Yemen. I am proud to say we enjoy a close partnership with President Hadi and the Yemeni Government, and we share a commitment to a democratic transition and regional security. If confirmed, I pledge to continue this important work in Yemen, furthering U.S. interests there and in the region.

Again, I am honored by this nomination and greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Tueller.

Mr. Silliman.

STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS ALAN SILLIMAN, OF TEXAS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF KUWAIT

Mr. SILLIMAN. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, I am honored to appear before the committee today and gratified by the trust that the President has placed in me by nominating me as the Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. I have submitted my full written testimony to the committee for the record and welcome this opportunity to say a few short words.

I would like to start by thanking my family for their love and support as I have dragged them across North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia over my career. My wife, Catherine, and my younger son, Zachary, are here with me. My older son, Benjamin, as the chairman knows, is at William and Mary University and could not be with us. I also want to thank my father, who supported me in this career from the very beginning, when others had some doubts whether this was the right path.

I also want to acknowledge Ambassador Matt Tueller, sitting next to me at the table, for his exemplary service as the Ambassador in Kuwait over the past 2½ years. I hope that I can fill his very large shoes.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and with the entire Congress, and I look forward to seeing you and your staffs in Kuwait, and to consulting with you and your staffs whenever I am back in Washington.

If confirmed, foremost among my priorities will be the safety of American citizens, those in the Embassy, deployed U.S. service members, and the many private Americans who live in and visit Kuwait.

Mr. Chairman, there are few U.S. friends or allies as steadfast as Kuwait. This strong relationship was forged in the heat of battle during the first gulf war as brave Americans and Kuwaitis fought to liberate Kuwait from occupation. One of those Americans was my father-in-law, Doctor and retired Army Medical Corps Colonel, Ted Raia, who led a combat support hospital during the war.

If confirmed, I will seek to deepen United States-Kuwait cooperation on defense and security. This includes continued strong American support for the defense of Kuwait, for the security of the wider region, and the fight against terrorism and terrorism financing.

Our U.S. military presence in Kuwait is concrete proof of our country's commitment to these principles.

The regional security is more than just military relations. As President Obama said during the visit of Emir Sheikh Zaballah to Washington this past September, Kuwait is one of our most important partners in the region, working together on a whole range of economic and social and security issues. In particular, Kuwait has led international assistance efforts for Syrian refugees, hosting United Nations humanitarian pledging conferences for Syria in 2013 and 2014 and itself donating $500 million in assistance this year alone.

United States-Kuwait economic and energy ties are strong, but can grow stronger. If confirmed, I will vigorously pursue opportunities for United States businesses in Kuwait and work to attract Kuwaiti investment into the United States.

Kuwait has a vibrant political system with strong constitutional traditions. Women vote and run for office and currently serve in the Kuwaiti Parliament and the Cabinet. If confirmed, I will engage with Kuwaitis to explore how Kuwait might expand human rights and protections for vulnerable populations.

About 60 percent of Kuwaitis are under the age of 30 and the United States must stay connected to this new generation, mostly born since the liberation of Kuwait. If confirmed, I will prioritize outreach to younger Kuwaitis, emphasizing the fundamental American values of education and tolerance.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, Senator Barrasso, I have had the privilege of serving the American people as a diplomat for nearly three decades. During my career, including as deputy chief of mission in Iraq and in Turkey, I have encouraged democracy and human rights, defended the homeland and my posts against terrorism, advocated for American companies, developed the professional skills of my staff, promoted entrepreneurship, and even sponsored the teaching of American jazz. And through it all I have done my best to shepherd American taxpayers' dollars wisely.

I am confident that I have the skills necessary to succeed as our next Ambassador to Kuwait and I hope that this committee and the full Senate concur.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to be here today, especially under these conditions. I would be very pleased to answer any questions the committee has.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Silliman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS A. SILLIMAN

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before this committee today, and gratified by the trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown by nominating me to serve as Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. If you will permit me, I would also like to thank my family for their support throughout my career. My wife, Catherine, and younger son, Zachary, are here with us today.

I would also like to express my thanks to my friends and to the many colleagues across the U.S. Government with whom I have worked during my nearly 30 years in the Foreign Service. I particularly want to acknowledge Ambassador Matt Tueller, sitting here at the table with me today, for his exemplary service as the U.S. Ambassador in Kuwait over the past 2½ years. If confirmed, I will strive to follow his example as I pursue U.S. national interests. I also pledge to work closely with this committee and others in the Congress to sustain and enhance relations

with Kuwait, and of course, we would welcome the opportunity to see you and your staff in Kuwait.

There are few U.S. friends or allies in the world as steadfast as Kuwait, particularly in the strategically important and always dynamic Middle East. Of course, the strong foundation of this relationship was forged in the heat of battle during the first gulf war and in the sacrifices of the brave men and women from the U.S. military and Kuwait who fought to liberate Kuwait from occupation. If confirmed, my mission will be to continue to deepen and broaden the strategic U.S.-Kuwait partnership, to include not just military-to-military ties but also substantial academic, commercial and cultural relations.

Foremost among my priorities will be the protection of American citizens in Kuwait—those working in the U.S. mission, U.S. military personnel deployed forward, and the numerous private Americans who live in, work in, or visit Kuwait.

If confirmed, I will also seek to deepen U.S.-Kuwaiti cooperation on defense and security. This includes continued strong and concrete American support for the defense of Kuwait and the stability of the wider region, as evidenced by the presence of U.S. military personnel in Kuwait.

Of course, regional security is not only about military-to-military relations but also about ensuring strong diplomatic coordination. Fortunately, the United States and Kuwait share a very similar outlook on regional developments. During the visit of Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to Washington this past September, he reviewed with President Obama and Vice President Biden the full range of regional issues that affect both of our nations—including Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, and efforts to secure Middle East peace. The two leaders agreed to continue to pursue shared objectives on these issues. Kuwait has also played a globally important role as a leading contributor to humanitarian assistance efforts for conflict victims and refugees fleeing the brutal war in Syria: in January it hosted for the second time a U.N. assistance conference that raised $2.6 billion in new assistance for the humanitarian response, including a new Kuwaiti pledge of $500 million.

I was fortunate to observe first-hand from Baghdad the courageous steps that Iraq and Kuwait took to finally and fully normalize relations, and Kuwait's rapprochement with Iraq now serves as the model for reintegrating Iraq into the immediate neighborhood, from which it was so long estranged, and the wider Arab world. Meanwhile, Kuwait's financial assistance to Yemen and support for its political transition have been important factors in our ongoing efforts to ensure long-term stability throughout the region. Significantly, our two governments are also working to strengthen our joint efforts to fight against terrorism and terrorism financing throughout the region.

Energy is another important issue in Kuwait. Kuwait holds about 7 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and will remain a significant producer of hydrocarbons for many years to come. If confirmed, I will promote U.S. technical assistance as an important tool to help Kuwait protect and modernize its oil and gas infrastructure. There are also realizable opportunities to improve Kuwait's energy efficiency through simple steps such as further reducing the flaring of natural gas and increasing the energy efficiency of new buildings.

These priorities should also provide new commercial opportunities for American companies in Kuwait. According to the International Monetary Fund, Kuwait has run regular and large budget surpluses for more than a decade—including more than $50 billion last year. At the same time, Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund is the region's oldest, controlling more than $400 billion in assets. If confirmed, I will vigorously pursue commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses in Kuwait, particularly in Kuwait's rapidly expanding infrastructure and housing sectors. I will also work to attract more Kuwaiti investment into the United States, where Kuwait represents one of our country's fast growing sources of incoming foreign direct investment.

Kuwait stands out in the region for its vibrant politics and its outspoken press and I look forward to witnessing Kuwaiti politics first hand. The Kuwaiti Constitution remains the framework for political discussion in all its forms, and Kuwait's National Assembly is an empowered legislative body with significant oversight authorities. Women have voted and run for office since 2006, and women currently sit in both the Cabinet and Parliament. If confirmed, I will continue the regular engagement we have long enjoyed with Kuwaiti politicians, opinion leaders and the full range of Kuwaitis to highlight democracy in the United States and its impact on civil and human rights, increased protection for vulnerable populations, improved labor standards and providing better economic opportunities for all.

I will also devote my attention to Kuwait's important youth population. With nearly half of the country's population under the age of 25, many Kuwaitis coming of age today were not yet born when U.S. forces helped liberate their country.

Because they are growing up in a fundamentally different world than previous generations, the United States must strive to tell these Kuwaitis our story and continue to establish new relationships that will last far into the future.

That is a task we can accomplish. American culture is as popular among Kuwaiti youth as it is elsewhere around the globe. They love to visit the United States, and they understand that speaking English and getting an American education teaches them how to connect, how to solve problems and how to be a world citizen in the new era of globalization. Right now, there are at least 6,500 Kuwaiti students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities, with plans to expand their presence, and tens of thousands more Kuwaitis visit each year for tourism, medical, and business reasons, bringing with them billions of dollars to be injected into the U.S. economy.

The United States uses exchange programs, English language scholarships, and other opportunities to engage the rising generation of Kuwaitis. If confirmed, I will prioritize mission engagement with younger Kuwaitis, emphasizing the fundamental American values of education, tolerance, and inclusion that are the backbone of U.S. success.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving the American people as a diplomat for nearly three decades. I began my career adjudicating visas in Haiti, where I quickly learned how fortunate we are to be American citizens. My time in the Middle East and South Asia taught me how compelling American values truly are. Throughout my career I have promoted human rights, countered terrorism, strengthened military-to-military ties and advocated on behalf of U.S. companies. Most recently, I served as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Iraq during the withdrawal of our troops and scaling-down of our Embassy; prior to that I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Turkey. In these positions I was responsible for thousands of American direct hire personnel and many more thousands of contractors and locally engaged staff. Through it all, I have experienced first-hand the strong returns of investing in people, ensuring their personal security and that of their families, and prioritizing career development and mission morale. I am confident that during these past 30 years I have acquired the skills necessary to succeed as a chief of mission.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Silliman.

Mr. Gilbert.

STATEMENT OF MARK GILBERT, OF FLORIDA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO NEW ZEALAND AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AS AMBASSADOR TO SAMOA

Mr. GILBERT. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, Senator Barrasso, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to New Zealand and to the independent state of Samoa. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence in nominating me, and I am equally grateful to receive this committee's consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my wife, Nancy, and daughter, Danielle, who are with me today, and also acknowledge my daughter, Elizabeth, who unfortunately because of the weather was not able to be here. They are the driving force behind everything that I do.

Mr. Chairman, I can imagine no higher honor than to be asked to serve my country as Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. Connected by the Pacific Ocean, we are partners committed to expanding global trade, promoting democratic values, while pursuing peace and security. With almost three decades of experience in global finance and investment, I appreciate our enduring economic ties to New Zealand and the economic opportunities in Samoa and the Pacific region as a whole. If confirmed, I will strive to advance

our Nation's interests, nurture those economic ties, and build on our growing relationships.

The United States is one of New Zealand's top trading partners. We have collaborated closely on the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. If confirmed, I will work to promote an even stronger economic link between our countries, capitalizing on opportunities to not only increase U.S. investment in New Zealand, but to also expand New Zealand investment here at home.

New Zealand is an active partner in the United Nations, committed to resolving conflict through negotiation. It plays a far larger role on the world stage than the country size would suggest. Its Armed Forces have led and participated in numerous peacekeeping missions around the globe and have worked side by side with our troops in Afghanistan.

In 2010 our nations signed the Wellington Declaration, pledging increased diplomatic ties and regional cooperation. In 2012 we laid the foundation for the strengthened defense cooperation in the Washington Declaration.

New Zealand is an integral link in the global effort against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and actively works in the Asia-Pacific region on counterterrorism issues as well. As an island nation with a culture and an economy deeply rooted in its natural resources, New Zealand understands the seriousness of global scientific and public policy challenges, including greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Fifty years ago we forged a scientific partnership with New Zealand and Antarctica. Christchurch serves as the U.S. Antarctic program's gateway for operations, including vital environmental research at McMurdo Station and our South Pole Base. We closely cooperate in multilateral settings, working to provide technical assistance to Pacific Island economies in education, in energy policy, and the training of the local workforce.

As the first independent country to be formed out of island territories in the Pacific, Samoa is a leader in security and economic stability in the Pacific region. Its commitment to free trade was enhanced by its entry to the World Trade Organization, where it has exhibited unique leadership in forging a stronger partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum. In our bilateral relationship, the Peace Corps has deepened our ties between Samoans and the people of the United States by sending volunteers for more than four decades to work in communities throughout Samoa.

Its capital, Apia, is the home of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, which cooperates with our scientists and researchers on projects like climate change and the protection of vital marine habitats and resources.

The United States conducted the first exercise of the 2012 Shiprider Agreement between Samoa and the U.S. Coast Guard to achieve sustainable fisheries and to combat illegal fishing.

Mr. Chairman, I have been incredibly fortunate to have had a diverse and interesting career in business, community engagement, and professional athletics. I am humbled to be nominated to represent the United States to countries as diverse as New Zealand and Samoa. If confirmed, it will be my great honor to lead a strong team of Foreign Service, civil service, military experts, and local

staff. I also look forward to working closely with this committee and other Members of Congress to promote and protect the interests of the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you for being here today, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gilbert follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK GILBERT

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to New Zealand and to the Independent State of Samoa. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence in nominating me, and I am equally grateful to receive this committee's consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my family: my wife, Nancy, and daughters, Danielle and Elizabeth. They are the driving force behind everything I do. I'm so delighted that they are here today.

Mr. Chairman, I can imagine no higher honor than to be asked to serve my country as Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. Connected by the Pacific Ocean, we have partners committed to expanding global trade and promoting democratic values while pursuing peace and security.

With almost three decades of experience in global finance and investment, I appreciate our enduring economic ties to New Zealand and economic opportunities in Samoa, and the Pacific region as a whole. If confirmed, I will strive to advance our nation's interests, nurture those economic ties, and build on our growing relationships.

Our relationship with New Zealand is stronger now than it has been in nearly three decades. In 2010, our nations signed the Wellington Declaration, pledging increased diplomatic ties and regional cooperation, and in 2012 laid the foundation for strengthened defense cooperation in the Washington Declaration. Over the past few years, we have initiated senior-level policy and military dialogues and resumed joint military training exercises. Despite being separated by thousands of miles of Pacific Ocean, our two countries share the values of democracy, fair economic opportunity, and a more open global community. We actively collaborate in advancing those shared values. In Wellington, we have a partner committed to expanding global trade and promoting democratic values while pursuing peace and security. These are exactly the sort of diplomatic relationships we seek to forge around the globe, and we will continue to expand our connections to the next generation of New Zealanders of all backgrounds to renew and strengthen our partnership.

The United States is one of New Zealand's top trading partners and we have collaborated closely on the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. If confirmed, I will work to promote an even stronger economic link between our countries—capitalizing on opportunities not only to increase U.S. investment in New Zealand, but also to expand New Zealand investment here at home.

New Zealand is an active partner in the United Nations, committed to resolving conflict through negotiation. It plays a far larger role on the world stage than the country's size would suggest. Its armed forces have led and participated in numerous peacekeeping missions around the globe and have worked side by side with our troops in Afghanistan.

New Zealand is an integral link in the global effort against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and actively works in the Asia-Pacific region on counterterrorism issues as well.

As an island nation with a culture and economy deeply rooted in its natural resources, New Zealand understands the seriousness of global scientific and public policy challenges, including greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Fifty years ago we forged a scientific partnership with New Zealand in Antarctica. Christchurch serves as the U.S. Antarctic Program's gateway city for operations—conducting vital environmental research at McMurdo Station and our South Pole Base.

And we closely cooperate in multilateral settings—working to provide technical assistance to Pacific Island economies—in education, in energy policy, and in training of the local workforce.

As the first independent country to be formed out of island territories in the Pacific, Samoa is a leader in security and economic stability in the Pacific region. Its commitment to free trade was enhanced by its entry into the World Trade Orga-

nization, where it has exhibited unique leadership in forging a stronger partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum. In our bilateral relationship, the Peace Corps has deepened our ties between Samoans and the people of the United States by sending volunteers for more than four decades to work in communities throughout Samoa.

Its capital, Apia, is the home of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, which cooperates with our scientists and researchers on projects like climate change and the protection of vital marine habitats and resources.

The United States is committed to engagement with Samoa. Last year, the U.S. Navy was in Samoa for 10 days, working with our Samoan and international partners through the Pacific Partnership to provide a range of assistance. And just a short time ago, we opened a brand new U.S. funded medical center there. We also work closely with Samoa in protecting important natural resources. In fiscal year 2013, we conducted the first exercise of our 2012 Shiprider Agreement between the U.S. Coast Guard and Samoa to achieve sustainable management of Pacific fisheries resources and combat illegal fishing.

Mr. Chairman, I have been fortunate to have had a diverse and interesting career in business, community engagement, and professional athletics. I am humbled to be nominated to represent the United States to countries as diverse as New Zealand and Samoa. If confirmed, it will be my great honor to lead a strong team of Foreign Service, civil service, military experts, and local staff. I also look forward to working closely with this committee and other Members of Congress to promote and protect the interests of the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you might have.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Gilbert.

Secretary Westphal.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL, PH.D., OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Dr. WESTPHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ranking Member Risch, Senator Risch, thank you for being here. Senator Barrasso, thank you for being here. It is a great honor to be here. It is somewhat humbling to sit next to Senator Collins and have her say all those really elegant things about me, especially since I had the temerity to ask her to do it a second time. She did it when I was nominated to be the Under Secretary of the Army. So I am especially grateful for her. She called me this morning and I thought she was in Maine, and I asked her how the weather was in Maine. She said: "Well, I am in Washington and it is probably the same as it is in Maine." So I am very grateful to her, and I am very grateful to sit with these great three colleagues here who are before you today.

I am honored to be the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and I am also deeply thankful to Senator Kerry for his support and confidence that he has shown in my nomination. Serving as the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia would be a great honor and I am humbled by the opportunity to continue my career of public service.

If confirmed, I will represent the United States and the American people to the best of my ability, advancing American political, security, and economic interests with a key ally in the region, and continue to strengthen our strategic relationship.

I should also, Mr. Chairman, like my colleagues, introduce my wife, my wife of 45 years who has put up with all of these different positions that I have had. I feel like we have moved so many times I should have been in the Army. My wife, Linda, Linda Westphal, behind me here. We have four kids and six grandkids and I think

they are probably all tuning in right now to watch this hearing. I thank them for their support and their love. They are all married, they all have kids, and they all have jobs, which is really good.

Most recently I have had the great honor and privilege of working to support our brave men and women in uniform as they serve our Nation at home and abroad. In my current position as the Under Secretary of the Army and its Chief Management Officer, I am responsible for managing one of the world's largest organizations during a period of significant change, great budget uncertainty, and continued threats to our national security. Managing the globally deployed U.S. Army and the large number of our forces serving in the Middle East has given me a great insight into the complexity of this region's strategic environment.

This vital area is beset by change and turmoil, and it is undergoing historical transformations in its social, economic, and political development.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, the United States and Saudi Arabia enjoy a long and enduring partnership which, contrary to some press reports, continues to be strong and resilient. Saudi Arabia is a crucially important partner in the region with whom we share important interests in confronting regional challenges.

The United States is committed to political transition in Syria, a new government that is representative of the Syrian people. The Saudi Government shares that goal. Saudi Arabia shares our commitment to ensuring that international assistance does not fail—does not fall into the hands of violent extremists, including groups connected to al-Qaeda. The Saudis have publicly endorsed the international efforts to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons in accordance with the U.N. Security Council Resolution 2118 and the related OPCW Executive Council decision, while emphasizing the need to hold the Assad regime accountable for barbarically using these weapons against the Syrian people.

The United States and Saudi Arabia both are committed to ensuring that Iran does not acquire nuclear weapons. We share the long-term goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The administration has made clear to Saudi Arabia and to our other gulf allies that progress on the nuclear issue means a comprehensive solution and the ability to verify that Iran will not be able to produce nuclear weapons. In addition, we both recognize Iran's destabilizing activities in support of the Assad regime and terrorist groups in such countries as Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon.

We continue to engage the Saudi Government on how best to build Egypt's economy, while emphasizing to all parties that Egypt's economic success requires stability that only will be achieved by inclusive democratic institutions. In Egypt, we believe that the Egyptian people should be represented by an inclusive democratically elected civilian government.

Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel, and other senior administration officials continue regular high-level discussions with Saudi leaders about how best to influence progress toward this objective.

On Middle East peace, Secretary Kerry noted recently in meetings with King Abdullah that we value Saudi Arabia's support for

continuing negotiations to achieve the administration's goals of ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a permanent status agreement and bringing stability to region.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I would conclude by summarizing that our longstanding friendship with Saudi Arabia includes a durable and critically important security and counterterrorism partnership, significant economic and commercial ties, with strong interest in maintaining stability of energy markets and prices. We are the educational hub for more than 74,000 Saudi students studying in this country, thereby increasing employment and development opportunities for young Saudi men and women.

Finally, we have had a very strong and enduring military and security partnership. Our security assistance efforts to train, advise, and assist the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces and the Saudi Arabian National Guard are only two large aspects of one of our most robust foreign military sales in the world, valued at approximately $97 billion.

If you confirm me to be our Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, I would work to strengthen and sustain these important interests, but I would also work to promote universal rights, including religious freedom and the rights of women. But the first thing I would turn upon and I would do upon arriving in country would be to review our security procedures and get fully briefed on the security environment from our Embassy team, since my first priority will always be the security and protection of our citizens.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Risch, Ranking Member Risch, Senator Barrasso, I commit to keeping the committee and this Congress informed and engaged and seek your counsel in matters important to this committee and to the Congress.

I thank you all for your service to our country and if confirmed I thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Westphal follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. JOSEPH WESTPHAL

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am honored by President Obama's nomination to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I also would like to thank Secretary Kerry for his support and the confidence he has shown in my nomination. Serving as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia would be a great honor and I am humbled by the opportunity to continue my career of public service. If confirmed, I will represent the United States and the American people to the best of my ability, advancing American political, security, and economic interests with a key ally in the region and continue to strengthen our strategic relationship.

I have devoted my career to public service, both in government and academia. Most recently, I have had the great honor and privilege of working to support our brave men and women in uniform as they serve our Nation at home and abroad. In my current position as the Under Secretary of the Army and its Chief Management Officer, I am responsible for managing one of the world's largest organizations during a period of significant change, great budget uncertainty and continued threats to our national security. Managing the globally deployed U.S. Army and the large number of our forces serving in the Middle East has given me insights into the complexity of this strategic region's environment. This vital area is beset by change and turmoil, and is undergoing historical transformations in its social, economic and political development.

As the Chief of Mission in Saudi Arabia, I will prioritize taking care of our people. Only 9 years ago, our consulate general in Jeddah suffered a terrorist attack in which five local staff members lost their lives. The safety and security of our mission, its employees and family members in Riyadh, Dhahran, and Jeddah will be

my top priority, as it is for President Obama and Secretary Kerry. I will work with you and my colleagues at the Department to ensure that our mission personnel have the correct security posture and necessary resources to do their jobs safely and effectively. To that end, the safety and security of all Americans will be my uncompromising priority.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have a long and enduring partnership which, contrary to some press reports, continues to be strong and resilient. In addition to numerous visits by senior administration officials and members of this committee, the President now plans a visit in March to reinforce our broad cooperation. If confirmed, I will work across the wide set of our national priorities to advance critical U.S. interests through our diplomatic, security, and commercial engagements.

Saudi Arabia is a crucially important partner in the region. We share important interests in confronting regional challenges, including the crisis in Syria, Iran's nuclear program and regional aspirations, and providing support for democratic and economic development in Yemen. Saudi Arabia's important role in the Gulf Cooperation Council and our strong desire to see the Council be "an anchor for regional stability," as Secretary Hagel stated in his Manama Dialogue speech, means that if I am confirmed by the Senate, I will work to reinforce this important multilateral framework.

We also have a critical security partnership; Saudi Arabia is our largest Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customer, with 338 active and open cases valued at $96.8 billion dollars, all supporting American skilled manufacturing jobs, while increasing interoperability between our forces for training and any potential operations. We saw the importance of this as our forces stood together during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. On counterterrorism, our countries are very aware through tragic experience of the threat posed by al-Qaeda terrorists, and we have forged a critical partnership with the Saudis on this issue, which I will discuss further.

Apart from political and security cooperation, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia enjoy robust commercial and business relationships, and I look forward to further strengthening trade and promoting American exports. On energy, the United States and Saudi Arabia share an interest in maintaining stable, reliable sources of oil and price stability. We also are committed to working with the Government of Saudi Arabia on its efforts to diversify energy sources and reduce domestic oil consumption. If confirmed, I will engage proactively in all aspects of energy policy and sustainability of mutual interest to the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Secretary Kerry in his speech of January 24 in Davos stated, "you cannot find another country . . . not one country . . . that is as proactively engaged, that is partnering with so many Middle Eastern countries as constructively as we are on so many high stake fronts. And, I want to emphasize that last point: partnering." I will emulate the Secretary's active approach in strengthening our partnership with Saudi Arabia, engaging Saudi officials and the Saudi people to advance the policy objectives of the administration and the Congress.

Earlier in this statement, I mentioned Saudi Arabia's importance in regional politics. This is a region beset by change and great turmoil but also great opportunity. If confirmed, I will work closely with governmental and nongovernmental entities in Saudi Arabia to find constructive and collaborative means to achieve security, peace, economic prosperity, and the advancement of human rights. This includes expanding opportunities for women to participate fully in society, politics, and the economy. I will promote transparency, friendship, and proactive engagement in the relationship while working with my colleagues in the region to safeguard U.S. interests.

There are many ways our mutual interests converge and I will briefly explain our coordination with the Saudi leadership as we advance U.S. policy priorities.

First, the United States is committed to political transition in Syria and a new government that is representative of the Syrian people. The Saudi Government shares this goal and has contributed over a billion dollars to support Syrian civilian and refugee needs, while supporting nonextremist opposition groups under the political umbrella of the Syrian National Coalition. The Saudis share our commitment to ensuring that international assistance does not fall into the hands of violent extremists, including groups connected to al-Qaeda. We may have tactical differences in our approaches to Syria at times, but Saudi Arabia shares our goal of ending the horrible violence in Syria through a political transition to a representative government, and has exercised positive influence in Geneva as we strive to achieve common goals. Additionally, the Saudis have publically endorsed the international effort to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons, in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 2118 and the related OPCW Executive Council decision, while empha-

sizing the need to hold the Assad regime accountable for barbarically using these weapons against the Syrian people.

Similarly, the United States and Saudi Arabia are both committed to ensuring that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon. We share the long-term goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Saudi Arabia remains as concerned as we are about Iranian activities in the region. The administration has made it clear to Saudi Arabia and our other gulf allies that progress on the nuclear issue will not lead to a decrease in U.S. concern about, or in action to deter and combat, Iran's destabilizing activities, whether its support for the Assad regime in Syria, or its lethal aid and training of militants in Yemen and Bahrain. The United States and Saudi Arabia also want to counter Hezbollah's attempts to undermine the Lebanese Government; we both support building up the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

In Egypt, we believe that the Egyptian people should be represented by an inclusive, democratically elected, civilian government. Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel and other senior administration officials continue regular high-level discussions with Saudi leaders about how best to influence progress toward this objective. In the last year, Saudi Arabia has provided Egypt's interim government with over $2 billion in grants, deposits, and energy credits, and billions more in investments, while encouraging large contributions from other Gulf States. We continue to engage the Saudi Government on how best to build Egypt's economy, while emphasizing to all parties that Egypt's economic success requires stability that only will be achieved by inclusive democratic institutions.

On Middle East Peace, as Secretary Kerry noted in recent meetings with King Abdullah, we value Saudi Arabia's support for continuing negotiations to achieve the administration's goal of ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a permanent status agreement, and to bring stability to the region. We are counting on Saudi Arabia to help build support for our shared efforts, and to continue financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

Saudi Arabia also has played a critical role in stabilizing, launching and promoting a successful political transition in Yemen. Saudi Arabia is the largest international assistance contributor to Yemen, and shares our important interest in combating Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and other violent extremists groups, while assisting efforts to provide security, support economic development, and address critical humanitarian challenges.

The reemergence of violent extremism in Iraq also is a critical concern for the United States, and one for which we believe Saudi Arabia can play a constructive role. As Ambassador, I will encourage productive relationships and open dialogue between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, including support for Iraq's efforts to flush the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) out of Anbar province—a conflict that has broader implications for the region. I will reinforce our message that progress on current problems is not gained through rehashing conflicts of the past or drawing sectarian lines, but by finding areas of mutual interest, and that violent extremist groups are a threat to us all.

The Syrian crisis, turmoil in Iraq, transition in Yemen, and the role of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups demand stronger, coordinated efforts to combat terrorism in the region. The Government of Saudi Arabia values our combined efforts in counterterrorism, and sees al-Qaeda as just as much a threat to Saudi Arabia as to the United States. I note that the Saudi Government actively discourages its citizens from participating in foreign conflicts, and issued a new law in early February that provides for long prison sentences for those who join jihadist groups in Syria or elsewhere. If confirmed, I will work diligently through our interagency process to strengthen further our counterterrorism cooperation and our overall security relationship.

We have built durable and critically important security and counterterrorism ties with Saudi Arabia, with a range of programs that protect the citizens and institutions of both of our countries. These include coordination to stem the abuse of financial and charitable channels that fund terrorism in the region and beyond, and cooperation on combating violent extremist messages. If confirmed, I intend to work with the leadership of Saudi Arabia to further build our partnerships in these areas.

As mentioned, another key priority I will work toward is growing U.S.-Saudi economic and commercial ties. Saudi Arabia is our 10th-largest trading partner; in the first three quarters of last year, bilateral trade with Saudi Arabia amounted to approximately $52 billion. I will work to expand and diversify our bilateral trade and help create new opportunities for American business in Saudi Arabia.

We also have a significant interest in stable energy markets and prices. Today we import approximately about 1.3 million barrels per day of crude oil from Saudi Arabia which represents 15 percent of Saudi Arabia's total global exports. This

makes Saudi Arabia our second-largest oil supplier, after Canada. As the world's only current oil producer with significant spare production capacity, Saudi Arabia plays a critical global role in price stability. The price our trucking companies and airlines pay for fuel, and the price the American consumer pays at the pump, are heavily influenced by trends in global oil markets. As two of the largest oil producers in the world, the United States and Saudi Arabia have a mutual interest in ensuring that energy markets remain sufficiently supplied and support global economic growth.

Shifting to education, I first observe that the quality of American educational institutions is well-known and highly prized among Saudis. I note that over 74,000 students from Saudi Arabia now study in the United States. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of U.S. education in developing the skills and perceptions of the next generation of Saudi leaders. Students will return home with a better understanding of the United States and our people, and will bring back American ideals that can be an important influence as Saudi society develops.

Saudi Arabia is a young country, with nearly two-thirds of the population under 25. Saudi youth expect their leadership to adapt and respond to the whole population's needs, including the 50 percent that's female. I believe the Saudi leadership understands these challenges. King Abdullah has taken important steps, such as scheduling another round of municipal elections for 2015 in which women can vote and run as candidates, and decreeing that at least 20 percent of appointees to the national consultative council should be women. I look forward to monitoring these developments with my team. The Saudi leadership also has expanded scholarship opportunities, including for women, and sponsored interreligious dialogue. More than 40 percent of students receiving the King Abdullah Scholarship for study abroad are women. However, much more needs to be done to ensure expanded opportunities for Saudi young people, for women, and to increase citizens' roles in government affairs. I look forward to working with the Saudi leadership to help them provide these opportunities.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will not shy away from topics where we disagree, such as promoting women's full participation in society, supporting the rights to religious freedom and free association, or encouraging greater respect for labor rights and protections for the country's foreign workers. As Ambassador, I will support home-grown reform efforts and will be an advocate for full respect for the basic rights of all citizens and residents. I will provide public support for Saudis' rights to freely associate, to report corruption, wrongdoing, or abuse by public officials, and to petition their government for redress of grievances. We will make it clear that basic human rights are universal and we advocate that Saudi Arabia meet its international commitments.

Allow me to close by noting that, although American society differs greatly from that of Saudi Arabia, we cannot allow our differences to prevent solid continuing cooperation on political, security, and economic challenges and opportunities. The ties between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are deep and historic, and serve core American interests. I look forward to strengthening these relationships while maintaining frank and productive dialogue for issues where our views do not fully align.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today and I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Secretary Westphal.

We will now begin rounds of questioning. It would be our intent to do questions in 7-minute rounds. Because there are four of you, we might not get to all of you in the first round. If that happens, do not breathe a sigh of relief and do not feel offended because we will likely have second rounds because of the number of nominees on the panel.

Senator RISCH. And do not leave.

Senator KAINE. And do not waive.

Senator RISCH. Do not leave.

Senator KAINE. Oh, do not leave. Yes, do not leave. Do not leave. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. Especially since we have stayed here, do not leave.

To begin, I will start actually. Secretary Westphal, I have some questions about Saudi Arabia. This is a very important partnership

and yet it is a partnership that has some challenges right now. On the United States side, we have concerns about the treatment of women, we have concerns about the funding of particular elements within the Syrian opposition. We have concerns about some human rights issues with respect to journalists or freedom of religion.

On the Saudi Arabia side, they have expressed some concerns about actions that we have taken even as they have supported with us the role of a nonnuclear Iran. They have expressed concern about the degree to which we have communicated with them about our strategy. They were concerned about United States action in Egypt. They have been concerned about United States action in Syria.

So it is a partnership that has been an important one, but there are also a number of rifts, perceived rifts in the partnership. How would you as Ambassador try to deal with these issues? Without ceding any issue important to us, even on issues where there are differences, how would you work to kind of get over the little friction that has been pretty obvious in the relationship in recent years?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Mr. Chairman, I think, first of all, I think within the context of the broader strategy that we have, that the President has laid down for this region, to continue to fight the threat of violent extremism, counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, eliminate terrorist networks, and of course keep energy flowing, energy prices stable, important to all our economies, in the framework of that context all of these issues are issues of policy where generally speaking on the issues of strategy we agree on, we may disagree on tactics about some of the solutions to those problems.

On the issues of human rights and religious tolerance, those are issues that we will need to continue to engage with the Saudi Government to ensure that they can move forward.

I think King Abdullah has done a remarkable thing since he came the ruler of Saudi Arabia. He has moved this country—I will admit that by us it seems like a glacial pace. But he has moved this country toward a series of reforms. They are small in scale, but they are significant. I mentioned that we had 74,000 students studying here from Saudi Arabia on scholarship from him. There are almost 100,000 worldwide and I am told that about 40 percent of those are women.

So there is a movement going forward to address this. But I will say that our relationship is robust, it is resilient, it is strong. It is evidenced by the multiple engagements that we have had just this year alone, conversations between the King and the President, the visit by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Energy, a number of other leaders who have been there recently, visits by them. Muhammed bin Nayef is here right now, the Minister of Interior, engaged in very, very important conversations with us on counterterrorism and all the issues you mentioned.

So I think that is a very strong relationship and partnership. They want to be partners with us. We want to be partners with them and we will make that relationship continue to work. If I am confirmed, I will do my utmost to engage very proactively, very

openly, with every element of the Saudi Government to address these issues that you mentioned.

Senator KAINE. Secretary Westphal, obviously defense is a leading pillar of the relationship, as you indicated. You come into this nomination from the Department of Defense in your role with the Army. What do you intend to do to further this particular aspect of the relationship, the defense partnership, and what major platforms, if any, do you see Saudi Arabia potentially purchasing in the near future, given your background on acquisition issues?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Thank you, Senator. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think there are a number of things that one can do there. One of the most important foreign military sales pieces that we have with Saudi Arabia and we have had for a number of years is the training mission. We train their defense forces and we train their national guard. That is a huge, huge undertaking by us because it means that we can calibrate the way in which their professionalism, their military, and their security forces can really become more professional and do the jobs that sustain the ability of Saudi Arabia to transform itself into a more open society.

I think we need to fortify that. We need to pay more attention to that and engage more deeply with them in how to do that. They are looking to do more work on fortifying their facilities, their energy facilities. They are looking to grow, to your question on what foreign military sales could be in the future, they are really looking to build, strengthen their navy, build a coast guard.

Those are all areas where we are going to compete with other foreign countries. We must be energized. We must work with our defense industry. We must work to build support from them to look our way, because we think we have the best in the world in all these categories.

Senator KAINE. Last question. Since the Eisenhower administration we have had a partnership with Saudi Arabia very heavily focused on petroleum. There has been some speculation that the great developments in the United States domestically produced energy just by themselves really could cause a significant change in the relationship with Saudi Arabia. Do you see the growing U.S. energy economy as a big game-changer in the relationship with Saudi Arabia or is that maybe overplayed a bit?

Dr. WESTPHAL. I do not see it as a big game-changer, under the following conditions. First of all, I think, wisely, the King and the Government of Saudi Arabia do see that they need to diversify their economic portfolio, that they are consuming too much of their own product. So it is very incumbent on us to help them transition to other forms of energy, whether it's solar, wind, and nuclear.

Nuclear is going to be the next step and we have got lots of opportunities there to help them generate nuclear in a peaceful way to sustain their economy.

That being said, world energy prices are what could become the worst problem for us. So we have to be very careful in working with them to continue to make sure that the markets are open and that they can freely export their oil to keep prices level, because for us domestically as we improve our domestic production it is the increase in prices that could affect us negatively. So if I am confirmed that is what I would engage in very seriously.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Westphal—first of all, to all four of you: Thank you for your service to America. I think probably one of the most underappreciated functions of the Federal Government is what you people in the State Department do in representing Americans all over the world.

Mr. Westphal, I am going to be critical here for a second. I want to say this in the kindest and gentlest way. I read your testimony very carefully and I have got to tell you I am disappointed in not addressing really what I think are some serious, serious fractures in the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States.

There is no doubt that your description is a great description of what traditionally our relationship has been with Saudi Arabia. They have been a great partner, they have been a great friend. We have pulled the wagon together. We have serious differences with them and have had over the years over issues, particularly women's rights issues, and they have tolerated us nudging them in the direction we think that they ought to go.

They have become angry with us over the last 6 to 12 months, and particularly with this arrangement that the administration has chosen to enter into with Iran. I know you are well aware of it. I am sure you have read all the things that have come out of Saudi Arabia. They have taken action which is adverse to the United States. They make no bones about it. They were very public about it.

I was hoping you would address that a bit more. We all hope that the agreement that was put on the table as far as Iran is concerned will work, that the people in Iran will change their ways, that they will slap themselves on the forehead and say: Gee, we have been bad actors over the years, but we are going to change our ways. To be honest with you, I do not think that is going to happen. I have been very critical of it. Other members of this body have been critical of it. The Saudis have been as critical as we have, if not more so. As I said, they have taken actions that are adverse to us.

How are you going to handle that? Let us assume for a moment that the administration is wrong, Iran does not change its ways, that it is the same old same old, that they use us in order to take the time to further develop their nuclear ambitions. I do not think we will ever get the genie back in the bottle again as far as the sanctions are concerned. I hope we do, but I think that is going to be very difficult.

What is going to happen? What are you going to say when you have to walk up to the palace and talk to the King and tell him, well, this has not worked out? How are you going to handle that?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Well, Senator, I think that is going to evolve from our decision that what the Iranians are doing is not verifiable, they are not committing to the terms of any agreement that we may have with them in the near future, that they are simply not abiding by the terms. And the Secretary of State and the President, of course, will make that decision to take a different route.

I think the evidence that the Saudis would like to see this whole situation be, the tension be reduced, is marked by their participation in the London 11, by their participation in Geneva. They agree with us that Iran should not, cannot have a nuclear weapon. So I think we agree on the terms. We agree on the conditions. We agree on the end result. The question is will the terms of any agreement be verifiable, and that is something that we have to wait to see what the administration finds on that.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Westphal, I agree with you that we are, I think, in full sync with them as far as the objective. The Saudis really, really do not want the Iranians to have a nuclear weapon. They agree with us on that objective.

I think that they were badly offended by, first of all, the process and the way they were kept in the loop, or lack of being kept in the loop; and secondly was the finality of where we wound up in this first step of trusting them to do something and giving them something before they performed, as opposed to reversing that. For the life of me, I cannot understand why anyone would do that when you are dealing with the Iranians. But the administration did it.

So you have got your work cut out for you there. You have been around long enough that I know that you know that there are serious problems here, and it is going to take substantially more work than it has taken in the past, because, again, this relationship is drifting in the wrong direction. I hope you are the right guy to bring it back. Certainly the President needs to work on that. The Saudis are critical partners in the region.

Thank you for your service and thank you for your willingness to do that.

Dr. WESTPHAL. May I?

Senator RISCH. Certainly, please.

Dr. WESTPHAL. Senator, I agree with what you said. And I also want to say, and I said this at the end of my remarks and I mean this very sincerely, we are a representative democracy, so we ourselves are having a large and broad debate on this issue openly and in a very clear fashion. So I do believe that you play a role. I do intend to be very connected to this committee and to the Congress to understand what your sensibilities are on this, and translate that to the Saudi Government.

But in addition to that, I would say that the relationships, like any good relationship, you are going to have disagreements, you are going to have issues where perhaps we did not consult them early enough, perhaps we did not engage with them in this way and that way. But we are very transparent in our conversations with them. Everything that I have been briefed about and come to know at this point in time—I have not been in these conversations, so I cannot tell you exactly what has transpired. But I am confident that from the President on down we are deeply and very seriously and very openly and very, very clear about our direction and our policies with them.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Tueller, on a personal note, will you be taking your family to Yemen, your wife and your five children?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, at the moment we do not have accompanied status in Yemen. So employees are there without families.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. It is probably wise under the circumstances on the ground. You have your work cut out for you.

Mr. Gilbert, I am almost out of time. But Mr. Gilbert, I have gone all through this, all through the papers you have given me, and somehow you missed it. We do not seem to have your lifetime batting average here with the Cubs and with the Reds and the White Sox. So maybe if you could submit that for the record it would be helpful as we move forward on your confirmation.

Mr. GILBERT. Of course, sir. I could tell you now that in the major leagues it was .273. My career average for 8 years playing was .284.

Senator RISCH. Respectable. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you. My time is up, and you are going to have to excuse me.

Senator KAINE. Yes, thank you.

Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to follow up, Mr. Chairman, on some of your comments as well as Senator Risch's just about the important relationship and partnership with Saudi Arabia, and talk about things that are happening there, because it is key to the stability of the region. The relationship between our two countries has been strained. In the past, I think as you have said, Mr. Westphal, perhaps we did not consult them early enough on things.

I look at this and say King Abdullah's going to be 90 years old this year. At the end of the King's reign, it is anticipated there is going to be a leadership change to the next generation. So in trying to get ahead of this, in trying to consult them early enough, can you talk about what individuals in the line of succession to the King are there, how that next King is going to be selected, and how this may play a role as we look to the future?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Well, what I know, given my limited insight into the inner workings of the royal family, is that there is a crown prince and he is the successor to the King. Apart from that, that is how we are operating. I think as a government we expect that to be the case, and from that will emanate other changes as he takes over at some eventual point in time.

King Abdullah to my knowledge is very engaged, even at his age. He is about to receive a visit from our President. I think this is an important meeting. I think that the King is very much aware of all of the issues that are taking place. So we are operating with that government, with that crown prince, and with those ministries as they are today.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, the reason I ask is that former Ambassador James Smith, who was our Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 2009 to 2013, he warned that Saudi Arabia may become, as he said, a kingdom of different heads and a decentralized monarchy, he said, consisting of multiple fiefdoms. That is what makes me concerned.

So I am just wondering, in your analysis of this division of the various ministries and the possibility of decentralization, how do

we deal with that, because it is entirely possible that that would happen on your watch.

Dr. WESTPHAL. Senator, I do know he said that, but I have not seen any evidence of that in anything that I have read or anything that I have seen from anybody else. So I am loath to speak to that because I am assuming that they have a succession plan that right now is what it is. If I am confirmed as the Ambassador, I will certainly be very focused on making sure that we are very well connected within all of the ministries and all of the agencies of that government, that we are engaged with what we perceive will be future leadership.

I think people do that when they come to this country. They look at who the future leaders of this you will be and engage with them. I think that is incumbent for me to do that.

I appreciate your question. Just I believe that responsibly we must deal with the government that we are dealing with today.

Senator BARRASSO. I have been to the region a couple times in the last 3 months. Last year Saudi Arabia was elected to a 2-year term as a rotating temporary member of the United Nations Security Council. They then announced that they were rejecting the Security Council seat just this past October, after months of actually engaging in the lobbying. As a founding member of the U.N., the Kingdom declared it would renounce the Security Council seat.

I just wonder if you could have a little discussion about what you thought the reasons were that they declined the seat in the United Nations Security Council, and then how they view their role with the international community?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Senator, a good question. I think part of this is going to be my own sort of personal view of this. I think that as they looked at the situation in Syria and in other parts of the world becoming much more critical, a seat, a permanent seat—excuse me—a seat in the Security Council for them would not have been a permanent seat, so they would have to be involved in casting votes for which they would have no ability to follow through on in the future.

In turn, they took a seat in the U.N. Human Rights Commission. I think that is an important, really important seat for them and for us for them to hold that seat. I think that means that they are looking, and they have made some very positive statements about addressing human rights issues. It helps us, I think, to move that agenda forward, not just in Saudi Arabia, but with them throughout the world.

Senator BARRASSO. What do you believe is the greatest threat to Saudi Arabian national security today?

Dr. WESTPHAL. Well, I think certainly terrorism. They are doing a great deal. We are working very closely with them to stop the movement of their citizens into Syria and into Iraq and other parts, into Yemen. They are looking very hard at rehabilitating people who come back from those wars.

But the spillover of terrorist activities into Saudi Arabia is always a great danger that they are concerned with. So one of our strongest elements of our relationship with them is counterterrorism. We do not have as strong a relationship with almost any other country in the gulf region than with them on this matter. We

certainly have one very strong in the Middle East with Israel and other countries, but with this particular threat we have a great relationship with them. We exchange a great deal of information.

Again, the Minister was here. He was engaged in conversations with our government on these matters. They have done a lot to curb the flow of money into Syria and into Iraq. They have the banking rules that limit some of that. They are a little bit more advanced, I think, than other gulf countries in prohibiting and limiting and regulating that. We are working closely with them.

So I think we have all the tools with them to engage in what is their biggest threat, but it is also our biggest threat. It is certainly in our national interest to ensure that that counterterrorism piece is strong and viable and supported.

Senator BARRASSO. I think it was interesting, Reuters reported just a couple days ago a decree by King Abdullah imposing prison terms of from 3 to 20 years on Saudis who go abroad to fight, and the concerns there. So it is interesting. I think there is a significant impact of the conflict in Syria and how it is impacting the security in Saudi Arabia. So we will see what happens in terms of shifts in the future.

I am out of time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

We will move to a second round of questions. In this and any subsequent rounds if necessary, we will move with 5 minutes.

Secretary Westphal, one last item. Senator Durbin had hoped to ask some questions, if here, concerning human rights issues, imprisonment of activists, journalists, folks persecuted under concerns around religious freedom. We are going to keep the record open for written submission of questions until the end of the day tomorrow, and there may be a written question submitted on that issue to you about how you would intend to deal with those issues. So I will just give you that heads up.

Mr. Gilbert, with respect to New Zealand, New Zealand has been a key supporter of expanded international trade and a partner with the United States as we work for the Trans-Pacific Partnership process. Obviously, with your financial background and expertise, trade and commerce between New Zealand and the United States will be a key issue. Talk to me a little bit about what your priorities will be in advancing United States trade interests with New Zealand?

Mr. GILBERT. Thank you, Senator. Next week is the next working group and then ministerial group meetings in Singapore regarding TPP. The work on TPP done by the U.S. Trade Representative, they are trying to get to a final agreement, a high-level, high-quality, very comprehensive agreement between the 12 nations that are currently negotiating on TPP.

Our relationship with New Zealand has been a very strong one and has increased with trade. This is an agreement that we believe that will benefit not only our two countries, but all 12 countries. Earlier today their Trade Minister Groser was speaking to a business group, talking about the predictions for TPP. He quoted the Peterson Institute here. He talked about their internal numbers and believes that these numbers could be dramatically understated.

They signed a free trade agreement with China a few years back and all the projections there were greatly underestimated. As a matter of fact, their trade has grown 10 times faster than they believe that it would. So they have been a great partner in working on TPP and if TPP is concluded and if I am confirmed I look forward to working with them in helping execute the agreement.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Gilbert.

One of the major defense policy adjustments in the last few years has been the President's announcement of the rebalancing, shift, pivot, toward Asia. While a lot of people who are not in Asia hear that and they get nervous, and particularly maybe some real estate for the rest of the panel, New Zealand has been a strong supporter of this announced strategy and the reestablishment of military-to-military ties with New Zealand has been a real positive during the last few years as our bilateral working relationships are increasing.

Talk a little bit about what you would intend to do in your role as Ambassador to further the growing military-to-mil cooperation between the United States and New Zealand?

Mr. GILBERT. Thank you. As I mentioned in my opening statement, on the back of both the Wellington Declaration and the Washington Declaration we have seen both our diplomatic and our military relationship with New Zealand strengthen. That is something that we believe that will continue.

Secretary Mabus was just in New Zealand at the beginning of this month meeting with his counterparts there. He also, while he was there, met with Prime Minister Key and Foreign Affairs McCully. We have been doing joint military exercises for the first time and the Royal New Zealand Frigate, the TE MANA, is serving with a multinational force in the Gulf of Aden and in the Indian Ocean on antipiracy patrols. The TE MANA also docked in Guam last year and it was the first time that a Royal New Zealand ship had docked in a United States port in many decades.

We believe that this relationship continues to move forward. Secretary of Defense Hagel has already given prepermission for the Royal New Zealand Navy to dock at Pearl for the Rim of Pacific fleet exercises this summer. So we are seeing more exercises with them. We have seen the mil-to-mil relationship grow, and if confirmed I look forward to being part of keeping that momentum going.

Senator KAINE. One last question. My time has expired, but there is no one here to stop me, so I am just going to run wild. There is an interesting issue about the United States and New Zealand working together to establish a marine-protected reserve in the Ross Sea. But that is currently opposed—that proposal is currently opposed by Russia and China. Do you have any thoughts on that particular item? I found that interesting. It sounds like a good idea to me.

Mr. GILBERT. I believe that both countries were a little disappointed. They had dramatically reduced the size of the MPA, by almost 40 percent, because they thought that that was a number that they would do to—actually, to have Russia and the Ukraine sign off on the agreement. So they were disappointed, both countries, we were disappointed, New Zealand was disappointed.

We are continuing to work on that and there will be meetings later this fall that will continue that discussion. But it is something that the United States and New Zealand both believe is critically important.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Gilbert.

Mr. Silliman, first I just—it is so interesting, you going from Baghdad to Kuwait. When we discussed this in my office recently, the reestablishment of fairly strong relationships between Iraq and Kuwait might have been something that I think I would have and others might have predicted would be pretty difficult. Talk a little bit about that effort and what that positive relationship does for Kuwait at this moment?

Mr. SILLIMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is in fact one of the few things that I have been able to accomplish within my tenure while in the Foreign Service. I have started many projects, but this was one that I think we were able to begin and execute fairly well.

At the end of 2011, we at the Embassy in Baghdad, Ambassador Tueller in the Embassy in Kuwait, and the United States Mission to the United Nations in New York tried to find ways to spark an improved relationship between Iraq and Kuwait. It was actually the visit of the Kuwaiti emir, Sheikh Sabah, to the Arab League summit in Baghdad in early 2012 that really broke this open. It started a chain of events that permitted us, in coordination with the U.N., to demarcate the border, work through claims on air transport and airlines going back to the 1990s, and to work through the last pieces of the U.N. Security Council structure that was meant to protect Kuwait and make sure that all of the bad effects of the war were addressed.

We were able last June to get through the Security Council a Security Council resolution essentially closing the chapter on most of the parts of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. All that remains is Iraqi payment of some war reparations, which they have been doing regularly. This has opened up a Kuwaiti Embassy in Baghdad, possibly Kuwaiti consulates in other parts of the country, and the possibility of new trade and cooperation in the region.

Kuwait has been in some ways a bridge between Iraq and other countries in the region, and one of the best results of this has been the resumption of air flights between Kuwait City and Baghdad last year. So it has been very positive for regional security.

Senator KAINE. We have been having a number of hearings about the destabilizing or sort of decreasing security situation in Iraq. But as I gather from our discussion so far, that has not really affected the Iraq-Kuwait relationship or border issues in north Kuwait?

Mr. SILLIMAN. Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is correct. It really has not had any impact on Kuwait. I think they watch nervously the developments in their much larger neighbors in all directions, but they have been very careful to maintain an excellent relationship with the Iraqi Government and have been consulting closely. We have been consulting closely with them as well, and thus far there has been no spillover into Kuwait, and we frankly do not expect any spillover into Kuwait.

Senator KAINE. It appears that domestic political unrest in Kuwait has quieted in recent months. Some of that may be economic in nature. Those of us working on budget issues were envious when we saw that Kuwait was announcing a surplus that was 40 percent of its GDP, a budgetary surplus. But what do you think the future is of political system reform in Kuwait going forward?

Mr. SILLIMAN. Senator, that is an excellent question and this is a question on which there is a very lively debate in Kuwait itself. Kuwait already has a political system that stands out in the region. As I said, women are full participants in the political system. There is a very lively press. There is very lively participation in social media, although with some controls from the government that we wish they did not try to impose.

I believe that it is the openness of the political system that makes it possible for Kuwaitis to move forward more rationally and calmly than many other countries that do not have such an open system. It is one of the great benefits of democracy that we have here and I think Kuwait benefits from that.

We will continue, I will continue if confirmed, to encourage expanded freedom of expression, freedom of association and other ways, so that Kuwaitis themselves can have open discussions and decide what their political future ought to be.

Senator KAINE. One of the issues we also frequently discuss in both Foreign Relations and Armed Services is sort of the growing sectarian nature of conflict in this region between Sunni and Shia Islamic populations. Yet Kuwait has been a little bit immune from that, and I wonder if you would talk about why?

Mr. SILLIMAN. Certainly, Senator. Kuwait is fortunate in the region in that they do not have the same social or economic differences tied to sect or religion that other countries in the region do. About 30 percent of the Kuwaiti population is Shia. It is a minority, but it is very well integrated socially and economically. Kuwait Shia to my understanding do not feel themselves second-class citizens. They participate fully in political life and in social life. So I think this is one of the reasons that you have not seen spillover from other sectarian conflicts in the region.

Again, if confirmed we will watch this very carefully. But I think that the situation in Kuwait is much more optimistic, or I am more optimistic about the situation in Kuwait than in many other places in the region.

Senator KAINE. One last question. What is the current state of the Kuwaiti reaction to the United States-Iran negotiations, the P5+1 discussions?

Mr. SILLIMAN. An excellent question. The Kuwaiti has publicly welcomed the joint plan of action and said also that they hope that the joint plan of action leads to a permanent agreement that will resolve the nuclear issues of Iran, because they believe it will increase regional security in this region and other parts of the world. That said, they are still nervous about some of the other activities of Iran that we too are nervous about, support of terrorism and revolutionary movements elsewhere in the region and the world.

So the Kuwaitis are not being Pollyannish when they are in favor of the joint plan of action. But thus far they have been supportive, and we have consulted with them closely.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Mr. Silliman.

Ambassador Tueller, in news of the week there was news this week about Yemen considering or on the path to adopt a six-region federal structure. Based on your experience, including your earlier posting in Yemen, do you think this structure make sense and will hold? Is there lingering possibility that southerners will not see this as a viable structure? What has been the initial kind of response to this in Yemen and what are your thoughts about it?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, that is an important step that has taken place in this continuing process that began with the GCC initiative. The national dialogue brought together representatives from political elites, from different regions of the country, the different parties, included women, representatives of broad swaths of society, including of course southerners. In the process of the national dialogue, of course these issues were discussed. There were recommendations made.

It is clear that there is still a need for further discussion on this. But the national dialogue concluded quite recently, January 25. The next phase of the process called for a study and the recommendations for a federal system, devolution of power from the center. So the recommendations that have come out for a six-region federal system are consistent with the national dialogue process.

The issues are still very much alive. We expect that President Hadi is going to have to continue to exercise the type of leadership that he has over the course of this process as the country moves to the next phases of drafting the constitution, having a referendum to approve the constitution. I expect that there will be challenges and we will have to be continuously engaged along with other partners to ensure that the process is not derailed or spoiled by those who would like to oppose it.

Senator KAINE. Just on that point, there has been an ongoing Houthi rebellion in a portion of Yemen and that rebellion has received, revolt has received support from Iran and has been a serious threat to security in Yemen. Is the political process as it is working sort of responding to grievances and dampening them, or is there likely to be an effort by this revolt to unwind or attack the political process that is ongoing?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, first on the question of the Houthi rebellion. There are legitimate grievances. The Houthis participated in the national dialogue, so that was a positive step. Nonetheless, the conflict continues.

As you mention, there is strong evidence that Iran has been providing support to the elements of the Houthi rebellion, including last year Yemen seized a dhow with weapons, referred the case to the U.N., and the U.N. concluded that Iran was likely behind the shipment of weapons to the Houthis.

We and Yemen share a strong interest in preventing Iran from meddling in and exerting its influence inside Yemen. So if confirmed one of my major efforts will be to assist the Yemeni Government both in addressing on the political, social, and economic level grievances that will allow the rebellion to be fought back, but also in preventing Iran from exploiting those tensions inside Yemen.

Senator KAINE. You testified a bit about AQAP and how it has been such a significant challenge. One of the issues really raised

as you dig into this is the success of counterterrorism in one country can create problems in a neighbor. So much of the AQAP membership has been Saudi natives who, because of Saudi efforts to crack down on terrorism, have found it easier to move across borders into Yemen and created problems in Yemen.

Talk a little bit about the current status of the Yemen-Saudi security cooperation in dealing with AQAP and what the United States is doing to try to help facilitate that?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, you have touched exactly on the issue behind AQAP's growth. It of course was formed in 2009 as a result of the unification, putting one banner over both the al-Qaeda elements in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, with Yemen providing, because of ungoverned spaces and weak central government authority, the opportunity for elements of Saudi Arabia to take root inside Yemen.

The question of how we combat that, of course, really goes to creating conditions where the Government in Yemen can begin to exert control in those ungoverned spaces, that it can begin to counter extremism, and that it can, with our assistance and the assistance of others, have the type of law enforcement security services that can counter the threat posed by terrorists.

Saudi Arabia has actually played a very, very constructive role in Yemen. It played a very important part in bringing about the GCC initiative that brought the country back from the brink of civil war. So we believe also that continued involvement with Saudi Arabia as a partner in addressing the issues in Yemen is going to be important to the success of our efforts there.

Senator KAINE. In the aftermath of the horrific bombing of the hospital in Yemen in December, AQAP took the unusual step of apologizing and saying they had made a mistake and that there was sort of a really just acknowledging that they had done wrong. Has the horrific nature of that particular crime weakened any attachment or support that they would receive from elements within the Yemeni population?

Ambassador TUELLER. Sir, again and again the primary victims of AQAP have been Yemenis. They have attacked Yemeni civilians, Yemeni infrastructure. The attack on the hospital and I believe the statement that you are referring to afterward is indicative of the type of challenge we face in countering their propaganda efforts. To carry out that sort of vicious attack and then come out afterward and try to apologize, while that may have some appeal to some people, I believe that we will be able to counter that and, with the help of the government that is engaged in the fight with us, to make sure that that extremist message, the lies they tell, do not take hold amongst the Yemeni people.

Senator KAINE. Talk a little bit about the security challenge for your personnel in Yemen. I think Senator Risch's question to you about would your family be attending was getting at that issue. Yemen might be one of the most challenging assignments in the United States Foreign Service because of security. I understand all the employees of the Embassy, U.S. employees, live in a single building that is a converted hotel. If you would just talk a bit about the security challenges and how you will tackle them when you are there.

Ambassador TUELLER. Yes, Senator. It is something that, it is a dynamic situation, one that I believe we constantly have to evaluate, look and see what the nature of the threat is, what are effective countermeasures, what is the nature of the footprint on the ground, are we doing everything possible.

Senator, if confirmed I will spend every morning and every evening giving serious thought to whether we are doing the things in Yemen that make sense, that we have got the right mix of people there, that we are taking all the appropriate countermeasures. I am confident with the experience that we have gained and continue to gain that we are putting in place best practices to protect our facilities and our people. But I am not going to rest for one moment and feel complacent about the steps in place and will be constantly evaluating whether we are doing the right thing.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Ambassador, I was struck when we talked privately, based on your experiences in being in Yemen earlier, but you pointed out that in the Arab world, in this part of the world, Yemen is the poorest country. So in terms of resources to deal with the challenges, from a physical resource standpoint, they are very, very stressed. And yet you really seem to convey that, given the level of resources they have, there are reasons for optimism about how they are handling the challenges that they face, with AQAP notwithstanding. Have I fairly characterized your thoughts?

Ambassador TUELLER. Yes, Senator, I do feel optimistic about that. I think the level of economic assistance that we are providing is enabling the Yemeni Government to begin to improve its ability to deliver services, to exert its influence into ungoverned areas, to create jobs, to foster private enterprise. Frankly, there are a number of other very committed partners also, including Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries.

So if together we can move that, there is great potential for Yemen to move from where it is now or has been over the past decades to a country, particularly as we see the political process begin to allow a government to function properly and be responsive to the needs of its citizens. I am optimistic about where that is headed.

Senator KAINE. A last question. In the National Defense Authorizing Act that we passed at the end of 2013, the language that was hammered out between the House and the Senate with respect to Guantanamo opened up the prospect for more transfers of Guantanamo detainees back to countries of origin, with sort of two components: transfers to countries of origin, transfers to the United States for trial in Article 3 courts.

We did not change the fundamental law with respect to the Article 3 courts, but we did open up more prospects for transfers back to countries of origin. A huge number of the remaining detainees, a sizeable percentage of the remaining detainees at Guantanamo, are Yemenis. Talk a little bit about, with greater congressional authority for such transfers, talk a bit about the important goal of returning to Yemen those who have been cleared for return at this point?

Ambassador TUELLER. Senator, the administration is very grateful for the greater flexibility that the legislation has provided the President, who has made clear that it is the policy of this administration to close Guantanamo. It has not been effective. It has not

served our national security interests. So that flexibility that allows the administration to look at, in the case of Yemen, a case-by-case examination of each individual detainee to determine whether the conditions can be met to make a transfer either to Yemen or to a third country.

So we will continue to look at that process. Again, it is going to be a case-by-case basis, looking at the specific circumstances of each individual and what assurances would be required so that we make sure that our national security interests are taken care of before any return takes place.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Tueller, for your testimony and to all the witnesses and all who are here in support of them. I am glad we were able to have this hearing today. Each of your countries are very, very important allies for the United States and it is important that we have our best representing us there.

The record of this hearing, and especially because of the timing of it, will remain open until the close of business next Thursday to allow members to submit questions for the record, and we ask your prompt response to such questions as they are submitted.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:24 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF DOUGLAS ALAN SILLIMAN TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. What are the vital U.S. national security interests in Kuwait? What are the other national security interests in Kuwait?

Answer. Kuwait is a steadfast ally in the strategically important gulf region and a valued partner in promoting policies that strengthen regional security and stability, including supporting efforts to reach a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, resolving the Syria crisis, including addressing the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people, and confronting Iran's destabilizing policies in the region. Our longstanding strategic partnership includes excellent military-to-military relations; Kuwait's proven track record as a supportive host of U.S. Army Central is critical to our ability to deter threats to our own homeland and to our allies. One of our highest priorities is sustaining and enhancing our security partnership, especially with respect to countering the threat of terrorism and violent extremism against the United States, U.S. personnel in the region and U.S. allies abroad. Kuwait, which holds the rotating Gulf Cooperation Council presidency for 2014 and will host the Arab League summit March 25–26, is increasingly assuming a regional leadership role on issues of shared importance such as the Syria humanitarian crisis and Iraq's regional reintegration. Finally, Kuwait holds roughly 7 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, and U.S. companies actively compete for massive contracts in Kuwait's transportation, heath, and infrastructure sectors.

Question. What are the three most important goals of U.S. policy in Kuwait?

Answer. Sustaining and deepening our security partnership will continue to be our first priority, as it is essential to ensuring U.S. security, and the security and stability of the broader gulf and Middle East regions. This includes the protection of official U.S. personnel in Kuwait, as well as the more than 50,000 U.S. citizens living, working, and visiting Kuwait City; in that respect, the Government of Kuwait provides outstanding cooperation in both of these areas. Protecting access to energy resources is a second, critically important objective. Kuwait produces roughly 2.7 million barrels a day and exports more than 2 million barrels a day; it is in our mutual interest to help ensure that Kuwait remains a reliable supplier to global energy markets far into the future. A final objective involves strengthening U.S.-Kuwaiti commercial ties. Kuwait has consistently run large budget surpluses, and the Government of Kuwait is directing a sizeable portion of these funds into modernizing the country's infrastructure and improving the Kuwaiti health and education sectors, opportunities for which U.S. companies can expect to be excep-

tionally competitive. At the same, the government has also increased its yearly contributions to Kuwait's Future Generations Fund, an investment fund to which Kuwait contributes a percentage of annual oil revenues. If I am confirmed, I will work to sustain the recent increase in Kuwaiti investment in U.S. assets and companies, where Kuwait ranks as our 13th-fastest growing source of Foreign Direct Investment.

Question. How does achieving these goals in Kuwait align with a broader regional strategy?

Answer. Deepening our security, political, and economic partnership with Kuwait is a key component in advancing our regional goal of countering threats and promoting stability. As evidenced by the Kuwaiti Amir's September 2013 visit to Washington and Secretary Kerry's two trips to Kuwait in the last 9 months, our two nations work collaboratively on a range of bilateral, regional, and international issues of utmost importance to U.S. national security. For example, as the Gulf Cooperation Council president for 2014, Kuwait will facilitate our multilateral engagement with that entity, including on ballistic missile defense. Kuwait has also welcomed the Joint Plan of Action as an important first step toward a comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran, and Kuwaiti assistance has been critical to short-term economic stability in Egypt. To address the dire humanitarian needs stemming from the ongoing violence in Syria, meanwhile, Kuwait's Amir cohosted with U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon a second-annual high level donors' conference that spurred a collective $4.2 billion in new pledges of humanitarian assistance. Finally, I had the privilege of personally working to advance the normalization of Iraq-Kuwait relations over the past 18 months, which greatly contributed to regional stability and continues to serve as a powerful example of the potential for Iraq's reintegration into the immediate neighborhood, from which it has been so long estranged.

RESPONSES OF MATTHEW TUELLER TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. What are the vital U.S. national security interests in Yemen? What are the other national security interests in Yemen?

Answer. Our vital U.S. national security interests in Yemen center on addressing near-term security threats to the United States and our regional interests by supporting President Hadi and the Yemeni Government's efforts to counter Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and to complete an historic democratic transition. In supporting Yemen's transition process, the U.S. thereby bolsters the Yemeni Government's ability to meet its citizens' economic, humanitarian, and political needs, undercutting the lure of extremist movements.

Our objectives include: enhancing the Yemeni Government's ability to protect its borders and coastlines; enabling Yemen to participate more fully as a regional security, political, and economic partner; supporting the Yemeni Government in extending control over its territory and ungoverned spaces to prevent use by terrorists and transnational criminals; facilitating Yemeni efforts to modernize its military and improve interoperability with U.S. and coalition forces; and, encouraging bolstered rule of law and human rights best practices.

Question. What are the three most important goals of U.S. policy in Yemen?

Answer. The three most important goals of U.S. policy in Yemen are to: (1) counter the threat from AQAP and other violent extremists, in partnership with President Hadi and the Yemeni Government; (2) support Yemen as it implements the political, economic, and social reforms underpinning the country's historic transition to democracy, fostering a more stable and prosperous Yemen; and, (3) protect and promote U.S. citizens, personnel, and interests in Yemen.

Question. How does achieving these goals in Yemen align with a broader regional strategy?

Answer. Achieving these goals in Yemen aligns with our broader regional strategy by promoting peace, security and stability, enhancing economic cooperation, expanding opportunities for broader trade and investment, and supporting aspirations for more inclusive, responsive governance which addresses basic universal rights and needs.

RESPONSES OF JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. What are the vital U.S. national security interests in Saudi Arabia? What are the other national security interests in Saudi Arabia?

Answer. In his September 24, 2013 address to the U.N. General Assembly, President Obama outlined U.S. core interests in the region, which also define our vital interests in Saudi Arabia:

> We will confront external aggression against our allies and partners, as we did in the gulf war . . .
>
> We will ensure the free flow of energy from the region to the world . . .
>
> We will dismantle terrorist networks that threaten our people.

If confirmed, I will work to advance our defense and security partnerships, energy coordination, and counterterrorism relationships, which truly are critical to our national security.

However, as President Obama also noted: [T]o say that these are America's core interests is not to say that they are our only interests. We deeply believe it is in our interests to see a Middle East and North Africa that is peaceful and prosperous, and will continue to promote democracy and human rights and open markets, because we believe these practices achieve peace and prosperity.

Building our commercial relationships, including increasing Saudi imports of American products and bolstering the success of American firms in winning Saudi contracts and forming successful business partnerships, will be a high Embassy priority during my tenure as Ambassador.

Likewise, if confirmed I will prioritize engagement with Saudi Arabia on affording opportunities for women to participate fully in the public and economic life of the country, and allowing citizens basic rights, such as freedom of association and assembly. I will not shy away from advocacy of Saudi reforms in these areas or from offering support to those fighting for protection of these rights.

Finally, the safety and security of the many American citizens in Saudi Arabia, both private and official, will be a first priority for me as Ambassador if confirmed.

Question. What are the three most important goals of U.S. policy in Saudi Arabia?

Answer. The most critical U.S. policy goals necessarily follow the U.S. core interests outlined above. We must continue to maintain our deep security partnership while continuing to sustain our robust Foreign Military Sales program with a current value of more than $96 billion. Building Saudi defense capabilities and maintaining our partnerships in security and counterterrorism are essential matters of our national security strategy. We must also work closely with Saudi leaders on energy matters to ensure stability in global markets, and further enhance our cooperation on counterterrorism which is a critical policy goal that I will work to advance if confirmed, in whole-of-government fashion. I further look forward to visits from and consultation with members of the committee to discuss our approaches to these issues and how best to achieve our goals.

Question. How does achieving these goals in Saudi Arabia align with a broader regional strategy?

Answer. While our bilateral partnership with Saudi Arabia remains critical in its own right, it also is very much a component of the broader regional strategy that you reference. Saudi Arabia is an influential regional actor and plays a key role in every major issue confronting the region, from Syria to Iran. We need Saudi coordination and assistance to deal effectively with these complex regional challenges. As the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) collective, grows increasingly important as a political, security, and economic body, we must work with Saudi Arabia, the largest GCC member state, to strengthen our partnerships in the region and enhance regional economic and military ties. We must continue regular engagement with the GCC states through the U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum to develop broader cooperative ties with the six GCC member states, including on matters such as gulf security and ballistic missile defense.

RESPONSES OF JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. As you are well aware, women in Saudi Arabia are effectively treated as legal minors due to the country's male guardianship system and are unable to do many of things that women here in the United States take for granted. In fact,

according to a recent report from the World Bank, the economic potential of Saudi women is the most limited in the world due to their legal status.

In recent years however, Saudi Arabia has made several advancements in women's rights. For example, in the upcoming Saudi election in 2015, women will, for the first time, be able to stand as candidates and vote in municipal elections. The majority of these advancements made by King Abdullah have been largely symbolic but I hope that they can at the very least represent a turning point for women in Saudi Arabia.

- ♦ What will you do to engage with the Saudi Government on women's issues and how will you work to advocate on behalf of women especially in light of the upcoming 2015 elections?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will engage Saudi leaders on the need to accelerate reforms that allow women to participate fully in the political and economic life of the country and that protect women and girls from abuse or discrimination. I will express the view that Saudi Arabia will never reach its full potential if it does not allow half of its citizens to contribute to the country's future and prosperity. The historic appointment of 30 women to the Kingdom's Consultative Council was a positive step in this direction; however, much more needs to be done for the full inclusion of women in Saudi public life. As Saudi women prepare to vote and to run for office for the first time in the upcoming 2015 municipal council elections, I will closely monitor these important elections and encourage the women of Saudi Arabia to seize this important opportunity to participate in their country's political life. I will also engage with key Saudi women leaders in business and government.

As I engage with Saudi officials, I will be clear that the U.S. Government supports women's freedom of movement and all opportunities afforded to men, including the removal of restrictions on women in transportation, employment, and public life. Saudi women are working hard to change social and government views inside their country, noting the illogic of current policies and practices, and they have generated vigorous public debate within Saudi Arabia about the role of women in Saudi society—a debate the Saudi leadership has at least tacitly supported. The recent driving campaign is just one example of the many home-grown campaigns that Saudis of both genders have initiated in recent years to press for increased opportunities and rights for Saudi women.

Question. Further, how do you believe the United States can best work to improve economic prospects for Saudi women?

Answer. Many women in Saudi Arabia have little ability to fulfill their talents and career and entrepreneurial ambitions because of societal and governmental strictures. If confirmed, I will examine ways to expand women's opportunities by showcasing Saudi women entrepreneurs through the use of social media and other mission resources and will facilitate networking among established women entrepreneurs and those just starting out so that others can gain from those with track records. I will also support increasing the number of Saudi students in the U.S. I will promote exchanges and training opportunities, and will examine partnerships for Saudi female entrepreneurs and professionals with peers in the U.S. I will also discuss with American companies operating in Saudi Arabia how they can help increase opportunities for women and youth and pave the way for more women to enter the labor force. Expanded U.S. educational offerings, network-building, and mentoring opportunities will benefit Saudi women just like they assist professionals everywhere, and over time will help expand the space available to women in Saudi Arabia to fully contribute to their country's success.

RESPONSES OF MATTHEW TUELLER TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. The busiest liquefied natural gas import terminal in the country is in my home State of Massachusetts. In fact, over the last 5 years, 40 percent of all U.S. imports have come through Boston Harbor. Fourteen percent of the LNG brought into the port originates in Yemen. That figure is declining due to terrorists repeatedly blowing up the main gas pipeline in Yemen.

- ♦ What is your assessment of the current security situation as it relates to the country's oil and gas infrastructure? Do you believe Yemen is a reliable source of natural gas for Massachusetts consumers?

Answer. Yemen continues to face frequent attacks by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and other armed groups seeking to undermine the political transition. This has included attacks on the country's oil and gas infrastructure. Presi-

dent Hadi and the Yemeni Government remain committed to improving the security environment and to protecting—and developing—Yemen's energy infrastructure. The Yemeni Government has made some progress reclaiming territory in the south previously under AQAP control, and is working to prevent attacks on Yemen's oil infrastructure. However, AQAP and tribal militias still routinely launch small scale attacks, particularly in remote areas, which disrupt energy production.

The United States supports programs to help build the capacity of Yemen's security forces to conduct counterterrorism operations and protect the Yemeni people, officials, and infrastructure from terrorist attacks. Our success in this initiative will contribute directly to Yemen's reliability as a provider of LNG to the people of Massachusetts.

Question. The United States has not merely given military aid to Yemen since that country's political transition began in 2011 we have also provided humanitarian and economic development assistance. In fact, over the previous 2 fiscal years, we have provided over $100 million in economic aid. Yet, much more work is needed to transition Yemen's political system and economy into the 21st century, particularly the country's electric grid. Yemen suffers chronic blackouts, even in the capital. Reliable power is a cornerstone of stability.

- Is there anything we can do to improve the reliability and security of Yemen's electric grid with our assistance, so that it can move further toward self-sustaining development?

Answer. Our security strategy in Yemen includes a strong focus on increasing Yemeni capacity to secure the country against AQAP and other threats, which will in turn build Yemeni capability to protect critical infrastructure. We seek to develop Yemen's security forces to conduct counterterrorism operations, extend government control in ungoverned spaces to prevent use by terrorists, and to secure maritime and land borders.

We routinely engage with the Yemeni Government on discussions over critical infrastructure—particularly Yemen's electric grid—and, in tandem with the international community, continue to support efforts to improve the reliability and safety of the energy grid, including through infrastructure development programs linked to the country's Mutual Accountability Framework, which is critical to ensuring donor confidence and continued support.

We are also working with Yemen to develop more sustainable uses of energy and support the establishment of ties between Yemeni and American business communities to promote sustainable development, including in the areas of renewable energy.

Finally, we continue to advocate for U.S. businesses looking to work with the Yemeni Government to increase electricity generation capacity.

Question. In your opinion, what should be the focus of the United States economic development goals in Yemen?

Answer. The United States economic development goals in Yemen should continue to focus on supporting near-term development and growth as well as longer term macroeconomic reform to achieve stability and underpin the gains of the country's ongoing transition process. In particular, our goals should include: (1) assisting the Yemenis in addressing economic reform priorities, which will set Yemen on a more sustainable path while increasing opportunities for private enterprise; (2) strengthening the capacity of the Yemeni Government, including the Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) Executive Bureau, to support the country's efforts to implement reform commitments; (3) encouraging other international donors to fulfill assistance pledges which will enable the Yemeni Government to pursue meaningful reform and development; and, (4) assisting the Yemeni Government in meeting the critical humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people to foster the stability required to serve as a foundation for meaningful change.

Significant structural reform and the development of a sustainable private sector remain essential to addressing many of the Yemeni citizens' key economic-focused demands. The Yemeni Government, however, has limited technical capacity to undertake sweeping institutional and economic reforms on its own. Our development goals in Yemen should focus on supporting Yemen's transitional government as it works to advance much-needed economic and structural reforms, while coordinating with the international community to maximize the utility of our assistance.

NOMINATIONS OF DEBORAH BIRX; SUZAN LEVINE; MAUREEN CORMACK; AND PETER SELFRIDGE

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Deborah L. Birx, of Maryland, to be Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally

Suzan G. LeVine, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Principality of Liechtenstein

Maureen Elizabeth Cormack, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Peter A. Selfridge, of Minnesota, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:15 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Edward J. Markey presiding.

Present: Senators Markey, Cardin, Murphy, Kaine, Corker, and Barrasso.

Also Present: Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, U.S SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator MARKEY. This hearing will come to order and we welcome all of you this afternoon. Today we welcome four distinguished individuals who have been nominated for senior positions in our Nation's State Department. I want to express my appreciation to the ranking member, Mr. Barrasso, as we begin our hearing today and I want to thank our panel for being here.

Our first nominee is Deborah Birx, who has been nominated to serve as Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally. Dr. Birx has been a renowned leader and innovator in the HIV/AIDS field for decades. I could go on singing Dr. Birx's praises, but my colleague and fellow Senate Foreign Relations Committee member, Senator Cardin, is going to arrive here soon in order to graciously deliver

Dr. Birx's introduction, so that is all that I will have to say for right now.

Our second nominee is Susan LeVine. After a storied career at Microsoft, Ms. LeVine has been nominated by the President to be our Ambassador to Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. Ms. LeVine has substantial experience in the private sector, including at Microsoft, and we are fortunate to have both of her distinguished Senators from Washington who have also offered to introduce her to the Foreign Relations Committee.

I will note at this point that there is a roll call on the Senate floor right now, so we are going to have an imminent arrival of several distinguished Senators in order to properly extol the virtues of our candidates.

We also have before us Maureen Elizabeth Cormack, who has been nominated by President Obama to serve as our next Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ms. Cormack brings a wealth of experience at the State Department, most recently as the Principal Deputy Coordinator of the Department's Bureau of International Information Programs. As the Deputy Coordinator, Ms. Cormack provided skillful leadership to our Nation's public diplomacy communications operation.

Since she began her career at the State Department in 1989, Ms. Cormack has demonstrated exemplary service both at home and overseas. I believe her background will enable her to bring strong leadership to our Foreign Service as the next Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Last but certainly not least, we welcome Peter Selfridge, who has been nominated by the President to serve as the Chief of Protocol at the State Department. Mr. Selfridge has a long and impressive track record of ensuring that the highest profile Presidential trips go off without a hitch, no small feat. He has demonstrated this as the Director of Advance and Operations at the White House. That is precisely the sort of experience needed in our Chief of Protocol.

As our Nation's first contact that welcomes foreign leaders and diplomats to our Nation, the Chief of Protocol plays a crucial role in our Nation's diplomatic operations. Put simply, our Chief of Protocol makes person to person diplomacy possible.

Mr. Selfridge began his career right here in the United States Senate as a staff assistant and legislative correspondent in the office of Senator Tom Harkin, and we are glad to welcome him back today as we consider his nomination to this position. Unlike many Senators, he has made his way to the White House. So we congratulate you on that.

With that, I would like to stop and actually begin to allow our witnesses to testify. As the Senators arrive, I am going to interrupt at that point so that each of the Senators can make their welcoming comments as well. So why do we not we begin with you, Ms. Birx. Whenever you feel comfortable, please begin.

STATEMENT OF DEBORAH L. BIRX, M.D., OF MARYLAND, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR AT LARGE AND COORDINATOR OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS GLOBALLY

Dr. BIRX. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today. Let me begin by acknowledging the much appreciated and unheralded work of this committee and many in this room who have persistently and effectively moved AIDS from the shadows to the center of our global health agenda.

I am deeply grateful to President Obama for his continuing support and investment and in challenging us to do more, to Secretary Kerry for his long-term commitment to changing the course of this pandemic, to Secretary Clinton for the blueprint for an AIDS-free generation, and to President Bush for creating PEPFAR.

Let me also take a personal moment to acknowledge my parents here today, who taught me to live my life focused on others, and my daughters, age 27 and 30. I am very proud of them and grateful for their patience and sacrifice.

Senator MARKEY. Could they stand for a second so we can recognize them for the fantastic work they did.

[Parents stand.] [Applause.]

Senator MARKEY. Beautiful. Thank you all for being here.

Dr. BIRX. As you know, the AIDS pandemic has been devastating. Since the first cases were recognized in 1981, more than 30 million people have died of HIV and more than 30 million people today live with HIV. But the AIDS story has changed dramatically over the last decade. It is no longer one of overwhelming despair. It has by sheer determination forged a different path, driven from the amalgamation of literally millions of untold and often heroic personal, political, and programmatic choices. Now the tide of this relentless pandemic is turning.

Because of activists and analysts, scientists and religious leaders, parents and parliamentarians, we stand on the verge of achieving what many of us thought impossible just a few short years ago, the ends of the AIDS epidemic as we know it.

My own 34-year professional journey, most of it in uniform in our Nation's armed services, has been intertwined with the path of this epidemic from the beginning. My path has been marked by humility, inspiration, and discovery: humility because at Walter Reed in the early 1980s we were caring for young soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who were suffering and dying from a mysterious illness and we could not save them; inspiration from Africa in the late 1990s, when pregnant women dying of HIV/AIDS still came forward, were tested, and confronted stigma and discrimination, forsaking their own lives to save their babies from HIV, and we could do nothing to save them; discovery for the potential pathway to an effective HIV vaccine through a partnership with NIH, DOD, and Thailand, and discovering through PEPFAR that we have not only saved lives but changed the course of this epidemic.

The United States political leadership of this global response have also taken risks, defying conventional wisdom, across multiple administrations and Congresses. This committee was instrumental in creating PEPFAR in 2003, which has twice been reauthorized with strong bipartisan support.

It only looks possible in hindsight that the whole of government coming together to achieve a common goal. the Department of State and USAID, the Departments of DOD and HHS and their components, as well as the Peace Corps, working together every day to implement PEPFAR.

Among the lasting legacies has been the speed at which outstanding science and innovation has been translated into sound policy and programming at scale. Looking forward, our chance to realize an AIDS regeneration is within reach. We have arrived at a critical moment in time where we can redefine the trajectory of this epidemic.

But our challenge is to remain—is maintaining our focus. If we begin to drift, if we lessen our aspirations or we leave our science behind, we will have squandered all of this investment and allowed the accomplishments of the last decade to unravel, with enormous negative consequences.

We have arrived at an AIDS-free generation—we can arrive at an AIDS-free generation through PEPFAR and our vision is one that reflects shared responsibility, accountability, and impact. First, we need to follow the PEPFAR blueprint and the clear recommendations from external reviews. Second, we need to work together to achieve the vision of PEPFAR, holding each other accountable by harnessing the power of science to create new paths and tools, the power of scale in our programming, to continue to demonstrate to the sometimes-skeptical world that we are both capable of saving lives as well as changing the very face of this epidemic, the power of partnerships to create genuine synergies and to hold each of us accountable to our commitments, and the power of activism to translate our aspirations into our policies.

Finally, we must stay focused in four key areas: scaling of effective interventions, strengthening countries' capacities and systems, sharing responsibility to address the epidemic, and most important ensuring transparency, accountability, and oversight.

I believe we can accomplish what was truly unthinkable just a few short years ago. I look forward to the opportunity of working with this committee as we bring this to fruition, and let me stop here and express my deep appreciation and take any questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Birx follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. DEBORAH L. BIRX

Thank you Senator Markey, Senator Barrasso, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker and distinguished members of the committee. I am deeply honored to have been nominated by President Obama, with the strong support of Secretary Kerry, to serve as the United States Global AIDS Coordinator and to lead the global HIV/AIDS efforts on behalf of our Nation. It is a particular pleasure to have this opportunity to appear before your committee, which has so persistently and effectively moved AIDS from the shadows to the center of our global health agenda. I would like to applaud the members of this committee and your congressional colleagues for your unwavering bipartisan support of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and for the recent passage of the PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act of 2013. You are to be commended for your leadership in moving this legislation forward and with each reauthorization strengthening PEPFAR's investment strategy and program oversight to ensure maximum impact on the epidemic to achieve an AIDS-free generation.

Please know that if confirmed, I will continue to work with you and the larger global health community to further strengthen and accelerate our global HIV/AIDS efforts to ensure that our programs have an even greater impact in saving lives, changing the course of the HIV epidemic, and taking a major step forward in achiev-

ing an AIDS-free generation. I will also ensure effective oversight, accountability, and enhanced transparency to you and the American people so that our investment of tax dollars reaps the greatest dividends. Our investments must continue to be smart, strategic, and impactful if we are to ultimately win the global battle against HIV/AIDS.

The AIDS pandemic has devastated individuals and communities in the United States and around the world. Since the first cases were recognized in 1981, more than 30 million people have died from AIDS and millions more are now living with HIV, with an estimated 1.6 million deaths in the past year. Countless others have been affected by untold personal and economic loss. In recent years, however, the story of AIDS has changed dramatically. It is no longer just a story of devastation and despair—it is one of healing and hope. By sheer determination and millions of heroic personal, political, and programmatic choices, the tide of this relentless epidemic is turning.

The U.S. global HIV/AIDS effort has both launched and anchored the largest and longest lasting global health collaboration in history. Working together we have brought about extraordinary achievements that have transformed individuals, communities, societies, and countries. Over the last decade we have seen impressive gains. We have reached, and in many cases exceeded, PEPFAR's targets defined by the President. In FY 2013, PEPFAR directly supported 6.7 million men, women, and children worldwide with life-saving medicines; supported HIV testing and counseling to more than 12.8 million pregnant women; and provided antiretroviral medications to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus to 780,000 women. Last June, Secretary Kerry made the historic announcement that PEPFAR had achieved a milestone—1 million babies born HIV-free. We have supported more than 4.7 million voluntary medical male circumcision procedures in east and southern Africa. And PEPFAR supported 17 million people with care and support, including more than 5 million orphans and vulnerable children, in 2013.

These efforts have saved millions of lives and illustrate the critical role of American leadership in global health. Within the global response to the epidemic, PEPFAR has served as a remarkable example of cooperation across the breadth of our Government and our Nation with countless partners around the globe. This success owes a great debt to the leadership of President George W. Bush and the members of his administration for creating PEPFAR. To President Obama, former Secretary of State Clinton, and Secretary of State Kerry for their deep commitment as outlined in the "PEPFAR Blueprint for an AIDS Free Generation" to further extend our efforts. And to the visionary leaders in this and earlier Congresses, who had the foresight to propose, support and guide this program in its development. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Ambassadors Eric Goosby and Mark Dybul for their effective stewardship of PEPFAR during the current and past administrations. And we are grateful as well to the pioneers who created the Leadership and Investment in Fighting the Epidemic (LIFE) Initiative in the Clinton administration. The U.S. global response to HIV has been uniquely uninterrupted, and each administration has contributed its own vision while maintaining the fundamentals, securing bipartisan bicameral support through each reauthorization, and reflecting the enduring compassion of the American people.

My entire professional career has been focused on the AIDS epidemic, interacting with it from a number of different perspectives both in the United States and throughout the world. As a physician I have cared for patients, beginning in the 1980s at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, before we knew a deadly virus was causing this horrendous disease. I made scientific contributions in understanding how this virus destroys the body's defense mechanisms.

And while leading the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research work on HIV/AIDS, I was able to acquire a more thorough appreciation of the potential and limitations of groundbreaking vaccine research. As a proud Army Veteran, having risen to the rank of Colonel, I brought together the Navy, Army, and Air Force in a new model of cooperation—whose lessons I would hope to adapt in this role to ensure that the full U.S. Government interagency PEPFAR collaboration is enhanced. Finally, in my current role as the Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Global HIV/AIDS, I have had the privilege of working with and across the full array of U.S. Government PEPFAR implementing agencies, where I developed a unique understanding and appreciation of the complementary roles of each. These diverse and demanding experiences have challenged me personally while reinforcing my confidence in our collective capacities—and my optimism that our chance to create an AIDS-free generation is within reach.

Our challenge is to maintain our focus. If we begin to drift, to lessen our aspirations, or to stray from the scientific method, we will have squandered our accumulated assets and allowed the accomplishments of the last decade to unravel, with

enormous negative consequence to a great many young lives. To achieve an AIDS-free generation—we need to refocus our efforts, reenergize our partnerships, and reaffirm our commitments to achieving our objectives. My confidence in our eventual success derives from what we have seen and experienced thus far in the global effort.

We have seen our many partners in clinics and communities across five continents persevere and prevail in their efforts to bring sound science to the service of social justice.

We have seen the compassion and passion of AIDS advocates and activists at the forefront of the global response drawing support to the organizations, health care providers and community health workers who directly touch the lives of those we are privileged to serve.

Within the U.S. Government efforts, we have seen in action the leadership at the Department of State, including the important contributions of ambassadors to the field, as well as the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, and USAID; the Department of Health and Human Services and its agencies, including CDC, HRSA, and NIH, and the Office of Global Affairs; the Department of Defense; the Peace Corps; the Department of Labor; and the many dedicated career staff working here and overseas bringing their complementary expertise and shared commitment to this effort.

We have seen the increased efforts of other governments, our multilateral partners, the private sector and a wide array of community, faith-based and civil society organizations, including those living with HIV/AIDS join forces to create a global response, which brought the political will of the global community to bear at the front line of the epidemic.

Together we have experienced the power of activism, to translate our aspirations into our policies; the power of science, to create new paths and tools where the ones we have in hand fall short; the power of scale in our programming, to continue to demonstrate to a sometimes skeptical world that we are capable of changing the very course of the epidemic; the power of partnerships, to create genuine synergies and hold each of us accountable to our commitments; and the power of our collective will and generosity of the American people. Together we have achieved what was once thought to be unachievable.

Looking forward, our vision is to achieve an AIDS-free generation through shared responsibility, accountability, and impact. First we need to pursue both the agenda defined by the "PEPFAR Blueprint," reflecting lessons learned from 10 years of experience in supporting countries to rapidly scale up HIV prevention, treatment, and care services, as well as recommendations from external reviews available to help guide PEPFAR's next steps. Second, we need to work together with all our partners to realize our vision, holding each other accountable and continuing to work together as activists, scientists, policymakers, and service providers to turn the tide of this epidemic together.

To realize this vision we must stay focused on four key areas. First, we need to use country-driven analyses to accelerate action to scale up effective interventions for maximum impact in saving lives. Second, we must focus on strengthening country capacities and systems for longer term accountability and sustained impact. Third, we need to establish innovative Country Health Partnerships that ensure shared responsibility of the epidemic with country and other global stakeholders, including more robust engagement of country governments and civil society. Finally, we need to ensure enhanced transparency and accountability of program objectives, impact, investments, and quality.

SCALING OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

As a physician and epidemiologist, I am strongly committed to ensuring that country-driven analysis steers efforts to accelerate action to rapidly scale up effective interventions for maximum impact and controlling the HIV epidemic. Science, epidemiology, and dynamic data systems are essential. We will work with partner countries toward scaling up the best models for facility- and community-based service delivery that ensures that our resources go to the right people at the right time. We will prioritize reduction of sexual transmission by driving programs using epidemiological data and intervention effectiveness. To achieve an AIDS-free generation, we must analyze the epidemic country by country and tailor our approach to those most at-risk, to: eliminate new HIV infections among children and keep mothers alive; increase coverage of HIV treatment to reduce AIDS-related mortality and enhance HIV prevention; end stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and key populations (e.g., men who have sex with men, sex workers, and people who inject drugs), improving their access to, and uptake of, comprehensive HIV

services; increase the number of males who are voluntarily circumcised for HIV prevention; and increase access to, and uptake of, HIV testing and counseling, condoms and other evidence-based interventions.

STRENGTHENED COUNTRY CAPACITIES AND SYSTEMS

I am committed to ensuring that our PEPFAR programs are designed, implemented, and measured to strengthen country ownership and that we build long-term capacity of governments and civil society in countries through innovative Country Health Partnerships. These efforts to strengthen country ownership enjoy strong international support, and working with our partners we will maintain a concerted focus in health systems in a results-oriented manner that will be critical for sustaining the response to HIV prevention, care, and treatment. Through our work we will ensure we effectively support countries in strengthening their health systems over time with metrics and strategies that align with PEPFAR's vision. I am committed to ensuring that civil society engagement will be enhanced to make sure that those voices are involved in decisionmaking, implementation, and oversight activities of all PEPFAR programs.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EPIDEMIC

Nothing is possible alone, "shared responsibility" is an established U.S. Government perspective and I believe everything is possible through this perspective and partnership. This means a joint approach toward country led, managed, and implemented responses with civil society, multilateral, and bilateral partners, including key collaboration with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, the World Health Organization, UNAIDS, UNICEF, other multilateral, nongovernmental organizations and faith-based organizations. PEPFAR and the Global Fund financed programs are complementary and intertwined in countries where both exist. If confirmed, I will be vigilant in ensuring that we continue to realize strong program coordination, decreased costs, greater impact and efficiencies between Global Fund and U.S. investments—so that we are getting the best return on all available resources to fight HIV/AIDS in countries. Similarly, private sector mobilization is critical to service delivery and sustainable programs. We will continue to work toward shared accountability so that countries are in a position to manage and control their own epidemics. We will apply lessons learned from PEPFAR and our development partners across the health and economic sectors to more effectively deploy our transition policy in a stepwise manner that is consistent and aligned with epidemiology, strategy, and financing.

TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND OVERSIGHT

If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring enhanced transparency and accountability of program impact, cost, and quality by clearly and transparently aligning vision, strategy, and resources. We must strengthen key management and accountability relationships between multiple agencies, countries, and recipients in support of common health goals. We will use health economic data, including in-depth cost studies and expenditure analyses, to better manage program accountability to demonstrate PEPFAR's contributions to partner-country programs. We will use a comprehensive knowledge management framework, including a program monitoring and evaluation strategy, a prioritized and targeted research portfolio, and systems for knowledge dissemination, improved implementation and oversight—not only by the United States but also by the countries themselves.

The history of the end of the 20th century will be forever recorded with the emergence of a new and deadly viral plague that challenged us scientifically, socially and politically. Fortunately, that history will also record that—eventually—we faced our own fears of the disease and embraced those infected and affected with the open arms of compassion, creative research, and determined solutions. Our task is to ensure that the history of the beginning of the 21st century records that we continued to bring our collective scientific and care-giving potentials together around the globe. And that with confidence in our tools and capacities, we focused them with unwavering urgency to control this pandemic. We demonstrated that this chronic disease could be managed in resource-limited settings. And when the end of HIV/AIDS epidemic was within our reach, we grasped it and held on tightly. We cannot permit complacency to allow this pandemic to reemerge stronger and deadlier than it was before.

Mr. Chairman, though the road ahead will be challenging, I am confident that we will prevail. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to support and further the work of our many colleagues and partners whose determined effort is an inspiration to us all. It is essential that the United States of America continue to lead the global fight

against HIV and AIDS until we achieve our overarching objective, as envisioned by the President. Those who remain skeptical might find heart in Nelson Mandela's encouragement to us that: "It always seems impossible until it is done." The challenge in front of us is indeed immense, but we have learned a great deal from our efforts and success to date. The time has come where we can confidently translate our aspirations into operations, and systematically reign in this epidemic.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator MARKEY. Our next witness, Ms. LeVine; whenever you are ready, please begin.

STATEMENT OF SUSAN G. LEVINE, OF WASHINGTON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE SWISS CONFEDERATION, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

Ms. LEVINE. Thank you so much. Chairman Markey and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to both the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein. I am profoundly humbled by this opportunity and thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence that they are placing in me with this nomination. I would also like to thank Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell, when they get here, for their generous remarks on my behalf.

If I may, I would like to introduce you to some of the members of my family who are here today. I would like to introduce you to my mother, Phyllis Davidson, my husband, Eric LeVine, and my children, Sydney and Talia. It is through their love and support that I am here today.

Lastly, I would like to mention that I am sure my father, Maurice Davidson, may he rest in peace, who proudly served as an Army physician in Vietnam, is with us today in our hearts. Patriotism and service to our country were paramount to him and he instilled those values in me and my siblings throughout his life.

Over the last——

Senator MARKEY. Can I ask your family to stand up, too, so we can see them?

Ms. LEVINE. Absolutely.

Senator MARKEY. Oscar in a supporting role here.

[Family stands.] [Applause.]

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. LEVINE. Thank you.

Over the last 20-plus years, be it as a leader in business, both as a director at Microsoft and a vice president at Expedia, or as an intern at NASA, or as a volunteer and leader in the nonprofit sector, or as a mother, I have pursued opportunities and overcome challenges. I have led teams, built partnerships, organized communities, grown businesses, created and cultivated social media spaces, and conducted youth outreach. Above all, I have achieved results.

Throughout my career, I have focused my efforts on technology, innovation, education, travel, early learning, and social responsibility, all key areas of partnership with Switzerland and Liechtenstein. As two of the oldest federal republics in the world, the

United States and Switzerland are close friends and partners. Our relationship spans important areas of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, from human rights to regional stability.

As in any mature relationship, sometimes we have different perspectives. The issue of bank secrecy and tax evasion was a difficult one, but the U.S. and Swiss Governments have reached important agreements in this area and we are turning the page. Liechtenstein has also made great progress in the sharing of bank information.

I believe the mission for this position is to foster bilateral relationships with both Switzerland and Liechtenstein that enhance prosperity, stability, and security in our respective nations and around the world. Thus, if confirmed I would leverage my experience and knowledge to execute three key strategies: one, further grow our economic ties; two, expand global security and development collaboration; three, increase awareness and appreciation for each other's culture, values, and policies.

Let me elaborate. From the economic standpoint, we will start from a strong base. Switzerland is one of the top foreign direct investors into the United States, accounting for hundreds of thousands of American jobs. Switzerland is also a top-20 export market for American goods and services. Liechtenstein, even with a population of about 36,000, has key companies that account for thousands of U.S. jobs. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to tap into the rich potential for even more foreign direct investment and exports with these two partners.

Second, throughout my career I have built and stewarded partnerships where we tackled bigger opportunities and challenges than we could have alone and at the same time reduced redundancy and cost. The United States, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein have done some outstanding work together on this front. For example, along with the Swiss we are founding members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum. In addition, with Switzerland serving as the 2014 Chairman in Office of the OSCE, we have the opportunity to work together for security, prosperity, and human rights in Europe and Eurasia. If confirmed, I would explore how we might better leverage and expand existing partnerships or create new collaborations to further our shared global priorities.

Finally, if confirmed I hope to increase awareness and appreciation of culture, values, and policies between our nations. For example, as Americans among our many values we pursue fairness, protect our environment, and respect diversity. On the policy front, we are working closely with the Swiss on a number of policy priorities, including on the NATO-led Kosovo force, steering humanitarian assistance, and conflict mediation.

To be effective at increasing awareness and appreciation, it is important to understand at least one of the core Swiss values and policies, that of neutrality, and how they demonstrate that neutrality does not mean hands off. For example, in January alone Switzerland took over the chairmanship in office of the OSCE, hosted the Geneva talks on Syria, and hosted the World Economic Forum in Davos. If confirmed, I will ensure that our global priorities and policies are articulated to both the Swiss and Liechtenstein Governments and their people.

In all of these areas and endeavors, if confirmed I will rely on our highly skilled embassy staff, both local and American.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for inviting me to testify before you today. If confirmed, I commit to serving with integrity and to proudly and humbly applying my experience to this position. I look forward to collaborating with this esteemed committee and the Congress to foster our relationships between the United States and the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein in the global diplomatic, development, and economic spheres.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. LeVine follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SUZAN G. LEVINE

Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Barrasso, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to both the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

I am profoundly humbled by this opportunity and thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence that they are placing in me with this nomination.

I would also like to thank Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell for their generous remarks on my behalf. I have known both for many years and hope that I can live up to the very high standards that each sets as an incredible public servant—whether as the ultimate mom in tennis shoes or as a tech exec doing good.

If I may, I would like to take just a few moments to introduce you to some of the very special members of my family who are here today. First, I'd like to introduce you to my mother, Phyllis Davidson—who grew up not far from here and whose parents, my grandmother and grandfather, a WWI veteran and cofounder of the American Legion, are buried in Arlington Cemetery. Next, I'd like to introduce you to my husband, Eric LeVine, and my wonderful children, Sidney and Talia. It is through their love and support that I am here today. Lastly, I'd like to mention that I'm sure my father, Maurice Davidson, may he rest in peace, who proudly served as an Army physician in Vietnam, is with us today in our hearts. Patriotism and service to our country were paramount to him and he instilled those values in me and my siblings throughout his life.

Over the last 20-plus years, be it as a leader in business, both as a Director at Microsoft and a vice president at Expedia, or as an intern at NASA, or as a volunteer and leader in the nonprofit sector, or as a mother, I have pursued opportunities and overcome challenges. I have led teams, built partnerships, organized communities, grown businesses, created and cultivated social media spaces, and conducted youth outreach. Above all, I have achieved results. It is my great hope that the Senate will permit me the opportunity to use my skills and experiences to further our vital relationship with Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

My dual degrees in English and Engineering reflect my unique approach to leadership—I am a translator and a connector. Throughout my career I have focused my efforts on my passions, including technology, innovation, education, travel, early learning, and social responsibility—all core sectors of excellence for both Switzerland and Liechtenstein, and key issues of partnership in our bilateral relationship.

As two of the oldest federal republics in the world, the United States and Switzerland are close friends and partners. Our relationship is deep and strong, covering a wide range of important areas of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, from human rights to regional stability. We share many of the same values.

The United States and Switzerland partner together in many areas, including in venues such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), of which Switzerland is the Chairman-in-Office in 2014, the NATO Partnership for Peace, multiple U.N. bodies, and international financial institutions. Switzerland's neutrality allows it to play a unique mediating role, which can help address key U.S. foreign policy priorities.

As in any mature relationship, sometimes we have different perspectives on how to address certain issues. The issue of bank secrecy and tax evasion was a difficult one, but the U.S. and Swiss Governments have reached important agreements in

this area, and we are turning the page. Liechtenstein has also made great progress in the sharing of banking information.

I believe the mission for the job to which I have been nominated is to foster bilateral relationships with both Switzerland and Liechtenstein that enhance prosperity, stability, and security in our respective nations and around the world. Thus, if confirmed, I would leverage my experience and knowledge to execute three key strategies:

(1) Further grow our economic ties;

(2) Expand global security and development collaboration; and

(3) Increase awareness and appreciation for each other's culture, values, and policies.

From an economic standpoint, the growth we pursue will start from a strong base. Both Switzerland and Liechtenstein have an outsized impact in economic matters. Switzerland is one of the top foreign direct investors in the United States, ahead of countries many times its size, and Swiss companies account for hundreds of thousands of American jobs. Switzerland is also a top 20 export market for American goods and services. Liechtenstein, even with a population of about 36,000, has key companies that account for thousands of U.S. jobs. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to tap into the rich potential for even more foreign direct investment and exports with these two partners.

The second strategy I want to highlight, if confirmed, will be to expand our global security and development collaboration. I firmly believe in the value of partnering on difficult issues. Throughout my career, I have built and stewarded so-called "1+1 = 3 partnerships"—where we tackled bigger opportunities and challenges than we could have alone and, at the same time, reduced redundancy and cost. This type of collaboration is critical when it comes to both global security and development, and the United States, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein have done some outstanding work together on this front. For example, along with the Swiss we are founding members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, which aims to stop terrorism before it begins. In addition, with Switzerland serving as the 2014 Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, we have a great opportunity to work together for security, prosperity, and human rights in Europe and Eurasia. If confirmed, I would explore how we might better leverage and expand U.S.-Swiss and U.S.-Liechtenstein partnerships, and other collaborations, to further our shared global priorities.

Finally, if confirmed, I hope to work to increase awareness and appreciation of culture, values, and policies between our nations. For example, as Americans, among our many values, we pursue fairness, protect our environment, and respect diversity. On the policy front, we are working with the Swiss Government on a number of foreign policy priorities, both in Switzerland's backyard and further afield. Within Europe, Switzerland is a major troop contributor to the NATO-led Kosovo Force. Beyond Europe, Switzerland has provided over $70 million in humanitarian assistance for the people affected by the Syrian crisis, and helped to mediate among the factions in Mali. If confirmed, I will work with the highly skilled team at Embassy Bern to ensure awareness of these and other policies and values.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the Swiss hold neutrality as a key value and policy. I got a taste of this fact in 1988 when, on the first day of my first trip to Switzerland, I was stunned to meet my hometown rabbi. He was there to escort a group of students on their trip from Poland to Israel; since these two countries did not share diplomatic ties at that time, Switzerland was the way-station. This experience powerfully imbued me with a sense of just how important the Swiss are in building bridges.

While the political landscape has changed dramatically since 1988, Switzerland's role as mediator and neutral broker has not. If anything, Switzerland has taken its global position to a whole new level. For example, in January alone, Switzerland took over the Chairmanship-in-Office of the OSCE; hosted the Geneva 2 talks on Syria; and hosted the World Economic Forum in Davos. They are actively showing that neutrality does not mean hands off.

Fundamentally, if confirmed, I believe my key responsibility is to ensure that our global priorities are articulated to both the Swiss and Liechtenstein governments and their people so that we may partner wherever possible on key global challenges.

In all of these areas and endeavors, if confirmed, I will rely on our Embassy and its staff, both local and American. I have heard great things about the staff, and if confirmed I will seek to engender a true team spirit at the Embassy.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee—thank you, again, for inviting me to testify before you today. I feel honored to be nominated and, if confirmed, I commit to serving with integrity, and to proudly and humbly apply my professional, nonprofit, and community experience to this position. I look forward to collaborating

with this esteemed committee, and the Congress, to foster our relationships between the United States and the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein in the global diplomatic, development, and economic spheres.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Ms. LeVine.

Next we will hear from Maureen Elizabeth Cormack. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF MAUREEN ELIZABETH CORMACK, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Ms. CORMACK. Mr. Chairman, it is a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am deeply honored by the confidence placed in me by the President and Secretary Kerry. I would like to thank this committee for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I will seek to merit your trust and avail myself of any opportunities to consult with you, as I know many Members of Congress have spent a great deal of time over the last two decades working to help ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina moves toward a better future.

Mr. Chairman, my husband, William Cormack, who is also a State Department employee, has been my support and partner for 24 years. He has just transferred to an assignment in Pakistan and is very sorry not to be with us today. My oldest daughter is launching a new product with her colleagues at a startup in your great State of Massachusetts in Cambridge. My son William is——

Senator MARKEY. A very good excuse. [Laughter.]

Ms. CORMACK. It is a good excuse.

My son, William, is a freshman out in Colorado, and my daughter, Margaret, is on a semester abroad. So they are all here in spirit. We are a very Foreign Service family.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you all so much for all that you did, the family, as you are watching this on a computer someplace. Welcome.

Ms. CORMACK. Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Please continue.

Ms. CORMACK. Thank you. I have some wonderful neighbors and Department colleagues who are here today and I thank them warmly for their support.

Mr. Chairman, I have on several occasions in my career been fortunate to work on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans. My relationship goes back to the mid-1920s, when as European personnel officer for the U.S. Information Agency my first assignment in 1996 was to assign staff to the public diplomacy section of our Embassy in Sarajevo at the conclusion of the Dayton Accords. Those I assigned were sent on three-month tours to a city riddled with bomb craters.

While serving at Embassy Paris in 1999, I was on the press staff for the Rambouillet Peace Talks, and as director of Western European Affairs in 2010 I worked with our European partners to ensure their contributions to the still-critical stabilization missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Kosovo.

Thanks in large part to the key role played by the United States through the implementation of the Dayton Accords, Bosnia and

Herzegovina has made strides since those early days. Much remains to be done, however, and the risk of backsliding cannot be discounted.

Starting with the Dayton peace process in 1995 that ended the horrific war that claimed over 100,000 lives, the United States has invested huge amounts of political, human, and economic capital to bring peace and stability to Bosnia and Herzegovina and build its postwar institutions. We continue this work today with efforts to strengthen Bosnia and Herzegovina's democracy, foster good governance, increase respect for human rights, and promote economic prosperity.

We have a special bond with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a result of our leading role in helping to end the war and build the peace, as well as through the thousands of Bosnians who immigrated to the United States. My goal, if confirmed, will be to work with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to build a stable, multiethnic, democratic, and prosperous country. We support the aspirations of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who want to see their country join the European Union and NATO so they too can share in the political stability and economic opportunities afforded by membership in these institutions.

The United States is concerned, however, by Bosnia and Herzegovina's lack of progress on the path to EU and NATO membership. Bosnian politicians and government leaders pledged their support for advancing the country's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, but have failed to take the basic steps required to move toward membership in those institutions. Constitutional changes are urgently needed to progress towards EU membership and make the government more efficient and responsive to citizens. Defense reforms for NATO integration and the conditions for transition of the Office of the High Representative remain unmet.

As evidenced in the protests throughout the country last month, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are frustrated with their political leadership, who have done little in recent years to improve the lives of their citizens and respond to the terrible economic situation. Politicians exploit zero-sum nationalism at the expense of the country as a whole, which prevents compromise on critical reforms.

Despite these challenges, there are signs of progress and opportunities to pursue. Recent demonstrations and the formation of citizens forums are a hopeful sign of citizen engagement, though it is critical that protests remain peaceful.

Our Embassy has a long history of working with civil society. If confirmed, I will build on these efforts to work directly with citizens in support of their shared aspirations instead of what divides them. The citizens will have the opportunity to hold their leaders accountable in general elections in October, a message I intend to strongly reinforce in public and private if confirmed.

Croatia's entry into the EU and progress made by Serbia and others in the region offers the potential to motivate Bosnia and Herzegovina to resolve long-standing obstacles to the country's EU integration.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a strong bilateral partner to the United States. Their troops recently returned from a deployment alongside the Maryland National Guard in Afghanistan and the staff of our Embassy in Sarajevo and branch offices in Banja Luca and Mostar is exceptionally talented and dedicated to our mission.

If confirmed, I will continue our crucial efforts to support the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their aspirations for a peaceful and prosperous Euro-Atlantic future.

Mr. Chairman, I am so grateful to appear before this committee today and I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Cormack follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAUREEN E. CORMACK

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am deeply honored by the confidence placed in me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry.

I would like to thank this committee for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I will seek to fully merit your trust and avail myself of any opportunities to consult with you, as I know many Members of Congress have spent a great deal of time over the last two decades working to help ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina moves toward a better future.

Mr. Chairman, my husband, William Cormack, who is also a State Department employee, has been my support and partner throughout 24 years in the Foreign Service. He has just transferred to an assignment in Pakistan and is very sorry not to be here today. Our daughter, Elizabeth, is launching a new product with her colleagues at a startup in Cambridge, MA, today, our son, William, is a freshman in college, and our daughter, Margaret, is on a semester abroad, and so they are all with me in spirit. Some wonderful neighbors and Department colleagues are here and I thank them warmly for their support.

Mr. Chairman, I have on several occasions in my career been fortunate enough to work on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans. My relationship goes back to the mid-1990s, when as the European Personnel Officer for the U.S. Information Agency, my first assignment in early 1996 was to assign staff to the Public Diplomacy section of our Embassy in Sarajevo after the conclusion of the Dayton Accords. Those I assigned were sent on 3-month tours to a city still riddled with bomb craters, whose citizens still lived in great hardship. While serving at Embassy Paris in 1999, I was on the press staff for the Rambouillet Peace Talks, and as Director of Western European Affairs in 2010, I worked with our European partners to ensure their contributions to the still critical stabilization missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Kosovo.

Thanks in large part to the key role played by the United States through the implementation of the Dayton Accords, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made strides since those early days. Much more remains to be done, however, and the risk of backsliding cannot be discounted as we look at the situation today.

Starting with the Dayton peace process in 1995 that ended the horrific war that claimed over 100,000 lives, the United States has invested huge amounts of political, human, and economic capital to bring peace and stability to Bosnia and Herzegovina and build its post-war institutions. We continue this work today, with efforts to strengthen Bosnia and Herzegovina's democracy, foster good governance, increase respect for human rights, and promote economic prosperity. We have a special bond with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a result of our leading role in helping end the war and build the peace, as well as through the thousands of Bosnians who immigrated to the United States. My goal, if confirmed, will be to work with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to build a stable, multiethnic, democratic, and prosperous country. We support the aspirations of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina who want to see their country join the European Union and NATO, so they too can share in the political stability and economic opportunities afforded by membership in these institutions. Supporting these aspirations, in close cooperation with our European allies, will be one of my top priorities, if confirmed.

The United States is concerned, however, by Bosnia and Herzegovina's lack of progress on the path to EU and NATO membership. Bosnian politicians and government leaders pledge their support for advancing the country's Euro-Atlantic aspira-

tions, but have failed to take the basic steps required to move toward membership in these institutions. Constitutional changes are urgently needed to progress toward EU membership and make the government more efficient and responsive to citizens. Defense reforms required for NATO integration and the conditions for transition of the Office of the High Representative remain unmet.

As evidenced in the protests throughout the country last month, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are frustrated with their political leaders, who have done little in recent years to improve the lives of their citizens and respond to the terrible economic situation. Politicians exploit zero-sum nationalism at the expense of the country as a whole, which in turn prevents compromise on critical reforms needed to grow the economy, improve governance, and move toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

Despite these challenges, there are both signs of progress and opportunities to pursue. Recent demonstrations and the formation of citizen forums are a hopeful sign of citizen engagement, though it is critical that protests remain peaceful. The Embassy has a long history of working with civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. If confirmed, I will build on previous efforts to work directly with citizens in support of their focus on shared aspirations instead of what divides them. The citizens will have the opportunity to hold their leaders accountable in the general elections in October, a message I intend to strongly reinforce in public and in private if confirmed. Croatia's entry into the EU, and progress made by Serbia and others in the region on their EU paths, offer the potential to motivate Bosnia and Herzegovina to resolve longstanding obstacles to the country's EU path.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a strong bilateral partner to the United States. Bosnian troops recently returned from a deployment alongside the Maryland National Guard in Afghanistan, and the country remains an ISAF contributor. The staff of our Embassy in Sarajevo and branch offices in Banja Luka and Mostar is exceptionally talented and deeply dedicated to our mission.

With the strong support of Congress, U.S. assistance continues to support democratic development, good governance, rule of law, economic growth, defense reform, and interethnic reconciliation. If confirmed, I will continue our crucial efforts to support the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their aspirations for a peaceful and prosperous Euro-Atlantic future, and in their efforts to demand greater accountability from their leaders.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to appear before this committee today. I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you so much.

Mr. Selfridge, another rollcall has gone off on the Senate floor. So I apologize to you. We are going to take a brief recess and then we will return and reconvene the hearing. So the chair calls this hearing to a recess and we will return in approximately 10 minutes.

[Pause.]

Senator BARRASSO [presiding]. Mr. Selfridge, if I could just welcome you on behalf of the other members who are here and congratulate each and every one of you. We are lucky to be joined by the two Senators from Washington State, who have both come to the committee today to first make a statement of introduction—and I apologize, due to votes. Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell, thank you so much for being here. I know you have an important message to bring to the committee as well as to the Senate, and whenever you are ready, Senator Murray, I turn to you.

STATEMENT OF HON. PATTY MURRAY, U.S. SENATOR FROM WASHINGTON

Senator MURRAY. Thank you so much, Senator Barrasso, and Senator Markey as well, for chairing this hearing today. I really appreciate the opportunity to be here today with Senator Cantwell to introduce Suzie LeVine from our home State of Washington as this committee considers her nomination for Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

I know you have a lot of nominations here today, so I just wanted to make a few points about Suzie. I first got to know her well around 7 years ago and, like most people when they first meet her, I was really struck by her energy and her passion and her commitment to her community, her country, and to making the world a better place. She has deep roots in Washington State's technology and business world, was put into leadership roles in Microsoft and Expedia. She is an experienced and proven manager and has earned deep respect throughout the industry for her ability to translate and communicate complex tech issues to customers and stakeholders, as well as for her understanding of consumer needs and how technology and innovation can meet them.

Throughout her career she has demonstrated a strong ability to assess problems, ask smart and insightful questions, find solutions, and motivate and inspire her team to act. When she sees a problem that needs to be solved, she is focused, engaged, and absolutely driven to get results.

But she combines that drive and energy with a true ability to listen to people and build relationships and a deep compassion and caring for others. These skills were invaluable in the business world and she brought them with her into her work in the community as well. She cofounded Kavana, a nationally recognized Jewish community organization in Seattle. She started and chaired the advisory board for ILABS, the University of Washington's Early Learning Research Lab, and through her work on education issues at Microsoft brought people together and built partnerships to support the thousands of students from around the world in the Imagine Cup, the company's global student technology competition.

She is clearly committed to her community and her country and it is clear that this patriotic spirit and love for America is something she and her husband Eric value deeply and have passed along to their children.

Suzy is all about having a positive impact wherever she is. It is clear she wakes up every morning thinking about how she can make a difference and then spends the rest of the day going out and making that happen. She has done it in the business world, she has done that for her community and for the students that she has worked with across the globe. She has done it with a smile, a positive attitude, a relentless energy, and a true spirit of compassion.

I am very confident that she will represent our country well and bring that same energy to her role as Ambassador. With all that is going on right now in Europe and across the world, we need people representing our country abroad who take these challenges seriously, who can bring people together, and who will stand up for our interests and represent our values.

So I am very proud today to introduce her to the committee, and I am delighted to be here with my colleague Senator Cantwell as well.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Murray.

Senator Cantwell.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA CANTWELL, U.S. SENATOR FROM WASHINGTON

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Chairman Barrasso, and it is a pleasure to be here with my colleague Senator Murray and to introduce Suzy LeVine from Seattle to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for her consideration for Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Before I get started, I just want to acknowledge Suzy's family who are with her here today: her husband, Eric, and her children, Sydney and Talia, who I have gotten to meet before, and her mother Phyllis Davidson. I just want to thank them, because oftentimes these things are a responsibility that goes beyond just the Ambassador role, but the family sacrifices as well. So we want to thank them for their sacrifices in this effort and the support of Suzy.

In Seattle, as Senator Murray said, Suzy is well known as a savvy business leader and a trusted community advocate. In Washington State we are proud of our innovation economy, whether that is fuel efficient planes or medical breakthroughs or innovation in technology, and I think Suzy LeVine represents the best of Washington State. She knows how to build strong relationships, management teams with driven results, and whether it is working with Fortune 500 companies or major research institutions, she has done a lot.

At Microsoft she helped launch the Windows 95. As vice president of sales and marketing at Expedia, she was part of the senior management team that took the company public and helped it become the number one online travel company. Just recently at Microsoft, she was responsible for building a strategic partnership for the Imagine Cup, which built partnerships with major companies like Coca-Cola and Nokia. During that time she highlighted the innovation of students from 60 countries around the world.

So, like the Swiss students who designed a text-to-speech app called "Text For All," Suzy knows how important an innovation economy is, and I know that that will be very important in her role in Switzerland. That is because in Switzerland it was ranked the number one innovation economy in 2013 by the Global Index of Innovation. Switzerland is home to the largest physics lab in the world, CERN, and it has been a leader in research and innovation.

So Suzy has the right background from the tech world to hit the ground running in Switzerland and their very high tech economy. And she is a proven manager and can follow through on level policies and operations. She has also led a recognized nonprofit in Washington State and understands the important role of civil activities.

The Swiss have a system of a people's referendum. They an propose legislation and even reverse legislation approved by parliament. Suzy is familiar with the many initiatives we have in Washington State, something I know that both the chairman and Senator Barrasso know from their home States as well. So she understands what community issues are and how they need to be heard, and throughout her life she has demonstrated that she is a good, proven team-builder.

So I am happy to be here and I wish her well in this new endeavor. I am confident she will do an excellent job representing our

country in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, and I urge the committee to confirm her without delay.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Cantwell. Thank you, Senator Murray. I know you have very pressing schedules, but thank you so much for taking the time to be with us.

Senator MURRAY. Thank you.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you very much.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

We are joined also by Senator Cardin. Senator Cardin, thank you for joining us. I know you have a statement to introduce one of the nominees.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Senator Barrasso, thank you very much. I appreciate this courtesy. I first want to offer my congratulations and thanks to all the nominees that are at the dais and thank them for their service to our country, their willingness to continue to serve our country, and we thank your families also because we know this is a joint sacrifice.

Mr. Chairman, I am particularly proud of the Marylander that is on this panel, Dr. Deborah L. Birx of Maryland. Dr. Birx is a long-time Marylander and a world-renowned global health leader and scientist studying HIV/AIDS. Maryland is home to the very best medical researchers in the world. So I am pleased that President Obama has nominated Baltimore-born Dr. Deborah Birx to such an essential post.

Dr. Birx is a model Marylander. She is a pioneer in HIV/AIDS research who has dedicated her life's work to public service. Dr. Birx moved to Silver Spring, MD, in 1979 to begin training at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, then in D.C.—it is now in Maryland—and completed a joint fellowship with NIH at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

For nearly 30 years since the beginning of the epidemic, Dr. Birx has dedicated her professional career to understanding and changing the course of HIV/AIDS both in the United States and throughout the world. Dr. Birx has been on the front lines of the HIV/AIDS epidemic before even we knew what the disease was. While serving at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Dr. Birx led its work on HIV/AIDS, including HIV vaccine research in domestic and global settings. Dr. Birx was part of the cadre of researchers that were instrumental in helping us first understand the disease.

Throughout the 1990s and through 2005, she served as the Director of the U.S. Military HIV/AIDS Research Program in the Department of Defense and received the Legion of Merit Award for her innovation, management, and leadership in HIV/AIDS research and program implementation. She rose to the rank of colonel, bringing together the Army, Navy, and Air Force in a new model of cooperation, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the U.S. military's HIV/AIDS efforts through the inter- and intra-agency collaboration.

While in the Army, Dr. Birx served as Director of the U.S. Military HIV/AIDS Research Program and as Director of the Division of Retrovirology at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research from

1996 to 2005. Having served on Active Duty in the U.S. Army for 29 years, Dr. Birx retired in 2008 with the rank of colonel. Dr. Birx earned the prestigious U.S. Meritorious Service Medal for her leadership in refining, validating, and standardizing immunity testing in HIV-infected patients. She helped lead one of the most influential HIV vaccine trials in history, known as RV–144 or the Thai Trial, which provided the first supporting evidence of any vaccine being effective in lowering the risk of contracting HIV. She was awarded another U.S. Meritorious Service Medal for that effort.

Since 2005, as the Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Global HIV/AIDS, she led and managed its President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR, global effort. She has published over 200 HIV-related publications on domestic and global epidemiology, treatment, vaccine development, and public health programs, policy implementation, and health systems strengthening, in addition to serving on over a dozen scientific and advisory boards.

She received her medical degree from Hershey School of Medicine, Pennsylvania State University, trained in internal medicine and basic clinical immunology at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Institutes of Health.

Today we can envision an HIV-free generation within our lifetime. Dr. Birx is one of the trailblazers who has dedicated her life to making this vision a reality. Her support for PEPFAR's investments in programs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV has paid great dividends. PEPFAR has averted more than one million pediatric HIV infections thanks to researchers like Dr. Birx and her colleagues.

So, Mr. Chairman, before there was PEPFAR and the Global Fund Dr. Birx was leading the charge against this disease. I can think of no more qualified person to be our Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of the United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally than Dr. Deborah Birx.

Let me just say in concluding remarks, we all get the opportunity every once in a while to introduce people from our State that have been nominated for a particular post. I do not think I have ever introduced a person who is more qualified, who has done more in her lifetime, than Dr. Birx. We are very proud of her work and I am proud that she has been nominated to this important post. [Applause.]

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you very much, Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. They are all Marylanders behind me.

Senator BARRASSO. I do not blame them.

Thank you, Senator Cardin. I know you have a busy and pressing schedule. So thanks so much for joining us, and you are excused if that works for you. Thank you.

Now back to Mr. Selfridge, who has been nominated to be Chief of Protocol. Your flexibility in allowing us to go to three other Senators shows that you are already very qualified for the position.

STATEMENT OF PETER A. SELFRIDGE, OF MINNESOTA, NOMINATED TO BE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, AND TO HAVE THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE

Mr. SELFRIDGE. My resume is not as impressive.

I am, needless to say, very humbled by the company I share on both sides of this table. Ranking Member Barrasso, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. It is a tremendous honor for me to appear before this distinguished body as President Obama's nominee for Chief of Protocol of the United States. I deeply appreciate the confidence of both President Obama and Secretary Kerry in nominating me for this position.

If you would allow me, I would also like to recognize my wonderfully supportive wife, Parita, my cousin, Ami, and my long-time high school friends who have joined me here today.

Senator BARRASSO. Could I ask them to please stand and be recognized.

[They stand.] [Applause.]

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Mr. SELFRIDGE. Thank you, sir.

My story is not unlike those of many in this room today. I am a descendant of immigrants and a proud son of the Midwest. My mother hailed from Germany, where she was born and raised in the shadow of World War II. My father is a second generation Chicagoland native of Scottish and Irish heritage. My wife's parents hail from Gujarat, India, and came to America, as did my mother and grandparents decades prior, in search of a dream that they will gratefully tell you has been fulfilled many times over, thanks to the opportunities afforded to them by this great country.

My father taught me at an early age that good etiquette and decorum are not only useful tools for navigating society, but a reflection of the person wielding them. Treating others as you would be treated is a virtue for everyday life and is one of the guiding principles of protocol.

I have had the honor of serving as the White House's lead logistical representative on official travel overseas and have had the privilege of working with some of the best and brightest American ambassadors and diplomats at our missions and consulates abroad. I have interacted with many of the very same protocol officers and foreign government officials who, if confirmed, I would hope to work closely with as Chief of Protocol.

Ranking Member Barrasso, as you and the members of this esteemed committee know well, the office of the Chief of Protocol plans an important role in advancing the foreign policy goals of the United States. The person selected for this post serves as the President's representative to visiting foreign leaders and their delegations, as well as the members of the diplomatic corps based in the United States. Not only is this a great honor, it also provides remarkable opportunities to create an environment for successful diplomacy, to promote cross-cultural exchanges, and to build new bridges of understanding.

I believe that we are obliged to use every diplomatic tool at our disposal to broaden our bilateral relationships as well as to set the stage where diplomacy can be made to work. The Office of Protocol provides many such tools to our government and its representatives. The team at Blair House works tirelessly to ensure that foreign dignitaries are properly accommodated as well as provided for and protected during their stays. The Ceremonials Division plans and executes official events hosted by the Secretary of State. This

dedicated staff, who I have had the privilege to meet, meticulously provides for the participation of the diplomatic corps in special events and public events, including joint sessions of Congress, inaugurations, funerals, and other ceremonies.

The Diplomatic Affairs Division diligently oversees the accreditation of foreign ambassadors, diplomatic agents, and consular officials, thousands of individuals posted throughout the United States. The Diplomatic Partnership Division works to strengthen and deepen our government and our Nation's relationships with the diplomatic corps through programming designed to promote new partnerships, enhance mutual understanding between our countries and their own.

Protocol's Visits Division manages the logistical planning behind hundreds of visits of foreign dignitaries to the United States, as well as all official engagements by President Obama, Vice President Biden, Secretary Kerry, and other officials overseas. This team also helps to plan and execute U.S.-hosted summits and other multilateral events.

Protocol also assists with the selection of gifts given by the President, the Vice President, First Lady, Secretary of State in their engagements with foreign leaders.

The work of the Office of Protocol provides a unique opportunity to showcase the very best America has to offer, not only as hosts, but as true partners in diplomacy.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Selfridge follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER A. SELFRIDGE

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. It is a tremendous honor for me to appear before this distinguished body as President Obama's nominee for Chief of Protocol of the United States. I deeply appreciate the confidences of the President and Secretary Kerry in nominating me for this position.

My story is not unlike those of many in this room today. I am a descendant of immigrants and a proud son of the Midwest. I was born in Illinois, raised in Minnesota, and educated in Iowa. My mother hailed from Germany where she was born and raised in the shadow of World War II; my father is a second generation Chicagoland native of Scottish and Irish heritage. My wife's parents hail from Gujrat, India, and came to America, as did my mother and grandparents decades prior, in search of a dream that they will gratefully tell you has been fulfilled many times over thanks to opportunities offered by this great country.

My father taught me at an early age that good etiquette and decorum are not only useful tools for navigating society, but a reflection of the person wielding them. Treating others as you would be treated is a virtue for everyday life, and it is one of the guiding principles of Protocol.

As Director of Advance and Operations for the President and in a similar role for the Vice President before that, I have had the honor of serving as the White House's lead logistical representative on official travel overseas. I have had the privilege of working with some of the best and brightest American ambassadors and diplomats at our missions and consulates abroad and interacted with many of the very same protocol officers and foreign government officials who, if confirmed, I hope to work closely with as Chief of Protocol.

Mr. Chairman, as you and the members of this esteemed committee know well, the Office of the Chief of Protocol plays an important role in advancing the foreign policy goals of the United States. The person selected for this post serves as the President's representative to visiting foreign leaders and their delegations, as well as the members of the foreign Diplomatic Corps and consular communities based in the United States. Not only is this a great honor, it also provides remarkable

opportunities to create an environment for successful diplomacy, to promote cross-cultural exchanges, and to build new bridges of understanding with leaders, governments, and citizens throughout the world.

I believe that we are obligated to use every diplomatic tool at our disposal to broaden our bilateral relationships, as well as to set the stage where diplomacy can be made to work. The Office of Protocol provides many such tools to our government and its representatives. The talented people who work in Protocol serve on the front lines of diplomatic engagement, and, if confirmed, it would be a great privilege to join them in carrying out this critical mission.

The team at Blair House—the President's Guest House—works tirelessly to ensure that foreign dignitaries are properly accommodated, as well as provided for and protected during their stay. What's more, it's a living museum that houses a considerable collection of treasured art and artifacts—many of which bear witness to pivotal moments in our Nation's history.

The Ceremonials division plans and executes official events hosted by the Secretary of State. This dedicated staff meticulously provides for the participation of the Diplomatic Corps in special events and official public functions including Joint Sessions of Congress, inaugurations, funerals, and other ceremonies, large and small.

The Diplomatic Affairs division diligently oversees the accreditation of foreign ambassadors, diplomatic agents, and consular officers—thousands of individuals posted throughout the United States.

And the Diplomatic Partnerships Division works to strengthen and deepen our government's—our Nation's—relationships with the Diplomatic Corps. As you know, there are more than 180 foreign ambassadors sent to the United States to represent their country's interests. This expert team engages those diplomats through a wide array of programming designed to foster good will, promote new partnerships, and enhance mutual understanding between their countries and our own.

Protocol's Visits division manages the logistical planning behind hundreds of visits by foreign dignitaries to the United States, as well as all official engagements with President Obama, Vice President Biden, Secretary Kerry, and other officials. Through their important work, the Chief of Protocol extends the first hand that welcomes these chiefs of state and heads of government to our country. This team also helps to plan and execute U.S.-hosted summits and other multilateral events, as well as supports Presidential delegations in their travel abroad.

Protocol also assists with the selection of gifts given by the President, Vice President, First Lady, and Secretary of State in their engagements with foreign leaders.

The work of the Office of Protocol provides a unique opportunity to showcase the very best America has to offer, not only as hosts, but as true partners in diplomacy.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today, and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

Senator MARKEY [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Selfridge, very much. We thank the other Senators who have come to introduce our witnesses.

The chair will recognize himself and Iam going to begin with you, Dr. Birx. Recent antihomosexuality laws enacted in Uganda and Nigeria compromise the ability of PEPFAR programs to effectively reach the LGBT population with public health services and possibly put health workers at risk of retribution or imprisonment. For example, the new law in Uganda calls on individuals to report acts of homosexuality, but it is not clear what that provision means for doctor-patient confidentiality.

What strategies do you think that we should put in place to maintain and sustain effective HIV programming in these difficult and challenging environments as they unfold?

Dr. BIRX. Thank you, Senator Markey, for that question because, as with everyone in this room, we are deeply disheartened by the changes in both Uganda and Nigeria. It represents an entire step backward to a place where many of us were 35 years ago when this disease was first discovered. To move backward at a time when we should be moving forward and controlling the epidemic is con-

cerning to all of us, and I think you have seen the wonderful statements made by President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and a series of Senators and House members who have spoken out against this specific legislation.

We are very concerned about the public health impact of such of these bills because having it has an impact on services that people can no longer access because of their fear of retribution will be a huge step back for all of this epidemic control. It is particularly concerning to me for Uganda because Uganda was one of the few countries that had early control of its epidemic and then had over the last few years a real reversion and an increase in their incidence. At a time when they need to really concentrate every effort on controlling this epidemic, to pass this kind of legislation that will again cause the epidemic to expand and have people not access services is extraordinarily concerning to all of us in the field.

Senator MARKEY. Let me follow up by asking you: In your testimony you covered the unprecedented results that PEPFAR has achieved so far. They bear repeating. PEPFAR has supported antiretroviral treatment for more than 6.7 million people, cared for 17 million, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children, and last year announced 1 million babies have been born HIV-free, 1 million babies born HIV-free.

Beyond the measured results, PEPFAR transformed the thinking of what is possible for nations from AIDS futility to an AIDS-free future through leadership, science, and sound investments.

Your testimony has highlighted your strategic goals and priorities for PEPFAR. What priority results should this committee hold you responsible for, this administration responsible for, and on what time line? What are your goals?

Dr. BIRX. Thank you, Senator. Reading through the legislation and the reauthorizations from this committee really shows the knowledge that the committee has about this disease. The reporting requirements have evolved with the epidemic. The last act had very precise reporting requirements, but importantly also asked the office to look very carefully at prevalence and incidence in each of these countries and to measure clear impact.

We are working very hard to measure clear impact and that should be a goal that the committee should hold the office, the coordinator's office, responsible for, to really show country-by-country impact on this epidemic. Working backward from that, you absolutely have to have the treatment, the male circumcision, the counseling and testing, and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, which are all covered in the reporting requirements to this committee.

So you ought to hold me responsible to the roadmap that was laid out well a year and a half ago and to all of the elements that we know are responsible and the tools that we need to control this epidemic.

Senator MARKEY. So how will you use science and evaluation with regard to costs and efficiency to drive these targets and results?

Dr. BIRX. Over the last couple of years at CDC, we have integrated the costing analyses with site-level monitoring, so that we can actually analyze each site for its performance, how much it

costs to achieve that performance, the actual quality of the services delivered, and also measuring the impact on the community as far as controlling the HIV epidemic. This has been really important, to have that level of detail, and that is the level of detail we will need to bring to the office in order to ensure that we are having the impact that we are investing in.

Senator MARKEY. What is the role of prevention, specifically combination HIV prevention that brings together structural, behavioral, and biomedical interventions in achieving those results?

Dr. BIRX. Thank you for that question. That has been an important component of the office for the last 3 years. Ambassador Goosby, recognizing the importance of this particular approach, has launched two large combination prevention intervention trials that will actually look at this question in a very rigorous scientific methodology to ensure that we can answer the very question that you just asked.

These questions have been answered in very double-blinded, controlled trials, but when you take that to actual community implementation there is always the question, does it work as well? So these particular trials are actually launching services at the community level and then looking at their impact, and we will be able to tell you the components that have the largest impact on decreasing incidence.

Senator MARKEY. Great. Thank you so much for that great answer.

Let me ask you, Ms. Cormack, if you could just briefly summarize how optimistic you are about making progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina? Do you have some sense that progress can be made?

Ms. CORMACK. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that question. I think that optimism is an integral component of diplomacy. So yes, I always go out with an optimistic approach, but also a realistic approach. The United States, as I noted in my testimony, has invested significant time and effort in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina emerge from a very difficult war and rebuild the country, rebuild the institutions of governance, and start to build the civil society.

It is a period in time when we see citizens there starting to stand up and hold their leaders accountable, to take into their own hands some of the processes of democracy. I hope as I go out—I am a public diplomacy officer by training—to work directly with the people and really try to understand their concerns and see how we support them going forward into what we hope will be a Euro-Atlantic future.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you so much.

Ms. CORMACK. Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Let me turn now and recognize the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Kaine—oh, I am sorry. Senator Barrasso.

Senator KAINE. I defer to my colleague.

Senator MARKEY. Let me turn and recognize the ranking member of the full committee, Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Well, thank you. I enjoyed our conversation on the earlier panel today.

Senator MARKEY. Senator Kaine and I are now in 8-minute seats up here.

Senator CORKER. Very good.

Senator MARKEY. It is a carryover joke from the earlier period.

Senator CORKER. I am going to have mine for about a minute and a half. So I thank you for this.

I thank all of you for what you are doing and getting ready to do. I just want to ask one question to Dr. Birx if I could. I am going to give a little preface for it. She is probably expecting this question. I want to thank you for being here today and I appreciated the meeting and discussion that we had regarding the PEPFAR program in my office.

One of the many laudable achievements accomplished by the PEPFAR program is the fact that 6.7 million people have been put on treatment by the end of the year 2013. The prioritization of treatment and care has been a hallmark of the PEPFAR program, as you know well. Focusing on the goals of both the implementing partners and U.S.-funded initiatives, in the PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act we included a provision that has been part of the program since the beginning, the requirement that at least 50 percent of PEPFAR dollars must be spent on treatment and care programs. However, because the GAO report pointed out in a report in March 2013 that the administration has been excluding a significant portion of the PEPFAR funding from this 50-percent calculation, we clarified the language, and I know you and I talked about that. The language now states that the calculation must be made from all amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to carry out the provisions of Section 104[a] of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

So the question, after that preface. Senator Coburn and I wrote a letter to the administration asking a number of questions about the history of the treatment and care provision and we received their response shortly after our meeting. Today I would like to ask you about one of the specific answers we received in that response.

We asked the administration if they are planning to modify current policies in order to comply with the new language in the Stewardship Act, and they responded that they will consider it. My question to you, Dr. Birx: If confirmed, will you ensure that the agency conforms to this clarification in law regarding the treatment and care calculation? Will you work in your new position to change any necessary policies or guidance to make sure it is implemented in compliance with the law?

Dr. BIRX. Yes, sir, we will be compliant with the as-written in the legislation.

Senator CORKER. Thank you so much. I look forward to your confirmation.

Thank you for letting me do that on the record. If you want to talk about energy policy or anything else——

[Laughter.]

Senator MARKEY. I thank the ranking member for coming. Thank you, sir.

The gentleman from—the Senator from Virginia, Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. He called me "gentleman," but then he corrected it to "Senator."

Senator MARKEY. As a Congressman you are called "gentleman" and I was in the House for 37 years, calling people the "gen-

tleman." But in the Senate you just call people "Senator." They are never "gentleman" over here in the Senate.

Senator KAINE. Very true.

Senator MARKEY. The Senator from Virginia.

Senator KAINE. Dr. Birx, I think I walked in as you were answering a question that the chair posed to you. But I think I want to come back to it. The legislative activity in Uganda is very, very troubling. I use that as an example for the possibility of other such action anywhere in the world that would stereotype or stigmatize folks because of their sexual orientation. Very possible that such legislation is something that we could—we will see, continue to see, in other parts of the world. That kind of legislation can promote an attitude, frankly, that will be counter to your mission of trying to educate, inform, eradicate and treat HIV/AIDS.

I imagine there are other parts of the U.S. Government, human rights offices and things, that are charged with dealing with those challenges when they come up. But I would also think part of your portfolio could be education and using the tools at your disposal to try to give people, give policymakers, the information they need so that they do not go down the path of discriminatory legislation. If you could talk just a little bit about what you see your role as in that important educational effort, I would appreciate it.

Dr. BIRX. Thank you, Senator. There are many gentlemen in the South, including from Virginia. So thank you.

This is an extraordinary time where we are making incredible progress. So to have this as a clear setback, and I think we all hear and share that this is an incredible setback to the people to be able to access services. If people cannot come forward for services, they cannot be tested. They will not know their status. They cannot receive lifesaving treatment and, more importantly, they cannot lower their viral load to a nontransmittable state.

So it is in all countries' interest to do all of their program, policies, and legal framework to encourage access to all public health services. I share your concern. I know the President shares your concern. Many Senators share your concern and have been very outspoken on this issue, as well as Secretary Kerry. I know that Secretary Kerry and the White House are working on this right now, and the Ambassador from Uganda is coming to Washington for this specific discussion during a chief of missions meeting, and we are working—I hope to work very closely.

But you are right, it is not just Uganda and Nigeria. There are similar laws on the books, not quite as restrictive and not quite as violent as Uganda's, in many of our countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and this legal framework has to be addressed in the future to have full successful control of the epidemic.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Dr. Birx.

Ms. LeVine, congratulations on your nomination. You will succeed, I am confident, a dear friend of mine, Ambassador Don Beyer, who did a wonderful job.

Senator Markey and I are strong supporters of immigration reform. The question I wanted to ask you is about immigration, particularly your kind of interpretation—explain to us what you can about the Swiss vote on February 9, that was a narrow backing of a referendum to put immigration caps on immigration from EU

countries. Why did the Swiss populace back that? What can we learn from it?

Ms. LEVINE. Thank you very much for that question, Senator Kaine. I know that this is near and dear to your heart, also from your background in spending time in other parts of the world. The referendum itself is an internal Swiss matter and in terms of the implications to the United States or other parts of the world we do not yet know what those implications are and the ramifications of that referendum.

But I think that what we can take away from it is it is sort of a fascinating demonstration of Swiss direct democracy. They have an interplay of direct and representative democracy with which Western States, like Washingtonians and Massachusetts, have this interplay between having initiatives and representative democracy. I think what we take away from that is an opportunity to work more with the Swiss people.

I am moved by Peter's testimony earlier with regards to his being an immigrant and coming from an immigrant background. I think the American story about immigration is an incredible one. I would suspect that 95 percent of the people in this room have come here some time within the past four generations. When I look at people like a gentleman named Hadi Partovi, who worked at Microsoft for a very long time, came to the United States as a young man, as a young boy in fact, from Iran. He succeeded wildly in technology and now he has created a nonprofit called Code.org to help people become ready for the 22nd century, never mind the 21st century.

We have an extraordinary story to tell, and if confirmed I would love the opportunity to tell that story. I think that that is what we as Americans can do in articulating and in reaching out. I also think that, if confirmed, I would love the opportunity to work with organizations that bridge the gap between different communities and continue some of the fantastic work that Ambassador Beyer had done, especially around gender equality and reaching out to women and technology, and to get more women into technology, of which I am one.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ms. LeVine. Wonderful answer.

Ms. Cormack, talk a little bit about the dynamics about the possible joining of NATO by Bosnia?

Ms. CORMACK. Thank you very much, Senator Kaine. Bosnia has pursued the track of joining NATO. It is, along with their accession to the European Union, something that polls show the majority of the population supports. As so much at the moment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they have not been able to take the specific steps needed to move firmly onto the track of a map, the process for NATO.

In the case of NATO, that is simply registering defense properties that have been identified by the ministry of defense as essential. These are unmovable defense properties that the ministry believes that they need for their functions. It is we consider a step that is fairly basic, and if confirmed I look forward to working with the Bosnians to try to help them move in that direction.

Senator KAINE. You do not read the failure of the Bosnians to take those steps yet as any equivocation about wanting to pursue

NATO? You think this is a kind of a practical matter that we should be able to address productively?

Ms. CORMACK. I think there are different perspectives among the population. Some people are probably less enthusiastic. Others are more so. But I do believe that, together with our NATO partners, we can try to move in this direction.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, with your permission—I am right at the end—could I ask Mr. Selfridge a question?

Senator MARKEY. Yes.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Selfridge, your experience in directing advance and operations at the White House to me seems like the perfect background for this protocol job, because I understand a little bit about that position and I think it is pretty much the job description for protocol officer almost. But then there is the issue of challenging international sort of diplomatic perspectives and the fact that we sometimes see things differently than even our friends.

I just was curious about this. There have been some recent controversies relating to criminal charges against foreign diplomats in the United States and they have made headlines. These are things you hope do not happen, but they happen—episodes related to Medicaid fraud, 49 New York-based Russian diplomats and spouses allegedly obtaining Medicaid benefits; and then the very controversial and widely publicized incident in December of 2013 about the arrest of an Indian deputy consul general in New York City on charges related to household employment.

To your knowledge, to what extent in your position, Chief of Protocol, are you engaged in addressing or helping other officials within the U.S. Government figure out a way to address problems like that in a sensitive way?

Mr. SELFRIDGE. Thank you, Senator, for that question. This is an issue of great importance to the Department, as you know, and to Secretary Kerry. I think protocol's best weapon in these circumstances is communication. While we do not directly cover the visa process, we nonetheless can inject ourselves into that process by educating the workers themselves and the missions, foreign governments and their missions here in the United States.

I think that is the most important step. We believe, the Department believes, that it has been very effective as far as getting information that was not previously available to these workers out, including hot lines, other actionable items that these workers can take.

I think, as far as I guess post-infraction, the Office of Protocol acts as a coordinator, so to speak. They make sure the mission is aware of the infraction and encourage investigations of their own to correct them, and they can make recommendations in that regard. They also cooperate very closely with law enforcement to make sure that the missions and their diplomats and staff follow the law. Regardless of immunity, we expect all diplomats serving here to abide by U.S. law.

So in the case of Dr. Khobragade, we believe that the system functioned as it should. It is unfortunate that it had to get to the point that it did. But the case is still pending. Should she return to the United States, she would face charges. So again, this is

something, if confirmed, that I would have a great staff working on these issues and I would intend to make that a top priority.

Senator KAINE. Thank you to each of you, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, gentlemen. I thank the Senator.

The chair recognizes the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to all of you. I think some of the ground that I wanted to cover has already been covered you my colleagues. Ms. Cormack, great to see you here. I enjoyed our time together.

Ms. CORMACK. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. I wish you well in your new endeavor. I wanted to maybe ask you a broader issue about the challenges that confront the Balkans today and how the division of labor should be allocated between a historic United States leadership role in the Balkans and an emerging role for the EU in trying to moderate some of these disputes. There is all sorts of issues, but the three that sort of emerge at the top of the list over and over again are the question you will be confronted regarding Bosnian governance, the issue over the Macedonian name dispute with Greece, and then the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo, which is obviously getting better with the new agreement, but still has lingering issues.

So when I talk to friends in the Balkans they are welcoming of Lady Ashton's vigor on many of these issues, but are looking for a return to U.S. leadership on these questions. What do you see as the future of the European Union's ability to moderate some of these disputes and how does that dovetail with what I hope is a renaissance of American interest in the region in the coming years?

Ms. CORMACK. Thank you very much, Senator Murphy. I also enjoyed our conversation, so thank you.

The United States commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina remains strong. We also strongly support Bosnia's accession process to the European Union and NATO. We partner very closely with our European allies on the ground. There is an excellent European Union senior representative in Sarajevo. We work very closely with their Enlargement Commissioner. We really feel that we both play an important role. As you note, the United States has a very historic role in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our commitment is something that I certainly, if confirmed, intend to fully maintain. I look forward to working closely with the people of the country and really finding out how we can work together to help them move to a Euro-Atlantic future.

As we see countries like Croatia join the European Union, as Serbia and other countries move in that direction, Bosnia is in a region where they risk being isolated if they do not also follow that path. So it is the European Union that needs to have the lead in ensuring that Bosnia moves in the institutional sense in the direction that they need to if they are going to join Europe. But the United States certainly intends to be a key partner in that process.

Senator MURPHY. It certainly appears that the carrots that Europe has offered so far has not been sufficient to change the political dynamics on the ground in Bosnia. So I wonder whether there is a different set of incentives or a renewed road map that may be necessary in order to stimulate the domestic reforms necessary. I

do not expect you to have a fulsome critique of what that road map should be, but it appears to me that we should know by now that whatever we have used is maybe insufficient and it is going to take a new set of criteria, both sticks and carrots I guess, to get them to change their calculus.

Ms. CORMACK. Thank you, Senator. If confirmed I certainly would look forward to working with our European partners to have that conversation, because you are right, we are very disappointed, honestly, that Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been able to take the first basic steps to move toward the EU and NATO.

I do think that the demonstrations that we have seen in Bosnia and Herzegovina in recent weeks show an increasing frustration from the population with their leaders. These were economic demonstrations, people wanting jobs, wanting proper salaries, pensions, things that are very basic and that would certainly accrue to them if they start making the changes necessary to move down the European path.

So figuring out what that is, what would put the political will in place to get that process going, is something that I would look forward to working on.

Senator MURPHY. Great. Well, I think you are going to be a fantastic ambassador. I really appreciate your service.

Ms. LeVine, we had a chance to talk as well and I am glad that Senator Kaine covered with you the topic that we spent some time discussing, which is the rather disturbing anti-immigration trends, not just in Switzerland but throughout the continent. As we sort of think about the future path for Ukraine, we of course envision them joining the EU. But that prospect is dimmed in some respect by the fact that there is going to be an EU that may be even more Euro-skeptic than before and countries like Switzerland, which are having a little bit harder time rapping their hands around the concept of free flow of peoples. So I am glad to hear your commitment to work on that issue.

I wanted to just ask you about the pending free trade agreement with the European Union and just talk to you about the role that the Swiss will play and the role which your Embassy will play in trying to talk about ultimately the benefits that flow to all of Europe if we are able to ink a free trade agreement with the continent.

Ms. LEVINE. Well, to be clear—thank you very much for that question, Senator Murphy. I also enjoyed our time yesterday, albeit brief. I look forward to more time to discuss some of these matters if confirmed.

With respect to TTIP, Switzerland is not in the EU. They are in the European Free Trade Area. So while they are not part of the negotiations themselves, I think that the role that the embassy plays in the State Department plays is to continue to keep them updated on the progress of those conversations and identify those areas that would impact trade with Switzerland because of both the role that Switzerland plays in trade with Europe and of course as a top 20 export market for the United States and as a generator of over 400,000 American jobs, Swiss companies care deeply about the impact of TTIP.

So I think it is incumbent upon the State Department and the embassy team, and if confirmed myself as Ambassador I will make it a priority to continue to keep the Swiss Government updated and to facilitate in whatever way is necessary the USTR as they continue to negotiate this so that they keep the Swiss informed and involved.

Senator MURPHY. I appreciate that. There are all sorts of non-EU countries who have partnerships in various ways, shapes, and forms with the EU that are going to benefit from this free trade agreement. Switzerland will benefit from this agreement. Other countries on the edges of the EU will no doubt benefit. And we want to the extent possible to have them partners with us in trying to sell this, both internally and globally, as we move forward. So I appreciate your focus on this.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to ask some questions.

Senator MARKEY. If the Senator has any other questions——

Senator MURPHY. I am good.

Senator MARKEY. Beautiful.

Let me just ask you, Ms. LeVine, one quick question. Switzerland is shutting down its five nuclear power plants. It is going to decommission them and they are moving more toward a renewable energy future. Do you as a businesswoman see any opportunities for the United States in partnership with Switzerland to be engaging in business transactions that can help both Switzerland and the United States in that area?

Ms. LEVINE. Senator Markey, I especially appreciate that question given your history with the environment and being an incredible steward for renewable energy development in the United States and jobs related to renewable energy. So thank you very much for that question.

The short answer is yes. In addition to that, I think that there are a few areas related to this. Now, the Swiss have been leaders in clean tech funding and in fact clean tech from my understanding comprises about—clean tech jobs comprise about 5 percent of the jobs in Switzerland. There are over 160,000 people who are employed in that area. They are incredible funders, including sustainable asset management, green tech. There are emerald technology ventures.

If confirmed, Senator, I look forward to applying my skills in building partnerships and in understanding and reaching out to entities—previously Senator Cantwell talked about work that I did when I was at Microsoft engaging Coca-Cola, engaging Nokia, to work with our students, or when I was at Expedia I worked with tourism boards to engage them with travel agencies, to increase travel. I would apply those same skills and the success that I have had in that domain to understand the respective interests and opportunities from among the clean tech funders in Switzerland and then, similarly, reach out to innovators, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders in the United States to gauge what are their needs, and to try to do that matchmaking, and with that to make sure that it is sustainable and mutually beneficial.

Senator MARKEY. I think you are the perfect person, honestly, to capture that——

Ms. LEVINE. Thank you.

Senator MARKEY [continuing]. Economic opportunity for both countries. It is going to happen. This revolution is occurring. Switzerland believes that the planet is warming, that there are no emergency rooms for planets, and that we have to engage in preventative care, and Switzerland is a country that accepts that. They have the Alps. They can see what is happening. So we thank you for that.

What I am going to do here is to ask each of you, in reverse order, to give us the 1-minute, tell us the 1-minute thing you would want us to remember about what it is that you hope to achieve for our country in the positions that you have been nominated to fill. Give us your vision of what it is that you hope to provide for our country in this incredible opportunity that you are each being given. We will go in reverse order from the opening statements, so we will begin with you, Mr. Selfridge.

Mr. SELFRIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a great question. I am thinking out loud right now because——

Senator MARKEY. And you would like to go last. [Laughter.]

Mr. SELFRIDGE. I am used to that order, yes, sir.

I am going to be thinking out loud a little bit here because I think the first thought that popped into my head is the Chief of Protocol, while somewhat—while very visible, I guess, when it comes to foreign diplomacy, is nonetheless supposed to I guess be seen and not heard. So I would like to be remembered as an excellent steward of the office.

That being said, I think there is always room, to borrow Secretary Kerry's line, for modernization and innovation, and I hope to look for those opportunities in the office, to perhaps be the Chief of Protocol, if confirmed, that invigorates the office in that respect. I also want to be known as a steward of the taxpayer dollars. I think this is one office that does quite a bit with very little.

I see my time is up. I will leave it at that and thank you again, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Cormack.

Ms. CORMACK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As I go out, if confirmed, to Bosnia and Herzegovina, I have three overarching goals. I have heard from everyone in the U.S. interagency that I have one of the best missions they have worked with, and I look forward to taking the leadership role of a wonderful group of people and really hoping to inspire and empower them to do wonderful work.

Secondly, I hope to use my public diplomacy skills and reach out far more extensively to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to, first of all, listen and really understand their concerns, and then find out how the United States can support their aspirations.

Finally, really support the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina as they move toward a Euro-Atlantic future. I do believe that their future, multi-ethnic, democratic, and prosperous, should be rooted in Euro-Atlantic institutions.

So thank you so much.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you so much.

Ms. LeVine.

Ms. LEVINE. Chairman Markey, if confirmed I look forward to applying my skills, my experience, and my passion to increasing our economic ties, especially as measured by foreign direct investment and exports. I look forward to expanding our collaborations, existing and new, whether it is through the OSCE, whether it is through the Global Counterterrorism Forum, or whether it is creating new ones, public-private partnerships like ones recently announced between the Gates Foundation and the Swiss Government.

I also look forward to increasing awareness and appreciation, especially given what we discussed before in terms of direct democracy and outreach to the Swiss and Liechtenstein people, especially the youth and the students, and especially in the technology community.

Senator, I hope that I have been able to demonstrate today and through my submissions that, while nonlinear, my wide array of experiences, from working at Microsoft, Expedia, even at NASA, to volunteering and starting up nonprofits, and also to being a mom, equip me to serve our country proudly, humbly, and well.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Ms. Levine.

Ms. Birx.

Dr. BIRX. Those were all wonderful answers. I think I feel a lot of pressure to continue the amazing work that has been done in the field, and building on that coalition of activists and their insights, civil society and their insights, and linking that with the scientific innovations that we have found to be most helpful, and continue to take them to scale.

In addition, making it clear that the interagency process is the reason why PEPFAR has been successful. It was a brilliant idea to harness the whole of government. It made it clear that no one agency could do it alone. It has been amazingly successful in that we have learned from each other, yet still built on our individual agency strengths. The control of the epidemic that we have today is due to that.

Then finally, be able to demonstrate that we can definitively control the epidemic, and finding that country or those countries that we can do that in will be the absolute goal of the next 3 years.

Senator MARKEY. I thank you, Ms. Birx.

Well, we have four supremely qualified candidates for your positions. We thank each of you for your willingness to serve our country. I think you each have a background that fits the job that you have been asked to serve in perfectly, and we are very proud to have you as Americans willing to serve our country. I wish a speedy confirmation for each of you and I will try to help in any way that I can in order to accomplish that goal. So we thank you for that.

For the other members who were not able to attend, I just make the public announcement that they will have until the close of business tomorrow to submit questions to our witnesses, because we hope to be able to move forward quickly on these nominations.

So with that and the thanks of our country, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF DR. DEBORAH BIRX TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Burma is a PEPFAR bilateral country. In late February 2014, Doctors without Borders (MSF) was ejected from Rakhine State by the Government of Burma, which falsely alleged that MSF was stoking ethnic tensions. MSF is reportedly one of the biggest providers of HIV/AIDS drugs in Burma and also treats thousands of tuberculosis patients.

Question. How will MSF's ejection from Burma impact the health of the HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis patients they were treating in the country?

Answer. MSF Burma, represented by MSF–Holland (MSF–H) and MSF–Switzerland, has been working in Burma for over 20 years, providing basic and maternal health care and treatment for HIV and tuberculosis (TB). The current situation only applies to activities conducted by MSF–Holland. MSF–Switzerland has not been impacted by the recent developments in Rakhine.

MSF–H has significant operations in Rangoon and Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States. Currently, MSF–H is providing life-saving antiretroviral therapy to over 30,000 HIV positive patients and tuberculosis treatment to over 3,000 patients.

On February 27, 2014, MSF–H received a written order from the Government of Burma to cease all operations in the country pending renewal of its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the government. This led to a closure of all MSF–H clinics on February 28. On February 28, the Government of Burma allowed MSF–H to resume activities in all areas except Rakhine State. Seven hundred patients on antiretroviral therapy at MSF–H sites in Rakhine State have been impacted by the closure.

Question. What possible impacts will MSF's ejection from Burma have on the spread of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in the country?

Answer. At the end of 2013, MSF was providing antiretroviral therapy to 31,276 patients across the country. This represents nearly half of the total number of people on antiretroviral therapy in Burma. In addition to antiretroviral drugs, MSF is also supporting additional key TB/HIV services, which is a critical given that the HIV rate among new tuberculosis patients is estimated to be nearly 10 percent.

Because MSF's HIV/AIDS and TB activities in most of the country were resumed after a single day of suspension, no significant impacts are expected on the spread of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in Burma nationally. The Ministry of Health has assured continuity of treatment services for those patients in Rakhine State. It will be critical for the MOH to continue these services in order to ensure the current gains in combating HIV/AIDS and TB in Rakhine State are not lost.

Question. What actions has the U.S. Government taken to encourage the Government of Burma to allow MSF back into the country?

Answer. MSF clinics continue to operate in many parts of Burma. The current suspension affects the MSF–Holland clinics in Rakine State. U.S. Embassy Rangoon remains in regular contact with the Government of Burma and with local and international humanitarian assistance providers regarding the situation on the ground. Ambassador Derek Mitchell personally has been in frequent and active communication with both Government of Burma senior officials and MSF–H to encourage continued private dialogue in negotiating a way forward to ensure no gap in necessary humanitarian services and to work toward a restoration of MSF–Holland services in Rakhine State. As part of this effort, on the day of MSF's suspension, Ambassador Mitchell highlighted for Burmese officials from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Border Affairs, the humanitarian consequences of MSF–H not being allowed to continue provision of its life-saving services. Ambassador Mitchell also encouraged the GOB to continue dialogue with MSF toward ensuring unfettered access for humanitarian agencies to people in need. USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah joined with Ambassador Mitchell in expressing strong concern about the events of February 28 to government ministers with the Burmese President's Office. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman also raised the issue with senior Burmese officials during her March 6–7 visit to Burma.

U.S. Embassy Rangoon continues to engage daily with MSF–H and with the Government of Burma on this issue, urging the government to abide by international standards on humanitarian access and provision of services.

Question. How much PEPFAR assistance goes to Burma through MSF? Are there other PEPFAR partner organizations that can adequately treat the 30,000 HIV/AIDS patients that were under MSF's care?

Answer. PEPFAR does not provide any direct financial assistance to MSF, nor does it support direct treatment service delivery in Burma through any other partners. MSF is currently providing treatment services to over half of all patients currently enrolled on antiretroviral therapy in Burma, and there are no other organizations that can absorb 30,000 patients at this time.

Question. How much Global Fund assistance goes to Burma through MSF–H? Are there other Global Fund partner organizations that can adequately treat the 3,000 tuberculosis patients that were under MSF's care?

Answer. MSF–H received $3.4 million USD in 2013 from the Global Fund, and is budgeted to receive $4.1 million in 2014. As MSF activities have resumed in most of the country, the U.S. Government is optimistic that nearly all of the 3,000 tuberculosis patients on treatment will continue to receive services through MSF sites. For the patients on tuberculosis treatment at currently shuttered MSF sites in Rakhine State, the Ministry of Health has made a commitment to provide treatment to these patients until MSF is allowed to resume activities. Health agencies working in Rakhine State, including other Global Fund partner organizations, do not have the capacity to assume the treatment burden for MSF's caseload.

RESPONSES OF DR. DEBORAH BIRX TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has enjoyed broad, bipartisan support since its launch in 2003. Last year, this bipartisan tradition continued with the PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act, which passed unanimously in the Senate and by a voice vote in the House. The program's support stems largely from the fact that Congress has a clear picture of what Americans get for their contributions by setting ambitious bilateral targets and goals specifically for PEPFAR and measuring progress toward those targets. However, this year the administration did not announce any new bilateral treatment or prevention goals for PEPFAR.

The PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act requires the administration to report on bilateral annual targets for treatment and prevention programs specific to PEPFAR.

♦ (a). How important do you think bilateral targets are to the performance, accountability, and focus of PEPFAR?

Answer. Annual bilateral country targets are a core marker for measuring performance and implementing partner accountability for contributing to impactful HIV prevention and treatment programs. Annual targets are used to build implementing partner budgets, and allow for the PEPFAR country team to plan and collaborate with the host government and the Global Fund on what can be achieved in core prevention and treatment programs in a given year, and how these targets contribute to increased levels of treatment and prevention program coverage.

PEPFAR's targets for prevention, care, and treatment have been a critical factor in enabling both Congress and the American people to understand how their investments have been saving lives in countries around the world. In addition to these annual targets, PEPFAR works jointly with local and international partners to define measurable commitments that contribute to creating an AIDS-free generation, including commitments around legal reform, supply chain improvements, and increased domestic contributions for HIV/AIDS—all areas of work that ensure that treatment and care programs maximize their impact and meet or exceed any bilateral targets that have been set.

PEPFAR will continue, per P.L. 113–56, the PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act, to use bilateral targets as an essential component of its efforts to save lives and increase efficiencies. Fighting the AIDS pandemic will require global solidarity, and PEPFAR is only one of several donors working with partner countries on this epidemic. The act focuses not only on the bilateral targets established by PEPFAR in each partner country, but also the national targets established by the country itself, to which PEPFAR will contribute.

♦ (b). How will you ensure that the bilateral target requirements in the Stewardship Act are met?

Answer. On a semiannual and annual basis the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) requires all implementing agencies to report core prevention

and treatment achievements drawn from an established set of program indicators. At the semiannual check-in point, the intent is to identify those countries (and implementing partners within countries) that are not on track to reach annual targets established, determine the problems, and develop a plan of corrective action. When warranted, technical support is deployed to country teams from headquarters to provide further assistance. Close monitoring of country achievements to targets and corrected action has enabled PEPFAR to meet annual and multiyear targets in prevention, care, and treatment.

♦ (c). When will this year's bilateral PEPFAR targets be released publicly?

Answer. PEPFAR is committed to staying in regular communication with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) and other congressional committees of jurisdiction on progress toward setting FY 2014 bilateral PEPFAR targets. The FY 2014 PEPFAR Country Operational Plans (COPs), the source of 2014 targets by implementing partner by country, will be reviewed in April/May and and finalized in the summer of 2014. In September/October, the 2014 COPs and targets will be made available to Congress and will also be posted publicly on the PEPFAR.gov Web site after a process of redaction has taken place to ensure that procurement sensitive information has been removed. The 2014 COP will be implemented in FY 2015. Currently PEPFAR teams are implementing COP 2013, and all 2013 COPs have been posted publicly.

In addition, in December 2013, the President called for the new U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, once confirmed, to convene our partners to develop joint HIV prevention and treatment goals to ensure we are making progress against this epidemic together. We will engage SFRC closely in our processes toward setting these global targets.

Question. PEPFAR has begun to transition from an emergency response to a sustainable, long-term program, including shifting toward greater country responsibility. While it is important for host countries to assume greater leadership in combating their HIV/AIDS epidemic, I am concerned by accounts that transitions to greater country ownership are driven by factors other than scientific data and country capacity. How those transitions are planned and executed is critically important and can involve significant risk to the more than $40 billion we have invested as well as a tremendous risk to the people who depend on these programs for life and health.

What lessons have we learned from the transition process so far, and how do you intend to ensure that transitions to greater country ownership continue to increase the impact of core interventions, as well as protect our investments and the patients on the ground who are counting on us to get this right?

Answer. Greater country ownership is key to ensuring that the PEPFAR investments, systems, and capacities that have been established in the program to date continue in the long term. Through our partnerships, we have saved millions of lives, and our paramount responsibility is ensuring that those to whom we provide treatment and care continue to receive treatment and care during our transitions.

Under PEPFAR we have learned that political leadership, local management and technical capabilities, supportive public health institutions and communities, and mutual accountability are factors that affect the degree to which countries are ready to assume responsibility for the prevention, treatment, and care of people dependent on services that the United States has been providing. With our partner countries, we need to share the common goal of using scientific data with adequate financing to invest in proven interventions and key populations to achieve continued progress toward an AIDS-free generation.

In countries where PEPFAR funds have been used to provide support for direct service delivery in prevention, care, and treatment programs, PEPFAR teams have delivered transition successes in conjunction with their country counterparts. Health care workers previously trained and funded by PEPFAR are now funded by the government. Delivery of clinical services has transitioned from international NGOs to the Ministry of Health, local NGOs, and faith-based local providers. National procurement and delivery of commodities are funded by domestic resources. In all cases, these successes have been possible due to strong partnerships and sustained because of strong political will and commitment. In addition, across multiple countries, PEPFAR has registered successful transfers of responsibilities for the care of key populations—groups that may have difficulties accessing health and support services—to local civil society.

Across former focus countries, district- and provincial-level government and nongovernmental entities have assumed the role of direct service provider, enabling efficiencies and maintaining or improving performance. We are monitoring the use and

impact of evidenced-based scientific interventions through our newly launched quality strategy. To optimize the impact of investments, expand population coverage, and retain more patients in care, PEPFAR is developing, in partnership with host countries, strategies for strengthening the quality of clinical services with a focus on improving linkage, engagement, and retention in care. These strategies are rooted in sound international standards and locally relevant strategies for quality management so that the best possible results are achieved from PEPFAR and domestic investments.

PEPFAR is also monitoring the readiness for and impact of transitions through a series of joint assessments with countries that will be taking on additional responsibility. These assessments focus on identifying what additional capacities are required for local partners—governments, research, development, and academic institutions, NGOs, the private sector, and civil society networks and communities—to lead, manage, and monitor internal and external efforts to address HIV/AIDS in country. Part of this process includes supporting a country's ability to drive the process to identify, source, and manage ongoing capacity-building efforts as a sustained government-led effort to target change, facilitated by capacity-building frameworks and indicators developed by PEPFAR in conjunction with our partners.

Our health partnership with South Africa is a model we are learning from, and continue to evolve with our partners in other countries, for transition to greater country ownership. Throughout the evolution of all of our partnerships, we have never lost sight of our shared goals: to enable more people in need of HIV/AIDS services to receive them, and ensure that those who already receive these services continue doing so. Strong partnerships with many diverse stakeholders are vital to achieving these goals. Where we face challenges, we work jointly to address them. For example, as some patients move from one facility to another, they can get lost in the system. Preventing this "loss to follow up" is a challenge in any health system, including within the United States. PEPFAR continues to work closely with our South African partners to support the rollout of monitoring systems to ensure patients are properly tracked over time and retained in care.

As PEPFAR moves from an emergency to a sustainability response, we are extremely cognizant of the challenges that partner nations face as we make this transition. Every country is situated at a different point on the continuum of country ownership, with a different range of needs and strengths. Advancing sustainability in a way that is tailored to each specific circumstance will require time and careful planning. PEPFAR is committed to ensuring that the eventual transfer of program management, implementation, and ownership to the host country occurs smoothly and at a pace appropriate to the local context. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to country ownership. The eventual transition of PEPFAR program activities to host countries will occur in a step-wise manner, at a pace appropriate to their local context. In all countries, PEPFAR's goal is to support the country in achieving an AIDS-free generation, increasing the impact of core interventions, as well as protecting our investments and the patients on the ground.

Question. Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) programming is intended to help achieve progress toward prevention, treatment, and care objectives, but exactly how they achieve it might not be as clear as it is with spending that is specific to a particular program area. Additionally, because the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator has not counted HSS as part of the denominator when calculating how to meet the treatment and care spending requirement in law, it would seem that it is somehow treated or viewed differently than other program focus areas.

♦ (a). What is the total annual funding level for HSS in PEPFAR by year, and how was that funding level determined?

Answer.

Budget Code—OHSS

2005 COP—Total Planned Amount	445,395,169
2006 COP—Total Planned Amount	58,972,580
2007 COP—Total Planned Amount	103,779,504
2008 COP–OPU Full JUL 2011—Total Planned Amount	152,471,123
2009 COP–OPU Full AUG 2012—Total Planned Amount	291,362,960
2010 COP–OPU Full AUG 2013—Total Planned Amount	337,581,718
2011 COP–OPU Full AUG 2013—Total Planned Amount	368,945,328
2012 COP–OPU Full AUG 2013—Total Planned Amount	364,601,625
2013 COP—Total Planned Amount	296,386,434

Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) funding levels as part of the annual Country Operational Plan (COP). Above are the most recent data for the Health Systems Strengthening budget code (OHSS) for COPs, including reprogramming. The collec-

tive, annual amount of HSS is variable and is dependent on the maturity of the program and specific HSS requirements in order to ensure strong results in prevention, care, and treatment programs. HSS-core activities include: support for human resources for health (HRH), supply chain management and improvement, infrastructure improvements, policy development that allows for optimal program delivery, economic strengthening initiatives for vulnerable populations, laboratory support and support for the development of strategic information systems and use of data. Each PEPFAR country team will prioritize those HSS efforts that are necessary for successful core program delivery.

In FY 2013, OHSS represented about 8 percent of the most recent COP total budget. The FY 2014 level is not included as the COPS are not fully approved.

♦ (b). Is HSS programming in PEPFAR required to demonstrate clear, direct contributions toward prevention, treatment or care targets, and if so, how?

Answer. HSS spending is designed to support delivery of prevention, treatment and care activities and achievement of targets set under those budget codes. The COP 2014 Guidance, OHSS budget code narrative, states: "The HSS strategy and program plan should clearly demonstrate how its priority interventions flow from and support the prevention, care, and treatment pillars of the overall PEPFAR program." The full COP 2014 guidance can be found here: http://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/217765.pdf.

The FY 2014 Technical Considerations provide supporting documentation to link HSS programming to the delivery of prevention, treatment and care services. For example, the Technical Considerations illustrate how teams can map HSS activities to support three PEPFAR goals; (1) increased use of HIV/AIDS services by key populations; (2) option B+/pediatric treatment scale-up; and (3) antiretroviral treatment scale-up. The mapping provides specific examples of HSS investments that support these goals in several types of health system components: governance/leadership; human resources for health; supply chain management, laboratory systems, strategic information, and finance. The FY 2014 Technical Considerations for health systems strengthening can be found here: http://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/217761.pdf.

HSS is required to be linked to advancing population coverage of key prevention, care and treatment programs. For example, support for redesign of supply chains ensures that commodities are available at all levels of the health care delivery system and drug stock-outs do not occur, meaning that people are enrolled in treatment programs, receive TB treatment, are able to get an HIV test, and can undergo male circumcision—all core HIV interventions. Additionally, investments in building partner country supply chains results in improvements in the efficiency of drug supply chains and best price commodity procurements, which means available budgets provide health services to a larger portion of the population.

Some HSS interventions are multiyear investments, but ultimately allow for improved achievements. For example, policy work on the use of point-of-care CD4 testing in low volume regions allows for people to be enrolled in treatment programs without waiting for the results of a CD4 test sent to a regional lab. Investments in electronic systems allow governments to tabulate health care worker availability and improve deployment, health care worker performance and retention strategies. These investments deliver results over time. While their impact is not captured as a direct result on service delivery performance metrics, without these types of investments, care and treatment programs are poorly resourced and struggle to perform.

♦ (c). Does HSS programming have specific targets to meet or metrics by which its performance can be assessed?

Answer. Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) programming is governed by metrics that relate to several of the health system components mentioned above. For example, country teams must meet specific targets through FY 2015 regarding the number of new health care workers. In addition, policy changes, as an outcome of investments in governance and leadership, are tracked.

HSS metrics and target setting—while supporting the achievement of service delivery targets—are therefore, of a fundamentally different nature than those captured under delivery of prevention, care, and treatment services. Unlike investments in prevention, care, and treatment services, "activities that fall into the HSS budget code are generally those that are implemented above the service delivery point (site) level" (COP 2014 guidance).

Under PEPFAR's Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) set of indicators, performance of HSS investments in leadership/governance, human resources for health (HRH) and supply chain are currently tracked at the headquarters level

through the following (investments in laboratory systems and strategic information are primarily tracked through different budget codes):

- Measuring progress in developing and implementing policies that directly support PEPFAR prevention, care, and treatment activities (one indicator: LGF—PTT);
- Production and distribution of new health care workers (two indicators: HRH—PRE; HRH—HRIS);
- Strengthening of HIV and other commodities supply chains (two indicators: SC—TRAIN; SC—STOCK).

Question. Recently, PEPFAR has been sharply criticized for its lack of transparency for a lack of publically accessible and usable information, and that the program has actually made less data available over time.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to reverse this trend and increase the transparency and usability of PEPFAR data?

Answer. As I said in my testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week, if confirmed, I will be fully committed to ensuring the PEPFAR program is transparent and accountable, and will be fully compliant with all the requirements of P.L. 113–56, the PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act.

Since 2007, PEPFAR has made comprehensive financial, program, and partner-level data available on its Web site (pepfar.gov) through annual publication of Country Operational Plans (COPs). All published COPs describe in detail the planned activities for each of PEPFAR's implementing partners, including the scope of their program activities and the associated funding. PEPFAR also posts a quarterly report on its Web site that provides a financial picture of the PEPFAR program, including the available appropriations, obligations, and outlays for each PEPFAR implementing agency by country.

Moving forward, as part of its implementation of P.L. 113–56, PEPFAR will increase the transparency, granularity, and usability of its data. PEPFAR will publish all nonprocurement sensitive information clearly and transparently in an open web-based format, and expand the quality and quantity of information available in its annual reports, including available financial and performance data. If confirmed, I will keep Congress well-apprised of efforts to increase data transparency and usability while avoiding inadvertently creating an overly burdensome reporting process for partner countries and U.S. Government teams in the field, which are also charged with producing lifesaving program results.

The Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) is also working with the State Department's Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance on the ForeignAssistance.gov Web site, which is driving implementation of a whole of U.S. Government effort to align with the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Data that OGAC and PEPFAR implementing agencies provide for publication on ForeignAssistance.gov contribute to overall U.S. Government efforts to increase data transparency.

NOMINATIONS OF PAIGE ALEXANDER, ALICE WELLS, THOMAS KELLY III, AND CASSANDRA BUTTS

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Paige Eve Alexander, of Virginia, to be Assistant Administrator, Bureau for the Middle East, United States Agency for International Development

Alice G. Wells, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Thomas P. Kelly III, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti

Cassandra Q. Butts, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:33 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine presiding.

Present: Senators Kaine, Risch, and Rubio.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. I am going to call this hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to order. Today we have four nominees for consideration by the committee in significant positions, doing important work for the United States with allies to our Nation, vital to the United States interests. I thank each of these witnesses for their service thus far and the service I am confident they will continue to render.

The committee always encourages our panelists to introduce family members and I see we have got good family member representation in the audience as well, which I appreciate.

Senator Risch is in the middle of a Republican committee meeting, a caucus meeting, that is running a bit late, but is likely to be here shortly. I have his permission to go ahead and begin the hearing. After I do introductions, I will ask each of you to give your opening comments and then begin with questions. When Senator Risch arrives, I will ask him to make any opening comments should he choose. But I welcome all to the hearing.

Today we have before us Paige Eve Alexander of Virginia, to be Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for the Middle East for USAID. Welcome, Ms. Alexander.

In addition, we have Alice Wells, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan—very happy to have you—Thomas P. Kelly, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti; and Cassandra Q. Butts, of the District of Columbia, to be the Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

What I will ask you to do is to make your opening statements in the order that I introduced you, and after you do I will move into questions, and again we will have Senator Risch make his comments should he choose and questions, as well as offer that opportunity to other committee members.

I will say before I ask you to make comments that one of the real joys of being on the Foreign Relations Committee is traveling around the world and seeing what fantastic small "a" ambassadors we have. The Ambassadors, capital "A," do a wonderful job, but I am impressed, and I know you are as well, by the degree to which all Americans who serve abroad are great ambassadors for the country.

I recently returned from a visit to Israel, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Egypt, and any time I travel I try to sit down with junior Foreign Service officers, usually those who are in their first or second tour, often working in the consul office as consular officials. And talking to these young men and women, some of whom are serving far away from spouses or loved ones, some of whom are serving in security situations where, as in Lebanon, they are required to live on the compound—they get 6 hours a week for personal time off the compound, only 6 hours a week. They live in Lebanon in a compound where they are reminded every day with the memorial at the compound of members of America's consular community who were killed in bombings in Lebanon in the 1980s and other instances.

We know, because we are still living in the shadow of the horrible experience in Libya, of the sacrifices that are made by those on consular service. I think Americans instinctively understand those sacrifices that are made by members of our military, and I think we demonstrate our appreciation for those sacrifices. But we have others who serve abroad who make us proud, who make sacrifices as well, whether they are security sacrifices or living far apart from family under difficult circumstances.

You seek to join those ranks. Many of you have been working in this field already. But we owe you and your colleagues a debt of gratitude for the work that you do to represent America, to represent our country as ambassadors abroad. So for that I thank you.

With that, I now would like to ask Ms. Alexander to begin.

STATEMENT OF HON. PAIGE EVE ALEXANDER, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Chairman Kaine. I am honored to be here today as the nominee for the Assistant Administrator for

the Middle East Bureau at USAID. It is a privilege to appear before this committee again and I appreciate and am grateful for the confidence that President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Administrator Shah have placed in me.

I want to recognize the leadership and the dedication of Deputy Assistant Administrator Alina Romanowski, who has been serving as Acting Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for the last 12 months. I would especially like to thank my family, friends, and professional colleagues, whose support and encouragement have allowed me to pursue this quest. In particular, I would like to thank my husband, Steve Grand, and my children, Rachel, Carly, and Josh. They all know the importance of public service and I am here today with their full support, which means the world to me.

For the past 3 years, I have had the honor and the privilege of serving as the Assistant Administrator for the Europe and Eurasia Bureau at AID. I have forged working relationships throughout the interagency, and I would expect this strong collaboration, which also spans the length of Pennsylvania Avenue, to continue as an integral part of the effective approach that AID would plan to take in the Middle East Bureau and moving these countries from a relationship of assistance to one of cooperation and partnership.

Four years ago, President Obama set forth a new version of a results-driven USAID that would lead the world in development. The agency has risen to this challenge, pioneering new models of development that bring greater emphasis on innovation and results. Our current national security strategy recognizes that development not only is a moral imperative, but is a strategic and economic one.

In perhaps no other region is this more important than the Middle East and North Africa. Today's USAID's Middle East Bureau advances national and strategic interests and programs in 11 countries and territories, with an annual budget of over $1.3 billion. The Middle East region poses many challenges, both politically and developmentally, and also presents enormous opportunities to showcase what has been done right through American assistance.

The challenges that the countries face in the region are complex: weak democratic institutions and processes, high unemployment, underperforming economies, and water scarcity. For the past 3 years, calls for transitions and change have reverberated across the region. In this time of transition, the United States must remain as an engaged partner with the governments and the citizens of the region to provide support for economic and political reforms and to promote security and stability.

AID's programs work to address the perennial barriers that include stagnant economic growth, high unemployment, and challenges in the education system, all of which affect the region's ability to compete in a global economy. To prepare the region's young people for employment USAID programs provide job training and workforce skills development for growing economic sectors. In Tunisia, USAID's work with the communications-technology sector has already generated over 2,600 jobs. USAID has supported the establishment of nine Palestinian startups and increased ICT exports by $1.4 million.

USAID's projects in democracy, rights and governance in the Middle East aim to support transitions by promoting resilient

democratic societies and strengthening weak institutions and processes, whether it is through direct support for elections assistance in places like Libya and Iraq or USAID's assistance with Yemeni women in asserting their rights throughout the political process to program, help, and empower the average citizen to hold their government accountable.

The crisis in Syria has become a regional challenge of daunting proportions. AID has responded to the needs of the most vulnerable populations both within Syria and to address refugee needs in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq—I am sorry, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt. Supporting neighboring countries as they cope with both the short- and the long-term effects of the Syria crisis must continue to be a top priority.

In practice, development is a continuum. It extends from humanitarian relief through recovery and reconstruction to investments in building institutions and delivering economic health and education services for the citizens of the country. Aid can begin at any point in that continuum and it can make short-term interventions or long-term investments depending on the needs. Yet, while it is on a continuum, it is not necessarily a linear process. Development can have challenges and threats to backsliding and these still persist.

We must nurture critically minded citizens, involve youth, and find opportunities that include the use of new technologies, and hold governments accountable. In this region, AID's development objectives are clear. The agency's mandate is to promote open and transparent governments that are accountable to their citizens, foster private sector development, and strengthen civil society organizations.

I am keenly aware of how technical assistance providers and grassroots organizations are important partners in implementing U.S. development and diplomacy objectives. Sound approaches to development must permit rethinking, reforming, and recalibrating our work in response to changing environments.

Thank you again for giving me this opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Alexander follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAIGE EVE ALEXANDER

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to be here today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Administrator of the Middle East Bureau at the United States Agency for International Development. It is a privilege to appear before this committee again and I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama, Administrator Shah, and Secretary Kerry have placed in me.

I also want to recognize Deputy Assistant Administrator Alina Romanowski, who has been serving as Acting Assistant Administrator of USAID's Middle East Bureau for over a year. Her vast knowledge and dedication, acquired across a more than 30-year career in the United States Government reflect the best qualities of the Career Senior Executive Service.

I would especially like to thank my family, friends, and professional colleagues whose support and encouragement have allowed me to pursue this opportunity. In particular, I would like to recognize my husband and best friend, Steve Grand, and our children, Rachel, Carly, and Josh. They all know the importance of public service and I am here today with their full support, which means the world to me.

The experience I have gained over a more than 25-year career in international development, including nearly 11 years within USAID, as well in posts at private

foundations, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations, has prepared me well for the new responsibilities I will take on, if confirmed.

For the past 3 years, I have had the honor and privilege of serving as USAID's Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia. In this role, I have come to appreciate and respect the importance of interagency cooperation and collaboration. I have forged effective working relationships throughout, and would expect this strong interagency collaboration, which will also span the length of Pennsylvania Avenue, to continue to be an integral part of how I would effectively approach USAID's work to move countries from assistance to cooperation and partnership.

Indeed, my current position has given me an even greater appreciation for the critical interplay between Congress and the executive branch. I have benefited greatly from the advice and counsel I have received from members of this committee and others in the House and Senate. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to seek your guidance and counsel on the critical challenges facing us in the Middle East.

Four years ago, President Obama set forth a new vision of a results-driven USAID that would lead the world in development. The Agency has since risen to this challenge, pioneering a new model of development that brings a greater emphasis on partnerships, innovation, and results. We are guided in these efforts by a new mission statement: we partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly with the dedicated men and women of USAID to continue to fulfill this goal.

Although these goals are not new, they reflect a unique moment in development today when exciting opportunities are emerging to change what is possible. In a time of fiscal restraint, we are applying the new model to seize this moment and reach more people, save more lives, and leverage more private investment than ever before—delivering results for the American people and those in greatest need around the world.

President Obama's national security strategy recognizes development not only as a moral imperative, but as a strategic and economic one. In perhaps no other region is that more relevant than the Middle East and North Africa.

The challenges that the countries of the region face are complex—weak democratic institutions and processes, high unemployment, underperforming economies, and water scarcity. For the past 3 years, calls for transition and change have reverberated across the region. In this time of transition, the United States must remain an engaged partner with the governments and people of the region to provide support for economic and political reforms and to promote security and stability in the region.

USAID's Middle East Bureau advances U.S. national and strategic interests with programs in 11 countries and territories with an annual budget of over $1.3 billion. If confirmed, I will provide strong oversight of USAID's programs in the Middle East, which respond to the needs and aspirations of the people in the region by facilitating more inclusive economic growth, supporting democratic processes, strengthening civil society, and addressing other key challenges, such as the impact of the Syria crisis.

Throughout the Middle East and North Africa, tepid or stagnant economic growth and high unemployment among young people remain major challenges. Twenty-four percent of young people are unemployed—the highest rate of youth unemployment in the world. Education systems fail to prepare young people for the workforce, reducing the region's ability to compete in a global economy. USAID programs work to address these barriers.

The Agency's programs target private sector growth through economic empowerment programs that provide small and medium enterprises training in business skills, startup seed capital, and regional networking opportunities. For Egypt and Tunisia, USAID is managing grants to Enterprise Funds that will provide investment in the Egyptian and Tunisian economies and will seek to leverage the involvement of other financial institutions and global investors. In Libya, USAID has expanded the business potential of women microentrepreneurs and women-owned small- and medium-scale enterprises.

USAID is also working with regional governments and local partners to create business-enabling environments that reduce barriers to starting a business and support them once they are operational. For instance, in several places, USAID is investing in "one-stop shops." In Egypt these "shops" have reduced the time it takes to register a business from over a week to about an hour, and in Iraq the registration period has gone from 6 months to less than 2 months.

To prepare the region's young people for employment, USAID programs provide job training and workforce skills development for growing economic sectors. In Tunisia, USAID is encouraging job creation in the high-impact information communica-

tions technology (ICT) sector. USAID's work with this sector has already generated over 2,600 new jobs. In the West Bank, USAID has supported the establishment of nine Palestinian startups and increased ICT exports by $1.4 million. In Iraq, USAID has assisted 5,300 Iraqi jobseekers to find positions in over 550 Iraqi businesses, by providing training modules that bridge skills gaps and supporting an online jobs portal in partnership with Microsoft.

USAID's education programs link directly to USAID's economic growth work, as keeping young people in school is key to regional economic growth and stability. The Agency is partnering with ministries of education and schools to implement early grade reading programs that will increase literacy rates, encourage retention, and expand girls' access to education. In Morocco, our early grade reading program aims to increase the recruitment of female teachers, improve the retention rate, and provide opportunities outside of school to promote reading by engaging with and supporting community-based groups. In Egypt, USAID has supported advancements in early grade reading and secondary science, technology, and math skills. Our support is helping improve the reading fluency and comprehension of approximately 4.5 million Egyptian elementary students by introducing new teaching approaches and training teachers.

USAID projects in democracy, rights and governance in the Middle East aim to support democratic transitions by promoting resilient democratic societies and strengthening weak institutions and processes. USAID projects in Libya and Iraq provide elections assistance to their respective elections commissions, helping with elections operations, voter registration, campaign finance, electoral dispute resolution, and the drafting of regulations and procedures. In February 2014, the Government of Iraq committed funds to support the USAID-sponsored Legal Clinic Network which has provided assistance on over 14,000 legal cases on behalf of vulnerable individuals such as female-headed households, internally displaced persons, and ethnic and religious minorities and educated over 26,000 Iraqis on their legal rights. USAID has supported Yemeni women in asserting their rights throughout the political process, and thanks in part to USAID's efforts, a 30-percent female participation quota was established for the National Dialogue Conference. USAID is also providing support for international elections observers and domestic monitoring for Tunisia's historic Presidential and parliamentary elections, which should take place at the end of this year.

The Middle East is also facing substantial natural resource challenges, encompassing 12 of the world's 15 most water-scarce countries. Further compounding the problem, the region has the world's second-highest population growth rate and excessive water mismanagement, increasing competition for a scarce resource in a region. In Jordan, the influx of Syrians into local communities has increased the pressure on limited and already strained water availability. A USAID project has set up a revolving credit fund so families can access loans to install cisterns for harvesting rainwater. Repayment rates are high and half of the borrowers are women. This effort has helped tens of thousands of people secure access to water. In Yemen, USAID has established 16 water catchment sites throughout the country, which collect approximately 2 million liters of water per year.

The crisis in Syria has become a regional challenge of daunting proportions, with 6.5 million people displaced inside Syria, 9.3 million in need of humanitarian assistance, and over 2.6 million refugees spilling over into neighboring countries. USAID is providing more than $669 million to help over 4.2 million people inside Syria and more than $232 million to help Syrian refugees in neighboring countries. USAID has responded to the needs of the most vulnerable in all 14 Syrian governorates and Syrian refugees in five neighboring countries—Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt. In addition to humanitarian aid, our response to the conflict in Syria is comprehensive—combining humanitarian, transitional, and development interventions to address the needs of conflict-affected Syrians and host communities both within Syria, and regionally. Supporting neighboring countries as they cope with both the short- and long-term effects of the Syria crisis must continue to be a top priority.

Of the 600,000 refugees in Jordan, nearly 480,000 Syrian refugees live within Jordanian host communities, rather than in camps, and these host communities face tremendous challenges. USAID has provided critical assistance to these communities to alleviate increased demand for services, including hospital renovations and water infrastructure repair. A USAID community engagement project is in place to help alleviate tensions in host communities by promoting dialogue and reducing community stressors including trash removal, and limited small-scale infrastructure projects to reduce traffic and create jobs. In Lebanon, where Syrians now make up more than 25 percent of the total population, USAID assistance focuses on water and education as well as a value-chain development program to advance small-scale agriculture. Since January 2013, USAID has rehabilitated thousands of Lebanese-

owned residential units for refugees, increased access to water or other municipal services for over 125,000 people and reached nearly 100,000 children and at-risk youth through supplemental education activities.

As is well understood in the literature and in practice, development is a continuum. It extends from humanitarian relief through recovery and reconstruction, to investments in building sustainable institutions delivering economic, health, and education services for the citizens of that country. Aid can begin at any point on that continuum and can make short-term interventions or invest in the long term, depending on the needs. While development is on a continuum, it is not necessarily a linear process. Major development challenges and the threat of backsliding still persist. We must nurture critically minded citizens, engage youth, and find opportunities that include the use of new technologies to hold governments accountable. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to focus and concentrate USAID assistance in areas where it can achieve maximum results that align with our strategic objectives.

In this region, USAID's development objectives are clear. The Agency's mandate is to promote open and transparent governments that are accountable to their citizens, foster private sector development, and strengthen civil society organizations capable of investing in the current and future lives of the people they represent, during this critical period of change. The United States continued engagement with the people of the region is critical for lasting growth, prosperity, and peace.

I am keenly aware of how technical assistance providers and grassroots organizations are important partners in implementing U.S. development and diplomacy objectives. Sound approaches to development must permit rethinking, reforming, and recalibrating our work in response to changing environments. If confirmed, I will continue to focus on finding scalable solutions that can affect development globally.

The Middle East region poses many challenges, both politically and developmentally, and also presents enormous opportunities to showcase what has been done right through American assistance.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you might have.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you.

Ms. Wells.

STATEMENT OF ALICE G. WELLS, OF WASHINGTON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

Ms. WELLS. Chairman Kaine, it is a great honor to appear before you today and I am grateful and humbled to be the President's nominee to represent the United States in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I would like to thank Secretary Kerry for the confidence he has shown me.

I would not be here without the support of my husband and until recently a fellow Foreign Service officer, Kurt Amend, and our daughters Helen, Isabel, and Phoebe. Our service in Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, and Russia was a family affair. It was an adventure and a privilege, but not without its share of sacrifices, and I am grateful to my husband and our girls for being enthusiastic participants in this journey.

My brother, Tom Wells, my sister-in-law, Paula, and their children, Nicholas and Elizabeth, are also here today. Tom's military service in Operation Desert Storm is one chapter in my family's long engagement with the Middle East.

Finally, my thanks to President Eisenhower, whose 1958 Middle East Task Force brought my father, then Army Captain Wes Wells, and later my mother, Heidi Wells, to Lebanon.

To my parents, I owe much more than the accident of my birth in Beirut, but the extraordinary example of their public service, their curiosity, and their service to their country abroad.

As President Obama has stated, the United States has very few friends, partners, and allies around the world that have been as steadfast and reliable as His Majesty King Abdullah, as well as the people of Jordan. If confirmed I will work to ensure that our assistance, our policies, and our diplomatic platform further Jordan's ability to withstand the Syrian crisis, to counter terrorism, and to promote regional security, to serve as an example for political and economic modernization, and to advance peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman, the historic partnership between the United States and Jordan has never been more important as we jointly work to achieve peace in the Middle East and to promote a democratic transition in Syria. With Jordan coping with more than 600,000 Syrian refugees, the loss of export routes through Syria, a steep decline in tourism, and an energy bill that rose to 21 percent of its GDP, the United States has a strategic interest in ensuring that the Hashemite Kingdom can meet its international humanitarian obligations without jeopardizing its own economic and political stability.

At the same time, our multifaceted partnership demonstrates to the people of Jordan and the region the benefits of choosing the path of moderation, of political and economic modernization, of peace with one's neighbors.

With strong bipartisan support from Congress, the United States is providing Jordan with a broad package of aid to bolster services strained by the refugee influx. United States support to Jordan topped $1 billion in both 2012 and 2013 and our bilateral assistance alone will exceed $1 billion in fiscal year 2014. This has been supplemented by more than $268 million in humanitarian aid to international organizations assisting Syrian refugees in Jordan, as well as a total of $2.25 billion in loan guarantees to help Jordan access international capital.

If confirmed, I will advocate continued flexibility in responding to the evolving crisis. The United States has a deep stake in Jordan's successful modernization and in supporting King Abdullah's embrace of political and economic reform as a strategic choice. To date, working with the International Monetary Fund, Jordan is successfully balancing competing demands, including the imperative of structural reforms that replace blanket subsidies with a targeted social safety net to alleviate popular discontent over fuel and electricity price hikes.

We also support King Abdullah's efforts to respond for greater transparency and dignity, including the establishment of a National Integrity Commission and an Independent Electoral Commission. As friends of Jordan, we should encourage the full implementation of these home-grown initiatives.

With the finalization of a second memorandum of understanding on bilateral assistance, substantial and predictable U.S. support can help Jordan transform the Syrian crisis into an opportunity. I am committed to reinforcing the collaborative and consultative approach to assisting Jordan as it charts this difficult path.

Finally, if confirmed I will dedicate myself to building and sustaining a diplomatic team that can advance these ambitious objectives while working to ensure the safety and security of U.S. officials and the American community.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Wells follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALICE G. WELLS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee. It is a great honor, as well as the dream of every Foreign Service officer, to appear before you, and today I am grateful and humbled to be the President's nominee to represent the United States in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I would like to particularly thank Secretary Kerry for the confidence he has shown me.

I would not be here without the support of my husband and, until recently, fellow Foreign Service officer, Kurt Amend, and our daughters, Helen, Isabel, and Phoebe. Our service in Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, and Russia was a family affair, a great adventure, and a privilege, but not without its share of sacrifices. I am grateful to my husband and our girls for being enthusiastic participants in this Foreign Service journey. My brother, Tom Wells, my sister-in-law, Paula, and their children, Nicholas and Elizabeth, are also here today. Tom's military service to his country, including in Operation Desert Storm, is one chapter in my family's long engagement with the Middle East. Finally, my thanks to President Eisenhower, whose 1958 Middle East Task Force brought my father, then-Army Captain Wes Wells, and later my mother, Heidi Wells, to Lebanon. To my parents, I owe much more than my accident of birth in Beirut, but the extraordinary example of their public service, curiosity, and service to their country abroad.

As President Obama has stated, the United States has "very few friends, partners, and allies around the world that have been as steadfast and reliable as His Majesty King Abdullah, as well as the people of Jordan." Mr. Chairman, the historic partnership between the United States and our invaluable ally Jordan has never been more important, as we jointly work to achieve peace in the Middle East and to promote a democratic transition in Syria. The United States and Jordan share concerns about destabilization in the region and increasing extremist activity. We have a strong history of mutual resolve and cooperation against terrorist threats, including in Afghanistan and Iraq, where King Abdullah directed that Jordan be part of the answer to restoring stability and countering the message of violent extremists.

At the same time, our multifaceted partnership with the Hashemite Kingdom aims to demonstrate to the people of Jordan and the region the benefits of their choosing the path of moderation, of political and economic reform, of peace with one's neighbors. As a testament to our support for Jordan, the Jordanian people, what Jordan stands for, and what it has achieved, in the 15 years since King Abdullah ascended the throne, the United States has provided over $10 billion in assistance.

If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, I will work to ensure that our assistance, our policies, and our diplomatic platform to advance U.S. interests and further Jordan's ability to withstand the Syrian crisis, counter terrorism, serve as an example of political and economic reform, and advance peace in the Middle East, while building bridges between U.S. and Jordanian societies.

First, with Jordan hosting 600,000 Syrian refugees, the United States has a strategic interest in ensuring that the Hashemite Kingdom can meet its international humanitarian obligations without jeopardizing its own economic and political stability. While international attention has focused on the Zaatri refugee camp, which several committee members and staff have viewed firsthand, nearly 85 percent of Syrian refugees reside in Jordanian host communities. Local governments, social services, and civic organizations are severely strained, with cities and villages facing overcrowded schools, shortages of hospital beds and medicines, and an inability to stretch municipal services to accommodate the increased population. At the same time, Jordan grapples with the loss of export routes through Syria, a steep decline in tourism, negative investor sentiment resulting from the war, and an energy bill that rose to 21 percent of its GDP when Egypt could no longer deliver on its natural gas contracts.

In response to these needs, the U.S. Government is providing Jordan with a broad package of aid designed to bolster services strained by the refugee influx and help safeguard Jordan's economic and political reform. Jordan was the fifth-largest recipient of bilateral assistance in FY 2013. With strong, bipartisan support from Congress, U.S. support to Jordan has totaled over $1 billion in both fiscal years 2012 and 2013. Our bilateral assistance alone will exceed $1 billion in fiscal year 2014 thanks to the generosity of Congress. This assistance has helped to reduce the financial strain on the sectors directly affected by refugees. In addition, over the

past few years we have provided more than $268 million in humanitarian aid to international organizations and NGOs assisting Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan, as well as a total of $2.25 billion in loan guarantees to help Jordan access international capital. If confirmed, I will advocate continued flexibility in responding to the evolving crisis, adjusting our own assistance priorities and diplomatic staffing as necessary. I also will continue to work closely with international donors and multilateral institutions to ensure a unified and coherent response that addresses Jordan's needs, while encouraging sensible reform to promote long-term economic sustainability and political stability.

Second, as violent extremists expand their operations in Syria and the Anbar province of Iraq, our cooperative efforts with Jordan on regional security and counterterrorism take on increased importance. Jordan offers practical partnership, as well as an alternative vision of a modern, Muslim country. The U.S. is utilizing a full array of programs, including the transfer of Excess Defense Articles, to strengthen Jordan's capabilities. This includes completing the Jordan Border Security Program, which uses advanced surveillance technologies to safeguard Jordan's border with Syria and Iraq, while working to stop the flow of foreign fighters and the financial networks that support them. In turn, Jordan's highly skilled security forces are playing a leadership role in training counterparts throughout the Middle East region and in peacekeeping missions around the globe. If confirmed, I also will look for additional opportunities to amplify King Abdullah's "Amman Message" of religious tolerance, as seen in Jordan's hosting of Pope Francis later this month, recognizing that interfaith dialogue and understanding are integral to repudiating the terrorist message and building tolerant, pluralistic societies across the region.

Third, the U.S. has a deep stake in Jordan's successful modernization and supporting King Abdullah's public embrace of political and economic reform as a "strategic choice." In Jordan, 70 percent of the population is under the age of 30 and almost 40 percent under the age of 14. We support the King's vision of promoting well-educated youth who can be an economic force multiplier. King Abdullah is in California today for meetings with U.S. investors and innovators to build greater economic ties and develop more jobs for the Jordanian people. To date, working with the International Monetary Fund, Jordan is successfully balancing competing demands, including the imperative of structural reforms that replace blanket subsidies with a targeted social safety net to alleviate popular discontent over fuel and electricity price hikes.

We also support the reforms advanced by King Abdullah to promote greater transparency and dignity, including the establishment of a National Integrity Commission, a Constitutional Court, limits on the State Security Court, and parliamentary elections that were judged credible by international observers. As friends of Jordan, we need to encourage the full implementation of these home-grown initiatives to reinforce the relationship between economic and political reform. King Abdullah has noted publicly that "for business to invest and expand with confidence, they need a predictable, level playing-field, transparency and accountability, the rule of law and a strong, stable foundation of inclusive political life," and we should encourage him to turn this vision into action.

I am committed to reinforcing the collaborative and consultative approach the U.S. has taken to help Jordan, whether in reforming its political system and reforming subsidies, diversifying its energy sector, renovating water infrastructure, extending education and enhancing the role of women, promoting international competitiveness and improving government service. The 2009–2014 MOU that provides $360 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) and $300 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) annually has been integral to providing the predictability in assistance that Jordan needs to make strategic decisions and undertake difficult reforms. The President's announcement in February of our intention to renew our MOU reflects the strength of our strategic partnership and our ongoing commitment to help Jordan successfully navigate the challenges posed by the regional unrest and build a stronger economy. For instance, if Jordan continues to adhere to its bold program of subsidy reform and diversification of its energy resources, by 2017 it has the potential to emerge from this crisis period with billions of dollars in budget savings.

Fourth, the United States relies on Jordan's continued support, as a partner and a stakeholder, to achieve a comprehensive final status peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians. Secretary Kerry appropriately called Jordan "an essential partner for peace." As one of only two Arab States to sign a peace treaty with Israel, the host to 2 million Palestinian refugees, and the traditional guardian of the Islamic holy shrines in Jerusalem, Jordan has a critical interest in any final status negotiations, as well as a role to play in any future security and border arrangement along the Jordan River. If confirmed, I will support continued engagement with Jor-

dan on this important issue and seek to identify ways to enhance trade, environmental and other ties between Jordan and Israel, and Jordan and the West Bank, recognizing the historic role that initiatives like the Qualified Industrial Zones have played in forging linkages.

Finally, if confirmed, I will dedicate myself to building and sustaining a diplomatic team that can advance these ambitious objectives, while working to ensure the safety and security of U.S. officials and the American community. The U.S. Embassy in Amman has grown substantially over the last 5 years, reflecting Jordan's regional importance and the Embassy's role in providing support for our mission in Iraq and our interests in Syria. Last year, Embassy Amman hosted over 15,000 official visitors, both U.S. and other nationalities, including—I'm glad to note—a total of 193 Members of Congress and staff. With the Embassy staffed to its physical capacity, choices will need to be made in prioritizing programs, as we anticipate the construction of a New Office Annex; similarly, we must remain nimble in responding to the evolving Syrian crisis. The safety and security of U.S. citizens and Embassy employees will always be the foremost priority, and I take the responsibility of managing risk seriously, recognizing the tension between security and engagement.

Mr. Chairman, in the course of my quarter century of service as a Foreign Service officer, the world has changed dramatically. I entered the State Department with pretensions of being an expert on the Soviet Union, only to help open our first Embassy in the independent and sovereign state of Tajikistan 3 years later. As a junior officer in Saudi Arabia, I waited 3 days for local media to report on Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, but now wrestle with the immediacy of the 24-hour news cycle and the imperative of social media. As Office Director for North Africa, I confronted the seeming permanence of Qadhafi, Ben Ali, and Mubarak's leadership, only later to see the frustration and despair of a street vendor in Tunisia ignite a wave of unprecedented political change in the Middle East. However, what has not changed is the importance of U.S. leadership, the power of our example, and the resources we bring to bear. If confirmed, it would be an honor to help the U.S. chart a course in Jordan at this critical time that promotes our shared values and our shared interests in a more peaceful and prosperous region.

Senator KAINE. Thank you so much, Ms. Wells.

Mr. Kelly.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS P. KELLY III, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

Mr. KELLY. Chairman Kaine, Senator Rubio, it is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me to this position and for the support of Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Linda Thomas Greenfield. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and the Congress to advance U.S. interests in Djibouti.

Mr. Chairman, I am from a very big family. I do not think we can fit all of them in this room. But I do have a good representation here. I would like to introduce them. I am joined by my wife, Elsa Amaya-Kelly, my daughter, Chantal, my brother, Joe Kelly, my mother-in-law, Elsa Reyes de Amaya, my brother-in-law, Juan Carlos Amaya, my uncle, John Kelly, Aunt Mary Kelly, Uncle Chris Burns, Aunt Suzy Burns, Cousin Patrick Kelly, Cousin Michael Kelly, and Mike's wife, Karen. Again, that is just the tip of the iceberg. [Laughter.]

Mr. KELLY. Mr. Chairman, during my 28-year Foreign Service career I have worked on a variety of issues that are relevant to my proposed post. I served for the first part of my career as an economics officer working on development issues around the world. I

also have experience managing large diplomatic missions, most recently in Lithuania, Argentina, and Brazil.

Over the last three years, I have had the privilege to lead the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, where we worked to reinforce the global partnership between the State and Defense Departments for our Nation's benefit.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, we share important interests and goals with Djibouti. The May 5 meeting between President Obama and Djiboutian President Guelleh reflected our desire to broaden our bilateral partnership, to work closely together to advance our shared vision for a secure, stable, and prosperous Horn of Africa.

Djibouti hosts the only U.S. military forward operating site in sub-Saharan Africa. This is Camp Lemonnier, the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, where more than 4,000 U.S. military and contracted personnel are stationed. If confirmed, I will continue to expand coordination and cooperation between Embassy personnel and Camp Lemonnier and its tenant U.S. military commands.

On the economic front, Mr. Chairman, making Djibouti an attractive place for investment is essential for its economic development. Djibouti remains very poor and less than 5 percent of its land is arable. The small USAID mission in Djibouti currently focuses on health and education, but we are expanding and deepening our focus areas following the President's May 5 meetings.

Additionally, Mr. Chairman, to help grow Djibouti's economy the United States has recently pledged to increase technical and financial assistance to the Djiboutian people and to further invest in Djibouti's development. If confirmed I will see that these programs remain a priority.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed I am also committed to working with Djibouti to strengthen democratic governance.

If confirmed, I will underscore the importance of democracy and governance reforms, including greater space for media, opposition, and civil society groups.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed my highest priority will be the protection of Americans and U.S. interests, including mission personnel living and traveling in Djibouti.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed by the Senate I look forward to working closely with you and other members of the committee and would hope to welcome you during my tenure.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you again for the honor to appear before the committee today. I will be happy to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kelly follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS P. KELLY

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, it is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary of State have shown by nominating me to this position, and for the support of Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and the Congress to advance U.S. interests in Djibouti.

First, Mr. Chairman, let me acknowledge several family members here today. I am joined by my wife, Elsa Amaya-Kelly; my daughter, Chantal Kelly; my brother, Joe Kelly; my mother-in-law, Elsa Reyes de Amaya; my brother-in-law, Juan Carlos

Amaya; my uncle, John Kelly; Aunt Mary Kelly; Uncle Chris Burns; Aunt Suzie Burns; Cousin Patrick Kelly; Cousin Michael Kelly; and Mike's wife, Karen Kelly.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to tell you about myself. During my 28-year career, I have worked on a variety of issues that are relevant to my proposed post. I served for the first two-thirds of my career as an Economics Officer, working on development, trade, and finance issues around the world. I have extensive experience managing large diplomatic missions, serving as Deputy Chief of Mission in Vilnius, Lithuania, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, and as Principal Officer in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Over the last 3 years, I have had the privilege to lead the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs as Acting Assistant Secretary and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary. The Political-Military Bureau works every day to reinforce the global partnership between the State and Defense Departments for the benefit of our Nation.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to leading Embassy Djibouti in advancing the interests of the United States. The U.S.-Djibouti relationship is strong, and our two countries share a firm commitment to peace and security, countering terrorism and piracy in the region, and economic development.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, we share important interests and goals with Djibouti. The May 5 meeting between President Obama and Djiboutian President Guelleh [GEHL-ay] reflected our desire to broaden our bilateral partnership to work closely together to advance our shared vision for a secure, stable, and prosperous Horn of Africa. Djibouti has a strategic position at the Bab-el-Mandab Strait, which joins the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Approximately 60 percent of Djibouti's population is ethnic Somali, and the Government of Djibouti has undertaken considerable efforts to restore peace in neighboring Somalia, a nation whose instability threatens the stability of the region. Djibouti is a troop-contributing country to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the al-Shabaab terrorist group has launched fatal attacks against Djiboutian forces in Somalia. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will continue to build our bilateral relationship and contribute to efforts with Djibouti and other partners to promote a stable and peaceful Somalia.

Djibouti hosts the only U.S. military forward operating site in sub-Saharan Africa. This is Camp Lemonnier, the headquarters for the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF–HOA), where more than 4,000 U.S. military and contracted personnel are stationed. If confirmed, I will continue to expand coordination and cooperation between Embassy personnel and Camp Lemonnier and its tenant U.S. military commands, including the CJTF–HOA contingent. If confirmed, I will also ensure that CJTF–HOA programming in Djibouti fits within the framework of U.S. Government priorities to advance our key interests.

On the economic front, Mr. Chairman, Djibouti's Government has privatized the country's excellent deep-water port and airport, reducing corruption and increasing revenue flows. Making Djibouti an attractive place for investment is essential for its economic development. Djibouti remains very poor, ranked 165th out of 187 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index. Less than 5 percent of its land is arable. The small USAID mission in Djibouti currently focuses on health and education but we are expanding and deepening our focus areas following the President's May 5 meetings. Mr. Chairman, to help grow Djibouti's economy, the United States has recently pledged to increase technical and financial assistance to the Djiboutian people and to further invest in Djibouti's development. Additionally, the United States responds to food insecurity through support for the Famine Early Warning Network office in Djibouti, as well as through U.S.-funded Food for Peace programs. If confirmed, I will see that these programs remain a priority.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I am also committed to working with Djibouti to strengthen democratic governance. Disputes over the 2013 legislative elections fueled months of protests, and the government arrested hundreds of opposition supporters. If confirmed, I will underscore the importance of democracy and governance reforms, including greater space for media, opposition, and civil society groups.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my highest priority will be the protection of Americans and U.S. interests, including mission personnel, living and traveling in Djibouti.

Mr. Chairman, I believe my prior experience in the Foreign Service has prepared me to serve as Ambassador to Djibouti. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working closely with you and other members of the committee, and would hope to welcome you during my tenure.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you again for the honor to appear before the committee today. I would be happy to take any questions you may have.

Senator KAINE. Thanks very much, Mr. Kelly.

Ms. Butts.

STATEMENT OF CASSANDRA Q. BUTTS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

Ms. BUTTS. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I am profoundly grateful for the honor that the President has bestowed upon me and for the confidence shown in me by Secretary Kerry as I look to take up this assignment if confirmed.

Please allow me to introduce my family members who are here today. I am joined by my mother, Mae Karim; my aunt, Barbara Jordan; and my brother-in-law, Frank Abbott. My family's been a wellspring of support for me. I am here today because of their love and support and because of their dedication and because of their belief in me.

I believe my experience as a lawyer and a policy adviser and my service to my country in the executive and legislative branches have well prepared me for the duties of Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Having worked on some of the major legal and policy issues of our time, including my most recent experience in international development at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, I have always sought solutions consistent with the values of our great Nation. I understand that leading with our values is the basis for finding lasting policy solutions and building strong partnerships at home and abroad.

If the Senate were to confirm me, I would bring these experiences, grounded in my strong belief in equality, justice, and compassion, to the post of Ambassador to the Commonwealth of Bahamas. Through close political, economic, and cultural ties, the United States and The Bahamas have forged a strong bilateral relationship that has served both countries well. Bahamians regularly travel to the United States to visit friends and family and to conduct business, and approximately 6 million U.S. citizens travel to The Bahamas annually.

The proximity of The Bahamas to the United States inextricably links our countries' national security. Together we are confronting shared challenges, such as illicit trafficking, including in narcotics, arms, and people.

If confirmed, my first and foremost priority will be to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens living in or visiting The Bahamas, as well as the Turks and Caicos Islands, which are included under Embassy Nassau's consular oversight.

If confirmed, I will work closely with local authorities and U.S. law enforcement officials under chief of mission authority to lower crime rates and other illegal activities. Other priorities will include promoting greater economic ties and growth, including exploring ways to support the development and enforcement of stable, transparent regulations.

We also want to encourage countries like The Bahamas to adopt cleaner technologies and build strong and resilient energy markets. These steps are important not only to provide a more secure and

sustainable clean energy future, but also to further economic growth and limit the effects of greenhouse gas emissions. I will also seek to further gender equality and expand opportunities for disenfranchised youth.

Expanding educational exchanges is one way, is one of the best ways to deepen the already existing cultural and historical ties between the United States and The Bahamas. At present approximately 1,600 students from The Bahamas study in the United States, and more than 750 students from the United States study in The Bahamas. If confirmed, I will seek to increase levels of educational exchange between our two countries, including through enhancing existing partnerships and building new ones.

While geography and history have forged strong bonds between our countries, The Bahamas also maintains close relationships with many other countries. We do not see foreign economic and commercial links to The Bahamas as a threat to the U.S. interests. We believe that beneficial and sustainable international trade and investment must be carried out in adherence to international standards of transparency and good governance, while respecting local environmental standards and regulations.

We should continue to focus our interests on the greater good of regional stability. The United States has not had an ambassador in Nassau for nearly 2½ years, but we have a strong U.S. Embassy staff in The Bahamas continuing the important work of the mission. If confirmed, I will work to further their good work and strengthen our already close and productive bilateral relationship.

In closing, I am confident that I have the experience, the imagination, and the energy to lead our bilateral relationship with the people and the Government of The Bahamas. While at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, I have seen firsthand the important work carried out by our ambassadors and their teams as they engage and advocate for U.S. goals and objectives. If confirmed, I pledge to uphold the tradition and high standard of public service that ambassadors are expected to uphold.

I look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve my country.

Again, thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Butts follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY CASSANDRA Q. BUTTS

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I am profoundly grateful for the honor that the President has bestowed upon me and for the confidence shown in me by Secretary Kerry as I look to take up this assignment, if confirmed.

Please allow me to introduce the members of my family who are here today: my mother, Mae A. Karim; my aunt, Barbara Jordan; my brother-in-law, Frank Abbott, and my nephews, Alston and Ethan Abbott. Unfortunately, my sister, Deidra Abbott, could not join us today because of a work-related commitment. My family has been a wellspring of support. I am here today because of their love and support and because of their dedication and belief in me.

I believe my experience as a lawyer and policy advisor and my service to my country in the executive and legislative branches have well prepared me for the duties of Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Having worked on some of the major legal and policy issues of our time, including my most recent experience in international development at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, I have

always sought solutions consistent with the values of our great Nation. I understand that leading with our values is the basis for finding lasting policy solutions and building strong partnerships at home and abroad. If the Senate were to confirm me, I would bring these experiences, grounded in my strong belief in equality, justice, and compassion, to the post of Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

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If confirmed, my first and foremost priority will be to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens living in or visiting The Bahamas, as well as the Turks and Caicos Islands, which are included under Embassy Nassau's consular oversight. If confirmed, I will work closely with local authorities and the U.S. law enforcement officials under Chief of Mission authority to lower crime rates and other illegal activities. Other priorities would include promoting greater economic ties and growth, including exploring ways to support the development and enforcement of stable and transparent regulations as well as improving the business environment through transparent procurement and investment procedures. We also want to encourage countries like The Bahamas to adopt cleaner technologies and build strong and resilient energy markets. These steps are important not only to provide a more secure and sustainable clean energy future, but also to further economic growth and limit the effects of greenhouse gas emissions. I will also seek to further gender equality and expand opportunities for disenfranchised youth.

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While geography and history have forged strong bonds between our countries, The Bahamas also maintains close relations with many other nations. Historically, foreign investment in the Bahamian banking sector has been mainly by Europeans and Canadians. The key tourism and hospitality sectors have seen increases in American, European, and, more recently, Asian investment as the world economy continues to rebound. We do not see foreign economic and commercial links to The Bahamas as a threat to U.S. interests. We believe that beneficial and sustainable international trade and investment must be carried out in adherence to international standards of transparency and good governance, while respecting local environmental and labor regulations. We should continue to focus our interests on the greater good of regional stability.

The United States has not had an ambassador in Nassau for nearly 2½ years, but we have had a strong U.S. Embassy staff in the Bahamas continuing the important work of the mission. If confirmed, I will work to further their good work and strengthen our already close and productive bilateral relationship.

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you all for your opening statements.

Senator Risch has declined to do an opening statement. He is just going to make his questions particularly hard. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. We will have 6-minute rounds of questions.

Senator RISCH. The first one is for you, Mr. Chairman. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. We will have 6-minute rounds of questions. If we do not get to you in round one, do not worry; I am planning on

coming back and making sure, because I have a number of questions for all of you.

But I will just begin with Ms. Alexander. USAID, in my travels as a member of this subcommittee I have really been impressed with the work of USAID in Jordan, with the work that USAID is doing in—I was recently in the West Bank and interacted with some of the Palestinian businesses that have been working together with USAID, and also was aware of USAID's good work being done in Egypt, but was not able to personally visit that work.

So this is very important work that is going on. USAID—in Egypt we were not able to visit because of security concerns. I just wonder if you would sort of offer some thoughts there. We are wrestling with complex issues here with regard to Egypt, levels of support, et cetera. Egypt has a significant counterterrorism threat that is a very real one that we need to provide help with. At the same time, there has been a tendency of concern to many of us to label opponents terrorists when they are really just opponents in the sense that you would expect there to be different points of view.

What can USAID do in the sort of democracy-building area that would be appropriate in Egypt, to just use that as an example for other nations in the region?

Ms. ALEXANDER. Sure. Thank you, Senator Kaine. I think USAID's programs have always been broadly designed to address the needs of the citizens and the governments as they support their own citizens' needs. In Egypt in particular, it is a difficult situation. In many of these countries it is very fluid throughout the Middle East, and we are looking to reorient our programs in places where we can not work with the governments directly on infrastructure or building capacity. We have started looking more closely at economic growth, the opportunities of the private sector.

In a lot of these situations we have had the opportunity to look at sectors such as—you mentioned the technology sector, but agriculture and tourism, as a real area for job employment and job growth. The linkage between economic growth and democracy and governance can not be lost. It is very difficult—and I have seen this through the transitions in Eastern Europe. It is very difficult to have democracy and governance take hold and make these transitions work if you have an economy that is tanking.

So in every way possible, AID looks to orient its program to make sure we are addressing the needs of the people and being sure to bring these countries through the transition in a way that the economic growth and the democracy rights and governance are synergistic.

Senator KAINE. A bright spot, I think it could be a bright spot, and one for us to pay some close attention to is Tunisia in the aftermath of constitutional reforms. If you could talk a little bit about USAID activity currently in Tunisia and what are some things that we can do to hopefully encourage a continued—the success of these recent constitutional reforms, the creation of a government that respects religious minorities, respects the rights of women, but within the Muslim cultural context of that country?

Ms. ALEXANDER. Sure. Tunisia is a bright spot for us. The interagency has actually quite a good division of labor between what the State Department programs are working on and what AID is work-

ing on. As we move forward in Tunisia, we have the Enterprise Fund and activities that we will plan to be doing through them, again to invest in the economy, and also to be looking at the democracy and governance work, both with gender equality programs and the dialogues that need to happen within Tunisia to make sure that this transition holds.

We really—a lot of our work right now at AID is focused on the global development alliances that we have in Tunisia with HP, with UNIDO, and with the Italians on the multilateral side, because I think that this is a world issue. People are looking at these countries and recognizing that together we can be helpful, but we have to make sure that we are listening to the people of Tunisia and we are doing what they request.

Senator KAINE. One other question that I think is a complicating fact and I am wondering how USAID would approach it is, in my visit to Israel and to the West Bank the USAID work with Palestinian entrepreneurs on the West Bank was very, very notable, and USAID has a great reputation for that work. The recent announcement that West Bank PLO authorities are working to find a unification with Hamas in Gaza is problematic because USAID and we do not have working relationships with Hamas because of its status as a terrorist organization.

How would you at USAID intend to carry on the ongoing work that has been positive in the West Bank under this scenario and what would your approach be to these unification issues?

Ms. ALEXANDER. USAID has a two-track approach in West Bank-Gaza. One is the budget support that we are working with the Palestinian authorities on and the other is the project activities that we are doing, and that includes institution building. So to the extent that those programs continue, we have high-impact, micro-infrastructure programs that have begun, and this is part of the peace process and the need to make sure that these negotiations continue, because at the end of the day that really is going to be the solution, a two-state solution.

As far as the announcement on the unity government, I think we have seen this before and we are going to watch carefully and see what ends up happening at the end of the day. We will adjust our programs as necessary, but we need to see how this plays out, because at this point it is not set in stone.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ms. Alexander. I will say the Foreign Relations Committee recently had an opportunity to meet with Foreign Minister Liberman of Israel to talk about these very issues. While expressing a lot of challenges and skepticism about current developments, when we explored the reality of the need for these peace negotiations he stated very plainly that there really is not a solution other than a two-state solution. How we get there and the timing and the circumstances is going to be very, very difficult. But, much as you indicated in your answer, he was very, very plain about that.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Alexander, Americans are the most caring, compassionate, humanitarian people on the face of this planet. You will lead the agency that is really the flagship agency of that caring relationship

that Americans have with other human beings on this planet. I am always amazed at what USAID does.

I think the challenge for you is to convince Americans that they are doing this and that they are doing a good job doing this and that they are doing a good job doing this, and that we should feel good about what we are doing in that regard. What USAID does I find to be under the radar as far as Americans are concerned, and yet around the world USAID is regarded so highly because of the humanitarian work that they do. So we wish you well and have every confidence you will do a good job.

Ms. Wells, your challenge is a little different. You are going to one of the countries that is certainly one of our friends in the Middle East. The King comes here regularly and meets with us. We have such a good friend in the King. Indeed, if everyone had, every country in the Middle East, had a leader like King Abdullah, the Middle East would have an entirely different complexion than it does today.

I have every confidence that you will carry America's feelings in that regard. I would just say that it has been printed and, although we cannot talk completely about it in an open setting, but it has been printed at least in the media that there is considerable Jordanian cooperation going on with Israel regarding counterterrorism work. I would hope that you would encourage the two agencies to continue that work. Certainly Jordan needs that with the challenges they have and the kind of immigration that they have had.

So with that, I would kind of like to hear your thoughts as far as the relationship with Jordan and Israel?

Ms. WELLS. Thank you, Senator. Jordan continues to be a leader on the Middle East peace process, both by being only the second Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel, but also by King Abdullah's public and frequent exhortations for the region and for the process to move forward. He describes peace as a basic right and a practical need, and he himself has championed the Arab peace initiative as well as worked very closely with Secretary Kerry over the last year in terms of the framework negotiations.

I think what is important about Jordan, irreplaceable really, is how it leads by example, as you mentioned. The fact that Jordanian officials sit down pragmatically with Israeli counterparts to discuss the holy sites in Jerusalem, water, environment, trade, security, the fact that security officials have appropriate relationships with one another, is all extremely important.

As we look ahead, we see new institutional relationships forming, including over energy security and how Israel and Jordan may be able to cooperate in the future on less expensive Mediterranean gas. We see very practical cooperation by King Abdullah in building Palestinian institutions, including the training of 5,600 Palestinian Presidential guards and national security officials.

So I think that, even though sometimes among the Jordanian public support can be tepid for the peace treaty, the kind of leadership we see from King Abdullah is really what we need to see more of in the region. Certainly if I were confirmed I would work to encourage that level of practical daily cooperation.

Senator RISCH. Well said. I think that probably that is one of the—again, something that is not stressed enough, and that is

what a success story it is, the relationship between Jordan and Israel, and the fact that Jordan leads by example. I think it makes it a lot easier for other Arab countries to deal with Israel when they see how well this relationship has worked between Jordan and Israel.

So I am sure that as you work with them you will carry our message that this is a really, really good thing and we want to see it continue. I know the King has expressed to us over and over again that he wants that relationship with Israel and would like to see all his Arab brothers have the same kind of a relationship with Israel.

So thank you very much and thank all of you for your service to the United States.

Senator KAINE. Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Thank you all for coming here. Congratulations to you and your family, and thank you for your offer to serve the country. For those that are already serving, thank you for that.

My first question is for you, Ms. Alexander. I wanted to ask you a little bit about the recent announcement of a unity government by the Palestinian Authority. Is it your position that this new government as announced as you understand it complies with or satisfies U.S. conditions on aid to the PA?

Ms. ALEXANDER. For starters, thank you, Senator Rubio. Hamas is a terrorist organization and we cannot work with Hamas. As far as the discussion about the unity government, at this point we are waiting to see what ends up forming. We have seen this before and we really have to wait and see how the process works at this point.

Senator RUBIO. So obviously then we are waiting to see what it looks like. But is it safe to say in your opinion that Hamas has not adequately recognized the Jewish State of Israel's right to exist and has not adequately accepted all provisions—or all previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements?

Ms. ALEXANDER. Yes, Hamas as currently configured has not.

Senator RUBIO. Can you confirm in your consultations with the agency that you are about to head that there will be an immediate cutoff of relevant U.S. assistance unless there is a full compliance with the letter and the spirit of all the provisions in the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act?

Ms. ALEXANDER. I can speak only to what I know at this point, which is the law. And as the law stands we would not be able to apply assistance to that government.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Ms. Wells, let me ask you about Jordan for a moment. I think you have touched upon it in your statement, but I wanted to talk briefly about the reform efforts that are occurring within Jordan. Obviously, there is a situation where on the one hand there is the need, I think as recognized by the government, to create more political opening, more space, for all voices to be heard within Jordanian political society. On the other hand, there is the need to provide stability.

We have seen what has happened around the world when these changes are not adequately managed during a pace that is sustainable. In fact, it creates a space for tremendous instability.

How would you assess the pace and the status of those reform efforts as being undertaken in Jordan today by the kingdom?

Ms. WELLS. Thank you. Since King Abdullah came to power in 1999, he has launched a variety of political and economic initiatives. He would be the first to say he was not satisfied with the progress he had been able to achieve. I think what we have seen recently is how the confluence of events have made difficult choices much more possible. The fact that you had the Arab Spring, you had the cutoff of the inexpensive Egyptian gas, and you have the Syrian crisis next door reinforces the imperative for getting ahead of public demands for change, as well as being able to respond to what was an unbearable economic pressure being placed on the government.

So I think we see in three broad areas substantial and noteworthy efforts at reform. On the political side, the King has relaunched a public dialogue on reform. He has led an effort to amend one-third of the constitution. He has created a constitutional court, an Independent Electoral Commission, he has held successful parliamentary elections in January 2013 which outside observers deemed as credible. He has also taken steps to shrink the jurisdiction of the state security courts, and we welcome those initiatives.

On the economic side, we see the same kind of forward-leaning approach. His negotiation of a standby arrangement with the IMF allows Jordan to establish a glide path for removing subsidies that are simply unsustainable. He has eliminated fuel subsidies in 2012 and the electricity company by 2017 will be in a position to have full cost recovery. This is essential when electricity deficits were eating up 6 percent of GDP.

So we are trying to support that. We are working with other donors to support that. It is a critical step and Jordan would be a leader in the region if it achieves those two reforms.

Then just the final element is energy diversification. This is—when they lost the inexpensive Egyptian natural gas after 20 attacks on the pipeline, their energy costs went up to 21 percent of GDP, again unsustainable. So we have worked with Jordan and Jordan has been very forward-leaning in seeking to find less expensive fuels, including through the American company that works with Israel, establishing an LNG terminal, working to expand the mix of solar and wind.

So I think right now as friends of Jordan we need to encourage that approach.

Senator RUBIO. Just one more point I wanted to raise. When we have had this debate here about what to do in Syria, some ask why should we even care about it. One of the arguments I have made, of course, is that our relationship and the cooperation that we get from the King and the Jordanian Government are extraordinary. It is a very important relationship in the region. It is one of the cornerstones of our Middle Eastern policy.

You would agree, I think you have already in your statement here today, that the events going on in Syria pose a direct threat to the kingdom, to their ability to continue to be of assistance to us, given the potential that that has to spill over into their own territory if not managed appropriately. So would you agree that as we

view the Syrian conflict we should view it partially through the context of what it would mean to our allies in Jordan?

Ms. WELLS. I agree entirely, Senator. I think from Jordan's perspective Syria is an existential threat. So if you look at our strategy in responding to the crisis, we have moved very aggressively both to provide the humanitarian assistance and economic aid that Jordan needs to weather this and weather the influx of refugees.

At the same time, we have a very aggressive program of mil-mil cooperation, bolstering Jordan's border security, increasing our own bilateral and multilateral training, trying to build the capacity, including through the targeting of foreign fighters, so a broad-based approach to address both the security element as well as the economic element.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Chairman, I know I am out of time. Can I ask one brief question on The Bahamas?

Senator KAINE. Yes.

Senator RUBIO. Ms. Butts, thanks for being here. Congratulations. I wish you the best on your assignment. It is a part of the country that is very—a part of the world that is very close to my part of the country in Florida.

I did want to ask you, however. There have been reports, and I have seen the videos of some of this, of how Cuban refugees have been forcefully repatriated back to Cuba by the Bahamian Government. We have reached out to their government. They dispute some of those assertions. Nonetheless, we remain very concerned about it.

I would just want to encourage you to work with the Bahamian authorities to ensure that not just Cuban refugees, as well as other refugees, including Haitian refugees and others, are treated appropriately and humanely if in fact they wind up on Bahamian territory. I think it is something that if people saw some of the images that have been put out there of how some of them have been treated by these authorities, they would be very concerned.

Again, we understand the realities of addressing something like this, the costs associated with it. But I would hope that you would use your office and our Embassy to speak out in favor of any vulnerable peoples that may find themselves on their territory. I would encourage you to use your position there to be an advocate for that.

Ms. BUTTS. Thank you, Senator Rubio. I appreciate that encouragement. It is certainly something that is very important to me. It is one of the policy issues that was most attractive about the role in The Bahamas. I have worked on migration issues before. Actually, I worked on migration issues on the Hill both on the Senate side and on the House side.

I have not seen the images. I have certainly heard about some of the allegations with regard to how Cuban refugees have been treated, migrants have been treated in The Bahamas. As I understand it, our State Department has had a number of conversations with the Bahamians. It will be one of my priorities to ensure that all migrants are treated humanely, and I am happy to, if I am confirmed, to have a chance to come back to you, Senator, and to your staff and keep you up to date on the issues.

Again, it is an issue of great importance to me too. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Let me just close by saying to all the nominees that I have not been here very long, about 3½ years, but in my short time I have learned that when the committee is not fully manned here with all the members it is usually a good sign for your nominations. So I wish you all the best.

Senator KAINE. Thank you both.

A question about embassy security that I really want to address both to Ms. Wells and Mr. Kelly. One of my first hearings as a member of the committee was a hearing to examine the Accountability Review Board recommendations in the aftermath of the analysis post-Benghazi. Those recommendations are significant and numerous, but I think all who were reviewing the recommendations find the ones that they kind of most lock on, and the ones that I really locked onto were sort of the embassy security challenges.

In the time since then, we have augmented the Marine security guard training program at Quantico to expand the Marine presence at a number of high-threat embassies. The State Department has recently announced moving forward with a FASTC, Foreign Assistance State Training Center, that is a long-desired effort to augment security training for embassy personnel. There are other issues concerning the hiring of the in-country security firms or individuals to assist.

These are issues that I am really passionate about. I just wonder, for both, especially Ms. Wells and Mr. Kelly, if you could talk a little about how you intend to tackle the challenge of keeping your folks safe and secure as you take on posts in a neighborhood of the world that can be pretty challenging?

Mr. KELLY. Thank you very much for your question, Senator Kaine. There is no more important issue for a chief of mission than taking care of your people. It is something that I have lived personally in my own career. My first assignment was in El Salvador during the civil war. We lost many embassy colleagues during my tour there, the years before and after.

In my second tour, in Chile, I survived a terrorist attack against a embassy-related softball team, where a terrorist group put a bomb in a softball bat and killed one of my teammates and injured some of my embassy colleagues.

So this is an issue that the Foreign Service has been dealing with for many, many years. So it is something that I am going to be very focused on as the chief of mission. Now, we have perhaps an advantageous situation in Djibouti because 2 miles from the Embassy we have more than 4,000 U.S. military personnel and contractors. So I think that our security is in pretty good shape. We have a very robust presence by diplomatic security agents in the Embassy. We also have an almost brand new Embassy compound, which really provides state of the art security conditions for our personnel.

But I think the most important thing that a chief of mission can do is inculcate a culture of security throughout the mission, and that is something that will be important to me every day.

Just another point about the environment that we are operating in now. Another very important aspect of our bilateral relationship with Djibouti is, because our Djiboutian partners provide us with

a platform to have a forward military location in Djibouti, that gives us access to a lot of neighboring countries that are potentially more vulnerable than we are. Our forces operating out of Djibouti were already fairly recently able to go into Juba in South Sudan to provide much-needed security reinforcement to our mission there, and that enabled our mission to stay open.

So it is an issue that is very important and it is something that will be on my mind every single day.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

Ms. Wells.

Ms. WELLS. Like Tom, I have also experienced the instability that can take place, whether it was in Tajikistan being evacuated or from Pakistan or the political tensions escalating between India and Pakistan and the effect it has on Foreign Service families and the broader American community. Security would be my number one concern in Amman. It is a family posting. There are 760 official Americans and their family members under chief of mission authority. Given the history of events, the assassination of our USAID officer back in 2002, attacks on hotels in Jordan in 2005, and just the general events in the region, it is impossible to take security for granted.

One of the very first things I would do at post would be to walk the wire with the regional security officer to understand what our strengths and weaknesses are, to go outside the embassy to look at schools and our housing complexes, to have a sense of how the unofficial American community, which numbers 40,000, what challenges they face.

Thankfully, we have a very capable partner with the Jordanians, who provide excellent security support to us. The Embassy is well staffed to oversee our security programs. But this has to be a preoccupation in this day and age.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Ms. Butts, a question about one of the major areas of cooperation between the United States and The Bahamas is in the antidrug effort. I know that The Bahamas has been a good partner. There is a regional initiative including The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos, that they have been significant players in.

We recently in Armed Services had testimony by General Kelly, the head of SOUTHCOM, who basically was talking about the effect of sequester on drug interdiction efforts by our Nation. He said: "I watch about 75 percent of drugs coming into the United States just go by because I do not have the resources that I would need to stop them." And he estimated that if he did he would make a huge reduction in the amount of drugs that come into the United States.

Talk a bit—we have to resolve these budgetary issues, but what are some opportunities as you look ahead for the United States and The Bahamas to be even better partners on this significant challenge that we face?

Ms. BUTTS. Thank you for your question, Senator Kaine. Certainly the focus of counternarcotics is a large focus of the bilateral relationship with The Bahamas. As you mentioned, Senator, we have the Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, which the acronym is "OPBAT," which has been going on since 1982. It is a part-

nership effort with The Bahamas which focuses on gathering intelligence, which focuses on cooperating in investigations, but also focuses on executing interdictions.

We have seen success since 1982 and we are continuing to see success. Actually, just this past year we have seen an increase, a significant increase actually, in the drugs that we have been able to seize through that operation.

In addition to that, under the Obama administration we actually now have the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative that actually started in 2010. Over the 4-year period we have invested $263 million. What is interesting about CBSI, Senator, is that actually it is a regionwide initiative. Where OPBAT is focused on The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, and the United States, CBSI is focused on the entire Caribbean. One of the things that the President wanted to do was to show that you have to have a regionwide focus if we are going to be successful.

So I would say to you, Senator, in addition to the very important joint efforts that we are doing through OPBAT, that we have got to look at the region as a whole in ensuring that we are doing the right level of cooperation, that we are doing the right level of coordination. I think that the President has started that out with the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, and I hope that we are able to continue that.

Actually, one of the advantages that The Bahamas has in the region is that The Bahamas—we have the Southern Command, obviously, Senator, but The Bahamas is actually organized through the Northern Command. So we have the Northern Command resources, just talking about resources that we can bring to bear to the effort. So we have the Northern Command resources, but we are the beneficiaries of the efforts going on through the Southern Command.

Certainly there is a recognition that we never have as much in terms of resources that we want. But with some of the rethinking and reallocation of resources as a result of pulling out of Iraq and winding down in Afghanistan, with actually hope that there will be some additional resources that might be able to come the way of The Bahamas and of the Caribbean so that we can continue what has been a very strong effort on counternarcotics and counterterrorism efforts.

Senator KAINE. That is one other concern that I know many have, is whether offshore banks in The Bahamas are at all being utilized by criminal networks, whether those are networks that are primarily focused on narcotic activity or other criminal activity. What is the current status of any activity or cooperation between the United States and The Bahamas to try to specify the existence of that problem and hopefully deal with it?

Ms. WELLS. There has been a good deal of cooperation, Senator, over the years. Certainly The Bahamians understand the importance of ensuring that their financial services institutions are not being used in ways that are illicit. They have put regulations and reforms in place to address that. So we have some confidence moving forward now and moving forward that the financial services—that the industry in The Bahamas is not trafficking in finances from illegal activities. So we have confidence they have done a very

good job. We work jointly with them in ensuring to provide the support that they need so that they can get their system in place.

So I think we feel confident. There could always be more done and as the chief of mission in Nassau I certainly want to work and coordinate with the Bahamians to ensure that they can continue to do the good work that they are doing.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you.

Mr. Kelly, one of the things that is interesting, I find interesting, about Djibouti is the degree of foreign military presence. The United States only sort of permanent enduring military facility in southern Africa, and in addition there is a Japanese military presence and a French military presence and also the international antipiracy efforts focusing on the Gulf of Aden are headquartered in Djibouti.

Given your immediate past billet at the State Department, you would seem to be just exactly the right person to help manage that. I know those are primarily mil-to-mil relationships, but talk a little bit about the relationship that you would have as Ambassador in not only interacting with the AFRICOM Joint Command, Horn of Africa Joint Command, but also with the other U.S. allies that have military presence in Djibouti?

Mr. KELLY. Thank you very much for your question, Mr. Chairman. What I have been doing the last 3 years at the Political-Military Bureau is working every day to try to make sure that State Department and Department of Defense are working around the world in sync. We have taken a lot of steps to try to work more efficiently in that regard, including embedding each other's personnel in the other's agency. We now have more than 90 Foreign Service officers working in different military commands and we have doubled the number of uniformed officers over the last couple of years who are working at the State Department.

We have that kind of model that is already functioning in Djibouti. At the CJTF–HOA there is a Senior Foreign Service officer who works as the adviser to the base commander, and then there is also a military liaison officer who works at the Embassy.

It would be my responsibility as chief of mission to make sure that every day we are working together as efficiently as possible, to make sure that our coordinated efforts are advancing all of the very significant interests that we have in Djibouti. As you said, Mr. Senator, we have very considerable security interests there. Djibouti provides us with a platform that we just do not have anywhere else in the entire continent, and it gives us very important strategic access to places like Yemen, which is a country that is plagued by the most active al-Qaeda affiliate in the world right now, as well as al-Shabab in Somalia. So the stakes are indeed very high.

We will also be coordinating with the other military forces that are there, as you mentioned. Camp Lemonnier used to be the overseas base for the French Foreign Legion.

The Foreign Legion is no longer there, but there are still 2,000 regular French troops who are stationed in Djibouti. They are very active. The only Japanese, significant Japanese military presence outside of Japan is at Camp Lemonnier as well.

There is presence by several other foreign military forces, especially navies that are focused on the counterpiracy mission that you described. That is going to be an important part of my job as well and I am looking forward to it.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Talk a little bit—Senator Durbin is particularly interested in development issues in Djibouti and I wanted to just ask. In the recent meeting between President Obama and President Guelleh, talk a little bit about economic issues that came up and what you see as some economic opportunities for the United States to interact and assist in the development of this economy. As you point out, only a small percentage of the land is arable land. There are some significant challenges there. How can we through USAID or other strategies be helpful?

Mr. KELLY. Thank you very much, Senator. I am a development economist by training, so I believe very strongly that our strategic partnerships have to be underpinned by partners who govern democratically and openly and who are presiding over prosperous economies. So I think that it is very important that we spend a lot of time making sure that we are bringing all our development assistance resources to bear to make sure that Djibouti continues to grow.

Djibouti faces a number of development challenges. Besides the fact that they basically have to import all of their food, they also face real energy problems. There are blackouts that last for much of the day. Half of the country does not even have access to electricity. There is a very high rate of unemployment, the estimate is about 60 percent of the population, and young Djiboutians, 20 to 24, the unemployment rate is probably above 80 percent.

So we need to continue our traditional development focus on basic health and primary education, but I think we have to do more than that. During the May 5 conversation that the President had with the Djiboutian President, we made a commitment to move into other areas that are very important for Djibouti's development.

In the first instance, we are going to work actively in workforce development to try to help Djiboutian authorities develop the skills of the Djiboutian workforce in a way that is relevant to the private sector. Then in the energy sector we are going to work with other donors, including the World Bank, to try to develop Djibouti's considerable geothermal resources to provide them with some national source of energy that can provide them with a more constant source of power, which in turn I think can help them to attract more private investment, especially more foreign investment.

Djibouti has very ambitious development plans. We think that they have a good vision, but they are going to need help from us and from other donors to get it right, to put in force the right regulatory framework. I am looking forward, as somebody who has worked on development for many years, to do that.

Senator KAINE. Excellent.

Ms. Wells, I wanted to ask a similar question about some sort of economic issues, and maybe especially given Jordan—the degree to which the Syrian refugees really stress an economy that already has a lot of stresses. Jordan is one of the most water-poor countries

in the world. The number of Syrian refugees coming into Jordan taxes a system that is already very, very challenged.

I believe that most now see these refugees, not as a short-term presence, but a longer term presence. So some of the strategies that you might use to deal with the refugee population that might just be there for a short period of time—it now becomes more of a development issue, building water systems rather than providing bottled water, just to use an example.

If I am correct about that, that the refugees are not likely to be returning to Syria any time soon, what are some strategies that we should be looking at in tandem with the Jordanian Government to make sure that the number of refugees does not overly tax this economy that can be fairly fragile?

Ms. WELLS. Thank you. I think the first is to step back and to do as you have, which is to recognize the extraordinary burden and the extraordinary generosity that the Jordanians are displaying in hosting the Syrian community, 80 to 85 percent of whom are living in host communities. The Jordanians have opened their schools to Syrian children. They have opened their hospitals to Syrian refugees. In the north we are seeing schools running double shifts, 80 kids to a class. Hospitals are at full capacity and in some instances running out of medicine.

It obviously places a strong burden on the water infrastructure, with Jordan being—I think there are only three countries in the world that have less accessible water than Jordan. So I think the response has to be two-part: one, continuing to respond appropriately to the crisis conditions that Jordan faces; but two, to be nimble in our response and to reprogram and to redeploy assistance as appropriate, which we have begun to do, whether it is by using moneys to renovate and build new schools, directing more moneys to municipal water sources, taking advantage of existing programs, such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation's $275 million 5-year project to expand water and waste water efficiency, which will touch the lives of three million Jordanians.

So I think in terms of how our aid program is structured for Jordan, we are doing the right things. We are really focused on the resilience that Jordan needs in water, education, sanitation, and health, but to constantly be reassessing what is the burden that is being placed on Jordan and are we responding appropriately.

Our tools do not have to be limited just to assistance. We have a lot of other economic tools at our disposal. We have support for the multilateral programs, like IMF that I have mentioned, coordination with the World Bank and other key donors to make sure we have a consistent and appropriate response. We have a slew of trade mechanisms. Jordan has one of the most open economies in the Middle East, and we can use the free trade agreement, the qualified industrial zones, our bilateral investment treaty, to make sure that we as we build the private sector are also encouraging and helping Jordan achieve the increased growth that it needs.

Then I think energy diversification, so keeping Jordan focused on its own long-term economic sustainability and modernization.

Mr. KELLY. The Jordanian-American Chamber of Commerce paid a visit to us recently here and is very interested in expanding their

ties with American technology and other firms. That is something that I know many of us are interested in working with them on.

The last question I will ask you is about the status of political reforms that are under way in Jordan. Jordan has done a fairly good job of managing different constituencies that in other nations have been harder to manage. The Muslim Brotherhood is a sort of loyal opposition to the monarchy in Jordan and have been treated as a loyal opposition, not marginalized to a degree where they would then seek to engage—not shut out of legitimate political opportunities so that they feel like to be heard they have to carry out illegitimate opportunity.

But talk about sort of ongoing political reform efforts in Jordan and how those are affected by other challenges like the Syrian refugee challenge?

Ms. ALEXANDER. As I mentioned in an earlier answer, there are a variety of political reform initiatives that King Abdullah has taken up in the last 3 years. One of the very important reform initiatives is to take steps to increase the presence and strength of political parties. Jordan is a tribal country, a tribal society, along with a significant Palestinian population. But the Parliament has not reflected, has not really been based on parties. It has been based on tribal leaders and individuals with standing in the community, with one of the sole parties that has a coherent ideology being the Islamic Action Front.

So if you look back at Jordan's elections, until the Islamic Action Front began to boycott the elections they were the single most important party. So some of the reforms that have been taken recently have been to give Jordan simply one man, two votes. You can place one vote, which people presume will go to somebody in your community or a tribal leader, but a second vote is for a national list. We see this as a very positive development and beginning to encourage the formation of other parties.

I agree with your assessment that King Abdullah has ably managed the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. They are a legitimate, as he puts it, part of the Jordanian social fabric. They have been around since the 1940s, recognized by the government. They became a political party in 1992. They never established a militant wing and they have never called for the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy.

So to create a culture where there is consensus, where there is give and take, where all of these parties participate in the elections, I think is a goal. If you look at the parliamentary elections that took place in January 2013, they were judged by many outside observers as being both credible and an improvement on previous elections.

So again, as friends of Jordan I think we want to continue to encourage those kinds of forward-leaning reforms.

Senator KAINE. You mentioned a comment that I just want to underline, which was a comment about the generosity of Jordanians, Turks, Lebanon in particular in dealing with Syrian refugees. The scope of it is just staggering. I know the figures best probably in Lebanon because of my recent visit there, but the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is now the equivalent of one out

of four Lebanon native population. And they have arrived within a space of about three years.

So if you were to think in the United States, if we suddenly had 75 million war refugees show up over a 3-year period, you got to look yourself in the mirror and say, would we be as generous? I bring that point up because sometimes we think of this region as a region of troubles and strife and folks doing horrible things and a lot of atrocities, and there certainly are. We also need to think of it as a region where neighbors do some pretty incredible things.

And the Governments of Turkey and Jordan and Lebanon are pretty different. They are all stressed in their own way, some resource, some with leadership challenges. And yet in each of these nations there has been an extraordinary degree of sacrifice really, to run double shifts in schools, to in a water-poor nation provide water for refugees.

Now, the United States is the single largest funder of assistance to Syrian refugees who have fled borders to other countries, and that is something that we can do and we should do and hopefully we can do more. But it is important to shine a spotlight on what Jordan and again Lebanon and Turkey especially are doing in the midst of this very difficult situation. I am glad you brought that up.

I want to thank you all for this, for the hearing today, for your willingness to serve, and your forthright and thoughtful answers.

I will leave the hearing open officially. If any members of the committee desire to submit questions in writing, I will leave the record open until Thursday at 5 o'clock for those questions to be submitted, and if they are I will trust that you will respond as promptly as you reasonably can.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:42 p.m. the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSE OF ALICE G. WELLS TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The pressures from the Syrian humanitarian crisis on the Government of Jordan and many sectors of its society remain enormous. On April 3, 2014, the Senate passed S. Res. 384, calling on the President to develop and submit to Congress a comprehensive strategy to address the Syrian humanitarian crisis. The strategy is to be submitted within 90 days of the resolution's passage, or by early July.

- If confirmed, what are your objectives for the strategy, and what is the status of the administration's progress in developing and completing it?

Answer. The U.S. Government's Syria policy is guided by six overarching interests—countering violent extremism and preventing the growth of terrorist safe havens, avoiding the collapse of the Syrian state, preventing the transfer or use of chemical weapons, supporting Syria's neighbors, alleviating the humanitarian suffering, and fostering a political transition.

The United States is taking steps to ensure that our humanitarian and development efforts across the region complement and reinforce those of our partners, neighboring countries, international humanitarian organizations, and other donors. Of the roughly $1.7 billion in humanitarian assistance that the United States is providing to respond to the crisis in Syria, more than $268 million is distributed through international organizations and nongovernmental organizations operating in Jordan (Migration and Refugee Assistance, International Disaster Assistance, and Food for Peace (Title II) funding).

Our funding and programs are geared to support both immediate needs and longer term programming. To the maximum extent possible, we seek to have governments and civil society take ownership of programs with continued and robust international support. The United States has been supporting the United Nations efforts to develop a Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework (CRSF). The goal of the CRSF, which was just released on May 8, is to coordinate humanitarian, development, and macrofiscal interventions to meet immediate protection and assistance needs; build the resilience of households, communities and systems; strengthen host-country leadership; and support regional stability. We support the U.N.'s effort to build coherence between traditional humanitarian and development responses through the CRSF. Donor coordination tools such as the CRSF and the National Resilience Plan/Host Community Support Platform in Jordan are useful for making the best use of limited U.S. Government resources during a time of budget constraints and several large-scale crises occurring at one time.

Jordan has an important role to play in identifying the areas where we can best help them, and we will actively seek Jordan's counsel. With regard to Jordan, my primary role will be to focus on the interests that facilitate its security and assist Jordan in its efforts to help alleviate the humanitarian suffering.

Our policies for the specific objectives of alleviating the humanitarian suffering and supporting Jordan's security are well developed, and I would seek to build on them. They include continuing robust humanitarian and economic assistance for Jordan, furthering the Jordan Border Security Project, pursuing and capitalizing on opportunities for military training exercises like Eager Lion, continuing and developing contingency planning and defensive assets in Jordan, increasing cooperation on countering the flow of foreign fighters, and, in light of the extraordinary refugee flows into Jordan, continuing and expanding our extensive cooperation to provide cross-border humanitarian assistance and nonlethal assistance.

RESPONSE OF ALICE G. WELLS TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. In FY 2012, Jordan received $20 million in USAID sustainable WASH funding, which is nearly 5 percent of USAID's total sustainable WASH budget. The 2013 Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act's Report to Congress states that in FY 2012 "more than 1.7 million people in Jordan received improved water service through USAID-funded construction of pumping stations and water conveyance systems. An additional 8,750 plus people now receive improved access to drinking water.

- Since Jordan has 96 percent access to safe water, can you please describe what specific communities USAID WASH funds currently target?
- What populations are represented in the 1.7 million and 8,750 figures, and what is the definition of "improved water service" versus "now receive improved access" used in the annual report to Congress?
- What proportion of WASH funds are supporting Syrian refugees and what kind of WASH programs are being directed to assistance Syrian refugees?
- If confirmed, what do you believe are the United States Government's priorities for WASH funding in Jordan? And how can these funds be leveraged to bring first time access to safe water and sanitation to poor and vulnerable communities?

Answer. Jordan has access to safe water because of its piping network, but this does not mean that the pipes are always full of water. In fact, Jordan's water distribution system is by and large discontinuous and rationed. In the northern governorates, water comes only once every 2 weeks for a few hours at a time, so households are largely dependent on water stored in cisterns and tanks. On average, the wastewater network is much less widespread, with approximately 65 percent of coverage across the country.

The "1.7 million population" refers to those served by the Zaatri pump station and the 48 km-long Zatari-Hofa pipeline, which will serve the 1.7 million residents of Jordan's four northern governorates, Ajloun, Irbid, Mafraq, and Jerash. We are uncertain to what the statement "an additional 8,750-plus people now receive improved access to drinking water"; refers to, however, the impact of our projects in improving access to drinking water in the north alone would account for far broader access to drinking water than that figure: A 20-percent immediate increase in access was anticipated at the startup of the Zaatri pump station, which would amount to approximately 340,000 people receiving improved access to drinking water for this project alone.

The Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), manages the U.S. assistance to Syrian refugees in Jordanian refugee camps, and

USAID directs its assistance to Jordanians and Syrians living in Jordanian host communities. It is estimated that 85 percent of Syrian refugees are living outside of the refugee camps. UNHCR and other relief organizations are keeping comprehensive records and maps detailing percentages of Syrian refugees residing in host communities throughout Jordan, and USAID Mission Amman is currently working to develop ways to better quantify the benefits of our water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs for Syrian refugees receiving this assistance. Considering that water pipelines and wastewater treatment plants benefit all people in Jordan, including Syrians, we can conclude that our assistance is benefiting millions of people.

There are many things Jordan can do to improve water resource management. There is a great need for Jordan to continue improving water policies, tighten up its water system by reducing leaks and theft, and increasing its ability to recover its costs by improved billing procedures. Our USAID mission can help by supporting the Jordanian utility companies, such as the Yarmouk Water Company, in a similar manner that we helped the Aqaba Water Company and will soon be engaging Miyahuna, the Water Utility for Amman. The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has been asked to increase water tariffs and recover more costs as a condition of loan guarantees from the U.S. They also need to continue to find ways to decrease water use in the agricultural sector and better protect their aquifers, while dealing with the high concentration of Syrian refugees living with no access to wastewater treatment networks, particularly in the north of the country, where wastewater network coverage represents only 35–40 percent of households.

NOMINATIONS OF MARK SOBEL, SUNIL SABHARWAL, MATTHEW McGUIRE, AND MILEYDI GUILARTE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Mark Sobel, of Virginia, to be United States Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of two years
Sunil Sabharwal, of California, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of two years
Matthew T. McGuire, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of two years
Mileydi Guilarte, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Alternate Director of the Inter-American Development Bank

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez, Murphy, Corker, and McCain.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. This hearing will come to order.

Today we have four well-qualified nominees for the committee's consideration. These nominees, if confirmed, will represent the United States in the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Inter-American Development Bank, three essential international institutions tasked with international macroeconomic stability, poverty alleviation, and economic development.

Every Presidential administration since Harry Truman's has valued the work of international financial institutions. Most have sought to strengthen them and bolster their capability to reduce poverty and increase economic development. President Eisenhower said they assist the world's poorest in their struggle for "freedom from grinding poverty."

But then, as now, they are also instrumental in keeping America prosperous and secure. It is in our clear interest to support the

global and regional institutions that promote global financial stability, sound fiscal policies, open markets, good governance, and help alleviate poverty. And, in the decades after World War II, they helped keep the peace.

That said, recent efforts to undermine U.S. participation in these institutions in my view is not the answer, and is a direct threat to U.S. global leadership of an international economic system that we largely built.

Do they need reform? Yes. As the world economy evolves, so must these organizations, and the three international financial institutions we will hear about today are all in the process of reform. I look forward to hearing our nominees' thoughts on the progress being made in reforming these organizations, and what each of them intends to do to continue the reform process.

Our first panel will focus exclusively on the IMF. Six weeks ago, this committee approved a Ukrainian bill that included important governance and quota reforms that IMF members agreed to in 2010 in recognition of the key role the IMF played in stabilizing Ukraine's economy, but also because we believed it was time for the United States to ratify reforms that would reinforce the IMF as the first-responder to international financial emergencies.

At the end of the day, supporting the IMF has not been a partisan issue. Presidents Reagan, Clinton, and both Presidents Bush backed legislation to increase IMF resources, and President Reagan called the IMF "the linchpin of the international financial system."

In fact, during our debate on the Ukraine bill, I quoted from a letter to House and Senate leadership from members of the Bretton Woods committee who argued—and I quote—"implementing the IMF quota reforms bolsters our leadership in the Fund and provides the United States with leverage to continue to preserve our national security and economic interests abroad." So I look forward to hearing from our first panel why they believe the IMF as an institution, and the 2010 reforms in particular are critical to continued U.S. global economic leadership.

We welcome all of our nominees and their family members and friends. We also encourage nominees to introduce family members so we can also acknowledge them for their support and shared sacrifice in this process.

With that, let me recognize the distinguished ranking member, Senator Corker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

Senator CORKER. Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling the hearing and to the two of you for your public service in the roles that you now play and hopefully will play in the future.

I appreciate the opportunity, as you mentioned, to examine the roles of these three entities, the IMF, the World Bank, and IDB.

I want to share the chairman's comments and concerns regarding the IMF. I too wish that we had been able to pass the IMF reforms that actually began—I had a good conversation yesterday with Mr. Sobel. But these IMF reforms began early in the Bush administration, and somehow things have been conflated, if you will, recently and people have forgotten the origin of these and have tried to use

the fact that these reforms are continuing to be pushed by this administration as if this is something new.

But I do think it is very important for us to have the kind of reforms put in place at the IMF that have been discussed. The IMF continues to be a viable entity. I think that we do a very poor job here of explaining to people back home that when you have a population of 4.5 percent of the world and yet you share in 22 percent of the world's gross domestic product, it is very important—more important—to our citizens maybe than any other that the world is stable and that we have the opportunity to continue to grow economically, and we do a really, really bad job of that, I think, on this committee but, candidly, in the Senate and as Federal officials in general.

So I appreciate you being here. I do think there are some challenges when you look at the World Bank and just other sources of loans. I want to talk a little bit about that.

But, Mr. Chairman, I just want to close with this. I know that the IMF legislation that we looked at was a part of a Ukraine bill, and I appreciate the way we have done so many things together in a bipartisan way.

I will have to tell you that it is very frustrating to get up every morning and to read the newspapers and to see what Russia is doing inside Ukraine. For Russia to be making statements that they have moved troops away—and we know that they have not—for them to continue to foment problems inside the country as we sort of race—it is almost a game of chicken between now and May 25 when the election takes place. It does not appear that we are doing anything. It looks like Putin is doing a whole lot. And it is very disturbing to me to know that we are in a position as a nation, where we are unwilling to prevent the kind of behavior that Russia is putting forth. And I know that many people on both sides of the aisle share those same frustrations.

But thank you for the hearing today, and I look forward to the witnesses' testimony and I look forward to working with the chairman as we move along to try to put the IMF reforms in place at some point so that, again, we have an institution that is healthy and is able to—even though mistakes were made during the European crisis—and I am sure it will come up today or at least in written questions. Mistakes were made. Having an entity like this that helps usher in economic stability in countries where that does not exist is a good thing. So thank you for the hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you, Senator Corker, and thank you for your work with us on the IMF as part of the Ukraine package and your observations about it, with which we totally agree, and hopefully we can get there at some point in this process.

With that, let me introduce our first panel today: Mark Sobel, nominated to be U.S. Executive Director of the IMF; and Sunil Sabharwal, to be alternative U.S. Executive Director to the IMF.

Mr. Sobel has served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Monetary and Financial Policy, Senior Advisor to the U.S. Executive Director of the IMF, and Director of the Office of International Monetary Policy, as well as other senior positions at Treasury.

Mr. Sabharwal began his career at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He has worked in international payment systems in both the United States and Europe and has held senior positions at First Data Corporation, Western Union, and GE Capital.

Thank you both for your willingness to serve.

Let me just say for the record that your full statements will be included in the record, without objection, in their entirety. We ask you to summarize them in about 5 minutes or so, so that we can enter into a Q&A session. And again, if you have family members here, please feel free to introduce them.

Mr. Sobel.

STATEMENT OF MARK SOBEL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and members of the committee. I am honored that President Obama nominated me to serve as Executive Director of the United States to the International Monetary Fund, and I am grateful to Secretary Geithner, Secretary Lew, and former Under Secretary Lael Brainard for supporting me.

I am delighted to be joined today by my wife, Martha Halperin.

Working with talented Treasury colleagues and senior officials in administrations from both parties, I have had the rare privilege of holding a front row seat in the making of American history for over three decades. As you noted, I have served as an Assistant Financial Attache in Bonn, Germany; Director of the Treasury's International Monetary Policy and Transition Economy Offices; worked in the staff of the U.S. IMF Executive Director; and since 2000, as Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Monetary and Financial Policy. In recent years, I have been proud to play a role in America's leadership in establishing the G20 Leaders process and reforming the IMF.

Seventy years ago, as our brave soldiers fought in World War II to liberate the global from tyranny and dictatorship, our Nation's financial diplomats took the lead in creating a new vision for international economic cooperation. Their vision shunned protectionism and beggar-thy-neighbor currency policies, forces that helped catalyze the war, and instead trumpeted multilateralism and shared prosperity. At the center of that vision, they created the IMF.

Since its inception, the Fund has well served the world economy and U.S. national security and economic interests, whether it be in helping to mitigate economic crises in Latin America in the 1980s, support the transition of the ex-Soviet states in the 1990s, combat the Asian and emerging market crises of the latter 1990s, provide concessional support and debt relief for poverty alleviation in low-income countries, or tackle the European crisis of the past years.

Without the IMF, these developments had the potential to rock geopolitical stability to a much greater extent, often in countries with strategic significance to our national security. Without the IMF, these developments also had the potential to spread more virulently around the world and seriously harm U.S. growth and

jobs through decreased export opportunities, lost foreign investment, and financial shocks.

Throughout my career, I have seen firsthand the IMF's strengths. Its ability to design and support country reform programs is unparalleled. The IMF brings together officials from around the world, creating shared understanding. It fosters multilateral rules of the road. Its technical assistance helps countries build the infrastructure for more robust economic policies. The IMF's surveillance can help prevent crises.

But despite the Fund's strengths, the organization, like any other, has room for improvement, for example, in better providing crisper judgments on global rebalancing and exchange rate issues, strengthening its work on crisis prevention and debt sustainability, supporting pro-poor spending in low income countries, and helping make financial sectors more resilient.

I believe firmly in defending U.S. interests and in advancing multilateralism, as well as in working pragmatically and collegially, with analytic rigor and in a nonpartisan manner. I also believe in the IMF's mission and that our Nation's leadership of the IMF is critical. Those beliefs have guided my career.

If confirmed as U.S. Executive Director, I will work vigorously to strengthen and improve the IMF consistent with those beliefs. I will dedicate myself to doing my utmost to work with Congress to help secure U.S. passage of the 2010 quota and governance reforms.

Again, to have been nominated by the President to represent the United States in the International Monetary Fund, the very institution at the center of America's post-World War II global economic and financial vision, is a tremendous and humbling honor and a responsibility that I am eager to undertake.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sobel follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK SOBEL

Thank you Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and members of the committee. I am honored that President Obama nominated me to serve as Executive Director of the United States to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and I am grateful to Secretary Geithner, Secretary Lew, and former Under Secretary Lael Brainard for supporting me. I am delighted to be joined today by my wife, Martha Halperin.

Working with talented Treasury colleagues and senior officials in administrations from both parties, I have had the rare privilege of holding a front row seat in the making of American history for over three decades. I have served as an Assistant Financial Attaché in Bonn, Germany; Director of Treasury's International Monetary Policy and Transition Economy Offices; a member of the staff of the U.S. IMF Executive Director; and since 2000 as Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Monetary and Financial Policy. In recent years, I have been proud to play a role in America's leadership in establishing the G20 leaders process and reforming the IMF.

Seventy years ago, as our brave soldiers fought in World War II to liberate the globe from tyranny and dictatorship, our Nation's financial diplomats took the lead in creating a new vision for international economic cooperation. Their vision shunned protectionism and beggar-thy-neighbor currency policies, forces that helped catalyze the war, and instead trumpeted multilateralism and shared prosperity. At the center of that vision, they created the IMF.

Since its inception, the Fund has well served the world economy, and U.S. national security and economic interests—whether it be in helping to mitigate economic crises in Latin America in the 1980s, support the transition of the ex-Soviet states in the 1990s, combat the Asian and emerging market crises of the latter

1990s, provide concessional support and debt relief for poverty alleviation in low income countries, or tackle the European crisis of the past years.

Without the IMF, these developments had the potential to rock geopolitical stability to a much greater extent, often in countries with strategic significance to our national security. Without the IMF, these developments also had the potential to spread more virulently around the world and seriously harm U.S. growth and jobs through decreased export opportunities, lost foreign investment, and financial shocks.

Throughout my career, I have seen firsthand the IMF's strengths. Its ability to design and support country reform programs is unparalleled. The IMF brings together officials from around the world, creating shared understanding. It fosters multilateral rules of the road. Its technical assistance helps countries build the infrastructure for more robust economic policies. The IMF's surveillance can help prevent crises. But despite the Fund's strengths, the organization—like any other—has room for improvement, for example, in better providing crisper judgments on global rebalancing and exchange rate issues, strengthening its work on crisis prevention and debt sustainability, supporting pro-poor spending in low income countries, and helping make financial sectors more resilient.

I believe firmly in defending U.S. interests and in advancing multilateralism, as well as in working pragmatically and collegially, with analytic rigor, and in a nonpartisan manner. I also believe in the IMF's mission and that our Nation's leadership of the IMF is critical. Those beliefs have guided my career.

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Again, to have been nominated by the President to represent the United States in the IMF—the very institution at the center of America's post-WWII global economic and financial vision—is a tremendous and humbling honor and a responsibility that I am eager to undertake.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Sabharwal.

STATEMENT OF SUNIL SABHARWAL, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS

Mr. SABHARWAL. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today to present my personal and professional credentials for the position of the United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund.

I am grateful to the President for nominating me to this important office and to Secretary Lew for his confidence and support. I also want to thank your staff for taking the time to meet with me prior to today. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing our shared commitment to make the IMF an even more effective organization and one where U.S. interests are strongly represented, promoted, and defended.

I would like to introduce members of my family who are here with me today, starting with my son, Nicolas, a freshman at Duke University with an interest in engineering and sciences; my daughter Izabella, a freshman at National Cathedral School in high school, who is vying to follow her grandfather to be an Olympian track athlete; and finally, my wife, Gabrielle, whose forensic sciences background and attention to detail actually has helped me a great deal to be able to be sitting here in front of you. Gabrielle and I also share a common passion for the sport of fencing, as we

met 25 years ago in Culver City, CA, at a fencing club and continue our involvement with the sport and the Olympic movement.

The CHAIRMAN. Who wins? [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that was determinative. Go ahead. [Laughter.]

Mr. SABHARWAL. I was born in New Delhi, India, to an Indian father and a Hungarian mother. My parents separated when I was 9, and I moved to Budapest, Hungary, part of the Soviet Bloc at the time. Following my mother's refusal to join the Communist Party, she was denied a business permit, was constantly harassed for her religious beliefs, in the end giving the family no choice but fleeing the country and seeking asylum in the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. I had just finished high school then.

Through the cooperation of the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, and charitable organizations, we received political asylum in the United States, more precisely in Columbus, OH, with the specific assistance of the Upper Arlington Lutheran Church. To date, I will never forget the reception we received in Columbus in December 1983, just a few days before Christmas, and will remain forever grateful to Professor Cole and his family who enabled me to enroll at the Ohio State University a few weeks after my arrival. While I put myself through college with the use of financial aid, work-study, and scholarships, my family moved to California. Upon graduation, I joined them in California to begin my professional career.

When I left Hungary in 1983, I thought that was going to be for good. Little did we know that less than 10 years later, massive political changes would sweep the region free. One of the first institutions created to foster the transition was the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and I was fortunate enough to play a meaningful role in the region's transition as an American citizen and an EBRD employee.

I established the EBRD office in Budapest in early 1992, a time in which Hungary was at the forefront of innovative foreign direct investment legislation and regulations. This experience allowed me to participate in landmark public and private sector transactions, including the first bank and telecom privatizations, infrastructure projects, municipal finance, and venture capital deals. I then transitioned to the EBRD headquarters in London as a member of its financial institutions team, which had the responsibility of investing and lending to banks in the region.

The 5 years I spent at the EBRD had shaped my early professional career and have had a significant impact throughout. I then spent about 10 years working for GE and First Data Corporation, most of it focused on investing in the financial services sector and companies that provide services to the financial services industry. For the last 8 years, I have served as an independent investor and adviser to the same sectors.

As a result of my global upbringing, through which I have had an ability to relate to people around the world, and my 25 years of tenure in the financial services sector, gained in both public and private domains, I am equipped with the experience necessary to carry out successfully the duties, if confirmed, of the U.S. Alternate Executive Director at the IMF. In addition, my language skills and

volunteer experiences are also highly relevant in a body where we need to get representatives of nearly 200 countries to support us on a wide-ranging set of issues.

I look forward to answering your questions and, if confirmed, working with members of the committee on policy matters affecting the IMF.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sabharwal follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SUNIL SABHARWAL

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and distinguished members of the committee—it is an honor to appear before you today to present my personal and professional credentials for the position of United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

I am grateful to the President for nominating me to this important office and to Secretary Lew for his confidence and support. I also want to thank you and the committee's staff members for taking the time to meet with me prior to today. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing our shared commitment to make the IMF an even more effective organization and one where U.S. interests are strongly represented, promoted, and defended.

I would like to introduce members of my family, who are here with me today: starting with my son, Nicolas, who is a freshman at Duke University with an interest in engineering and the sciences. My daughter, Izabella, who is a freshman in high school at the National Cathedral School, and is vying to follow her grandfather to be an Olympian track athlete, and finally my wife, Gabrielle, with a forensic sciences background whose attention to detail has helped me get through all the documents needed prior to me sitting here in front of you. We also share a common passion for the sport of fencing as we met 25 years ago in Culver City, CA, in a fencing club and continue our involvement with the sport and the Olympic movement.

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independent investor and adviser focused on the financial services, or "fintech" sector.

As a result of my global upbringing, through which I gained an ability to relate to people around the world, and my 25 years of tenure in the financial services sector—in both public and private domains—I am equipped with the experience necessary to carry out successfully the duties, if confirmed, of the U.S. Alternate Executive Director at the IMF. In addition, my language skills and volunteer experiences are also highly relevant in a body where we need to get representatives of nearly 200 countries to support us on a wide-ranging set of issues.

I look forward to answering your questions, and, if confirmed, to working with members of the committee on policy matters affecting the IMF.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you both. You have started off very well because neither one of you used your full time, and that is a rarity here at the hearings. So we appreciate that.

Let me start off with you, Mr. Sobel. The United States championed the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms, but we are the only major IMF member country that has yet to ratify them. How would you describe this as impacting U.S. leadership in the IMF? And if confirmed, what actions would you take as the Executive Director to counter any real or perceived decline in U.S. influence?

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you.

I think, as you have suggested, both of you suggest in your statements, it is an absolute priority for the United States to implement the 2010 legislation. The IMF is extremely critical to the United States for our national security, for our economy, for our ability to lead and foster a multilateral system of governance around the world, and it is also crucial to how the world views American leadership. This is an institution we created, and the world looks to us to play a major role in leading it. And when we are the one country that has not passed our legislation, I think the world looks at us and wonders if we truly remain committed to multilateralism and to this institution.

You know, I was struck during the recent spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank. There are many important issues in the global economy. There are issues about how are we going strengthen global growth. What are the risks and the potential tail risks that could undermine our economy? But, in fact, what happened was that the global community ended up spending most of its time focused on what did the inability to secure legislation mean for the IMF. So I think it was a distraction from really some of the very important issues that the world economy faces.

I believe that there is a very strong case for the legislation, for the important role the IMF plays for the United States. I think the legislative package is an excellent one. We are not putting $1 into the IMF, and yet, we are preserving our veto power. We are preserving our leadership and influence, and we are achieving some modernization of the IMF, which is critical for the Fund's future. So it is an excellent package. I will do whatever I can to work with you to make sure that the importance of this legislation for the United States and for the global economy is understood by all.

The CHAIRMAN. And, if confirmed as the Executive Director, until we get to that point, you will have a challenge, when dealing with your counterparts in making them understand that we are truly

committed. And I assume that we can count on you to be able to do that.

Mr. SOBEL. You may, sir. I, in my current position, wear a G20 hat. This issue is very prominent in the G20 as well, and the Secretary, I, and many others have spent a considerable amount of time explaining the situation to others, assuring them that the executive branch remains fully committed to securing passage of this legislation, and we will certainly continue to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you. I would appreciate it if you could discuss the key role the IMF plays in intervening in financial crises such as the ongoing situation in the Ukraine. And as part of that, please explain how ratification of the 2010 reforms would strengthen the IMF's ability to fulfill its mission.

Mr. SOBEL. Unfortunately, countries live beyond their means. They fall into stress, and they come to the IMF often too late. But what the IMF works to do—I would say the country then faces two paths. One is a path of disorderly adjustment. In that path, the country puts in place measures that are half-hearted, piecemeal, and there can be a very sharp, disorderly contraction in the economy that has major spillover effects on the global economy, including the United States.

What the IMF seeks to do is to help the country put in place sound reforms for a market-based economy and provide some financial support, conditioned on implementation of tough reforms, tough reforms that are necessary for the country to live within its means and to tighten its belt, but to provide support to provide for a more orderly and gradual adjustment path that is less disruptive to the people of the country and less disruptive to the global economy. And that is why I think the Fund programs are so important in supporting market economies around the world and lessening the spillback to the United States.

Ratification of the IMF again is absolutely vital for strengthening the IMF. We want the membership of the IMF to feel part of a multilateral system. We benefit from a multilateral system, and we benefit from countries playing according to multilateral rules of the road. What we do not want to see is the world economy splinter off into regional blocs. We do not want to see a Ukraine that is dependent upon its neighborhood and not have the support of the international community. And so to do that, we need a modernized IMF that the membership feels is relevant and legitimate, and the 2010 reforms will help precisely do that.

The CHAIRMAN. I have one last question for you. Last year, I joined 60 other Senators in a letter to Secretary Lew raising concerns about currency manipulation. A number of studies estimate large U.S. job losses due to direct and sustained intervention in foreign exchange markets by our major trading partners. And know that I am deliberately not referring to the effects of central bank monetary policies.

We in Congress are looking for a robust administration action plan. Now, I understand Treasury's preference has been to address this through the IMF and G20, not through trade negotiations, but so far such attempts have fared poorly.

If confirmed, would you use your position to motivate IMF leadership to press currency manipulators to move forward toward market-based exchange rates?

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you for that question.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the IMF was created—one of the reasons it was created was specifically to overcome beggar-thy-neighbor currency practices which, as I noted, was one of the factors that gave rise to the disruptions in World War II.

Foreign exchange surveillance is a core mandate of the International Monetary Fund. This is another area referencing what Senator Corker said at the beginning. Senator Corker said that the governance reforms in the IMF have been pursued in both last administrations. The same can be said about IMF and foreign exchange surveillance. Both administrations very actively since 2005 have pressed the IMF to exercise firmer and more rigorous surveillance over exchange rates. And as you have acknowledged, we have also pushed this case very heavily in the G20.

In response, I think the IMF has significantly improved its analysis. It has improved its coverage of exchange rate issues in its article 4 work and other papers. I still feel that there is more to be done. As I indicated in my statement, I feel there is more to be done in providing crisper assessments and judgments in this area, and I would like to assure you that, if confirmed, I will definitely press the IMF to undertake more vigorous and more robust foreign exchange surveillance.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Now, Mr. Sabharwal, since it is only Senator Corker and I, I am going to take advantage and ask one more question and will then turn to him.

Being the alternate is important as well because if Mr. Sobel is not, for any reason, acting and you are going to get engaged, I want to know how you think. So I would appreciate if you could give us your perspective, as someone with extensive experience in the private financial sector, on the importance of the IMF in ensuring international financial stability, and why you think—assuming you think—full implementation of the proposed 2010 quota and governance reforms are justified and necessary.

Mr. SABHARWAL. Thank you for the question.

The IMF really sits in the center of the global economy. One of its missions is to avert crises, and if a crisis does happen, to contain them. Whenever the private sector looks to invest, the first item of risk it is looking at is the risks that the IMF is addressing, macroeconomic risks, which includes financial economic currency as well. Therefore, a strong IMF creates strong global economies, which then leads to a growing economy that is helpful for us in the United States as about 15 percent of our GDP is based on exports creating 10 million jobs, and of course, a stronger global economy results in more exports. When there is stability around the world, then those countries are also investing more back home.

As a business person, I would think that a proposal where each U.S. dollar—our dollars—is being matched four to one by other countries in the objective of strengthening the IMF, and on top of that, we are then the only country with a veto right. That is a very strong proposition and one, from a businessman's perspective, I

would take because it benefits us. It is leveraging our capital. It is growing the global economy that is creating jobs back home. The strength of the global economy again is enabling others to invest in our country, travel to our country, again beneficial for the U.S. economy.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again, thank you both for being here.

Just for those who might be looking on and members who are not here, explain the relationship, if you would, between the actual person and the alternate and how the two interrelate and why we have it set up in that way, if you would briefly.

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you, Senator.

The Office of the United States Executive Director is responsible for being the voice of the United States. In the IMF, some people talk about our votes. So we cast the votes. The office does. The Fund tries to operate most of the time on consensus, but we also provide the intellectual heft from the United States to articulate and represent our views.

I would say one thing I have learned in my career is that virtually any issue of importance to the international monetary system is discussed in the IMF board.

So what does the IMF office do?

Senator CORKER. Before we get to that, just if you would specifically—there is an Executive Director and then there is an alternate. Explain why we have it set up that way, if you would briefly.

Mr. SOBEL. It goes back to the original governance of the Fund, but of course, there is just a tremendous amount of work that goes to the board, and the two are there to represent the United States in the board, to discuss with colleagues around the world and build a consensus to advance U.S. positions. And of course, if one or the other is not present, the other would serve as the representative.

Senator CORKER. So you have to be present to vote. Is that correct?

Mr. SOBEL. Yes.

Senator CORKER. You cannot do that by proxy.

Mr. SOBEL. Absolutely not.

Senator CORKER. So is that the reason you have an alternate?

Mr. SOBEL. Absolutely.

The IMF board meets three to four times a week. They are bringing hundreds of papers to the board for discussion and presentation of ideas every year, and the office needs to be positioned to read all the papers and weigh in on each and every one of them. It is a tremendous volume of work.

Senator CORKER. So, Mr. Sobel, we had a meeting yesterday, and I have been listening to your testimony today and I appreciate it. You used the word "intellectual" a minute ago. You all provide the intellectual work to analyze what is happening. And you seem very quiet and unassuming and sort of reserved. It is kind of refreshing when you think about the environment I live in daily.

But on the other hand, I would like to ask this question. I mean, you talk about influencing others. And I know you probably have a very high IQ, beyond certainly the person asking the question.

I guess the question is how much on the EQ side is relevant to the job. I mean, is this an influencing job where you are out trying to influence other people? You are relatively quiet and I am just wondering what kind of skills you possess relative to getting other people from other countries who have divergent views to come your way.

Mr. SOBEL. Well, thank you for that question. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let me forewarn you before you answer. Do not take Senator Corker's self-effacing way to suggest that somehow your intellect is greater than his. This is his "oh, shucks" way of getting to people. So I just want you to know.

Senator CORKER. Thank you.

Mr. SOBEL. I thank you for that. I had not been fooled.

Well, first of all, I thank you for perceiving me for being quiet and unassuming. I know many people who would not agree with your assessment.

Over my career, I have come to appreciate that the United States leads not only by virtue of being the largest country in the world, but by having good people who are smart and can put forward strong reasoning and lead with analysis and good ideas. Obviously, we have to be collegial. I think my colleagues around the world know that if I need to be a tough negotiator, I can be a tough negotiator. But I am a straight talker and I am on my game.

Senator CORKER. How much of the job, though seriously—I know we talked a little bit yesterday. But how much of the job is you influencing others through discussion and conversation? How much of it is just analyzing some paper and people reading and making a decision based on what is in a paper?

Mr. SOBEL. The two actually come together. You read papers. You form your analysis, but then you go talk to others to form the best position and to exchange ideas on it. And I think that really is in large measure the essence of what one does in the IMF executive board.

Senator CORKER. Well, I know we talked a little bit about the quota package or you did with the chairman. I think there has been some discussion on our side of the aisle, not by me, but some have questioned the difference between the NAB and the risk that our Nation has relative to that versus going ahead and making the investment that is called for by the IMF reforms.

Would you mind using this opportunity to distinguish between the two and to talk a little bit about that risk? I think it would be your view that the investment is not any more risky than having the NAB out there, or at least I think that is what it was yesterday. But if you would, please share your thoughts in that regard.

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you.

Both our contributions to the NAB and quotas I feel are extremely secure. I feel our reserve claims on the IMF are completely secure. The safeguards that would apply to the NAB or the quota are the same. When NAB or quota resources are lent out, they are lent out subject to strong conditionality. When the IMF lends to country X, our exposure as a nation is not to country X. It is to the Fund's balance sheet. The Fund's balance sheet is rock solid. The Fund is regarded around the world as a de facto preferred

creditor. The Fund has strong reserves. It has strong unrealized gold profits that could back our loans in case there were any questions. So the Fund's balance sheet is rock solid. I think that is beyond debate.

Senator CORKER. Has the Fund ever lost—has the Fund ever had a year where losses took place?

Mr. SOBEL. No, absolutely not.

Senator CORKER. Has it ever lost money on a single loan?

Mr. SOBEL. The Fund has not lost money.

Senator CORKER. On any loans ever.

Mr. SOBEL. They at times have extended loans, and some principal has gone into arrears but it has been repaid.

Senator CORKER. So I think one of the things that people who criticize the reforms and maybe criticize the IMF in general are concerned about is there have been a lot of exceptional access loans recently. It seems to be growing. People get concerned. Obviously, the IMF has had a solid track record, as you just alluded to, but people over time, as they watch things happen that are, quote, extraordinary, meaning they are not the norm, get concerned about the IMF and the governance there, if you will, becoming more lax and potentially exposing taxpayers' losses. I wonder if you might respond to the fact that we have done much more of that recently than in the past. We, meaning the IMF.

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you.

One observation I would make about the way the global economy has changed that is directly relevant to your question is that if you think back to the 1970s and 1980s countries developed current account issues, problems, and by tightening macro policies, they could adjust their current accounts.

What has happened—and this is a tremendous benefit to the world economy—is that we are seeing countries around the world that have become more integrated into the global financial system. Their capital accounts play a much more pronounced role in the financing of the country, and when they face serious stress, capital can flee very quickly. And I think that is part of the reason why, starting with Mexico in 1994 and continuing through the Asia crisis, is that you have sent the Fund need to rely more on exceptional access programs to provide countries with resources to stop liquidity runs, to stop liquidity pressures and the like.

So no policymaker that I know of has ever liked approving exceptional access programs, but it was felt that one needed to do this for the stability of the global economy.

Now, in the case of Greece, this issue has arisen, as you know, and it has been debated in the press. What I wanted to say about the issue in that context is that in mid-2010, I feel that Greece was looking potentially at a massive default or a departure from the euro, and it was also a time when Europe had not built the firewalls that were really needed to protect the Eurozone. And had Greece defaulted or left the euro at the time, I feel there would have been potentially a massive contagion also within the Eurozone. This would have had a tremendously detrimental impact not only on Europe, not only on the world, but particularly the United States. There were a lot of forecasts that I saw at the time that said if it had been highly contagious, it could have pushed us

back into recession at a time when we were just beginning to grow our way out of the 2009 financial crisis, and that would have meant a loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs in the United States.

And between May and July of 2010, the stock market in the United States declined by about 15 percent, largely on these developments, and it wiped off, I was told, $2 trillion in capitalization. So those are the savings of American works. Those are their pensions.

And so I think that the IMF, working with the Europeans to provide support for Greece, even if it was exceptional access, was very much in the interests of the United States and the global economy.

Senator CORKER. Is it OK if I can go just a little bit longer? I know I am already over, and I appreciate the extra time.

So in the case of Greece in particular, there were actually allegations that the IMF not only did something exceptional but also sort of bent the rules. And that news—that kind of came out at a time which made it difficult, if you will, when we were looking at IMF reforms. Do you want to talk a little bit about that and the fact that it actually looked like maybe the IMF staff—it just seemed there was a little shading of what the current situation was in order to make this happen. And should that concern policymakers here in Washington?

Mr. SOBEL. I would be pleased to answer that.

So when the exceptional access criteria were developed in the early 2000s, Under Secretary John Taylor, whom you may know, played a role in advancing that. As I said, no policymaker liked approving exceptional access loans. And he felt that there could be perhaps a more systematic and rigorous process for examining whether such loans met certain criteria: sustainability, could the country regain market access and the like. And we developed the exceptional access criteria.

Now, there were a number of loans, even then, that were approved that did not fulfill all the criteria of the exceptional access. I think Turkey, Uruguay, Argentina, maybe even Brazil back then that we approved the did not meet the criteria.

So if we fast forward to—so I guess the point is I always thought of the criteria as guidelines but not rigid rules. They were to help us think through the case and whether it made sense.

If we fast forward to the Greek case, the IMF felt that there was a question as to whether there was a high probability of sustainability of the program. So they put into the second criteria systemic exception. And they put this to the board, which under the Fund's governance is the body that, with requisite voting power, is duly constituted to approve such loans and that policy change, and the board approved that. Everybody read the paper. Everybody in the world knew what they were doing. The shareholders did it, and I outlined the reasons why I felt at the time this was absolutely the right thing to do for the world economy and for the U.S. economy.

Senator CORKER. So I know that I have gone over and unfortunately so long that now there is another member. And I have messed up the chairman's schedule. But I have a couple of questions and I am going to ask you directly in writing. I talked to you a little bit yesterday about the Argentina bonds issue and whether you were involved in trying to get a brief written outside of the

Treasury oversight, if you will. So I am going to ask you a couple of other questions in writing.

But I thank you both for your willingness to serve in this way and your testimony today. Thank you very much.

I am sorry to take so long.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator, my pleasure.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I actually will not belabor this meeting.

Thank you very much, both, for being here. Mr. Sobel, I am sure you have covered the topic of Ukraine in your remarks and some of the back and forth. Maybe you have answered this, but let me just pose it to you and if you have, you can expound upon it.

I appreciate all of the thought that the IMF has given to the conditions upon which support has been granted to the Ukrainian Government. A lot of outstanding questions remain about their ability to repay that loan, especially given some of their past history with this kind of assistance.

What is the relationship between the ability of Ukraine to normalize trade relations with Russia and their ability ultimately to pay back the money that has been lent and will be lent? Or is there an ability to have a frozen conflict over the course of 5 or 10 years and still be able to repay their obligations? Ultimately, obviously, we believe that there is going to be an ability for Ukraine to have a relationship with Europe but also have a significant relationship with Russia. But if that were not to happen in the course of the next 10 years, does that potentially compromise their ability to pay back that money and what role would the IMF have then in trying to facilitate some normalization of relations after the temporary hostilities, that we hope are temporary, abate?

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

I think the IMF's loan for Ukraine is absolutely vital. I think Ukraine, after many years of a difficult policy experience, fits and starts, faces a critical moment, as I know you do. And we are keenly interested in seeing a Ukraine that is on the path of reform, that becomes an economy that is able to sustain its finances, to stand on its own feet, to trade and interact with the world, the whole world, and to lessen its vulnerability and dependence to its neighbors.

And that is what the IMF package seeks to do. Obviously, it is going to be a very tough program, and given the history of Ukraine with the IMF, we are going to have to be very vigilant and make sure that the tough reforms that Ukraine needs to take are implemented faithfully. These, as you know, involve addressing extraordinarily heavy subsidization of energy in the economy. I was told that basically Ukrainian consumers pay 20 percent of the cost of energy, and this results in a subsidy of about 8 percent of GDP to the economy. And so it just puts an enormous burden on them, but it also puts a tremendous dependence upon them on the region. And it also then puts huge pressure on their fiscal policy and whatnot. And given that Ukraine has had an overvalued exchange rate for a long time, it is not the most competitive economy and it is addressing those issues.

I think if Ukraine is able to address those issues—and it is going to be tough. We are going to have to monitor it very carefully—there is the prospect that Ukraine can put itself on its own feet and be able to interact on a much more market-oriented basis with the rest of the world.

And so I feel that the IMF is offering that multilateral path forward and is absolutely essential. But Ukraine will have to pay its energy bills, and that is part and parcel of the program that is being put forward for the country.

The IMF has an excellent repayment record. It is regarded as the world's de facto preferred creditor. The IMF is always repaid. And I have no doubt that Ukraine will repay the IMF, as it always has in the past. But I very much hope that this time we will be able to see Ukraine embark on a much bolder reform path, tackle the corruption and governance problems that the country has had, and make significant progress forward.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Sobel.

Let me just ask one thing of you, that as we implement the repayment terms, I think it is important to understand, as I know you do, that there is going to be enormous pain with respect to the conversions that the Ukrainian economy has to make to move away from these dramatic inefficiencies and oversubsidization of energy prices. But the result of moving too quickly and too rapidly is a corresponding rapid undermining of support for this new government, which ultimately I think is the only one that has the potential to deliver on these reforms.

I know this is always a tension that the IMF faces when trying to press economies for these types of reforms, but in Ukraine, which is different than some of the other European countries that have been offered these assistance packages, they have an alternative. They can always go back to a financial and economic dependence on Russia. Ultimately this path forward, one in which they are in partnership with the IMF and Europe, is better for Ukraine, better for the continent and ultimately I think better for the United States. And being careful about the timing and the terms upon which we ask them to make reforms is integral to the ability of this new government to be able to stand on its two feet in the long run.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOBEL. I fully agree with that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Sobel, at any time during the last year, did you urge officials of the Government of Mexico to file an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court, taking the side of a foreign government against U.S. investors?

Mr. SOBEL. No, sir. The Mexican Government asked the U.S. Treasury about the litigation, but the Mexican Government decided on its very own to file, as did France and Brazil. We did not advocate that.

The Secretary was asked about this recently in a hearing in the House, and he also indicated that Mexican officials have spoken to him and that he had interacted with them on this issue and ex-

plained the longstanding concerns of the United States on this issue.

Senator MCCAIN. So I take it that your answer is you did not urge officials of the Government of Mexico to file an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. SOBEL. No.

Senator MCCAIN. Did you recommend to the Government of Mexico that they do that?

Mr. SOBEL. No.

Senator MCCAIN. Did you urge or express support for the IMF filing a brief without the approval of your own superiors at the Treasury Department?

Mr. SOBEL. The IMF decided on its own that it wanted to file a brief and then communicated that through the U.S. ED's Office to the Treasury. This was known in the Treasury. There were senior level discussions of the issue and staff level discussions. And Secretary Lew again said in the hearings a few weeks ago that he had discussed this matter with the IMF.

Senator MCCAIN. So at no time during last year did you urge the International Monetary Fund officials to file an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. SOBEL. It was their decision. They decided. We did not encourage or discourage them. This was their decision.

Senator MCCAIN. Are you aware of any other examples in which the IMF has intervened in a domestic court case in a member state?

Mr. SOBEL. So I am not a lawyer. I am told that it is rare for IMFs, the international financial institutions, to do so, but that they have. And I would be happy to submit for the record what our lawyers have come up with in that regard.

[The information requested was not available at the time this transcript went to press.]

Senator MCCAIN. And I assume you do not know why the IMF originally had the impression that the United States supported the filing and why that impression needed to be corrected.

Mr. SOBEL. I think you would have to ask Madame LeGarde.

Senator MCCAIN. So you have no idea.

Mr. SOBEL. No, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, do you have personal views on the continuing litigation between U.S. investors in Argentina over Argentina's refusal to settle its defaulted debt?

Mr. SOBEL. So this is a longstanding issue, as you know. It involves a clause in sovereign bonds that the United States has felt the interpretation of the clause is important for the orderliness and predictability of the sovereign debt process, as well as for New York's role as a financial center.

The Bush administration filed a case in 2004—filed an amicus in 2004 with the appellate court, and the Treasury also filed two briefs in 2012 on this same issue. So there is a longstanding concern in the Treasury Department—well, not only Treasury. It is Treasury, State, and Department of Justice that all come together and weigh in on these issues. There is a longstanding concern that has existed since 2004, if not earlier, on this issue and I think that

remains the view of many. That remains the view in the Government.

Senator MCCAIN. Is it not a fact that Argentina has refused to settle its defaulted debt even though when the bonds were issued, they pledged to submit to U.S. court judgments and waive their sovereign immunity? Argentina's current leadership is defying U.S. courts and refuses to even negotiate with its creditors. And is it not true that the U.S. courts have consistently ruled against Argentina in the matter, most notably in the unanimous ruling by a panel of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals last August? It is my understanding that you disagree with that court's ruling. Do you disagree with that court's ruling?

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you.

I want to be clear. We do not condone Argentina's behavior. We have urged Argentina to honor its commitments. We have had a policy for many years of opposing MDB lending to Argentina. Our interest in the matter has related, as provided for in our briefs, to our broader concerns about the impact of this issue on—again, it comes back to the orderliness and predictability of the sovereign debt restructuring process.

It is just an issue about Argentina. We have seen a tremendous uptick in such litigation around the world over the last decade or so. There was recently an academic article, and I would be happy to provide to your staff after this, which actually contains a catalog of all the increased holdout litigation, but it affects countries like Liberia and Zaire and others around the world. That is the concern in the United States.

Senator MCCAIN. Do you agree or disagree with the court's ruling?

Mr. SOBEL. The court has ruled as it is.

Senator MCCAIN. I repeat my question, sir. Do you agree or disagree with the court's ruling? It is a pretty straightforward question.

Mr. SOBEL. I appreciate that, Senator. My job is to provide advice to the Secretary of the Treasury. The Treasury——

Senator MCCAIN. I am aware of what your job is. I would like to know whether you agree or disagree with the court's ruling. As I say for the second time, it is a pretty straightforward question. You are free to elaborate on your view, but I would like to know whether you agree or disagree.

Mr. SOBEL. I continue to believe that the court's ruling has given—gives rise to the questions that we have had for over a decade——

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Sobel, you know, this is really getting a little frustrating. It is a fairly straightforward question. I would like to know whether you agree or disagree with the court's ruling, and you can elaborate on it however you want.

Mr. SOBEL. Senator——

The CHAIRMAN. Let me just ask because I want to wrap this up. Do you have an opinion? If you have an opinion, yes. If you do not have an opinion, then your answer is you have no opinion on the ruling.

Mr. SOBEL. I have an opinion.

The CHAIRMAN. Maybe it is not your job to have an opinion on the ruling.

Mr. SOBEL. OK. Senator, I have an opinion. I continue to be concerned that the court's ruling could upset the orderliness and predictability of the sovereign debt restructuring process. So, yes, I have concerns about the court's ruling. But that is me speaking personally. As to what the U.S. Government does, that will be a matter that will be determined by the Department of Justice, the Department of the Treasury, and the Department of State.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Let me thank both of you for your testimony. Because we are going to have votes in a few minutes, I want to get to the second panel. There are other questions. I do not want Mr. Sabharwal to think he walked away that easily. We have a few other questions, but I am sure you will both be able to answer them.

If questions are provided for the record, I would urge you to answer them expeditiously because the sooner you answer them, the more quickly we can consider you at a business hearing for the committee's vote.

And with the gratitude of the committee for your testimony and your willingness to serve, this panel is excused.

Let me bring up our second panel. We have Matthew McGuire, nominated to be the U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and Mileydi Guilarte, nominated to be the Alternate U.S. Executive Director to the Inter-American Development Bank.

Mr. McGuire is the Assistant to the Secretary and Director of the Office Business Liaison at the Department of Commerce. He previously worked as a senior executive in the financial services industry, and has been active with nonprofit and civic organizations throughout his career.

Ms. Guilarte has served at USAID, the United Nations, the World Bank, and the IMF, giving her a broad perspective on global economic development and poverty alleviation efforts.

Welcome to both of you.

Again, I will just state for the record that your opening statements will be fully included in the record for their entirety, without objection. I would ask you to summarize them in about 5 minutes. And if you do have family members or friends here, please feel free to introduce them prior to making your statement.

Mr. McGuire.

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW T. McGUIRE, PH.D., OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS

Dr. MCGUIRE. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor and a privilege to be here as President Obama's nominee for Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

I have enjoyed meeting some of your staff in the last few weeks, and I look forward to answering your questions today.

I am, as you mentioned, fortunate to have a number of family members with me, and I would like to acknowledge them before I begin. First, my wife, Michelle, is here with our two daughters, Alexandra and Charlotte. My mother, Georgianna McGuire, is here, as is my brother, Eric and his wife, Stacy. My uncle and aunt, John and Lynne McGuire, and their son and my cousin, Jason, as well as my in-laws and my other parents, Bobby and Dianne Mance. I am from D.C. as I will come back to in a minute and so many family who are here.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you for populating the hearing. We appreciate it. [Laughter.]

Dr. MCGUIRE. Certainly. I try to be helpful.

My mother was part of the first Peace Corps group ever to go overseas, Ghana 1, back in 1961. She was the first person in her family to go to college, having worked her way through, and when she graduated, she heard President Kennedy's call to reach out beyond America's shores and make a difference, however small or however large that might be. She taught English in a small town in Ghana called Tema, and many years later, a student of hers from Tema's secondary school became one of my professors at Brown University. As you might imagine, I grew up hearing many stories about those sorts of connections, and I grew up hearing about the importance of America's role in the world, especially through its uniquely American institutions like the Peace Corps.

My father, who died when I was 6 years old, also served in the Peace Corps in what was then East Pakistan and is now Bangladesh. He spent most of his career working on international affairs as well, and his influence on me has been considerable even in his absence.

I also grew up working in my family's business here in Washington, DC, the McGuire Funeral Service. My great grandfather, Robert Grayson McGuire, founded the funeral home in 1912, and when I was old enough I began spending my summers and my weekends there, washing cars, arranging flowers, shoveling snow off the driveway, and even acting as a pallbearer when a family was in need of another set of hands. And I will always remember that my mother and my uncle paid me minimum wage and no more, punching a time clock like everyone else, for every hour and every minute that I worked there.

Through the course of watching my grandfather, my mother, my aunt, and my uncle run the funeral home, I learned numerous things. I learned how important it is to have a bank that provides credit in bad times, as well as good, about how having economic independence makes it easier to engage with the political issues of the day, like the civil rights movement, which my family was deeply involved in, and about the pride and responsibility that comes from being able to hire more people as your company grows. These are simple yet powerful things that I carry with me to this day.

The first part of my career was squarely focused on issues of economic equality and how public policies can increase the possibilities of ordinary citizens to raise their incomes and have a shot at realizing their dreams. I got a Ph.D. in anthropology from Harvard,

finishing in 1998, and my dissertation was on the redevelopment of public housing in Chicago. During that time, I also spent several months in Ethiopia and Eritrea researching the relationship between those countries shortly after the end of their 30-year-long war. And when I finished my Ph.D., I ran a welfare-to-work job training program in New York before joining a firm that helped U.S. cities redevelop public housing projects into mixed-income communities.

In 2003, I moved into the financial services industry, and I spent the next 8 years working for several mutual fund and hedge fund companies, raising capital and serving as a senior executive in three entrepreneurial and dynamic firms. During that time, I began to more fully understand the role that financial markets play in our economy and how interconnected the global economy is as a result of the ease with which capital moves across national borders, industry sectors, and asset classes. In an era where CEO's and investors can deploy their next dollars or euros or ryal almost anywhere in the world at almost a moment's notice, it is increasingly important that countries like ours pay close attention to their financial positions and that they strive to maintain and strengthen the integrity of their capital markets.

And that is what I would like to close with. Should this committee and the full Senate confirm me, you can be sure that I will undertake the role of Executive Director with that very sensibility in mind at all times. I will strive to be a sound steward of our country's capital at the bank and I will work to ensure that each dollar we commit is used to support the values that have proven so durable since America's founding, that open societies are the strongest societies, that transparent systems are the most successful systems, and that those countries which endeavor to give all of their citizens a fair shot at becoming educated, being healthy, and achieving economic independence are the countries that will succeed no matter where they happen to be located. Those are just a few of the values I have watched President Obama champion for many years now, and I would be honored to carry them forward on his behalf and on the country's behalf as the Executive Director of the bank.

I look forward to answering any questions you might have, and I thank you again for allowing me to come before you today.

[The prepared statement of Dr. McGuire follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MATTHEW T. MCGUIRE, PH.D.

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor and a privilege to be here, as President Obama's nominee for Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. I have enjoyed meeting some of you and your staff in the last few weeks, and I look forward to answering your questions today.

I am fortunate to have a number of family members with me, and I would like to acknowledge them before I begin. First, my wife, Michelle, is here with our two daughters, Alexandra and Charlotte. My mother, Georgianna McGuire, is here; as is my brother, Eric, and his wife, Stacy. My uncle and aunt, John and Lynne McGuire, are here as well; and so are my in-laws and my "other parents" Bobby and Dianne Mance.

My mother was part of the first Peace Corps group ever to go overseas, "Ghana I," back in 1961. She was the first person in her family to go to college, having worked her way through, and when she graduated she heard President Kennedy's call to reach out beyond America's shores and to make a difference however small

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I also grew up working at my family's business here in Washington, DC, the McGuire Funeral Service. My great-grandfather, Robert Grayson McGuire, founded the funeral home in 1912, and when I was old enough I began spending my summers and my weekends there, washing cars, arranging flowers, shoveling snow off the driveway, and even acting as a pallbearer when a family was in need of another set of hands. And I will always remember that my mother and my uncle paid me minimum wage and no more, punching a time clock like everyone else, for every hour and every minute that I worked there.

Through the course of watching my grandfather, my mother, my aunt and my uncle, run the funeral home, I learned numerous things. I learned about how important it is to have a bank that provides credit in bad times as well as good; about how having economic independence makes it easier to engage with political issues of the day, like the civil rights movement, which my family was deeply involved in; and about the pride and responsibility that comes from being able to hire more people as your company grows. These are simple, yet powerful things that I carry with me to this day.

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I look forward to answering any questions you might have, and I thank you again for allowing me to come before you today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Guilarte.

STATEMENT OF MILEYDI GUILARTE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTER–AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Ms. GUILARTE. Thank you, Chairman. Before I begin, I would like to introduce my family: my mother, Zenaida, my sister, Maida, my sister-in-law, Meda, my brother, Jose, and my father, Jose.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama nominated me to serve as the Alternate Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank. I am also grateful to Secretary Lew and Assistant Secretary Marisa Lago for supporting me.

I am also grateful to my family, friends, and colleagues that are present today for their love, encouragement, and unwavering support. I specially would like to thank my mother, Zenaida, for inspiring me to be better each day.

If confirmed, I will bring to the IDB a deep understanding of Latin America, solid experience with international development, a strong belief in the value of public service, and the commitment to relentlessly promote the U.S. interests in the region.

Representing the United States at the IDB, an institution created to support the economic and social development of Latin America, is a humbling yet vital undertaking. If confirmed, I would be the first Latina in nearly 30 years to hold this important position.

Let me take the opportunity to tell you a little bit about my background, which has shaped how I came to pursue a career in international development. Born in Cuba, I left Havana for the United States at an early age with my family in search of a better life with only a single blue suitcase in our hands. I spent my formative years in Miami, where I worked side by side with my parents in flea markets each weekend to help make ends meet. These experiences taught me the value of discipline and hard work. I was the first member of my family to graduate from college, and I feel deeply blessed to have prospered in America.

While in graduate school, I focused on developing a solid academic foundation to understand economic, political, and social issues as they impact development and democracy.

After graduation, my deep commitment to the promotion of democracy and human rights led me to work and live in various countries around the globe. Professionally I have worked in countries as diverse as India, East Timor, the Philippines, and the Republic of the Maldives. Through these experiences, I deepened my leadership skills and learned how critical the interaction between financial institutions, donors, and civil society are in the development of the world's poorest nations.

At the World Bank and at the United Nations, I worked on conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, and strengthening emerging democracies. Most recently, at the United States Agency for International Development, I worked in El Salvador shepherding an interagency initiative which supported broad-based economic growth and citizen security. These experiences allowed me to appreciate the challenges of working within complex multilateral

institutions and develop the skills to help promote effective initiatives in that environment.

Thinking about Latin America has been a constant throughout my life. The opportunity to represent our great country at the Inter-American Development Bank is a particular honor for me as an American born in Latin America.

If confirmed, I will work diligently to advance U.S. objectives at the Inter-American Development Bank by carefully stewarding the resources of the U.S. taxpayer and promoting greater accountability, transparency, and effectiveness. I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and your staff.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Guilarte follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MILEYDI GUILARTE

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Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you both for your testimony.

Just like the previous panel, you have extraordinary personal backgrounds, and we always marvel about how people can come forth from their different backgrounds and engage in public service. So we applaud you in that respect.

And your father is probably the smartest person here. He has a guayabera on. I wish I could get away with that here. [Laughter.]

But in any event, let me ask you, Mr. McGuire. The World Bank is now in the second year of President Kim's ambitious reform plan to refocus the bank on its twin missions of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and promoting shared prosperity.

What is your assessment of that progress to date? Certainly, strong U.S. leadership is essential in this process. If confirmed, in addition to your assessment, what interaction would you expect to have with President Kim's reform program?

Dr. MCGUIRE. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

You are absolutely right. Dr. Kim has undertaken significant changes at the bank in terms of how it operates and those two goals that you outlined. I am quite supportive to this point of the efforts he is undertaking. Anytime there is significant change in an institution, there are hiccups and bumps and I think that the changes he is making are significant ones, and as a result, it is imperative as the Executive Director, the United States maintain close focus on how it is all going and whether or not the capital that we entrust to the bank continues to carry out the purposes that the board has approved them to do.

I would say that one of the things in particular he has done I applaud, which is a move toward practice areas or in the business world we called verticals, and moving toward aligning the experts in agriculture, in education, in energy in such a manner that they really can spread their expertise more effectively across the many regions working with the country directors who understand the local environment the best. I have seen that model work quite well in the private sector, and while it takes time for it to really take root, it is one thing in particular that I think is quite commendable. And I look forward to working with Dr. Kim closely on seeing its execution all the way through.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Guilarte, what is your perspective on how the IDB initiatives complement U.S. foreign policy goals for this hemisphere? And do you believe there are areas where the United States and the IDB could coordinate more closely to be able to further mutual objectives?

Ms. GUILARTE. Thank you, Chairman.

The IDB plays a critical role in the region. As the largest shareholder at 30 percent, we have a unique opportunity to really shape the way that we conduct our relationship with the region. It helps in a number of ways—our assistance to the bank. Primarily it helps promote and advance our national interests, our security agenda. It helps promote U.S. opportunities and increase investment to U.S. firms, create jobs. So in a number of ways, our assistance goes a long way. A stable economy for our neighbors means a stable economy for us as well.

In terms of our collaboration, I think there is a lot of work being done right now between the IDB and the World Bank. One great

example is for the Haiti reconstruction that we have worked very closely on. So there are a lot of opportunities. It does not mean that we cannot do more. Absolutely. And if confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleague at the World Bank to promote and encourage more collaboration, ensuring that we do not duplicate any of our efforts.

The CHAIRMAN. One other question for you. Argentina has failed to honor international obligations to the IMF, the United States, and other Paris Club creditors and to private bondholders. And I understand that the administration's policy since 2011 has been to oppose all MDB loans, including from the IDB, to Argentina, and that the IDB is currently large inactive in Venezuela.

If confirmed, will you assure us that you will work to ensure that the IDB continues to take the U.S. Government's concerns about Argentina and Venezuela into consideration, and will keep the Congress informed?

Ms. GUILARTE. Thank you, Chairman.

Absolutely. The United States does not support any loans to Venezuela or Argentina, and if confirmed, I will continue to uphold that position and keep your committee informed.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for your willingness to do this, your great backgrounds. And you are very fortunate today that we have vote coming up and this is going to be short meeting. [Laughter.]

I would like for you, if you would, Mr. McGuire to explain to people again looking on what our national security dividend, if you will, is for being such a large contributor to the World Bank and being involved in that way.

Dr. MCGUIRE. Sure. There are any number of things. I would start with several. One, as was mentioned earlier, economic stability is in the interest of our national security in the sense that when there are fragile or failed states in any part of the world, they tend to have spillover effects in the surrounding region. And to the extent that the World Bank can serve to strengthen countries all over the globe, it allows us to extend our foreign policy toolbox, as it were, in ways that are very important to not only the citizens of those countries, but to our Government itself.

I would point secondly, coming from the Commerce Department, that I think an awful lot about the U.S. economy and its importance not only to our national security but to the globe's well-being. Clearly to the extent that there are growing middle classes around the world, there are deeper export markets for our companies to sell into, and as President Obama says an awful lot, 95 percent of the world's customers are outside of the United States. So to the extent that we can strengthen economies around the world, there are dividends not only to our national security but to companies here in the United States, to workers here in the United States, to our economy every single day.

Senator CORKER. So one of the things people look at relative to your organization, the organization you hope to be a part of—China has obviously dramatically changed over the last two decades, and yet we are still involved with—the World Bank is still involved

with making loans there. I guess I would ask, should we not be moving away from being involved with economies and countries like China, Brazil, and India?

Dr. MCGUIRE. So there are two ways I would come at that. First, in terms of India itself, as I understand it, the bank is not providing loans except—to China except in those cases where there are considerable human needs. It is really about very, very basic human needs. So if the question is in terms of loans there, I would just want to differentiate between China and some other countries.

In terms of the——

Senator CORKER. Explain that to me again.

Dr. MCGUIRE. As I understand it, at this point the World Bank is not loaning to China for projects there except for those instances where there are exceptional human needs having to do with very basic health, having to do with really fundamental lives being at stake. So in the sense that it is not like borrowing countries where there are projects coming before on a very regular basis.

Senator CORKER. So on that note, though, that is interesting, and obviously we care about people's human needs. But on the other hand, China is making massive loans to countries in Africa, obviously taking advantage of natural resource access. And actually people are very worried about the amount of loans they are making to some of those countries and their ability to repay them and what happens over time to those countries' sovereignty.

So can you explain to me the rub there? So here we are making loans to China inside their country for basic human needs. On the other hand, they are loaning massive amounts out to other countries and, in essence, maybe making them stewards of China. It just seems like to me there is a little bit of a conflict there, and I wonder how you might resolve that.

Dr. MCGUIRE. So I think the important point there is that China can do things on a bilateral basis or on a multilateral basis. And it is important that China is part of the World Bank and that we are working with them so that they are in part of this multilateral institution and with other countries from around the world who can engage and try to shape some of the things that are going on within not only China but elsewhere in the world. So really it comes down in a very basic way from my perspective about working with someone versus entirely against someone, and I think it is always advantageous to the extent you can bring people into these global institutions and work with them and try to shape behavior there.

I would also say that in terms of Africa specifically or other countries where the World Bank operates, as does a country like China bilaterally, it is very important for a member of the World Bank's role often is the smart money, if you will. The capital markets have changed. The global environment is radically different now than it was 20 years ago. One of the things that World Bank money does is often come with the expertise that is highly respected and that, therefore, can shape the way the particular governments there operate differently than they might if they only were choosing between a bilateral choice of Chinese dollars—or Chinese yuan versus American dollars and there were not institutions like the World Bank to be mediators and to push people in the right direction.

Senator CORKER. So I have met Jim Kim, and I think actually the chairman may have hosted something where he came in to talk a little bit about the World Bank. And we have been reading stories about the restructuring, and we all know probably better than anybody in the world here that when you change anything, there is lots of resistance. A lot of people have a lot of stake in the status quo.

But you feel with his background, which is very different for somebody looking at billions and billions and billions of dollars alone—he has a very different background, if you will, coming mostly I think from a health background. Do you feel like he is qualified, first of all, to carry out the role of the World Bank but also the changes that he has put in place with things that are going to lead to a good end at the World Bank?

Dr. MCGUIRE. I do and for several reasons. One, I would note that he has run various types of organizations in his career. So as president of Dartmouth University, that is a very different entity than when he cofounded Partners in Health, which was really doing health care around the world, public health. So I think the diversity of the types of organizations he has run is an advantage.

I think also importantly, though, this is where the Executive Director can play a real role. The United States is a leader on the board, as you know. We have significantly more shares than anyone else at the bank. And this is a role that I hope that I can help play by garnering support at the board level, by working closely with management, and making sure that this does go smoothly going forward.

Finally, the thing I would say that is important—and you know this as a business owner yourself, I would imagine—is how important the people under you are. And I think so long as he continues to maintain the extraordinary talent under him and let them do their jobs effectively, I am very confident that he will be able to succeed going forward.

Senator CORKER. Well, thank you both. And we will have some written questions to follow up. But I do appreciate especially people with the backgrounds that you have aspiring to serve in this way.

Thank you for bringing of your family members. We have a minister that ends up having the children's choir a lot to make sure the audience is full. [Laughter.]

So thank you very much, all of you, for being here. And we look forward to a speedy confirmation. So thank you.

Dr. MCGUIRE. Thank you very much.

Ms. GUILARTE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Corker.

Again, as I said to the previous panel, there will be some other questions submitted for the record. I would urge you to answer them as expeditiously as possible in order to consider your nomination before a business meeting of the committee.

This record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, Thursday.

And with the thanks of the committee for your testimony and your willingness to serve, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Material Submitted for the Record

Letter Signed by 11 House Members Supporting the Nomination of Matthew T. McGuire

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 15, 2014

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Corker
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker:

We write to express our strong support for President Obama's nomination of Mr. Matthew T. McGuire to become the next United States Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Mr. McGuire's experience spans several years as a senior executive in the financial services industry, and numerous leadership roles with nonprofit and civic organizations working on a wide range of public policy issues around the world. Most recently, in his capacity as Director of the Office of Business Liaison at the Department of Commerce, Mr. McGuire has been instrumental in leading the department's efforts to engage the business community on international economic and trade issues, including the Power Africa Initiative.

The World Bank is the premier multilateral development institution and our central tool to provide development assistance to U.S. allies and governments whose failure would jeopardize U.S. national security interests. At the height of the financial crisis, the institution quickly responded by boosting its lending by more than $100 billion dollars, providing critical countercyclical support to keep our allies and partners strong. As recent international events have shown, it is in our vital interest to support the reduction of extreme poverty around the globe as a means of preventing state failure and combating cross-border terrorism.

The World Bank recently launched a series of wide-ranging reforms under President Jim Yong Kim. The next United States Executive Director will exert significant authority over the board's oversight responsibilities, and we look forward to Mr. McGuire working with senior management to better align the bank's operations with greater development results and achieving greater diversity in its senior professional workforce.

Mr. McGuire's doctoral degree from Harvard University and his significant experience in the financial industry and public sector at the global stage make him distinctively qualified for this position. We have full confidence in him to lead the U.S. Executive Director's office at the World Bank, and call upon the Senate to confirm him as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Gregory W. Meeks

The Honorable Lacey Wm. Clay

The Honorable Terri A. Sewell

The Honorable Patrick Murphy

The Honorable Charles Rangel

The Honorable Grace Meng

The Honorable Karen Bass

The Honorable Bobby Rush

The Honorable Hank Johnson

The Honorable Barbara Lee

The Honorable Michael E. Capuano

RESPONSES OF MARK SOBEL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

EU FINANCIAL CRISIS AND IMF REFORMS

Question. Since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2009, 11 European countries have entered into financial assistance programs with the IMF, with commitments totaling about $157 billion. Of these programs, three are with members of the Eurozone: Greece, Portugal, and Ireland. Some critics, including here in Congress, are concerned about whether loans to Europe are an appropriate use of IMF resources, and have called for internal, systemic reform of the IMF surveillance program and lending processes.

- Given that you were working at Treasury during the crisis, what is your view of the IMF's response to the crisis in Europe? If confirmed, are there any aspects in particular of the IMF's mandate and/or procedures that you believe merit review and possible reform?

Answer. The Fund's engagement with Europe is strongly in the U.S. interest. The IMF has played a critical role in supporting its European members' efforts to stabilize their economies and financial systems, and helping to mitigate contagion from Europe to other countries, particularly the United States. As our largest economic

partner, Europe is an important source of growth and jobs for the United States, and our economic health is closely intertwined with Europe's.

The IMF benefits all of its members by standing ready to provide policy advice, technical assistance, and financing, if needed. The IMF has supported specific European countries in cases where the European Union has provided the bulk of the financing and has been willing to apply its policy tools flexibly and aggressively to support necessary reforms. This lending has come with rigorous conditions in the context of macroeconomic adjustment programs. Today, Ireland has exited and Portugal is close to exiting from IMF support, and Greece has achieved a primary surplus and completed an international bond issue.

Despite its many strengths, the IMF—like any other organization—has room for improvement. As I discussed in my testimony, I think the IMF can provide crisper judgments on global rebalancing and exchange rate issues, strengthen its work on crisis prevention, spillover analysis, and debt sustainability, support pro-poor spending in low-income countries, and help make financial sectors more resilient. I look forward to working to strengthen the IMF's work in these areas, if confirmed.

RESPONSES OF MARK SOBEL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

IMF QUOTA PACKAGE

Question. If the quota reforms are implemented, the United States will transfer approximately $63 billion from the New Arrangements to Borrow (NAB) credit line to the more permanent IMF quota system. The overall IMF quota will be doubled, reaching approximately $755 billion.

There are many in Congress who approved the emergency NAB credit line in 2009 because they were led to believe the NAB funds were important in a time of global financial emergency.

♦ Why is a doubling of the IMF quota justified?

Answer. The 2010 reforms are necessary to put the IMF on a more sustainable and stable financial footing for the future.

The world has changed since the 1980s and 1990s, and the size of IMF quotas has not kept pace with global growth and the rise in global trade and capital flows. With increased financial integration and globalization, the extent to which destabilizing flows can flee a country has greatly increased. Moreover, reflecting this and other realities, the world has confronted far greater tail risks since the global financial crisis. In short, there is the potential for much larger demands for IMF resources in the face of continuing global economic and financial instability.

The doubling in quota resources was also an important element of the 2010 negotiations, facilitating the achievement of needed realignments in quota shares and to modernize IMF governance. Specifically, these reforms are designed to rebalance shares to more accurately reflect today's global economy, while maintaining the U.S. veto.

It is critical to underscore, however, that the overall amount of resources available to the IMF when the 2010 reforms are implemented will only increase slightly, and the United States will not increase its commitment to the IMF by a single dollar.

Under the 2010 reforms, the United States preserves its veto and leadership role in the IMF, facilitates a needed realignment to ensure that the Fund's membership remains anchored in the multilateral system and continues to view the Fund as legitimate, all without committing any new resources to the IMF. At the same time, the IMF gets the resources it needs to keep pace with the growth in global output, trade, and financial flows.

Question. Engagement with Congress on the IMF reform package has not been effective since the administration agreed to the reform measures and quota changes in 2010. Given that you were responsible at the Treasury Department for the IMF during that period, what would you do differently going forward in your engagement with Congress to explain and promote congressional approval of the proposed IMF changes?

Answer. The administration has been, and continues to be, strongly committed to passage of legislation to implement the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms. As Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Monetary and Financial Policy, I have appreciated the opportunity to engage with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and other congressional committees, on the importance of passing this legislation. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work with you and other Members of Congress on this high priority legislation.

IMF SURVEILLANCE AND THE RESPONSE TO THE 2008 GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS

Question. One of the key functions of the IMF is to monitor the economic and financial policies of its member countries, highlighting the risks to stability in the international monetary system and advising on needed policy adjustments. Yet, recent financial crises such as the global financial crisis of 2008 and the Eurozone crisis seem to have caught many by surprise and unprepared.

♦ In your view, what lessons have we learned from the 2008 crisis? What changes to IMF surveillance and policies have been implemented in response to these crises?

Answer. IMF surveillance indeed has an important crisis prevention role. The global community is far better served by crisis prevention rather than coping with crisis resolution.

As a first line of defense, countries have important responsibilities to implement sound policies. Many countries, especially emerging markets, have learned lessons from their crises in the past decade, and have improved their policies, consistent with IMF advice, in order to create more space and shock absorbers.

The 2008 crisis revealed other lessons. One was that the potential for capital to rapidly flee countries has further grown. Another lesson in this spirit is that interdependencies among countries have also increased, meaning that contagion can spread more virulently and quickly around the world. In this regard, IMF surveillance underestimated the combined risk across economies, as well as sectors, and the importance of financial sector feedback and spillovers. Another lesson is that a sound macroeconomic policy framework is the best first line of defense against external risks.

Accordingly, since 2008, the United States has encouraged the IMF to strengthen its focus on multilateral surveillance through increased coverage of financial stability and external sector issues, as well as analysis of the spillover effects of country policies. In response, the IMF now produces annual spillover reports and external sector reports, and has enhanced its analysis of financial stability issues in Financial Sector Assessment Program (FSAP) reports. The United States has also continued to urge the IMF to undertake more rigorous bilateral surveillance and put forward its views in a more candid and forthright manner.

Further work, though, is still needed to create incentives for countries to follow IMF advice to strengthen their policies and reduce vulnerabilities, recognizing that sovereign countries may not always follow the IMF's recommendations. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that surveillance is strengthened.

ARGENTINA BONDS AND AMICUS BRIEFS

Question. As you know, the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals recently held that Argentina breached its contractual obligations to U.S. taxpayers by refusing to honor its financial obligations under bonds owned by those taxpayers. Last summer, Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that the Fund would be filing an amicus brief in support of Argentina's appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

♦ It is my understanding that the IMF has never before filed a U.S. Supreme Court brief. Is that accurate?

Answer. I am aware that though the IMF has not filed an amicus brief before the Supreme Court, it has filed at least one amicus brief in a U.S. appellate court. In 1997 and 1998, the IMF (together with the Inter-American Development Bank, Pan-American Health Organization, and Intelsat) filed, in both the federal district and appeals courts, amicus briefs opposing the imposition of D.C. sales taxes on cafeteria transactions by a World Bank contractor. *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development* v. *District of Columbia,* 171 F.3d 687 (D.C. Cir. 1999).

I understand that submission of amicus briefs by international financial institutions occurs infrequently, but the IMF and other international financial institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank do file amicus briefs in U.S. courts from time to time.

Question. What communications did you have with the IMF Executive Board and any staff of the IMF regarding the Argentine sovereign debt? Did you participate in any conversations regarding the potential IMF amicus brief? If so, please describe such conversations.

Answer. The IMF's decision to file in this case was its own, reached by IMF management and staff. The IMF's concerns about the implications of the Court's ruling in undermining the orderliness and predictability of the sovereign debt restruc-

turing process were similar to those expressed in prior U.S. Government briefs in the litigation.

The State and Treasury Departments actively discussed the merits of whether the United States should file an amicus brief, working closely with the Department of Justice. Treasury exchanged views with the IMF at the staff level on the posture of the litigation, consistent with discussions ongoing at senior levels. As Secretary Lew stated in recent testimony (before the House Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government on April 29, 2014), he discussed these issues with the IMF.

In the context of this broader discussion, I engaged with the IMF management, in particular through the U.S. Executive Director, who is a member of the Executive Board, to help advise senior Treasury officials in determining the appropriate U.S. posture with respect to the IMF's consideration of a potential amicus brief and to engage with IMF officials regarding such a brief.

Question. What are your views on the propriety of the U.S. Executive Director to the IMF advocating that the IMF or foreign governments file amicus briefs in domestic U.S. court cases?

Answer. The positions taken by the U.S. Executive Director to the IMF at the IMF Board are subject to the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury. If confirmed, I will adhere to the instructions of the United States Government, and in particular, the Secretary of the Treasury.

Question. Would you please elaborate on your concern that "the court's ruling could upset the orderliness and the ability of the debt restructuring process"?

Answer. The United States, in briefs filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in [April] and December 2012, stated that U.S. efforts to promote voluntary debt restructuring, along with macroeconomic reform and support as necessary from the international financial institutions, is the most effective way to resolve sovereign balance of payment crises while minimizing economic damage. This in turn will help protect the U.S. economy and U.S. jobs.

As those briefs stated, the court's ruling may make voluntary sovereign debt restructuring substantially more difficult by tilting the incentives away from consensual, negotiated restructuring in the first place.

In 2004, the United States also filed a brief with the District Court for the Southern District of New York in the case involving Argentina. Like the 2012 briefs, the 2004 brief highlighted the potentially harmful impact on debt restructuring of both novel interpretations of standard contract terms and novel enforcement mechanisms. The 2004 brief also noted that the United States has only previously twice intervened in litigation on sovereign debt issues (in Allied Bank/Costa Rica in 1984 and in CIBC/Brazil in 1994), emphasizing the adverse effects that contractual uncertainty could have on international financial markets and on restructuring efforts.

INVESTOR RIGHTS AND SOVEREIGN BORROWER LENDING FROM THE IMF

Question. The IMF staff issued a report in April last year on sovereign debt restructuring examining collective action clauses. What are your views on balancing the rights of bond holders with the need to establish a financially stable restructuring path for the debt burdened sovereign.

- Do you think property rights of investors should be respected when a sovereign borrower needs to restructure its debt in an economic crisis? How do you balance respect for investor's property rights and the need for debt relief to help the borrowing country recover?

Answer. As I stated in the hearing, the United States does not condone Argentina's treatment of its creditors or actions, respects the sanctity of contract rights, and urges countries to honor their commitments. As stated in the U.S. amicus brief filed in the Argentina case, U.S. sovereign debt policy implicitly recognizes the critical role of the contract in resolving a debt crisis. Restructuring negotiations, when these unfortunately become necessary, must take place within a framework where creditors can seek recourse to the courts to enforce contractual obligations. Moreover, creditors must be assured that the terms of any new debt instruments issued pursuant to a restructuring plan will be legally enforceable. As the amicus brief submitted by the U.S. Government in 2012 stated, it would harm the process that has evolved to address sovereign debt problems if creditors, in negotiating with debtors, also retained the option to litigate to obtain interpretations of standard terms than are not supported by commercial market practice.

Question. Do you think good faith negotiations between a sovereign borrower and its private sector investors is the best way to arrive at a fair and mutually agreed

restructured deal? What do you think of the proposals from some quarters for a non-negotiated or unilateral deal approach on the grounds of expediency?

Answer. I believe that good faith negotiations between a sovereign borrower and its private sector are the best way to arrive at a fair and mutually agreed deal. Borrowers should engage constructively with creditors, and fully disclose information on the country's financial situation and plans going forward.

I would not support proposals that would impose a unilateral deal on the grounds of expediency.

TTIP AND FINANCIAL SERVICES REGULATION

Question. Treasury has opposed including financial services regulatory issues in TTIP. Is that still Treasury's position or has there been any further interagency discussion on how to approach the issue in TTIP?

Answer. It is my understanding that the administration's position has not changed. As Secretary Lew has indicated, traditional market access issues for financial services should be part of the negotiations; however, financial prudential and regulatory cooperation should continue in existing and appropriate bilateral and multilateral regulatory fora, such as the G20, the Financial Stability Board, and international standard setting bodies, in parallel alongside the TTIP negotiations.

Question. My understanding is that the Europeans have stated publicly that the current Financial Regulatory Markets Dialogue (FMRD) is insufficient to address bilateral issues, and they appear to be insistent that these issues be addressed in TTIP.

♦ Isn't there some sort of creative solution that can bring some of these issues into TTIP in a way that does not undermine U.S. law or negatively affect regulators' prudential authority?

Answer. Ensuring the safety and soundness of the U.S. financial system through a robust regime of prudential regulation and supervision remains a top priority of the administration.

Since the financial crisis, the United States has been pursuing a comprehensive agenda, with ambitious deadlines, on regulatory and prudential cooperation in the financial sector—multilaterally, in the G20 and the Financial Stability Board, bilaterally with the European Union in the Financial Markets Regulatory Dialogue, and in international standard-setting bodies such as the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision and the International Organization of Securities Commissions.

Alongside the TTIP negotiations, the United States will continue to work to make progress in these channels in the near term, including by raising international standards to the levels that our financial regulators are now implementing in the United States. This is the best way to assure high quality regulation globally and level the playing field for U.S. firms.

CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS

Question. In your role as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, did you at any time discourage the U.S. Executive Director to the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, the U.S. Executive Director for the Asian Development Bank, or the Executive Director from the Inter-American Development Bank from agreeing to requests to appear at hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee?

Answer. No.

Question. If confirmed as U.S. Executive Director, do you commit to appearing at hearings of this committee when requested and to responding to committee requests for information in a timely manner?

Answer. Yes, I look forward to working with your committee.

RESPONSES OF MARK SOBEL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In your answers to Senator McCain's questions you indicated that both the IMF's announcement, in July 2013, that it would file an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court siding with Argentina against U.S. investors, and then the subsequent reversal of this announcement were decisions that originated at the IMF and received no support or influence by any U.S. Government officials.

♦ Is this an accurate summary of your position?

Answer. The IMF's decision to file in this case was its own, reached by IMF management and staff. The IMF's concerns about the implications of the Court's ruling in undermining the orderliness and predictability of the sovereign debt restructuring process were similar to those expressed in prior U.S. Government briefs in the litigation.

The State and Treasury Departments actively discussed the merits of whether the United States should file an amicus brief, working closely with the Department of Justice. Treasury exchanged views with the IMF at the staff level on the posture of the litigation, consistent with discussions ongoing at senior levels. As Secretary Lew stated in recent testimony (before the House Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government on April 29, 2014), he discussed these issues with the IMF. In view of the posture of the litigation, and the U.S. decision not to file a brief, Treasury indicated to the IMF that it would not support the brief.

Question. In its 68-year history, the IMF has never attempted to influence a domestic U.S. court case, and in fact, the Fund has maintained a decades-long tradition of remaining neutral in debt disputes between member states.

- Will you assure this committee that, if confirmed as U.S. Executive Director to the IMF, you will maintain this tradition and oppose any effort by the IMF to influence a domestic U.S. court case?

Answer. The positions taken by the U.S. Executive Director to the IMF at the IMF Board are subject to the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury. If confirmed, I will adhere to the instructions of the United States Government, and in particular, the Secretary of the Treasury.

I am aware that though the IMF has not filed an amicus brief before the Supreme Court, it has filed at least one amicus brief in a U.S. appellate court. In 1997 and 1998, the IMF (together with the Inter-American Development Bank, Pan-American Health Organization, and Intelsat) filed, in both the federal district and appeals courts, amicus briefs opposing the imposition of D.C. sales taxes on cafeteria transactions by a World Bank contractor. *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development* v. *District of Columbia,* 171 F.3d 687 (D.C. Cir. 1999).

I understand that submission of amicus briefs by international financial institutions occurs infrequently, but the IMF and other international financial institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank do file amicus briefs in U.S. courts from time to time.

RESPONSES OF SUNIL SABHARWAL TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

IMF REFORM

Question. The 2010 quota and governance reforms increase the IMF's resources and adjust its governance structure to more accurately reflect current global economic participation. However, stemming from IMF engagement in EU countries during the financial crisis, some critics contend that other systemic and operational reforms should be considered.

- Do you agree that, aside from the 2010 reforms, other internal reforms are needed at the IMF and do you intend to explore additional reform options, if confirmed?

Answer. It is important for the IMF to be evenhanded and maintain the same high standards in its lending to European countries as in its lending to other countries around the world. On the other hand, it is not uncommon that the IMF's exposure at any given time is high to a finite group of countries in a given region for the purposes of avoiding contagion, negatively affecting the global economy. An example of this would be the Asian crisis of the late 1990s.

The IMF plays an important role in promoting fiscal discipline and open and transparent budget processes in its member countries. As a businessman, I believe that the IMF should apply similar discipline to its own internal budget framework and demonstrate strong institutional transparency. I understand the United States has been a strong voice over the years in encouraging IMF budget stringency and greater transparency of the IMF's operations. I look forward to supporting these efforts and looking into these issues further, if confirmed.

IMF SURVEILLANCE

Question. A frequent accusation of critics is that IMF surveillance is ineffective, because the IMF has no means of enforcing its policy recommendations in countries that do not borrow from the IMF.

♦ Do you agree with this assertion? If so, how might the USED's office work with the IMF to make its surveillance more effective?

Answer. Surveillance is one of the IMF's primary activities to identify risks and prevent crises. Many countries have learned lessons from past crises and have improved their policies consistent with IMF advice. I understand that given the importance of surveillance to crisis prevention, the United States has encouraged the IMF to strengthen its focus on multilateral surveillance through increased coverage of financial stability and external sector issues, as well as analysis of the spillover effects of country policies. Multilateral surveillance can be further improved by increasing cooperation with and amongst other stakeholders of the global economy.

In addition, more work is needed to create incentives for countries to follow IMF advice to strengthen their policies and reduce vulnerabilities, recognizing that in the end, countries are responsible for charting their own course.

Therefore, I believe surveillance can be improved throughout, via a number of methods, such as the application of peer pressure using the article IV consultations and publication of IMF staff assessments. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that surveillance is strengthened.

IMF TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Question. To what extent has the IMF, as it claims, increased transparency and accountability to both shareholders and loan recipients? If confirmed, will ensuring greater transparency in the IMF be a priority for you?

Answer. In the 1990s, very little information was published about the IMF's institutional or operational activities. Since then, I understand the United States has consistently pressed for greater transparency at the IMF, including enhanced disclosure of economic and financial information by IMF member countries. Today, extensive information about the IMF's operations and activities is publicly available on the IMF Web site, and I understand that over 90 percent of IMF article IV staff reports and lending program documents are published. If confirmed, I will work to promote enhanced transparency at the IMF.

RESPONSES OF MATTHEW T. MCGUIRE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

WORLD BANK SAFEGUARD REFORM

The World Bank is currently overhauling its social and environmental safeguard policies. With strong U.S. leadership, the Bank was the first international financial institution to adopt such policies, which have been influential and remain critical in ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

♦ As USED, how will you use this opportunity to ensure safeguard policies reflect international best practices and U.S. development priorities at the World Bank?

Answer. The World Bank's social and environmental safeguard policies are an integral part of its comparative advantage and impart value added beyond the financing that the World Bank provides. The current review of the World Bank's safeguards is an opportunity to update and strengthen the safeguards, both in terms of the written policies and the way in which they are implemented. If confirmed, I will work with other Board members to build support for safeguard policies that reflect international best practices and U.S. development priorities. I will also actively consult with civil society groups and the private sector on the World Bank's safeguard review process.

WORLD BANK RESPONSE TO UKRAINE AND GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS

Question. What is your evaluation of the World Bank's response to the global financial crisis? What reforms, if any, would have improved its effectiveness? The World Bank has announced its intention to support IMF and other bilateral and multilateral efforts to stabilize and reform Ukraine. What are the goals of this program and what role do you anticipate you would have as USED in discussions regarding Ukraine?

Answer. The World Bank responded to calls from G20 Leaders to increase lending to emerging and developing economies in support of essential government spending during the global financial crises. The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group concluded that the World Bank was responsive in scaling up countercyclical financing, but was also critical of the Bank's crisis-related fiscal management operations

and financial sector support. The evaluation puts these findings into perspective by noting the severe economic headwinds.

In Ukraine, the World Bank has responded rapidly. My understanding is that the Board will consider a lending package totaling up to $3 billion in 2014. I also understand that World Bank programs in Ukraine are tackling the difficult reforms required in the country to improve governance and lay the foundations for future economic growth. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the World Bank to respond effectively to the crisis in Ukraine.

WORLD BANK ENERGY INITIATIVES IN AFRICA AND ASIA

Question. Off-grid energy markets in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have grown rapidly, but could grow faster with better access to reliable financing partners.

- ♦ If confirmed, what will you do to ensure the Bank's Lighting Africa and Lighting Asia programs not only break down market barriers, but also provide long-term, low-cost financing?

Answer. I understand the United States supports the World Bank's Energy strategy, which aims to increase access to energy, enhance energy security and move countries toward more sustainable energy practices. Lighting Africa and Lighting Asia are helping to increase access to modern lighting services by setting industry standards for product quality, promoting relevant policy and regulatory reforms and mobilizing private capital to increase access to low-cost finance. If confirmed, I will continue to support and encourage the World Bank's efforts to increase energy access in Africa and Asia.

WORLD BANK DOING BUSINESS REPORT

Question. The "Doing Business" report has long been lauded as signature World Bank initiative that promotes reform efforts around the world to improve the ease of doing business. However, it has aroused some controversy and last year an external panel appointed by President Kim reviewed the report and suggested reforms.

- ♦ What were the main reforms the panel recommended and how would this affect the integrity of the report? What has World Bank leadership decided as far as implementation of the recommendations? If confirmed, would you have the opportunity to influence internal decisions on this issue, and what is Treasury's position on the results of the review?

Answer. I understand the United States Government vigorously supports the "Doing Business" report, including its aggregate country rankings. I believe that the report is a valuable knowledge product of the World Bank Group that helps incentivize changes to improve business climates in the Bank's member countries. Dr. Kim has announced that he will focus on improving methodology and increasing data to strengthen the "Doing Business" report. If confirmed, I will work actively with senior World Bank management and other Board members to protect and enhance the "Doing Business" report.

WORLD BANK—EMERGING MARKET LENDING

Question. What reasons are there for the World Bank to continue to lend to dynamic emerging market economies such as China, which have substantial resources of their own and often have their own active assistance programs?

Answer. While the World Bank's grant resources are appropriately reserved for the poorest countries, I believe there is an ongoing role for the World Bank in middle-income countries, where the majority of the world's poor live today. For example, World Bank programs deliver the highest quality procurement standards, as well as strong environmental and social safeguards. Moreover, World Bank lending to middle-income countries supports domestic consumption within these economies, which generates export markets for U.S. firms and contributes to broader global rebalancing efforts.

To clarify a previous statement that I made about World Bank lending to China, the World Bank provides a range of lending to China, mainly for projects supporting green growth and stronger social inclusion. But consistent with congressional legislation, it is U.S policy to oppose World Bank projects for China, except those that are specifically aimed at meeting basic human needs, such as clean water, basic education, and health services to poor populations.

WORLD BANK—PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. COMPANIES

Question. There are billions of dollars in procurement opportunities from World Bank lending.

- To what extent are U.S. firms bidding on, and winning, these contracts? What hurdles do U.S. firms face on bidding for contracts? If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure American companies are fully informed of opportunities and can compete on a level playing field for such contracts?

Answer. My understanding is that in the World Bank's fiscal year 2013, U.S. firms won 134 prime contracts with a total value of almost $100 million. The World Bank is currently reviewing and revising its procurement policy, and the U.S. Government has committed to ensuring that the World Bank maintains procurement policies that uphold a level playing field for all businesses. As a way to level the playing field between American firms and international firms, if confirmed, I will continue to push for greater use of nonprice factors, such as quality or after sales service, in the awarding of contracts, rather than only the lowest cost options.

WORLD BANK/IFC WATER PROJECTS

Question. Access to clean and affordable drinking water is a major challenge in much of the world, and water-borne illnesses are a major source of death and lost productivity in the developing world. The World Bank has been a global leader in this area, particularly its private finance arm, the International Finance Corporation, and this has great potential to alleviate global poverty. However, I have heard concerns that IFC has prioritized financial outcomes over access.

- I fully understand the complexity of water issues, and realize the private sector has a crucial role to play. However, will you commit to me now that, if confirmed, you will explore this issue during your first year, in coordination with my office?

Answer. I understand that this is an issue on which the U.S. Executive Director's Office has been engaged with civil society organizations, IFC and World Bank staff in recent months. My understanding is that when the IFC provides support to private water companies, it sets out explicit development objectives for these investments, including expanding access and improving quality. If confirmed, I will continue to engage on this issue and would be pleased to update your office as the work progresses.

WORLD BANK—CHANGES TO THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (IDA)

Question. According to some estimates, the number of countries eligible to borrow from the World Bank's concessional facility, the International Development Association, or "IDA, will decline from the current 81 countries to as low as 30 within the next 10–15 years, and with most of those in sub-Saharan Africa.

- Can you explain this expected development, and could this fundamentally change how the World Bank operates? What would this mean for the new objective of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030?

Answer. I understand that the U.S. Government places a very high importance on IDA, given its global reach and focus on the poorest, which aligns with administration priorities. Current demand for IDA resources remains high for countries that are too poor to attract sufficient capital to support their urgent development needs. And, to achieve the World Bank's goal of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030, IDA support is critical for the hardest-to-reach places, like fragile and conflict-affected states, where progress has been slower.

WORLD BANK REFORM—MEASURING PERFORMANCE AND GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS

Question. Many critics of the World Bank argue that its main weakness has been to judge performance by how much it lends rather than by what it and borrowing countries achieve . . . essentially a quantity over quality criticism.

- Do President Kim's reforms address this common concern with the World Bank?

Answer. Yes, I understand that Dr. Kim's reforms will restructure the World Bank around "global practices," which are thematic areas, such as water, energy, health, and education. I believe that restructuring the World Bank in this way will strengthen its expertise on these issues, improve the flow of knowledge across the different countries in which the World Bank works and improve the quality of the World Bank's lending. The effort to shift the World Bank's culture to a stronger focus on results will take sustained attention over time. If confirmed, I will continue

to support Dr. Kim's reforms that aim to accelerate this cultural change and, more generally, work to elevate the use of evidence and the measurement of results.

Question. Given the huge size of private investment in emerging and developing economies, some critics also contend that the Bank should devote fewer resources on country programs and instead use its global reach to focus efforts and serve as a catalyst for addressing global challenges, such as those related to the environment, health, agricultural productivity, and good governance.

- The World Bank already engages in regional and global initiatives, but are you aware whether the ongoing reorganization will accelerate this shift? If confirmed, do you anticipate supporting more regional World Bank programming?

Answer. The World Bank can convene a broader set of stakeholders than bilateral agencies. This is especially important for providing global public goods or when dealing with global challenges like climate change or food security, which are too vast and complex for any one country—or even group of countries—to effectively manage on their own. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the World Bank to work on regional projects and to address global challenges that are not contained within country boundaries.

RESPONSES OF MILEYDI GUILARTE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

IDB PRIVATE SECTOR CONSOLIDATION

Question. The IDB is reviewing options for consolidating multiple existing private sector divisions, following a 2012 independent evaluation that was critical of the inefficiencies of the current structure.

- Is the administration supportive of the private sector restructuring initiative? Do you expect greater efficiency and efficacy from a consolidated private sector division? What concerns does the administration have, and what can we expect as far as consultations with Congress? If confirmed, what involvement with this issue would you expect to have?

Answer. I understand that the United States welcomes the initiative to improve the efficiency and development impact of the IDB's private sector operations, and that during the recent IDB annual meeting, the Board of Governors passed a resolution to continue work on developing a proposal for the so-called "merge-out" restructuring of the IDB's private sector windows.

It is also my understanding that the United States has advocated for an in-depth review of the proposed restructuring, including an analysis of the assumptions and implications of the potential business and capitalization models. This process will be ongoing throughout 2014 and 2015. If confirmed, I would aim to ensure that the process is comprehensive and that the potential implications for the IDB's financial outlook and development effectiveness and soundness are fully understood and considered. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to keep you updated on both the process and new developments.

IDB—ENERGY IN THE CARIBBEAN

Question. The Caribbean has been in an energy crisis for quite some time. Electricity rates are high and there is a great dependence on Venezuela's subsidized oil. The political and economic catastrophe in Venezuela could very well end that subsidized oil program and further exacerbate hardship throughout the Caribbean.

- Are you familiar with IDB energy initiatives related to the Caribbean? What policies guide the USED's office on this issue and, if confirmed, what actions would you be in a position to take to help the IDB address this issue?

Answer. I understand that the IDB is very active on this issue. For instance, the IDB hosted the Caribbean Energy Ministers Conference in December 2013. During this conference, the USED's office helped to facilitate a meeting between U.S. Energy Secretary Moniz and President Moreno, which led to an enhanced working relationship between the IDB energy sector staff and USG agencies. I understand that the IDB is funding energy studies that explore the feasibility of conversion to natural gas as a fuel source in the Caribbean, as well as the role for renewables and energy efficiency. I believe that collaboration with U.S. Government agencies has been integral to these studies. If confirmed, I will continue to support this important cooperation.

In addition, I understand that the participation of the USED's office in IDB energy initiatives related to the Caribbean is in line with the administration's en-

ergy objectives in the region, and is guided by the President's Climate Action Plan, which seeks multipronged energy solutions. If confirmed, I will continue to pursue U.S. policy goals at the IDB on these important issues.

IDB—SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT VERSUS ECONOMIC GROWTH

Question. Social development is one of the IDB's strategic policy goals. In particular efforts to reduce inequities in opportunity based on gender, ethnicity, race, disability, and social and economic circumstance are key priorities.

- How important is social development for economic development, compared, for example, with efforts to promote productivity, to enhance private sector growth, and to encourage economic and institutional reform? How will you balance these sometimes competing objectives if confirmed?

Answer. Economic growth and social development are inextricably linked, and I understand that both are central to the IDB's mission to support efforts by Latin American and Caribbean countries to reduce poverty and inequality through sustainable and inclusive growth. I understand that the IDB has put in place a development effectiveness framework to ensure that all IDB activities—whether for social development specifically, or for private sector growth and institutional reform—contribute to the overall goals of the institution, while complying with effective social and environmental safeguards.

I understand that last year 21 percent of approved IDB financing was allocated to social sector programs; 34 percent was allocated to infrastructure and the environment; 9 percent to regional integration and trade; and 36 percent to institutional support for development. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the IDB project portfolio continues to support both the goals of social development and economic growth.

IDB—PROGRAMS IN HAITI

Question. The IDB is a major donor to Haiti and has pledged to provide $2.2 billion in grant assistance to Haiti by 2020.

- Is IDB assistance to Haiti meeting its objectives, and is it doing so in an open and transparent manner? If confirmed, do you expect to have the opportunity to influence IDB programs in Haiti?

Answer. I understand that in 2010 the shareholders of the IDB, with strong leadership from the United States, agreed to forgive all of Haiti's outstanding debt to the IDB and to provide $200 million in transfers each year to the Haiti Grant Facility over a 10-year period. The fourth transfer of $200 million to the grant facility was approved at the recent IDB annual meeting. I understand that this funding will continue to provide critical resources to support the IDB's ongoing work in six priority sectors in Haiti: education reform, private sector development, energy, agriculture, transportation, and water and sanitation. My understanding is that IDB projects in Haiti are subject to the same approval processes and transparency protocols as any IDB project, including Board approval prior to project implementation.

From my experience at USAID, I know that the sustainable development of Haiti's economy is an important policy priority for the U.S. Government, given Haiti's proximity to the United States and our close economic and people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I will represent these interests by supporting the IDB's annual $200 million transfer to the Haiti Grant Facility each year, and work with IDB staff to ensure that those resources are used effectively and in a coordinated manner in helping to meet Haiti's long-term development objectives.

IDB—MULTILATERAL INVESTMENT FUND

Question. The United States is in arrears to the Multilateral Investment Fund, and there are concerns that without additional financing, the MIF could be forced to cease operations as soon as 2015.

- What other sources of funding, besides the United States, can the MIF draw from? Are you aware how U.S. arrears to the MIF compare to the arrears of other countries? Would consolidation of the private sector functions potentially solve this problem?

Answer. I understand that the United States has been an active supporter of the MIF, and if confirmed, I will continue to strongly support the MIF's critical work and valuable contributions to development in Latin America. My understanding is that the United States is the only IDB shareholder in arrears to the MIF.

I understand that the MIF would be part of a new, consolidated entity, but that its precise relationship is unclear and the reform process itself may take some time

to conclude. For that reason, it is my understanding that at the recent IDB annual meeting, the Board of Governors asked IDB management to present formal proposals for interim MIF financing by June 2014, to ensure an appropriate level of operations until decisions are made on the private sector restructuring initiative.

IDB—PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. COMPANIES

Question. There are significant procurement opportunities related to IDB project lending, especially in the infrastructure sector.

- To what extent are U.S. firms bidding on, and winning, these contracts? What hurdles do U.S. firms face in competing for these contracts? If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure American companies are fully informed of opportunities and can compete on a level playing field for such contracts?
- What can the USED's office do to encourage the IDB to adopt procurement policies that encourage the adoption of high-quality goods, services, and technology, as opposed to simply accepting a bid with a low initial cost, but poor durability and excessive maintenance requirements?

Answer. I understand that U.S. companies are actively bidding on—and winning—contracts related to IDB project lending. I understand that the percentage of U.S. firms that bid on and win consulting opportunities averages 75–80 percent, while the percentage for contractors is around 60–65 percent. Since 2011, U.S. companies have been awarded 240 consulting contracts for IDB-related projects, totaling $32,982,266, as well as 53 contracts for goods and services related to IDB projects, totaling $55,166,702.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the USED's office, in collaboration with the U.S. Commercial Liaison Office to the IDB, makes every effort to assist U.S. companies in preparing bids for international procurement opportunities with the IDB and in clearing any hurdles that might arise during the procurement bidding process. My understanding is that the USED's office advises U.S. companies on how to be successful in their bids by providing helpful guidelines (such as information about IDB procurement rules, networking opportunities, and process suggestions), and by assisting companies with obtaining procurement related documents (all of which are available on the IDB Web site).

It is also my understanding that the USED's office participates in Board- and Committee-level discussions pertaining to reforms of the IDB's procurement policies. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage robust procurement policies that conform to international best practices and provide a level playing field for U.S. firms.

ECONOMIC STATECRAFT

Question. I have long been interested in finding ways to leverage U.S. agencies such as Ex-Im Bank, OPIC, and TDA to promote economic integration in the Western Hemisphere, specifically by tackling Latin America's infrastructure deficiency.

- In your opinion, how can the U.S. Government and private sector work with the IDB to address this issue and create new economic opportunities here in the United States and throughout the hemisphere?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to support the ongoing efforts made by the U.S. Government and the private sector to work in cooperation with the IDB in promoting economic integration and addressing infrastructure deficiencies in Latin America. As just one example, I understand that the U.S. Government is actively exploring ways to work with the IDB and other partners in the region to improve trade and logistics infrastructure through Central America and its linkages to North and South America. With regard to private sector coordination, I understand that the Americas Business Dialogue (ABD) is a private sector driven initiative facilitated by the IDB intended to foster a high-level and open dialogue among the region's most important business leaders, and is being supported by the State Department and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. If confirmed, I will continue to support these types of efforts and seek out new opportunities to address this issue.

CUBA'S STATUS IN THE IDB

Question. Cuba signed the 1959 IDB Charter as an "original member" but never formalized its membership. Any move to include Cuba in the IDB would receive intense and bipartisan interest from both Congress and the administration. The United States has the ability as the largest shareholder to withhold the quorum needed to proceed with a vote by the IDB Board of Governors to include Cuba as a member.

♦ Given ongoing congressional interest will you assure us that you will consult closely with Congress on any and all developments concerning Cuba's membership in the IDB?

Answer. It is my understanding that, at present, there are no discussions regarding potential membership for Cuba in the IDB. If confirmed, I would consult closely with Congress on any developments concerning Cuba's potential membership in the IDB, were that to occur.

RESPONSE OF MATTHEW T. MCGUIRE TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. The World Bank is currently reviewing its safeguard policies, which identify and minimize harm caused by bank projects to vulnerable people and the environment. Women, girls, and minority communities compose more than half of the world's population, but face discrimination, human rights abuses, and frequent exclusion from positive benefits of economic development. Recent World Bank studies have affirmed the real economic costs of discrimination to economic development. In recent months, the consequences of this exclusion on women, girls, and LGBT communities have become particularly evident, in part because of unfortunate new laws and practices in some countries that seek to discriminate and exclude, rather than support these groups.

The World Bank has never adopted a mandatory safeguard policy to mitigate risks associated with its investments to these vulnerable groups. As a result, the Bank risks excluding these individuals—often some of the poorest and most marginalized—from benefiting from or contributing to its projects and programs, and, in so doing, it may even reinforce or create new inequalities in the countries in which it works. This is bad for our investments and it is not what we stand for as a country. I was pleased to see that the Obama administration recently released a policy paper expressing support for adding additional safeguards to World Bank projects, particularly safeguards on gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

♦ As the Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, how will you seek to ensure that World Bank projects do not exclude marginalized groups? Would you support an effort by the World Bank to update its safeguard policies so that they address the impacts of World Bank projects on women, girls, and LGBT minorities?

Answer. Exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women, girls, and LGBT persons, is unacceptable. If confirmed, I will work with other Board members to build support for World Bank policies, including safeguard policies, that seek to ensure that Bank projects and other Bank activities do not directly or indirectly contribute to exclusion of these groups and that help enable the Bank to fulfill its goal of inclusive economic growth.

NOMINATIONS OF ANDREW SCHAPIRO AND NINA HACHIGIAN

THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Andrew H. Schapiro, of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Czech Republic

Nina Hachigian, of California, to be Representative to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:36 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher Murphy presiding.

Present: Senators Murphy and Johnson.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator MURPHY. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will now come to order. We will be joined shortly I believe by Ranking Member Senator Johnson. Thank you very much for your patience. As you know, we just finished a long series of votes, which happens to be the final series of votes for the week. So that may explain what could be a smaller turnout for this hearing. We appreciate your patience, figured that you guys have waited for months for this hearing to take place, so an extension of a few hours might not necessarily be so disastrous.

I am pleased to welcome both of our nominees and also your friends and family who have come here today to support you. The committee will consider today the nominations of Andrew Schapiro to be our Ambassador to the Czech Republic and Nina Hachigian to be our Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Just to outline the process, I will give some opening remarks. If Senator Johnson arrives, he will give his as well. Then we will proceed to introductions of our nominees, at which time you will be invited to give your opening statements and then answer questions from the panel. It would be great of you could keep your opening statements to around 5 minutes or less.

To begin, I would like to address the United States relationship with the Czech Republic and the challenges and opportunities that

await our next Ambassador. The United States-Czech relationship is a special one. Our democratic histories have served as an inspiration to each other. Former Czech President, poet, and playwright Vaclav Havel and the revolutionary manifesto Charter 77 are icons of freedom and democracy to millions here in the United States. Correspondingly, America of course was a refuge for thousands of Czechs fleeing both Nazi occupation and Soviet control.

In addition to our shared values, we also have strong security and economic ties. The Czech Republic is a key NATO ally and serves as the protecting power for U.S. interests in Syria after we evacuated our Embassy in Damascus. Since 2002 they have been one of our staunchest and strongest partners in Afghanistan, sending 700 soldiers, including special forces, who operate in some of the most challenging areas of Afghanistan.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Czech Republic plays a leading role promoting democratic values around the world, helping countries make that difficult transition from authoritarian regimes to representative democracy. It was under the Czech Presidency of the European Union that the Eastern Partnership Initiative was launched.

Still, there are challenges in the Czech Republic that no doubt will be met by our next Ambassador. The surprisingly successful entrance of the ANO Party on the Czech political scene was largely driven by voters fed up with bribery and corruption. According to a Gallop Poll, the percentage of Czechs who perceive corruption as widespread in the government increased by 15 percentage points between 2007 and 2013, reaching 94 percent last October. The recent scandal that forced the Prime Minister's resignation and triggered new elections may have been the most notable of these problems, but hopefully it will also lead to real reform.

Another area that will be both a challenge but also an opportunity is the field of energy security, which has increasingly become a central issue of our discussions around Ukraine and the European response to Russia's belligerent actions in the region. The Czech Republic, like many nations in Central and Eastern Europe, is highly dependent on Russian energy. They need a regional strategy to diversify their sources and to modernize their energy infrastructure.

Now let me say a few words about ASEAN. The United States has deep interests in Southeast Asia, including maritime security, the promotion of democracy and human rights, the encouragement of liberal trade and investment regimes, counterterrorism, the combating of illegal trafficking of narcotics and human trafficking, and many other issues.

As a Pacific nation and a global power, it is imperative that the United States continue to deepen our engagement in the region and with ASEAN, its most important multilateral institution. In terms of our economic partnership, the trading and investment figures with the region speak for themselves. U.S. goods trade with ASEAN is nearly $200 billion. Services trade is approximately $30 billion, and U.S. foreign direct investment in those markets is around $160 billion. Conversely, the 10 countries have a market of approximately 600 million consumers and economic growth there has been faster than the world average for the past decade.

In terms of political and security interests, I would note that the United States has an abiding interest in maintaining peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region, and this includes ensuring open sea-lanes in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, where so much of the world's commerce flows. So it is of paramount importance that any disagreements and territorial disputes in Asia be resolved peacefully, through international law, through arbitration and through codes of conduct, not through aggressive actions and confrontation.

The tension between Vietnam and China—I am sure we will talk about that today—that we have seen in recent days underscores they need for peaceful mechanisms to resolve territorial disputes. We hope that the Association will continue to play an important role in facilitating these discussions.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on those subjects and many others. In the absence of Senator Johnson's opening remarks, let me proceed to introducing our witnesses and then you can proceed with your statements. I am pleased to introduce Andrew Schapiro, who is the nominee for Ambassador to the Czech Republic, who has come before this committee after a career in both the public and private sector.

Andrew is a Czech American who has deep family ties to the country to which he has been nominated to serve. I would encourage all of my colleagues to read the incredible moving story of his family's experience during the time of Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia as documented in "Letters From Prague."

Mr. Schapiro attended Yale University, graduating magna cum laude with a degree in history. He was awarded the Marshall Scholarship to do postgraduate work at Oxford, earning a degree in philosophy, politics, and economics, and then he returned to the United States to attend Harvard, the law school there, where he also graduated magna cum laude.

Again, his legal career as a clerk to two distinguished Federal judges, both Richard Posner and Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun. He then entered public service, spending 5 years as a Federal public defender in Manhattan. He went on to become a partner at two leading international law firms, achieving newsworthy victories in the areas of intellectual property, white collar criminal defense, and commercial litigation. He was selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers of America and has been described as one of the brightest legal minds of his generation.

In addition, Mr. Schapiro is involved in a number of civic and charitable organizations, serving on the Criminal Justice Act Advisory Board for the U.S. Court of Appeals in the Second Circuit and the Board of Directors for the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund, as well as the Board of Directors for the Jewish Council of Urban Affairs.

I am also pleased to introduce Nina Hachigian as the nominee for the Ambassador to be the Representative of the United States to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with the rank and the status of Ambassador. She is currently a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, based in Los Angeles. She focuses on great power relationships, the United States-China relationship, international institutions, and United States foreign policy.

She is the coauthor of the book "The Next American Century: How the U.S. Can Thrive as Other Powers Rise." She was previously a senior political scientist at RAND Corporation and served as the director of the RAND Center for Asia Pacific Policy for 4 years. Before that she was with the Council on Foreign Relations and also on the staff of the National Security Council in the White House.

She has published numerous reports, book chapters, and journal articles. She is on the board of the Institute for International Affairs of Stanford University and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Pacific Council on International Policy.

She received her bachelor of sciences from Yale University and then, like Mr. Schapiro, for inexplicable reasons left Connecticut to pursue her J.D. from Stanford Law School.

We will now move to opening statements. We will start with you, Mr. Schapiro, and then Ms. Hachigian.

STATEMENT OF ANDREW H. SCHAPIRO, OF ILLINOIS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Mr. SCHAPIRO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks in advance to Ranking Member Johnson and all members of the committee. It is an honor to come before you as the President's nominee to be our next Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

Seventy-five years ago my late mother, then a small girl, watched from the window of her family's apartment in Prague as German soldiers marched in to occupy her city. Czechoslovakia, as it was then known, had been a flourishing outpost of Western democracy and culture prior to those tragic events. Our family, like all the Czech people, learned the hard way that you cannot take liberty and security for granted.

We ultimately learned something else—that the United States of America, the Nation that gave my mother and her parents refuge when they fled the Nazis, literally saving their lives, is a force for good in the world like no other.

I want to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust that they have shown in me with this nomination, and I am so pleased that if I am confirmed my wife and children will be joining me to represent America in the Czech Republic. They mean everything to me and they are here with us today: my wife Tamar, our 13-year-old daughter, Gallia, and our 10-year-old son, Alexander. Mr. Chairman, they will be force multipliers in Prague if I am confirmed for this position.

I would also like to acknowledge my sister, also named Tamar, who has come in from California to be here today. Sadly, my parents are no longer with us, but their wisdom and their examples are always present.

The Czech Republic is a staunch, important ally in the heart of Europe. We have deep relationships in three key areas: our shared security, our shared prosperity, and our shared values. Let me address each in turn.

Our defense and security relationship has flourished since the end of the cold war. As an active member of NATO, the EU, and the OSCE, the Czech Republic plays a role in global affairs that is disproportionate to its relatively small size. As you mentioned, Mr.

Chairman, Czech military forces serve side by side with U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The Czechs have helped to promote peace and stability in the Balkans, in Mali, and the Sinai, and the Czechs have courageously served as our protecting power in Syria since we closed our Embassy there in 2012.

If confirmed, I will work to fortify our bilateral and multilateral cooperation in building security around the world.

Of course, Russia's actions in Ukraine now remind us and our allies of the role that NATO was originally created to perform, the defense of transatlantic security. Here again, the Czechs are making important contributions. They have offered fighter jets to reinforce Baltic air space and troops to support the NATO Response Force. They have also provided monitors for OSCE missions. In fact, a Czech was among the OSCE monitors recently taken captive and then released in Eastern Ukraine.

The Czech Republic has quickly and faithfully implemented the targeted sanctions and asset freezes that have been imposed on Russia, and if confirmed I will make sure that we continue to coordinate closely with our Czech allies as we jointly address the situation in Ukraine. I will also take every opportunity to reaffirm our ironclad commitment to mutual self-defense under NATO's Article 5.

Today the Czech defense budget totals just over 1 percent of GDP, falling well short of NATO targets and placing the Czechs in the middle of the pack among our European allies in terms of defense spending. If confirmed, I will urge the Czech Government to boost the share of resources that it dedicates to defense.

Recent events also starkly demonstrate the need for greater attention to European energy security. The Czech Republic, which gets about 75 percent of its oil and gas from Russia, understands that predictable and uninterrupted access to energy is fundamental to both national security and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will work with the Czech Republic to help increase its energy security through diversification of energy sources and routes.

Next, I want to build on our two nations' growing economic and commercial ties. Over the last 4 years bilateral trade between the United States and the Czech Republic has doubled to nearly $6 billion. The Czech Republic has become one of the United States fastest-growing export markets in Europe, and if confirmed I will be a strong advocate for U.S. business interests to support job creation back home and I will make expanding our trade ties and ensuring that our firms can compete on the ground a top priority.

Completing an ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP, is a key strategic goal for both the United States and the European Union and its member states, including the Czech Republic. I promise that, along with our excellent interagency team in Prague, I will work to maintain the support of the Czech Government for TTIP and help to promote awareness that a mutually beneficial agreement will ensure continued growth and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic.

Finally, on our shared values, if confirmed I will advocate for transparency and rule of law in the business sector and encourage the Czech Government to continue its anticorruption efforts to help improve the overall business climate. I will also work with the

Czech Government and civil society organizations to help foster a more inclusive society so that all Czechs, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation, benefit from equal opportunity and full protection of the law.

In all of these efforts I will draw upon my experience as an advocate, as a public speaker, as a student of economics and politics, and as a manager of large and diverse teams to advance the goals of our Nation and the Embassy.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I noted at the outset that in the late 1930s my mother and grandparents watched Nazi troops enter their city from their apartment window in Prague. That apartment building still stands and it is within walking distance of the U.S. Ambassador's residence where, if confirmed, I will soon be living with my own family. It is not a long walk, but it is quite a journey that has taken us from that apartment to that residence. I am deeply honored to have been asked to represent the United States in Prague. I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and I welcome any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schapiro follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANDREW H. SCHAPIRO

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the committee. It is an honor to come before you as the President's nominee to be our next Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

Seventy-five years ago, my late mother—then a small girl—watched from the window of her family's apartment in Prague as German soldiers marched in to occupy her city. Czechoslovakia, as it was then known, had been a flourishing outpost of Western democracy and culture prior to those tragic events. Our family—like all the Czech people—learned the hard way that you cannot take liberty and security for granted. And we ultimately learned something else: that the United States of America—the nation that gave my mother and her parents refuge when they fled the Nazis, literally saving their lives—is a force for good in the world like no other.

I want to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust in me that they have shown with this nomination. And I am very pleased that, if I am confirmed, my wife and children will join me in representing America in the Czech Republic. They mean everything to me, and they are here with us today. My wife, Tamar; our 13-year-old daughter, Galia; and our ten-year-old son, Alexander. They will be "force multipliers" in Prague if I am confirmed for this position. I would also like to acknowledge my sister—also named Tamar—who has come in from California to be here today. Sadly my parents are no longer with us—but their wisdom and their examples are ever-present.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, at this critical time, the Czech Republic is a staunch, important ally in the heart of Europe. We have a deep relationship in three key areas: our shared security; our shared prosperity; and our shared values. Let me address each in turn.

First, our defense and security relationship has flourished in the decades since the end of the cold war. As an active member of NATO, the EU, and the OSCE, the Czech Republic plays a role in global affairs that is disproportionate to its relatively small size. Czech military forces serve side by side with U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan; they are currently in charge of base protection at Bagram Air Force base and contribute helicopter training units and special forces troops. The Czechs have promised that they will draw down only in consultation with allies, and have pledged to be "in together, out together" with us in Afghanistan.

The Czechs have also made important contributions to peace and stability in the Balkans, providing units for both NATO's force in Kosovo and the EU's mission in Bosnia. Today Czech soldiers are deployed with the EU Training Mission in Mali, and with the Multinational Force Observers mission in the Sinai. Additionally, the Czechs have courageously served as our protecting power in Syria since the closure of our Embassy there in 2012. If confirmed, I will work to fortify our bilateral and multilateral cooperation in promoting democracy and building security around the world.

And while Czech forces have proven their mettle in expeditionary missions, Russia's actions in Ukraine now remind us and our allies of the role that NATO was originally created to perform, the defense of transatlantic security. Here again the Czechs are making important contributions. They have offered fighter jets to reinforce Baltic airspace and troops to support the NATO Response Force. They have also provided monitors for OSCE missions; indeed a Czech was among the OSCE monitors recently taken captive and then released in Eastern Ukraine.

The Czech Republic has quickly and faithfully implemented the targeted sanctions and asset freezes that have been imposed on Russia. If confirmed, I will make sure that we continue to coordinate closely with our Czech allies as we jointly address the situation in Ukraine. I will also take every opportunity to reaffirm our ironclad commitment to mutual self-defense under NATO's Article 5.

Today the Czech defense budget totals just over 1 percent of GDP, falling well short of NATO targets and placing the Czechs in the middle of the pack among our European allies in terms defense spending. If confirmed, I will urge the Czech Government to boost the share of resources that it dedicates to defense. I know that Defense Secretary Hagel and Czech Defense Minister Stropnicky discussed Czech modernization efforts and the need to maintain readiness and capabilities to support NATO when they met here in Washington last month. If confirmed, I will continue to engage on this high priority topic.

The events in Ukraine also starkly demonstrate the need for greater attention to European energy security. The Czech Republic—which gets about 75 percent of its oil and gas from Russia—understands that predictable and uninterrupted access to energy is fundamental to both national security and economic prosperity. With the cancellation of the Temelin nuclear power plant tender, the Czech Government is reexamining its energy security strategy. If confirmed, I will work with the Czech Republic to help increase its energy security through diversification of energy sources and routes.

Next—I want to build on our two nations' growing economic and commercial ties. Over the last 4 years, bilateral trade between the U.S. and the Czech Republic has doubled—to nearly $6 billion. With a prosperous, industrialized economy, the Czech Republic provides substantial export opportunities for the U.S. in high-tech, manufacturing, and other sectors. Last year, with the support of the U.S. Commercial Service, we exported almost $2 billion of goods to the Czech Republic—more than at any other time in our history. In fact, the Czech Republic has become one of the United States fastest growing export markets in Europe. If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for U.S. business interests to support job creation back home, and will make expanding our trade ties and ensuring that U.S. firms can compete on the ground a top priority.

Completing an ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP, is a key strategic goal for both the United States and the European Union and its member states, including the Czech Republic. The Czechs will benefit from the expansion of trade and reduction in the cost of doing business through lowering tariffs and removing "behind the border" barriers. U.S. companies will benefit from the opening of opportunities—especially for small and medium-sized businesses—to trade with and invest in the Czech Republic. I promise that—along with our excellent interagency team at our Embassy in Prague—I will work to maintain the support of the Czech Government for TTIP and help to promote awareness that a mutually beneficial agreement will ensure continued growth and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic.

Finally, on our shared values, if confirmed, I will advocate for transparency and rule of law in the business sector and encourage the Czech Government to continue its anticorruption efforts to help improve the overall business climate. Last year, several prominent Czech NGOs came together to speak with one voice on anticorruption issues. Their efforts led to creation of several distinct pieces of anticorruption legislation which a majority of parliamentarians have publicly supported. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Czech civil society organizations to support and amplify their efforts.

Confronting all forms of racism and intolerance reinforces the values and security of both the United States and the Czech Republic. I will work with the Czech Government and civil society organizations on building a more inclusive society to ensure that all Czechs, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation benefit from equal opportunity and the full protection of the law.

In all of these efforts, I will draw upon my experience as an advocate, a public speaker, a student of economics and politics, and a manager of large and diverse teams to advance the goals of our Nation.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I noted at the outset that in 1939 my mother and grandparents watched Nazi troops enter their city from their apart-

ment window in Prague. That building still stands, and it is within walking distance of the U.S. Ambassador's residence where—if confirmed—I will soon be living with my own family. It is not a long walk, but it is quite a journey that has taken us from the apartment to the Residence. I am deeply honored to have been asked to represent the United States in Prague. I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I welcome any questions you may have.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Schapiro.

Ms. Hachigian, I hope that I came somewhat close to pronouncing your name correctly. You are welcome to give your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF NINA HACHIGIAN, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR

Ms. HACHIGIAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am deeply honored to appear before you today and humbled by the confidence that President Obama has shown in me with this nomination. My Armenian grandmother, whose locket I am wearing, only had a grade school education. When she came to this country fleeing persecution and poverty in her homeland, I do not think she could have imagined the path that would bring me here.

Her younger son served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean war. He earned a Ph.D. in math. He married another professor from Germany and they had a daughter, who ended up at this table. I am my grandmother's American dream. My parents would also have been very proud of this nomination.

I would like to introduce my husband. My family is more important to me than anything and I would not be here if Joe and my two children were not willing to embark on a genuine adventure. I also want to thank my friends and colleagues who are here with us today.

I have been working on U.S. Asia policy for some 15 years now since I left the staff of the National Security Council, first as the Director of the Center for Asia Pacific Policy at the RAND Corporation and now as a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. In those jobs, I traveled to the region frequently, had the opportunity to meet with Asian leaders and work closely with my Asian counterparts.

I am thrilled by the prospect of entering government again and serving my country if I am confirmed as the next Ambassador to ASEAN. I want to acknowledge the key role the Senate has played in recognizing the growing importance of ASEAN, including by creating this position in 2006.

Just as the Rebalance to Asia is an important part of the administration's foreign policy, engagement with ASEAN plays a central role in the rebalance. Increasingly, the most challenging issues in Asia—energy security, territorial disputes, climate, human trafficking—can only be solved by nations working in concert. ASEAN is at the heart of Asia's institutions, providing the architecture to work through these issues, and that is why Secretary Kerry said last year "The partnership that we share with ASEAN remains a top priority for the Obama administration."

What binds the 10 countries of ASEAN together is their commitment to nonviolence and the rule of law. We share those values. We share ASEAN's vision of a peaceful, prosperous, rules-based order in the Asia-Pacific. If confirmed and with your help, I will work with ASEAN to further our common values, including human rights for the people of Southeast Asia.

The United States has other important interests in the region, including economic opportunity. Southeast Asia's over 600 million people are already America's fourth-largest export market, supporting over half a million U.S. jobs. ASEAN is pursuing an integrated economic community and the United States is supporting that effort. America is the largest foreign investor in Southeast Asia. If confirmed and with your help, I will continue to work to expand U.S. business's access to the growing ASEAN market.

Energy, environment, and climate are also critical issues in Southeast Asia. As a Californian, I especially welcome the chance to engage with the region on how to protect oceans and rivers, these critical natural resources that provide food security and economic livelihoods for so many.

Our engagement with ASEAN is also about its people, many of whom are our relatives. Over 6 million Americans identify with an ASEAN ethnicity. The region is young—65 percent of ASEAN's people are under the age of 35. With the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative that President Obama launched in April, we are looking to build ties with the leaders of tomorrow, giving them a platform to work with each other across ASEAN borders.

All of our interests in Southeast Asia ultimately rest on the peace and stability made possible by our enduring security presence in the Asia-Pacific. Two treaty allies, the Philippines and Thailand, are members of ASEAN. The United States response after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines shows the unique capabilities that our military and civilian agencies bring to bear and demonstrates our deep and abiding commitment to addressing both traditional and nontraditional security challenges in the region.

Half of the tonnage of the world's ship-based cargo passes through the South China Sea. The United States has a national interest in the unfettered flow of this commerce and in freedom of navigation and overflight in these waters. We have a deep stake in ensuring that the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea are solved peacefully, without coercion, force, or intimidation, and in accordance with international law.

Unfortunately, we have seen lately what appears to be a pattern of unilateral actions by China to advance its territorial and maritime claims, the latest of which is China's introduction of an oil rig into the disputed waters near the Paracel Islands. This is provocative and raises tensions and it highlights the need for claimants to clarify their claims in accordance with international law. America supports ASEAN's strong and unified voice on these disputes and its efforts to manage them in a manner that is consistent with a rules-based regional order and international law. We encourage ASEAN and China's efforts to conclude a meaningful code of conduct. A peaceful rules-based process will benefit all the claimants, big and small, and help preserve regional peace and stability.

An effective ASEAN will have lasting benefits for the region and for our shared future. If confirmed and with your help, I will commit myself to deepening our ties with this important organization. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I am happy to answer your questions now or at any time in the future.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hachigian follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NINA HACHIGIAN

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today, and humbled by the confidence that President Obama has shown in me with this nomination.

My Armenian grandmother, whose locket I am wearing, had only a grade school education. When she came to this country, fleeing persecution and poverty in her homeland, I don't think she could have imagined the path that would bring me here.

Her younger son served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean war. He earned a Ph.D. in math, married another professor from Germany (my mother, who later became a small businessowner), and they had a daughter who ended up at this table.

I am my grandmother's American dream.

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I've been working on U.S. Asia policy for some 15 years now, since I left the staff of the National Security Council—first as the director of the Center for Asia Pacific Policy at the RAND Corporation, and now as a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress. In those jobs, I traveled to the region frequently and had the opportunity to meet with Asian leaders and work closely with my Asian counterparts.

I am thrilled by the prospect of entering government again, and serving my country, if confirmed as the next Ambassador to ASEAN.

I want to acknowledge the key role that members of the Senate and of the House have played in recognizing the growing importance of ASEAN, including creating this position in 2006. I will count on your continued engagement if confirmed.

Just as the Rebalance to Asia is an important part of the administration's foreign policy, engagement with ASEAN plays a central role in the rebalance.

Increasingly, the most challenging issues in Asia—energy security, territorial disputes, climate, human trafficking—can only be solved multilaterally. ASEAN is at the heart of Asia's institutions, providing the architecture to work through these issues, and that is why as Secretary Kerry said last year: "The partnership that we share with ASEAN remains a top priority for the Obama administration."

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If confirmed, and with your help, I will work with ASEAN to further our common values, including human rights for the people of Southeast Asia.

The United States has other important interests in the region including economic opportunity. Southeast Asia's over 600 million people already are America's fourth-largest export market, supporting over half a million U.S. jobs.

ASEAN is pursuing an integrated ASEAN Economic Community, and the United States is supporting that effort. In 2012, President Obama established the U.S.-ASEAN Expanded Economic Engagement initiative to promote increased U.S. trade with and investment in the region, and to encourage ASEAN countries to join high-standard trade agreements. If confirmed, and with your help, I will continue this work to expand U.S. businesses' access to the growing ASEAN market, creating more jobs for Americans and realizing ASEAN's own goals.

Energy, environment, and climate are critical issues in Southeast Asia. As a Californian, I especially welcome the chance to engage with the region on how to protect oceans and rivers—these critical natural resources that provide food security and economic livelihoods for so many.

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them a platform to work across ASEAN borders to solve social and economic challenges.

All of our interests in Southeast Asia ultimately rest on the peace and stability made possible by our enduring security presence in the Asia-Pacific. Two treaty allies, the Philippines and Thailand, are members of ASEAN, and all five Pacific allies are members of the East Asia Summit. The U.S. response after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines shows the unique capabilities our military and civilian agencies bring to bear and demonstrates our deep and abiding commitment to addressing both traditional and nontraditional security challenges in the region.

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America supports ASEAN's strong and unified voice on these disputes and its efforts to manage them in a manner that is consistent with a rules-based regional order and international law. We encourage ASEAN and China's efforts to conclude a meaningful Code of Conduct. A peaceful, rules-based process will benefit all the claimants, big and small and help preserve regional peace and stability.

An effective ASEAN will have lasting benefits for the region and for our shared future. If confirmed, and with your help, I will commit myself to deepening our ties with this important organization.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to answer your questions, now or at any time in the future.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you to both of our nominees. Welcome to your families as well.

We will now start an opening round of questions. Mr. Schapiro, let me start with you to talk a little bit about the subject of my first, and I think only, visit to the Czech Republic, which was some years ago in the middle of the tender for the nuclear contract, which has now been shelved, in part likely because of energy price dynamics in the Czech Republic and the region. But of course, this was always about the Czech Republic's efforts to make themselves energy independent, and maybe the price sensitivities of the market today do not allow for the tender to go forward. But hopefully we will have an ambassador there who will try to impress upon the Czechs the need to reopen this bidding process. We clearly have an American company that we hope gets fair consideration, but it is hard to figure out in the short term and the medium term how the Czech Republic really moves in a substantial manner to independence with respect to energy from Russia without that nuclear project getting under way.

What is your understanding as you have learned about this country, about the prospects of that deal being put back together, and what is the role of our next Ambassador in trying to make that happen?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You raise a very important issue, the issue of energy independence, which has both an economic and a security aspect to it, as we have learned in recent events. As you note, the Czech Republic does rely on nuclear power for some of its electricity generation, and we were of course disappointed that the Temelin tender, the tender for the Temelin nuclear power plant, has been called off.

I can say that our Embassy team in the Czech Republic did wonderful work in advocating for Westinghouse in that regard. But, as you noted, it was essentially an economic decision by the Czech Government. The Czech energy company, CEZ, had asked for price guarantees, but, given the economic realities, the government was not able to make those price guarantees.

If I am confirmed, I will make sure to advocate for and support an open and transparent tender process. There is word that the tender is not necessarily permanently taken off the shelf.

Senator MURPHY. If you could talk a little bit about the orientation of the Czech Republic to Europe. Their former President Vaclav Klaus was famously Euroskeptic in his views. You have now got the ANO Party. The leader of that party is not supportive of joining the euro zone, although he is, frankly, not rabidly committed to staying out of European Union affairs.

A lot of talk within the region about this next round of European Parliament elections perhaps resulting in more Euroskeptic Parliament members going to Brussels. What do you see? What do you understand to be the view and the trend line over the next 5 years of attitudes toward Europe and the EU within the Czech Republic?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. Thank you, Senator. What I can say about that is that the current government is generally regarded as somewhat more EU-centric than the government that it replaced. But as you correctly point out, one of the larger parties within the coalition, ANO, is sometimes seen as not so tilted toward Europe. So I think what we can draw from that is that it is very hard to predict. It is a relatively new government. But certainly we have seen nothing that causes any alarm or concern. There are strains of Euroskepticism in Czech politics, as in most countries in the EU.

I would not hazard to predict how the European parliamentary elections, which I think are a week from today, will turn out. I think we will have to wait and see. But everything I have heard suggests that we have no cause for any alarm.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Hachigian, I am not sure whose phrase this was, but one of your focuses is on great power relationships and clearly that would seem to describe the relationship between the United States and China. But part of being a great power is submitting yourself to internationally acceptable ways of resolving disputes. One of the troubling trend lines in the part of the world that our subcommittee looks at over the past several months has been one great power, Russia's, enthusiasm, frankly, for walking away from those traditional ways of dealing with disputes and disagreements.

As you look at this pattern of aggressive activity on the open seas by the Chinese, do you think this is a government that is moving toward attempting to settle disputes outside of those acceptable norms, or do you think this is just a sort of series of provocations designed to lay claims so that they can settle disputes in an acceptable form?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. Thank you for that question, Senator. It is a difficult question because I do not think we really know yet. What we are seeing is the pattern, and it is China's acting unilaterally to change the status quo and not resorting to diplomacy, which is

what the United States would want to see, that these disputes are resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law.

That said, the ASEAN and China are engaged in negotiations over a code of conduct, and the United States would very much like to see that be a meaningful code that is concluded swiftly, because there is obviously a need for more guidelines so that there is not further violence in the region.

Senator MURPHY. One of the criticisms of ASEAN is that it is a talk shop, that it is a forum for a lot of discussion, but not as much action. So take the dispute over the Paracel Islands. What is the role for ASEAN to play in a bilateral dispute like this and what is the potential for ASEAN to shed that image and deliver a little bit more action and a little bit less discussion?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. Thank you for that question. ASEAN has a central role in these disputes. It negotiated a declaration of conduct with China back in 2002, which is a document that asks for all the claimants to act peacefully and to not act in an escalatory manner. Now, as I said, it is in negotiations with China over a declaration of conduct.

Over this last weekend ASEAN had its summit, and in three separate documents it talked about its serious concerns over these incidents in the South China Sea. That is significant. It shows a level of concern on the part of ASEAN that we have not seen before. The Indonesian foreign minister made some surprisingly strong statements. Of course, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister did as well.

I think that, would we like to see even stronger statement? We would and if confirmed as Ambassador that is something that I will certainly be working on.

The other thing I should note is that talking is actually very important in this region that does not have a history of a security architecture. So ASEAN's forums, where the entire region can get together, China and us and many others, to talk about these issues, is actually playing a meaningful role. They also generate a number of confidence-building exercises, including those related to humanitarian response and disaster assistance. So you have all the 10 ASEANs plus China and Japan and us and Australia and others working together to facilitate the future cooperation.

Senator MURPHY. One last question and then I will turn it over to Senator Johnson. Has the announced pivot to Asia, whether or not you agree with the realization of that policy, had an effect on the influence of the United States representative to ASEAN, or are those nations waiting to see what the actual policies are that come after that announcement in policy shift? What has this announced pivot to Asia meant for the influence specifically within the association of the U.S. representative?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. I would say that having a Permanent U.S. Representative is part of the Rebalance to Asia. If confirmed, I would only be the second one, so we have only had one since 2010. We were the first non-ASEAN country to have a Permanent Representative in Jakarta at the Secretariat and that meant a lot and means a lot to the ASEANs.

I think as I look at it from the outside, there is a lot going on in Asia, that we have a tremendous number of different kinds of programs across the board in economics, in security, and in democ-

racy and human rights. It has been a very active policy. I think that an ambassador to ASEAN is able to point to all those things to show that we are there to stay, that we have been a Pacific power and we will continue to be one in the future.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms.—how do you pronounce your name?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. "Hah-CHEE-gee-an."

Senator JOHNSON. "Hah-CHEE-gee-an," OK.

Ms. HACHIGIAN. You were very close.

Senator JOHNSON. Do you draw any parallels in terms of what is happening in Eastern Europe, what the U.S. response has been to Vladimir Putin's aggressive expansion, our reaction to it, and what China is doing in terms of, in your words, acting unilaterally? Do you draw a parallel there?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. I see the parallel that you are drawing. But we have very strong interests in Asia that the rebalance is all about, and I do not think anyone should doubt our resolve to realize those interests and those of our allies in the region.

Senator JOHNSON. You are saying nobody should, but are people doubting our resolve? Have you spoken to some of the ASEAN countries and are they starting to question Americans' resolve? And is that a concern to you, and how are you going to address it?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. I see your point. I think that we are doing so much in Asia that I do not think that they are doubting our resolve. I see the analogy that you are drawing, but these unilateral actions that China has been taking, they precede the annexation of the Ukraine and they continue to exist. I do not think that there has been a direct effect that I can see, although I do not know for certain.

What I can say is that Putin's annexation of the Crimea has perhaps put more pressure on China in the region to show that it actually means to resolve these disputes peacefully, as is its stated policy.

Senator JOHNSON. That would be a hopeful outcome. Let us hope that is exactly what China is thinking. I think they are probably thinking something else. I think they are thinking this is probably a pretty good time to act, and that is a concern.

Talk to me about the economic opportunities we have in East Asia? What are our greatest opportunities?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. I think we have a terrific opportunity to increase exports. It is already the fourth-largest market and it is growing rapidly. ASEAN has plans to form an integrated economic community, which over time will mean more harmonization of standards and regulations across the 10 countries, and I think that will make it a lot easier for our exporters.

So I would say that that is a central and important opportunity for us, and if confirmed I will be speaking with U.S. businesses about how we can realize that.

Senator JOHNSON. There has been an awful lot of talk here in Congress and in Washington about potential Chinese currency manipulation. I kind of happen to think that the United States is calling the—the pot calling the kettle black here. And there has been

an awful lot of reports that it is very difficult to say exactly where the Chinese currency value would actually fall if it were in a true free market.

Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. China is a major economic player in the region, no question. They have strong trading relationships with ASEAN. But we have strong trading relations with ASEAN as well and we are the largest foreign investor by far.

In terms of China's currency, I am certainly no expert and should probably take that question back.

Senator JOHNSON. That is a pretty large driver, though, of economic activity between the countries, correct, currency valuations?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. It certainly is bilaterally between us and China, and I assume is as well within the region. But in terms of the detailed economic analysis of that, I do not think I can get it to you just now.

[The written response to Senator Johnson's question to Nina Hachigian follows:]

It is imperative that we get our relationship with China right, given the effect its economic policies have on the United States, including the Rebalance to Asia, and on the world economy. We have an interest in developing a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive relationship with China that delivers benefits to both our countries and to the broader international community. As a part of developing this relationship, we must find ways to address the array of issues born of our substantial and complex bilateral economic engagement.

The policy of the administration is to use all the tools at U.S. disposal to direct China toward full compliance with its international trade and commercial obligations, including its commitment to enhance exchange rate flexibility. The management of our economic relationship cuts across a range of U.S. agencies, including USTR and the Departments of Treasury, Commerce, Energy, and Agriculture, in addition to State. I agree with the objective of leveling the playing field in China for U.S. businesses and workers; however, I defer specific questions about currency to the Treasury Department.

More broadly, we must remind China how both our countries benefit from China's increased integration into the rules-based international economic system—and of the level playing field this system requires.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Schapiro, why do you not speak a little bit in terms of what are our greatest opportunities economically with the Czech Republic?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. Thank you, Senator. I am very excited to build on the great work that our team on the ground in the Czech Republic has been doing over the last 4 years under Ambassador Eisen. They have doubled trade between our countries, so that now the Czech Republic is one of our fastest growing, I think it is either the second- or third-fastest growing export market in Europe.

So I want to support and encourage that type of trade. I think there are four things I can do in that regard. First, I think the Ambassador's job is to be, and his team is to be, alert to opportunities and make sure that that gets communicated back home to companies, to businesses, to this committee.

At the same time, we have to be advocates, and that is something that I have spent my career doing, so to be out advocating for U.S. companies on the ground.

Next, I think we really need to work to build an environment in which free trade allows both our country and the Czech Republic to really reap the benefits of economic growth. For that reason, pressing and encouraging the Czechs, who are already essentially

on board with the TTIP treaty—there are still discussions going on, but they have been supporters. Working to make sure they help the European Union get that across the finish line with us would be the third thing I would want to do.

Then fourth, as Senator Murphy said, I think before you were coming in, is to do all I can to level the playing field by pressing for rule of law and advancing the anticorruption efforts that we already have under way, especially in procurement. If you are a U.S. company coming in, you need to know that the rules are going to apply by one yardstick to everyone.

Senator JOHNSON. So specifically in what product areas or service areas have exports grown, and are those the same areas that there is renewed or increased opportunity in the future, or are there some other areas as well? Specifically with the product or service areas?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. The U.S. exporting to the Czech Republic, I know that we have increased exports in high tech and that we also have large resource and development capabilities that some American companies have placed in the Czech Republic. In turn, the Czechs mainly export manufactured goods to the United States.

I think there is a great deal of opportunity, but I probably will need to be on the ground and surveying the landscape before I can opine as to whether one sector or another is best for us. We had hoped that the area of nuclear energy would be one and, as we discussed earlier, there still may be some hope to revise that effort. That is certainly something that creates a tremendous amount of jobs back here in the United States.

Senator JOHNSON. Both Senator Murphy and I have been involved in meetings with European partners and there is always a great deal of vocal support for TTIP in general, but then it kind of gets down to the specific issues. Are you aware of any specific trouble spots in terms of negotiating TTIP that will come out of the Czech Republic?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. Nothing unique to the Czech Republic, other than there are some concerns about farmers markets and whether farmers markets and agriculture will be affected in a way that hurts Czech farmers. I think that is not the case, and so one of my jobs—and I know our team is already doing this—will be to make sure that the story gets out about how a mutually beneficial treaty between the United States and the European Union can benefit everyone.

But the short answer to your question is there are no large concerns on the horizon that we have heard, nothing different from what we are seeing in many of the European countries.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

One of the things that both of us have observed as we have watched the crisis in the Ukraine and on Russia's borders play out is that, as we are increasingly concerned about security interests, we tend to spend a little bit less time focusing on some of the human rights issues and problems inside places like Russia. It is a convenient distraction from some of the very serious issues regarding the freedom of civil society.

I think the same thing plays out in Southeast Asia as well. As we are focused on these almost daily security concerns, we maybe lose sight of some of our interests in promoting human rights.

That is an opening to ask a broad question to you, Ms. Hachigian, over this question of what ASEAN's role is in promoting human rights in the region. I just noted the recent decision of Brunei to institute fairly strict sharia law, including floggings for abortions and adultery. What is the role that we play within ASEAN on the issue of human rights and how aggressive will ASEAN itself be in trying to work on those issues?

Ms. HACHIGIAN. The issue of human rights is very important to me. When I was in college I spent some time at an antiapartheid organization in South Africa. I went to Afghanistan to do some research on the placement of land mines in civilian areas. In my first trip to Southeast Asia I was part of a Navy program to train Cambodian military officers in human rights and the rule of law. So these are personal—this is a personal interest to me.

I think if you look at the region overall the human rights situation has gotten quite a bit better over the last 20, 30 years. But there are still pockets of real need for improvement, including the Rohingya in Burma and freedom of expression in Vietnam and then, as you say, sharia law in Brunei.

ASEAN has a few years ago established a human rights commission, and the United States has been working with that commission from the beginning. If confirmed I will continue to work to try to make that a more effective body than it currently is.

When it comes to sharia law in Brunei, I know that our bilateral embassy is engaged on this issue. I think it comes down to it being important that a nation's laws conform with its international obligations on human rights. Some of the physical corporal punishment associated with that law, if implemented, as you point out, would be inconsistent with international obligations.

Senator MURPHY. One additional question for you, Mr. Schapiro. We have danced a little bit around Ukraine here today. The Czechs have been very strong, frankly, in their at least language and rhetoric that they have used surrounding the provocations of Russia in Eastern Ukraine and the invasion and annexation of Crimea. What is the disposition as you understand it of the Czech Republic with respect to the next level sanctions, possible sectoral industry-wide sanctions, that will have an economic effect on major Russian trading partners like the Czech Republic? We have heard a lot of strong talk from some of our European partners, but not necessarily corresponding action.

I am one, and I think others on the committee join me, in believing that it is probably about time for the United States to move out on our own with respect to stronger sanctions.

What do you understand to be the disposition of the Czech Republic?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. I think I would describe the disposition as cautious, Senator. As you note, the Czechs have thus far stood side by side with us. There is no daylight between our positions. They have implemented the sanctions that are in place thus far and they have most recently condemned the May 10 referenda in Eastern

Ukraine. No major media outlets in the Czech Republic are tilting pro-Russian in any way.

That being said, Russia is a significant trading partner of the Czech Republic. They get 70 to 80 percent of their gas and oil from the Russians. So they face competing concerns. I think my job as Ambassador, if confirmed, will be to continue to try and, through public engagement and through private meetings with the government, do all I can to support those who will stand with us, because the Czechs do recognize—and this is one of the sources of the strong support that you describe—they understand that you cannot be asleep at the wheel when there is a dangerous power not too far away. They had the experience of the late 1930s, they had the experience of 1968. So I think they get it.

All that being said, it is true there would be some significant economic pain if we go to sectoral sanctions.

Ms. HACHIGIAN. I would just ask you in your capacity as our next Ambassador to convey a very strong message that this assumption of security based on NATO membership comes with limitations. One limitation is that the United States cannot continue to provide 70 percent of the funding. We cannot allow for countries like the Czech Republic to come in with only 1 percent of their GDP. I was glad that your opening remarks talked about your intention to press that point.

But secondarily, what Putin is perfecting is an ability to rattle nations and gain control of portions of their society and public affairs without a transparent invasion through military force. That should worry every single NATO member because we have an Article 5 obligation to protect NATO members, but the question is if the kind of tactics that Putin is using in places like Eastern Ukraine start to be used in a NATO country, a Czech Republic or a Hungary or a Baltic State, there is a legitimate question as to what our Article 5 responsibility is.

That is why, even with the pain that may come with engaging in tougher sanctions, our European allies especially on the eastern edge of the continent I would hope should be willing to deal with some of that temporary economic pain to make sure that those kind of tactics are not visited upon their country, posing a pretty significant and troublesome question about what NATO's response will be.

Mr. SCHAPIRO. I could not agree with you more.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think Putin is perfecting that technique because he is not paying a price. Mr. Schapiro, you talked about the Czech Republic's dependence on Russian oil. As Ambassador, would you advocate for opening up those oil markets so we can end Vladimir Putin's basic monopoly on oil and gas supply to not only the Czech Republic, but the Ukraine and other parts of Europe?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. Well, I am pleased to say that the Czechs have increased storage capacity and made investments in reversible pipeline technology. We support that. I will encourage Czech efforts to diversify their energy sources, to liberalize EU energy markets, to increase interconnectivity of European energy supply works.

I was pleased to read that I think just yesterday, I believe it was the V–4—Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic—announced their intention to come up with a plan to deal with any potential shutoff of Russian gas and oil, because I think this has to be a wakeup call for them, and that is a message I intend to bring.

Senator JOHNSON. But just storing Russian oil is not the answer. They actually have to get supplied from other places. Certainly I think the United States has the capability of doing it, and I think it would be helpful if people on the ground there could advocate back to the administration. It would be very helpful to start, for example, to allow those LNG permit applications to proceed forward. Just that announcement I think would be helpful.

Earlier today I read a report that the Czech Defense Minister said that he sees no NATO troops stationed on Czech soil. Do you have any further information on that? Have you heard about that, and what that posture is?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. I do, Your Honor——

Senator JOHNSON. Close enough.

Mr. SCHAPIRO. It is my former job as a lawyer. [Laughter.]

Senator Johnson, yes. The Czech Defense Minister's comment—I think it was to a Reuters reporter—about seeing no need for NATO troops to be stationed on Czech soil caused a bit of an uproar over the last 2 days in the Czech Republic. He was roundly criticized by all of the parties in the government, including the Prime Minister. He has essentially walked that back, said that his comments were taken out of context by Reuters, he was talking about permanent stationing of troops.

In response to this, the lower house of the Czech legislature just—it was either yesterday or today; I am not sure about how the time difference plays into this—passed a new resolution stating that they will comply with all NATO obligations. So I was pleased to see that it created and expression of support for NATO.

Senator JOHNSON. So you would anticipate, then, that the Czech Republic—and you would potentially help advocate for this—could potentially host training exercises as somewhat a show of strength and resolve against Vladimir Putin's actions?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. I think—I could be wrong about this, but I think the Czech Republic has already stated that it would be open to hosting training exercises. I know that the Defense Minister was here in April and met with Secretary Hagel and National Security Adviser Rice. It is possible that I am mistaken about that with regard to exercises, but I believe that is accurate.

Look. Anything that we ask the Czechs to do as a part of NATO or that NATO wants to do that involves the Czech Republic is something that is going to need to be worked out through a dialogue with our Czech partners, and my job will be to facilitate that dialogue and advance our interests.

Senator JOHNSON. I would like to ask both the nominees—and we will start with Mr. Schapiro. When we were over in the Ukraine, I think, one of the most important messages we heard is that the propaganda coming out of Vladimir Putin and Russia is incredibly effective. I think we see it in Venezuela. We have these very dictatorial regimes in total control of the media.

My concern, across the board, is that America has pretty well withdrawn from providing the truth and providing information. My final question to both of you is your assessment of that and what do you think we can do in the countries that you are going to be representing the United States in, to hopefully increase our efforts?

Mr. SCHAPIRO. It is a real issue, Senator. A few weeks ago I turned on my television in a hotel room and I was watching what I thought was an ordinary news program. This was here in Washington. And after about 4 minutes I realized, something just seems off about this. Then I realized I was watching RT, the Russian faux cable news channel. I can see how, to those who do no view it necessarily with a critical eye, it is fairly sophisticated. That is a real issue.

The Czechs have a good history of partnering with us to counter Russian disinformation. Back after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Vaclav Havel, who was then the President of the Czech Republic, invited Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty to move from Germany to Prague. So RFE and Radio Liberty are now located in the Czech Republic. Of course a lot of what they do is beamed toward other areas of the world, but some of it is Russian language.

I think, in light of what has happened, no one should be blind to the danger that that type of propaganda poses, and as Ambassador, if confirmed, I will encourage and support all of our efforts to push back.

I will say, though, I think one of our great strengths is that those who pay attention understand that when they look at our country and the diversity of voices and CNN and Fox and MSN and NBC, I think people can tell the difference. I would not want to fall into any ham-handed propaganda, but I do not think that is what you are suggesting.

Senator JOHNSON. No. The problem is so many people just live their lives and they are not paying attention, not closely. So when they are inundated with propaganda from Vladimir Putin's Russia or from the dictators now in Venezuela or other places, there is just no pushback.

I think one of the problems we have, whether we are talking about the human rights abuses within Muslim countries, requires a real concerted effort to provide real information.

So I just throw that question to you as well.

Ms. HACHIGIAN. Thank you, Senator. I think this is why our continued advocacy for freedom of the media in all these countries is really important. I do think, though, that actions speak louder than words, and even in a country where media is controlled, as in Vietnam, the message of China's recent actions has really come through. As you know, there have been protests across the country.

I think, similarly, our actions and what we did in Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, that is real. That is showing a real commitment, and that is better than any propaganda. We just have to make sure we can get the message out about what we are actually doing. I think that is the challenge. That is what public diplomacy is all about and what, if confirmed, I will help to try to do.

Senator JOHNSON. I agree, actions speak far louder than words, and that is a lesson we can learn in other areas as well.

Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Johnson.

Thank you both for your testimony today. I think you have acquitted yourselves very well. We are going to keep the record open for a short period of time. We are going to keep it open just until tomorrow at 5 o'clock. So if we do get any questions in, we hope that you can turn them around very, very quickly, in part because we are going to try to move your nominations through the committee very, very quickly. So the record will be open until Friday at 5. You will try to turn any questions around as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your participation today, and with that this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

NOMINATIONS OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT, STUART E. JONES, DANA SHELL SMITH, JAMES D. NEALON, AND GENTRY O. SMITH

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Hon. Robert Stephen Beecroft, of California, to be Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt
Hon. Stuart E. Jones, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq
Dana Shell Smith, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the State of Qatar
James D. Nealon, of New Hampshire, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras
Gentry O. Smith, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:05 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez, Murphy, Kaine, Corker, Risch, Rubio, Johnson, and Barrasso.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

For our first panel today, we have nominees for U.S. Ambassadors to Egypt, Iraq, and Qatar.

In Egypt on Sunday, the former Minister of Defense, Field Marshall Sisi, was sworn into office. But, as we all know, a sustainable democratic transition is about more than elections. I remain concerned by the state of media repression in Egypt, the intimidation and detention of activists, mass death sentences, and the disproportionate use of force by Egypt's security services. That said, the people of Egypt have taken to the streets to protest successive governments, and there is no reason not to expect protests again if the Sisi government is unable to deliver on its promises.

Ultimately, my goal is to find a way forward for the United States/Egypt partnership, which means maintaining the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, and a strong defense in counter-terrorism partnership. When it comes to assistance, continued U.S. aid must be based on the totality of our shared interests. And this now includes the Egyptian Government taking steps toward a sustainable democratic transition. That is not only my view, but a legal requirement of the 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Act. So, that said, I look forward to hearing from Ambassador Beecroft on his views.

In Iraq, while political leaders are dealmaking to form a government, the Iraqi people are not benefiting from their country's increased oil output, and the conflict continues to surge in western Iraq, as the spillover from Syria has enabled the Islamic state of Iraq and Syria to take hold. Clearly, we must continue to support the Iraqi Security Forces, but I am concerned by reports that they have been using barrel bombs in their operations. Syria's questions remain unanswered: Iraq's role in Syria, the activities of Iraqi Shia militias fighting with Assad security forces, Iranian influence in Iraq, and the commitment of the Iraqi Government to protect the residents of Camp Liberty until we can conclude a resettlement process. So, Ambassador Jones, I look forward to your perspectives and analysis.

Qatar presents another set of issues. I know that there are many who have questions about the context of the negotiations, the Qatari Government's role in facilitating the talks, and its commitments regarding the status of the Taliban detainees. However, Qatar's multifaceted strategic importance goes far beyond its facilitating role in the Bergdahl/Taliban deal. So, I sincerely hope that this hearing does not denigrate into a political debate that demands answers the nominee does not have and ultimately holds up the process, leaving us with no ambassador on the ground to enforce the terms of the agreement. This is not the time to debate those terms. It is time to confirm an ambassador who will enforce them. I look forward to hearing from you, and to hearing about what you see as your role in Qatar, broadly, as well as on this issue. If you are confirmed, I am monitoring this commitment, and I want to make it clear that Congress will play an active oversight role on this issue. That said, I look forward to hearing from the nominee on the many facets of Qatar's broader strategic importance.

With that, let me turn to the distinguished Ranking Member, Senator Corker, for his remarks.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thanks, to all three of you, for your desire to serve in this way. We obviously have three very qualified nominees, and going to very, very important places.

And I think, to a lesser degree in Qatar, but certainly to a degree, there are two issues that overwhelmingly will affect the service of both Ambassador Jones and Beecroft, and that is the black hole that we have right now in Syria.

And I know that both of you have already experienced that in the countries in which you are serving right now and the fact that we have never really put in place any kind of policy or strategy, or even laid out what our objectives are clearly. And that is obviously having a very destabilizing effect on Iraq and Jordan, where both of you have been.

We also have a situation where there is just no regional strategy. You know, the administration, unfortunately, continues to hide behind, you know, classified briefings and those kind of things, and is unable to lay out a coherent strategy for the region. And so, again, all three of you enter places where that has created significant difficulties. And again, I thank you for your desire to serve in that way.

Egypt, since 2011, there has been no stabilization there. The country is really no better off, relative to many of the issues that we care about, than it was. I do have hopes—maybe greater hopes than our chairman just mentioned—for Egypt, going forward. And I know that they are a very important relationship for our country.

Iraq, we are continuing to read daily the devolution that is taking place there. You feel it on the ground. The lack of involvement that we have had in helping shape things on the ground is very, very apparent, and I know we will talk about that during Q&A.

And in Qatar, because of our inability or lack of desire or just whatever in taking a lead, relative to the Syrian opposition, Qatar obviously has taken a role that has been unhealthy. I understand that may be tapering back some now, but that is a very, very important relationship.

So, I look forward to our questions and answers. I want to thank each of you again for the lives you have led that have made you so qualified for the positions that you are ascending to. And I thank you for being here today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Corker.

Let me again welcome our first panel of nominees, all decorated career Foreign Service officers. None is a stranger to demanding, consuming critical assignments, both domestically and abroad. And we thank them and their families for their past service, and for their willingness to serve again in very challenging roles.

Let me introduce them. They are Robert Stephen Beecroft, to be Ambassador to Egypt; Stuart E. Jones, to be Ambassador to Iraq; and Dana Shell Smith, to be the Ambassador to Qatar.

Ambassador Beecroft has undertaken difficult assignments in the most critical countries for U.S. national security and strategic interests. He is a career Foreign Service officer with the rank of minister counselor, and currently serves as Ambassador to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Stuart E. Jones also is no stranger to demanding assignments in the most strategic, pressing areas for the United States. He is a career Foreign Service officer with the rank of career minister. He is currently serving as our Ambassador in Amman, Jordan, and has served twice as the deputy chief of mission in Baghdad, and in our Embassy in Egypt.

Dana Shell Smith is truly a global diplomat, having served throughout the world in her capacity as a public affairs officer. She, too, is a career Foreign Service officer, with the rank of minister

counselor, and currently serves as senior advisor to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

So, let me join Senator Corker in thanking you all for your service, both past and moving forward in the future.

We have a larger audience than we normally have for nominees, so I assume that maybe there are some family members or friends present. If they are here with you, we would urge you to introduce them to the committee when you have your time to testify. We understand and appreciate that families are a big part of the sacrifice and the service, and we honor their willingness to have you serve our country while they, themselves, face sacrifices as a result of it.

Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection, so we ask you to summarize your openings in about 5 minutes or so, so we can enter into a dialogue with you.

And, with that, we will start off with you, Ambassador Beecroft, then Ambassador Jones, and then move to Ms. Smith.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

Ambassador BEECROFT. Thank you very much, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, other members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their support and confidence, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and other Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States.

I am also pleased to share this hearing with my colleagues, Stu Jones and Dana Smith. I look forward to working closely with them on the many issues facing the United States in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my career working in the Middle East, including assignments in Syria and Saudi Arabia, and as Ambassador to Jordan and to Iraq. My experience has made me acutely aware of Egypt's strategic importance inside and outside the region, and the need for effective U.S. engagement with Egypt. As the most populous Arab country, Egypt represents fully a quarter of the Arab world. It also hosts the Arab League. Its long-standing cultural influence and importance as an opinion leader and bellwether for trends across the region is well known. Egypt is the third-largest market for U.S. goods and services in the Middle East, and the United States is the second-largest source of foreign direct investment in Egypt.

Approximately 8 percent of global maritime commerce flows through the Suez Canal every year, and a total of 427 U.S.-flagged vessels, including over 85 U.S. military vessels, moved over 1.9 billion tons of cargo through the Suez in 2013.

And I cannot stress enough the importance of Egypt's upholding of its peace treaty with Israel, which has delivered over 35 years of stability to the region. After repeated conflicts, beginning in 1948, the two countries have not seen war since 1973. Conditions in Egypt, thus, have implications for the security of Israel and our allies in the Arab world and beyond. Increased instability in Egypt would not only open space for violent extremist strongholds, but

also encourage migrant flight. It would threaten global commerce with an ensuing ripple effect on international economies.

For these reasons and more, we have crucial interests in Egypt: preserving regional peace and stability with Israel and all of Egypt's neighbors, countering the transnational threats of terrorism and weapons trafficking, creating economic prosperity and increased opportunities for foreign investment, and building inclusive democratic institutions and civil societies that undermine the conditions for violent extremism and form the bedrock of prosperous, equitable economic growth. As President Obama said in his May 28 address at West Point, support for human rights and democracy goes beyond idealism. It is a matter of national security.

While views on how to advance our interests in Egypt may differ, there is agreement that Egypt's success as a secure, prosperous, and pluralistic democratic state remains vitally important to the United States. If confirmed, I commit to work with Congress to help achieve this goal and promote a constructive United States/Egypt partnership that furthers our interests.

I want to commend the American personnel and local staff at our U.S. mission who have been carrying out courageous and difficult work during a tumultuous time. The mission has remained actively engaged with Egyptian Government officials, political parties, and civil society. Twelve cabinet-level agencies at the mission are advancing our national security objectives, protecting the welfare of American citizens and business, and pursuing our work with the Government and people of Egypt. If confirmed as Ambassador, I look forward to joining in their efforts.

It is a distinct honor to have been nominated by President Obama to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker, I look forward to answering any questions you or members of the committee may have.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Beecroft follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT

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Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my career working in the Middle East, including assignments in Syria and Saudi Arabia and as Ambassador to Jordan and to Iraq. My experience has made me acutely aware of Egypt's strategic importance inside and outside the region and the need for effective U.S. engagement with Egypt: as the most populous Arab country, Egypt represents fully a quarter of the Arab world. It also hosts the Arab League. Its long-standing cultural influence and importance as an opinion leader and bellwether for trends across the region is well-known. Egypt is the third-largest market for U.S. goods and services in the Middle East, and the United States is the second-largest source of foreign direct investment in Egypt. Approximately 8 percent of global maritime commerce flows through the Suez Canal every year, and a total of 427 U.S. flagged vessels—including over 85 U.S. military vessels—moved over 1.9 billion tons of cargo through the Suez in 2013. And I cannot stress enough the importance of Egypt's upholding of its Peace Treaty

with Israel, which has delivered over 35 years of stability to the region. After repeated conflicts beginning in 1948, the two countries have not seen war since 1973. In the ensuing years, Egypt has even played a constructive role supporting our mediation on other tracks of the Arab-Israeli Conflict.

Conditions in Egypt thus have implications for the security of Israel and our allies in the Arab world and beyond. Increased instability in Egypt would not only open space for violent extremist strongholds, but also encourage migrant flight that could place added strain on our Southern European allies. It would threaten global commerce, with an ensuing ripple effect on international economies.

For these reasons and more, we have crucial interests in Egypt: preserving regional peace and stability with Israel and all of Egypt's neighbors; countering the transnational threats of terrorism and weapons trafficking; creating economic prosperity and increased opportunities for foreign investment; and building inclusive, democratic institutions and civil societies that deter the emergence of violent extremism and form the bedrock of prosperous, equitable economic growth. As President Obama said in his May 28 address at West Point, ". . . support for human rights and democracy goes beyond idealism—it is a matter of national security."

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It is a distinct honor to have been nominated by President Obama to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker, I look forward to answering any questions you or members of the committee may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Ambassador Jones.

STATEMENT OF HON. STUART E. JONES, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I am deeply honored today to appear as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq. I am grateful to the President and to the Secretary for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work closely with you to advance U.S. goals in Iraq.

I look forward to building on the excellent work of my predecessor and friend, Ambassador Steve Beecroft, who is, of course, with us today, and I am also delighted to share this panel with Dana Smith, a valued colleague of many years.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my daughter, Dorothy Jones, a rising sophomore at Duke University. She flew up from Atlanta to be with me here today. My wife, Barbara, and two sons, Thaddeus and Woody, are in Amman. I am grateful that my family has been game for every new posting.

Mr. Chairman, I am both humbled and thrilled to have the opportunity to serve as Chief of Mission at the American Embassy in Baghdad, one our largest and most complex diplomatic missions. I have served in Iraq twice, as you mentioned, and as Director for Iraq Affairs on the National Security Council. These jobs have helped me to prepare for the complexity and challenges of the assignment ahead.

We are all familiar with the history of Iraq's past decade. It is impossible to serve in Iraq without recalling and honoring the sacrifice and achievement of our U.S. service men and women and civilians. More than 4,000 lost their lives there, but they also put an end to the oppression and regional threat of the Saddam Hussein regime. Today, we are all committed to help build a new Iraq, secure in its borders, with strong democratic institutions, where all can benefit from its abundant resources.

Iraq has, indeed, made important economic and democratic progress, but is now engaged in a fierce battle against ISIL, the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, one of the most dangerous terrorist groups in the world. Monday's coordinated attack on Mosul in which ISIL militants overran parts of the city highlights just how dangerous this group is. We will continue to work with our international partners to try to meet the needs of those who have been displaced, and we will look for ways to support the government and the security forces in their conflict with ISIL.

Overall, violence in Iraq has reached levels not seen since the height of the U.S. surge in 2007. Suicide vests and vehicle bomb attacks are averaging nearly 70 per month since the beginning of this year. The United States has taken important steps to help Iraq combat this shared enemy. We have provided urgently needed military equipment through the foreign military sales process, and the Iraqis have told us that our equipment and advice are making a critical difference. I would like to thank this panel for making these transfers possible.

In addition to military equipment transfers, we have strengthened our information-sharing relationships and are developing programs to improve border security. We have also initiated a high-level dialogue between our senior military leadership and key Iraqi military commanders.

Security assistance, however, is only one element of our assistance, and it is connected to intense political and economic engagement. The United States has also encouraged Iraq to adopt a holistic strategy to isolate ISIL from the population and develop a strategy for sustainable security. This strategy will require continued engagement between Iraq's political leaders, Sunni tribal leaders, and others.

From a political standpoint, Iraq's successful national election on April 30 was a victory for efforts to strengthen Iraq's democratic institutions. While Prime Minister Maliki's State of Law Coalition won more seats than any other, it fell short of the 165 needed to form a majority government. Government formation is an Iraqi-owned process, and it will be up to Iraq's political leaders to form a government that reflects the will have the people, as expressed in the April 30 election.

Despite Iraq's political and security challenges, its tremendous economic growth over the last decade has been impressive. Iraq's economy has averaged 6.5-percent growth since 2005. It is now producing 3.2 million barrels of oil per day.

The United States and Iraq have partnered to share best practices on fossil fuel production and exports. We are engaged with the Government of Iraq on capturing gas for power generation and on political issues related to hydrocarbon revenue management. The

government also faces a challenge in its natural resources—in distributing the wealth created by its natural resources to its population and to use its oil wealth to promote growth in other sectors.

Iraq's economic growth offers exciting opportunities for U.S. firms, particularly in key sectors, such as infrastructure development and construction. If confirmed, I look forward to promoting Secretary Kerry's Shared Prosperity agenda as Ambassador to Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, as I have discussed, Iraq poses a challenging security environment. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will bear responsibility for the safety of all U.S. personnel in Iraq, including at Embassy Baghdad and our consulates in Erbil and Basrah. If confirmed, I will work closely with our security team on the ground, as well as with our diplomatic security professionals back here in Washington, to ensure that our people are well protected. This will be my highest priority, as well as to protect the safety of American citizens in Iraq.

Since U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq in 2011, the Embassy and consulates have significantly reduced our staffing. As of June 2014, we have approximately 5,300 staff, just one-third of our 2012 footprint. If confirmed, I will continue to examine staffing levels to ensure that we have the appropriate number of personnel to carry out our mission.

Our diplomatic efforts are supported by a highly skilled team of individuals at the Embassy in Iraq, and they represent a wide range of U.S. departments and agencies. This whole-of-government approach allows us to bring the very best experts our government has to offer and address some of the challenges I have raised with you today. I would like to thank everyone at the Embassy in Iraq for their service, as well as the leadership back here in Washington, including this committee, that makes this level of interagency coordination possible. Our continued success in Iraq depends on continued collaboration.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to address you today. I appreciate and value this committee's oversight of our efforts in Iraq. And, if confirmed, I look forward to welcoming you and your respective staff members to Baghdad. Your continued engagement on the policy issues that we face in Iraq are a vital element in ensuring our success.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Jones follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY STUART E. JONES

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today, as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work closely with you to advance U.S. goals in Iraq. I look forward to building on the excellent work of my predecessor and friend, Ambassador Steve Beecroft, who is of course, here today.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my daughter, Dorothy Jones, a rising sophomore at Duke University. She flew up from Atlanta to be with me today. My wife, Barbara, a former Foreign Service officer and current civil servant, is in Amman with our sons, Thaddeus and Woody, so they could not join us. I am grateful for our children's support for this assignment and throughout our Foreign Service careers.

Mr. Chairman, I am both humbled and thrilled to have the opportunity to serve as chief of mission at American Embassy Baghdad, one of our largest and most complex diplomatic missions. I had the honor of serving as Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad. I also served as the Governorate Coordinator in Ramadi, in Anbar province under the Coalition Provisional Authority in 2004. Later I was Director for Iraq Affairs on the National Security Council staff here in Washington. These jobs have helped me prepare for the complexity and challenges of the assignment ahead.

We are all familiar with the history of Iraq's past decade. It is impossible to serve in Iraq without recalling and honoring the sacrifice and achievement of our U.S. service men and women and civilians. More than 4,000 Americans lost their lives to give the Iraqi people a chance at a better future. Today we are committed to helping build a new Iraq, which has moved beyond the isolation and oppression of its past, with secure borders, strong democratic institutions, and where all citizens benefit from its abundant resources.

On April 30, Iraq held its first national elections since the departure of U.S. forces. As they did in 2005 and 2010, Iraq's citizens overcame terrorist threats and exercised their franchise.

Today, Iraq is also producing around 3.2 million barrels of oil per day. It is one of the major contributors to the world oil market and this oil wealth has placed Iraq on the path to economic self-sufficiency. Iraqi oil exports have also made it possible to sustain the international sanctions on Iran without cost to the world economy.

While we are encouraged by these developments, we also recognize that the Republic of Iraq is now engaged in a fierce fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL. The complex, coordinated attack on Mosul on Monday, in which ISIL militants overran parts of the city, highlights just how dangerous this group is. ISIL now controls much of Iraq's second-largest city, and thousands of people have been forced to flee in the last several days, according to the U.N. The Iraqi security forces are responding together with Kurdish Peshmerga forces. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, and will work with our international partners to try to meet the needs of those who have been displaced.

Overall, violence in Iraq has reached levels not seen since height of U.S. surge in 2007. Suicide vest and vehicle bomb attacks are averaging nearly 70 per month since the beginning of this year. Most of these were carried out by foreign fighters, who use Syria as a safe haven to conduct attacks in Iraq. The U.N. has reported that in May 2014 alone, 799 Iraqi civilians were killed by acts of terrorism.

ISIL overtook the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi on January 1 of this year. Iraqi security forces cooperated successfully with Sunni tribal groups to largely push them out of Ramadi. But ISIL still occupies Fallujah and poses a threat to the Iraqi state and its neighbors.

The United States has taken important steps to help Iraq combat this shared enemy. We have provided urgently needed military equipment through the Foreign Military Sales process. I would like to thank the members of this committee for their leadership, and the Congress for making these transfers possible. In addition to military equipment transfers, we have strengthened our information-sharing relationships, and are developing programs to improve border security. We have also initiated a high-level dialogue between our senior military leadership and key Iraqi military commanders, coupled with training for Iraqi security forces.

Security assistance, however, is only one element of our assistance, and it is connected to intense political and economic engagement. Accordingly, the U.S. has also encouraged Iraq to adopt a holistic strategy to isolate ISIL from the population and develop a strategy for sustainable security. This includes incorporating tribal fighters from Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah ah Din into their security framework to protect the populations in their towns and villages. This strategy, which was employed successfully during the U.S. military surge in 2007, will also require continued engagement between Iraq's political leaders and Sunni tribal leaders to effectively defeat ISIL. We are also encouraging Iraqi political and security leaders to ensure that their difficult fight against ISIL is conducted in a manner that protects the civilian population and adheres to the rule of law.

I already mentioned Iraq's successful elections. Turnout nationally was just over 60 percent. It is notable that turnout in Anbar province, where ISIL is most active, was 45 percent. Iraq's security forces protected more than 50,000 polling stations on April 30, and with support the U.N. Assistance Mission in Iraq, Iraq's Independent High Election Commission worked to provide Iraq's 21 million eligible voters the ability to vote. While Prime Minister Maliki's State of Law coalition won more seats than any other, it fell short of parliamentary majority that is required under the Iraqi Constitution to form a government.

We will encourage all sides to work together to swiftly form a new government that is representative of all Iraqis. This is an Iraqi-owned process, and it will be

up to Iraq's political leaders to form a government that reflects the will of the people as expressed in the April 30 election. We hope they will pay special attention to the rights and interests of the religious and ethnic minority populations, including the sizeable Christian community. Our mission in Iraq has worked hard—especially as ISIL attacks have escalated in the last year—to urge the Government of Iraq to protect these vulnerable groups. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our commitment to ensuring that these communities are afforded the right protection.

Despite Iraq's political and security challenges, its tremendous economic growth over the last decade has been impressive. Iraq's economy has averaged around 6.5 percent growth since 2005. This has been primarily driven by the energy sector. Iraq is now producing around 3.2 million barrels of oil per day; it is the second-largest producer within OPEC. The International Energy Agency estimates that Iraq will provide 45 percent of all new incremental oil supply worldwide between now and 2035. Iraqi oil will be essential to meet rising international demand and maintain market stability. While the United States imports less than 5 percent of its oil from Iraq, global economic growth will benefit from Iraqi oil reaching the market. Increasing exports from Iraq is therefore one of our highest bilateral strategic priorities.

Lack of onshore pumping and storage capacity continues to prevent Iraqi production and exports from reaching their full potential. There is also tremendous opportunity to harness Iraq's significant natural gas resources. If this gas is converted to power, this would provide much-needed electricity to the Iraqi people, fueling further economic growth. In addition to partnering to share best practices on fossil fuel production and exports, we are engaged with the Government of Iraq on capturing gas for power generation, and on political issues related to hydrocarbon revenue management. The government also faces a challenge in equitably distributing the wealth created by its natural resources to its population and to use its oil wealth to promote growth in other sectors. These are all areas where the United States would be willing to help play a positive role and exchange lessons learned.

Iraq's economic growth offers exciting opportunities for U.S firms, particularly in key sectors such as infrastructure development, construction, health care, telecom, and agriculture. Iraq imports some of the best equipment and technology in the world from the United States, including civilian aircraft and the turbines that generate much-needed electricity. I have spent much of my career promoting U.S. economic engagement overseas. If confirmed, I look forward to promoting Secretary Kerry's Shared Prosperity agenda as Ambassador to Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, as I have discussed, Iraq is a challenging security environment. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will bear responsibility for the safety of all U.S. personnel in Iraq, including at Embassy Baghdad and at our consulates in Erbil and Basrah. If confirmed, I will work closely with our security team on the ground—as well as with our Diplomatic Security colleagues back here in Washington—to ensure that our people are protected. I assure you this will be my highest priority, as well as to protect the safety of American citizens in Iraq.

Since U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq in 2011, the Embassy and consulates have significantly reduced our staffing. As of June 2014, we have approximately 5,300 staff; just one-third of our 2012 footprint. If confirmed, I will continue to examine staffing levels to ensure that we have the appropriate number of personnel to carry out our mission.

Again I wish to commend my colleague Steve Beecroft and his whole-of-government team for their tremendous achievements and selfless service; I am proud to be named as Steve's successor.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to address you today. I appreciate and value this committee's oversight of our efforts in Iraq and, if confirmed, I look forward to welcoming you and your respective staff members to Baghdad. Your continued engagement on the policy issues discussed today is a vital element in ensuring our success in Iraq. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Smith.

STATEMENT OF DANA SHELL SMITH, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF QATAR

Ms. SMITH. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and members of the committee——

The CHAIRMAN. Will you put your microphone on, please?

Ms. SMITH. This is my first time doing this.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the State of Qatar. I am extremely grateful to President Obama and to Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the American people and to working with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Qatar.

And it is a privilege to share this panel with Stu Jones and Steve Beecroft, two of our finest Ambassadors, whose work I have long admired.

It has been an honor to serve as a Foreign Service officer since 1992 and to use my regional experience and the Arabic language in a variety of assignments. The Foreign Service even introduced me to my husband, who is here today, and our two children—well, the Foreign Service did not introduce me to them—he is here with our two children. And it is exciting to have them here, able to watch our democracy in action. I am delighted that my aunt and uncle and so many of my friends could be here, as well.

Qatar plays a growing role in the international community, with influence that extends far beyond its 4,400 square miles and 250,000 citizens. We share a productive relationship on key regional issues, ranging from Syria to Iran. They have been extremely supportive of our commitment to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our policies and diplomatic platform advance U.S. foreign policy and national security interests in Qatar and the region more broadly.

Defense cooperation is a central pillar of our partnership, and it is best reflected in Qatar's hosting of the U.S. CENTCOM forward headquarters, the Combined Air Operations Center, and the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing at al-Udeid Airbase.

The renewal, in December 2013, of our Defense Cooperation Agreement is a further testament to our enduring security partnership. If confirmed, I will work to deepen our military ties and expand our regional security cooperation.

We have an active and productive dialogue on both counterterrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Qatar has endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative and is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum. These efforts take on increased importance, of course, as violent extremists expand their operations in Syria. And we are working together to improve the capacity of Qatar's counterterrorist financing regime and to disrupt illicit cash flows.

The United States is also continuing efforts with Qatar and other regional partners to support the moderate opposition in Syria. Qatar believes, as we do, that Bashar al-Assad's murderous oppression of the Syrian people leaves him with no legitimacy to rule. And we share the view that the crisis in Syria should be resolved through a negotiated political solution. We are working closely with regional partners to maximize the impact of our collective efforts. Qatar has also publicly welcomed the Joint Plan of Action reached between Iran and the P5+1 on Iran's nuclear program, and has

made clear it supports United States efforts to negotiate a comprehensive agreement.

As you know, Qatar played an instrumental role in recovering Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl. Their efforts are a testament to our partnership. With regard to the five individuals transferred from Guantanamo in connection with Sergeant Bergdahl's release, the United States has and will continue to coordinate closely with Qatar. We are confident that the security measures that have been put in place, including restrictions placed on the activities of the individuals, will substantially mitigate any threat that the individuals may pose to our national security. The Amir personally provided his assurances to the President, and the administration is confident that the Qataris have the capacity and will to deliver on the commitments made. But, let me be clear. If confirmed, I will work each day to ensure that these commitments are upheld. I will consult regularly with the members of this committee as we move forward on this issue.

Our thriving commercial relationship with Qatar continues to grow, presenting tremendous opportunities for American business. Qatar is one of our most important trading partners in the region, importing over $5 billion worth in U.S. goods in 2013. If confirmed, I will make it my priority to advocate for U.S. companies vigorously to ensure that we continue to seize on the multitude of opportunities offered by the Qatari market.

Qatar also hosts six branches of U.S. universities. If confirmed, I will work to expand our cultural and educational partnerships to promote enduring ties between our people for the next generation.

At a U.S. mission with employees from a variety of U.S. Government agencies, my first priority, if confirmed, would remain, at all times, protecting the safety and security of the dedicated men and women at our mission, as well as of all Americans living, working, and traveling in Qatar.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, members of the committee, it has been my privilege and great honor to spend my entire adult life in the service of our country, promoting and defending U.S. interests and values. If confirmed, I welcome your views and insights on Qatar and the region, and look forward to your visits to Doha.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have for me today.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANA SHELL SMITH

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the State of Qatar. I am extremely grateful to President Obama and to Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to representing the American people, and to working with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Qatar. It is a privilege to share this hearing with Stu Jones and Steve Beecroft, two of our finest Ambassadors whose work I have long admired. I look forward to working closely with them.

It has been an honor to serve as a Foreign Service officer since 1992, mostly in the Arab World, and to use my regional experience and the Arabic language in a wide variety of assignments. The Foreign Service even introduced me to my husband, Ray Smith, who is here today, an agent with the Diplomatic Security Service.

As a tandem couple we have been fortunate to serve together and to raise a family while pursuing careers we love. Our two children are also with me here today. They have learned so much from living overseas, and should I be confirmed, I know that Qatar will serve as an incredible educational and cultural experience for them. They have been great sports moving as often as they have, and I am very proud of them.

Qatar is playing a growing role in the international community with influence that extends far beyond its 4,400 square miles and 250,000 citizens. As President Obama has said, "If our two countries are communicating frankly and constructively, and pursuing common strategies, we can be a force for good for the entire region and for a vision of a Middle East that is democratic, that is prosperous, that is tolerant, that is representative of all peoples, and that is a force for good around the world." We enjoy a productive relationship with Qatar on key regional issues ranging from Syria to Iran. Qatar has been extremely supportive of our government's commitment to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Qatar agrees that peace between Israelis and Palestinians would advance security, prosperity, and stability in the Middle East. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our policies and diplomatic platform advance U.S. foreign policy and national security interests in Qatar and the region more broadly.

Defense cooperation is a central pillar of our partnership and is best reflected in Qatar's hosting of U.S. Central Command Forward Headquarters, the Combined Air Operations Center, and the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing at Al Udeid Air Base. Al Udeid plays a critical role in advancing our regional security as the platform for U.S. air operations in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility, including for Afghanistan. The renewal in December 2013 of our Defense Cooperation Agreement with Qatar, governing interactions between U.S. and Qatari forces, is a further testament to the enduring security partnership enjoyed by our two countries. If confirmed, I will work to deepen our military ties and expand our regional security cooperation.

We have an active and productive dialogue with Qatar in the areas of counterterrorism and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Qatar has endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative and is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum. In March 2013 Qatar hosted a Forum workshop to develop a plan of action for rule of law-based, community-oriented policing programs to counter violent extremism (CVE). Qatar has also pledged $5 million to support the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, the first public-private global fund to support local, grassroots CVE efforts. As violent extremists expand their operations in Syria, these efforts take on increased importance, and we are working with Qatar to improve the capacity of its counterterrorist financing regime and disrupt illicit cash flows, including through the provision of training.

The United States is also continuing efforts, together with Qatar and other regional partners, to support the moderate opposition in Syria. Qatar believes that Bashar al-Assad's murderous oppression of the Syrian people leaves him with no legitimacy to rule and Qatar shares our view that the crisis in Syria should be resolved through a negotiated political transition. Qatar is an active member of the London 11 Core Group on Syria and a strong supporter of the Syrian opposition. We are working closely with regional partners like Qatar to maximize the impact of our collective efforts to support the moderate opposition and address the humanitarian crisis.

Qatar has publicly welcomed the Joint Plan of Action reached between Iran and the P5+1 on Iran's nuclear program, and has made clear it supports U.S. efforts to negotiate a comprehensive agreement.

As we saw a few weeks ago, Qatar played an instrumental role in recovering Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl. Qatar's efforts in this regard are another testament to our partnership. With regard to the five individuals transferred to Qatar from Guantanamo in connection with Sergeant Bergdahl's release, the United States has and will continue to coordinate closely with Qatar. We are confident that the security measures that have been put in place, including restrictions placed on the activities of the individuals, will substantially mitigate any threat that the individuals may pose to our national security. The Amir personally provided his assurances to the President, and the administration is confident that the Qataris have the capacity and will to deliver on the commitments made. If confirmed, I will ensure that my Country Team tracks closely and verifies that these commitments are being upheld. In this regard, I look forward to consulting with the members of this committee and their staff, if confirmed.

Our thriving commercial relationship with Qatar continues to grow, presenting tremendous opportunities for American business. Qatar plans to invest up to $200 billion in preparation for hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, and to date U.S. companies have performed exceptionally well in securing contracts for mega infrastructure projects, such as the new airport, port, metro system, roads and bridges. Qatar

is one of our most important trading partners in the region, importing over $5 billion in U.S. goods in 2013, and it is the fifth-largest destination for U.S. exports in the Middle East. If confirmed, I will make it my priority to advocate for U.S. companies vigorously to ensure that we continue to seize the multitude of opportunities offered by the Qatari market.

Qatar's 2030 National Vision aims to transition to a knowledge-based economy, and critical to this effort is Qatar's development of a strong education sector. Qatar has served as a center of innovation in the region, in part thanks to its warm welcome of diverse academic institutions and think tanks, particularly U.S. institutions. Qatar's "Education City" is home to six U.S. universities, and Qatar has also welcomed the presence of U.S. institutes Brookings and RAND. Our partnerships in education have expanded dramatically, with the number of Qatari students choosing to study in the United States more than doubling over the past decade. Qatar's contribution of $5 million to the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative will help equip more than 1 million youth with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century through online educational exchanges between the U.S., the Middle East, and North Africa. If confirmed, I will work to expand our educational and cultural partnerships to promote enduring ties between our peoples for the next generation.

At a U.S. mission with employees from a variety of U.S. Government agencies, my first priority, if confirmed, would remain at all times protecting the safety and security of the dedicated men and women at our mission as well as of all Americans living and working or traveling in Qatar.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, members of the committee, it has been my privilege and great honor to spend my entire adult life in the service of our country, promoting and defending U.S. interests and values. If confirmed, I would welcome your views and insights on Qatar and the region and look forward to your visits to Doha. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have for me today.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you all for your testimony, and again, welcome to your family and friends.

Let me start with you, Ambassador Beecroft. Well, let me ask you—all three of you—an overarching question. A simple yes or no will do. If confirmed, will you make yourselves available to the committee and answer inquiries from the committee while you are in post?

Ambassador JONES. Yes.

Ambassador BEECROFT. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. SMITH. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. OK.

Ambassador Beecroft, you know, you are going from one difficult assignment to another one. That is why we have some extraordinary persons like yourself. But, speaking for myself as the chairman, let me just say, if we are going to continue to see mass death-penalty sentences, if we are going to continue seeing massive arrests of the young people who, in essence, created the situation in Tahrir Square that ultimately led to President Sisi's election, if President Sisi believes that only his engagement in the Sinai, which I applaud, is sufficient for his relationship with the United States, then there will be a rude awakening. And I hope that, in your role as our Ambassador, that you will be able to relay to President Sisi that we need a broader agenda to see progress moving forward, not just because that is my view, but the FY14 appropriations legislation contains certification requirements to release the rest of Egypt's FY14 assistance, including that "A newly elected Government of Egypt is taking steps to govern democratically."

So, I would like to hear from you, as you approach this new assignment, what is it that you will be saying when you go to Egypt, and how do we make progress to create the political space for the

Egyptian Government to address some of these concerns that, by law, they must do if we are ultimately going to continue our assistance?

Ambassador BEECROFT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I agree with you 100 percent, that we want to have the strongest, broadest possible partnership and relationship with Egypt, and we want an Egypt that is stable and secure because it has and respects fundamental human-rights, democracy, and because it builds a prosperous economy. If confirmed, I will engage on all these issues with the Egyptian Government and work with them to partner and develop the economy, to build human rights, expand those rights, to stop practices such as the mass trials that you have referred to, which we have condemned, and to ensure that justice is individualized, to ensure that there is a society and a country and a government that the Egyptian people buy into, that they see that their interests are best represented inside the democratic process, and not outside it, and that will lead to fundamental, long-term stability. Egypt does have promising prospects, including economic prospects, and it has demonstrated, over the last two decades at times, that it can function as a emerging economy, that it can have real GDP growth in excess of 7 percent. And we need to, again, build on that and do whatever we can to——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that.

Ambassador BEECROFT [continuing]. Strengthen the partnership.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, in addition to those concerns, you talked about the economic questions. And I am concerned by what I read in President Sisi's statements, where it sounds like he thinks that greater state intervention in the economy is going to create the opportunities that Egyptians need. And I am not quite sure, having just returned from the gulf region, that our gulf partners, who have actually been very helpful to the Egyptians, will have that view. What messaging will we be giving as it relates to how this economy can revive itself and grow?

Ambassador BEECROFT. Thank you very much. It is, of course, very much in our interest to see Egypt build its economy, strengthen its economy. It is in our interest to work with the gulf countries you referred to, to target assistance as effectively as possible, and to encourage the economic reforms that are necessary for the economy to progress.

I would note that Egypt has a number of economic advantages we can build on. It has a relatively well-developed infrastructure; specifically, telecommunications, roads, ports. It has access to markets in—because of its proximity—in Europe, in Asia, in Africa. It has labor that should attract investment, as well. And it has natural resources, particularly natural gas, that can be developed. So, there is the basis for a strong economy. We have to encourage the reforms that will attract investors into the country and to target the assistance so that it addresses the parts of the economy that need to be addressed—particularly reforms.

The CHAIRMAN. Ambassador Jones, you know, we had Prime Minister Maliki here last year. It was a difficult meeting. I do not know whether or not he will actually be the Prime Minister again. I guess, by many accounts, he may very well ultimately put together the coalition necessary to do that. But, as I said to Ambas-

sador Beecroft as it relates to our relationship with the Egyptian Government, in this case, the Iraqis must understand that the use of barrel bombs, that the overflights and transiting of airspace by Iran sending troops and military equipment into Syria with impunity, and the lives of the people at Camp Liberty, until they are resettled, is going to be part of what this committee uses to judge, our relationship, with regards to future arms sales.

So, I would like to hear from you—we understand the importance, we honor the lives of those who were lost, in pursuit of a more democratic Iraq, from the United States, and an enormous national treasure, but there has to be some change in the course of events here, including having a government that is more inclusive, in which every Sunni is not an enemy of the state. There are many Sunnis who want to be part of Iraq, as a nation, but they have to be included as well.

Can you tell me about what you will be messaging there as it relates to these issues?

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me take your last point first, which is, of course we completely agree that, for Iraq to succeed, the different political elements, the sectarian groups, need to come together and create a shared vision. They need to create a shared vision for their national security. They need to pull together to address the terrorist threat posed by ISIL. And, although the news from Mosul is very bad, I think one positive aspect of this may be that the groups are, indeed, coming together to address this challenge. At least we are seeing signs of that in the last 24 hours.

In regards to the barrel bombs, the use of barrel bombs is completely unacceptable. It is an indiscriminate weapon against civilians and cannot be tolerated. This is something that my colleague Steve Beecroft has raised with the senior levels of the Iraqi government. There has been an instruction handed down through the military that barrel bombs will not be used. And we have also heard, from military contacts, that they recognize that instruction.

In regards to the overflights, this is an issue that remains a problem. We are concerned that Iran is supplying the Bashar Assad regime with overflights over Iraq. This is something that we would like to see the Iraqis stop. And this is, again, something we have raised at the most senior levels. And I will continue to do that and look for ways to find a way to stop this traffic.

On the issue of Camp Liberty, I know this is an issue of particular concern, and it is a very important issue. When I was the Deputy Chief of Mission in Iraq in 2010 and 2011, we witnessed a terrible attack on Camp Ashraf in which many people were killed and others wounded. I think the steps that we have taken since then have been quite positive. Moving the residents of Ashraf to Camp Liberty has improved their security. The Government of Iraq has also responded to our request, and others' requests, to improve the security around Camp Liberty, and that is encouraging. But, the solution, of course, is to remove the members of the Mujahedine Khalq from Iraq and get them to a safer place. They will not be safe until they are outside of Iraq. And I am—our government is taking the lead on this. The Special Envoy to the Secretary, Jonathan Weiner, is meeting with representatives of countries around

the world and asking them to take members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq. And we also now have a team in Baghdad to interview members to see—working toward receiving a group of those here in the United States. And I think this is the best solution that we can present.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, two final points, so that it is crystal clear. I do not want to hear Iraq tell us that, "We need actionable intelligence." When we have it, we will provide it. But they have a responsibility, in doing random surveillance of overflights, and that is an excuse that is unacceptable.

Secondly, I agree with you that resettlement of the MEK is the ultimate solution. I hope—and I have urged the State Department to consider bringing some of them to the United States as an example to those in the rest of the world that we are also asking to consider resettlement. But, in the interim, I hold the Prime Minister responsible for the lives of those individuals at the camp.

Ms. Smith, I do not want you to think I do not have questions for you, but, in fairness to my colleagues, my time is expired. I will come back to you afterward.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. I am sure Ms. Smith was fine with that, actually, so thank you. [Laughter.]

Ms. SMITH. That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I may not be from the South, but I would bet you I will be more genteel. [Laughter.]

Senator CORKER. So, again, I want to thank all three of you. And I will start—I will just go in order.

Ambassador Jones, you know, I visited Ambassador Beecroft and have been to Iraq, like many of us, many times. And today when you are there, unlike Jordan, where you have just—where you still are—it feels like a vacant, deserted lot, relative to our emphasis on it. It feels like we have checked the box and moved on, and that we really have lost influence. That is, I think—I think everybody acknowledges that. But, that we just have not been really robust at all levels, relative to our efforts there.

We had a great conversation yesterday, and we talked a little bit about the lack of the SOFA, and the fact that our troops are gone, and that has contributed to the lack of influence in a pretty big way. You have had two tours there. And I mentioned I was going to bring this up just to kind of set the record straight. Many of us have felt—and maybe even after you say what you say, may still feel—that one of the reasons that Iraq is the way that it is, is that we, you know, did not leave behind some presence and that we actually—this was actually what the administration wanted to occur.

You have a very different perspective of that, and I thought that—do not take too long, if you will—but, I think it would be good for you to share your thoughts, relative to why we do not have a presence in Iraq today.

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Senator. As you said, we spoke about this yesterday. My view on this is that the Iraqi people really did not come together and ask us to stay in a way that made it possible for us to stay. And it is as simple as that. No major Iraqi leaders, with the exception of the Kurds, came forward and invited us to stay in a public manner, and they did not go on television.

We obviously needed to have a Status of Forces Agreement for the security of our troops, and the Iraqis did not meet us halfway on that. So, I think this was the result of that negotiation, and that is how it ended.

Senator CORKER. And so, from your perspective, the fact that we have no presence there, and, candidly, much lesser influence, is a result, really, of just the Iraqi people not wanting it to be that way.

Ambassador JONES. Yes, sir.

Senator CORKER. OK. Well, it is interesting and a very different perspective than, you know, I have heard from most, but I appreciate you sharing that.

And, you know, I would agree with the chairman, we had a pretty terse meeting with Maliki here. I had had one on the ground with him just before that. He has obviously not been a good Prime Minister. He has not done a good job of reaching out to the Sunni population, which has caused them to be more receptive to al-Qaeda efforts. Obviously, the Syrian conflict—I know there is analysis today saying that that is really not having an impact on Iraq. I believe it is having a major impact on Iraq.

But, with our diminished status in Iraq, and the fact that we used to sort of play shuttle diplomacy, if you will, between the Sunnis and Shias and causing things to work in a better way—I think you did that before, in your previous capacity—how do you view your role there, going there now, under the circumstances that we have and trying to mitigate some of the problems that exist between the—especially the Shia and the Sunni?

Ambassador JONES. Yes. Well, I think I am blessed to be following in the footsteps of Steve Beecroft. I think Steve has established very good relations with all of the groups in Iraq, and I think this is a role that we should continue to play, brokering—using our good offices to broker solutions to the myriad problems that face Iraq. I think we have made great progress, in recent months, in trying to broker an arrangement by which the hydrocarbon law could be finalized and the relations between Kurdistan—the Kurdish regional government and Baghdad could resolve their problems. I think we can also find ways to support a process of political conciliation between some Shia—and Sunni groups with the government. This is the role that the United States has played in Iraq for the last 10 years, and I would certainly hope to continue to play that role.

I think we do have significant influence because of our continuing presence in the commercial and petroleum sector, as well as a continuing presence in the military sector, though obviously not with troops on the ground.

Senator CORKER. Yes. Thank you.

Ambassador Beecroft, we talked a little bit about another topic, and a similar topic, but for different reasons: our influence in Egypt, itself. I think people have had really strongly held beliefs about what we should and should be doing relative to Egypt and aid. And I have felt we should continue the relationship, certainly with some contingencies. But—or conditions—but, the fact is, we have sort of been on again, off again. People there have perceived us to be, in some ways, supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, but not the citizens of Egypt. You have had the—some of the gulf coun-

tries step in and fill a vacuum when Egypt felt we were stepping away.

What is your sense of how the leadership of Egypt today views the United States? And again, similar to Ambassador Jones, how do you expect to be able to step into that situation and exert appropriate influence and shaping in the country?

Ambassador BEECROFT. Thank you very much, Senator.

Let me first say that we do have a partnership with Egypt. The Egyptians are continuing to engage with us. We need to take advantage of that to pursue our own interests. Our interests and Egyptian interests do happen to overlap considerably, I believe. It is not going to always be—we are not going to always agree on matters, but, again, engaging with them, working with them, we can push in the right direction. And what we want to see in Egypt is, we want to see security and stability that is built on the fundamentals of a sound society, such as the economy and such as democracy and human rights, and be as inclusive as possible.

Our assistance—I see our assistance as pursuing our interests in Egypt and, again, believe that our interests overlap considerably. If confirmed, I will engage with the Egyptians and I will push them in the directions that we want them to go, encourage them, work with them, and use the assistance, to the extent it is approved by Congress, to further our interests in the country.

Senator CORKER. Well, thank you.

And I appreciate the relationship and conversations that we have had in the past with both the Ambassadors. And thank you for your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Ms. Smith, Qatar has played an interesting role in Syria because of the lack of policy, from our standpoint. I think they became exasperated and sort of went out on their own, if you will. There are reports that that is being sort of—is moving back into a more coordinated effort with us. Do you have any sense of their efforts on the ground in Syria relative to opposition? And are they moving more into the mainstream, if you will, relative to the type of support they are giving?

Ms. SMITH. Thanks very much for that question.

Yes, we do have the sense that we are making progress, in terms of coordination. It is all of our goal to support the moderate opposition in Syria and, of course, to address the humanitarian disaster that is happening there. Qatar has been incredibly generous. They have given $1.2 billion toward the—addressing the humanitarian needs in Syria. And so, going forward, what our engagement consists of with the Qataris is continuing to find ways to coordinate, to work together in support of the moderate opposition. Obviously, with the ultimate goal being Assad not being in charge anymore.

Senator CORKER. In order to give you a chance to say something on the record that I think you are authorized to respond to, it is my understanding the SAS Committee is developing language that allows title 10 training of the opposition on the ground in Syria. Do you know if the administration supports that, or does not support it?

Ms. SMITH. It is my understanding that the administration does support the Levin language in the NDAA to authorize training and equipment——

Senator CORKER. OK.

Ms. SMITH [continuing]. Of the moderate opposition. But, again, I am not in those policy discussions at the moment.

Senator CORKER. I understand. I just understood you were authorized——

Ms. SMITH. Appreciate it.

Senator CORKER [continuing]. To say that they support it, and——

Ms. SMITH. I appreciate it.

Senator CORKER [continuing]. I wanted that on the record.

So, with that, I will close and thank you.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you.

Senator CORKER. I do want to say to the other committee members that our staff has been able to go down and read the memorandum of understanding that we have between the United States and Qatar. I wish it was available to all committee members. For some reason, it is not. It is 3 pages long. My understanding is, it is very unremarkable. And our staff had no antennas raised in reading it. But, I just thought I would share that.

And again, thank you for your service.

And thanks for having this hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thanks, to all of the witnesses, for your service and willingness to serve.

Ms. Smith, let me just ask you a question I was curious about. And we had a chance to talk, but I forgot to ask you this. In Qatar, under the leadership of the new Amir, have there been any particular changes in direction in the United States/Qatar partnership or relationship that have seemed notable during this time of transformation? Is it kind of steady and we are continuing to kind of do—the relationship is in the same place it was? Or have we seen some changes in direction because of that leadership transition?

Ms. SMITH. If I am confirmed, I would love to give a more fulsome response when I am actually there and able to make my own assessment. But, my understanding is that our relationship continues to be as close and cooperative as it was before. The Amir has been in power for just about a year; and, of course, he is not new to the government. He was working there for over a decade before, under his father's rule.

So, while I would not say that we are seeing a change, what we are seeing is continued progress on the areas where we have good and close coordination. And so, I have every expectation that, if I am confirmed, we will able to deepen and expand those positive areas where we are working together.

Senator KAINE. One of the areas where I know there has been some tension—the chairman has hosted meetings before, where the Foreign Relations Committee members have had a chance to dialogue with the Amir—had been in, you know, who the Qataris—referring to earlier questions—the Qataris have been supporting in Syria. That created some tensions. Is that changing? Are we, maybe, more in accord with the Qataris now and the government

about, you know, what is the right way to have influence to bring this humanitarian issue and, ultimately, the civil war to an end?

Ms. SMITH. Well, this is something we are always watching very closely. I have not heard from anyone that we are ready to just declare, you know, everything is wonderful and perfect, but we do feel that we are making progress in our shared understanding of which groups are—constitute moderate opposition and who is worthy of our support.

Senator KAINE. OK. Thank you for that.

Mr. Beecroft, you talked a little bit about the economic issues in Egypt. You know, it seems like that that would be a real test for the new President, is how quickly he can try to demonstrate some economic improvement. You and I had a chance to talk about this the other day. Could you talk a little bit about the role that the United States can play in helping Egypt in economic transformation, and also the role that other allies—the Gulf State allies should be able to play?

Ambassador BEECROFT. Thank you very much, Mr. Senator.

As I mentioned earlier in the hearing, Egypt does have the fundamentals for a successful economy, and it needs to be encouraged to take the steps necessary to build that economy. We have a team that is actively engaged with the Egyptians and the Gulf States to help, again, target assistance to Egypt and to encourage the necessary reforms.

One of the things that President Sisi has called for is investment. And investment is key to developing the economy. In order to get investment, you have to have certain sound fundamentals in place, or the investment will not come. And among those are, of course, a stable society based on an inclusive democracy that respects and guarantees human rights for all Egyptians and that provides the security and stability that encourages people to invest.

And again, as I mentioned earlier, Egypt does benefit from certain advantages that should help it get through these crucial times if it chooses to make the right reforms. Among those are an infrastructure that is relatively well developed—as I mentioned, telecoms, roads, ports; access proximity to markets in Europe and Asia, including or allowed by the Suez Canal, and in Africa; natural resources, particularly natural gas—my understanding is, Egypt has the third-largest proven reserves of natural gas in Africa; and a labor market that should be very, very attractive to investors.

And so, we need to focus Egypt on, again, making the necessary changes so investors see that it is a safe and secure environment; again, that the people enjoy their rights; and that they are making the right economic decisions that attract that investment. And again, we can do that by working with the Gulf States that are particularly engaged in Egypt, and staying engaged with Egyptians, I hope.

Senator KAINE. And, Ambassador Beecroft, one last question on the human-rights front. And I know there has been a question before I walked into the room. But, I was most troubled, when I was there in February, about the situation with journalists, and probably because the day that I was meeting with Egyptian leaders, including General al-Sisi, was the day there was a very prominent

set of journalists going on trial. The U.S. Embassy in Egypt even asked if I would do an—come-one-come-all press conference, just to show an example of—an elected official does not have to be afraid to answer tough questions from an even hostile press. And I got some tough questions from hostile press there, but I was very used to it, because I have been in politics in the United States.

But, have you seen any sign, since the Presidential election—is there any even early evidence about the direction that this together will take with respect to press freedoms? Or is it too soon to say?

Ambassador BEECROFT. Well, President al-Sisi, in his inaugural address, did make mention of his desire to be a president for all Egyptians and to see all Egyptians enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms. And I think what we want to do is, to the extent we can, push and take him up on that, and encourage him to follow through. Obviously, we believe in the strongest possible freedom of the press—the broadest possible freedoms for the press. It is very, very disturbing and unfortunate that journalists have been detained and charged with crimes in Egypt. A society cannot function effectively without—a democratic society—without freedom of the press. And so, we need to engage, we need to encourage it, we need to try to find ways to show that having a free press is in the interest of Egypt as a country, in the interest of the government, and interest of the people.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Ambassador Jones, thanks for your service. I very much was impressed with your work leading the mission in Jordan when I visited last July. And I do not have much time left, so let me just get right to it.

What do you think about the commitment of the Iraqi Government to political inclusion of the different factions within Iraqi civil society? That has been troubling me, and I would like your, just, current assessment of that.

Ambassador JONES. Thanks. And thanks also, Senator, for your visit to Jordan. It was a very helpful and positive experience.

I think that, especially as the government faces this terrorist challenge with ISIL, there is a strong incentive and political will to try to unify the groups. Just recently, the Prime Minister has issued a statement, you know, encouraging national unity and inviting participation in unifying the groups against ISIL. So, I think that there is political will. And, you know, even before the most recent crisis in Mosul, the Prime Minister has reached out to Sunni groups, he has brought 6,000 tribal members into the Iraqi security forces, he is aiming for a number of—an even larger number. So, I think that there is—that there is movement on this. And this is obviously something where I think the United States can continue to play a positive role, and we should.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Smith, first of all, congratulates on your appointment. Interesting time to be going to—my first question, just out of the box; we have been debating here for a second—what is the definitive pronunciation? Is it "Cutter," "Kittare" or "Gutter"? We have heard all three over the——

Ms. SMITH. In Arabic, actually it is "QUH-tar."

Senator RUBIO. OK. Well, how would I say it? Help me. [Laughter.]

Ms. SMITH. "Cutter."

Senator RUBIO. "Cutter." OK.

Ms. SMITH. "Cutter," for ease——

Senator RUBIO. Got it.

Ms. SMITH [continuing]. Is probably the best for an American.

Senator RUBIO. So, "Cutter," all right.

Ms. SMITH. Yes.

Senator RUBIO. Great.

So, let me ask you about Qatar. Have you been briefed on the memorandum of understanding?

Ms. SMITH. Yes, I have.

Senator RUBIO. Well, do you—will that be provided to Congress?

Ms. SMITH. I believe it has been made available to the chair and the ranking member.

Senator RUBIO. Do you know if that will be made available to other members, as well? I do not know if that has been—you have been informed on that.

Ms. SMITH. I do not. I am sorry, I am not in those conversations.

Senator RUBIO. What can you tell us about how much of the supervision of these individuals will the United States have the ability to participate in?

Ms. SMITH. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address this, because I know this is very much on people's minds, not only in this room.

If I am confirmed, this goes to the very top of my list of priorities. We will be working very closely with the Qataris. We will be engaging them very closely, verifying both their—what they have been—the restrictions that they have put on these individuals and the information that they will be collecting on these individuals, but also verifying, from our own standpoint. And we will be assessing continuously, every day—every morning when I wake up, every night when I go to sleep—to reassess whether these people pose any threat whatsoever to our national security. And so, I can guarantee you that I will be leading a country team representative of our whole government that will be working on this tirelessly, if I am confirmed.

Senator RUBIO. Well, can you share with us, in this setting, what exactly are the expectations of the U.S.'s participation in that effort, in terms of providing capabilities? Is that something you could share with us at all, in terms of your understanding of——

Ms. SMITH. I think what I can share is that we have a very good and close and productive information-sharing relationship with Qatar. And obviously, as Secretary Kerry said, Qatar will not be the only one with eyes on these individuals. And I think it is probably best to leave it at that.

Senator RUBIO. Can you give us your indication or your feelings about the capabilities of the Qatari Government to carry out this obligation they have committed to?

Ms. SMITH. It is my understanding that they have the capacity to do this, that we have a high degree of confidence in their capacity. And we also assess that they have the will to do this. Their

Amir called and gave the President, personally, his assurances, his personal commitment to upholding this agreement. So, we are cautiously optimistic that there is the ability to do this.

Of course, I think it would not be an effective way to enter into it, just with blind faith, so that is why we will be working constantly to verify and assess, from our own standpoint.

Senator RUBIO. What are your views, in the aftermath of this swap, as to the precedent that it sets and, therefore, the risk that it poses for Americans, both in and out of uniform, in terms of becoming even more appealing targets for other groups to try to—to capture Americans for the purposes of carrying out an exchange similar to this one?

Ms. SMITH. Sorry, that is something that I am not, probably, qualified to address.

Senator RUBIO. Well, let me ask you this way, then. Are we concerned, in the aftermath of this, that Americans serving our country, whether it is at—in the Embassy or as part of any of our governmental efforts in Qatar, are now at increased risk, given the fact—given this—the aftermath of this?

Ms. SMITH. We are—as diplomats, we are always concerned about our national security. It is our top priority, both of the people working on our teams and also for all American citizens, whether in the countries where we are representing America or whether back here at home. So, I—absolutely, safety and security of Americans is the number one thing that we are concerned about and care about.

Senator RUBIO. Well, in that light, obviously we have all seen the—all are aware of what happened in Benghazi, and we understand that, when we send service—when we send men and women to represent us in the diplomatic corps around the world, particularly in areas of the world where are more prone to terrorism, or the presence of terrorist-linked groups, that it places particular dangers upon those who serve our country in that realm. What—can you give us an assessment of how you view our security in the Embassy there? And obviously, you have talked about what a priority that would be. If you could share with us just a little bit about the—to extent that you can, the processes by which that becomes a priority, and how we ensure the safety of those who will be working underneath you in that facility.

Ms. SMITH. Sure. And this is something that every chief of mission is concerned about and particularly focused on, in light of the events in Benghazi. Chris Stevens was a close friend of mine, so it is something that I am very mindful of.

So, as we have moved through since the events, every embassy has been looked at, and looked at again. And it is a primary responsibility of the chief of mission to look at both the physical security, working with the security team that you lead, as well as any threats that are posed, day in and day out, and how that threat level might be changing. And it is a constant give-and-take, it is a constant conversation. And I think it is probably best to leave it at that.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Mr. Beecroft, based—quickly, about Egypt—what would the administration consider to be sufficient measures by Egypt in order to meet the conditions for full resumption of U.S. military aid?

Ambassador BEECROFT. I am familiar with the 2014 Appropriations Act, but I am not a party to those discussions yet. What I look forward to is, if confirmed, going to Egypt, contributing to those discussions, considerations. Again, I know this is something the administration is looking at very, very closely and on a daily basis, but I am not in a position to answer the question. I apologize.

Senator RUBIO. OK. Well, let me ask you briefly, then—there have been recent reports about sexual assault during inaugural celebrations this past week that have been very alarming. In particular, a video showing a mob assault a woman in Tahrir Square, and a policeman struggled to save her has been—and a policeman struggled to save her—has been circulating the Internet. How would you work with the Egyptian government to ensure the prevention and prosecution of sexual assault? Is—how would you work with them to ensure that this is a priority for them in this new government?

Ambassador BEECROFT. The act you are referring to, and others like it which have been reported as well, are extremely disturbing, and we are extremely concerned about those type of incidents. Women should have a—the ability to go anywhere they want in the country, just like a man. And they should be full participants in Egypt's democratic and social processes.

We need to engage with the Egyptian Government. We need to make clear that these activities are unacceptable. And I recognize that Egypt, including President al-Sisi, has made statements to the effect that these are unacceptable, and he has called on security forces to do everything they need to do to enforce the law and make sure that women are safe in the aftermath of this incident. We have ongoing programs about sexual and gender violence and women's rights, and we need to pursue those programs, as well, through our assistance, consistent with the law.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Let me, for the record—and I am just verifying this right now, but, my understanding is that the memorandum of understanding re: Qatar is available to leadership as well as members and appropriately cleared professional staff members of several committees, including the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which would mean that any member, and those professional staff who have been cleared for intelligence briefings, will have access to the memo. So, all members would be able to read it.

With that, Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I want to thank the witnesses and your willingness to serve.

Ms. Smith, when did you review the memorandum of understanding?

Ms. SMITH. Earlier this week, Senator.

Senator JOHNSON. On Monday or——

Ms. SMITH. I believe it was Monday.

Senator JOHNSON. Is your security clearance higher than that of a United States Senator?

Ms. SMITH. I cannot answer that question. I do not know what your security clearance is.

Senator JOHNSON. OK.

I appreciate the fact, Mr. Chairman, that now we have the opportunity to review that memorandum of understanding, but I think the point of my question is, as a nominee to be Ambassador, you know, I think you should certainly be able to review that, but I think we should have been, as well. And we simply were not until, apparently, late last night.

Ms. SMITH. I would like to make this commitment to you, Mr. Senator. If I am confirmed, I will be delighted to consult with you and any of the members of the committee, and your staffs, as closely and regularly as you like.

Senator JOHNSON. You—in your testimony, you said, "We are confident that the security measures that we have been—that have been put in place, including restrictions placed on the activities of the individuals, will substantially mitigate any threat that the individuals may pose to our national security." Did you by any chance see the video of the celebration as these five detainees were welcomed at Qatar?

Ms. SMITH. I did not see the video. I saw reports about it.

Senator JOHNSON. You should review that. It does not look like particularly restrictive environment to me.

Ms. SMITH. If I am confirmed, we are going to be focused on our national security, and we will be looking at, not only the directly threatening types of things they could be doing, but things that constitute propaganda and that constitute that type of thing.

Senator JOHNSON. Because I was not able to take a look at the memorandum of understanding, I will go down and I will look at it. Can you tell me, were there restrictions in terms of public displays for propaganda purposes within that memorandum of understanding? In other words, has Qatar already violated that, based on your understanding?

Ms. SMITH. I think the best thing that I can say here is that there will be restrictions on some of the activities of those individuals. I would be delighted to consult with you, again, in a different setting.

Senator JOHNSON. OK.

Ambassador Beecroft, how would you assess—or, how would you describe the result that is occurring in Iraq now after we have withdrawn all of our combat forces? How is that going?

Ambassador BEECROFT. Well, Iraq is facing a very, very severe challenge from terrorist groups—particular—terrorist groups—particularly the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. And it has suffered setbacks. If there is a silver lining in this, it is that we are seeing Iraqis, over the past few days, start to pull together in ways they have not before, overcome sectarian divides. We have seen the Kurds and Baghdad start to talk to each other, start to cooperate on the battlefield. And we have seen Iraq putting together a conference for Sunnis to reconcile with as many Sunni groups as possible and engage them in the fight.

So, it is an uphill battle, it is a struggle. We are doing what we can to help them in ways of providing assistance for military equipment, military weapons, ammunition, providing training, and sharing as much intelligence as we can with them to fight this battle.

Senator JOHNSON. But, again, I mean, just kind of a one-word, couple-word assessment of the result. Success?

Ambassador BEECROFT. On the battlefield, it is very, very difficult. It cannot be considered a success. It is going—it is a huge challenge.

Senator JOHNSON. Ambassador Jones, what would you describe the result after our pullout of all combat troops in Iraq?

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Senator.

As Ambassador Beecroft just characterized, I think the Government of Iraq continues to face a severe threat from ISIL, which has now penetrated Iraq through the influx of foreign fighters across the Syrian border as a result largely, though not exclusively, of course, of the Syrian civil war. ISIL poses a significant threat, not only to Iraq, but to Iraq's neighbors. And I think the United States has a commitment to support Iraq and its security, and we will continue to work, through the measures that Ambassador Beecroft just outlined, to try to support the Iraqi security forces in this challenge that they face.

Senator JOHNSON. Now that we have seen Fallujah, Mosul, fall to, basically, elements of al-Qaeda, now that we have seen the Iraqi security forces shed their uniforms, go door to door, getting civilian clothes so they could meld into the population, do you see any silver linings?

Ambassador JONES. I think what Ambassador Beecroft said was that—I think the escalation of the threat posed by ISIL is having an impact in Baghdad of drawing the political factions more closely together. And I think, in the last 72 hours, we have seen a series of meetings, where the various political elements are coming together and drawing up plans and looking for ways to cooperate for the national security.

Senator JOHNSON. So, do you expect the Iraqi security force now to turn the tide and be able to capture back Fallujah and Mosul?

Ambassador JONES. We certainly hope for that outcome, and I think it is incumbent on the United States to support that outcome.

Senator JOHNSON. You are obviously going to Iraq, and, you know, God bless you for being willing to serve. You said there are 5,300 U.S. personnel in Iraq. Are they going to be safe?

Ambassador JONES. That is a very good question, Senator. And thank you for your kind words.

The compound in—as mentioned earlier, I was the Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad from 2010 until 2011, and I have worked in that compound. We have taken extraordinary measures to ensure the safety and protection of our personnel. We are going to have to make sure and be vigilant to maintain those.

We cannot stay behind the walls. We have to be out. And I know that Ambassador Beecroft is out frequently to meet with Iraqi contacts in Baghdad and other parts of the country. So, we are going to have to do the best we can to reduce the risks and ensure that we can do—both do our jobs and stay safe.

Senator JOHNSON. Can you tell me, of the 5,300 personnel, how many are really security forces? And is—are those military personnel? Are those State Department?

Ambassador JONES. Yes, it is a complicated question. I would love to go into the details with you in another setting, but——

Senator JOHNSON. OK.

Ambassador JONES [continuing]. Suffice to say that we have a significant number of Diplomatic Security officers who are State Department officers. We also have, of course, the Marine security guards, and then we also have contract guards who are assigned to protect the perimeter. So, it is a significant number, and I will be happy to get back to you with the details of all those numbers.

Senator JOHNSON. OK, well, I appreciate that. And I—again, I wish you, you know, godspeed and safety and best of luck, but I hope this—the security of yourself and those serving with you on the ground in Iraq is your top priority.

Ambassador JONES. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Smith, my questions have largely been asked and answered, so I will not pursue them.

I would just instruct the nominees that the record will be open for the next 48 hours. To the extent that questions are submitted to any of you, I would urge you to respond to them expeditiously so that we can move your nominations through a business meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee.

And, with our gratitude for your willingness to serve, this panel is excused.

And I would call upon our second panel today: James Nealon, nominated to be the Ambassador to Honduras——

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. If we could have everyone who is not staying for the rest of the hearing please leave the room and——

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. All right. As we have everybody exit, let me, for the sake of time and votes that are going to be coming—our second panel today is James Nealon, nominated to be the Ambassador to Honduras. Mr. Nealon's nomination comes at a time when Honduras is facing serious challenges from crime and violence and a humanitarian crisis of children crossing borders by themselves, and being apprehended and held. The Government of Honduras is struggling to guarantee the security and economic well-being of its people, and, as a result, we are left to address how we will handle waves of children immigrants crossing into the United States on their own, and how the Honduran Government will handle the underlying issues of crime and violence.

Just last week, President Obama announced the creation of a new interagency task force to address what he called "an urgent humanitarian situation" stemming from unaccompanied minors crossing the southern border of the United States, many of whom are from Honduras. I look forward to hearing Mr. Nealon's views on the best way forward to address this humanitarian crisis.

Also on our panel is Gentry Smith, nominated to be the Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, with the rank of Ambassador. Mr. Smith is an expert in embassy security issues. He is a career member of the Foreign Service Class of minister counselors, serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary and Assistant Director for Countermeasures at the State Department, a position he has held since 2009. He has served as the regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo and the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon. He has also served as security officer and deputy regional security officer during two separate tours at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.

So, we welcome both of you to the committee. Again, if you have family members, we urge you to introduce them to the committee. We appreciate their willingness to join in your service on behalf of our country.

Your full statements will be included in the record, without objection, but I ask you to summarize your openings in about 5 minutes or so, so that we can enter into a dialogue with each of you.

And, with that, Mr. Nealon, you are recognized first.

STATEMENT OF JAMES D. NEALON, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF HONDURAS

Mr. NEALON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee as Ambassador to Honduras. I am deeply grateful to the President and to the Secretary of State for their trust and confidence.

After 30 years in the Foreign Service, I appreciate the privilege and the responsibility that it is to be considered for confirmation as Ambassador. I deeply respect the role of the Senate in ensuring that the United States has a foreign policy that reflects our Nation's values.

I would like to recognize my wife, Kristin, who is here today, and our four children, Rory, Katie, Maureen, and Liam, all born while we were living overseas. We are a Foreign Service family, and we have been in this together from the very beginning, so this is their day as much as mine. I believe I also have a sister, a brother, a brother-in-law, and many friends here, so I thank all of them. And I see my son arrived from California. I am glad to see him.

Mr. Chairman, the headlines do not often tell a positive story about Honduras. This is a country that faces tremendous challenges, many of them associated with the direct and indirect effects of narcotics trafficking and organized crime. It is a challenge to establish strong democratic institutions, establish a rule-of-law culture, attack impunity and corruption, reduce crime, attract investment, and ensure a prosperous future for Honduran citizens.

We share, with many Members of Congress, a concern about the consequences of slow economic growth, impunity, weak institutions, corruption, and extreme violence in Honduras. We share the view that everything is related: impunity and lack of accountability and transparency promote a weak rule-of-law culture, discourage investment, and encourage illegal migration to the United States. We

are partners with you in seeking to influence this trajectory in a positive direction.

Mr. Chairman, in such circumstances, some will ask if U.S. engagement in Honduras makes a difference. I believe that it does and that it is in our interest to stay engaged. A Honduras with greater accountability and transparency will establish stronger rule-of-law institutions and be more likely to protect human rights. A Honduras with a vibrant middle class means a larger overseas market for American-made products. A more secure and prosperous Honduras means fewer migrants trying to cross our borders. A Honduras with strong interdiction capacity means fewer drugs arriving in our communities. As President Obama recently said, respect for human rights is an antidote to instability—a Honduras with strong human rights protections means enhanced security in our region.

The United States is committed to partnering with the Government of Honduras to promote prosperity, governance, and security. In order to do so, we need willing partners in Honduras who have the political will to transform their society, the capacity to seize drugs, and the commitment to arrest, prosecute, and sentence criminals. They also need to guarantee the human rights of their own citizens.

Mr. Chairman, Honduras is at a crossroads. We have seen some early signs that the Government of Honduras is ready to take important steps to improve the lives of its citizens. In May, for the first time, they extradited a notorious Honduran drug trafficker to the United States, an important strike against impunity. The new government has dedicated scarce resources to better combat trafficking in persons. They have fired corrupt police, they have indicted the entire board of directors of the Social Security Institute for corruption, and they have invited the United Nations to set up a human rights office. They have also formed a task force to investigate unsolved murders in a particularly conflictive area of the country, the Bajo Aguan. But, there is no doubt, the Government of Honduras still has a very big job ahead.

I am fully aware of the serious doubts expressed, including in the U.S. Congress, regarding the willingness and ability of the Government of Honduras to take needed steps to improve the human rights situation. If confirmed, I commit to work tirelessly in this area.

Mr. Chairman, I have been a Deputy Chief of Mission at three embassies in this hemisphere. I am currently the Deputy Civilian Commander at U.S. Southern Command. I have spent the last 30 years in nine foreign postings, working to promote democracy and human rights, enhance law enforcement and security partnerships, and promote U.S. exports and investment.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the honor of appearing before this committee today. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you and your colleagues to advance the vital interests of the United States in Honduras.

Thank you very much. I look forward to answering your questions today and at any time in the future.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nealon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES D. NEALON

Mister Chairman, distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is an honor to appear today before you as the President's nominee as Ambassador to Honduras. I am deeply grateful to the President and to the Secretary of State for their trust and confidence.

After 30 years in the Foreign Service, I appreciate the privilege and the responsibility that it is to be considered for confirmation as Ambassador. I deeply respect the role of the Senate in the work of ensuring that the United States has a foreign policy that reflects our Nation's values.

I would like to recognize my wife, Kristin, who is here today, and our four children—Rory, Katie, Maureen, and Liam, all born while we were living overseas. We are a Foreign Service family and we have been in this together from the very beginning. This is their day as much as mine.

Mr. Chairman, the headlines do not often tell a positive story about Honduras. Our vision for Honduras is of a country that is middle class, democratic, and secure. Still, this is a country that faces tremendous challenges, many of them associated with the direct and indirect effects of narcotics trafficking and organized crime structures operating throughout the country. It is a challenge to establish strong democratic institutions, establish a rule of law culture, attack impunity and corruption, reduce crime, attract investment, and ensure a prosperous future for Honduran citizens.

We share with many Members on the Hill a concern about the consequences in the United States and in Honduras of slow economic growth, impunity, weak institutions, corruption, and extreme violence in Honduras. We share the view that everything is related: impunity and a lack of accountability and transparency promote a weak rule of law culture, discourage investment, and encourage illegal migration to the U.S. We are partners with you in seeking to influence this trajectory in a positive direction.

In such circumstances, some still ask if U.S. engagement in Honduras makes a difference. I believe it does and that it is in our interest to stay engaged. A Honduras with greater accountability and transparency will establish stronger rule of law institutions and be more likely to protect human rights. A Honduras with a vibrant middle class means a larger overseas market for American-made products. A more secure and prosperous Honduras means fewer migrants trying to cross our borders. A Honduras with strong interdiction capacity means fewer drugs arriving in U.S. communities. As President Obama recently said, respect for human rights is an antidote to instability—a Honduras with strong human rights protections means enhanced security in our region.

The United States is committed to partnering with the Government of Honduras to promote prosperity, governance, and security. In order to do so, we need willing partners in Honduras who have the political will to transform their society, the capacity to seize drugs, and the commitment to arrest, prosecute and sentence criminals, and to guarantee the human rights of their own citizens.

Honduras is at a crossroads. We have seen some early signs that the Government of Honduras is ready to take important steps to improve the lives of its citizens. In May, for the first time, Honduras extradited a notorious Honduran drug trafficker to the United States, an important strike against impunity. The new government dedicated scarce resources to combat trafficking in persons and launched a signature program to bring more people into the formal economy. The government has taken steps to improve security, enhance the rule of law, and emphasize its commitment to improving human rights conditions. The President has fired corrupt police, indicted the entire board of directors of the social security institute, invited the United Nations to set up a human rights office, and set up a task force to investigate unsolved murders in a particularly conflictive area of the country, the Bajo Aguan. But there is no doubt the Government of Honduras still has a big job ahead.

Honduras's location and role in regional security make its success vital to our own national security, and it is in our interest to work with the government and civil society to improve democratic governance, the rule of law, stability, and protection of human rights. It is also important that we emphasize the value of building national consensus in support of the serious challenges the country confronts. I am fully aware of the serious doubts expressed, including in the U.S. Congress, regarding the willingness and ability of the Government of Honduras to take needed steps to improve the human rights situation. If confirmed, I commit to work tirelessly in this area.

The United States engages in Honduras to support social and economic development, improve food security, promote civil society, and give alternatives to joining gangs to at-risk youth. We have a wide variety of programs focused on increasing

law enforcement and rule of law capacity and strengthening violence prevention efforts to improve the security environment, and we recognize that these efforts are only effective and sustainable when human rights are at the center. The United States should remain Honduras' best partner because it is very much in our interest that Honduras be stable, well governed, prosperous and safe.

Mr. Chairman, I have been a deputy chief of mission at three embassies in this hemisphere. I am currently the civilian deputy to the Commander at U.S. Southern Command; in that context, my view is that the most appropriate role for the U.S. military in Honduras is to help ensure that the Honduran military is professional, under civilian direction, and can secure its own borders. I have spent most of the last 30 years working to promote democracy and human rights, enhancing law enforcement and security partnerships, and promoting U.S. exports and investment. Above all, I am proud to have spent my career working in the interests of American citizens to defend our values throughout the world.

I understand the magnitude of the challenges the United States faces in Honduras. I delegate authority, not responsibility. I believe in the power of diplomacy and of using our influence to achieve our national security goals. Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the honor of appearing before the committee today. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you and your colleagues to advance the vital interests of the United States in Honduras.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to any questions you may have, now and in the future.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Nealon. And, you know, we did not give you a complete introduction. You have 30 years of experience, having joined the service in 1984. You have most recently been the deputy chief of mission in Canada, Peru, and Uruguay. You have also been located in Spain, Hungary, the Philippines, and Chile, as well as the current assignment that you just talked about. So, a tremendous background. We appreciate your willingness to serve.

Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF GENTRY O. SMITH, OF NORTH CAROLINA, NOMINEE TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Mr. SMITH. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, OFM. I am profoundly grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in nominating me for this unique and important position.

My entire professional life has been dedicated to public service. Beginning with my first career as a police officer in Raleigh, North Carolina, to my assignments at our Embassies in Tokyo, Rangoon, and Cairo, and to my current role as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Countermeasures with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, I have strived to improve the conditions in which our colleagues live and work. I believe my dedication and commitment in this regard will serve me well if given the opportunity to lead the Office of Foreign Missions, an organization whose primary goals are using reciprocity to ensure equitable treatment of United States diplomatic and consular missions abroad, and their personnel; regulating the activities of foreign missions in the United States to protect our foreign policy and national security interests; protecting the U.S. public from abuses of privileges and immunities by the members of the foreign missions; and the provision of serv-

ice and assistance to the foreign mission community in the United States on a reciprocal basis.

As you are aware, OFM was established in 1982 as a requirement under the Foreign Missions Act. In passing the act, Congress made it clear that the operations of foreign missions in the United States is a proper subject for the exercise of Federal jurisdiction. For more than 30 years, the act has guided the Department's management extension to the foreign missions in the United States of privileges, benefits, and immunities associated with the acquisition and use of real property, motor vehicles, driving services, tax exemptions, custom clearances, and domestic travel courtesies and restrictions. In my estimation, the Foreign Missions Act is a landmark piece of legislation which has positively influenced and conditioned the environment in which U.S. diplomatic and consular missions operate abroad.

This committee is well aware of the Department's ongoing efforts to ensure our personnel abroad work in facilities that are safe, secure, and functional. I can authoritatively attest that the relocation of an American embassy is a complex, costly, and difficult task. To accomplish this job, the United States Government and in many countries—have, in many countries, the support of that host country. And in countries where that support is lacking, the Office of Foreign Missions plays a critical role in assisting in the resolution of these impasses we sometimes face with these governments during our attempts to acquire real property and in those countries where we are relocating our facilities.

When a country has an interest in improving and relocating its own mission in the United States, the Office of Foreign Missions uses its ability to regulate the acquisition and the use of real property of those missions as leverage to achieve the Department's own property-related needs in that country. Without OFM and the authorities it has under the Foreign Missions Act, we may not have been able to build a new embassy in Beijing, China, or a new annex in that same location. This and more was achieved as a result of reciprocity and the Foreign Missions Act.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I am honored to have the opportunity to address you and the esteemed members of the committee. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to further these important objectives of Congress as set out in the Foreign Missions Act. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the proper treatment of our foreign personnel abroad and that foreign missions here are good neighbors.

Thank you for this opportunity and your consideration for my nomination. I respectfully request that my entire statement be entered into the record, and I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GENTRY O. SMITH

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Director of the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM). I am profoundly grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in nominating me for this unique and important position.

My entire professional life has been dedicated to public service. Beginning with my first career as a police officer in Raleigh, NC, to my assignments as a Regional Security Officer at our Embassies in Tokyo, Rangoon, and Cairo, and to my current role as the Deputy Assistant Secretary and Assistant Director for Countermeasures in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, I have strived to improve the overall conditions in which my colleagues, and those of us with families, live and work. I believe my dedication and commitment in this regard will serve me well if given the opportunity to lead the Office of Foreign Missions, an organization whose primary goals are:

- Using reciprocity to ensure equitable treatment for United States diplomatic and consular missions abroad and their personnel;
- Regulating the activities of foreign missions in the United States to protect our foreign policy and national security interests;
- Protecting the U.S. public from abuses of privileges and immunities by members of the foreign missions; and
- Providing service and assistance to the foreign mission community in the United States on a reciprocal basis.

As you are aware, OFM was established in 1982 as a requirement of the Foreign Missions Act. In passing the act, Congress made it clear that the operations of foreign missions and international organizations in the United States, including the permissible scope of their activities and the location and size of their facilities, is a proper subject for the exercise of Federal jurisdiction. The act provides the Department of State with broad authority to determine the treatment to be accorded to a foreign mission in the United States.

OFM vigorously pursues its mandate under the act that, "consistent with our obligations under the Vienna Conventions, the treatment afforded a foreign mission in the United States shall be determined after due consideration of the benefits, privileges, and immunities provided to missions of the United States in the country represented by that foreign mission." With this very mandate, OFM leads the Department's engagement in a process in which it either develops an approach or exploits leverage to achieve a specific end. OFM's approach to issues is a very realistic one. OFM knows that for every action there is a reaction, and so it works daily with a number of stakeholders, both within the Department and the broader community of Federal agencies, to carefully craft and implement responses to a wide range of actions that impact the proper or efficient operation of our diplomatic and consular operations abroad.

For more than 30 years, the Act has guided the Department's management and extension to foreign missions in the United States, privileges and benefits associated with the acquisition and use of real property, motor vehicle and driving services, tax exemptions, customs clearances, and domestic travel courtesies and restrictions. In recent years, OFM's role and its use of the act's broad authorities has allowed it to expand into new areas including the provision of assistance with the establishment and availability of financial services for foreign missions and to the development of the proposed Foreign Missions Center at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center for the purpose of creating a second dedicated "embassy neighborhood" here in our Nation's Capital.

The act is also the reason I am before you today, in that it requires the Director of OFM to be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

In my estimation, the Foreign Missions Act is a landmark piece of legislation which has positively influenced and conditioned the environment in which U.S. diplomatic and consular missions abroad operate. I appreciate the fascinating history associated with the act's origins, and its role in achieving a number of major, and often unsung, improvements to the operations of many of our embassies and consulates abroad. For example, in the past 11 years, OFM's leadership of the Department's Diplomatic Tax-Relief Initiative has resulted in the establishment of close to 100 bilateral and reciprocal construction tax-relief arrangements; this has resulted in an estimated savings to the Department of nearly $280 million in foreign taxes associated with our efforts to construct new embassy and consular compounds.

I am eager to lead OFM's efforts in using the tools Congress provided the Department in realizing improvements to the many challenges, both new and old, that face so many of our posts abroad and my colleagues and their families who dutifully execute the diplomatic and consular relations of the United States.

The prospect of improving the conditions of my colleagues and their families abroad is of significant personal importance to me. Our personnel, many with accompanying and unaccompanying family members, face pressures and challenges each day that did not exist when I first joined the Department of State. Without question, the life of the Foreign Service has dramatically changed. The daily pres-

sures on our personnel are significant, and I will work every day to use the tools Congress provided OFM to help improve, in both small and big ways, the daily lives of the brave men and women who are assigned to our embassies and consulates around the world.

This committee is well aware of the Department's ongoing efforts to ensure that our personnel abroad work in facilities that are safe, secure, and functional. I can authoritatively attest that the relocation of an American Embassy is a complex, costly, and difficult task. To accomplish this job, the United States must have the interest and support of the host government. In many countries, such support and assistance is there for the asking. In countries where support is lacking, I, as a member of Diplomatic Security, along with colleagues in Overseas Buildings Operations and other parts of the Department, have come to realize and respect the critical role that OFM quietly plays in assisting with the resolution of impasses we sometimes face with foreign governments during our attempts to acquire real property in their countries for the relocation and construction of our facilities.

When a country has an interest in improving or relocating one of its missions in the United States, OFM uses its ability to regulate the acquisition and use of real property by foreign missions as leverage to achieve the Department's own property-related needs in that country. Without OFM and the authorities it has under the Foreign Missions Act, the Department might not have been able to speak today of having a new U.S. Embassy in Beijing, as well as a new annex building under construction there as well. This and more was achieved as a result of reciprocity and the Foreign Missions Act.

If I am confirmed and with your support, I will further use OFM's authorities as a means to support and realize the goal shared by both Congress and the President of ensuring that our personnel work in safe and secure facilities abroad.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I am honored to have the opportunity to address you and the esteemed members of the committee. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to further the important objectives Congress set out in the Foreign Missions Act, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure proper treatment of our Foreign Service personnel abroad, and that foreign missions are good neighbors here at home.

Thank you for this opportunity and your consideration of my nomination. I respectfully request that my full statement be entered into the record, and I will be happy to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Both of your statements will be fully entered into the record.

Mr. Nealon, let me start off with the—for me, the most pressing issue of the day as it relates to Honduras, which is in the headlines and minds of all of us who care about the issues of human rights and human dignity. And it is the thousands of young people, and increasingly younger people, who seem forced to leave their families and head for the U.S. border because of the inability of the Honduran government and other Central American governments to deal with crime and violence in a region that is home to the highest murder rate in the world.

I am personally appalled by the staggering numbers of minors, sometimes as young as 5 and 6 years old, who are left by their personal circumstances with no other choice than to try to cross the desert by themselves. And, as you approach this post, I would like to get a sense from you as to what discussions you have had with the administration and with the State Department. What is our strategy to try to address both the present challenge, as well as the underlying causes that has given us this humanitarian tragedy?

Mr. NEALON. Thank you very much, Senator.

I very much share your concerns about these children who are leaving Central America, including Honduras, and making a dangerous trip in an attempt to cross our borders. If confirmed as Ambassador to Honduras, of course, my piece of this would be an effort in Honduras to try to get Hondurans to see their future in their own country, and not try to make this dangerous trip. We all know

what the push factors are. The push factors are the threat of violence and a lack of economic opportunity.

Senator, we currently have programs in Honduras that are designed to address these issues. Some of them are very good programs. But, we have to ask ourselves if it is enough. We have programs such as the GREAT Program, which addresses at-risk youth and try to wean them away from the threat of joining gangs. We have programs that offer economic opportunity. We support outreach centers, which try and create a culture where kids stay out of gangs, where they try to get job skills so they can enter the labor force. But, it is extremely difficult. As you said, Senator, it is one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere, and it is perhaps the most violent. So, the challenge is staggering.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me just say that—here is part of our challenge. And I hope that, if confirmed, you will make this case within the administration. Last week, the White House informed the Congress that it would need $2.28 billion to address the issue of unaccompanied minors crossing to the United States. Now, in 2015, the administration's request to Congress was only $130 million for its five-country Central American Regional Security Initiative, which is a decrease of $30 million over 2014. So, given that we need to spend $2.2 billion to address the consequences of the crisis here in the United States, it would seem that 130 million is absolutely insufficient to address the root causes of the problems. This is one of the things that boggles my mind.

So, we are going to spend$ 2.28 billion—almost $2.3 billion, if we honor the President's request, to deal with young people crossing the border, instead of spending that type of money to ultimately make sure they stay in their country and have the aspirations that you so aptly talked about.

So, I know this is above your pay grade. You do not make this decision. But, since you are going to be going to this job, upon confirmation, I hope you are going to make the case that $130 million for five countries, which is less than what we have done, as compared to $2.2 billion to respond to the problem—it just does not make any sense.

This is our problem with—as someone who was the Western Hemisphere chair here before I became the full-committee chair, getting the focus of the Congress and this administration on the Western Hemisphere is a challenge. It is our front yard. It is our own national interest. And we seem to have a problem understanding that. So, we will spend more on a crisis than we will on meeting the challenge in the first place.

So, could I get you to be an advocate for this proposition?

Mr. NEALON. Senator, you can absolutely have me as an advocate for this proposition, if confirmed. I am obviously not in a position to assess how much money—how much additional money we might need in Honduras to address this problem, but I do know that both USAID and the State Department are, right now, assessing those programs that we do have. So, I will very much look forward to seeing the results of that assessment to see if we can get a handle on how much additional money we might need.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Smith, let me ask you. What do you consider to be OFM's highest priorities? And how do you perceive your role

in achieving them? This is a mandate that has evolved and expanded since the creation of the office in 1982. I want to get, as the nominee here, what your highest priorities would be, and what your role would be in pursuing them.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you for that question, Senator.

As we know, the Office of Foreign Missions, as it came into existence from the Foreign Missions Act of 1982, gives the Secretary broad responsibilities for ensuring that foreign missions here act in a manner that is appropriate. My highest priority will be making sure that our citizens who work abroad are treated fairly in a reciprocal manner, and also ensuring that the activities of foreign entities here are in support—or do not conflict with our national interests, and also that there is no abuse of privileges, immunities by the missions and the personnel that are here.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, I would like to hear from you, what role does the Director of the Office of Foreign Missions play in interacting with diplomatic security with respect to security in our embassies and consulates abroad?

Mr. SMITH. The relationship between the Office of Foreign Missions and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security has existed for a long time, from the time before the Office of Foreign Missions was officially a—an office within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, until the point where it is now, where it is a separate entity. Diplomatic Security has always played a supporting role in helping the Office of Foreign Missions carry out some of its responsibilities. We help to protect the diplomats who are here in the United States with—through our police liaison unit. Diplomatic Security has relationships with police organizations and local police throughout the country. And so, we help to protect the diplomats who reside here, and we also offer protection to visiting diplomats who come here to visit the country during short periods of time through our protective details.

In every location where there is an Office of Foreign Missions, there is also a field office for Diplomatic Security.

The CHAIRMAN. One final question. Your—this office is often referred to as the Office of Tit for Tat, meaning that for—one of our main goals is to ensure reciprocity of treatment of our diplomats overseas. Can you talk about that reciprocity? And here is one example, for example: Argentina. A February 2013 Department of State Inspector General report suggested that there was an array of reciprocity inequities negatively affecting personnel at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In particular, the report cites inequities regarding the importation, exportation, sales, and transfer procedures relative to private and government-owned vehicles and household effects. I am under the understanding that the office sent a diplomatic note to the Argentine Embassy in Washington drawing attention to the situation, but, at the time of the Inspector General's report, no response had been received.

So, that is an example of one of the important roles you play so that our people can have a decent standard of living as they are representing our country abroad. Tell me a little bit about the reciprocity issue, in general. And do you know about this Argentina issue, in specific?

Mr. SMITH. Thank you for that question, Senator.

Yes, reciprocity is one of our major tools that is—that we can use in ensuring that our diplomats overseas, and that our missions that operate overseas, are treated fairly. I have heard, during my briefings for preparations, that there has been an issue in Argentina. As a matter of fact, I know that, as you stated, the issue was raised in the February 2013 report.

The reason that the issue is still under discussion is the fact that there is still information that we have asked for, that the Office of Foreign Missions has asked for, from our mission in Buenos Aires. And yes, we have been in contact with the Argentine mission here, but there are additional details that are needed from the people that we have out there on the ground——

The CHAIRMAN. Something is wrong when, 16 months later, we are looking for information versus action. So, if confirmed, will you commit to me that you will make this one of your highest priorities?

Mr. SMITH. I will, indeed, Senator, if confirmed. We very much would like that information, because, you are absolutely right, we are looking and willing to engage on this issue to ensure that our personnel overseas are treated in the fairest manner possible.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Mr. Chairman, I know Senator Rubio needs to be on the floor, so I am going to defer and let him go, and then I will ask my questions after Senator Kaine.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Thank you both for your service to our country.

Mr. Nealon, I have two quick questions. And I appreciate the ranking member's indulgence on this. The first has to do with an issue I am sure you are aware of, and that is a U.S. crew that was arrested in Honduras during a river job. This is the salvage company, Aqua Quest International. They had a contract to dredge the Patuca River and raise valuable mahogany and cedar logs that were on the bottom of the riverbed. They have been there for more than a century. It was a very valuable contract, mutually beneficial to both Honduras but also to this crew that was involved in this.

It is standard operating procedure for crews in the Mosquito Coast in this part of the world to have firearms onboard to defend themselves from both pirates and potentially from drug traffickers in the region. This group pulled into the port there, they arrived at the port, they declared their two pistols, or two shotguns and a semiautomatic sport rifle that looks like an AK–47. They declared it to the Honduran navy inspection post. The sailors agreed to let them continue to the port. But, when they arrived there, they were arrested for weapons charges, and they remain in the custody of the Honduran Government.

I just was hoping to get your commitment today that, if confirmed, one of your—hopefully, by the time you get there, this will have been cleared up, but, if not, that you will make it among your highest priorities to address this outrage that has occurred there. And these men should not be in jail. They have done nothing wrong. They followed maritime law. And I just want your commitment publicly that we will address this issue, if, in fact, this has

not been cleared up—and we hope it will be—by the time you get there.

Mr. NEALON. Thank you very much, Senator. I am very much aware of the detention of the crew of the Aqua Quest in Honduras on May 5. You do have my word that, if confirmed as Ambassador to Honduras, the safety and welfare of American citizens will be my highest priority. I, too, hope that this situation will be cleared up by the time I get there, if confirmed. But, I want you to know that, if I am confirmed, you will be able to call me personally and hold me personally accountable for the actions of the Embassy in any case involving American citizens or constituents.

Senator RUBIO. Well, we appreciate that. Thank you very much.

I want to talk about a broader issue that is emerging in the press lately, because of the urgency of it. And the chairman has already alluded to it a moment ago. Just the—the facts are pretty staggering. About 5 years ago, there were about 100-—968 unaccompanied children that crossed the southern U.S. border from Honduras. This year alone—we have not even gone through—halfway through the year—there has been more than 13,000 unaccompanied minors that have come across the border from Honduras. This is, like I said, almost twice as much as last year, the entire year. We understand that violence and poverty are a driver of this. It is important to understand the desperation that a parent must have to put their kids on—in the hands of these groups that are going to move them across the border. That is how desperate people are to—to turn your child over. Some of these unaccompanied minors are very young children—talking very young children—6, 7, 8, 9 years of age. So, this is a very serious humanitarian crisis that we are all kind of struggling around here to figure out what to do about it in the short term, just to deal with the humanitarian aspects of it.

I do want to ask you, What insight do you have as to—beyond the motivation for doing it, why is this happening? In essence—we have heard anecdotal reports—I have, certainly, in south Florida, among members, some in the Honduran community—that there are what are, for lack of a better term, rumors that if, in fact, the children are able to get here, they are going to get to stay. Is that a—is, in fact, those rumors circulating? And what—and if, in fact, they are, as—I believe that there is some element of that; I do not know how much of it is quantified to that, but whatever percentage of it is—what can we do, working with the Honduran Government, to make clear to parents in Honduras that, despite the desperation that they face and what we need to do to help the Honduran people overcome that in their own country, this is not something they should be doing? They should not be—they are putting their children in grave danger. When they are crossing through Mexico into the United States, they become prime targets for traffickers, they become prime targets for all sorts of transnational criminal organizations. And then, when they get to the United States, to be abundantly clear, the laws of the United States do not allow them to stay here. They arrived illegally. That whatever it is they are hearing, it is not accurate. What can we do through our Embassy to help make that clear so that we can prevent this mass migration? I think this is a question to ask of our posts in El Salvador and

Guatemala, as well, but you are going to Honduras. What can we do to make it clear that this is not something that they should do? It is not wise, and it puts their children in grave danger.

Mr. NEALON. Senator, thank you very much. And, as I said to Chairman Menendez, I share your very deep concern for this situation.

I am not sure that I have any wisdom to add to what I already said to the chairman, except that I can say that the Honduran Government is running public service ads in Honduras to counter the kind of rumors that you have described. Obviously——

Senator RUBIO. Where do these rumors come from? Why are they—where did the perception that they can come and stay if they arrive—where is that coming from?

Mr. NEALON. Senator, unfortunately, I am not in a position to answer that question for you. I simply do not know. But, I can tell you that, if confirmed, this issue, which I think has gotten the attention, rightly, of all of us, would be at the very top of my list of priorities to try to address. And I would really look forward to working with you. I know you have deep roots in the community in Florida. I would really look forward to working with you to see if we could come up with some ideas to address the situation.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to the witnesses.

And, Mr. Smith, I will apologize to you in advance. I have a kind of an obsession about Honduras, and so I am not going to grill you. I hope you do not mind.

And I will start with Mr. Nealon. First, congratulations. I mean, this is a country of many, many wonderful people, and I think being Ambassador to Honduras at this time, though a very challenging one, is going to give you a superb opportunity to continue what has really been an estimable career in Foreign Service. And so, I congratulate you there.

I lived in Honduras, in el Progreso, in the Yoro province, in 1980 and 1981, and I worked with Jesuits there who are responsible for a lot of good work in that province and around the country. And I just—I kind of hate to say this, and I—every time I say it, I kind of feel bad saying it, but, when I was there, it was a military dictatorship, and it was a very brutal place, including brutal to the people that I worked with, many of whom were targeted during that time, and after, by the government, because of their activity and advocacy on behalf of the least of these, especially the campesinos and the banana camps near el Progreso. But, it is worse now than then. They are less safe now than then. It is not a military dictatorship anymore. You know, we moved out of the military dictatorship era into a time of Presidential elections. But, my friends who are there—it is not that they want to go back, but they are less safe than they were. And a country that was—that has been a superb ally to the United States, a country that is one of the original partners with us on an issue—it is like the Peace Corps—now is one of the few countries in the world that cannot even have Peace

Corps Volunteers there, because of the level of violence and danger. And that is just a tragic thing to think about.

One element of the tragedy, in particular, that I am concerned about, is—as you might imagine, is the people that I worked with. There is a radio station in el Progreso, Radio Progreso, that was run by the Jesuits, bombed and attacked when I was there. And a very prominent journalist who worked at the radio station, who also worked for a Jesuit-run think tank, the Equipo de Reflexiones Investigaciones Cristianos, was just murdered, on the 11th of April. Carlos Mejia Orellano, murdered in his home in el Progreso. And the speculation has been that he was murdered because he was a journalist, because he was doing what that radio station does, which is call attention to human rights problems. There has been virtually no progress, or even interest that I am aware of, in solving that case, and he is one of 34 media representatives that have been killed in Honduras since 2010.

The fate of people I know—and maybe it is unfair to focus on this, just because I know these folks—but, these are people doing good work, and they are raising questions that have to be asked, and yet they are being targeted and—as other journalists are, as well.

Maybe if you could just start off there. What can you do, in your position as ambassador, to demand accountability for the deaths of journalists, demand that they take it seriously and hold up the virtues that we proclaim here about the importance of a free press and the protections that they are entitled to?

Mr. NEALON. Thank you very much, Senator.

And, first of all, I am very aware of your obsession with Honduras and your work as a lay missionary there, back in the 1980s. And, if confirmed, I would be delighted to welcome you back and have you——

Senator KAINE. I would love to come.

Mr. NEALON [continuing]. Introduce me to your old friends and your old haunts.

You raise a number of very important issues, but I think the most important is the issue that goes to impunity. As you probably know, Senator, impunity is a long-standing human rights issue in Honduras. By some estimates, as many as 95 percent of crimes in Honduras go unresolved, not just crimes against journalists or politicians or members of other such communities, but crimes against the population in general. So, this is something that we simply have to address.

I will say, Senator—and if you come down, if I am confirmed and we get a chance to work together on this—I believe we have seen some early signs of positive steps that this government is willing to take important steps to begin to address these issues. And if, with your patience, I will name a couple of them.

First of all, last month, Honduras extradited——

Senator KAINE. Good news.

Mr. NEALON [continuing]. Carlos Lobo, a notorious narcotrafficker, the first such extradition in the country's history. They had to change the constitution in order to do it. And we understand more extraditions may be coming. I think this is a very, very positive step.

They have fired scores of corrupt police officers. They have indicted the entire board of directors of the Social Security Institute, 16 people, for corruption. And the President has requested that the United Nations open up an Office of the U.N. High Commission on Human Rights in Honduras. And I understand that the Congress, our Congress, has appropriated a million dollars toward that, which I think is a fantastic step.

So, Senator, I believe we are seeing early signs of positive steps, but I completely agree with you that the issue of impunity is something that we need to get at.

Senator KAINE. I want to associate myself with comments that the Chairman made about the importance of investments.

Trying to help the Hondurans deal with the violence challenges in Honduras is not just because we are good people, and it is not just because, if we do it, it may slow down unaccompanied minors coming to our borders. I mean, the violence in Honduras is largely driven by a drug trade that is fueled by Americans' demand for drugs. Hondurans are not big drug users. The drugs that are transiting through Honduras are not transiting through Honduras because of the Honduran mass appetite for illegal substances. Honduras has become a convenient staging ground, transit point, and stopover place for drugs that are coming north into Mexico to the United States or Canada.

And so, it is, you know, the—it is hard to look yourself in the mirror and, you know, kind of just point the finger, what the Hondurans need to do about their—you know, their justice system, when you know that so much of the violence that is causing parents to set their kids free, trying to find their way to the U.S. border, is driven by a drug trade that is largely fueled by U.S. dollars and the demand for drugs.

So, we have more than just a need to do something, you know, to help a partner. We have an obligation, here, because the violence that folks are suffering under in Honduras is something that is directly connected to domestic activities here in the United States.

And it is my hope, as well, that we will not just, "Oh, gosh, now there are unaccompanied minors. I guess we have to do something about it, because they are trying to come to our border." If it has—if the country has one of the highest murder rates in the world because of a drug trade that, at the end of the day, is ending up in the United States, that ought to call us to do some things, too. And the chairman said we ought to be proactive and not wait til the problem just gets to our door. If it is a problem that we have some responsibility for, then we ought to be in solving it even before it gets to our doorstep.

And I associate myself, Mr. Chair, with your comments on that.

Thank the witnesses and wish you the best. And I will visit you. I will.

Mr. NEALON. I will look forward to that, Senator. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. My thanks to Senator Kaine, for his always erudite insights, and particularly, I know that he has a real, passionate interest in Honduras. And, as such, throughout the Central America region, which is a challenge for us.

I have one final question, Mr. Nealon. You know, I was arguing earlier that we need to invest more so that we do not spend so much more—multiples more, as it relates to facing the problem versus meeting the core elements of why we have situations like young people crossing the border. By the same token, as I advocate for increased resources for addressing the citizen security issue throughout Central America, including, obviously, in Honduras, we need a strong, shared approach with the governments in the region—in this case, with Honduras.

In that sense, I want to get an understanding of your evaluation of the Hernandez administration's ability and willingness—understanding you are not on the ground, but hopefully the briefings have given you some insight—to address the challenges at hand. The State Department's 2013 Human Rights Report on Honduras raised concerns about corruption, the weakness of the justice system, and unlawful and arbitrary killings by security forces. President Hernandez has prioritized the creation of a military police force over what should be the U.S. priority of strengthening and reforming a civilian police force. And finally, the U.S. Government has limited intelligence-sharing and radar information as a result of recent legislation providing the Honduran governmental authorities to shoot down civilian planes believed to be involved in drug trafficking. And, while we certainly can applaud any efforts to try to interdict drug traffickings, to go to the extreme point of shooting down planes creates all types of risks, especially if you have got the information wrong.

So, what do these developments imply for our relationship with the Government of Honduras as we try to meet this mutual challenge?

Mr. NEALON. Thank you very much, Senator.

First of all, you raised the issue of the military police. These are actually members of the armed forces who have law enforcement authorities who have been put on the street by the Honduran government to try to address the highest murder rate in the world and the other violent crime that is pervasive there. We do not support putting the military in the streets in a law enforcement capacity. We believe that that distracts from the very important work that we do support with our programs, of working with the civilian police force, because we believe that military police in the streets simply is not a viable permanent solution. We have to work with the civilian police.

You also mentioned, Senator, the recent legislation in Honduras, the air sovereignty law, which some people call a "shoot-down law." That is very problematic for the United States, and that point has been made very clear to the Honduran Government. There were some immediate consequences of that law. For example, Southern Command, General Kelly, had to turn off air feeds that we provided to the Hondurans because there was some risk that those air feeds could be used to shoot down civilian aircraft. And there may be other consequences to that, as well, moving forward.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I hope this will be part of the work that you will pursue upon confirmation, in terms of trying to get us to a point that we can get the Honduran Government to agree with us on the common methodology, if we are going to fund it, one that

we can be supportive of. Because, if not, it will be a further challenge to trying to help them with citizen security.

Senator Corker asked me to say that he will submit his questions for the record. He has deep respect for both of you, but he had a conflict in his schedule, so he could not stay any longer.

The CHAIRMAN. And I would urge you, not only to answer his questions, but any other members' questions that are posed for the record, as expeditiously as possible so that we can, therefore, consider your nominations before a business meeting of the full committee.

And, with the thanks of the committee for your willingness to serve, this panel is excused and this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:55 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF STUART E. JONES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Assistance to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).—As a result of the current crisis related to the advance of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Northern Iraq, as many as 500,000 people have fled into KRG-controlled areas, creating an urgent humanitarian crisis already severe due to the presence of some 250,000 refugees from the Syrian side of the conflict. Current estimates place the burden to the KRG at roughly $1,000 per person, per year. The KRG are reliable U.S. partners, and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters are now the frontline against ISIS.

- What support are we currently providing to the KRG to ensure it can respond to urgent security and humanitarian pressures?
- How will you address urgent KRG needs for food, shelter, generators, water, irrigation systems, camp infrastructure, vehicles and more, to help the KRG address these urgent humanitarian needs?
- The KRG has also requested assistance in releasing U.S. military and security equipment withheld by the Maliki government in Baghdad. What leverage do we have to facilitate the immediate release of this equipment to the KRG?
- What specific steps can the U.S. take immediately to strengthen KRG border security efforts, including providing body armor, communication systems and other nonlethal aid?

Answer. The United States is extremely concerned about the deteriorating security situation deepening the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. On June 12, we announced a contribution of an additional $12.8 million to international organization partners like the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that are working to meet the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict victims in Iraq. Our total humanitarian assistance to those affected by conflict in Iraq in fiscal year 2014 is more than $136 million. Since 2010, the United States has contributed to the United Nations, other international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations more than $1.1 billion in humanitarian assistance for Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people throughout Iraq. Separately, we have provided more than $105 million to support Syrian refugees in Iraq since the start of the Syria crisis in 2011. This funding goes toward international organizations and nongovernmental organizations supporting the more than 225,000 refugees from Syria who have fled to Iraq since March 2011.

Our funding for refugees from Syria supports transportation to refugee camps, refugee camp infrastructure, including providing safe water and sanitation, as well as support for education, child protection, and gender-based violence prevention and response. The recently announced $12.8 million in support for the current humanitarian crisis in Iraq includes $6.6 million to UNHCR for essential humanitarian supplies like blankets, tents, and hygiene items, and $6.2 million to other international organizations for food, clean water, core relief items, and urgent medical care for the affected. These organizations are working closely with the KRG and the Government of Iraq (GOI) to assess needs and support.

The GOI is not withholding any military or security equipment from the KRG. The GOI was temporarily holding some military logistical equipment, which was

purchased through DOD's Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF), but transferred all of it to the KRG in 2013.

If requested and approved by the GOI, the U.S. Government could provide a wide range of assistance to eligible KRG security forces through traditional security assistance authorities like the Foreign Military Sales program. The delivery of such assistance would of course be dependent on host nation funding as well equipment availability and production timelines. We have not received any such requests from the GOI for assistance to KRG security forces.

Question. MeK.—I have received assurances from the Iraqi Government that it will ensure the security of Camp Liberty and its residents, while we continue to work to resettle members of the MeK here in the United States and in other countries outside of Iraq.

- Is the Iraqi Government committed to the safety and security of the residents at Camp Liberty while in Iraq?

Answer. The United States continues to work closely with the Government of Iraq (GOI) and the United Nations (U.N.) to ensure the protection of those currently residing at Camp Liberty, a.k.a Camp Hurriya. We interact regularly with senior Iraqi officials about the safety and security of the Camp Hurriya residents, and they assure us that they are committed to this issue, despite the current situation in Iraq. To date, the GOI has moved in 520 bunkers, 700 small T-walls, 90,000 sandbags and 1,488 large T-walls, about 750 of which were installed by April 23 in accordance with a plan agreed to by the GOI and the camp residents. They have also granted permissions for requested security enhancements at the camp as appropriate.

- What will your role be regarding Camp Liberty and the resettlement of MeK residents outside Iraq?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Government of Iraq and the U.N. regarding the safety and security of the residents. We are fortunate to have a very able senior advisor for MEK Resettlement, Jonathan Winer, and he and I will coordinate closely on finding safe, permanent, and secure locations for the Camp Hurriya residents outside of Iraq.

- Please provide an update on the resettlement process, and the work of the U.S. interagency team currently in Iraq. How many residents are able and willing to meet U.S. requirements in order to be settled in the United States?

Answer. Currently, 377 Camp Hurriya residents have been relocated outside of Iraq in countries like Albania and Germany. An interagency team was deployed May 18 to evaluate candidates for U.S. resettlement. Our initial goal is to identify at least 100 qualified individuals, subject to security conditions, cooperation of the MEK and availability of interested candidates. At this point, it is too early to say how many are qualified as the team has not yet finished its work.

Question. I understand that the Government of Iraq has yet to sign U.S. contracts for Apache attack helicopters that we intend to sell and lease. We were told repeatedly and in no uncertain terms that these helicopters were absolutely vital to the Iraqis in order to fight the insurgency, and that they needed to be sent as soon as possible.

- Given this delay, do the Iraqis feel the same way?

Answer. Yes, the Apache remains Iraq's combat helicopter of choice.

Congressional approval for the Apaches was urgently needed in order to get the case into the Government of Iraq's (GOI) long and complex bureaucratic process. We are disappointed by the delay on the Iraqi side and continue to urge the GOI to act quickly to sign and fund the cases. Unfortunately, several factors including internal budget issues, recent elections and the ongoing government formation process, and the current counterterrorism crisis combined to muddle Iraq's already complicated approval process, delaying Iraq's decision to finalize large, long, lead-time purchases like the Apache.

The Apache will provide superior precision-targeting and firepower capability and increased in-air flight time to allow for flexibility and longer mission endurance at greater distances. The Apaches will also provide much-needed protection against small arms fire; Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continues to damage and shoot down Iraq's unarmored helicopters. The Iraqi Security Forces will use the Apaches to support ground forces, interdict border incursions, conduct precision strikes against ISIL targets, and to deter terrorist activities and it will fill a needed capability gap.

♦ Was the administration mistaken in their assertions to us about the urgency of approving the sale?

Answer. Congressional approval for the Apaches was urgently needed in order to get the case into the Government of Iraq's (GOI) long and complex bureaucratic process. We are disappointed by the delay on the Iraqi side and continue to urge Iraq to act quickly to sign and fund the cases. Unfortunately, several factors including internal budget issues, recent elections and the ongoing government formation process, and the current counterterrorism crisis combined to muddle Iraq's already complicated approval process, delaying Iraq's decision to finalize large, long, lead-time purchases like the Apache. Although the Apaches will not arrive in time to aid in the current crisis, Iraq will continue to face a critical ISIL threat and have a continuing need for the Apache well into the future. The Apache will provide the Iraqi Security Forces an armored, long-range, precision-strike platform capable of supporting a wide range of counterterrorism operations.

♦ Why did the Iraqi Government miss a payment for the F–16s? What are the next steps to get this back on track?

Answer. To date, Iraq has paid approximately $5 billion of the approximately $7.1 billion total for all 36 F–16s. A payment of $1.6 billion was due earlier this spring, but has been delayed due to the operations in Anbar and Iraq's delay in passing a new budget. GOI officials have affirmed that the payment will be made. We have informed the GOI that the delivery of the first two aircraft could be delayed as a result of the delayed payment and we will continue to urge the GOI to complete the payment.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

COUNTERTERRORISM LAW

A new counterterrorism law awaiting ratification by the President has been criticized as overly broad, allowing for nonviolent protestors and other critics of the government to be arrested on terrorism-related charges. The current Egyptian Constitution exempts the Egyptian military from trial in civilian courts while giving military courts broad authority to try civilians.

Question. Are you concerned that these laws are essentially making the Mubarak-era "emergency laws" part of Egypt's permanent body of laws?

Answer. I share the U.S. Government's concerns regarding these laws. My understanding is that the draft counterterrorism law and the recently ratified Egyptian Constitution would effectively grant the government and security forces significant new authorities and that the draft counterterrorism law would give the Egyptian Government the right to enforce an undeclared state of emergency. It would also prescribe tougher punishments for terror-related offenses and increase the number of crimes punishable by death or life imprisonment. The laws would also likely further restrict political space and freedoms of expression and assembly and narrow legal channels for dissent, which could give new cause for radicalization in Egypt rather than counter or deter terrorism.

The U.S. Government has expressed its deep concern over such measures and has made clear its opposition to military trials of civilians to the highest levels of the Egyptian Government.

Question. How will you engage with the Egyptian Government to ensure that nonviolent critics of the government can speak freely without fear of reprisal or arrest?

Answer. If confirmed, I will emphasize to the Egyptian Government that overly restrictive measures, such as the draft counterterrorism law, will undermine Egypt's stability, increase radicalism, and make it harder for the new government to forge the consensus needed to tackle daunting economic and social challenges. I will press that no matter how difficult the security environment, Egypt must find a way to distinguish extremists and terrorists from peaceful demonstrators. At every opportunity, I will make clear that the U.S. remains deeply concerned by actions the Egyptian Government takes that limit freedom of expression, assembly, and association, including the restrictive demonstrations law decreed in November 2013. I will also encourage the Egyptian Government to develop legislation in keeping with the spirit of those parts of the new constitution which guarantee basic rights and protections and promise to uphold Egypt's commitments and obligations to international human rights covenants and agreements.

ASSISTANCE

Earlier this year, this committee's bipartisan Egypt Assistance Reform Act of 2014 called for a strategic reassessment of security and economic assistance provided to Egypt in light of new realities on the ground.

Question. What can you tell us about the administration's review of U.S. assistance to Egypt? Should we continue to provide $1.3B in security assistance to Egypt?

Answer. The administration is reviewing how our assistance can best advance U.S. interests. Our military assistance to Egypt has supported stability in the Middle East. It has strengthened protections along Israel's border, enhanced the security of the Suez Canal, and increased Egypt's capacity to participate in regional operations, including peacekeeping.

If confirmed, I will work with Congress to ensure that any assistance through the Egypt Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program is appropriately structured to counter shared security threats, such as terrorism and weapons trafficking.

Question. Is the balance between security assistance and economic assistance still appropriate given the last several years of upheaval in Egypt?

Answer. U.S. assistance to Egypt, both military and economic assistance, supports key U.S. interests of stability in Egypt and along Israel's border; safe Suez transit; countering transnational threats, such as terrorism and weapons trafficking; promoting inclusive democratic institutions, human rights, and basic freedoms; and supporting broad-based economic stability and growth. The administration considers the FY 2015 request—in conjunction with a more targeted approach—to be necessary and appropriate to meet our goals regarding Egypt.

To that end, we are focusing our Economic Support Fund (ESF) funding on programs that will address Egypt's most critical sources of instability: its economy, particularly the need for private sector-led growth and youth employment, and its lack of sustainable democratic institutions and human rights. Our programs will support basic and higher education; job creation; private sector development; democracy and civil society promotion; and improving health outcomes. Our FMF request will support Egypt in its counterterrorism and border security efforts, including in the Sinai, adding to our ongoing counterterrorism and nonproliferation efforts supported through other assistance accounts.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on advancing U.S. interests in Egypt, including through our assistance programs.

MILITARY SALES

The administration has also placed policy holds on a number of weapons systems scheduled for delivery to the Egyptian Armed Forces. Egyptian military leaders believe the delivery of Apache helicopters is particularly urgent for continuing Egypt's counterterrorism campaign in the Sinai.

Question. Do you agree with the assessment that the Apache helicopters will help fight terrorism in the Sinai?

Answer. Egyptian efforts to combat violent extremism in the Sinai are ongoing, and Apache helicopters have been a key part of those efforts, which is why President Obama directed the delivery of the pending additional Apaches. If confirmed as Ambassador, I look forward to discussing with Congress the conditions in Sinai and the use of U.S.-funded defense items in Egypt.

Question. What is the way ahead on determining when the administration will release the F–16s and other military equipment still under a policy hold?

Answer. President Obama made clear that credible progress toward an inclusive, democratically elected, civilian government is important to the administration's review of assistance to Egypt and release of held defense items. We are continuing to urge the Egyptian Government to make progress along those lines, including by urging President el-Sisi to establish transparent, accountable, and responsive democratic institutions, based on rule of law and respect for the rights of all Egyptians. If confirmed, I look forward to providing updates on the situation in Egypt and will consult with Congress closely as part of the ongoing assistance review.

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Egypt is now host to hundreds of thousands of Syrians who have fled there over the past 2 years. Initially welcoming to them, the Egyptian Government has in the past year made a concerted effort to restrict the entry of Syrian refugees through visa restrictions and security clearance requirements.

Question. In your view, what steps should the U.S. take through its engagement with the Egyptian Government to ensure that Egypt can be a place of refuge for Syrians?

Answer. We recognize and appreciate the tremendous challenges faced by countries in the region as individuals continue to flee Syria and seek asylum in neighboring countries. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to encourage Egyptian authorities to continue extending support and hospitality toward refugees from Syria and all who are fleeing conflict. UNHCR has registered almost 138,000 refugees in Egypt, but according to the Egyptian Government, there may be as many as 300,000 Syrian refugees in Egypt. Separately, there may be as many as 6,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria currently in Egypt. If confirmed, I will continue expressing our concerns about the climate of anti-Syrian and anti-Palestinian public sentiment in Egypt and urge the Egyptian Government to communicate to the Egyptian people the importance of protecting all vulnerable refugees.

RESPONSES OF DANA SHELL SMITH TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Terror Financing.—A large degree of funding for terrorist groups in the region, from Hamas to the Salafist and al-Qaeda inspired groups in Syria, comes from wealthy gulf benefactors.

- How big a problem is this in Qatar?
- What has the Qatari Government done to crack down on this, and is the Qatari Government committed to controlling private and charity funding streams?
- What will you do to expand our terrorist finance and money laundering cooperation with Qatar?

Answer. We engage regularly with Qatar and our other gulf partners on the issue of terror financing, but there is no doubt that more needs to be done. Syria is attracting more violent extremists the longer the conflict goes on. Qatar and other regional partners are working with us to support the moderate Syrian opposition and to work toward a political solution to ensure that Syria no longer serves as a magnet for violent extremists.

In recent years, we have seen some improvements in Qatar's counterterrorist financing efforts, including steps to improve its anti-money-laundering/counterterrorist financing legal framework. In 2012, the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force determined that Qatar had improved its anti-money-laundering/counterterrorist financing (AML/CTF) regime and was either "Compliant or Largely Compliant" with all of the Task Force's recommendations.

However, Qatar's monitoring of terrorist financing by Qatari individuals and charitable associations remains inconsistent, and we will not hesitate to act to disrupt terrorist financing networks. For example, in December 2013, the Treasury Department announced the designation of a Qatar-based financier who secured funds and provided material support for al-Qaeda and its affiliates in Syria, Iraq, Somalia, and Yemen.

We remain committed to working with Qatar to confront ongoing terrorist financing and on strengthening its AML/CTF regimes. For example, we conducted an interagency training in early June for Qatari officials involved in the design and implementation of Qatar's CTF regime to improve capacity and coordination on counterterrorism financing. In the coming weeks, we will send an interagency delegation to a number of Gulf States, including Qatar, to improve our coordination on stemming the flow of foreign fighters to Syria. If confirmed, I will ensure that counterterrorism finance issues remain a priority of our bilateral engagement with the Government of Qatar.

Question. Labor Rights.—The system of kafala, or employer sponsorship, is prevalent in many GCC countries. Foreign workers under the kafala system are often subject to abuses such as wage theft, substandard housing, and dangerous working conditions. I have written letters to Secretary Kerry and International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) President Sepp Blatter highlighting my concerns. I was particularly alarmed by the deaths of 44 Nepalese workers in Qatar last year. The Qatari Government recently announced labor reforms that it says will "abolish" the kafala system but did not give any timeline for implementation.

- How will you engage the Qatari Government to ensure that these reforms are implemented, that protections for workers under Qatari law are enforced and that workers building infrastructure for the 2022 World Cup are not subjected to the same conditions that led to the deaths of those 44 Nepalese?

Answer. We have consistently raised concerns about the restrictive nature of Qatar's sponsorship system and encouraged more robust enforcement of labor and antitrafficking laws with senior Qatari officials. Advancing the protection of labor rights, particularly for migrant workers, is a priority of our diplomatic engagement.

In the past year, Qatar has taken some positive steps to address these issues, including cracking down on visa selling, doubling the number of labor inspectors, and blacklisting 2,000 companies for violations of the labor law. On May 14, the Government of Qatar (GoQ) announced that the ministerial cabinet had endorsed reform of the sponsorship system. The proposed reforms would eliminate no objection certificates, which prevent employees from switching jobs without approval, and amend the exit permit system such that the GoQ—rather than employers—would have the authority to prevent workers from departing the country. The reforms would also increase fivefold the fines for passport withholding.

The announcement did not provide a timeframe for implementation of the proposed changes, which must still undergo passage by the Shura Council. If confirmed, I will urge the implementation of these reforms and continue to encourage Qatari efforts to ensure the thorough protection of workers' fundamental labor rights in Qatar.

RESPONSES OF STUART E. JONES TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. Women's Rights in Iraq.—The Iraqi Cabinet has passed a personal status law that would effectively legalize child marriage and severely set back women's rights to divorce, inheritance, and child custody if passed by Parliament.

- ♦ If confirmed, how would you use your leverage as Ambassador to discourage Iraq from passing such a harmful law?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to raise—with the Government of Iraq and its Members of Parliament—our strong objections to this draft law. The Embassy will also continue to support civil society efforts to advocate for respect for the fundamental rights of all people including women, children, minorities, and individuals of all faiths.

We have previously expressed our concern regarding the draft law, which has not been enacted, as has the United Nations Mission in Iraq, and a wide range of Iraqi political, religious, and civil society leaders. It threatens to undermine constitutionally protected rights for women in Iraq and jeopardizes the rights and protection of children, especially girls.

Women's rights activists and nongovernmental organizations have also condemned the draft law as a significant step backward for women's and girls' rights in Iraq.

Question. Women in the Iraqi Justice System.—Women in Iraq face significant abuses throughout all stages of the criminal justice process—including during arrest, interrogation, trial, and imprisonment. These abuses have included illegal arrests, lack of protection for female prisoners, and sexual assault. It is clear that more must be done to protect Iraqi women from such abuses—particularly as these violations undermine the rule of law in Iraq.

- ♦ How do you plan to work with the Government of Iraq to build support for rule of law and ensure that women are afforded all the same protections as men?

Answer. I am aware of the reports of abuse of women in the criminal justice process and in prisons. If confirmed I will continue to raise our concerns about these problems with appropriate Iraqi Government officials at all levels. I will also consult with civil society and international organizations on these issues to ensure that we are kept informed.

Despite serious obstacles for women and girls' political participation in Iraq, we were heartened that Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission reported that 22 women were directly elected to the new Parliament, a significant increase from the 2010 election when only 5 women won seats by popular vote. We hope that this is a trend that will continue. In total, 82 of Iraq's 328 members of Parliament will be women based on a requirement that 25 percent of parliamentarians are women.

The State Department has historically provided $10 million per year to support efforts to eliminate gender-based violence, protect women's rights, and empower women politically and economically in Iraq. To address reported abuses by security forces, a number of past and current programs focus on human rights training in prisons throughout southern Iraq, implementing the U.N. Convention against Torture and demanding accountability for human rights abuses throughout the country. If confirmed, I will work in partnership with Congress to ensure that this important

level of support continues. I will also work with the Government of Iraq to ensure that it understands the U.S. commitment to the rule of law and the equal rights for all persons, regardless of gender.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. U.S. Strategy to Respond to Gender-Based Violence.—The United States has made gender equality and efforts to combat gender-based violence a priority within its foreign policy.

- In light of the ongoing issues in Egypt, how can the United States work to utilize the tools and actions laid out in the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally to better respond to the situation in Egypt?

Answer. The United States, through our Embassy in Cairo, is working to utilize the tools and implement the actions outlined by the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally. This includes supporting the Egyptian Government's legislative responses to gender-based violence (GBV), training for special law enforcement units to respond to sexual assault cases, and supporting capacity-building programs for government and nongovernment stakeholders to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

For example, USAID in Egypt supports a U.N. Women-led program working to expand legal services for survivors of gender-based violence, launch a youth-led public awareness media campaign, and improve small-scale infrastructure in pilot communities, such as improved lighting in high-risk areas. Our USAID mission also plans to increase engagement with local Egyptian organizations working on matters related to gender-based violence to improve their sustainability and effectiveness. The Embassy plans to continue supporting programs aimed at deterring gender-based violence, including those that strengthen law enforcement capacity to more effectively prosecute GBV-related crimes. Through public awareness programs and professional exchanges, the Embassy is continuing to increase community participation in addressing the root causes of GBV. Continued close coordination with partners, such as U.N. Women and the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime, will allow the U.S. Government to continue supporting improved intergovernmental strategic planning, prevention, and training to prevent and respond to GBV.

If confirmed, I will strongly support this work and encourage the use of all possible tools and actions recommended by the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV. I will continue to raise issues of gender-based violence in my engagement with the Egyptian Government, encouraging it to undertake serious efforts to end all forms of violence in Egypt—including intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation—and work to end impunity for violence perpetrated against women and girls.

RESPONSES OF STUART E. JONES TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM UDALL

Question. ISIL's rapid expansion across Iraq is deeply troubling both for regional stability and the security of thousands of Americans working there. Maliki needs to reach out to marginalized groups in Iraq if a unified defense of Iraq's territory is going to be successful.

- How will you work with these different groups to ensure unified efforts are made within Iraq against ISIL?

Answer. We are deeply engaged in direct dialogue and active diplomatic strategy with the Prime Minister and all of Iraq's leaders on taking a holistic approach to fighting ISIL by working together to address social, political, and economic issues in addition to security cooperation to drive ISIL out from Mosul and surrounding areas. Our engagement includes working with all sides to urge that they take critical next steps so that a timely, inclusive government formation process in line with the Iraqi Constitution can continue. Without significant, demonstrated efforts by the government on these issues, ISIL will continue to exploit fissures within Iraqi society and leaders for its own gain. We are also working with Iraq's neighbors to encourage unified support for the government's counterterrorism efforts. Iraq held national elections on time April 30; the U.N. praised the elections as free and fair.

- How will you engage the international community in this aspect?

Answer. We are also working closely with the P3, Iraq's neighbors including Turkey, and other key players at the highest levels to support the Government of Iraq

(GOI) as they fight ISIL. The U.N. Security Council issued a statement today strongly condemning ISIL's incursion into Iraq and threw its support behind the GOI to combat terrorism. We are urging donors to support the U.N.'s humanitarian efforts in response to the estimated 500,000 individuals who have fled ISIL's recent advances in Ninewa and Salah ad-Din governorates, in addition to the nearly 480,000 who have fled violence in Anbar governorate since January.

- How will you work to ensure that the U.S. Embassy and our consulates are protected against the threat of ISIL's advance?

Answer. For a number of years, Mission Iraq has maintained a heightened security posture comprised of extensive physical security features, robust and well-armed Diplomatic Security officers, and the ability to be self-responding in the event of an emergency such as an attack. Our Embassy and consulates in Iraq, as with all U.S. Diplomatic Missions, have a highly trained and well-equipped contingent of DS agents under the Regional Security Officer (RSO). The Regional Security Offices also include personnel working under the World Wide Protective Services contract who staff protective security details and static guard positions.

Embassy Baghdad has a Marine Security Guard Detachment that is larger than that of most detachments assigned to U.S. missions. In addition to this robust security platform some additional U.S. Government security personnel were recently added to the staff in Baghdad. I am happy to discuss exact numbers of security personnel with you in a more appropriate setting. Like all other U.S. Diplomatic Missions, the Embassy and our consulates also conduct regular planning exercises for response to possible emergency situations, including evacuation.

In addition to having plans in place, Mission Iraq is well postured with its own assets to support evacuations or long-term sheltering in both permissive and non-permissive environments. We continue to monitor the situation closely and are in continuous communication with our personnel on the ground. We are corresponding regularly with the Government of Iraq to ensure that our sites remain safe for our staff.

Question. Water issues remain a major issue inside Iraq. The Tigris and Euphrates is drier than normal as a result of both drought and new dams upriver.

- How can the U.S. work to promote water conservation and improved management of resources and will you work with other U.S. agencies, as well as the national labs to help Iraq devise strategies to improve the management of water resources?

Answer. Partnering with the GOI on water resource management is a U.S. Government priority and there are a number of USG programs focused on this issue. For example, Iraq's Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Science & Technology (MOST) has asked for NASA assistance to study dust storms from space. MOST currently is developing a Memorandum of Understanding with NASA on this issue and is working on another with the U.S. Geological Survey to train Iraqi professionals on flood inundation, desertification, and sandstorm analysis. In the past, the State Department has provided $1.5 million to the U.N. Development Programme for the establishment of a National Water Council and to support capacity-building on transboundary water cooperation. The intent of this project is to give the Iraqi Government the needed diplomatic and technical tools to effectively negotiate international transboundary water issues with neighboring countries. The State Department's Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Bureau is currently exploring engagement with Iraq on transboundary water issues through the U.N. Shared Waters and U.S. Water Partnership programs for FY 2014. Additionally, USAID provided $10 million between 2012 and 2014 for a harvest program that included improving water usage for efficient irrigation.

We are open to leveraging the expertise of any U.S. department or agency—including the national labs—that can assist Iraq in better managing its water resources. As U.S. development and economic assistance to Iraq decreases, we are exploring options in which the GOI directly funds such programs in the future.

RESPONSES OF JAMES D. NEALON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM UDALL

Question. As Ambassador, how will you address the root causes leading to the recent surge in minors migrating from Honduras to the U.S.? While putting pressure on our system to house and address each minor's individual case, the insecure conditions these children are fleeing are only getting worse. As chief of mission how will you prioritize and leverage each agency's involvement in Honduras as well direct

the resources of State and USAID to address these root causes including fear of gang violence, and inability to access education and livelihood opportunities. How will you engage the new Honduran Government more deeply into your efforts?

Answer. I am committed to supporting the U.S. response to the influx of unaccompanied children arriving at the Southwest border. Violence, gang recruitment, and lack of economic opportunity are among the root causes that drive people—adults and children—to emigrate from Honduras, along with the perceived economic opportunities in the United States. I share your concerns about the conditions in Honduras.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of Honduras to raise public awareness about the potential for child migrants to be exploited and to support messaging that makes clear the dangers of the journey. I will also encourage the Honduran Government to invest in providing sufficient and capable consular representation along the U.S. border and in Mexico to help respond to this humanitarian situation.

For the long-term, a sustainable solution requires a comprehensive approach to address issues of security, economic opportunity, and governance, all of which play a role in the migration of children and their parents. The Department of State and USAID have a broad range of programs intended to support host government efforts in these areas. If confirmed, I will work with the Honduran Government to continue addressing the complex root causes of migration and will work closely with the U.S. Congress to ensure our requests for future assistance are sufficient and targeted appropriately.

Question. I have long advocated for increased resources for the Western Hemisphere region, however the administration has again de-prioritized this region in relation to others in the President's budget. As Chairman Menendez illustrated during the hearing, we are seeing the repercussions of this through the thousands of migrants arriving in the U.S. from Central America, escaping one of the most violent countries in the world.

- How will programs in Honduras be impacted by the decreased request for the CARSI program in FY 2015? What changes will you advocate for in the FY 2016 request?

Answer. I am firmly committed to advancing U.S. engagement with the Western Hemisphere, including, if confirmed, as U.S. Ambassador to Honduras. I understand the administration's FY 2015 request for the region places a strong emphasis on citizen security, the rule of law, and crime and violence prevention, which account for just under half of the total request.

The FY 2015 request for the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) reflects an assessment of existing resources and current rates of expenditure in some areas, but the CARSI request level reflects no decrease in priority. In addition to CARSI, the administration's request includes $44.3 million for Development Assistance for USAID programming in Honduras. This assistance prioritizes addressing root causes of crime and insecurity, which lead to migration, complementing CARSI assistance.

If confirmed, I would assess U.S. assistance to Honduras and advocate for resources to advance U.S. objectives.

Question. What is the impact of human rights violations on the public by local security force units, and does impunity and failure to prosecute human rights violators increase the ability for local gangs or organized crime in Honduras to recruit and operate because of a lack of trust in law enforcement? How will you use the Leahy Law as a tool to address the well-documented human rights abuses in the country including against human rights defenders and public officials as noted by the State Department's Human Rights Report?

Answer. The high level of impunity for crimes against all Hondurans means there is little or no disincentive to committing a crime. When human rights abuses are committed by government authorities, this impunity can leave a perception in the public mind of institutional weakness or government tolerance of illegal activities. Either way, the result is greater difficulty deterring narcotrafficking, organized crime, and gangs.

Honduras continues to face significant challenges establishing strong democratic institutions, establishing a rule of law culture, attacking impunity and corruption, and ensuring a safe and prosperous future for Honduran citizens. The Honduran Government has made some efforts to change its trajectory, but more needs to be done. If confirmed, I commit to partnering with the U.S. Congress to assist Honduras to address these challenges. I will support efforts to increase accountability, promote the rule of law, and improve the capability of the Honduran Government

to protect the rights of its people. I will be an advocate for U.S. programs to train Honduran officials to protect against and effectively prosecute crime—exactly the skills they need to address the impunity that exists, stop the high levels of crime in their country, and build trust between law enforcement officials and the communities they serve.

In accordance with U.S. law and policy, including the Leahy law, the Department of State vets units and officers in Honduras who may receive assistance. We do not provide assistance to security force units when we have credible information that they have committed gross violations of human rights.

RESPONSES OF JAMES D. NEALON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. I am concerned about the rule of law in Honduras, particularly corruption within the legal system. Pan-American Life Insurance Company (Pan-American), an American company with offices in Louisiana, Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, Kansas, and Minnesota, has experienced significant injustices at the hands of the Honduran Judiciary. Pan-American has attempted to resolve this matter through various diplomatic channels, but the courts of Honduras continue to enter judgments against Pan-American that are contrary to Honduran law, basic insurance tenants and governing policy provisions.

- 1. Have you been briefed on Pan-American's situation in Honduras?
- 2. I understand that at least two other U.S. Senators have written to the Honduran authorities on the harassment of Pan-American, but have yet to receive a response to their concerns. What concerns does this raise about Honduran authorities?
- 3. What are your thoughts on using visa revocation as a tool to curb corruption in Honduras?
- 4. What is your position on providing U.S. foreign assistance to countries in which the judiciary's integrity may be compromised at the highest levels?
- 5. If confirmed, would you agree to meet with Pan-American representatives to discuss this matter in detail?

Answer. I am aware that the Department of State and Embassy Tegucigalpa have been in touch with the offices of Senator Vitter and Senator Landrieu regarding the Pan-American case and that Ambassador Kubiske has spoken personally about the case to both members. Ambassador Kubiske has also raised the case on several occasions with the Honduran Government and judiciary to note our government's interests in U.S. companies receiving fair treatment in Honduran courts. If confirmed, I will meet with the Pan-American representatives and press the Honduran Government to answer the Senator's letters. I will also promote U.S. business interests in Honduras, including advocating for fair treatment of U.S. businesses and citizens in Honduras through promoting the use of applicable dispute settlement provisions of our Bilateral Investment Treaty and the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement.

The United States recognizes institutional weaknesses in Honduras' judicial system and supports efforts to increase accountability and promote the rule of law. U.S. assistance provides training, mentoring, and professionalization to Honduran officials and supports reforms to strengthen police, judicial, and rule of law institutions. If confirmed, I will continue to work in these areas and be an advocate for judicial independence in Honduras.

Concerning visas restrictions, the Department faithfully enforces the provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) by which aliens are ineligible for visas based on criminal activity. Moreover, we have ample additional authority under Presidential Proclamation 7750 (2004) and section 7031(c) of the FY 2014 State Appropriations Act to impose restrictions based on significant corruption. The Department takes seriously allegations of corruption and reviews such allegations in order to determine whether credible evidence exists to justify revoking a visa or imposing visa restrictions under U.S. law.

RESPONSE OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. I want to raise with you an issue that I believe is incredibly important: ensuring that the Egyptian Government respects the rule of law regarding the abduction of American children. Having a child abducted by a current or former spouse to a foreign country is one of the most heartrending events a parent can face.

Not only does it deprive a child of the opportunity to have frequent contact with both of their parents, it does violence to our entire system of justice. People need to play by the rules—they can't be allowed to steal a child just because they don't like the decision a court makes regarding custody. And other countries need to respect the decisions of our courts.

Now, this is a global problem, and I look forward to the Foreign Relations Committee considering a bill this Congress to address international child abduction. But this problem appears to be especially acute in Egypt. Because Egypt is not a partner to the Hague Abduction Convention, it's more difficult for the State Department to reunite kids, many of whom are United States citizens, with their American parents. In fact, last year, there were 22 active custody disputes involving an American child in Egypt, and apparently half of the cases have been pending for at least 12 years. That is appalling.

One of those 22 cases involves one of my constituents, Colin Bower. Mr. Bower was married to an Egyptian citizen and had two wonderful little boys with her, Ramsay and Noor, both of whom are American citizens. In 2008, the marriage ended in divorce and an American court granted sole custody to Mr. Bower. A little under a year later, Mr. Bower's ex-wife unlawfully absconded to Egypt with the boys by making use of illegal passports and then got an Egyptian court to grant her custody.

Mr. Bower did everything he could to get his kids back. He got state and federal warrants issued for her arrest. He got Interpol to issue a red notice for her arrest. He even got an Egyptian court to grant him visitation rights every 2 weeks. Yet, every effort he's made to enforce even the Egyptian court order has been thwarted. He's traveled to Egypt 12 times to see his kids. Eight times he went to the appointed meeting place and waited for his boys. And 8 times they never arrived. It's been 5 years since Mr. Bower's boys were kidnapped and over two and a half since he has even seen them.

- ♦ If confirmed, will you commit to making the international parental child abduction case of *Noor and Ramsay Bower* a priority? Also, what concrete steps can you take as Ambassador to ensure that Egypt respects decisions of U.S. courts regarding child abduction cases?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make the abduction case of *Noor and Ramsey Bower* a priority. I will press members of the Egyptian Government at all levels to gain their cooperation in resolving the *Bower* case and all other child abduction cases involving Egypt , while also encouraging Egypt to accede to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Convention). The State Department and I share your concern regarding international parental child abduction (IPCA) and we share Congress' goals of preventing IPCA, returning children expeditiously to their countries of habitual residence, and strengthening and expanding membership in the Convention worldwide.

My understanding is that the State Department is currently aware of 19 IPCA cases in Egypt, including the case of *Noor and Ramsay Bower*, and senior State Department leaders have raised these cases with Egyptian Government officials at every opportunity to ensure the Egyptian Government understands the U.S. Government's concern for the welfare of U.S. citizens overseas, especially children, who are some of our most vulnerable citizens.

I also understand that the U.S. Embassy in Cairo has ongoing engagement with relevant offices in the Egyptian Government, such as the Good Intentions Subcommittee, to request their action on these cases and have discussed the case of *Noor and Ramsay Bower* specifically. The Office of Children's Issues in the Department of State is also in frequent contact with, and always available to, the left-behind parents and their representatives to discuss the status of their case and options for continuing action.

RESPONSES OF STUART E. JONES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

IRANIAN OVERFLIGHTS

Question. Please describe the actions the Government of Iraq is taking to stop the flow of Iranian arms from going to the Syrian regime.

Answer. We know that Iran is supplying arms to the Syrian regime and violating the U.N. Security Council prohibition against selling or transferring arms and related materials, including through flights over Iraqi territory. Iraqi leaders have issued statements condemning the flow of foreign fighters and weapons through, and from, Iraqi territory. However, the Government of Iraq is not doing enough to prevent Iran from using its territory to supply the Assad regime, and we continue

to urge all senior Iraqi officials to either deny overflight requests or require flights to land in Iraq for credible inspections consistent with Iraq's international obligations.

Question. How is the U.S. continuing to apply pressure on Iraq to stop these overflights that are building and arming Iranian militias in Syria?

Answer. The Government of Iraq is not doing enough to prevent Iran from using its territory to supply the Assad regime and Iraqi Shia militants, and we are urging all senior Iraqi officials to either deny overflight requests or require flights to land in Iraq for credible inspections consistent with Iraq's international obligations. Secretary Kerry, and other senior U.S. officials, have consistently raised this issue with Iraqi officials, emphasizing the connection between the flow of weapons and the escalation of extremist violence in the region, particularly in Syria. If confirmed, I will continue to make it an issue of urgent concern and regular diplomatic engagement.

Question. How is the United States engaging with our gulf partners to stop these over flights?

Answer. In our senior-level engagements with our gulf partners, we are stressing that we are not satisfied with the Government of Iraq's inaction to prevent the use by Iran of Iraq's airspace to resupply the Assad regime, and that senior officials, including the Secretary, continue to raise this with Iraqi officials, emphasizing the connection between the flow of weapons and the escalation of extremist violence in the region, particularly in Syria. We have urged that Iraq either deny overflight requests for Iranian aircraft going to Syria, or require such flights to land in Iraq for credible inspections, consistent with its international legal obligations.

Question. What is the relationship between Iraq and Iran?

Answer. Despite decades of mutual mistrust stemming from the Iran-Iraq war, Iran continues to try and forge closer ties with Iraq—in the interests of neighborliness but mostly to expand and deepen its sphere of influence. There have been high-level exchanges of visits between the Government of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Regional Government, and Iranian leaders. Iraq is one of Iran's top-five trading partners, with bilateral trade between $6–$12 billion in 2013. Iran supplies about 11 percent of Iraq's electricity. The two countries have also signed an extradition treaty (this does not include the status of the Mujahedin-e Khalq members still in Iraq), but are still negotiating border issues going back to the 1975 Algiers Accord.

Question. What kind of influence does Iran have either politically or economically in Iraq?

Answer. While Iran continues to be an influential neighbor, Iraq does take actions that run counter to Iranian interests, such as increasing oil production just as Iranian exports were being taken off the market due to U.S. and EU sanctions. Had Iraq not done so, worldwide oil prices would have spiked, ultimately reducing the impact of sanctions on Iran and hurting U.S. consumers. On issues like Syria and nuclear proliferation, Iraq has demonstrated that it acts in its own interest. For example, Iraq has fully supported a negotiated political solution to the crisis in Syria, and the U.S. position on converting Syrian chemical weapons production facilities in Syria (Iraq, in fact, has an expert on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons staff). Iraq has ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Additional Protocol, which requires inspections of nuclear facilities, and hosted the P5+1 talks in May 2012. Iraq has also publicly called to prevent flows of foreign fighters and weapons through Iraq.

Question. If the U.S. cannot stop these flights diplomatically, does Congress need to withhold foreign military sales to Iraq if these flights continue?

Answer. No; withholding foreign military sales risks reducing U.S. influence as Iraq engages in an important fight against ISIL. We are seeking to increase our influence with Iraq's leaders and this is a critical component. U.S. security assistance enables Iraq to better combat ISIL, which is an increasingly direct threat to the United States and our allies; U.S. assistance serves broader U.S. goals, too; limiting or conditioning it would limit our progress toward those goals. Even without the growing terrorism threat, U.S. security assistance provides an important vehicle for cementing the United States enduring partnership with Iraq. Security cooperation on critical systems, such as air defense, will provide a basis for a long-term relationship.

SECURITY SITUATION

Question. When did the United States, either through intelligence, diplomatic channels, or military analysis, become aware of the deteriorating security issue in Iraq?

Answer. We have maintained a close watch on Iraq's security situation since the standup of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad in 2004. The threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its effect on Iraq's overall security situation was neither a surprise nor a sudden event. We have watched and warned of ISIL's growing strength and its threat to Iraq and U.S. interests in the region—and now to Europe and the U.S. homeland—since the group's resurgence in 2012 as a result of the escalating conflict in Syria.

Since the start of the Syrian conflict, we watched with growing concern as ISIL—formerly Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)—took advantage of the escalating conflict to establish a safe-haven in Syria's eastern deserts. With ample resources, recruits, weapons, and training, ISIL slowly began to execute its strategy across the Syrian border into Iraq. Violence in Iraq began to increase toward the end of 2012, but did not accelerate until early 2013, including a marked rise in ISIL suicide bombings. These attacks increased throughout 2013, jeopardizing the political discourse in the country, further fueling mistrust from political leaders to ordinary citizens, and making the tangible reforms that Iraq needs to reconcile its society even harder to reach. Taking advantage of the instability it was causing, ISIL then seized parts of Anbar province including the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah in early January 2014, initiating what has been a constant counterterrorism counteroffensive by the Government of Iraq. Although ISIL has long operated in Mosul and northern Iraq, its recent, sudden, large-scale offensive there further escalated the fight, dramatically demonstrating the existential threat that we have been assisting the Government of Iraq to combat.

Question. What action, if any, did the administration take when it first learned of the deteriorating security situation?

Answer. As the ISIL threat increased, we took several steps over the last year to increase counterterrorism assistance to Iraq and to build a foundation for future, expanded cooperation. Military efforts alone will not defeat ISIL. We have encouraged a holistic counterterrorism approach with the Government of Iraq, fusing political and security efforts. We have urged the recruiting of tribal leaders and greater Sunni incorporation into the military ranks to reduce sectarian tensions.

To increase Iraq's military capabilities, we expanded training in Iraq and Jordan, provided military advice, enhanced information-sharing relationships, and sought opportunities to increase border security.

Additionally, we have expedited shipments of weapons, equipment, and ammunition to Iraq's military. Thanks to congressional support, recent shipments included the delivery of 300 Hellfire missiles, thousands of helicopter-fired rockets, thousands of rounds of tank ammunition, thousands of machine guns, grenades, flares, sniper rifles, M16 and M4 rifles to the Iraqi Security Forces. We also delivered additional Bell IA–407 helicopters late last year and 10 Scan Eagle surveillance platforms are on schedule for delivery this summer. The Iraqis have told us that our equipment and advice is making a critical difference. In particular, the Hellfire missiles are the most effective airborne weapon the Iraqis have, and they have been using them to great effect.

Question. When the President ordered the last withdrawal of troops from Iraq, did that improve or diminish our ability to predict changes in the security situation in Iraq?

Answer. The withdrawal of U.S. forces was consistent with the 2008 U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement. It honored our commitment to Iraqi sovereignty and began a new chapter in our partnership. The follow-on U.S military forces discussed in 2011 was primarily a small training contingent that would not have had a significant impact on our ability to predict changes in Iraq's security situation.

Question. Do you anticipate that a similar deterioration of security will occur in Afghanistan once the United States withdrawals from Afghanistan in 2016?

Answer. We believe that at the end of 2016, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will be capable of maintaining security in Afghanistan with the continued international financial assistance pledged at the NATO summit in Chicago. The ANSF took the lead for security around the country in June 2013, have lost no significant ground to the insurgents since that time, and have won the trust of Afghan citizens in their ability to protect them, which was manifest in the high turnouts

for both rounds of the elections despite determined Taliban efforts to disrupt the electoral process and intimidate voters.

While the situation in Iraq is cautionary, it differs from that in Afghanistan in some important ways. In Afghanistan, the people overwhelmingly want us to stay, to the extent that every single contender in the Presidential election said he would sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA).

In addition, the international community has made a range of significant commitments to Afghanistan that extend well into the future that will continue to shore up the military and civilian sides of the Afghan Government as well as support Afghan civil society.

COUNTERING ISIL

Question. Since the United States withdrew our troops in 2011, a security vacuum has emerged in Iraq. From the al-Qaeda fighters seizing Fallujah and Ramadi in January to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's (ISIS) gain of the second-largest city of Mosul to the declaration of a state of national emergency, Iraq is facing significant security challenges.

♦ How committed is Prime Minister Maliki to ending the strong al-Qaeda and ISIS backed insurgency that is taken place in the western part of Iraq?

Answer. Prime Minister Maliki has stated that he is dedicated to combating and driving back the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). However, it has long been the case that all Iraqi leaders, including Prime Minister Maliki, need to do more to address unresolved issues to better meet the needs of the Iraqi people. Unfortunately, Iraq's leaders have too often been unable to overcome the mistrust and sectarian differences that have long been simmering, creating vulnerabilities within the Iraqi Government as well as its security forces.

ISIL, the primary threat to Iraq's stability, has an ideology that has little to do with Iraqi domestic politics and no appeal to the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people. ISIL's aim is to take territory and terrorize the Iraqi people, regardless of sect, as it seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate from Lebanon to Baghdad.

We support Iraqi efforts to implement a coordinated approach to effectively address the security and political situations. Nobody has an interest in seeing terrorists gain a foothold inside of Iraq, and nobody is going to benefit from seeing Iraq descend into chaos. Our focus is on the Iraqi people, and we urge all Iraqi leaders across the political spectrum to unite, put differences aside, and stand together against the threats they face.

Question. What steps is the administration willing to take to address the reemergence of al-Qaeda and ISIS in Iraq?

Answer. The United States has been engaging in intensive and active diplomacy inside Iraq, across the region, and with the international community since this crisis erupted. We are coordinating with our international partners and countries in the region on next steps and how we can effectively help Iraq push back against ISIL's aggression.

While it is evident that Iraq needs assistance to break ISIL's momentum, there is no military solution that will solve Iraq's problems. Any action we take would have to be done in conjunction with a serious and sincere effort by Iraqi leaders to govern in a nonsectarian manner; promote stability and unity among Iraq's diverse population; build and invest in the capacity of Iraq's Security Forces; and address the legitimate grievances of Iraq's Sunni, Kurd, and Shia communities. No short-term assistance we might provide—to include military action—will succeed absent a serious Iraqi political effort.

CAPTURED WEAPONS

Question. Media reports indicate that terrorist fighters were able to gain arms supplied by the United States during the capture of Iraq's second-largest city yesterday.

♦ Who has these weapons?

Answer. We are concerned by the reports of captured U.S. military equipment captured from the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). We are working to confirm what material may have fallen into the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL) hands. We are also following up on reports that Kurdish Peshmerga forces may have secured some of the equipment left behind by the Iraqi Army.

At this time, we do not have information indicating that the loss of any equipment would constitute a violation of our agreements with Iraq regarding security and end-use of U.S.-provided equipment. However, we are aggressively following up on the

issue. Halting the transfer of defense articles to the ISF because of these setbacks, though, would only decrease ISF capability and willingness to fight an enemy that endangers the stability of the region as well as our own national security.

We take end-use monitoring of all U.S.-provided equipment very seriously. Our Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) works closely with senior Iraqi Ministry of Defense leadership to stress the importance of responsible use and stringent management of all weapons systems.

Question. What weapons have the terrorist fighters obtained?

Answer. The situation on the ground in Iraq is fluid, and we do not have confirmation of what may have fallen into ISIL's hands. Initial reports indicate that ISIL captured U.S. manufactured small arms, associated ammunition, and HMMWVs. We have not seen credible reports that ISIL captured any U.S. manufactured heavy combat equipment like M1A1 tanks or helicopters, although there are reports that ISIL captured some of Iraq's older, Russian-made tanks.

Question. How capable are the terrorist fighters and the ISIS of effectively using those weapons and equipment?

Answer. We assess that ISIL fighters are highly effective at employing small arms, crew-served weapons, and light tactical vehicles. They are likely less effective at using more complex weapons systems that require advanced operator and crew training as well as significant maintenance. ISIL would likely not be able to effectively employ advanced U.S. weapons systems like M1A1 tanks or helicopters. U.S. equipment, although the best in the world, requires advanced training, frequent maintenance, and a steady supply of spare parts—none of which ISIL possesses.

Question. Do you believe that these weapons will make their way to Syria and support the Assad regime?

Answer. Although ISIL may take some of the reportedly captured weapons to Syria, it is highly unlikely that any of the captured equipment will be used to support the Assad regime. ISIL is a violent Sunni extremist terrorist group with the stated goal of overthrowing the Assad regime and installing an Islamic caliphate from Lebanon to Baghdad. ISIL would employ any captured weapons against the Assad regime in Syria and against the Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi people in Iraq.

GTMO DETAINEES

Question. As you know, Jordanian officials recently rearrested a former Guantanamo detainee named Osama Abu Kabir for conducting terrorist activity. Kabir was initially picked up in Afghanistan in November 2001 and subsequently transferred to Guantanamo Bay. The United States at the recommendation of the Joint Task Force-GTMO released Kabir to Jordan in 2007 even though he was considered a "high risk."

- Given your firsthand experience as an ambassador to a country that has accepted high-risk Guantanamo Bay detainees, what are some of the lessons learned that should be applied to any future transfers?

Answer. The USG has implemented a series of "lessons learned" from the early transfers from Guantanamo. All detainees currently designated for transfer have been extensively reviewed through an interagency process—comprised of military, national security, intelligence, law enforcement, counterterrorism, and foreign policy experts—and have been unanimously approved for transfer by the six agencies responsible for that review. This rigorous, updated review given to each detainee has resulted in a significantly lower recidivism rate than that prior to the 2009–10 interagency review process. We also obtain appropriate security assurances from the receiving nations.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT STEPHEN BEECROFT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

EGYPTIAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

Question. How would you characterize the bilateral relationship between Egypt and Russia?

Answer. The two countries maintain decades-old economic and military ties, with Russia a major source of tourists for Egypt and also a supplier of military equipment, primarily for air defense.

Question. What is the reason for the recently increasing cooperation on energy, trade, and arms sales between Egypt and Russia?

Answer. While there has been press speculation on increased activity between Egypt and Russia in areas such as arms sales, we have seen no confirmation of these claims. Even if the speculation is accurate, Egypt already has a long-standing relationship with Russia, and such cooperation would not represent a substantial change in that relationship.

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize to Egyptian officials the benefits of the U.S.-Egypt relationship to advancing our shared interests.

Question. Do Egypt's expanding military and economic ties with Russia signal a larger shift in Egyptian foreign policy?

Answer. While there has been press speculation on increased activity between Egypt and Russia, we have seen no confirmation of these claims. Egypt has a long-standing relationship with Russia on a variety of mutual interests, including economic and military ones, and such cooperation would not represent a substantial change in that relationship, nor would it be an area of concern for us. Egyptian officials have repeatedly told us that they value the U.S.-Egypt relationship, and a relationship with the United States provides unique benefits and capabilities not available through other partners.

If confirmed, I will continue to press Egyptian officials on the benefits of the U.S.-Egypt relationship to advancing our shared interests, and I will make myself available to Congress to provide updates on the state of our relations with Egypt.

ASSISTANCE

Question. Is U.S. foreign assistance to Egypt still in the U.S. national interest? Why or why not?

Answer. All U.S. assistance to Egypt, both military and economic assistance, supports the key U.S. interests of stability in Egypt and along the Egyptian-Israeli border; countering transnational threats, such as terrorism and weapons trafficking; ensuring safe Suez transit; promoting inclusive democratic institutions and protection of universal human rights; and supporting broad-based economic stability and growth. Continuing assistance to support these objectives—while also regularly reviewing how our assistance can better support our goals—remains in the U.S. interest.

If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on ways our assistance can best be used to promote U.S. interests in Egypt.

Question. Do you support reinstating all of the U.S. foreign assistance to Egypt? Which U.S. financial assistance is the most critical to the Government of Egypt?

Answer. I support assistance to Egypt which is determined to best serve U.S. interests. As part of those interests, the United States has a pressing need to address Egypt's most critical sources of instability: its economy, particularly the need for private sector-led growth and youth employment, and its lack of sustainable democratic institutions. Our programs support basic and higher education; job creation; private sector development; democracy and civil society promotion; and improving health outcomes. Our FMF supports Egypt in its counterterrorism and border security efforts, including in the Sinai, adding to our ongoing counterterrorism and nonproliferation efforts supported through other assistance accounts. Our ongoing assistance review will also inform future assistance plans.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on advancing U.S. interests in Egypt, including through our assistance programs.

Question. What conditions need to be attached to U.S. foreign assistance to the Government of Egypt?

Answer. While the Department of State does not support conditioning U.S. foreign assistance, the administration made clear the importance of credible progress toward an inclusive, democratically elected, civilian government to reviews of assistance to Egypt and release of held defense items. We are continuing to urge the Egyptian Government to make progress along those lines, including by urging President el-Sisi to establish transparent, accountable, and responsive democratic institutions, based on rule of law and respect for the universal rights of all Egyptians, which will allow the participation of all voices and overcome the current political and social polarization in Egypt.

If confirmed, I look forward to providing updates on the situation in Egypt and will consult with Congress closely as part of the ongoing assistance review.

EGYPTIAN ECONOMY

Question. Is the Government of Egypt at risk of default?

Answer. The Government of Egypt has not provided indications that it is considering default, and they have not defaulted in recent years when faced with similar fiscal pressures. It is true that Egypt continues to face economic challenges, including high expenditures, particularly subsidy costs, which are causing fiscal deficits to rise. External imbalances are also putting pressure on foreign currency reserves, and low economic growth has been exacerbated by disruptions in manufacturing and tourism. Egypt also continues to finance the deficit with domestic T-bills and Central Bank financing, which creates higher interest obligations for the government and poses an increased risk of inflation. Recent disbursements from the gulf have helped to temporarily relieve fiscal and exchange rate pressures.

If confirmed, I will continue the State Department's work of emphasizing to the Government of Egypt that sustainable and credible reforms will set the stage for long-term stability and growth. I will work with our gulf partners and international financial institutions to emphasize a common call for reforms so that Egypt can move quickly to reduce its fiscal deficit and address external imbalances.

Question. What issues must be addressed by the Government of Egypt in order to stabilize their internal security and improve their economic growth?

Answer. The U.S. Government is urging Egypt to undertake credible and sustainable economic reforms to spur private sector-led growth, attract investment, and create jobs, especially for Egypt's youth. We are also urging the Egyptian Government to address its lack of inclusive and sustainable democratic institutions and to guarantee fundamental human rights as a means of combating radicalization and improving internal security.

If confirmed, I will emphasize to Egyptian officials that issues of democracy, human rights, economic growth and development, security, and stability are all inextricably linked.

REFORMS AND VISION

Question. What is President Sisi's vision for the future and top priorities?

Answer. In his inauguration speech and initial statements, President el-Sisi made clear that his top priorities are strengthening the state, restoring security, combating corruption, promoting economic growth, and respecting human rights. He also noted that he planned to protect the rights of, and govern for, all Egyptians. As President el-Sisi will surely be presented with multiple competing interests, he must seek to build institutions that will ensure all Egyptians can participate in the political process and provide clarity on Egypt's national priorities.

If confirmed, I will work with President el-Sisi and his government to identify and refine our shared interests, and I will seek practical and effective ways that we can work together to achieve our common objectives. This includes working with the Egyptian Government to help demonstrate the benefits of pursuing political and economic reform.

Question. How would you characterize the current state of religious freedom, freedom of speech, right to assembly, and the rule of law in Egypt?

Answer. The Department of State and broader administration have repeatedly noted concerns about the current restrictive environment in Egypt, including on freedoms of expression, assembly, and religion and on issues of due process. Egypt's new constitution, passed in January 2014, does guarantee basic freedoms, such as freedom of religion and the rights of women, but leaves much room for legislative and judicial interpretation that could curtail those freedoms. Both the State Department and the White House have consistently expressed concerns about the restrictive political environment in Egypt, including on limits to freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression. In addition, the United States has made clear that it is the Egyptian Government's responsibility to ensure every citizen is afforded due process.

I believe ensuring these rights is an essential element of any successful democracy and necessary for Egypt's stability and prosperity. Should I be confirmed as Ambassador, I will urge Egypt's leaders to ensure these freedoms for all Egyptians and press for the government to make good on its promise to govern inclusively, protect freedoms of the press, and allow open debate and free flow of information.

Question. What is your assessment of the current Egyptian judicial system?

Answer. The State Department has noted that Egypt's judicial system functions extremely slowly and is subject, in some cases, to political influence. Additionally,

Egypt's new constitution permits military trials for civilians, which the United States has consistently opposed. We are also deeply concerned by the use of mass trials that deny individualized justice and due process and the preliminary death sentences against hundreds of people without due process. An independent and impartial judiciary is essential to any democracy and to the protection of individuals' rights and freedoms. It assures decisions based on law, rather than politics, and on democratic principles rather than current events.

If confirmed, I would continue U.S. engagement with the Egyptian Government and society on the crucial role that judicial systems play in a democracy and on the government's responsibility to afford every citizen due process.

Question. What actions would you take to address the continued use of mass trials and sentencing in Egypt?

Answer. The White House and Secretary have both made clear that the denial of individualized justice and due process through mass trials and sentencing in Egypt is unconscionable, defying even the most basic standards of international justice. Mass trials and sentencing, including decisions by an Egyptian court to issue preliminary death sentences to hundreds of people, cannot be reconciled with Egypt's obligations under international human rights law.

If confirmed, I will make clear our position to the Egyptian Government that they have the responsibility to ensure every citizen is afforded due process. While we respect that the Egyptian judiciary is a separate institution from the executive branch, I will urge Egypt's leaders to take a stand against proceedings that deny defendants individualized justice or violate due process and basic standards of international justice.

IRANIAN OVERFLIGHTS

Question. As Ambassador to Iraq, what specific actions did you take to apply pressure on Iraq to stop Iranian overflights that are building and arming Iranian militias in Syria? What actions were the most effective? What actions were the least effective?

Answer. Despite repeatedly declaring that it will not allow any party to transport arms and related materials through its airspace to Syria, the Government of Iraq has failed to take adequate steps to prevent Iran from overflying its territory to supply the Assad regime. Along with Secretary Kerry and other U.S. Government officials, I consistently urged the Prime Minister and senior Iraqi officials to either deny overflight requests or require flights to land in Iraq for credible inspections consistent with Iraq's international obligations.

Secretary's Kerry's visit to Iraq in March 2013 as well as Prime Minster Maliki's meeting with the President in Washington, DC, later that year resulted in a temporary increase in Iraq's inspections of flights bound for Syria.

In a few specific cases, we were able to provide detailed information in advance regarding flights carrying objectionable cargoes, and the Iraqi Government was generally more cooperative in denying overflight. We continue to engage every level of the Iraqi Government on this very important issue and to press them to fulfill their international obligations to deny overflight clearance or require aircraft to land for inspections.

Question. Why has the Government of Iraq failed to stop the flow of Iranian arms from going to the Syrian regime?

Answer. Despite statements from Iraqi leaders condemning the flow of foreign fighters and weapons through and from Iraqi territory, we know that Iran continues to supply arms to the Syrian regime in violation of the U.N. Security Council prohibition against selling or transferring arms and related materials through flights over Iraqi territory.

Iraqi leaders have cited Iraq's lack of an air interdiction capability, stating they have neither fighter aircraft nor ground-based interceptors that could defend Iraq's airspace and force any transiting aircraft to land for inspections. Additionally, senior Iraqi officials have argued that the collapse of the Assad regime would create an even greater security vacuum and strengthen ISIL, which would further increase the ongoing terrorist threat to Iraq.

Question. As Ambassador to Iraq, how did you engage with our gulf partners to stop these overflights?

Answer. I frequently met with foreign ambassadors resident in Baghdad, including those ambassadors resident from Gulf States, and urged them to engage the Iraqi Government and press it to prevent the use of Iraq's airspace to resupply the Assad regime.

Question. What is the relationship between Iraq and Iran?

Answer. Despite decades of mutual mistrust stemming from the Iran-Iraq war, Iran continues to try and forge closer political and economic ties with Iraq in part to expand and deepen its sphere of influence. There have been high-level visits between Iranian leaders and the Government of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Regional Government. Iraq is one of Iran's top-five trading partners, with bilateral trade of approximately $6 billion in 2013. Iran also supplies about 11 percent of Iraq's electricity. The two countries have also signed an extradition treaty (this does not include the Mujahedin-e Khalq members still in Iraq), and recently resumed negotiating border issues going back to the 1975 Algiers Accord.

Question. What kind of influence does Iran have either politically or economically in Iraq?

Answer. As noted in the answer to the previous question, Iran and Iraq have economic and political relations. They also have significant disagreements over border, water, investment, visa, and other issues. For example, while Iran is an influential neighbor, Iraq does take actions that run counter to Iranian interests, such as increasing oil production just as Iranian exports were being taken off the market due to U.S. and EU sanctions. Had Iraq not done so, worldwide oil prices would have spiked, hurting U.S. consumers and likely leading to a reduction in the impact of sanctions on Iran. In another example, Iraq has fully supported the U.S. position on converting Syrian chemical weapons production facilities in Syria. (Iraq, in fact, has an expert on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons staff.) Iraq has also ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Additional Protocol, which requires inspections of nuclear facilities.

SECURITY SITUATION

Question. What was the security situation on the ground in Iraq when President Obama withdrew the last American troops from Iraq?

Answer. Although dramatically improved since the 2007 troop surge, Iraq remained a violent country when U.S. military forces departed in December 2011. Approximately 4,400 Iraqis were killed each year in 2011 and 2012, most in attacks by violent extremist groups led by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL) predecessor, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). While this violence was persistent and targeted, it did not threaten the stability of the state or threaten to rekindle civil war.

However, 2011 and 2012 also witnessed the escalating civil conflict in Syria, inflamed by regional rivalry and opportunism by terrorist groups. AQI—rebranding to call itself ISIL—reemerged in Syria as one of the most organized and lethal terrorist groups exploiting the conflict and loss of state authority there. Primarily focused in Syria in 2012, ISIL was able to reconstitute itself from the losses it had suffered against U.S. military and Iraqi Security Forces, setting the stage for the group to shift its resources and focus back to Iraq in 2013. Flush with resources, recruits, weapons, and training, ISIL slowly began to execute increasingly sophisticated and frequent attacks inside Iraq from its safe-havens in Syria. Violence in Iraq ticked up toward the end of 2012, but did not accelerate until early 2013, including a marked rise in suicide bombings.

Question. At what point did you first determine that there was a significant problem of security deterioration in Iraq?

Answer. Although the U.S. interagency had been watching ISIL with growing concern since the start of the civil war in Syria, in early 2013 we began to see ISIL shift more of its resources and focus from Syria to Iraq. In 2012, Iraq witnessed an average of 5–10 ISIL suicide attacks per month. By the summer of 2013, Iraq was averaging 30–40 suicide attacks per month, which were increasingly coordinated and effective attacks. On March 14, 2013, for example, five ISIL suicide bombers attacked and took hostages in the Ministry of Justice in Baghdad, controlling the building for several hours before detonating themselves. This was the first in a series of sophisticated military-style operations throughout 2013, with suicide bombers used to clear a path, followed by well-trained fighters to take and hold an objective.

These attacks increased throughout 2013, devastating the political discourse in the country, further fueling mistrust from political leaders to ordinary citizens, and making the tangible reforms that Iraq needed to reconcile its society even harder to reach. Taking advantage of the instability it was causing, ISIL then seized parts of Anbar province including the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah in early January 2014, intensifying what has been a constant counterterrorism offensive by the Government of Iraq. Although ISIL has long operated in Mosul and northern Iraq, its

recent, sudden, large-scale offensive there further escalated the fight, dramatically demonstrating the existential threat that we have been assisting the Government of Iraq to combat.

Question. What action, if any, did you take when you determined that the security situation in Iraq had deteriorated?

Answer. As the ISIL threat increased, we took several steps to increase counterterrorism assistance with Iraq and to build a foundation for future, expanded security cooperation. Military efforts alone cannot defeat ISIL. We have encouraged a holistic counterterrorism approach with the Government of Iraq, fusing political and security efforts. We have urged the recruitment of tribal leaders and greater Sunni incorporation into the military ranks to reduce sectarian tensions. In early 2014, Prime Minister Maliki pledged that Sunni tribal fighters injured or killed in the conflict with ISIL would receive the same benefits as members of the Iraqi Security Forces.

To increase Iraq's military capabilities, we expanded training in Iraq and Jordan, provided military advice, enhanced information-sharing relationships, and sought opportunities to increase border security.

Additionally, with the support of Congress, we have expedited shipments of weapons, equipment, and ammunition to Iraq's military. Recent shipments included the delivery of 300 Hellfire missiles, thousands of helicopter-fired rockets, thousands of rounds of tank ammunition, thousands of machine guns, grenades, flares, sniper rifles, and M16 and M4 rifles to the Iraqi Security Forces. We also delivered additional Bell IA–407 helicopters late last year and 10 Scan Eagle surveillance platforms are on schedule for delivery this summer. The Iraqis have told us that our equipment and advice is making a critical difference. In particular, the Hellfire missiles are the most effective airborne weapon the Iraqis have, and they have been using them to great effect.

Question. When the President ordered the last withdrawal of troops from Iraq, did that improve or diminish our ability to predict changes in the security situation in Iraq?

Answer. The withdrawal of U.S. forces was consistent with the 2008 U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement. It honored our commitment to Iraqi sovereignty and began a new chapter in our partnership. The follow-on U.S military force discussed in 2011 was a primarily a small training contingent that would not have had a significant impact on our ability to predict changes in Iraq's security situation.

Question. Based on your previous experience as Ambassador to Iraq, what are your recommendations to prevent a similar deterioration of security in Afghanistan once the United States withdraws its troops from Afghanistan in 2016?

Answer. We believe that at the end of 2016, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will be capable of maintaining security in Afghanistan with the continued international financial assistance pledged at the NATO summit in Chicago. The ANSF took the lead for security around the country in June 2013, have lost no significant ground to the insurgents since that time, and have won the trust of Afghan citizens in their ability to protect them, which was manifest in the high turnouts for both rounds of the elections despite determined Taliban efforts to disrupt the electoral process and intimidate voters.

While the situation in Iraq is cautionary, it differs from that in Afghanistan in some important ways. The withdrawal of our forces from Iraq in 2011 was consistent with the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement signed in late 2008, honoring our commitment to Iraqi sovereignty. We could not reach agreement on key issues that would allow our troops to stay in Iraq, the people did not want U.S. forces to remain, and it was the mutual decision of both countries to start a new chapter in our partnership under the Strategic Framework Agreement. By contrast, in Afghanistan, the people overwhelmingly want us to stay, to the extent that every single contender in the Presidential election said he would sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA).

In addition, the international community has made a range of significant commitments to Afghanistan that extend well into the future that will continue to shore up the military and civilian sides of the Afghan Government as well as support Afghan civil society.

RESPONSES OF DANA SHELL SMITH TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. GTMO Recidivism.—In March 2014, the Director of National Intelligence released the most recent recidivism rate on Guantanamo detainees who have been released. Out of the total of 614 transferred detainees, 104 are confirmed to have reengaged in hostilities and 74 are strongly suspected of returning to the fight. We are now at a 29-percent recidivism rate for released GTMO detainees.

- With a 29-percent recidivism rate, do you believe releasing five high-level Taliban operational commanders is in the interest of U.S. national security and the security of our allies?

Answer. The administration's policy is clear: we will not transfer any detainee from Guantanamo unless the threat the detainee may pose to the United States or U.S. persons or interests will be sufficiently mitigated. The Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the President's national security team, determined that the transfer was in the national security interest of the United States and that the threat posed by the detainees to the United States or U.S. persons or interests would be substantially mitigated. Although we cannot publicly detail all of the assurances we received from the Government of Qatar, they were sufficient to meet these requirements. The national security team was unanimous in endorsing this transfer.

The previous administration transferred over 500 detainees from Guantanamo. This administration has now transferred 89 detainees. There are 149 detainees remaining at Guantanamo, including 78 eligible for transfer. The DNI has concluded that 18.6 percent of detainees transferred by the prior administration have been confirmed, under the IC's definition, to have engaged in terrorist or insurgent activities and an additional 13.5 percent are suspected of having done so. The DNI has found that only 6.1 percent of detainees transferred under this administration have been confirmed to have engaged in terrorist or insurgent activities, with another 2.4 percent suspected of having done so. The dramatic reduction in reengagement rate—over 90 percent of detainees transferred in this administration are not confirmed or even suspected of having reengaged—is a reflection of the President's strong and continuing commitment to transferring detainees from Guantanamo Bay responsibly and consistent with our national security interests.

The President's position is clear: The Guantanamo facility weakens our national security by wasting our resources, damaging our relationships with key allies and partners, and emboldening violent extremists—and that this administration will continue to pursue appropriate dispositions for the detainees remaining, based on the facts and circumstances of each case and consistent with our national security interests. This includes transferring detainees abroad when the threat the detainee may pose can be sufficiently mitigated and when consistent with our humane treatment policy.

Question. In your preparation for the position of U.S. Ambassador to Qatar, have you been briefed on any of the security measures that will be put in place by the Qatari Government to prevent the five recently released Taliban detainees from returning to the battlefield?

Answer. Following completion of the transfers and prior to my confirmation hearing, I was able to view the classified U.S.-Qatar Memorandum of Understanding governing the transfers. This MOU has also been made available to Members.

Question. United Nations War Crimes.—Two of the five Taliban detainees are wanted by the United Nations in connection with possible war crimes that include the murder of thousands of Shiite Muslims in Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban.

- Has the United States ever knowingly released a detainee that is wanted by the United Nations for possible war crimes?
- Do you believe it is appropriate for the United States to release individuals that are wanted by the United Nations for committing war crimes?

Answer. As I have been briefed, the United Nations has neither established, nor authorized, any tribunal that would have jurisdiction over war crimes committed in Afghanistan. Accordingly, the United Nations has not undertaken criminal investigations, nor has it sought or obtained arrest warrants for individuals accused of war crimes in Afghanistan and thus we know of no individuals who are wanted by the United Nations for war crimes committed in Afghanistan.

Question. Qatar Terrorism Financing.—According to the State Department 2013 Country Reports on Terrorism, "Qatar's monitoring of private individuals' and charitable associations' contributions to foreign entities remained inconsistent. Qatari-

based terrorist fundraisers, whether acting as individuals or as representatives of other groups, were a significant terrorist financing risk and may have supported terrorist groups in countries such as Syria."

- While Qatar has taken steps to improve its terrorism financing laws and enforcement, do you believe there are security measures in place to prevent the Taliban Five from using Qatar as a fundraising safe haven?

Answer. The administration's policy is clear: we will not transfer any detainee from Guantanamo unless the threat the detainee may pose to the United States or U.S. persons or interests will be sufficiently mitigated. The Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the President's national security team, determined that these transfers were in the national security interest of the United States and that the threat posed by the detainees to the United States or U.S. persons or interests would be substantially mitigated. Although we cannot publicly detail all of the assurances we received from the Government of Qatar, they were sufficient to meet these requirements. In addition to the travel ban, the transferred individuals will be subject to security measures in Qatar that will substantially mitigate the risk they might pose to U.S. interests. We are confident that the Qataris will enforce the restrictions agreed upon and these individuals will be restricted from activities that could pose a threat to our national security.

Question. Qatar Capabilities to Mitigate the Risk.—In 2005, a Guantanamo detainee was transferred to Kuwait with the promise that the country would mitigate the risk of him returning to terrorist activity. In 2008, he exploded a truck bomb near an Iraqi army base, killing 13 Iraqi soldiers and himself.

- In what ways is Qatar more capable than Kuwait of mitigating the risk that a transferred Guantanamo detainee may reengage in terrorist activity?

Answer. Although we cannot publicly detail all of the assurances we received from the Government of Qatar, in addition to a travel ban, the transferred individuals will be subject to security measures in Qatar that will substantially mitigate the risk they might pose to the United States or U.S. persons or interests. We are confident that the Qataris will enforce the restrictions agreed upon and these individuals will be restricted from activities that could pose a threat to our national security.

Question. In your written testimony, you stated: "We are confident that the security measures that have been put in place, including restrictions placed on the activities of the individuals, will substantially mitigate any threat that the individuals may pose to our national security."

- Please describe the specific security measures that have been put in place.
- What restrictions are placed on the activities of the individuals?
- What specific requirements did the United States request from the Government of Qatar?
- Were all of the security measures requested by the United States agreed to and implemented prior to the release of the detainees?

Answer. While we cannot publicly detail all of the assurances we received from the Government of Qatar, we required that certain security measures be put in place to substantially mitigate the threat that these individuals may pose to the United States and our interests. Those demands were met, and we are confident that the Qataris will enforce the restrictions agreed upon and these individuals will be restricted from activities that pose a threat to our national security. The classified U.S.-Qatar Memorandum of Understanding governing the transfers has been made available to Members.

Question. Are you confident that these five Taliban detainees will not pose any threat to our national security after 1 year when they are fully free to travel and return to the fight?

Answer. The President and his national security team, including the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the Director of National Intelligence, all concurred that the assurances we received from the Qataris were sufficient to substantially mitigate the threat these individuals may pose to the United States or U.S. persons or interests. That is not to say they may never rejoin the Taliban movement. But the threat they may pose to the National Security of the United States has been mitigated to the satisfaction of our top military commanders and national security advisors.

This is not a decision the President made lightly; many actions were taken to restrict the activities of these individuals. As the President said, we have confidence that we will be in a position to use appropriate tools to pursue these individuals if, in fact, they are engaging in activities that threaten our national security. The President would not have determined that the transfer should go forward if he thought it was contrary to U.S. national security interests.

NOMINATIONS OF MARK LIPPERT, JONATHAN STIVERS, THEODORE OSIUS, AND JOAN POLASCHIK

TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2014

U.S. SENATE ,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Mark William Lippert, of Ohio, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Korea
Jonathan Nicholas Stivers, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Asia, United States Agency for International Development
Theodore G. Osius III, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Joan A. Polaschik, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin presiding.

Present: Senators Cardin, Murphy, Kaine, Rubio, and McCain.

Also present: Senator Patrick J. Leahy.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. First, let me welcome you all to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on four very important nominees to represent the United States in diplomacy and in our foreign assistance.

We thank each one of our nominees for their willingness to serve our country, and I particularly want to thank their families. We will ask that you introduce the members of your family before you start your formal presentations, but we recognize that this is a family commitment and we thank you very much for your willingness to serve our country.

So today we will hear from the President's nominees: Mark Lippert to the Republic of Korea to be Ambassador; Theodore Osius to be Ambassador in Vietnam; Jonathan Stivers, Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Asia at USAID; and Joan Polaschik, Ambassador to Algeria. We welcome all of you to our committee.

I have the honor of chairing the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs. In three of the cases here, your direct responsibility will be in that region. So it is a particular pleasure that Senator Menendez has allowed me to chair this hearing.

I notice that we do have the distinguished President Pro Tem of the United States Senate, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator Leahy, with us. It is always a pleasure to have Senator Leahy in our midst. He is one of the great Members of the U.S. Senate. And I am going to allow him to introduce Mr. Lippert.

STATEMENT OF HON. PATRICK J. LEAHY, U.S. SENATOR FROM VERMONT

Senator LEAHY. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Of course, you and I have been friends for so many years both in your previous service and as a Senator. And I appreciate you doing this. I also appreciate the work of Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker.

I do not do this very often, but today I really wanted to be here to introduce Mark Lippert, President Obama's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I have talked to an awful lot of Senators over the years about Mark's character and intellect, but I also just want to say on the record my admiration for his dedication as a public servant, not only as a former member of my staff, but as a naval officer, as a senior staff member of the National Security Council and Department of Defense, but also because he and his wife, Robyn, are dear friends.

His qualification to serve as Ambassador to South Korea is extensive. He worked on foreign policy on the Appropriations Committee. He worked for me and advised me and helped our committee. And he has military service. He worked at the Pentagon, the White House. His breadth of knowledge and perspective on security, economic, humanitarian challenges we face in East Asia and the Pacific are significant.

He is a graduate of Stanford University. He earned a masters degree in international relations.

While I will put my whole statement in the record, I remember when he was here in the Appropriations Committee focusing on U.S. policy in East Asia where he has traveled many times.

While he was serving in my office, he decided to join the Navy, which was a lifetime goal of his. Now, it was not required. We do not have a draft. He just wanted to do that and did and did it very, very well. And I just want to dwell on this just for a moment because I advocate for members of the National Guard and Reserves with Senator Lindsey Graham. Mark is an example of a true citizen soldier. He deployed twice, once to Iraq, once to Afghanistan. This is not somebody who just reads about it. He does it.

When he left my office, he was working for a former colleague of ours, a first-term Senator from Illinois, who was racking up some frequent flyer miles to Iowa. But he helped that former Senator, but then that Senator left us and went on to an executive position, some would say the executive position. But I have heard then-Senator, now President Obama, speak so highly of Mark Lippert.

Now, Mark, like I, married above himself, married a Vermonter, his wife, Robyn. And both of them have achieved so much in their life.

So I just think at a time—I just came back from a trip not in Korea but in China and in Vietnam, and I know how important that area is. I will now add South Korea to my agenda once we have the new Ambassador there.

Mr. Chairman, I am just going to be so pleased when I can cast my vote for him on the floor.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much, Senator Leahy. I just really want to join you in thanking Mr. Lippert for his willingness to come forward.

You have a very impressive resume of public service, including in our military. We had a chance to talk and I am very impressed with your command of the subject and your knowledge of the complexities of our relationship with the Republic of Korea and how important that bilateral relationship is for our interests in the region and globally.

Senator Leahy, thank you very much for joining us. I appreciate it.

Let me introduce the other three of our nominees.

I know that Senator Rubio will be joining us shortly as the ranking member of this hearing, and I will yield to him when he is here.

Jonathan Stivers, I have known you since your days with David Bonior when I was in the House of Representatives, and I have always been impressed by your commitment to public service and your competency. I am very proud of what you have been able to accomplish and your being prepared for this important nomination as an Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Asia at USAID.

Jonathan is currently a senior advisor to the House Democratic Leader, Nancy Pelosi, a position he has held since 2011. Mr. Stivers has also served as senior advisor to Leader Pelosi in the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Office of the House Democratic Leader, and the Office of the House Democratic Whip. Previously, he served as Leader Pelosi's senior legislative assistant and press secretary. Prior to this, he was a staff assistant in the Office of the Democratic Whip David Bonior and a campaign assistant for David Bonior for the U.S. Congress.

He received his bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and a Masters in international policy and practice from the George Washington University, Elliott School of International Affairs.

Welcome, and we appreciate your coming forward.

The next person is Mr. Theodore Osius from my home State of Maryland. I should have read that first because I would have introduced you first, if I realized you were the only Marylander on the panel. [Laughter.]

But you certainly have priority as the President's nominee to represent us in Vietnam. I was just recently in Vietnam and I had a chance to meet with our Embassy personnel, and it is a critically important partnership for the United States, both in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City where we have a consulate office. The United States is very much valued by Vietnam and the opportunities there are incredible.

Mr. Osius is a career member of the Foreign Service, class of minister and counselor, and is an Assistant Professor at the National War College, a position he has held since 2013. He was a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies from 2012 to 2013. Prior to that, Mr. Osius served as the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia; Political Minister, Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India; Deputy Director of the Office of Korean Affairs in the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs; and Regional Environmental Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok. He has also served as a senior advisor in International Affairs in the Office of the Vice President at the White House.

Mr. Osius received his degrees from Harvard University and the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He knows Vietnam well. He speaks the language and has served in Vietnam in both our consulate in Ho Chi Minh City and our Embassy in Hanoi. Perhaps most importantly, he is a Marylander well prepared for this position, and we thank you for your long, distinguished service to our country.

We are also pleased to be joined by Ms. Joan Polaschik, the nominee for Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. Ms. Polaschik is a career member of the Foreign Service, class of counselor, and currently serves as the Director of the Office of Egypt and Levant Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, a position she has held since 2013. She has also served as Acting Director in the Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs; deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, Libya; counselor for the political and economic affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan; and Regional Refugee Coordinator based at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan. You have a long and distinguished career serving our country.

You also served as the Iran Desk Officer and Staff Assistant in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Your other assignments have included political officer in the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia; and counselor and general service officer at the United States Embassy in Tashkent, Azerbaijan. So you have really gotten around the entire region.

You received your B.A. from the University of Virginia and M.S. from Georgetown University.

It is a pleasure to have all four of you here.

We will start with Mr. Lippert. If you have members of your family that are with you today, we would welcome your introductions, and then you may proceed as you wish. As is the tradition of this committee, your formal written statements will be made part of our record. You may proceed as you so desire.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARK WILLIAM LIPPERT, OF OHIO, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr. LIPPERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My wife, Robyn, is right there, if she can stand up. She is a former Hill staffer herself, worked for Senator Leahy on the Judiciary Committee, and we actually met up here on the Hill.

Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief here and will ask consent to put my full statement in the record.

I will just simply say I am deeply honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I am humbled by the confidence the President and the Secretary of State have shown in putting me forward for this nomination.

Having proudly served as a personal representative of the member to this committee, it is very meaningful to be back in this committee room today. In large part through my service on Capitol Hill, which spanned nearly a decade, I am keenly aware that the close partnership with Congress is critically important to success in diplomacy, and if confirmed, I pledge always to be a strong partner and friend of this committee.

I would also like to thank my former boss, Senator Leahy, for his gracious introduction. I know how busy he is juggling his many important responsibilities.

Please also let me say a few words about my lovely wife. She has been the best partner that anyone could ask for and has patiently put up with years of military deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, long hours at the Pentagon and the National Security Council, and the intensity of work at the Senate Foreign Relations and Appropriations Committees.

Mr. Chairman, simply put, the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea is one of the most important relationships that we have in the world. Through my many visits to the Republic of Korea, I have come to greatly respect the people and culture of South Korea. Our two countries share deeply held values of free markets, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. And we share a common history of fighting together to uphold these values and to defend our security.

I am proud to say that our ties between the two countries have never been stronger. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly in close partnership with this committee to make our alliance even stronger.

As the former Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Asia-Pacific, I have had the opportunity to work closely with our South Korean allies, commanding generals of the United States Forces Korea, and senior members of our diplomatic team. I have seen the enduring strength of this relationship firsthand.

Mr. Chairman, my statement goes on to talk about the shared threats of North Korea, the economic challenges, and the great men and women who work at the U.S. Embassy. And with consent, I would ask to put my full statement in the record.

Senator CARDIN. Without objection, your entire statement will be made part of the record, as will, as I indicated a little bit earlier, the statements of the other three nominees.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lippert follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK WILLIAM LIPPERT

Chairman Cardin, Senator Rubio, distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I am humbled by the confidence the President and the Secretary of State have shown in putting me forward for this nomination.

Having proudly served as a personal representative of the member to this committee, it is very meaningful to be back in this committee room today. In large part through my service on Capitol Hill, which spanned nearly a decade, I am keenly aware that close partnership with Congress is critically important to success in

diplomacy. And if confirmed, I pledge to always be a strong partner and friend to this committee.

I would also like to thank my former boss, Senator Leahy, for his gracious introduction. I know just how busy he is juggling his many important responsibilities.

Please let me also say a few words about my wife. As Senator Leahy mentioned, I met Robyn when we worked together on Capitol Hill. She has been the best partner that anyone could ask for and has patiently put up with years of military deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, long hours at the Pentagon and the National Security Council, and the intensity of work for the Senate Foreign Relations and Appropriations Committees.

Members of the committee, simply put: the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea is one of the most important relationships that we have in the world. Through my many visits to the Republic of Korea, I have come to greatly respect the people and culture of the Republic of Korea. Our two countries share deeply held values of free markets, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. And we share a common history of fighting together to uphold these values and to defend our security.

I am proud to say that the ties between our two countries have never been stronger. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly, in close partnership with this committee, to make our alliance even stronger.

As the former Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Asia-Pacific, I have had the opportunity to work closely with our South Korean allies, Commanding Generals of United States Forces Korea, and senior members of our diplomatic team. I have seen the enduring strength of this alliance firsthand.

I continue to be vigilant about the stark threat that North Korea poses the U.S. homeland, to security on the peninsula, in the region, and around the world—including through its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technology, its worldwide proliferation activities, and egregious human rights violations against its own citizens.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the leadership of the Republic of Korea to ensure we are fully aligned in our efforts to achieve the complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea and prevent proliferation of key technologies. I have built a good working relationship with General Scaparrotti, the Commander of U.S. Forces Korea, and if confirmed, look forward to partnering closely with him and the Department of Defense as they work to strengthen our deterrence on the peninsula and ensure that the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed there are ready to "fight tonight," if necessary.

Although our alliance was established with a mutual commitment to security, our nations have built deep and growing economic ties. The U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, or KORUS FTA, is now in its 3rd year, and American and Korean consumers, businesses, and workers have benefited from it. Last year, the United States achieved a large investment surplus with the Republic of Korea, and U.S. goods exports are up 11.7 percent this year so far. That said, the full potential of the FTA has yet to be fully realized; more tariff cuts and additional provisions will come into force in the years to come. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the KORUS FTA is fully implemented so that American exporters, entrepreneurs, and workers can receive the benefits for which this administration negotiated so hard.

This alliance is also increasingly tackling global challenges as well. Our global partnership includes cooperation on everything from counterterrorism and counterpiracy to climate change and development. The United States is also negotiating a successor 123 civil nuclear cooperation agreement with South Korea that will allow us to continue our cooperation in this field, while maintaining our strong nonproliferation standards.

Finally, our strong people-to-people ties reinforce our shared values and interests. Each year, the Republic of Korea sends more university students to the United States per capita than any other major country. We have innovative exchange programs between our students and our science experts. If confirmed, I will make public diplomacy a top priority and work to foster these exchanges and bring more Korean education and tourism dollars to the United States. And if confirmed, I will be proud to also represent the over 1.7 million U.S. citizens that are of Korean descent and who contribute vitally to the deepening ties between our peoples.

Our Embassy in Seoul has a talented team comprised of career diplomats, civil servants from a range of U.S. agencies, and local Korean staff who are dedicated to advancing U.S. interests every day. If confirmed, I will work to ensure my team has the resources, training, and guidance to strengthen and broaden our alliance with the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Chairman, the U.S.-ROK alliance is the linchpin of security and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, in the Asia-Pacific, and around the world. Being nomi-

nated to represent the United States in Seoul is the honor of my lifetime, and if confirmed I will work night and day to advance this critical relationship.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my nomination, and I look forward to taking your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Stivers.

STATEMENT OF JONATHAN NICHOLAS STIVERS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE BUREAU FOR ASIA, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. STIVERS. Chairman Cardin, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for the Assistant Administrator for Asia at USAID. I am grateful for the trust placed in me by President Obama and Administrator Shah.

I am joined today by my wife, Ramsey Alwin, and my daughters, Josephine and Parker, who were making a little bit of noise back there.

Senator CARDIN. I did not know who it was, but it is perfectly OK. She is adorable.

Mr. STIVERS. The best decision I made in my life was convincing Ramsey to marry me. Her support is my bedrock, and everything I do professionally is in the hope that someday my daughters will be proud of their father.

I would also like to thank my family who could not be here today: my father, Richard Stivers; my mother, Sharon Stivers; and my siblings, Adam and Emily Stivers.

I would also like to recognize Denise Rollins, the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Asia Bureau, who has served our country for 25 years with great distinction, and Nisha Biswal, who previously served as the Assistant Administrator for Asia.

I am particularly honored to be appearing before you, Chairman Cardin. I had the opportunity to see your work behind the scenes and up close in the House of Representatives, promoting human rights on the Helsinki Commission and promoting free and fair trade on the Ways and Means Committee.

For the last 15 years, it has been a privilege to work on Asia policy and our foreign assistance initiatives. I believe that this experience in the legislative branch and my background in Asia have prepared me well for the responsibilities of USAID's Asia Bureau. I will always be grateful that Leader Nancy Pelosi placed her faith and trust in me to lead on foreign policy priorities in her office.

USAID's Asia Bureau works in 32 countries—excluding Afghanistan and Pakistan—with a program budget of approximately $1.1 billion.

In a time of budget constraint, USAID is effectively leveraging funding by building public-private partnerships and taking advantage of science and innovation. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly to ensure that U.S. taxpayer money is spent effectively and wisely in the pursuit of our national interests.

The President's Asia Rebalance recognizes that our future prosperity and security are inextricably tied to this region. It is a pivotal time for U.S. policy in Asia. It is a vibrant, diverse region with some of the strongest and fastest growing economies in the world. The region has enormous development challenges with over a ma-

jority of the world's poor and hungry, susceptibility to natural disasters, and democracy and human rights concerns.

If confirmed, I will place a premium on four key priorities: promoting resilient democratic societies; institutionalizing the Presidential Initiatives, Feed the Future, Global Health, and Global Climate Change; supporting basic education and empowerment for women and girls; and fostering greater regional economic connectivity.

First, we know that government by the people offers the best chance for freedom and prosperity. I believe that the solutions to the challenges facing Asia will ultimately come from the people of Asia themselves, and our best chance in promoting democratic change is to empower the reformers by helping them build institutions that can withstand nondemocratic events.

Second, Administrator Shah has provided exemplary leadership in promoting President Obama's three initiatives. We have seen tremendous development gains in the Asia region, and if confirmed, I will make it a priority to build upon these gains in food security, health, and the environment.

Third, the empowerment of women and girls through education is one of the most effective development tools to boost economic growth and to provide for a fair society. I have promoted basic education in my current position, and if confirmed, this will continue to be a key priority.

And finally, we must continue to promote an effective regional architecture that strengthens regional stability, connectivity, and economic growth through regional initiatives such as USAID's Almaty Consensus and the Lower Mekong Initiative.

Four years ago, President Obama set forth a new vision of results-driven development, and USAID has risen to this challenge. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I will tirelessly pursue policy solutions that make our foreign assistance more effective in line with this new model.

During my almost two decades of working in the legislative branch, I have learned the importance of engagement with Congress, and if confirmed, I can assure you that I will seek out, early and often, advice and guidance from you and your staff.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome any and all questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stivers follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JONATHAN NICHOLAS STIVERS

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Rubio, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Administrator for Asia at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I am grateful for the trust placed in me by President Obama and Administrator Shah.

I am joined today by my wife, Ramsey Alwin, and my daughters, Josephine and Parker. The best decision I made in life was convincing Ramsey to marry me. Her encouragement and support is my bedrock. Everything I do in my professional life is in the hope that someday my daughters will look back and be proud of their father. I also would like to thank my family who could not be here today, my father, Richard Stivers, my mother, Sharon Stivers, and my siblings, Adam and Emily Stivers.

I would like to also recognize Denise Rollins, the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Asia Bureau who has served our country with great distinction for over 25 years, and Nisha Biswal, the current Assistant Secretary of State for South and

Central Asia, who previously served as USAID's Assistant Administrator for Asia, for her advice and guidance throughout the process.

For the last 15 years, it has been a privilege to work on Asia policy and our foreign assistance initiatives at the highest levels of the U.S. Congress. I believe that my experience in the legislative branch and my background in Asia have prepared me well for the responsibilities of leading USAID's Asia Bureau. I will always be grateful that Leader Nancy Pelosi placed her faith and trust in me to lead on foreign policy priorities in her office. I am proud to have played a leadership role on numerous legislative initiatives including the landmark reauthorization of PEPFAR that tripled funding levels to fight global AIDS, the JADE Act that tightened sanctions on the Burmese Government after the Saffron Revolution, and the initial development assistance inside Tibet and to the then newly created country of East Timor.

For almost two decades, my second home has been in Congress. Over the years I have learned that initiatives are strongest when they are bipartisan, that open communication, transparency, and trust are crucial between the administration and Congress, and that making the case for foreign assistance in a manner that relates to the everyday lives of the American people is essential. I can assure you that, if confirmed, I will proactively reach out to Congress to ensure that we are working together to promote our national interests and our values.

I believe deeply in USAID's mission of partnering to end extreme poverty and promote resilient democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. The moral case alone is reason to address these global challenges, but in a more interdependent world, we are preventing instability, fighting extremism, stopping the spread of infectious diseases while promoting economic and job growth at home.

Administrator Shah's strong leadership is rebuilding USAID as the world's premier development agency. In a time of budget constraint, USAID is effectively leveraging funding by building public-private partnerships, utilizing multilateral and regional approaches, and taking advantage of science and innovation. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly with the dedicated men and women of USAID to ensure that U.S. taxpayer money is spent effectively and wisely.

USAID's Asia Bureau works in 32 countries—excluding Afghanistan and Pakistan—with a program budget of approximately $1.1 billion. It is an exciting and pivotal time for U.S. policy in Asia. Asia is a vibrant, diverse region with some of the strongest and fastest growing economies in the world. The region includes mature, consolidating, budding, and troubled democracies, along with authoritarian governments, struggling post-conflict nations, and emerging regional powers—all in the shadow of the rise of a great power.

The development challenges in Asia are enormous. Home to half of the world's population, the Asia region also struggles with 60 percent of the world's hungry and 70 percent of the world's malnourished children. The region is susceptible to natural disasters and the effects of climate change, pollution, and pandemics. It has a vast array of governance difficulties including fragile institutions, human rights concerns, gender inequality, and human trafficking challenges that hold back the region from achieving its full potential. At the same time, trade volume in Asia is expected to double in the next decade, and by 2050, the region's share of global GDP is predicted to almost double.

The President's Asia Rebalance recognizes that our future prosperity and security are inextricably tied to this region. At its core, the rebalance policy is about strengthening our relationships with countries, and more specifically the people of the region. If confirmed, I will place a premium on four key priorities: promoting resilient, democratic societies; institutionalizing the Presidential Initiatives—Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and the Global Climate Change Initiative; supporting basic education and empowerment for women and girls; and fostering greater regional economic connectivity.

First, we know that government by the people offers the best chance for freedom and prosperity. The United States also has stronger partnerships with stable, democratic countries that respect human rights. Fighting extreme poverty is often less a question of funding but in effectively addressing the underlying structural problems of governance that hold back many developing countries from becoming resilient, democratic societies.

I believe that the solutions to the challenges facing Asia will ultimately come from the people of Asia themselves and that our best chance in promoting democratic change is to empower the reformers by helping them build institutions that can withstand nondemocratic events.

Over the next 3 years we will learn a lot about democracy in Asia as many countries will hold national elections. Already this year, India has experienced the largest democratic exercise in human history, and next month, Indonesia, the most pop-

ulous Muslim-majority country, will mark another significant democratic milestone with the expected transfer of political power. While the recent elections in Bangladesh, unrest in Thailand, and unrealized democratic hopes in Cambodia represent challenges for democracy, the expected national elections in Burma, Nepal, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Philippines will further determine the future of democracy in Asia.

But democracy promotion is more than elections. USAID has been active in the region doing the difficult work strengthening civil society, providing technical support for good governance, combating corruption and promoting human rights.

Second, Administrator Shah has provided exemplary leadership in promoting President Obama's three initiatives—Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and the Global Climate Change Initiative.

Through Feed the Future, USAID is supporting country driven approaches that address the root causes of poverty and hunger by focusing on agricultural productivity. We know that growth in agriculture is at least twice as effective at reducing poverty as other sectors. For example, in Bangladesh, a country with one of the highest malnutrition rates in the region, USAID has trained hundreds of thousands of small farmers on improved technologies and increased crop yields by 20 percent through a fertilizer deep placement project. In Cambodia, new horticulture techniques have raised household incomes of over 7,000 farmers by an average of 250 percent. This type of assistance is particularly valuable because it promotes economic growth while at the same time feeding hungry and malnourished men, women, and children.

The Global Health Initiative is aimed at addressing regional health priorities, including ending preventable child and maternal deaths, preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as improving surveillance and response capacity for pandemic influenza and other emerging threats.

In February 2014, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry highlighted the urgency of addressing climate change. In a region of the world that experiences over 60 percent of the world's natural disasters, and with more than 10 billion pounds of airborne pollutants from Asia reaching the United States annually, it is imperative that we continue to reduce emissions from deforestation, promote sustainable and resilient societies, and foster clean energy in the Asia through the Global Climate Change Initiative.

If confirmed, I will make it a priority to build upon these gains in food security, health, and environmental well-being for both the people of Asia and the United States.

Third, the empowerment of women and girls through education is one of the most effective development tools and one of the best strategies to boost economic growth. While many Asian countries have recently made progress, nearly 20 million children in Asia—a third of the world's children—do not have access to primary school. Millions of children in Asia lack basic reading and writing skills thereby holding back the region for reaching its full potential. I am proud to have promoted basic education while in Congress and, if confirmed, this will continue to be a key priority. As Administrator Shah noted on International Women's Day, "If we are going to truly achieve the goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030, we cannot leave behind half of the global population. We have to invest in women and girls as champions of development who can lift their families out of extreme poverty."

And finally, we must continue to promote an effective regional architecture that strengthens regional stability, connectivity and economic growth through regional initiatives such as USAID's Almaty Consensus which supports the New Silk Road Initiative by increasing regional economic connectivity between South and Central Asia to bolster Afghanistan's stability; the Lower Mekong Initiative that provides a regional forum the development challenges that cross national boundaries; and by working with regional institutions such as ASEAN and APEC.

I would like to highlight a few priority countries where USAID operates.

In Bangladesh, the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse sparked outrage all over the world. Members of Congress led the way in calling for action to address labor and building safety conditions in the country. I played a role in this effort on a staff level working to call on corporations to improve building safety standards in Bangladesh and asking the administration to suspend the Generalized System of Preferences program until reforms are made. Please be assured that, if confirmed, workers' rights and safety will be a high priority for me throughout the region.

In Burma, we have seen historic political and economic reforms during this critical period of transition. The country faces a long and difficult road ahead, as transitions are never smooth nor are they ever easy. The next 2 years will be challenging in regards to national reconciliation and the national election in 2015. The USAID mission in Burma—which was reopened in 2012—is committed to supporting reform

that will bring lasting peace, stability, justice and improve the welfare of the people of Burma. If confirmed, my priorities in Burma will be to deepen USAID's engagement with civil society, expand economic opportunity, support reconciliation efforts, help the country prepare for the 2015 national elections, and continue providing humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable in the country.

In India, USAID helped secure a major success in the battle against polio when the World Health Organization officially removed India from the list of countries where the disease was active. In the coming years, USAID hopes to move more toward a 21st century partnership where USAID and India join together in tackling development challenges both in India and in the region.

When Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines, USAID had already been working for decades to strengthen disaster management and response capabilities. A USAID team was prepositioned, enabling an immediate response and ensuring a coordinated relationship between USAID, the Department of Defense, and other USG actors. Through relief efforts, USAID provided food assistance to more than 3 million people and helped save countless lives. If confirmed, I will continue to make both short- and long-term assistance to the Philippines a top priority.

While Vietnam is an emerging power with a high economic growth rate and a strategic position in the region, it is also a country with serious human rights concerns. USAID is continuing to focus its assistance to support the Vietnamese people as they confront the significant challenges they face related to health, susceptibility to climate change, and natural disasters. USAID also supports programs focused on economic governance and trade, and addressing legacies of the war between our two countries through the remediation of dioxin contamination.

Four years ago, President Obama set forth a new vision of results-driven development focused on achieving measureable results. Under the visionary leadership of Administrator Shah, USAID has risen to this challenge, pioneering a new model of development that brings a greater emphasis on partnerships, innovation, and results. In conclusion, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed to this position, I will tirelessly pursue policy solutions that make our foreign assistance more effective in line with this new model.

During my almost two decades working in the legislative branch, I have learned the importance of engagement with Congress and, if confirmed, I can assure you that I will seek out, early and often, advice and guidance from you and your staff.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome any and all questions you might have.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Osius.

STATEMENT OF THEODORE G. OSIUS III, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Mr. OSIUS. Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador to Vietnam.

I am very pleased that members of my family, including my mother, Nancy Zimmerman; my spouse, Clayton Bond; our 6-month-old son, Taybo; my sister Meg; cousin Deborah; cousins, Dick and Kate; and dear friends, Louise, David and Sam and Amy have all been able to join us here today.

I am very grateful to you, the Senator from Maryland, for chairing this hearing.

This, sir, is a dream come true for me. Early in my career, I had the privilege of supporting Pete Peterson, the first U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam following normalization, as he laid the foundation for a new relationship between our two nations. I represented Al Gore on the team that prepared a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam. And I accompanied President Bill Clinton on his historic visit there.

I have served in Asia for most of my 25 years in the Foreign Service. A highlight was helping lead the small team that opened our post in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. I relished the

chance to make friends for America in a land that once reminded Americans only of conflict.

I traveled all over Vietnam, once riding a bicycle 1,200 miles from Hanoi to Saigon. In the former demilitarized zone, I stood on a bridge gazing at what appeared to be ponds dotting the landscape. An older woman said in Vietnamese that those were not ponds, but places where bombs had been dropped, including on her village. When I told her that I represented the Government and people of the United States, she replied using the familial terms that make Vietnamese such an intimate language: "Hom nay, chung ta la anh chi em." Today you and I are brother and sister.

From those beginnings, I witnessed our relationship with Vietnam grow into an important partnership, founded on mutual respect and shared strategic interests.

As Secretary Kerry said, "A strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam that respects the rule of law and human rights will be a critical partner for the United States." While in the Senate, John Kerry joined with Senator John McCain to ensure that Americans could see Vietnam not just as a war, but as a nation and a people the United States could work with peacefully. They looked beyond the bomb craters and they saw hope for the future.

Their work included ensuring the fullest possible accounting of servicemen we lost in Vietnam, and we must complete that process honorably. Our history with Vietnam is a tough one, and even today we face real differences. If confirmed, I will face those differences squarely and directly with the leaders in Hanoi. I will say that when Vietnam's Government respects human rights, it will grow stronger, not weaker, and our partnership's potential will grow as well. I will press the government to protect universal human rights, including by releasing prisoners of conscience and by making systemic changes so that Vietnam can fully integrate within the world community because even as in families, differences can be worked out and history can be overcome.

If confirmed, I will strive to strengthen the ties that bind our peoples. Those linkages between people are central to the comprehensive partnership launched by President Obama and President Sang last year. Educational exchange is a good example. Already 16,000 Vietnamese study in the United States.

Trade is another key element of the relationship. Two-way trade continues to grow from $451 million in 1995 to nearly $30 billion last year. The successful conclusion of the high-standard Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement will further deepen this trade and strategic relationship, bringing Vietnam into a community of nations that comprises 40 percent of world GDP.

If confirmed, I will also maintain a firm commitment to the safety and security of all staff working for our mission.

Half of the world's ship-based cargo passes through the South China Sea. The United States has a national interest in the unfettered flow of commerce and in freedom of navigation and overflight in these waters. We have a deep stake in ensuring that the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea are solved without coercion, force, or intimidation, and in accordance with international law. Unfortunately, we have seen lately a pattern of

unilateral steps by China to advance its territorial and maritime claims.

The U.S. Congress plays a vital role in turning our difficult past with Vietnam into a promising future. If confirmed, I look forward to hosting many of you, I hope, in Hanoi.

Thank you once again for considering my nomination for this challenging and rewarding opportunity to continue to serve the United States of America.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Osius follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THEODORE G. OSIUS III

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador to Vietnam.

I am very pleased that members of my family and dear friends are able to join us today. I am grateful to the Senator from Maryland for chairing this hearing, and grateful to all of you for considering my nomination.

This is a dream come true for me. Early in my career I had the privilege of supporting Pete Peterson, the first U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam following normalization, as he laid the foundation for a new relationship between our two nations. I represented Vice President Al Gore on the team that prepared a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam, and I accompanied President Bill Clinton on his historic visit there.

I have served in Asia for most of my 25 years in the Foreign Service. A highlight was helping lead the small team that opened our post in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. I relished the chance to make friends for America in a land that once only reminded Americans of conflict.

I traveled all over Vietnam, once riding a bicycle 1,200 miles from Hanoi to Saigon. In the former demilitarized zone, I stood on a bridge, gazing at what appeared to be ponds dotting the landscape. An older woman said in Vietnamese that those were not ponds, but places where bombs had been dropped, including on her village. When I told her that I represented the government and people of the United States, she replied using the familial terms that make Vietnamese such an intimate language: "Hom nay, chung ta la anh chi em." You and I are now brother and sister.

From those beginnings, I witnessed our relationship with Vietnam grow into an important partnership, founded on mutual respect and shared strategic interests.

As Secretary Kerry said last year in Hanoi, "a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam that respects the rule of law and human rights will be a critical partner for the United States on many regional and global challenges." While in the Senate, John Kerry joined with Senator John McCain to ensure that Americans could see Vietnam not just as a war, but as a nation and a people the United States could work with peacefully. They looked beyond the bomb craters and saw hope for the future.

Their work included ensuring the fullest possible accounting of servicemen we lost in Vietnam, and we must complete that process honorably. Our history with Vietnam is a tough one, and even today we face real differences. If confirmed, I will face those differences squarely and directly with the leaders in Hanoi. I will say that when Vietnam's Government respects human rights it will grow stronger, not weaker, and our partnership's potential will grow as well. I will press the government to protect universal human rights, including by releasing prisoners of conscience and by making systemic changes, so that Vietnam can fully integrate with the world community. Because even as in families, among brothers and sisters, differences can be worked out, and history can be overcome.

If confirmed, I will strive to strengthen the ties that bind our peoples. Those linkages between people are central to the Comprehensive Partnership launched by President Obama and President Sang last year. Educational exchange is a good example; already 16,000 Vietnamese study in the United States, and others attend the Fulbright Economics Training Program in Ho Chi Minh City.

Trade is another key element of the relationship. Two-way trade continues to grow—from $451 million in 1995 to nearly $30 billion last year. The successful conclusion of the high-standard Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement will further deepen this trade and strategic relationship, bringing Vietnam into a community of nations that contributes 40 percent of world GDP.

Under the Comprehensive Partnership, our two nations are working to support peace, stability, cooperation, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific. We have expanded our work with Vietnam in areas such as security, nonproliferation, and law enforce-

ment. If confirmed, I intend to continue the efforts of my predecessors to broaden and deepen our engagement. I will also maintain a firm commitment to the safety and security of all staff working for our mission.

Half of the world's ship-based cargo passes through the South China Sea. The United States has a national interest in the unfettered flow of commerce and in freedom of navigation and overflight in these waters.

We have a deep stake in ensuring that the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea are solved without coercion, force, or intimidation and in accordance with international law. Unfortunately, we have seen lately a pattern of unilateral steps by China to advance its territorial and maritime claims, the latest of which is China's introduction of an oil rig into disputed waters near Vietnam.

The U.S. Congress plays a vital role in turning our difficult past with Vietnam into a promising future. If confirmed, I look forward to hosting many of you in Hanoi. Thank you, once again, for considering my nomination for this challenging and rewarding opportunity to continue to serve the United States of America.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Ms. Polaschik.

STATEMENT OF JOAN A. POLASCHIK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Ms. POLASCHIK. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to be the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence that he and Secretary Kerry have shown by making this nomination.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to take a moment to thank my family: my mom, Marion Polaschik; my sister, Anne; her husband and son, Keith and Grant, are here today. They have been a tremendous support throughout my career, and I am very grateful to them.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has a robust partnership with Algeria. If confirmed by the Senate, I will advance the following policy priorities: working with the Government of Algeria to counter the threat of terrorism and strengthen regional stability; increasing commercial ties; boosting civil society and democratic institutions; and working with the Algerian Government to support the reforms necessary to Algeria's long-term stability.

As Ambassador, I will make my top priority the protection of the people who serve in U.S. Embassy Algiers and all Americans who live and work in Algeria.

The Government of Algeria is a steadfast partner in our counter-terrorism efforts. It is a member of the Global Counter-terrorism Forum and the Trans-Sahel Counter-terrorism Partnership and is working with its neighbors to stabilize the broader Maghreb and Sahel region, including through training programs in Mali and Niger and close cooperation with Tunisia. If confirmed, I will work to support and expand these efforts.

Algeria is a critical supplier of energy to global markets. It has potentially vast untapped shale gas reserves, and its government is eager to partner with U.S. firms to develop them.

Beyond oil and gas, Algeria is working to diversify its economy, and there is significant potential for U.S. companies, particularly in the energy generation, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and machinery sectors. If confirmed, I will advocate for American companies in all of these areas.

Algeria has an important role to play in strengthening relations between North and sub-Saharan Africa and its mediating role in conflicts around the continent remains vital. Algeria would gain from increasing trade within the region, and its willingness to lead in this area will be critical to realizing regional integration, including with Morocco. To that end, we appreciate Algeria's support for the U.N.-led negotiations over the disputed territory of the Western Sahara.

Unlike other countries in the region, Algeria did not experience the upheaval of the Arab Spring. President Bouteflika introduced political reforms in 2011 and recently announced a series of constitutional amendments to further develop Algeria's political system. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the Algerian Government and people as they take the next steps in negotiating, adopting, and implementing reforms that will strengthen Algeria's long-term stability.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for this opportunity to address you. I am deeply honored to have been selected to lead the team at U.S. Embassy Algiers, a dynamic, hardworking, and dedicated group working on the front lines of U.S. policy. If confirmed, I hope I will have many opportunities to host you and your colleagues in Congress in Algiers. I would be pleased to address any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Polaschik follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOAN A. POLASCHIK

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Rubio, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to be the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence he and Secretary Kerry have shown by making this nomination.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take a moment to thank my family, which has been a tremendous support throughout my career. My mother, Marion Polaschik, and my sister, Anne, and her husband and son, Keith and Grant Barcal, have provided love, support, and a place to stay no matter where I was in the world and no matter how much worry I caused them by pursuing challenging assignments. I'm very grateful to them.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has a robust and multifaceted partnership with the people and Government of Algeria. I am fortunate to be nominated at a time when the potential for expanding that bilateral relationship has never been stronger. In April 2014 we completed the latest round of our Strategic Dialogue, and just 2 weeks ago the Secretary of Energy visited Algeria to lead the U.S. delegation to the Algeria International Trade Fair—where the United States was the guest of honor for the first time. If confirmed by the Senate, I will continue to advance our key U.S. foreign policy interests in Algeria. They are: (1) working with the Government of Algeria to counter the threat of terrorism and strengthen the stability of the Maghreb and Sahel regions; (2) increasing commercial ties between the United States and Algeria; (3) boosting civil society and democratic institutions; and (4) working with the Algerian Government to support the political and economic reforms necessary to ensure Algeria's long-term stability. And as Ambassador, I will make my priority the protection of the people who serve in U.S. Embassy Algiers, and all Americans who live and work in Algeria.

We know that we work in a dangerous part of the world, and I am pleased to report that the Algerian Government is deeply committed to the safety and security of our personnel and facilities, and has been extremely responsive to our requests for security support.

Mr. Chairman, the relationship between the United States and Algeria continues to grow stronger. Since 9/11, our nations have joined together in the struggle against violent extremism. Algeria is on the front lines of the battle against violent extremism, having suffered the scourge of terrorism since the 1990s, and most recently in the attack on the gas-production facility near In Amenas in January 2013. The Government of Algeria understands the need to remain vigilant against those

who wish to do us harm and is a steadfast partner in our counterterrorism efforts including as an active participant in the Global Counter-terrorism Forum and the Trans-Sahel Counter-terrorism Partnership. While terrorist activity in Algeria has decreased since the dark decade of the 1990s, the Algerian Government knows as well as the United States that violent extremism remains a threat. President Bouteflika was the first Arab leader to call President Bush following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, reflecting our shared view of the dangers posed by terrorism. This call was an expression of support that led to even greater cooperation.

Today, Algeria is working with its neighbors to stabilize the broader Maghreb and Sahel region. Algeria has taken positive steps to help train security forces in countries like Mali and Niger in the Sahel. Algeria has also provided airlift support to African peacekeeping troops. The Algerian military has taken action to secure its eastern border to combat smuggling and weapons proliferation. Tunisia and Algeria have formed a close security relationship to aggressively confront violent extremists. We continue to engage with Algeria about the security situation in Libya and the challenge of foreign fighters in Syria as well. If confirmed, I will work to support these efforts.

While counterterrorism and security remain the cornerstone of our relationship, in recent years we have expanded beyond CT to form a robust diplomatic, political, and economic partnership as well. In recent years, we have held two bilateral Strategic Dialogues, former Secretary Clinton visited Algeria twice, Secretary Kerry just visited in April 2014, and Energy Secretary Moniz opened the U.S. pavilion of the Algerian International Trade Fair—where 80 companies and organizations represented our commercial and economic interests in Algeria. These visits and dialogues are indicative of our rapidly expanding commercial and social ties.

As one of the largest oil and gas producers in the Middle East and Africa, Algeria is a critical supplier of energy to Europe and global markets. Algeria has significant remaining energy resources and potentially vast untapped unconventional hydrocarbon resources, and its government is eager to partner with U.S. firms, whose expertise in this sector is unparalleled in the world. If confirmed, I will advocate for U.S. companies who can partner with Algeria to safely develop shale gas and other resources to ensure stability in global energy markets and bring further development and prosperity to the people of Algeria.

Beyond oil and gas, Algeria is interested in diversifying its economy, and there is significant potential in the Algerian market for U.S. companies. Last year General Electric won a contract worth several billion dollars to develop Algeria's electricity sector. U.S. companies in the fields of pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and machinery are investing in Algeria and have won multimillion dollar deals in recent years.

Algeria has long had a significant political and diplomatic role in Middle Eastern and African affairs—it is literally at the confluence of Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Arab world. Algeria is a key player in the Arab League, the African Union, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It is a long-standing member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and a founding member of the New Economic Partnership for African Development. Algeria is also active in the Arab Maghreb Union, which has the potential to bring the Maghreb states closer together.

Algeria has an important role to play in strengthening relations between North and sub-Saharan Africa, and its mediating role in conflicts around the continent will remain vital to finding peaceful solutions there. Algeria has forgiven the debt of multiple African countries, and is looking for ways to boost economic development of its neighbors to the south. Algeria would gain from increasing trade within the region, and its willingness to lead in this area will be critical to realizing long-held dreams of regional integration, including with Morocco. To that end, we appreciate Algeria's support for the U.N.-led negotiations over the disputed territory of the Western Sahara. We also welcome Algeria's participation in the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit later this summer. I know the President looks forward to genuine dialogue with leaders of African nations, and we look forward to hearing from Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal—who will represent Algeria—about the many ways that Algeria stands ready to partner with and support its neighbors on the continent.

Unlike other countries in the region, Algeria did not experience the upheaval of the Arab Spring. President Bouteflika introduced political reforms in 2011, and recently announced a series of constitutional amendments to further develop Algeria's political system. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the Algerian Government and people as they take the next steps in negotiating, adopting, and implementing reforms that will strengthen Algeria's long-term stability.

The potential of the Algerian people is limitless. As Secretary Kerry saw firsthand during his recent trip, the people of Algeria are eager to partner with the United

States to develop people-to-people ties. We have expanded our cultural connections with Algeria, including boosting English Language Education, increasing opportunities for Algerians to study in the United States, and develop other educational exchange opportunities. Additionally, programs like those promoted by the Middle East Partnership Initiative help build civil society and will help bring our countries even closer together. If confirmed, I will work with the Algerian Government and people to continue and expand these programs.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the great honor of serving as a Foreign Service officer for the last 20 years. I have worked in and on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, focusing on countries that present some of the same challenges and rich opportunities that exist in Algeria. My previous assignments in Azerbaijan and Libya provided an extensive background in the counterterrorism and energy issues that are critical to our partnership with Algeria, while multiple tours in transitional and post-conflict countries have instilled a profound appreciation for the importance of political and economic reform to long-term stability, and for the power of people-to-people diplomacy to build lasting partnerships.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, ranking member Rubio, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to address you. I'm deeply honored to have been selected to lead the team in U.S. Embassy Algiers, a dynamic, hard-working, and dedicated group working on the front lines of U.S. policy. If confirmed, I hope I will have many occasions to host you and your colleagues in Congress in Algiers. I would be pleased to address any questions that you may have.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you and I thank again all four of you for your testimony and your appearance here.

As I said at the beginning of the hearing, this panel represents two of our three pillars of national defense, that is, diplomacy and development assistance. And that is by far the best return we get from the point of view of the dollars that are invested in our national security. So we look at each of you as critically important players in advancing the national security of the United States.

Mr. Osius, let me start with you. You and I have had a chance to chat, and I very much appreciate your career commitment to the Foreign Service and what you have been able to do to advance U.S. interests.

Vietnam is a very interesting country. They truly want to develop a much closer tie to the United States for many reasons. The security issue in the China Sea is one reason and their relationship with China, which is problematic right now because of the incident concerning the oil rig, is another reason. And they look at the United States as a reliable partner. So they were anxious to get into the TPP, which would be really revolutionary in the sense that we have a multilateral agreement that involves countries at different levels of development. And that issue was brought home to me in my conversations with the leaders of Vietnam.

I made it clear that there needs to be advancements in good governance and human rights in order to see the type of strategic partnerships between the United States and Vietnam that both countries would like to see.

Ambassador Shear has been very direct with the Vietnamese about this issue. As you and I have commented, he has that little card he points out with his checklist. I just would like to get your observations as to how you see your role, if confirmed, in advancing the U.S. objectives of improving the strategic ties between our two countries but doing it mindful that good governance and human rights must be improved.

Mr. OSIUS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And may I thank you very much for the time that you invested in traveling to Vietnam. It was very clear from the reception that you received

that they knew they were welcoming a heavyweight. They wanted very much to have constructive conversations with you, and by all reports, it was a terrific trip. So thank you so much for taking the time to travel there.

On TPP, as you mentioned, Vietnam is the least developed of the 12 countries that are negotiating. Along with Malaysia, it stands to benefit most should TPP succeed, should we conclude a TPP agreement. So I think that, as well as the strategic situation that the Vietnamese are facing in the South China Sea, means if we want to help advance good governance, respect for rule of law and for human rights, now is the time. There is really no better time than this year, given the Vietnamese interest in a deepening partnership with us.

Since the time that our two Presidents agreed on a comprehensive partnership, there have been some modest advances in human rights. You mentioned Ambassador Shear's little card. I have been carrying it around ever since my nomination. And by my calculation, one-third of the items that Ambassador Shear had listed on that card the Vietnamese have already dealt with. We would all like to see all of these issues dealt with, but I think we are making some progress.

I think some of that progress may be as a result of direct American engagement and the fact that the Congress is so much interested in this issue is a fact that is not at all lost upon Vietnamese leaders. Since the time the partnership was announced, the Vietnamese have signed the Convention Against Torture. They have published an ILO report on forced labor and child labor. They have released a small number of prisoners. The trick going forward will be to ensure that those prisons are not refilled but that the changes that are made are systemic. And I do believe we have a real opportunity to make those changes in the time ahead.

Senator CARDIN. Well, as you point out, they released a few of the prisoners of conscience, but there are still many more that are imprisoned. They will have on their law books crimes that under international standards should not be crimes, but people just expressing their peaceful disagreements with government and they should be able to do that. They still have a problem on the registration of religious organizations.

And what I think is the most challenging part is how they deal with corruption. As I pointed out, this is not a unique issue in Vietnam. Many countries have extreme challenges here. But Vietnam must be on a path to rid itself of the amount of corruption it has. We saw in Ukraine that the motivating force behind the populist uprising was a corrupt government more so than the philosophy of that government. And I think it is clear that that issue has to be high on our list for good governance reforms within Vietnam.

Mr. OSIUS. Yes, sir. Transparency International lists Vietnam as 116 out of 177 on its corruption index. I think the people of Vietnam would like to see that situation improve as well. And as you mentioned, there have been bloggers who have been imprisoned. Internet freedom is one of the issues that we have tried hard to advance and that, if confirmed, I would continue to work to advance.

Senator CARDIN. Do you have any recommendations in regards to the maritime security challenges? The relationship right now be-

tween Vietnam and China is dangerous in regards to the rhetoric we hear. The U.S. position is pretty clear. We want a peaceful resolution of the territorial issues. We do not take sides on who is right, but we do take sides on it being handled in a peaceful manner and not through unilateral actions such as what China did.

Any thoughts as to how you could be helpful in preserving a peaceful resolution of these issues and dealing with the commerce that goes through the China Seas?

Mr. OSIUS. First, I agree with your characterization. We have a great stake in how these issues are resolved and that they are resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law.

I would suggest that the strongest thing that we can do to send a signal in the region is continue to build powerful partnerships. We are building partnerships with ASEAN nations, including with Vietnam, over time. I think if there is a calculus that is being made by the Chinese, that calculus will be affected by the strength of our partnerships in the region.

With Vietnam in particular, we have strengthened our maritime relationship. Last December, Secretary Kerry announced a $25 million program, $18 million of which will go to Vietnam for strengthening collaboration between our two Coast Guards. I think we should explore further expansion of Vietnam's maritime domain awareness and how we can help Vietnam build its capacity to deal with the challenges in the South China Sea. And I think we should continue to stand by our allies. Here I am going beyond Vietnam—but to support our allies such as the Philippines and, of course, Japan as they deal with these challenges.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to all of our witnesses today. I know you will serve the United States very well. I just have a few questions for a couple of our witnesses relative to our growing economic relationship, especially through the negotiation of TPP.

But, first, let me say, although I do not have any questions for Mr. Stivers, I had the chance to work with him as he was of great assistance and counsel to the House majority. I know you will serve USAID just as well as you did the House majority and then the House minority caucus.

I wanted just to talk a little bit, maybe direct the question to you, Mr. Lippert, regarding negotiations over TPP and where South Korea may fall into those negotiations. A lot of us were skeptical of the Korea FTA not necessarily because of the writing on the page but because of our concerns about how it would be enforced. Some of those concerns have been borne out. In particular, one of the primary selling points for the FTA was the potential boon to U.S. auto manufacturers with their ability to sell into the Korean market, and we have seen sort of this strange concoction of tax credit and tax penalty that has so far meant that we have not, I think, witnessed the benefit that some had predicted.

I would just be interested in your thoughts on how we can continue to work through the existing enforcement issues with our FTA that has been signed and whether that prevents us from moving Korea into a broader conversation about being part of TPP.

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, thanks for the question.

You make a good point, and I would just say that if confirmed, one of my top priorities would be full implementation of the KORUS FTA. As you rightly point out, there are some uneven implementation issues, autos origin. The origin issue is also a big one as well that we have to continue to sort through. We have made a little progress on the data issue, it seems to me, but I do think that the autos issue remains outstanding. We have seen some progress. I think the stats are something—there is an 80-percent increase in U.S. automobiles into the country, and there is some progress there.

But I think you are right. We do have to stay on this, and I think having dealt with the South Korean Government in a defense capacity, I do feel that sustained U.S. engagement and raising the issue in consultation with USTR is one prong of the issue, that we just have to stay on it.

The second issue that I have seen work is senior-level visits. We tend to make progress around visits by the President, by the Vice President, by the Secretary of State. So lining up those engagements to try to make progress on these key trade issues would also be a way ahead as well.

But I do take the point. I think there is more work left to be done.

Senator MURPHY. How important is it to bring them into the rubric of the TPP negotiations? We have our own FTA obviously, but what are the stakes with respect to that decision?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, I think two things. I think you raise an excellent question.

I think the first point I would make is that the priority, if confirmed, for me is KORUS implementation. I think we have just got to get that done, first and foremost.

Second is as Ambassador Froman will tell you, we have got to finish the round here at TPP and work with Congress to try to make progress on it. At that point, I think we have said we welcome South Koreans' interest in the TPP. We look forward to consulting with them in the standard mechanisms, but I do think that if you can bring South Korea down the road, get all the aforementioned issues taken care of, I think it would be a boon to TPP overall.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Osius, I may have missed this. I did not get to hear your prepared testimony, but some have suggested that Vietnam has the farthest to travel in terms of domestic economic reforms in order to be ready for TPP. We have always had serious concerns about the ability of their government to protect intellectual property rights. What do you think about their ability to make the necessary changes in order to be part of that agreement and, to the point that we were discussing with respect to Korea, be able to actually enforce U.S. companies' rights as part of that agreement?

Mr. OSIUS. Senator, I think TPP offers us the best opportunity to put the Vietnamese in a position where they must, in order to meet the terms that they have agreed to, do a much better job at enforcing intellectual property rights. One of the things that will be a challenge for the Vietnamese is meeting the very high labor

standards that are set by the TPP. If they accede to the agreement, they will have to support ILO fundamental labor rights such as freedom of association, collective bargaining. They will have to deal with child and forced labor and essentially uphold rule of law when it comes to labor in ways that they have not done in the past. It will be a hard road for them to travel. The United States has shown that we are willing to help them build capacity, including in the area of customs enforcement where it will also be very important for them to work harder than they have in the past to meet the high standards of the TPP.

Senator MURPHY. And switching gears, just one question for you, Ms. Polaschik. Can you talk about Algeria within a regional context? It is maddening, frankly, to see the lack of cooperation in particular between Algeria and Morocco when it comes to combating terrorism and AQIM. What is the ability of the United States State Department and the embassy to try to get a little bit more regional cooperation, especially between those two nations when it comes to counterterrorism activity?

Ms. POLASCHIK. Senator, thank you for that question.

I think there are a couple of parts to that answer, and the first part is that Algeria is actually demonstrating quite impressive leadership on regional issues with respect to counterterrorism. Algeria, as you know, had its own long, difficult struggle with domestic terrorism and, with the growth of these new transnational groups, has been cooperating very, very closely with Tunisia to conduct operations against the extremists that are operating on their shared border. Algeria has put tens of thousands of military troops on its southeastern border to prevent the flow of weapons and terrorists from Mali and Libya and is working very, very closely with Mali and Niger to strengthen those two countries' capacity to combat transnational threats.

Yes, Senator, you are right. Algeria and Morocco do have a very complicated relationship, and we consistently urge both countries to work to improve them because they have shared interests in combating transnational terrorism, illegal migration, the smuggling of drugs. And we also share those interests. So we are doing everything possible to promote better relations between those two countries, and we urge them to delink the issue of western Sahara from their bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I certainly would reach out to my colleague, Ambassador Bush, in Morocco and his team to talk about ways that we could work together to improve this very critical relationship.

Senator MURPHY. Great.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of our nominees.

Senator CARDIN. Well, there is no country that has a more difficult relationship with one of its neighbors in the region, that are both closely aligned to the United States, than Korea with Japan. So, Mr. Lippert, what can you do representing our country? How do you intend to proceed with improving the relationship between Korea and Japan?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, thanks for that question.

As you know—and you have been out to the region many, many times and have dealt with this issue firsthand. So you are deeply

knowledgeable and steeped in this issue, having talked to you last week on this issue.

I think the first principle is that it is by far in U.S. national security interests that the Republic of Korea and Japan have a good relationship. There is a lot in common. They are both democracies, both free market economies. There is good trade back and forth, so on and so forth. And it is important for regional security that they do work together.

In terms of what I would do, if confirmed as Ambassador, is—you know, Ambassador Kennedy and the State Department team back in Washington—we would not play a mediation role. We obviously have conversations to encourage a better dialogue between the Japanese and South Koreans to work through some of these very difficult and painful historical issues. In my capacity as Assistant Secretary, for example, we worked very hard to add trilateral cooperation to the agenda at the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2 successive years. We completed ministerial level talks that brought Japanese and Korean defense ministers closer together. The President at The Hague also had a trilateral session with the Japanese and South Korean leaders in order to find areas of common interest, common cooperation, and common security.

But at the end of the day, both sides, the Japanese and the South Koreans, are two great countries with two very effective foreign ministries and are capable of making progress on this issue. And we can play an important role in encouraging that dialogue back and forth.

Senator CARDIN. I think it is important to have an honest and open discussion about this. The sensitivities here are great and actions taken by one country are interpreted rather strongly by the other. So whatever you can do in that regard to make it clear that they really need to go at least halfway—each country—in order to resolve this—and to improve their bilateral relationship. I think it is very important.

I want to get to North Korea just for one moment and how you see the best way to try to advance the concerns we have with North Korea. And I want to just preface that. North Korea is more than a threat against the region because of its nuclear capacity. It is a threat against its region because of its total disregard for the rights of its people and its economy that is in shambles. How would you suggest that we try to deal with these risks against regional stability?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, thanks for the question.

You are right. North Korea does pose a serious threat to the United States and its allies because of its nuclear and missile programs, but also its gross human rights violations, as outlined in the United Nations Commission of Inquiry. If you read that document, the evidence is staggering against the regime and the abhorrent behavior that it has demonstrated to its own people.

In terms of moving forward on the North Korea issue, I would just say, if confirmed, there are sort of three lines by which primarily out of Washington. But obviously I would be helpful, if confirmed as Ambassador.

The first is continue to build the international consensus to isolate North Korea and its regime. And perhaps one of the best examples is to isolate them on the human rights issue.

The second is to continue the pressure and the sanctions, both multilateral sanctions and unilateral sanctions, as well as military exercises to keep the North Koreans in check and to send a strong signal that the United States is watching their behavior.

And finally, what I have been working on at the Defense Department, which is strong defense and deterrence, and that means increasing the number of ground-based interceptors in Alaska. That means adding a second TPY–2 radar in Japan to booster our missile defense, two new ballistic missile defense cruisers by 2017, and the movement of the THAAD on Guam to ensure that we stay one step ahead of the North Korean threat both in terms of our own homeland and our allies.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Mr. Stivers, I am a big fan of Administrator Shah's efforts to leverage our development assistance in countries by trying to do what we can to move toward self-sufficiency and country sustainability so that our foreign development assistance is not needed forever, and doing so by leveraging government efforts with private sector funds and local participation.

Asia is an interesting region. There are a lot of challenges that are there. Can you just share with us how you would carry out that goal that Administrator Shah has mentioned about leveraging our development assistance for sustainability and private partnerships?

Mr. STIVERS. Well, thank you, Senator, for that question, and thank you for your leadership on Asia issues.

USAID has implemented a new model of development that does focus more on public-private partnerships, regional solutions to regional challenges, and certainly with the advances in science and innovation. And I know you have been a leader on the Global Development Lab, and I think that is one way where USAID is working to promote science and innovation. And in particular in Asia, I know USAID has launched something called the Millennium Alliance in India which brings together university partners and corporation partners to support new innovations, new development challenges regarding education and health. And I think that is one way where it has been very successful.

We are in a tight budgetary era, and we want to do more in terms of the rebalance in terms of the emphasis on the region. And to the extent that we can leverage more resources in this new model of development, I think Administrator Shah has done an exemplary job of moving AID in that direction.

Senator CARDIN. I wanted to get your views on how you would use development assistance to advance good governance and human rights. You have already mentioned young women and girls, and I very much appreciate that. The gender equity issues have been a huge priority under Secretary Clinton and now under Secretary Kerry, and it is an area that we need to continue to advance.

I remember a hearing that we had several years ago with former President Clinton as a witness and talking about how he goes about development assistance in other countries, and that there is

zero tolerance for corruption. We are not doing a country any favors if we are participating in just feeding a corrupt regime.

I want to get your commitment that that will be the policy of USAID, that yes, we want to help countries, but they must be on a path toward improving good governance and that our development assistance will not fuel further corruption of regimes.

Mr. STIVERS. Absolutely. Thank you for that, Senator, and thank you for your longtime support on good governance and human rights issues.

There are certainly governance challenges and concerns throughout Asia in a number of countries that USAID provides assistance to. Good governance is central to development. It is hard to do other development initiatives, whether you are making advances in health or food, unless you are addressing the underlying structural problems that sometimes cause poverty, and a lot of times, that has to do with poor governance. And to the extent that USAID is in these countries strengthening civil society, training journalists, promoting citizen participation and oversight, I think AID's programs in many countries are very good in this regard. And it will be a top commitment for me if confirmed.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Ms. Polaschik, I want to come back. Senator Murphy covered somewhat terrorism and counterterrorism and what we have to do working with other countries. It is one of our highest priorities. I understand there is still a warning against U.S. visitors to that country about the threat of safety from terrorist activities. Obviously, that is unacceptable. So we need to do a more effective job.

But I want to get your view on how we can improve good governance in Algeria. It is an oil- and gas-rich country. It is questionable as to whether the wealth is getting to the people in the most efficient way. I would just like to get your assessment as to how we could be helpful in promoting good governance in Algeria.

Ms. POLASCHIK. Mr. Chairman, thank you for that question. It is a very good one.

By all accounts, Algeria is a challenging place to do business. The World Bank's most recent Ease of Doing Business report, for example, lists it at number 153 of 187 of all countries worldwide. And American companies do raise concerns with us, in particular, about transparency in the decisionmaking process.

That said, the Algerian Government realizes that it needs to take steps to reform and particularly to diversify its economy. As you know, it is heavily dependent upon the hydrocarbon sector. And in order to diversify the economy, they are going to have to make some pretty marked improvements to their overall business climate. And I think there are some things that could be done pretty easily to improve that. One would be to improve their overall regulatory environment. Two would be to ease the administrative processing, like one-stop shopping for registering businesses, and improving access to decisionmakers.

The U.S. Government already is working in this area to support these efforts. We have some MEPI, the Middle East Partnership Initiative, assistance programs that are working with grassroots Algerian NGOs that are working to promote greater transparency.

So if confirmed, I certainly would continue and support these efforts to make the changes that are necessary.

Senator CARDIN. It is my understanding that the government is directly involved in the extractive industries in Algeria. Transparency is going to be critically important here. We found that in other countries. And I am not as familiar with Algeria as I would like to be, but I would like to get your commitment that we will make it clear that transparency is absolutely essential so that there can be a better tracing as to how the resources are being used in Algeria for its own development.

Ms. POLASCHIK. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

I now yield to Senator Rubio who informs us he has been tied up in the Intelligence Committee. Not much going on around the world like Iraq, so I do not know why that would tie you up too long.

Senator RUBIO. I am just glad to be here.

I do not have extensive questions. I think a lot of it has probably already been asked and answered. But I wanted to revisit a couple points.

I am sure, Mr. Lippert, you have been asked about relations between Korea and Japan. Let me start with a separate question. It was an issue that I have confronted in Florida, which we actually raised during my visit to Korea in February of this year. As you know, the free trade agreement with Korea I believe was a win for them, as it is for us. But we have had some implementation issues regarding—for example, Florida citrus growers have had an issue. The fundamental issue is that the Koreans have disputed in the past or have asked questions about whether that citrus is truly being produced and packaged in Florida or maybe it is coming from Brazil and just being brought through. And we were able to use the Embassy to facilitate a visit by South Korean officials to Florida where they were able to confirm all of it.

So my question is, as we proceed with the implementation of this agreement, I anticipate there may be further instances of this in the future that may arise on either side. And I think I know the answer will be yes, but I just wanted to get a commitment that you will be actively engaged through your office and the Embassy to resolve any sort of disputes that might arise in this process because I think they are critical to the future of any other trade agreements, whether it is TPP or anything else.

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, the answer is unequivocally yes.

Senator RUBIO. And then the second point—I am confident that you have been asked about it, but I was not here. So let me ask you about it as well.

When I was there, one of the issues that truly captured everyone's attention was the friction between the Abe government and South Korea, some of the issues that have arisen around that. In fact, I felt it was perhaps even more dominant than the concerns about China's illegitimate claims in the region or maybe not to the level of the risk posed by North Korea, but it was certainly one of the dominant features of our visit and for the United States, a very troubling one because both of these are critical alliances for us, in fact, perhaps the two most important alliances in that region.

Can you give us an update about where we stand with regard to that? Has there been improvement? Has that continued to degrade? Has there been any evidence that over the last few months the leadership of both countries have made efforts to try to bridge that divide and reestablish a cooperative working relationship? Because they have some mutually—they share some mutual defense concerns and economic ones.

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, it is an excellent question. And thanks for your travel out to the region. I did follow it closely and actually read one of your op-eds that you published on Asia recently.

To your point, I think it remains challenging. I will say that there has been some progress, especially on the United States engaging in a trilateral way. The President had a very good trilateral summit with the two leaders on the margins of The Hague. I actually hosted the Defense Trilateral Talks here in Washington at the Pentagon between the South Koreans and Japanese, and there was some very good exchanges and frank discussions that I think were helpful. Secretary Hagel had a trilateral meeting on the margins of the Shangri-La Dialogue that I think also helped move the ball forward, at least in terms of some of the security issues. And then Ambassador Davies also had a recent exchange with some of the six-party talks negotiators here both on the Japanese and South Korean side. So I think there has been progress, but I would say that a lot more work needs to be done.

Senator RUBIO. And the other point I would make—and I wanted your opinion on this. Of course, in Japan, there has been a lot of conversation about how they can reinterpret their existing constitutional provisions to allow them to engage in collective self-defense. For us, of course, we largely benefit from that because if in fact one of our ships or personnel came under attack right now, given the strictest definition of the constitutional provisions in Japan, a very capable Japanese defense force theoretically would not be able to come to our defense.

How is that goal of the Abe government to be a little bit more liberal in their application of that provision—how do they view that in Korea? Is there a sense there that there could be a defense partnership between those countries as a result of greater capabilities on the part of the Japanese?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, I think you outlined the up-sides of the reinterpretation of collective self-defense, as well as our own review that we do bilaterally with the Japanese called the Guidelines Review in helping instill greater capabilities to the U.S.-Japan alliance.

But to your precise question, what we have done at the Pentagon and elsewhere across the administration is encourage transparency and consultation with the South Korean Government on this issue. I still think it is a touchy subject. That is my own personal view. And we do have to do a good job, a better job of making sure that there is good outreach and information exchange. That was one of the focuses at the Shangri-La Dialogue where Secretary Hagel hosted his two counterparts to encourage that exchange on the reinterpretation of the constitution. It is what I did at the Defense Trilateral Talks as well here in Washington that preceded that in order to exchange information, demystify, get clarifying questions

answered because I think there are concerns that are still out there that we have to work through in a consultative manner.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

And I wanted to briefly pivot to Mr. Osius.

Thank you all for your service, by the way, and I congratulate you on your nomination and wish you all the best. Hopefully we will be able to visit some of you in your new posts.

I wanted to ask you two things. First, I am sure you have been asked already about the situation with regard to the conflict with the Chinese, and I missed that portion. Could you just update me on what you think our role is with regard to conflicts such as those where we do not have an existing defense agreement in the way we do with Japan or South Korea? But yet, we have an interest in territorial claims not being abused.

Mr. OSIUS. I agreed very much with the way the chairman characterized our position. We have a strong interest in the behavior of nations. Even if we have not taken a position on specific territorial disputes, we have a strong interest in the rule of law being observed. We have a strong interest in nations resolving territorial disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law.

My suggestion was that we can change the calculus of the Chinese in the South China Sea by forming powerful partnerships, and that partnerships with our allies, the Philippines and Japan and Thailand and others, but also with partners such as Indonesia and Vietnam can also change the calculus. And our partnership with Vietnam in the strategic areas is growing. We already have agreement on high-level dialogue on search and rescue, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peacekeeping operations. And where the relationship is growing fastest is in the area of maritime security.

Senator RUBIO. I have one brief question. Is that OK? I apologize.

This is a particular case that has arisen in Vietnam that I hope, when you are confirmed, that you will take up as a cause. In 2012, a Lutheran pastor, Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, was sentenced to 11 years in prison for, "undermining national unity," under article 87 of Vietnam's penal code. In reality, Pastor Chin was arbitrarily detained, and he was jailed simply for practicing his faith. Reports indicate that the pastor was beaten while praying on two separate occasions.

If confirmed, would you advocate for the release of Pastor Chinh, as well as other prisoners of conscience?

Mr. OSIUS. I would, sir, absolutely.

Senator RUBIO. And how would you engage with the Vietnamese Government on issues of religious freedom? I ask that because I do believe that these sorts of abuses are an impediment to the sort of partnership that you have discussed that you think it would be wise for us to pursue with Vietnam and others. I think religious liberties is an important thing for us to clearly be on the side of. So how do you think we can most productively engage with the Vietnamese authorities on cases such as these?

Mr. OSIUS. Senator, I agree. Activities such as that are an impediment to the appropriate development of our partnership with Vietnam.

I think there is some good news and there is some not-so-good news. In the 18 years that I have been visiting Vietnam or serving in Vietnam, the trajectory is basically pretty good. In the central highlands, when I first went there, the monasteries, the churches—they were all empty. Now they are full and they are full of young people, and more than half of Vietnam's population is under 30 and those people want to be able to practice their religious beliefs freely. And so I think there is a possibility for systemic change, and if confirmed, I would push as hard as I could for that kind of systemic change.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to the witnesses, thank you for your service and congratulations on your nominations.

I am going to apologize to the males on the panel. I am duty-bound by my jurisdiction to grill the University of Virginia graduate, Ms. Polaschik, and I am also the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Near East.

And I am very interested in relationship with Algeria. I recently met with the Algerian Ambassador to the United States. Forgive me. I am sure you have covered a bit of this in your testimony, possibly in an earlier question. But talk about the nature of the current U.S.-Algeria counterterrorism partnership.

Ms. POLASCHIK. Thank you, Senator, for that question. And wahoo-wa.

Overall, the state of the U.S.-Algerian relationship on counter terrorism is very, very good. Algeria, as you know, fought its own long and difficult battle with terrorism on its own soil and developed a very strong capacity. Algeria is now working with its neighbors to address the new transnational threats that are posed by the various Ansar al-Sharia groups throughout North Africa, MUJAO from Mali, and others. So Algeria is working with Tunisia to counter activity on their shared border. It has pushed out tens of thousands of soldiers to its southeastern border to stem the flow of terrorists and weapons coming out of Mali and Libya. And it is working very effectively with Mali and Niger to train their own security services. So it is a very good partner, and certainly, if confirmed, I would build on the excellent work that my predecessor, Henry Ensher, has done and seek to expand that further.

Senator KAINE. We have a very strong partnership—I am glad to hear you talk about that in some detail—with Algeria.

We also have a very strong partnership with Morocco, and yet those two nations have had their challenges. I think a question has been asked about that earlier. But I am just struck by a relationship where air travel between the two countries is common. Commercial traffic that way is common, but the border is closed.

What can the United States or what could you do as Ambassador that would hopefully help these two allies of ours continue to strengthen their own relationship and resolve difficulties?

Ms. POLASCHIK. Senator, it is an excellent question and certainly one that we in the State Department are very concerned with because both Morocco and Algeria are good friends of the United States and they are very, very capable partners. So if confirmed, I would continue doing what we are doing all along, urging both

Morocco and Algeria to work together to address their issues of shared concern such as counterterrorism, illegal migration, drugs trafficking, et cetera. And I would urge the Algerians to delink the issue of Western Sahara from their relationship with Morocco.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that. Algeria has one of the largest energy reserves in the world and is one of the largest energy exporters in the world. Is there anything that Algeria can do to help Europe wean themselves away from over-dependence upon Russian energy? That was a topic that I talked about with the Ambassador last week, and I thought that might have some promise.

Ms. POLASCHIK. Absolutely, Senator. It is an excellent question.

Algeria is a significant and stable exporter of oil, natural gas, and liquefied natural gas, and its geographic location, right next to Europe, makes it critically important for European energy security. Algeria is Europe's number two supplier of natural gas. And Algeria has significant reserves of shale gas. They have the third-largest recoverable reserves of shale gas anywhere in the world. So this is a new and exciting area of great opportunity. And the Algerian Government has announced plans to exploit these resources, and it is also very interested in partnering with American companies to develop them. So there are great opportunities for American companies there and to further advance European energy security.

If confirmed, I certainly would make it a top priority to make sure that we support the Algerian efforts to develop their shale reserves and to work to get American companies a share of the market.

Senator KAINE. I continue to believe that with respect to Ukraine and other nations in Europe, one of the best things we can do for them is to help them obtain other sources of energy. And often the debate here is about U.S. exports or technical assistance to develop European energy, but an additional way to make this happen is to find other partners who can export more to Europe, and Algeria seems to be, because of historical background and the fact that they are already a significant exporter, a perfect partner. So if there are things that we can do diplomatically or through American companies to help them develop that shale gas capacity and export more, that would be for the good of Ukraine, for the good of Western Europe, and I would love to explore that with you.

How, if at all, is Algeria responding right now to this uprising by the anti-Islamist general Haftar in Libya?

Ms. POLASCHIK. Senator, Libya very much shares the United States Government's concerns about the situation in Libya. It is very concerned about the spread of transnational extremists, the spread of weapons coming out of Libya and I think is willing to work with us and the neighbors to try to find a solution.

That said, nonintervention in other countries' internal affairs has been a long-standing pillar of Algerian foreign policy. So I do not expect that they would do anything rash. What I expect is that they would continue their very active diplomacy. And Algeria has been a leader in helping to resolve conflict throughout the continent, and we certainly welcome their role in that regard.

Senator KAINE. The last question I will ask is President Bouteflika's election to a fourth 5-year term in 2014 sort of underscored a continuity and a stability in Algerian politics, and yet he

is elderly. He has had some physical challenges. Talk a little bit about what are the political prospects in the future given the fact that after 20 years of a very difficult challenge, I am sure there are thoughts about transitioning, et cetera. We do not have a favorite, but what is the current lineup of political parties in Algeria and thoughts about kind of next chapters in political leadership?

Ms. POLASCHIK. Senator, Algeria since early 2011 has been pursuing a path of gradual reform, and just in the last couple of weeks President Bouteflika has announced some proposals to amend the constitution that would further open up the Algerian political system. For example, he would propose giving more power to the Parliament and to the Prime Minister, reimposing Presidential term limits and further liberalizing the media environment. And all of these steps we certainly welcome.

The Algerian Constitution has a very clear process for succession. In the event that the President is incapacitated, the speaker of the upper House of Parliament would serve as Acting President for 60 days, during which time elections would be organized. We fully anticipate that the Algerian authorities would abide by their constitutional procedures, and we would be prepared to work with whomever the Algerian people elect as their next President.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much for those answers.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lippert, the commander of U.S. Forces in Korea testified before the committee in March. He said that while the U.S. Forces that are on the peninsula are prepared to carry out their mission of fight tonight in the event of a conflict, that the follow-on force for reinforcing our troops is not ready to do so effectively due to sequestration. Do you share that view?

Mr. LIPPERT. Senator, I would have nothing to contradict General Scaparotti. So, yes.

Senator MCCAIN. You would agree with that.

That is of some concern.

Mr. Osius, the Vietnamese Government wants us to waive its ban on lethal arm sales or transfers. Obviously, the situation continues to become more tense in the South China Sea or the Asia Sea. Depending on which country you are from is whatever name you want to give it, but we know the area. Have we considered lifting that ban? And if so, what considerations do we have? And if not, I guess have we laid out for them the criteria that we would expect in order to have that arms transfer lifted?

Mr. OSIUS. Thank you, Senator.

We have made it clear that we cannot lift the ban absent significant progress on human rights, on the development of respect for rule of law and human rights in Vietnam. We have been quite clear on what we expect in terms of progress on human rights.

Senator MCCAIN. For example, what would be a criteria? A judgment of a human rights organization or judgment of the State Department? In other words, what are the criteria?

Mr. OSIUS. What we have done is we have listed nine areas for the Vietnamese where we would expect to see serious progress so that our partnership could achieve its full potential. I think at this

point there has been progress in a number of those areas, in three or maybe four of those areas. So that may mean it is time to begin exploring the possibility of lifting the ban. But it has to be done at a pace with which this committee is comfortable and with which the Vietnamese are comfortable.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, for the record, would you provide just for my information those areas where they have made progress and those areas where progress still needs to be made? But they have shown some progress.

Mr. OSIUS. There has been some progress. There has been some progress in the area of labor and labor rights. There has been some progress in the area of disabilities, treatment of people with disabilities. There has been some growth in the space for civil society to operate. There has been an increase in the number of churches that have been registered.

Now, as Americans, we have, I think, a discomfort with the idea of churches having to register in the first place, but there is more space for churches, evangelical churches, Catholic churches, to operate than there was in the past.

What we have not done is lay out a precise road map for what would get the Vietnamese to lifting the lethal weapons ban, and it may be time to consider that.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I hope we would do that given a whole lot of factors.

A question for you and Mr. Lippert. The Chinese, obviously, continue to stoke tensions in the South and East China Seas, and the situation certainly is worsening rather than better, which leads one to conclude that the actions taken so far have not braked Chinese behavior. I am wondering if you agree with that, and if you agree with that, what actions do you think we should contemplate, maybe beginning with you, Mr. Lippert?

Mr. LIPPERT. Thanks, Senator.

I think that we have spelled out a pretty robust strategy for pushing back against the Chinese starting in the East China Sea or east——

Senator MCCAIN. But you would agree that we have done so far has not had a deterrent effect.

Mr. LIPPERT. I would say it depends on which situation, Senator. For example, in the Senkakus situation, I think the clear statement of the article 5 commitment by Secretary Hagel and others has, I think, had some deterrent effect on the Chinese with the current situation.

I think in the South China Sea, the situation remains more challenging, as you point out. We have done some things in terms of help with our Filipino allies in terms of increased access. The access agreement I think was helpful. There has been a little bit more presence in the region that I think also has given a little bit of help to our allies in the region. But I think you are right. It is a very challenging situation and more needs to be done.

Senator MCCAIN. And for example, like what?

Mr. LIPPERT. Well, first, Senator, I do think we need to protect, where I sit currently in the Pentagon, robust defense spending in the Asia-Pacific region. We just have to have our maritime assets

out there in more force to give aid and comfort to our friends and allies in the region.

Second, I think stepped-up presence does help in terms of overflight, P–8's, so on and so forth.

And then, of course, our undersea assets I think also can play an important role as well.

Senator MCCAIN. Including joint operating bases such as we are moving forward—well, already done with Australia, moving forward with the Philippines and other countries in the region?

Mr. LIPPERT. Absolutely. I think the initiatives we have had in Singapore, Australia, Philippines—also, we are now getting increased access to parts of Malaysia that we have not seen before. I think those send very important and powerful signals as well.

Senator MCCAIN. Before I turn to Mr. Osius, the Camp Humphrey transition is proceeding okay?

Mr. LIPPERT. My sense is that things are generally on track. I think the HHOP issue, as you know, remains challenging. The amount of money we are asking U.S. service members to pay is very expensive. The outside-the-gate accommodations are not great, and I think that trying to get as many people as possible as our Commander of U.S. Forces Korea wants inside the gate is still a challenge. I know the Deputy Secretary of Defense a couple of months ago asked the Army to take another look at this to see what we could come up with because I think this is a very challenging issue and we need to sort of resolve this to move forward, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I hope we can because the movement obviously has to take place, and also this issue of operational control hangs out there as well. So I am sure you will do a great job.

I am not sure you will, Mr. Osius. [Laughter.]

Senator MCCAIN. I am confident that you will. It was a joke.

Mr. OSIUS. Thank you, sir.

First, in terms of security preparations, I would like to associate myself with what Mark Lippert said in terms of how we can strengthen our position in Asia. But I do not think we have exhausted the diplomatic route yet when it comes to the South China Sea. What the Chinese are doing both in Vietnam and the Philippines is actually making the job of the Filipinos and the Vietnamese easier in terms of taking their case to the world community. The Chinese in some ways are trying to have it both ways in the U.N., trying to keep the U.N. out, but also bringing the issue to the U.N. where they believe that they can control it. I think that is going to be a real challenge.

The New York Times today reported on island building in South Johnson Reef. It is one thing to put an oil rig into the Paracels. An oil rig can be removed. When you build an island, it becomes much harder to remove it. You can build runways on it, houses on it, and you have changed the status quo. And in 2002, the Chinese signed on to the Declaration of Conduct which said they would exercise self-restraint and not change the status quo. I think the nations of ASEAN certainly have taken notice that the Chinese are not living up to their obligations.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I think it is very clear in the exchange that Secretary Hagel had with the Chinese Deputy Defense Min-

ister in Shangri-La was not encouraging at all. Would you agree, Mr. Lippert?

Mr. LIPPERT. It was a testy exchange, Senator. I would agree.

Mr. OSIUS. Yes, sir. I agree.

Senator MCCAIN. I thank the witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CARDIN. Let me just follow up on one thing with Mr. Lippert. You mentioned the exchanges we are having between Japan and Korea and you mentioned the Shangri-La opportunities, and I agree with that. I would just call to your attention President Park's recommendation for using an OSCE type dialogue mechanism for northeast Asia, which I would just suggest that you may wish to follow through. In my conversations with Mr. Abe, he was supportive of that type of a mechanism. So there may be some way of strengthening the dialogue mechanisms between Japan and the Republic of Korea, along with other countries in northeast Asia.

The record of the committee will remain open untill close of business Thursday. That will mean that if members have additional written questions, we would urge you all to try to complete them as quickly as possible so that we can take action on the nominations as quickly as possible.

Once again, thank you all for your attention to this committee.

And with that, the committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:25 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MARK WILLIAM LIPPERT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Martin Dempsey recently testified in front of the House Armed Services Committee that "I consider land mines . . . to be an important tool in the arsenal of the Armed Forces of the United States." In separate testimony, General Scaparrotti, Commander of U.S. Forces Korea, testified that "it is my assessment that landmines are a critical element in the defense of the Republic of Korea and our interest there. And they are a critical element of our contingency plans, as well."

- Do you agree with these statements by Chairman Dempsey and General Scaparrotti?
- What is your assessment of the implications for the U.S.-ROK alliance if the United States were to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention?

Answer. I highly value, and take very seriously, the military advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander of United States Forces Korea with respect to the use of landmines on the Korean Peninsula.

Based on the above military advice, I believe that any consideration of the removal of antipersonnel landmines from our arsenal for the defense of Korea would raise serious and complex operational issues. These issues require careful review and consideration by policymakers in Washington to ensure that they are addressed.

If confirmed, I would work closely with the Government of the Republic of Korea, General Scaparrotti, and other relevant parties to ensure that these operational issues and their implications for the defense of Korea are brought to the attention of policymakers in Washington and addressed.

Question. As you know, the Republic of Korea has granted access to the Chinese telecommunications company Huawei for development of its wireless network.

- What is your view of this arrangement?
- If confirmed, what would you do as Ambassador to ensure that United States and Korean telecommunications networks are not compromised by this arrangement?

Answer. I share your concern about security of networks in the United States and among its partners and allies.

While serving at the Department of Defense, I have closely followed cyber issues relating to China and the Republic of Korea. I am concerned about the growing cyber threat to our national security and will continue to focus on this issue in the future.

As a sovereign country, the determination of criteria for foreign investment projects related to its nationwide LTE network is ultimately the decision of the Republic of Korea.

The Republic of Korea is a strong partner of the United States in cyber security issues. For example, the Department of Defense recently signed a formal agreement with the Republic of Korea military to jointly address cyber security threats. Additionally, the State Department uses the U.S.-Republic of Korea Cyber Dialogue and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy Forum to exchange views on our respective policies in cyber space.

If confirmed, I will continue to facilitate the close cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Korea on our respective cyber policies and practices, including on the subjects of cyber threats or areas of concern and security issues.

I will also work closely with the Commander of United States Forces in the Korea to ensure that our military continues to use a comprehensive risk mitigation approach to cyber security to ensure our military communications are secure in the Republic of Korea.

NOMINATIONS OF HON. ALFONSO E. LENHARDT AND MARCIA DENISE OCCOMY

THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Hon. Alfonso E. Lenhardt, of New York, to be Deputy Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development

Marcia Denise Occomy, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Director of the African Development Bank for a term of 5 years

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:10 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Edward J. Markey, presiding.

Present: Senators Markey, Kaine, and Barrasso.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator MARKEY. Good afternoon, and welcome to today's hearing.

We have two excellent nominees being considered by the committee for positions in the field of international development.

We are joined, first, by Ambassador Alfonso Lenhardt, a familiar face around the United States Senate, having served here previously as our 36th Sergeant at Arms. Ambassador has now been nominated to serve as Deputy Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

And we welcome you and your wife, Jackie, back to the committee.

Ambassador Lenhardt comes to us after 4 successful years representing the United States as our Ambassador to Tanzania, and after more than 30 years of service in the United States Army, from which he retired with the rank of major general. He received a baptism-by-fire upon taking over as the Sergeant at Arms on September 10, 2001. The Ambassador has clearly gained a great deal of experience leading large organizations in complex environments. Such experience is needed to back up the administrator and an agency operating in over 100 countries around the globe.

Having served as both an Ambassador and a general, Ambassador Lenhardt is uniquely qualified to place our international de-

velopment programs in the broader context of our country's foreign policy priorities, so we will all be interested to hear his perspective on the policy challenges at the intersection of security and economic development.

In Tanzania, Ambassador Lenhardt led American efforts to implement some of our government's key development programs, such as the President's Feed the Future Initiative. And we look forward to hearing from him.

I would also like to welcome Marcia Occomy—how did I do?

Ms. OCCOMY. Excellent.

Senator MARKEY The President's nominee for the position of U.S. Executive Director at the African Development Bank. Ms. Occomy has worked extensively on financing projects in developing and post-conflict countries, including Africa. She brings both private-sector experience and the BearingPoint & Deloitte consulting firm's experience, as well, and also worked in the Office of Management and Budget. And that is the right combination for the African Development Bank, which helps generate economic growth by forging innovative public-private partnerships. The United States is the second-largest shareholder in the African Development Bank, so we have an important role in shaping the agenda. And I am particularly interested in hearing and discussing areas where the Bank's priorities intersect with some of our government's top development priorities, such as the President's Power Africa Initiative.

Power Africa could dramatically improve the lives of millions in sub-Saharan Africa by expanding access to reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy. Congress has a role here, as well. Earlier this week, I was proud to support the Energize Africa Act as it passed out of this committee. But, institutions like the African Development Bank will be critical to generate private investment in the energy sector and to provide governments with needed technical and regulatory advice. We can use our influence in the Bank to help bring this initiative to fruition.

When each of these organizations succeeds in advancing greater stability and prosperity overseas, American interests are well served. Promoting development strengthens our security and provides new opportunities for our economy to grow, so we need top-notch leaders in regional development banks and in our developmental agencies. And we are looking forward to hearing from two such leaders this afternoon.

The ranking member is going to come in just a few minutes, and he will be able to make, if he wishes, an opening statement at that time.

But, I turn to Senator Kaine, if he has any opening statement to make.

Senator KAINE. No, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. So, let us then turn and—Ambassador Lenhardt, whenever you are ready, please begin.

STATEMENT OF HON. ALFONSO E. LENHARDT, OF NEW YORK, NOMINEE TO BE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ambassador LENHARDT. Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Chairman and member of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. It is, indeed, a privilege to come before this committee again, and I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Administrator Shah for their trust and confidence.

Mr. Chairman, I respectfully request that my full written statement be submitted for the record.

Senator MARKEY. Without objection, so ordered.

Ambassador LENHARDT. Let me begin by thanking my wife, Jackie, who is not here, by the way, because of another family emergency we are dealing with, but who has been by my side during my years in public service. Jackie, like the men and women of USAID, has dedicated her life to serving those most in need. Her work in Tanzania to support young girls and women recovering from abuse not only transformed communities, it embodied America's commitment to empowering women and girls around the world.

It is a pleasure to return to the Senate and see so many colleagues and friends. Between my time as an officer in the Army, as Sergeant at Arms in the Senate, and as Ambassador to Tanzania, I am proud to have dedicated more than 38 years of public service to our great Nation. From the battlefield to the halls of the Senate to the Embassy of Tanzania, I am fortunate to have gained a broad perspective of the opportunities and, indeed, the challenges facing the United States. These previous leadership roles have required me to manage and maximize resources effectively.

Three decades serving in the Army have prepared me for managing critical situations in complex environments similar to those where USAID operates, from Afghanistan to Syria to South Sudan, USAID workers in some of the most difficult parts of the world and toughest parts of the world dealing with fast-pacing—fast-changing, rather, high-pressure situations that require visionary leadership.

During my time as Sergeant at Arms, I managed Congress' internal response in the wake of September 11 terrorist attacks and the October 2001 anthrax attack, strengthening security throughout the Capitol complex and ensuring the continuity of our government. As these events remind us all, we live in an interconnected, complicated, and oftentimes tumultuous period. And USAID plays a critical role in rooting out the drivers of extremism.

As the Ambassador to Tanzania, I oversaw more than 700 staff and contract personnel across eight agencies. I inspired a collaborative process throughout the Embassy that produced real results in support of our diplomatic and humanitarian objectives. If confirmed, I look forward to fostering that same spirit of collaboration with my interagency colleagues. Alongside Administrator Shah, I will work to advance a new model of development that harnesses the power of science, technology, and innovation, and certainly partnership, to accelerate progress for the world's most vulnerable people. Key to that effort is forming public-private partnerships that leverage more resources, thereby making the agency's efforts more sustainable. These partnerships pave the way for USAID to work itself out of business, its efforts replaced over time by thriv-

ing civil societies, vibrant public sectors, and transparent, accountable governments. In 2013 alone, DCA loan guarantees in El Salvador, Mexico, and in Nicaragua helped release $98 million in local lending to 4,000 small- and medium-size entrepreneurs.

In addition to solidifying the reforms already underway, I will also work to institutionalize our development initiatives, from Feed the Future, climate change, and Power Africa, to ending preventable child death and achieving an AIDS-free generation. But, above all, the success of the reforms and initiatives I have described depend on having in place effective management, operations, and systems. If confirmed, I will devote a substantial part of my portfolio to ensuring that USAID maximizes its impact for every dollar it spends. Doing so will require that USAID streamline program areas and make strategic investments.

Finally, I believe USAID has an important story to tell. In this regard, I will help build both domestic and international consensus for our efforts, ensuring we have more partners across the world. Sharing our story not only puts a powerful face to the USAID's work, but it also furthers our national interests. Partner countries should know how the American people have contributed to improving their welfare, helping them raise their children—their voices and grow their crops, and protect their children from disease and other maladies, and certainly to build strong and democratic institutions. Today, 93 percent of the Tanzanian people express a favorable view of America. Imagine the possibilities if we were able to build on that and export it across the world. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to be part of this noble effort.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the members of the committee for considering my nomination. I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Lenhardt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ALFONSO E. LENHARDT

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Barrasso, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It is a privilege to come before this committee again, and I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Administrator Shah for their trust and confidence.

Let me begin by thanking my wife, Jackie, who has been by my side during my years in public service. As a trained social worker for more than 15 years, Jackie—like the men and women of USAID—has dedicated her life to serving those most in need. Her work in Tanzania to support young girls and women recovering from abuse not only transformed communities—it embodied this administration's commitment to empowering women and girls around the world.

It is a pleasure to return to the Senate and see so many colleagues and good friends. Between my time as an officer in the Army, as Sergeant at Arms in the Senate, and as U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania, I am proud to have dedicated more than 38 years of public service to our great Nation. I am honored that, if confirmed, I will have the opportunity to extend that record of service.

The leadership positions that I have held during the past four decades have prepared me to meet the challenge of advancing USAID's mission: to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies—while advancing our own security and prosperity.

From the battlefield, to the halls of the Senate, to the Embassy of Tanzania, I am fortunate to have gained a broad perspective of the opportunities and challenges facing the United States. These previous roles—as well as my time leading business and nonprofit organizations—have required me to manage and maximize resources efficiently, all while working toward ambitious objectives.

Three decades serving as an officer in the U.S. Army have prepared me for managing critical situations in complex environments—similar to those where USAID operates. From Afghanistan to Syria to South Sudan, USAID works in some of the world's toughest places—dealing with fast-changing, high-pressure situations that require visionary leadership.

During my time as Senate Sergeant at Arms, I managed Congress' internal response in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks and the October 2001 anthrax attack—strengthening security throughout the Capitol complex and ensuring the continuity of our government. As these events reminded us all, we live in an interconnected, complicated, and often tumultuous time. USAID plays a critical role in rooting out the drivers of extremism, and I am prepared to diligently review our efforts to ensure that we are advancing our national security and are good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Most recently, as the U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania, I oversaw more than 700 staff and contract personnel across eight agencies. I created a collaborative process with Embassy staff, NGOs, and Tanzanian nationals that produced real results in support of our diplomatic and humanitarian objectives. If confirmed, I look forward to fostering that same spirit of collaboration with my colleagues from the State, Treasury, Defense, and Agriculture Departments, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Peace Corps, and others.

Since my nomination, I have had the privilege to speak with a number of development experts from the Agency, our diplomatic corps, and the National Security Council staff about their priorities and challenges in the years ahead.

If confirmed, I will focus on advancing the reforms that USAID has worked so ardently to achieve over the past 5 years. I will also work to institutionalize priority programs—like President Obama's food security initiative, Feed the Future, among other priority initiatives that will double electricity access in Africa, work toward an AIDS-free Generation, and drastically improve child and maternal health.

Alongside Administrator Shah, I will work to advance the Agency's new model of development that harnesses the power of science, technology, innovation, and partnership to accelerate progress for the world's most vulnerable people. In a time of constrained resources, this new approach has enabled USAID to maximize its impact in unprecedented ways. By applying it to all of the Agency's programs—from vaccinating children to empowering entrepreneurs—we can unlock resources for millions of at-risk communities around the world.

Key to that effort is forming public-private partnerships that leverage more resources and make the Agency's efforts more sustainable. Today, USAID is partnering with everyone from multinational corporations to local startups—investing in high-potential talent, groundbreaking technologies, and rigorous evaluation tools that deepen the impact of our work. Above all, these partnerships pave the way for USAID to work itself out of business—its efforts replaced over time by thriving civil societies, vibrant private sectors, and transparent, accountable governments.

By pairing policy reforms with private investment, the Agency is making historic strides toward ending extreme poverty. In my additional role as U.S. Ambassador to the East African Community (EAC), I saw the value of this approach firsthand—uniting markets, opening borders, and bringing unprecedented economic growth and prosperity to East Africans. I recall a CODEL visit to the Selian Agricultural Research Station in Tanzania, a joint venture between USAID, local farmers, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Alongside several members of Congress, including Senator Barrasso, Senator Graham, and Senator Hagan, I witnessed how the research into drought-resistant, high-yielding varieties of maize was helping farmers lift their families out of poverty and move their village beyond the threat of chronic hunger.

A similar effort is under way in Latin America, where USAID is working to expand public-private partnerships that produce more mature public institutions, an active civil society, and a dynamic private sector—with whom USAID can partner to unleash untapped financial resources, spur innovation, and bring scientific and technological solutions to bear on the region's development challenges. For example, USAID's Development Credit Authority (DCA) uses risk-sharing agreements to mobilize local private capital to fill financing gaps in emerging economies like Mexico. In 2013 alone, DCA loan guarantees in El Salvador, Mexico and Nicaragua helped release $98 million in local lending to 4,000 small- and medium-sized enterprises.

If confirmed, I will build on public-private partnerships in Latin America and around the world through the innovative efforts of the Agency's new U.S. Global Development Lab. The Lab represents a historic investment in the power of science and technology to bend the curve of development. If confirmed, I will focus on

advancing the Lab's mission to generate, test, and scale game-changing solutions to complex development challenges, while attracting private sector investment to improve the sustainability of our efforts. In Latin America, the Lab is already building on a solid track record of successful USAID partnerships with private sector companies in the region, including Coca Cola, Intel, Microsoft, and Starbucks.

In addition to solidifying the reforms already under way, I will also work to institutionalize the President's core development initiatives. I am committed to promoting a new era of agricultural growth through Feed the Future; ending preventable child death and achieving an AIDS-free Generation; enhancing opportunities for the next generation of global innovators through the Young African Leadership Initiative; combating global climate change; and through Power Africa, achieving the goal of doubling access to electricity on the African Continent.

Having served on the ground in Tanzania, I can attest to the results of every one of these initiatives. For example, using a creative financing mechanism, USAID's Tanzania Mission was able to support the development of a power plant that will provide electricity for thousands of citizens that had long lived in the dark. Thanks to projects like these, more scientists can conduct pioneering research on life-saving treatments; more young entrepreneurs can launch groundbreaking technologies; and more children will have the light to read by at night.

I also witnessed firsthand how the Agency's Feed the Future specialists collaborated with climate experts to ensure the sustainability of our food security programs. This kind of integrated approach helps countries like Tanzania increase food, energy, water and economic security, and reduce the likelihood and costs of climate-related shocks—such as storms, flooding or drought.

But above all, the success of the reforms and initiatives I have described—programs essential to fulfilling USAID's mission—depends on effective management, operations, and systems. If confirmed, I will devote a substantial part of my portfolio to ensuring that USAID maximizes its impact for every dollar it spends.

Doing so will require USAID to streamline program areas and make strategic investments. As the President's Directive on Global Development says, "The U.S. cannot do all things, do them well, and do them everywhere. Instead, the U.S. must focus its efforts in order to maximize long-term impact." Under Administrator Shah's tenure, the Agency has been committed to "selectivity and focus"—and if confirmed, I will work to apply this principle consistently to the decisions we make each and every day.

Instead of trying to find a "one-size-fits-all" approach, I will focus on promoting sustainable development through local solutions that empower change-agents on the ground, including entrepreneurs, university students, and government ministers. This approach builds resilient societies in areas of the world especially vulnerable to natural disasters and the consequences of climate change—from drought in the Horn of Africa, to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, to a devastating earthquake in Haiti.

By responding quickly and forcefully to humanitarian crises, we avert suffering and strengthen our own security. My experience as the commanding general of an Army training and operational installation in Alabama illustrated the importance of working as a team to identify, respond to, and mitigate the effects of a crisis—all while remaining committed to advancing long-term solutions to endemic challenges.

Finally, I believe USAID has an important story to tell—and I will serve as an advocate for our Nation's work in development. From Nepal to Senegal to Honduras, there are tens of millions of families who have found pathways to prosperity, health, and security as a result of the American people's tireless work and generosity. In doing so, I will help build both domestic and international consensus for our efforts, ensuring that we have more partners across the world.

I have seen such success stories firsthand. In Tanzania, USAID helped reduce malaria infections by 50 percent, putting us much closer to eliminating the disease entirely. USAID also helped train scores of health workers on how to perform life-saving resuscitation on newborns—cutting mortality rates in half.

Sharing these stories not only puts a powerful face to USAID's work, but it also furthers our national interests. Partner countries should know how the American people have contributed to improving their welfare—helping them raise their voices, grow their crops, protect their children from disease, and build strong democratic institutions. Today, an overwhelming number of Tanzanians express a favorable view of America; imagine the possibilities as we build on that success in other parts of the world.

As President Obama's global development directive stated, "Development is vital to U.S. national security and is a strategic, economic, and moral imperative for the

United States." If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to help lead our Nation's efforts in this area.

In his last two State of the Union Addresses, President Obama called on Americans to help end extreme poverty within the next two decades. This is a powerful mission—and I would be honored to serve USAID, this President, and our country to make our world a brighter and safer place.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the committee for considering my nomination. I would be happy to address any of your questions.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, very much.

Ms. Occomy, whenever you feel comfortable, please begin.

STATEMENT OF MARCIA DENISE OCCOMY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINEE TO BE UNITED STATES DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK FOR A TERM OF 5 YEARS

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Barrasso, and distinguished members of the committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as the U.S. Executive Director for the African Development Bank.

I grew up in Chicago in a family of excellent role models who taught me the importance of hard work, discipline, and focus to be successful in life. My grandmother was one of the first African-American women to attend Radcliffe College in the early 1900s, and later became a prominent writer during the Harlem Renaissance. My father entered the University of Chicago at the age of 15, excelling in math and later becoming a computer executive in the retail industry in Chicago. My mother taught public schools for over 30 years, dedicating her life to public service. They and many others in my family have influenced my decision, in part, to pursue an international development career later in my life.

If confirmed as the U.S. Executive Director to the African Development Bank, my vision is to leverage my international development experience to support U.S. interests in seeing the African Development Bank carry out its mission to promote economic development and progress across Africa.

Boosting growth is important for the African Continent, but also for the United States, by opening new markets and providing new customers for American goods and services. I have years of experience as a fiscal reform advisor on USAID finance projects in developing and post-conflict countries.

I have advised Ministries of Finance as they underwent public financial management reforms to strengthen their revenues, to build financial systems, and to build the capacity to lead these countries toward economic growth while building political capacity. I have worked in Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and, in Africa, Egypt, Senegal, and, most recently, in the newest independent nation in the world, South Sudan. I have experienced firsthand when countries struggle to balance implementation of sound fiscal policies while seeking to maintain political stability and security. I was in South Sudan until recently, assisting the country with its recovery efforts. Prior to my fiscal reform project implementation experience, I worked as a policy analyst at the OMB.

I also have experience leveraging public-private partnerships. As a University of Chicago graduate student on a Patricia Harris Fel-

lowship, I worked with the Habitat Company, a leading real estate development firm, which partnered with the Chicago Housing Authority to build scatter-site housing for public-housing residents to better integrate them into the broader community. This project was a model for how the public and private sector can partner to address the social issue effectively.

I recognize that leveraging private-sector investment solutions and technologies will be a critical aspect of the future development of Africa, as well. I look forward to supporting the African Development Bank to leverage its financing instruments to encourage private investment in Africa, including through public-private partnerships.

Attracting private investors to Africa will require significant investment in infrastructure and a climate that is conducive to investment in Africa. Creating the right investment climate will depend on Africa's commitment and ability to improve governance, transparency, regional integration, and to build a skilled workforce. The African Development Bank has played a leading role in assisting African countries to address these issues. But, more work remains to be done.

During his July 2013 visit to Africa, President Obama launched the Power Africa Initiative, an initiative aimed to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa, in partnership with African countries and the private sector. In announcing this key initiative, the President noted: America's been involved in Africa for decades. We are moving, beyond a simple provision of assistance, to a new model, a partnership between America and Africa, a partnership of equals that focuses on Africa's capacity to solve problems and Africa's capacity to grow. I embrace the President's vision to promote a partnership between the United States and Africa that focuses on building Africa's capacity to solve its problems, address its challenges, and to realize its potential for tremendous economic growth.

If confirmed, I commit to being a good steward of U.S. financial contributions to the Bank and to ensure that the Bank supports our Nation's inherent values, recognizing that open societies are the strongest societies, transparent systems are the most successful systems, and countries that commit to equally helping their citizens be healthy and educated, with economic opportunities, will be the most prosperous.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for considering my nomination. I have enjoyed meeting members of your staff recently and look forward to answering your questions today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Occomy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARCIA D. OCCOMY

Thank you Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Barrasso, and distinguished members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as the U.S. Executive Director for the African Development Bank.

I would first like to acknowledge the presence of my family and friends/colleagues who are here today to show support for my nomination—my mother Norma Jean Occomy; my sister Tracy Marie Occomy Crowder and her son, Malik William Occomy Crowder; my sister-in-law, Dr. Stacey Parks Occomy; and my niece, Mya Lynn Occomy, and nephew, William Andrew Eric Occomy, Jr.; my late father's sister, Marita Joyce Occomy Stricklin. Also present a Vassar College colleague – Karen Cox, a dear friend, Sidi M. Boubacar, World Bank Chief Counsel, who I worked with

in Kosovo during the early years of my international development career and Daniel Lamaute. My mother who taught public school for over 30 years in Chicago and my late father William Almy Occomy, a computer executive in the retail industry in Chicago, taught me to be the best that I can be every day.

During his July 2013 visit to Africa, President Obama launched the Power Africa Initiative, a $7 billion, five-year initiative to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa in partnership with African countries and the private sector. In announcing this key initiative the President noted, "America's been involved in Africa for decades but we are moving beyond a simple provision of assistance, foreign aid, to a new model, a partnership between America and Africa, a partnership of equals that focuses on (Africa's) capacity to solve problems and (Africa's) capacity to grow."

I embrace the President's vision to promote a partnership between the United States and Africa that focuses on building Africa's capacity to solve its problems, address its challenges, and to realize its potential for tremendous economic growth. When President Obama launched the Power Africa Initiative in Tanzania, African Development Bank President Donald Kaberuka joined him for the launch as a symbol of how America and Africa can work together to promote inclusive growth in the region's new frontier economies.

If confirmed, I would leverage my international development experience to support U.S. interests at the African Development Bank by ensuring it carries out its mission to promote economic development and progress across Africa. Boosting growth is important for the African Continent, but also for the United States, by opening new markets and providing new customers for American goods and services. I have years of experience as a fiscal reform advisor on USAID- financed projects in developing, post conflict countries. I have advised Ministries of Finance as they underwent public financial management reforms and transformations to strengthen their revenues and to build financial systems to put the country on a path toward economic growth, while building political capacity. I have worked in such countries as Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and in Africa, Egypt, Senegal and most recently in the newest independent nation of South Sudan. I have experienced firsthand when countries struggle to balance implementation of sound fiscal policies, while seeking to maintain political stability and security. Prior to my fiscal reform project implementation experience, I worked as a policy analyst at the OMB during the 1990s.

I also have experience leveraging public-private partnerships. As a University of Chicago graduate student on a Patricia Harris Fellowship, I worked with Habitat Company, a leading real estate development firm, which partnered with the Chicago Housing Authority to build scattered site housing for public housing residents in an effort to better integrate them into the broader community. This project was a model for how the public and private sector can partner to address a social issue effectively. I recognize that leveraging private sector investment, solutions and technologies will be a critical aspect of the future development of Africa as well. I look forward to supporting the African Development Bank to leverage its financing instruments to encourage private investment in Africa including through public-private partnerships.

Attracting private investors to Africa will require significant investment in infrastructure and a climate that is conducive to investment in Africa. Creating the right investment climate will depend on Africa's commitment and ability to improve governance, transparency, regional integration and to build a skilled workforce. The African Development Bank has played a leading role in assisting African countries to address these issues, but more work remains to be done. The implementation of U.S. policy toward Africa such as the Power Africa Initiative combined with our role on the Board of the African Development Bank, are key tools to help Africa achieve expanded economic growth. It would be my privilege to contribute to these efforts to increase the African Development Bank's impact and effectiveness in the interests of the United States.

While humbled by the nomination, I am excited about the prospects and challenges facing the African Continent with its emerging economies and tremendous potential for growth. I hope to have an opportunity to play a role in continuing to foster the partnership between the United States and the African Development Bank working together to reduce poverty so that the African Continent can attain sustainable economic growth. If confirmed, I commit to being a good steward of U.S. financial contributions to the bank and to ensure that the Bank supports our Nation's inherent values—recognizing that open societies are the strongest societies; transparent systems are the most successful systems; and countries that commit to equally helping their citizens be healthy and educated, with economic opportunities will be the most prosperous.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for considering my nomination. I have enjoyed meeting members of your staff recently and look forward to answering your questions today.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you very much, Ms. Occomy.

Let me begin by asking you, General. There is a new program, U.S. Global Development Lab, that began a few months ago at USAID, and its intention is to kind of innovate in this area of development. Perhaps you could just give us a little sense of how you see that programming unfolding and what you would envision as its ultimate product.

Ambassador LENHARDT. Thank you, Senator.

I think the Global Development Lab offers an excellent opportunity for us to—USAID to think about ways that it can do better at programs and look for synergies leveraging technology, science, and partnerships that are—I think are three critical pieces to being more innovative about our approaches to any number of programs that may be undertaken by USAID. I think it is something for the future.

I will give you an example of what we saw in Tanzania, although we did not call it "the lab." We looked for synergies, we looked for opportunities to partner, to collaborate, and looked for efficiencies, as well as, How do we improve effectiveness? The Lab will do that. It has already begun to pay dividends, in terms of how we think differently about partnering, how we think differently about using science and technology to do a better job of getting more bang for the bucks that are available to us.

So, I think it is a great opportunity for us to embrace the future, to do more. I will tell you that I do not know as much as I hope to know. If confirmed, I certainly will become more involved in Global Development Labs. But, just looking at it from the standpoint of the last couple of weeks, I think it is a wonderful program that has the potential for reaping huge benefits in the future.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. Occomy, 10 years ago in Africa, 27 million people were on landline phones. Just 10 years ago, 27 total million Africans. Today, 1 billion Africans have cell phones. That is just amazing, that transformation. And they did so by skipping the wireline era and going right to wireless. And it is made a big difference, in terms of development opportunities.

So, let us, if you could, talk a little bit about the President's Power Africa Program, because it kind of offers the same kind of potential for off-the-grid development of electrical generating capacity in a very brief period of time. So, could you talk a little bit about how the African Development Bank could play a role in helping to accelerate the pace of electrical generating distribution, as well?

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Chairman, for that question.

I am very pleased that you have raised the Power Africa Initiative. The African Development Bank was an early supporter and an engaged partner in the Power Africa Initiative. When the President launched the initiative, in July 2013, the African Development Bank president was there with the President to show the symbol of how the bank and the United States in Africa could work to-

gether towards the goal of increasing electricity access across Africa.

The African Development Bank, specifically since 2013, has supported several Power Africa Initiative projects. For instance, the African Development Bank provided partial credit guarantees for a major wind-power project, the Lake Takana Project, in Kenya. And the partial credit guarantees enabled the Bank to leverage private-sector investment to fully finance that project. So, if confirmed as the U.S. Executive Director, in my role, I look forward to working—continuing to work with the African Development Bank to continue that partnership with the United States to further the goal of increasing access to electricity across Africa.

Senator MARKEY. I must say, from my perspective the two of you are incredibly well-qualified candidates for almost any position that we could imagine in the government. So, thank you.

Let me turn and recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Wyoming, Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Chairman Markey.

First, I want to welcome both of you, congratulate both of you, and extend a warm welcome to your friends and family who are here today.

You know, should you serve our Nation in these important positions for which you have been nominated, I think it is important that each of you provide strong stewardship of American taxpayer dollars—and you made mention of that; demonstrate professionalism and good judgment—and you referred to that in your statements; and vigorously work to advance the priorities of the United States—and you have made that commitment. I hope you will lay out your vision and goals, and I have a couple of questions.

And first, Ambassador—General Lenhardt, good to see you again. It is a privilege to be with you. I appreciate your long history of service to this institution, the U.S. Senate, as well as to our Nation. I wanted to get a little bit into the issue of sustainability. As I look at the fiscal year 2013 Annual Management Challenges Statement, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Inspector General took a look at it, listed six areas of serious management and performance challenges that you will face in this new role.

One of the areas had to do with sustainability. The Inspector General notes that USAID spent about $34 million on a Water and Wastewater Sector Support Program, instilled 33 water meters to measure the flow of water in various areas. And then, upon review, what they found is that none of the meters were working, because the government did not have the funds to repair or replace them. So, it does not challenge the validity of the program or the idea behind setting up, but then the funds were not there to actually make sure that they could be repaired or replaced.

And I just wonder, as you head this, as a man who has shown a history of commitment to responsible use of taxpayer dollars and sustainability, what steps does the agency—does USAID need to take to ensure long-term sustainability of these projects? Because in your opening statement, you said we need to make sure we have accountability for every dollar spent.

Ambassador LENHARDT. Yes. Thank you, Senator. And good to see you again.

The question you ask, I think, puts your finger right on what I consider to be a significant challenge, and certainly it is an important one. I mentioned my role—and this is something that Dr. Shah and I have talked about—in focusing on management, operations, and systems. There are already reforms underway—well underway. These past 5 years, Dr. Shah has put a number of reforms in place to identify areas and develop fixes where the disconnect is there that—you say, How does it—how does this happen? As you described. I am not familiar, by the way, of the particular issue. But, it requires a diligence, a steadfastness to ensuring that American dollar—taxpayer dollars are, in fact, protected. And we maximize those.

And so, without being specific about how I could do it now, I have really got to get in and see what does it look like and what are the challenges. Sustainability is something that, if you recall when you were in Tanzania, I talked about a great deal, because I put it on the other foot, meaning the Government of Tanzania, "How are you going to sustain these important programs?" And so, sustainability is something that we always, always subscribe to and ensure is happening.

I will have to look and see, specifically, this one issue, but I look forward to working with you and the committee and your counsel on how we can do a better job. But, I do know that reforms are already underway, and it is something that I am very excited about, in terms of the opportunities to work with a creative, innovative, take-another-look-at-things, let-us-not-do-business-the-same-old-way approach that perhaps you described a bit in your comments.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, I appreciate your comments. And if this had not been in the Inspector General's reports and notes from USAID, I would not have been aware of it, either. So, I just, you know, would recommend that you may want to take a little bit of time to take a look through that to take a look at the broad challenges. And obviously, you have been able to respond to challenges in many places in this city, as well as around the world. So, I am looking forward to maybe hearing back from you on what your thoughts are after you have a chance to take a look at the whole thing.

Ms. Occomy, I want to talk a little bit about energy sources, if I could. The African Development Bank's goal is to promote economic growth, reduce poverty in its 53 African member countries, in which we all agree. And I believe the U.S. Director of the African Development Bank should support low-cost, dependable energy sources as a means to help countries spur their own economic growth. African countries have substantial fossil-fuel resources, including oil, coal, natural gas. The African Development Bank's energy strategy notes that, "For many African countries, coal-fired power generation," they say, "is likely to form part of such an approach to help the continent increase its access to modern energy at an affordable cost." It is there, and it is affordable.

So, do you agree with the African Development Bank's energy strategy, as outlined?

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Senator Barrasso, for that question.

You know, just stepping back, it is important for the United States to support the African Development Bank and to partner with developing countries to increase access to electricity.

It is important for economic growth, and it is important for development.

The African Development Bank, you know, finances a wide range of energy projects. You know that there are vast, enormous needs in Africa, and the African Development Bank has played a leading role.

Regarding coal-fired power plants, you know, under the guidance, you know, related to the President's Climate Action Plan, in certain circumstances, you know, with exceptions, the United States can support a vote for a coal-fire power plant for the poorest countries, which have the greatest energy needs, but it has to be demonstrated that there is no other economically feasible alternative and that that project can overcome certain binding constraints for the national economic development of the country.

And so, if confirmed, I look forward to supporting the African Development Bank as it continues to finance and to support energy projects across the spectrum with the aim of increasing access to electricity across Africa.

Senator BARRASSO. Mr. Chairman——I am sorry, my time is expired, but I will have additional written questions for you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Gentleman's time is expired.

The Senator from Virginia, Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, to the witnesses, for your willingness to serve. And congratulations on your nominations by the President.

To Ambassador Lenhardt, first, I mentioned to you briefly, at the beginning, when we were visiting, that, as I travel as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I always interact with USAID personnel in the field, predominantly in the Middle East, where my subcommittee jurisdiction takes me. And you have some very fine people.

I know you know that, but I want to make sure that the American people know how valuable our small-"a" ambassadors are. And whether it is been in Israel or the West Bank or Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, some wonderful people who are doing work, and often under pretty tough circumstances, but they do it with a real sense of mission, wanting to represent our country well and help the nations where they work to achieve. And so, I just commend, through you, the great people that you have working for you.

Ambassador LENHARDT. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. You actually kind of stole my questions right in your opening. You said, "We are in some hard places, from Afghanistan to Syria," and I wanted to ask you about Afghanistan and Syria, maybe beginning with Syria.

We have many hearings, in this committee and others, where we talk about Syria. And it is common for someone to say the United States does not have a plan in Syria. And I am always quick to remind them, we are the largest provider of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in the entire world. And that does not happen by acci-

dent. That happens because the President and Congress are committed to it. And we should not be bashful about that. And yet, the humanitarian needs in Syria are staggering, and they get more so every day.

If you would, talk a little bit about the USAID's current approach in Syria, in terms of working to avert that horrible humanitarian crisis.

Ambassador LENHARDT. Thank you, Senator. Thank you also for your comments about the hardworking USAID personnel, and our diplomats, as well, in various parts of the world.

Syria represents, as you know, a unique problem, and it is one that USAID has worked with for many years, and continues to work with. Currently, in response to the crisis, USAID is providing both humanitarian as well as nonhumanitarian aid, and is also looking at the neighboring countries—Lebanon, for one, Jordan, and certainly Turkey, and there is also a slippage of Iraq, as well. So, we continue to do the work to assist, wherever possible, providing for humanitarian needs, comfort, shelter, food, clean water, and all of those things, and also the—as I mentioned, nonhumanitarian aid, assisting the Syrian coalition—the opposition, if I can use that term—in terms of how they may be nurtured, how they perhaps offer an alternative that we could work with in the future.

So, those are the things that I am aware of, in terms of how USAID continues to support Syria. And, as I said, it is ongoing. So, I do not see this as something that is short term as much as it will run out in the longer timeframe.

Senator KAINE. Ambassador Lenhardt, I would like to encourage you, encourage all of our administration, sort of, across the board—you know, we have been blocked in the Security Council frequently as we have tried to make more, in terms of assistance to humanitarian efforts in Syria. But—Russia using its veto power—but, during February, during the Winter Olympics, we were able to put something on the Security Council docket that it was not—they did not deem it a good idea, when the eyes of the world were on them, to veto that resolution.

That resolution called for more aggressive delivery of humanitarian aid into Syria—not just Syrian refugees who have crossed the border, but into Syria. And the London 11, the nations that are trying to finance this effort, met in—a month or so later, kind of affirmed that that would be a positive strategy that we should pursue. The U.N. report about the success of meeting those particular obligations that were put out in that Security Council resolution in February have been pretty bleak. The Assad regime is still not really cooperating to allow humanitarian aid. But, I would hope that the United States could utilize that U.N. Security Council resolution with the nations that were willing to support it, and continue to be creative about finding ways not just to provide humanitarian aid outside the country, but inside.

Let me switch to Afghanistan quickly. I mean, obviously, the country has invested a lot, in terms of blood and treasure. And some of the results in Afghanistan, if you look at it in terms of quality of life, are pretty amazing. The median age in Afghanistan, at the time of the initial United States entrance, militarily, in 2001, to today, has gone from 40 to over 60—20-year increase in

median age in a nation of 30 million people. My back-of-the-envelope tells me that is—that is 600 million more years of human life in a country because of some advances largely that have been driven by public health advances.

The advances—the military, that I say—say, "Look, we have created order," but it is been the NGOs, the USAIDs, and others that have been able to come in and put a public health infrastructure in place that has improved quality of life. If you could talk a little bit about USAID's plan in Afghanistan as we now move to the cessation of combat operations there.

Ambassador LENHARDT. Thank you, Senator.

USAID continues to support Afghanistan, but will do so consistent with the drawdown. Right now, in particular, though, Baghdad seems to be the focus. But, in other parts of the country—meaning the pressure point, the conflict—but, in other parts of the country, USAID continues normal operations. And so, they continue to provide humanitarian assistance, they continue to encourage, you know, good governance, accountability, and all the things that we hope, in terms of inspiring democratic processes.

But, Baghdad is an issue. We watch it carefully, in terms of the security of that. As you know, the U.S. Ambassador declared it a disaster area. And so, consistent with that, we are watching it, and we are drawing down our forces, based upon the scenario that is unfolding.

But, we are not moving out. And I think that is the point.

Consistent with the drawdown, also, at the end of the year, we will come down to a certain number of USAID people on the ground. We still have implementing partners who are there.

But, the bottom line is, USAID continues to provide support to Afghanistan. And I think that is the key. We will continue to do that until such time as circumstances determine that it is no longer safe, feasible to do that. But, until that happens, we are there.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, could I ask Ms. Occomy one question?

Senator MARKEY. Yes.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Ms. Occomy, one of the great things about being on Foreign Relations is learning about things that you really did not know that much about. And so, the African Development Bank, I will be honest, I was not an expert about it. And it was good to prepare a little bit for your testimony today.

One of the things I am fascinated by is the current structure, where Nigeria, the United States, Japan, and Egypt are the four largest contributors of funds that the Bank uses, but China has now made a commitment to provide a significant chunk of funds to the Development Bank, about 2 to 2½ percent of the funds. And I think that will be an interesting relationship as we and China and Japan and Egypt and Nigeria work together to figure out what is the right investment strategies.

If you would, talk a little bit about the role that China may play in the Development Bank, going forward, and opportunities that the United States and China—working together, we might be able to make some good headway in Africa, but find that that cooperation has other benefits, as well.

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

It is really important to note that its importance—you know, China can do things bilaterally or China can do things multilaterally. So, the obvious situation is, we would prefer China to do things multilaterally, to be, you know, part of the African Development Bank framework, and to have its funds be subject to the policies, procedures, and the safeguards of the African Development Bank.

So, I think it is a positive step in the right direction, seeing that, you know, China is being more involved and actively engaged in the multi-—in the African Development Bank. It is on the board, as well. It also just announced a partnership with African Development Bank in a setting of the Africa Growing Together Fund, $2 billion, that will be managed by the African Development Bank. And those funds will also be subject to the policies, procedures, and safeguards of the African Development Bank. So, I see this, generally, as a good, positive direction and, you know, bringing China into the fold of the multilateral, you know, rubric.

So, you know, if confirmed, I look forward to working with the African Development Bank and continuing to draw China into the partnership and having all of us work together towards, you know, economic growth and development in Africa.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I agree with you. I think it is a very positive development. And the more China is engaged in these international organizations, generally, the better, and the stronger our relationship is going to be.

I appreciate the witnesses' answers.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. I thank the Senator.

So, we will finish up by giving each one of you 1 minute to tell us your vision for what you see as your role in these agencies that you are about to play leadership roles at.

And we will begin with you, General. If you would just give us your 1-minute overview of what your vision is of your time there at the agency.

Ambassador LENHARDT. Thank you, Senator.

When I retired from the military, I thought I would never meet another group of people who are as patriotic, who are as committed, who was dedicated to the task of the mission, and who are selfless in everything that they undertook. I was surprised when I saw those same attributes in the people in the diplomatic service and USAID missions there in Tanzania. And so, this opportunity gives me that chance to remain affiliated with, and to lead and to manage and to look at operations and systems that would support these people in the work that they do, but also give me a deep sense of satisfaction in continuing my service.

And so, if I am confirmed, I look forward to working with these people, because they do excellent work; over a half-century of tireless, selfless commitment to making the world a better place, saving lives, improving lives, as the case may be. And I saw that firsthand in Tanzania. And there is nothing like it when you look the face of people who realize the connection, the partnership, the outreach from the American people to the Tanzanian people.

And so, I want to continue to be part of that.

Senator MARKEY. Beautiful. Thank you, General.

Ms. Occomy.

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Chairman Markey, Senator Kaine.

As I mentioned in my statement, one of my priorities—and I think it is important—is to leverage my experience, my fiscal reform experience in developing post-conflict countries, to support the African Development Bank, to provide technical assistance and leadership to many of the African countries, to improve their governance accountability, their public financial management systems, so that they can be sustainable, so that they can have the capacity to overcome their challenges and to really steer their growth.

So, my first priority is to leverage my experience and to really work with the Bank to continue its technical assistance and support to African countries, particularly the fragile states and those experiencing post-conflict.

My second priority, which I think is important, is—you know, an important role of the U.S. Executive Director is to coordinate U.S. Government activities, particularly related to the African Development Bank, so to really strengthen that coordination, to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts, and to sort of maximize the assistance, and also to strengthen coordination between the African Development Bank and the other multilateral development banks relating to African development projects, and particularly through coordination with the other United states Executive Director offices.

Senator MARKEY. We thank both of you so much.

And I think that you are going to receive a lot of support, and I think we also have a responsibility to move your nominations through the floor of the Senate, as well, so that you can get on the jobs that you have been given. And we are going to try to accomplish that goal, as well.

And we congratulate both of you for your careers, thus far, which I think are just really beginning. You have tremendous opportunities ahead of you.

And, to all members of the committee who could not be here, they will have until the close of business tomorrow to submit questions to our two nominees.

And, with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:55 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF HON. ALFONSO E. LENHARDT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

USAID launched a Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy in 2012. The Gender Equality Policy recognizes the fundamental role that promoting gender equality and advancing women's empowerment, including freedom from gender-based violence, plays in advancing international development. The Deputy Administrator will be tasked with advancing USAID's implementation of the U.S. National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security (2011) and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally (2012) to integrate women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution and combat violence against women and girls in times of both peace and conflict. In 2015, USAID is required by Executive order to work with the White House, State Department, and other government agencies to add input into a comprehensive review of, and update to, the NAP.

Question. The U.S. has made a strong commitment through the implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security to advance the inclusion of women and gender perspectives in peace processes in which the U.S. is involved, such as the Geneva negotiations on Syria or the Middle East peace talks. How will you work to advance these efforts and what metrics will you use to specifically determine the impact of this integration?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have been an ardent advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment, and I will continue to aggressively support progress for women and girls through USAID programming. In particular, I have seen during peace processes how women bring skills and perspectives to the negotiating table that are critical for transforming conflict and building peace, and I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with USAID's Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to advance implementation of the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally—and the full suite of policies put in place in recent years to improve integration of gender analysis into USAID's work.

I know the tremendous effort that USAID has undertaken to shape and implement the National Action Plan, providing support to increase women's participation in peace dialogues in Uganda, helping female politicians in Yemen develop law, and empowering Syrian women leaders to participate in transition planning and peace negotiations. For example, USAID's activities are helping Syrian women mitigate the current crisis, evidenced by cease-fires that were negotiated following the establishment of women's peace circles.

I am committed to building on USAID's work to advance inclusive peace and transition processes in coordination with interagency colleagues. To measure results, USAID is tracking the number of women substantively participating in peace-building activities supported with U.S. assistance as part of its regular program reporting. Combined with a qualitative assessment of women's ability to influence decisions and shape outcomes, these measures will enable USAID to better assess women's ability to affect the future of their societies.

Question. How will you work to prepare USAID for the 2015 U.S. Government review and update of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security?

Answer. I know the National Action Plan (NAP) has been an integral part of USAID's work in advancing gender equality and female empowerment in countries affected by conflict, crisis, and insecurity. As a result, if confirmed, I would ensure that USAID participates in a comprehensive NAP review process in close partnership with interagency colleagues, civil society, and women in host countries. This review will help identify where USAID has been successful and has faced challenges, as well as how it can strengthen efforts to achieve full implementation of the NAP. During the review process, for example, USAID could examine how to bring successful programs to scale, increase efforts to engage men and boys, and engage women and girls to help combat illicit activities and counter violent extremism.

As the Agency reviews its programming—from promoting women's participation in crisis and conflict situations, to preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) and trafficking in persons (TIP), and addressing the needs of women and girls in relief and recovery efforts—program evaluations will be an important part of informing its approach to NAP implementation.

USAID has made great strides in integrating women, peace, and security (WPS) objectives into its business model, creating training for staff who work in crisis and conflict-affected countries and composing specific indicators to track investments and results related to WPS. I am committed to building on these efforts, and using the review and update of the NAP to help determine how and what more we can do to improve the lives of women around the world.

Question. Despite the fact that women are frequently targets of radical ideologies and violence, they are often limited in their active participation in decision-making on peace and security issues. What impact do you believe this exclusion has on our efforts to counter extremism and terrorism around the globe?

Answer. The exclusion of women from decisionmaking and the failure to protect their rights can perpetuate violence and undermine development. In contrast, investing in the full participation of women and girls in development, conflict prevention and resolution, and peace-building is critical for building stable, prosperous societies.

USAID understands that many of the drivers of violent extremism are development challenges, and women and girls are critical to responding to these challenges. Moreover, as USAID's new mission statement prescribes "we partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies around the world" precisely be-

cause the achievement of these goals contributes to our own prospects for security and prosperity. Promoting women's active participation on peace and security issues, whether it's supporting the recruitment of women in police forces or strengthening the ability of women's organizations to hold governments accountable, is an investment in U.S. security and a vital piece of USAID's mission.

Question. How do you plan on ensuring that a gender lens continues to be integrated across USAID's work, especially in "nontraditional" sectors such as agriculture and infrastructure?

Answer. Integrating gender equality and women's empowerment across USAID's work is a critical component to improving sustainable development outcomes. For example, USAID understands that reducing gender inequality and recognizing the contribution of women to agriculture is critical to achieving global food security—there is consistent and compelling evidence that when the status of women is improved, agricultural productivity increases, poverty is reduced, and nutrition improves. As a result, Feed the Future integrates gender-based analysis into all of its investments.

Furthermore, it is new tools, like the Agency's Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) that will equip USAID with the means to identify ways to help women overcome obstacles and constraints. For example, information released in May 2014 revealed that among women in agriculture, the greatest constraints to empowerment are access to and decisions on credit, workload, and group membership. USAID missions are using these findings to ensure that program designs are addressing gender-based obstacles.

USAID is also making an effort to bring a gender lens to other "nontraditional" sectors. For example, it is clear that energy-related projects, programs and policies that explicitly address gender roles, power relations, challenges and needs will result in better outcomes with respect to livelihoods when they explicitly address gender roles and gender specific challenges (challenges related to accessing energy services and participating in the energy sector). Under the $7 billion Power Africa Initiative, the Agency can support gender equality and female empowerment practices by partnering with host governments to engender their energy sector policies and strategies. In addition, because women in particular are underrepresented in the energy and infrastructure sectors, the Agency is developing strategies to improve women's skills in order to increase their employment and leadership role in these sectors. The Power Africa Initiative is also supporting the Beyond the Grid subinitiative, aimed at bringing power to the underserved.

Training is also helping to integrate gender into other sectors. USAID recently launched the "Gender 103: Roles and Responsibilities of Mission Gender Advisors," an online resource for staff that includes strategies for carrying out gender integration in the Agency's everyday tasks, and tips on working with mission leadership and technical and program offices to integrate gender across all sectors. USAID also offers frequent in-person gender integration trainings, and several technical sectors have either incorporated gender integration requirements and guidance into their live courses or are in the process of doing so.

Question. While implementing the "U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence" issued by Executive order in August 2012, USAID must not only integrate gender-based violence into current programming but, also, conduct stand-alone programming that focuses primarily on violence. To ensure proper implementation, directives must come from the highest levels of USAID. Do you commit to making implementation of the strategy a priority during your tenure?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to prioritizing the implementation of the "U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally" (the GBV Strategy)—and this includes both integrating GBV prevention and response efforts into various sectors, as well as creating stand-alone programming.

To better integrate GBV into various sectors, USAID is providing staff and implementing partners with guidance on how best to integrate GBV interventions into the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of different sectors.

In addition, the Agency supports stand-alone programs to address gender-based violence across the globe. For example, in India, USAID partners with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support U.N. Women's Safe Cities New Delhi program, which increases the capacity of governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces. USAID is also making progress on strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of GBV stand-alone programs, evidenced by the recent release the "Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Gender-based Violence Interventions Along the Relief to Development Continuum."

Question. Both Members of Congress and civil society are anxiously awaiting a public report on how implementation of the GBV Strategy is progressing. We understand that such a report was due this past winter but it has not yet been released. How will you use your position to advocate for a timely, public release of the report?

Answer. I understand that pursuant to the Executive Order 13623 on Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls Globally Common Reporting Framework, USAID has submitted its annual report, which outlines the Agency's progress toward implementing the GBV Strategy, to National Security Council staff. Much of the information contained in the report is sensitive, and as such, has not been released publicly. If confirmed, I will support the Agency's efforts to work with our interagency colleagues to determine the best method to release the report. In addition, I will continue to encourage USAID to maintain engagement with civil society in order to provide updates on the Agency's progress on GBV interventions, including efforts to address child marriage.

Question. Last year Congress reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act and included language requiring the Department of State to draft and implement an interagency strategy to address child marriage. What is the status of the strategy and how will you work to advance its implementation?

Answer. USAID's "2012 Ending Child Marriage and Addressing the Needs of Married Adolescents: The USAID Vision for Action" is a pillar of the GBV Strategy and is an essential component of the suite of USAID gender equality policies and strategies. USAID invests in both prevention and response to child marriage because it is a practice that undermines efforts to promote sustainable development. It is difficult to imagine that upward of 10 million girls under the age of 18 are prevented from living a productive life—as part of the impact of this practice.

USAID's investments to address child marriage support the needs of married adolescents as well as expand knowledge on effective interventions to prevent child marriage. For example, USAID's work is supporting proven practices such as the program in Ethiopia where USAID helped raise awareness about harmful traditional practices that resulted in the ratification of a new law increasing the legal age of marriage. The Agency is also testing new approaches such as the program in India that evaluates an ongoing government-run conditional cash transfer program to delay child marriage.

Child marriage has been a focus area for program expansion—and if confirmed, I will continue to stress the importance of child marriage to ensure that young girls all around the world have a chance at a brighter future.

RESPONSES OF HON. ALFONSO E. LENHARDT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

INSPECTORS GENERAL

Inspectors general were created by Congress to be independent and objective units within each agency whose duty it is to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in the programs and operations of that agency. Congress provides the inspectors general unfettered access to their agencies' systems and records in order to carry out independent oversight. Last year, it was reported that a prior Deputy Administrator for USAID interfered with an inspector general investigation on bid rigging.

Question. What is your philosophy on working with the inspector general?

Answer. The Office of Inspector General plays an important oversight role for all executive branch agencies in the Federal Government. The USAID Office of Inspector General has stated that its mission is to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's programs and operations while safeguarding the integrity of all concerned. I fully support that mission and believe the objectives of the Office of Inspector General are aligned with those of the Agency. I share the inspector general's commitment to ensuring that USAID's programs are a responsible use of taxpayer dollars, and if confirmed, I will work closely with the Inspector General to promote the Agency's efficiency and effectiveness.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to complying with the Inspector General Act by providing the inspector general unfettered access to USAID systems and records?

Answer. Under the Inspector General Act, the inspector general has the authority to access all records, reports, audits, reviews, documents, papers, recommendations, and other materials that relate to the programs under his or her oversight. If confirmed, I would fully comply with the act and work to ensure that the Office of the

Inspector General has the information necessary to fulfill its oversight functions for the Agency and its important work around the world.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

USAID's ability to demonstrate results through performance management and reporting was one of the most significant challenges identified by the inspector general. The Inspector General's FY 2013 Annual Management Challenge statement said, "Quality, reliability, and sufficiency of program data are essential to assess whether projects are making adequate progress and having the intended impact. Even though USAID has extensive guidance to help manage projects, accurate and supported results continues to be problematic."

Question. Are results, impacts, and evaluations important to USAID?

Answer. USAID's core values state: "We strive to maximize efficiency, effectiveness, and deliver meaningful results across our work" and "We seek to improve ourselves and our work continually through reflection and evaluation." Over the past few years, the Agency has made great strides to increase the ability of its staff to measure results and understand the impact of USAID programs. Under Administrator Shah's leadership, USAID released new "state-of the-practice" policies on evaluations (2011) and performance monitoring (2012). Since then, the Agency has trained staff on best practices and methods for evaluations (over 1,400) and performance monitoring (nearly 600). Evaluation reports, including 234 in 2013, are accessible to USAID staff worldwide for planning and assessing purposes within three months of the evaluation's conclusion.

If confirmed, I am committed to building the Agency's capacity to measure the work we do and deliver foreign assistance in a more effective and efficient manner.

Question. What reforms do you propose in order to ensure quality data and accurate results are reported?

Answer. Since the creation of the Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) 3 years ago, the Agency has made good progress in revitalizing core business practices. PPL has embarked on an ambitious path to refocus USAID on strengthening strategic thinking and command of evidence in the discipline of international development, and if confirmed as Deputy Administrator, I will fully support this effort.

As a leader of complex organizations for over 30 years, I know that when project managers have access to quality information about the activities they are implementing, they can use the data to improve their work and direct it in a way that achieves better outcomes. To advance this objective, USAID emphasizes project design and performance monitoring, which are key to ensuring quality data are collected throughout USAID-funded activities.

The Agency is also piloting a tool to help missions track information about their project performance and locations, known as AID Tracker Plus. By implementing this tool in conjunction with others, the Agency will be able to craft a Development Information Solution that allows USAID to tell one cohesive story from strategy to results. This, in conjunction with Joint Summary Reports and the Annual Performance Reports, which pull aggregate data worldwide, will help identify program successes and shortcomings.

Question. Will you commit to making this one of your top priorities?

Answer. Ensuring the quality of data and accuracy of results are top Agency priorities. We know that data are only useful for decisionmaking if they are of high quality and provide the groundwork for informed decisions. USAID has measures in place to ensure data meet this standard. For example, missions are required to conduct data quality assessments for all performance data reported to Washington every 3 years—measured against five standards of validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness. Furthermore, primary and secondary data go through rigorous USAID assessments to ensure that they meet the five quality standards. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize data quality as a means to learn and adapt programming in response to evidence generated in the field.

Ultimately, the overall impact of our programs depends on effective management, operations, and systems, and if confirmed, I will work to ensure that USAID is a good steward of taxpayer dollars.

CASH ON DELIVERY

At a subcommittee in May last year, I served as ranking member for a hearing titled "Different Perspective on International Development." Dr. Todd Moss talked about the idea of the U.S. Government implementing pay for performance contracts in order for the U.S. taxpayer to only pick up the bill for actual achievements.

Question. How can the USAID work toward outcome from assistance instead of inputs or even outputs?

Answer. Increasingly, USAID is applying a new model for how it does business, which places a greater focus on outcomes and sustainability. Past models have focused on input/output models transacted mainly through acquisition and assistance instruments. Now project implementation often involves policy dialogue, government-to-government assistance, direct engagement of USAID technical staff, a grant, contract, loan guarantee, public-private partnerships, and/or a prize competition.

Projects are framed around a clear purpose with measurable outcomes and are based on an analysis of the inputs and outcomes required to achieve the project purpose. USAID's Global Development Lab has used several performance-based approaches, including the Development Innovation Ventures and the Grand Challenges, which have milestone-based payments and "staged investments" based on increasing levels of evidence. Prizes are another example of pay-for-performance—where funding is only awarded once the output or outcome has been achieved. For example, USAID used prizes to source algorithms that used public data to better assess when mass violence against civilians may occur in a given location. This method is being further developed and utilized by policymakers and academics for analytical purposes. The cost of procuring the algorithms via an open, challenge-driven prize were far lower than a traditional grant or contract.

Under the Local Solutions initiative, USAID is also supporting results-based financing in its government-to-government assistance to strengthen host systems, mitigate risk, and encourage performance management.

USAID is exploring the use of Cash on Delivery approaches, as relevant in the right country, with the right systems, program, and implementation and verification tools to inform further applicability.

Question. How should the U.S. measure the success and effectiveness of international development assistance?

Answer. The mandate of the newly created Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) is to provide strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. One way this objective is being achieved is through the creation and institutionalization of the Program Cycle, a model based on rigorous methodology for designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects.

The Program Cycle strengthens the discipline of development at all stages, utilizing cutting edge best practices to develop projects on the ground. It also emphasizes monitoring a project's performance in stages, allowing USAID missions and implementing partners to work together to make mid-course corrections to achieve outcomes. In addition, a more rigorous approach toward evaluation is leading toward greater accountability and continuous learning to inform future projects designed throughout our portfolio.

As noted above, USAID is engaged in a fundamental reform in how it designs its interventions so that success is more easily measurable. New approaches such as the aforementioned Development Innovation Ventures apply a tiered funding approach that is based on results, fosters innovation, and encourages partnerships. The Lab has also developed the Development Innovation Accelerator, which creates a platform for identifying and sharing broad questions that allow USAID to connect with innovative organizations to undertake proven development models and techniques.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Question. In development assistance, what are the core competencies and comparative advantages that the U.S. Government should focus on?

Answer. President Obama's Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD–6) outlines USG development focal areas, including: ensuring sustainable regional development outcomes, a more selective, locally owned, innovative approach, and establishing a coherent modern architecture.

Core competencies

To ensure Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains sustainable even after the USG departs a country, USAID must foster strong, democratic governments and work with local partners and institutions, which ensures sustainability. Promoting institutions where leaders are held accountable and govern responsibly encourages a favorable investment climate, thus furthering self-sufficiency.

The PPD–6 also notes that development is best attained by creating broad-based economic growth through providing innovative resources to the world's poorest. The

USG's size and reach allows us to uniquely scale up the best, most innovative ideas for tackling today's development challenges. For example, the Feed the Future (FtF) initiative accomplishes its goal of combating extreme hunger by partnering with local farmers to increase their productivity, and engaging the private sector by producing cutting-edge agricultural research to benefit targeted communities.

The USG remains a thought leader across a range of technical development sectors, and our expertise drives our successes in global health, education, energy, environment, among others. When tackling any development challenge, no Agency will operate alone. Federal employees call on colleagues from CDC, USDA, EPA, and others to provide their expert insight.

Comparative advantages

The United States has unique access to a vibrant private sector and a variety of philanthropic organizations. The Administration's Power Africa initiative, for example, aims to give millions of people access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa. Such a project would cost around $23 billion, but after an initial investment of only $7 billion, the USG has leveraged nearly $15 billion in commitments to fully fund this initiative.

The USG is the global leader in providing rapid disaster assistance. No other country has the same lift or logistical capacity, nor the equivalent pre-positioned resources necessary to respond to humanitarian and environmental crises.

Question. What objectives should be left to others to handle?

Answer. Attaining strong, broad-based economic growth meant to lift the impoverished out of poverty or resolve long-standing violence cannot be achieved by U.S.-funded development assistance alone. It must be a coordinated effort planned in concert with other donors, actively encouraged and supported by the host nation, and jumpstarted by private industry.

The Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD–6) states that the USG should "forge a deliberate division of labor among key donors." Specifically, it states that the United States will "seek an explicit division of labor by focusing our efforts on select countries and regions." USAID is continuously assessing where we have a comparative advantage to work in key regions and sectors, and where other donors may complement or better work in those areas—reducing or increasing presence where needed. For example, in Brazil, we are transitioning from a donor-recipient relationship to a partnership program that leverages Brazilian financial and technical resources to advance shared development objectives in the region and around the world.

The PPD also instructs to "Focus our expertise in a smaller number of sectors, with an emphasis on selectivity and an orientation toward results." USAID significantly increased its focus through development initiatives such as Science, Technology and Innovation; Power Africa; Global Health; Feed the Future; and Global Climate Change. In addition, USAID phased out Feed the Future agriculture programs in 22 countries since FY 2010 and 23 countries from USAID Global Health programs. USAID also has begun creating focused integrated development objectives within the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) process and strategic alignment will be key in the FY 2015 budget process.

Finally, the PPD directs USG to "Work with bilateral donors, the multilateral development banks and other international organizations to ensure complementarity and coordination of efforts." USAID holds regular consultations at the headquarter level with multiple donor and NGO partners such as DFID, the European Union, Norway, Denmark, Australia, World Bank, and the Arab Donor League. Successful partnerships include the partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) focused on Science, Technology and Innovation for cutting-edge development solutions to reduce poverty. Another example is USAID also recently hosted the first U.S.-Japan Development Dialogue to deepen collaboration with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in multiple sectors, including gender equality and female empowerment. USAID also continuously shares technical skill and lessons learned at the working group level when coordinating with other donors and NGOs.

If confirmed, I will continue USAID's efforts to partner with a variety of sister agencies across the Federal Government as well as other actors, ranging from donors to private industry, NGOs, host country governments and community-based organizations to tackle development challenges across the world.

RESPONSES OF MARCIA DENISE OCCOMY TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

POWER AFRICA INITIATIVE

The administration has identified the African Development Bank as one of the agencies involved in the Power Africa Initiative. The bank's portfolio has included energy infrastructure projects for a long time.

Question. Please identify the specific infrastructure efforts being pursued by the administration that fall under the Power Africa Initiative at the African Development Bank.

Answer. To help meet Africa's sizeable electricity needs, the United States, through Power Africa, is forging partnerships with African governments and organizations, other donors, and the private sector to advance key reforms and specific energy projects.

As a critical Power Africa partner, the African Development Bank (AfDB) supports far-reaching power sector reforms and provides technical assistance to improve the enabling environment, offers legal assistance to negotiate power purchase agreements (PPAs), and provides various financing tools for energy projects, including guarantee instruments to mitigate off-taker risks.

Some examples of the strong U.S.–AfDB collaboration on Power Africa include:

- In Kenya, the AfDB and the U.S. Government are providing financing, technical assistance, and partial risk guarantees (designed to attract private sector investment in projects by reducing the risk of participating) for the 300 MW Lake Turkana Wind Project.
- In Ethiopia, the U.S. Government is supporting the AfDB's African Legal Support Facility's work to provide guidance to the Government of Ethiopia regarding negotiations of the PPA for the 1,000 MW Corbetti Geothermal Project.

Question. How many of these projects were already being pursued prior to the announcement of the Power Africa Initiative by President Obama in 2013?

Answer. The AfDB has long been committed to promoting energy access across Africa, and some of the Bank's current efforts under Power Africa existed as proposals or active projects prior to President Obama's announcement in June 2013. However, many of these proposals and projects were not advancing. Power Africa created new momentum and unlocked sticking points by providing a coordinated approach across different agencies that, together, have the range of tools needed to accelerate energy development—from advice on policy and regulatory reforms, to prefeasibility support and capacity-building, to long-term financing, insurance, guarantees, credit enhancements and technical assistance.

The risks associated with investing in Africa's energy sector are significant, and a key goal of the U.S.–AfDB collaboration on Power Africa is to help close the know-how and financing gaps and to accelerate energy investment projects on the continent.

ENERGY SOURCES

During your confirmation hearing in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, you stated, "the U.S. can support a vote for a coal powered power plant for the poorest countries, which have the greatest energy needs."

Question. Do the 53 member countries of the African Development Bank include some of the poorest countries in the world?

Answer. The United States can support coal projects in IDA-only countries, where energy needs are often the greatest, in specified circumstances. Thirty-seven of the AfDB's fifty-three member countries are IDA-only. Eligibility for IDA support depends on a country's creditworthiness and relative poverty, defined as GNI per capita below an established threshold that is updated annually (in fiscal year 2014: $1,205).

Question. Is there a tremendous need for energy generation and transmission in the 53 member countries of the African Development Bank?

Answer. Yes. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest electrification rate in the world; nearly 600 million people, 70 percent of the population, go without electricity every day. Rural electrification rates are well below 5 percent in many areas—much lower than in Asia or Latin America. The lack of access to power is one of the largest obstacles to economic growth and poverty reduction on the continent. The U.S. Government is partnering with the AfDB to close this energy gap by increasing generation capacity and access to electricity.

Many African countries have substantial energy resources that include oil, natural gas, and coal.

Question. Will you vote in support of energy development projects that include oil, coal, and natural gas at the African Development Bank?

Answer. The U.S. Government is committed to helping to improve energy access and energy security to households and businesses in Africa and around the globe as an important element of economic development. Each project that comes to the Board for consideration is evaluated on its contribution toward sustainable development objectives, including support for a cleaner energy future. The U.S. Government's approach on coal seeks to promote technologies, such as carbon capture and sequestration (CCS), that will make coal feasible with lower emissions, alongside the promotion of cleaner sources of energy such as natural gas, wind, and solar. In line with the President's Climate Action Plan, I understand that support for coal power-generation projects may be considered, depending on the country, and subject to additional conditions, (a) for facilities deploying carbon capture and sequestration technology, or (b) employs the best available technology for reducing GHG emissions that is practically feasible where the project overcomes binding constraints on national economic development in the world's poorest countries. The United States Treasury "Guidance for U.S. Positions on MDBs Engaging with Developing Countries on Coal-Fired Power Generation" (issued in October 2013) states that in "IDA-only countries, where energy needs are often that greatest, the MDB could proceed with appraising a coal project that does not meet the best internationally available technology criteria, if it can be demonstrated that the project overcomes binding constraints on national economic development."

Question. Do you believe coal provides a low cost and reliable energy source which is important to countries looking for assistance in poverty alleviation and economic development?

Answer. Facilitating energy access and energy security to people in Africa and around the globe is a priority for the United States, and I understand how important such access is to promoting growth and economic development. The United States continues to pursue this goal using the cleanest technology possible. In line with the Climate Action Plan, I understand that the U.S. Government will consider support for coal projects using the best available technology for reducing GHG emissions that is practically feasible where the project overcomes binding constraints on national economic development in the world's poorest countries, or for facilities that deploy carbon capture and sequestration.

Question. Do you believe requiring borrowers to accept higher cost energy projects is a responsible use of taxpayer dollars when affordable and reliable alternatives are readily available?

Answer. The United States is committed to the pursuit of sustainable economic development. Least-cost alternatives in the short term are not always the most cost-effective in the long run. Climate change is one of many risks to the sustainability of development outcomes, and may have a disproportionate impact on the world's most vulnerable communities. A priority for the U.S. Government is to help developing economies shift to sustainable energy solutions, including lower-carbon energy sources so they can avoid a lock-in of high-emission power plants. Support for cleaner energy technologies that reduce pollution will also improve health outcomes, including reducing asthma and heart attacks, thus generating long-term health savings. It is important that scarce public financing be used to support the deployment of low-emission power generation in order to achieve sustainable development outcomes and the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Question. If confirmed, what criteria would you use to determine whether you will vote in support of energy development projects at the African Development Bank?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues throughout the government to ensure that we continue to evaluate projects on an individual basis, and we will determine positions based on the merits of each project in advancing sustainable and inclusive development objectives, consistent with all relevant policies.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Question. Will pushing President Obama's Climate Action Plan be one of your top priorities at the African Development Bank?

Answer. The Climate Action Plan is an important priority of the Obama administration, and as the President's appointee, if confirmed I will implement all the priorities and instructions from the White House and Treasury Department. The Climate

Action Plan is relevant for the African Development Bank as it provides guidance regarding the President's view on the circumstances under which support for public funding of coal-fired power plants overseas is warranted. Working to support the long-term sustainability of Africa's resources and the serious energy access needs of Africa are important goals to me and to the Obama administration.

INGA DAM

Question. What investments have been made by the African Development Bank on the Inga Dam projects?

Answer. The AfDB has made a number of investments in the Inga 3 project. In 2008, the AfDB provided a grant of about $15 million for a feasibility study that proposed an optimal approach to the development of the project. Two additional grants totaling $7 million were subsequently made for advisory services and technical assistance, and in November 2013, the AfDB approved a $68 million technical assistance program. As part of this program, the AfDB is providing technical assistance to put in place appropriate institutions, support key technical studies, and implement the reforms necessary to realize the Inga 3 project.

Question. What are your views on Inga 3 and the Grand Inga Dam?

Answer. Inga 3 and Grand Inga have extraordinary potential to generate much-needed electricity for the DRC and the region. At the same time, the risks of undertaking such an enormous project in a country with weak institutions and a poor track record of managing large-scale infrastructure projects must not be overlooked. If confirmed, I will carefully consider the merits and risks of both the Inga 3 and Grand Inga projects.

Question. What are the potential costs for construction and the energy potential of these projects?

Answer. Costs for the construction of Inga 3 and the associated infrastructure are estimated to be between $11–14 billion. Inga 3, if constructed, will have a capacity of 4,800 megawatts of electricity. No reliable cost estimates are available for the construction of Grand Inga. Preliminary estimates of the total capacity of Grand Inga show that such a project could have a capacity of 44,000 megawatts.

Question. Do you support the African Development Bank assisting in financing construction of Inga 3?

Answer. Any decisions regarding the U.S. Government's support for Inga 3 will be based on the results of environmental and social studies and on the implementation of necessary reforms. The U.S. Government will carefully consider the results of both the AfDB and World Bank technical assistance programs, and will perform the same due diligence that it performs on any multilateral development bank project (which factors in legislation on the MDBs), to make a determination about support for Inga 3 at the appropriate time. The AfDB has not proposed any assistance in financing construction of Inga 3.

Question. Do you support the African Development Bank assisting in financing construction of Grand Inga Dam project?

Answer. Support for Grand Inga is not being considered by the AfDB at this time. The AfDB is currently providing technical assistance for the development of Inga 3 and has at this stage has not proposed any financing for the construction of either Inga 3 or the Grand Inga Dam project.

U.S. INTEREST

Question. How much funding has the United States invested in the African Development Bank?

Answer. Since 1976, the United States has provided over $3 billion to the African Development Bank Group to support nonconcessional and concessional lending to African countries.

Question. How is the African Development Bank in the interest of the United States?

Answer. The AfDB is a strong partner that supports U.S. economic and security interests across Africa. By promoting private sector growth and improving the quality of the regulatory environment, the AfDB helps create new markets for U.S. businesses. By supporting economic growth in Africa's middle-income countries, the AfDB helps solidify nascent democracies in North Africa and create stable societies that can govern effectively and meet the needs of their people.

Additionally, the African Development Fund (AfDF)—the concessional lending arm of the AfDB—is solely dedicated to working with the poorest countries in Africa. The AfDF promotes inclusive growth in the region's new frontier economies, deepens economic and regional integration, and works with post-conflict and fragile states to assist them in becoming productive and stable. The AfDF supports many of our security objectives where new threats are emerging, including the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, by working to address some of the underlying causes of instability.

Investments by the United States in the AfDB have a significant leveraging effect, with each additional dollar of capital supporting additional lending of $20. U.S. contributions to the AfDF also provide significant returns, with every dollar contributed leveraging close to an additional $12.

NOMINATIONS OF TODD D. ROBINSON AND LESLIE ANN BASSETT

THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Todd D. Robinson, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala
Leslie Ann Bassett, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tom Udall presiding.

Present: Senators Udall, Kaine, and McCain.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TOM UDALL, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO

Senator UDALL. I call this nomination hearing to order. Today we meet to consider two nominations for the Western Hemisphere: first, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, Mr. Todd D. Robinson, to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala; and second, the Deputy Chief of Mission to the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, Korea, Leslie Ann Bassett, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay.

Both nominees are Career Foreign Service officers who currently hold the rank of minister-counselor. Both have extensive experience in the Western Hemisphere, which will be needed to address many of the pressing issues of importance to the United States and the regions they will serve.

In Paraguay, if confirmed, Ms. Bassett will be confronted with issues surrounding economic development, counternarcotics, corruption, and governance reform, as well as sticky issues of land reform and indigenous rights. Furthermore, she will need to address the issues of terrorism and the threat of terrorism in the triborder region of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil.

Like my home State of New Mexico, Paraguay is home to indigenous tribes. The Paraguayan population itself is a large mix of Spanish and Guarani Indians, many of whom are of mixed descent. In fact, 90 of the population speaks Guarani. This relatively poor and inland country has had a very difficult political history, including decades of dictatorship, in the last century. Most recently, the

impeachment of the former President, Fernando Lugo, in 2012 raised many questions about the state of Paraguayan democracy. With the help of the Organization of American States, Paraguay held elections in 2013 and elected the current President, Horatio Cartes.

Mr. Robinson, if confirmed, you will be representing the United States in a country that has experienced civil war, dictatorships, and now is in the throes of increasing gang violence, economic stagnation, and a resultant migration problem that is spreading throughout the hemisphere, including in my home State of New Mexico, where many of the immigrants are being held in the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia, New Mexico.

In order to deal with this most recent crisis, you will need to first address the dangers of traveling north to the United States. To the families and children that may be listening, this journey is dangerous. You should not undertake this journey to the United States or to Mexico. I have been briefed by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, FLETC, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection regarding the individuals undergoing removal proceedings and I can positively say that, despite what you may have heard, there is no amnesty for individuals once they reach the United States.

While it is easy to concentrate on the impacts of this side of the border, you will also need to deal with the underlying causes surrounding the migrations of children and families outside of Central America. Guatemala, like other countries, is in the area known as the northern triangle. It is one of the most violent countries in the world, with a rate of homicides of 34 homicides per 100,000 people, narcotics trafficking and rampant gang violence and a population of distrustful law enforcement authorities due to a history of corruption and abuse.

It should not be surprising that some of you believe that the dangerous trek to the United States would be worth the risk. I believe strongly that not only do we need to address issues on this side of the border, which includes passing comprehensive immigration reform and strengthening the border, but that we need to stop turning a blind eye to a region that has continued to receive diminished attention in multiple administrations. We need to put together a comprehensive plan which helps the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, better deal with violent crime and counternarcotics, governance and corruption issues, human rights and judicial issues, and economic development.

Until that happens, I believe that families will continue to see the dangerous trek to the United States as the least bad option, which will further stress our ability to deal with these issues in the border States.

Mr. Robinson, I am looking forward to hearing from you about how you will address these pressing issues during this hearing.

Before we hear from the nominees, I would like to give the ranking member, Senator McCain, an opportunity to give his opening statement as well.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have any opening statement except to thank both of the nominees for

their long and honorable service to our country, and we look forward to rapid confirmation through the committee and through the Senate, hopefully before we are out for the year.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator UDALL. Senator McCain, we also look forward to that, and I know you put a real emphasis on having well-qualified nominees and obviously these two I think are very high up on that standard.

I would now like to turn to our two nominees for their opening statements, beginning with Mr. Robinson. As always, your full testimony will be included in the record, and please try and stay within the allotted time.

Mr. Robinson.

STATEMENT OF TODD D. ROBINSON, OF NEW JERSEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain. Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is an honor to appear today before you as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Guatemala. I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have shown in putting forward my nomination for this position.

I joined the Foreign Service in 1986 and since then I have briefed Capitol Hill staff a number of times. Needless to say, this time is a little different. This time, while they are not with me today, I have the opportunity to acknowledge the support of my mother, Willetta BaCote, and my brothers, Mark Robinson and Jeffrey BaCote. They have been enormously influential on my career and without their support and that of my friends and colleagues I would not be before you today.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed it will be an honor to return to the Republic of Guatemala. I was deputy chief of mission at the Embassy in Guatemala from 2009 to 2011. Much of my career in the Foreign Service has been in the region—Colombia, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Bolivia. I was consul general in Barcelona from 2006 to 2009 and I have been a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement since 2011. I would hope to use this experience to advance United States goals in Guatemala.

Guatemala is at a critical moment. While the nation has made significant progress since signing peace accords in 1996 that ended a three decade-long internal conflict, significant challenges remain: trafficking of humans, weapons, and drugs, high rates of violence, impunity and corruption, poor education and employment opportunities, and chronic malnutrition. These are all serious and all particularly damaging to Guatemala's youngest, most defenseless citizens.

These challenges are complex. They require sustained and continued United States cooperation and engagement, and if confirmed I will work with this committee and our Guatemalan partners to promote respect for human rights and economic and social inclusion for all members of society.

The United States and Guatemala are making progress. Guatemala is advancing in the fight against trafficking in persons and is committing additional funding in a constrained budget environment to its antitrafficking efforts. There is strong cooperation on counternarcotics, judicial strengthening, and maternal and child health issues, but more steps are needed to ensure that this cooperation is institutionalized.

Earlier this year, a Guatemalan court convicted four labor traffickers, the first ever conviction for forced labor in the country's history. And the Department of State is working closely with the government of Guatemala to resolve the remaining 31 intercountry adoption cases pending since 2007.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot talk about Guatemala today without acknowledging the urgent humanitarian situation at the United States southern border relating to unaccompanied children. As nations that value human dignity, it is our duty to respond collectively. Both President Perez Molina and First Lady Rosa Leal de Perez have acknowledged the need for collective action and we are working toward that end.

The United States and the Government of Guatemala are committed to addressing the factors driving migration, such as the lack of economic and education opportunities. We cannot resolve this overnight and neither we nor Guatemala can address this single-handedly. If confirmed, I will work with Congress and the Guatemala Government to see that U.S. assistance is effectively targeted so that Guatemalan citizens can build their lives at home. I will also continue efforts to correct misunderstandings about U.S. law and correct misperceptions that children are permitted to remain in the United States.

Guatemala is a nation of diverse people who are working to consolidate democratic principles and who are cognizant of their responsibilities to advance the cause of international peace and security. It is a nation of enormous pride and cultural patrimony and it will be my high honor to represent the United States in Guatemala.

Mr. Chairman, I deeply appreciate the honor of appearing before the committee today. I understand the serious interests the United States has in the success of Guatemala and the region as a whole. If confirmed, I pledge to work with Congress and this committee to ensure that as we meet the challenges ahead we do so reflecting the values and ideals of the United States.

Thank you very much and I look forward to any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Robinson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TODD D. ROBINSON

Mister Chairman, distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is an honor to appear today before you as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Guatemala. I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have shown in putting forward my nomination for this position. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your colleagues to advance the interests of the United States.

I joined the Foreign Service in 1986 and since then, I have briefed Capitol Hill staff a number of times. Needless to say, this time is a little different. This time, I have the opportunity to acknowledge the support of my mother, Willetta BaCote, and my brothers, Mark Robinson and Jeffrey BaCote. They have been enormously

influential in my career, and without their support, and that of my friends and colleagues, I would not be before you today.

Mr. Chairman, it will truly be an honor to return to the Republic of Guatemala. As you know, I was deputy chief of mission at the Embassy in Guatemala City from 2009–2011. In fact, much of my career in the Foreign Service has ranged throughout the region in Colombia, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Bolivia. Before going to Guatemala, I was consul general in Barcelona, and when I left Guatemala, I took up my current duties as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. I have gained a wealth of experience from my work in these places and, if confirmed, I pledge to use this experience to advance U.S. goals in Guatemala.

Guatemala is at a critical moment. While the nation has made significant progress since the signing of the peace accords in 1996 that ended a three-decade-long internal conflict, significant challenges remain. Trafficking of humans, weapons, and drugs; high rates of violence; impunity and corruption; poor education and employment opportunities; and chronic malnutrition are all serious issues and all particularly damaging to Guatemala's youngest, most defenseless citizens. These challenges are complex and require sustained and continued U.S. cooperation and engagement and, if confirmed, I will work with this committee and our Guatemalan partners to promote respect for human rights and economic and social inclusion for all members of society.

The United States and Guatemala are already making some progress. Guatemala has made advances in the fight against trafficking in persons and is committing additional funding in a constrained budget environment to its antitrafficking efforts. There has been strong cooperation on counternarcotics, judicial strengthening, and maternal and child health issues. If confirmed, I pledge to work to support President Perez Molina's "Zero Hunger" campaign to see that child health efforts, in particular, become institutionalized. Earlier this year, a Guatemalan court convicted four labor traffickers, the first ever conviction for forced labor in the country's history. The Department of State is working closely with the Government of Guatemala toward resolution of the remaining 31 intercountry adoption cases, pending since 2007. And, Guatemala recently became a "compliant" country in the terms of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which means it has agreed to work with civil society and international community to ensure all mining projects are conducted transparently.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot talk about Guatemala today without acknowledging the urgent humanitarian situation at the U.S. southern border related to unaccompanied children. As nations that value human dignity, it is our duty to respond collectively. President Perez Molina has acknowledged the need for collective action, and we are working toward that end. While visiting DHS facilities in Arizona last week, Guatemalan First Lady Rosa Leal de Perez, a leading voice on this issue, reemphasized the Government of Guatemala's commitment to addressing the factors driving migration, including of children, such as a lack of economic and education opportunities. The significant increase in unaccompanied children is, in large measure, a direct result of the challenges I described earlier. We cannot resolve them overnight and neither we, nor Guatemala, can address them alone. If confirmed, I will work with Congress and the Guatemalan Government to see that U.S. assistance is effectively targeted to address the underlying causes of migration. I will also continue efforts to correct misunderstandings about aspects of U.S. law and correct misperceptions that children are permitted to remain in the United States.

Guatemala is a nation with drive and determination to open its borders and compete on a global scale. It is a nation of diverse people who are working to consolidate democratic principles, and who are cognizant of their responsibilities to advance the cause of international peace and security. It is a nation of enormous pride and cultural patrimony and, if confirmed, it will be my high honor to represent the United States in Guatemala.

Mr. Chairman, after nearly three decades in the Foreign Service, I deeply appreciate the honor of appearing before the committee today. I understand the serious interests the United States has in the success of Guatemala, and of the region as a whole. If confirmed, I pledge to work with Congress, and this committee to ensure that as we meet the challenges ahead we do so reflecting the values and ideals of the United States.

Thank you very much, I look forward to any questions you may have.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Robinson. We appreciate your testimony.

We now go to Ms. Bassett.

STATEMENT OF LESLIE ANN BASSETT, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY

Ms. BASSETT. Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, I appreciate very much the opportunity to appear before you today. This is a great honor for me personally and professionally. One hundred years ago my great-great-grandfather, Senator William J. Stone of Missouri, sat as chairman of this committee during a pivotal time in world history. His concern and interest in foreign affairs inspired my decision to join the Department of State and is the foundation of my enduring respect for the important role Congress plays in our foreign policy.

I am both grateful and humbled that President Obama nominated me for this position and I appreciate the confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me. You have my commitment that, if confirmed, I will live up to the high standards that the administration has set for its appointees, standards that I know this committee and the American people expect of nominees.

I come before you mindful of my family's legacy of service to the Nation. My grandfather graduated from West Point, fought in World War II, and rose to the rank of general in the U.S. Army. My father is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. My two uncles served in the Air Force during the Vietnam war, but only one came home.

For the last three decades I have carried on this family tradition of service to our country as a Foreign Service officer representing the United States across four different regions of the globe. More than half my service has focused both in the field and from the vantage of Washington on our relations with the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I will draw upon all of my knowledge and experience to advance U.S. interests in our important relationship with Paraguay; and if confirmed I look forward to working with this committee in this effort.

This is a time of opportunity in the bilateral relationship between the United States and Paraguay. We have a strong interest in supporting Paraguay's efforts to strengthen its democratic institutions, improve the rule of law, advance human rights, counter narcotics trafficking and terrorism, combat corruption, and promote an effective, transparent government and judicial system. The tragedy of human trafficking is unfortunately a significant concern in Paraguay and I believe more can be done.

This is a time of opportunity in our trade relationship as well. Trade between the United States and Paraguay continues to grow. In 2013 our two-way trade totaled $2.2 billion, leaving us with a trade surplus of $1.6 billion. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the many U.S. businesses represented in Paraguay to support a reliable, transparent business environment conducive to continued growth in trade and investment. Steps Paraguay can take to ensure protection of intellectual property rights will help improve prospects for increased commerce.

This is a time of opportunity in our people-to-people ties, anchored by a strong Peace Corps presence, sustained by the work of dedicated colleagues from the USAID, and made possible by the

committed efforts of the entire U.S. Embassy in Asuncion. If confirmed, I promise to offer mission leadership focused on protecting American citizens and advancing the full range of our goals.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, your distinguished colleagues, and your staffs to advance our priorities with the Republic of Paraguay.

Thank you again for this opportunity and I welcome any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bassett follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LESLIE ANN BASSETT

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I appreciate very much the opportunity to appear before you today. This is a great honor for me, personally and professionally. One hundred years ago my great-great-grandfather, Senator William J. Stone of Missouri, sat as chairman of this committee during a pivotal time in world history. His concern and interest in foreign affairs inspired my decision to join the Department of State and is the foundation of my enduring respect for the important role Congress plays in our foreign policy.

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This is a time of opportunity in our trade relationship as well. Trade between the United States and Paraguay, while relatively modest, continues to grow. In 2013 our two-way trade totaled $2.2 billion, leaving us with a trade surplus of $1.6 billion. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the many U.S. businesses represented in Paraguay to support a reliable, transparent business environment conducive to continued growth in trade and investment. Steps Paraguay can take to ensure protection of intellectual property rights will help improve prospects for increased commerce.

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If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, your distinguished colleagues, and your staffs to advance our priorities with the Republic of Paraguay.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear today. I welcome any questions you may have.

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much, Ms. Bassett.

I am going to start with questioning with Mr. Robinson. Mr. Robinson, as Ambassador how will you address the root causes leading to the recent surge in minors migrating from Guatemala to the United States? The mass migration is putting immense pressure on

the United States and especially the border regions. In Artesia, New Mexico, the community is being asked to take on more of this burden. I recently visited with the community in the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to learn more about what is being done. However, the insecure conditions these children are fleeing are only getting worse.

How will you direct resources to support the Guatemalan Government in both preventing future migration and supporting the repatriation process of those returning to Guatemala?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator. We know what the root causes are. We know that security—both food security and physical security—are important, terrible issues that are affecting the country. We also know that there are networks, criminal networks that are preying upon the families in desperate situations to get their family members from Guatemala up to the United States.

We have programs that we have been employing, implementing, that include work with the Guatemalan police, with Customs, with Border Patrol. We also have programs that focus on food security and maternal and child health. I think we need to continue to implement those programs and I would direct resources in that regard.

But this is not something that the United States can do on its own. Clearly, the Government of Guatemala has a role to play. We have seen some cooperation in that regard. If confirmed, I would work even more closely with government authorities to address the issue.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Ms. Bassett, the Cartes government's openness to public-private partnership, particularly in improving their infrastructure, I think provides an avenue for U.S. business to offer its unique expertise in this area. If confirmed, what kind of support will you provide to United States business hoping to work in Paraguay in the area of infrastructure, agriculture, and other areas for investment?

Ms. BASSETT. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I think you are absolutely correct in your assessment that this is an opportunity in the Government of Paraguay and with our relationship in Paraguay to expand our economic ties by virtue of the kind of investment Paraguay seeks to make in infrastructure that needs modernizing, both to improve opportunities for commerce, but also to extend the reach of government into more remote areas.

We are working and if confirmed I will continue to work to try to promote American business opportunities through making sure that they are aware of the tenders that are available, that the opportunity for bids and procurement are as transparent and fair as possible, and that when appropriate we advocate on behalf of U.S. businesses interested in engaging in new initiatives with the Government of Paraguay.

Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Mr. Robinson, as you probably know, I have long advocated for increased attention for the Western Hemisphere region. However, the administration continually deprioritizes this region in relation to others. We are seeing the repercussions of this through the thousands of migrants arriving in the United States from Central

America. How will programs in Guatemala be impacted by the decreased request for the CARSI program in fiscal year 2015? How will you rebalance this request to address crime prevention with equally important issues of economic development, judicial and governance reform, and addressing human rights and issues surrounding endemic corruption?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator. We have to acknowledge that this has been a very constrained budget environment over the last few years. But the State Department and the administration have not lost their focus on the important areas of the Western Hemisphere, particularly the northern tier: Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Over the last fiscal year Guatemala was the recipient of $19 million in aid. They were also from CARSI resources, regional resources—they benefited from $54 million over the last fiscal year.

We will continue—I will continue to devote and send resources to those areas that are—the programs that are particularly important: police reform, obviously; again, customs and border. We will also work with the judicial sector to continue to work to funnel those resources where necessary.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Ms. Bassett, Paraguay's counternarcotics body reported that drug seizures were up by 39 percent in 2013. The country's status as a major transshipment route for Andean cocaine is troubling, as we have invested considerable resources to address the drug crisis in Colombia, Mexico, and Central America. How will you engage the Paraguayan authorities to stop these transshipments and the potential for Paraguay to become a cocaine-producing country itself?

Ms. BASSETT. I agree that it is a serious concern, although I think that the Government of Paraguay's successes in increasing their amount of interdiction is a positive sign of their commitment to address this issue. Through my experience working as the deputy chief of mission in Mexico and as political counselor in Columbia, I have a great deal of personal experience on both the costs and the consequences of the narcotics business on host governments as well as on the United States, and it is a very serious issue.

I hope that we can continue to cooperate and train with Paraguayan police authorities to try and increase their efforts, but also to encourage regional cooperation, since Paraguay is primarily a transit country for these products, illicit products. So I think the opportunity is also to look at regional cooperation to try and stem the flow in that direction as well.

Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses. Ms. Bassett, thank you for your family's service to the country going back several generations, despite your father's lack of education. [Laughter.]

And I thank you for your outstanding service. I have had the privilege of seeing you in other posts and I have always been very impressed by your service and dedication.

Mr. Robinson, you stated in your written statement: "The United States and Guatemala are already making some progress. Guatemala has made advances in the fight against trafficking in persons and is committing additional funding in a constrained budget environment to its antitrafficking efforts." Your statement, I do not question the validity. But I do question the progress.

There is no progress, Mr. Robinson. Numbers of children are the ultimate decider on whether there is progress or not, and those numbers continue to go up. And, as you mentioned, we provide $19 million in assistance. I do not know how much other funding and assistance. Can you for the record describe, is that the sum total of our financial assistance to Guatemala?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator. No, it is not the sum total. I cannot be exactly sure, but I think we provided over the last fiscal year almost $80 million total. Some of that obviously goes toward programs that are run by USAID. Some of that goes toward funding INL programs that I am familiar with. Some of that is regional funding, so it is hard to break it down exactly.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I want you to carry a message to the Government of Guatemala from me and other Members of Congress. That is, unless they show a significant amount of progress in reducing flow of children into our country, I and others will be seeking to reducing that funding dramatically. We have every right to expect a greater level of cooperation from the government of those three countries, including Guatemala, in many cases expediting the flow, including advertising on their radio and television that if you can get to the United States you can stay, including paying the traffickers thousands of dollars and seeing those transactions taking place in Guatemala, and of course no border enforcement whatsoever.

So we are—there are many of us that are subject to the immediate impact of these floods of children.

And by the way, there is no way that the drug traffickers and the people who want to send their children to the United States could in any way be anything but encouraged when one-tenth or one-twentieth of those who appear at our border are actually returned to the country of origin. That is not a disincentive. Actually, that is an encouragement.

Many of us are very disappointed at the President's message, where he came over and asked for legislation, $3.7 billion for a variety of programs, and then at the end of his message: And of course we will negotiate with Congress other measures.

Mr. Robinson, unless those families in Guatemala see planeloads of children return to Guatemala, they are going to keep sending them, and that is just a fact. Whether it is a Bush law, as described by some, or whether it is a Feinstein law or whatever it is, the 2008 law obviously was one of the catalysts for this, and that has to be changed. And for the President of the United States not to view that as the highest priority in my view, he still does not get it. And obviously the fact that he could not take the trouble to not engage in a game of pool and drinking beer and go down to the border to see the actual situation, of course, is really exceptional.

So my message to you, Mr. Robinson, is that we are totally dissatisfied with the failure of the Guatemalan Government to do any-

thing tangible, and the only real metric is how many children from Guatemala are showing up at our border; then there will be many of us who want to review very carefully the investment of American tax dollars. OK?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator. I can assure you that I share your concerns and it will be among my highest priorities to make sure that we are, number one, making sure that our assistance is channeled in the right direction, but also making sure that the Government of Guatemala knows that it has a significant role to play in helping to address these issues.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the witnesses.

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

Ms. Bassett, in 2014 Freedom House elevated Paraguay's press rating from "Not Free" to "Partly Free" due to reduced political influence in the media. The nation has improved the independence and protection of its press in recent years, but criminal gangs present a real challenge. Already this year, in the border areas with Brazil, two radio journalists, Edgar Fleitas and Fausto Alcaraz, reporting on local government services and drug trafficking taking place across the border were gunned down.

What steps will you take to support the Government of Paraguay's efforts at ensuring the safety of journalists?

Ms. BASSETT. Thank you. As you note, Paraguay has been working to improve its record on both press freedoms and other human rights, but much work does remain to be done, and the two cases you cite are instances where the government has focused, as I understand it, its attention, and at least in one case I believe an arrest has been made.

But the importance is not only in following up on crimes that have taken place, but trying to prevent crimes in the future. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Paraguay on improving its protections, not just to journalists, but to indigenous people to women and to people of diverse groups, so that everyone may enjoy an equal opportunity for a good life in Paraguay, which Gallop rated one of the happiest countries in the world. So it is an interesting contrast.

Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Great. Thank you. That is an interesting contrast. Thank you very much.

Mr. Robinson, we appreciate Secretary Kerry's decision to award to International Women of Courage Award this year to Judge Iris Yassmin Barrios Aguilar. Her work to confront high-profile corruption, organized crime, and drug trafficking and human rights abuses by former military personnel set an important precedent and demonstrated the importance of an independent judiciary.

However, the early removal of Attorney General Paz y Paz and President Molina's decision to not renew the mandate of the Commission Against Impunity are concerning. How would you work to improve the management, accountability, and coordination of the Guatemalan security and justice sectors, which is critical to addressing past crimes and stemming the staggering rate of homicides in the country?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator Udall. I think, first of all, I should say that as DCM in Guatemala from 2009 to 2011 I had the opportunity to work with many that are in the current government now. If confirmed, I think I would be able to maintain and extend that relationship.

Obviously, the issue of judicial reform and police reform is very, very important. We had an excellent relationship with the Attorney General, Paz y Paz. We also have a very good relationship with the current attorney general, Thelma Aldana, who I know from my time there in the past, and I can assure you that if confirmed I would work very, very closely with her and the rest of the Perez Molina government to address the issue of judicial reform.

I should say that the issues that are important to the current attorney general are also issues that impact on the issue on the front pages of the newspapers today, the children. She has been a strong advocate for children's issues and sexual gender-based violence issues, domestic violence issues. I think that is very important.

On the issue of extending the mandate for CICIG, the U.N. Commission Against Impunity, I think they have not made a decision yet on whether or not to extend the mandate. I would, if confirmed, want to consult with both the Commissioner and with the President to make sure that all of the important issues are taken into account before a decision is made on extending that mandate.

Senator UDALL. Mr. Robinson, thank you very much for that answer.

We have been joined by Senator Kaine, who has a real interest in the region, and I would turn to him for any questioning he would like of the nominees.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses. Congratulations to both of you for your appointments, and thanks also for your significant public service prior to this point.

I know that there have been some questions and the Chair has already focused on CARSI. I have been really stunned by the reducing budgets for CARSI, the Central America Regional Security Initiative. I think it was in fiscal year 2015 $130 million, which was down from $160 million. In that same fiscal year 2015 budget where we had $130 million for CARSI, we, I think, originally programmed around $700 million for taking care of detainees coming from these countries, and now we are saying that is not enough; we will need $3.8 billion.

So let me start with you, Mr. Robinson. As Ambassador to Guatemala, what can you do to help make more plain the need for United States assistance in regional security efforts in Guatemala and the other Central American nations?

Mr. ROBINSON. I absolutely acknowledge that, in this very tough budget environment, we have had to really focus on how we implement the funding that we have received. If confirmed, it would be among my highest priorities to make sure that those funds are used appropriately to increase the, for instance, training to customs and border patrol, to increase training for the police, and police reform. I think those are absolutely important issues.

I will, of course, leave it to you to decide how much money is sent in terms of assistance. But I can assure you that my priority,

should I be confirmed, will be making sure that we use those funds to the maximum efficiency possible.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Robinson, let me continue with you if I can on this, because I see you have been in Guatemala previously as consul general. You have been in El Salvador. You have been in the Dominican Republic. This is going to be an odd question: Is there any evidence to suggest that Central American parents do not love their children like American parents do or like the parents of other nations do?

Mr. ROBINSON. Senator, there is no evidence to suggest that Central American parents love their children any less than any other parents. I think part of the reason for the humanitarian, the urgent humanitarian situation, is probably an indication of how much they do in fact love their children, but the desperation of the situation——

Senator KAINE. So American parents, if we would imagine—I have got three kids. What would it take for me to send my children on a journey of thousands of miles where they would be faced with dangers? It would be a very gut-wrenching decision for me as a parent. It has got to be a gut-wrenching decision for Guatemalan parents and others in the Central American region, correct?

Mr. ROBINSON. I would imagine so, yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. And it is an expensive proposition. The standard of living in these countries is not a significant one. So not only is it gut-wrenching to separate yourself from your children, but it costs an awful lot of money to do that.

And I gather that these parents are only doing it because of their deep, deep concern about their children's safety in the neighborhoods and communities where they live. Is that your sense of sort of underlying driver of this flood of unaccompanied children that are coming to the U.S. border?

Mr. ROBINSON. Senator, absolutely. I think there are several underlying reasons. One is the violence, not just in Guatemala, but in the northern tier countries. The other is the lack of education and economic opportunity. I can assure you that, should I be confirmed, those would be absolute priorities for me and for making sure that I raise those issues with government authorities.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Robinson, let me just focus on violence for a minute. I lived in Honduras for a year and recently spent some time with the Honduran President, the new Honduran President Hernandez, talking about this issue. The violence in these communities, a lot of it is connected to the drug trade, is it not?

Mr. ROBINSON. Absolutely.

Senator KAINE. Now, the drug trade in Honduras or Guatemala, for example, is not a significant trade because Hondurans and Guatemalans consume a lot of drugs, correct?

Mr. ROBINSON. We do not think that they consume a large amount of drugs.

Senator KAINE. So the drug trade in these nations is really a drug trade where they are being used as a transit point for drugs that are generally produced further south, and whether it is Guatemala or Honduras or El Salvador, these nations are being used as a transit point to get drugs largely to the United States—Mexico, the United States, and Canada; is that not correct?

Mr. ROBINSON. That is correct.

Senator KAINE. Just focusing on the United States demand for drugs as an example, we are a big nation and the Nation, the citizens of the Nation are willing to pay a whole lot of money for illegal drugs. And it is that money that then becomes a corrupting influence that fuels gangs, that fuels the drug trade, that fuels the corruption of law enforcement authorities in many of these Central American nations; is that not correct?

Mr. ROBINSON. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator KAINE. So this notion of these youngsters who are coming to the United States, they are coming to the United States because their parents want them to be free from violence, and the violence is created to some significant degree by domestic choices that American citizens make, to try to consume illegal drugs that are coming through their countries. Is that not part of what is going on?

Mr. ROBINSON. There is no doubt that the corrupting influence of the drug trade is having a major effect on the governments in the northern tier. But what we have also seen is that we can have an effect in arresting that through our community policing programs, through our model precinct programs. There are ways to go after this, and we have had very good cooperation with the government, particularly in Guatemala, but throughout the northern tier, in using these programs to address the security issue at a very local level, at a municipal level.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Chair, could I continue for a bit? I would like to continue if I could.

As I watch TV programs and things and I see American citizens sort of yelling at these kids who have made this long trip, as if the kids are somehow anti-U.S., it strikes me that many of these kids are only refugees because of U.S. destination drug trade. Would it dramatically improve the physical security of these countries if U.S.-demand for illegal drugs was eliminated tomorrow?

Mr. ROBINSON. Senator——

Senator KAINE. And I know your background includes working on narcotics issues. This has been a specialty of yours.

Mr. ROBINSON. Absolutely. No, again there is no doubt that the corrupting influence of the narcotics trade is a major influence, and the violence that is surrounded with that is a major influence, on parents who make the decision to send their kids on this very arduous journey. How you classify them I would leave to another agency.

Senator KAINE. Sure.

Mr. ROBINSON. But it is an urgent humanitarian situation and it is one that we think collective action needs to be taken to address.

Senator KAINE. My sense is it is not just something we should do because we do not want to have unaccompanied minors showing up at the border. But to the extent that U.S.-destination drug trade is creating major security challenges in these nations, who have traditionally been friends and allies of the United States, then we even have a little bit of a responsibility to try to provide some assistance, either in reducing the demand for illegal drugs here or providing security assistance so that these nations can deal with a

problem that is not entirely of their own cause. Would you share that view?

Mr. ROBINSON. Senator, I absolutely believe and both the President and the Vice President and the Secretary of State have all made calls for collective action. This is not an issue that can be resolved by any one country. The United States is going to have to work with Mexico; they are going to have to work with the countries of the northern tier, in order to address that.

Senator KAINE. I share that.

Mr. Chair, I just want to make one point. I think you made this point earlier. When we are spending $140 million to help Central American nations, $130 million, deal with a regional security challenge that we have some complicity in, bluntly, and that number is going down, and we are spending $800 projected to deal with the consequence, and then now deciding we have got to spend $3.8 billion to deal with the consequence, I think the answer just suggests itself that there is a better way to spend the money, that there is a better way to spend the money.

I am interested in digging into the President's $3.8 billion request because I know some of it is earmarked toward the causes. But if we just keep dealing with symptoms and we do not deal with causes, then we are going to be dealing with symptoms for a very long time.

Your background in having been in these countries and your background in working on narcotics control issues is a very important background to bring to this task.

Ms. Bassett, let me just ask you one question if I can about Paraguay. I know that there has been studies suggesting that among nations in the Western Hemisphere Paraguay has had a particular problem with corruption. This is a domestic political matter that we have to be careful about, about how we deal with those. But what in your position as Ambassador could you do to try to help foster a climate that was more hostile to public corruption?

Ms. BASSETT. Thank you. I think we should first take note of President Cartes' strong efforts to address that problem directly through the appointments he has made to his Cabinet, through reforms that he has made in government, through the process of issuing very public and transparent tenders for infrastructure reform. All those are important first steps that I think Paraguay has recognized it needs to take to begin to erode that perception of corruption that impacts its reputation in the region, as you say, and also its ability to attract new investment and trade opportunities.

I think we can continue and, if confirmed, I will certainly continue to encourage the government in that direction, to use the resources that we may have through our assistance and other programs to promote those reforms and strengthen democratic institutions so reforms can endure from administration to administration; and then finally remind that our own projects and our own processes serve as models. So our visa process can be very transparent and objective and that serves as a model. We hope to be constructing a new chancery in Paraguay in the near future and that process should model the transparency that we hope will occur throughout every transaction in Paraguay.

So both through our programs, our rhetoric, and our actual actions in country, I hope that we can reinforce the message that there is nothing more valuable than good governance.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you to both witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator UDALL. Thank you so much, Senator Kaine, for your questioning. I think you hit on some very issues there.

Let me thank both the witnesses for your testimony today. I want to once again echo what I think all of the members of the committee said: We thank you very much for your public service.

We would ask you both to reply very quickly to all questions that are submitted for the record. This will allow us to move quickly to report your nominations on to the full committee. We will keep the record open until the close of business Friday so that other Senators can ask questions.

This hearing is now adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:47 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF LESLIE ANN BASSETT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. How would you characterize the current state of U.S.-Paraguayan relations? What steps would you propose the United States take to assist the Cartes administration in consolidating democracy? What would be your top policy priorities as U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay?

Answer. Bilateral relations with Paraguay are strong. Embassy Asuncion engages actively and broadly with the Government of Paraguay on a range of U.S. national interests. President Horacio Cartes enjoys strong public support for his efforts to foster economic growth, reduce poverty, and eliminate corruption.

If confirmed, I will seek to expand efforts to support Paraguay's initiatives to make its government more effective in delivering services to its people and to create a transparent and democratic state. This includes initiatives to reduce poverty, improve public health services, promote human rights, fight corruption, incorporate the informal the economy and foster development, enhance law enforcement capacity, and improve educational systems.

Question. What are the principal barriers to the growth of the Paraguayan economy? What policies does the Cartes government have in place to combat poverty, and what support does the United States provide in this area?

Answer. Paraguay has yet to fully realize its economic potential. Growth in Paraguay's relatively small economy has been volatile—for example, Paraguay had negative growth in 2012, followed by 13.5 percent growth in 2013. Paraguay's economy is heavily dependent on agricultural commodities exports—many Paraguayans make their living from agriculture, often on a subsistence basis. Roughly one-third of Paraguay's 6.5 million people live below the poverty line. The Cartes administration has sought to grow the economy, create jobs, and sharply reduce extreme poverty by building major infrastructure projects, using both government funds and newly attracted investment, and increasing competitiveness as Paraguay further integrates into the regional and global economy.

USAID began two large 5-year programs in Paraguay in October 2013. The programs, totaling $33 million, are focused on inclusive and sustainable rural economic development, strengthening public institutions, and combating corruption. USAID works with public institutions in Paraguay to strengthen management and governance systems, improve accountability mechanisms, and professionalize the Paraguayan civil service. USAID's economic growth program supports the GOP's "Cultivating Opportunities" initiative by generating opportunities to increase impoverished families' incomes in the Northern Zone, one of the areas with highest concentration of poverty and limited government presence. If confirmed, I will support continuity of these programs in pursuit of U.S. and Paraguayan interests.

In response to Paraguay's request, the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance funded four teams in 2014 to work with the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank to strengthen Paraguay's financial institutions and promote transparency.

If confirmed, I will support continuation of these programs in furtherance of U.S. and Paraguayan interests in Paraguay.

Question. What is the extent of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's presence in Paraguay and is this cooperation sufficient? With State Department's counternarcotics assistance to Paraguay recently eliminated, what types of counternarcotics cooperation do you recommend?

Answer. The U.S. Government works closely with the Government of Paraguay on counternarcotics, and focuses on strengthening Paraguayan capability to disrupt cocaine trafficking operations, pursue and arrest high-level narcotics traffickers, and to combat money laundering and trafficking in persons, with an emphasis in and around the Tri-Border area. The U.S. Government has provided training, equipment and technical support to Paraguay's Anti-Narcotics Secretariat (SENAD), the Paraguayan National Police, and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of the Anti-Money Laundering Secretariat (SEPRELAD) as well as training to judges and prosecutors who prosecute narcotics and money laundering cases.

Although additional International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funding has not been requested, the U.S. Embassy is using remaining funds to strengthen antimoney laundering and asset forfeiture regimes, and to strengthen Paraguay's criminal justice system. The U.S. Government also supports sensitive investigation units (SIUs) that work well with DEA to disrupt drug trafficking organizations.

Question. What steps do you recommend to help Paraguay tackle its persistent and endemic corruption? What are the lessons learned from USAID's anticorruption and democracy programming in Paraguay that has aimed to reduce corruption in public sector institutions?

Answer. President Horacio Cartes has emphasized reforming the Paraguayan economy and governance controls, seeking to fight corruption, impunity, and international crime. He has sought to create jobs and sharply reduce extreme poverty by encouraging economic growth, investing heavily in infrastructure, and increasing competitiveness. These efforts are designed to help Paraguay strengthen the rule of law and promote transparency. We are working with President Cartes and his administration to address our many shared interests in this area.

In 2012, Paraguay completed the second of two Millennium Challenge Corporation threshold programs totaling over $65 million. Both threshold programs were focused on reducing corruption and they achieved tangible results including: reducing the length of time for response to complaints and for starting a business; building a forensics lab to improve the reliability of evidence provided to prosecutors; and strengthening procurement processes and accountability measures in 12 key government ministries and public offices.

Currently, USAID supports Paraguay's efforts to develop a National Anticorruption Strategy and will provide technical assistance for its implementation. An important component of this assistance will focus on strengthening the GOP's ability to effectively communicate reforms to its constituents. The overarching strategy will encompass USAID and Paraguay's joint efforts to strengthen management and governance systems improve accountability mechanisms, expand transparency through the Open Government Partnership, and professionalize the Paraguayan civil service. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Cartes administration's efforts to reduce corruption.

Question. What is your view of the potential threat of terrorism emanating from the tri-border region of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil? What is the extent of the threat posed by the People's Paraguayan Army (EPP)? How would you characterize U.S. support to Paraguay for its counterterrorism programs and is the level of support adequate?

Answer. The Tri-Border area of Paraguay is home to some of the continent's most active contraband traffickers. Although there is no evidence of terrorist operations in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, there are concerns that some portion of the money laundered from smuggling and drug activity may be used for terrorist financing.

The U.S. Government supports the Paraguayan Government's efforts to build stronger democratic institutions, improve internal auditing controls, establish internal disciplinary systems, and incorporate regular external audits. These efforts represent the types of systemic changes that will decrease the perception of corruption in the country and will improve delivery of citizen services.

A specific example of our support is the Homeland Security Investigation (HSI) Trade Transparency Unit (TTU) in Paraguay that serves as a strategic effort to combat and prevent exploitation of the international trade and financial systems through trade-based money laundering. Through the exchange of trade data, investigators are able to see both sides of transactions and increase transparency.

Since 2008, persons claiming to be part of the Paraguayan People's Army (EPP)—an internal guerrilla movement—have been active in the northern Departments of Concepcion and San Pedro. The group has been involved in violence designed to intimidate the population and government. The true size of the group has been difficult to establish, but the Government of Paraguay believes it to be a small, decentralized group of approximately 20–100 members.

The United States cooperates with the Government of Paraguay to counter potentially destabilizing threats. The U.S. Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program has contributed to building Paraguay's counterterrorism law enforcement capacity through training that included: the Police Leaders' Role in Combating Terrorism, Fraudulent Document Recognition, Investigating Terrorist Incidents, Interviewing Terrorist Suspects, and Cellular Telephone Forensics.

Question. To what degree are there models of effective land reform from the region that might be adapted to Paraguay?

Answer. President Cartes has stated that he supports land reform to spur economic growth and alleviate rural poverty. This June, President Cartes signed a law returning more than 14,000 hectares to an indigenous community. Land reform has been successful in many countries. Best practices that have worked well in other countries in the region include: developing mechanisms for land registration and titling, land taxation which encourages productive use, financing mechanisms to help landless peasants purchase land and assistance to small farmers in identifying commercially viable crops to move beyond subsistence agriculture.

RESPONSES OF TODD D. ROBINSON TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM UDALL

Question. Guatemala is considered to be one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the region. Tropical storms, flooding, and landslides are just a few of the extreme weather events impacting the country, many of which are expected to worsen. If confirmed, how will you support communities to build resilience, strengthen environmental governance and science based decision making?

Answer. Given the precarious environmental situation in Guatemala, as well as the likelihood of continued climate-related impacts, the Department of State and USAID have prioritized adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change and environmental degradation under the Country Development Cooperation Strategy and the President's Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI). Under GCCI, the United States is working to foster low-carbon growth, reduce emissions from deforestation, and promote sustainable and resilient societies. In Guatemala, USAID's Climate, Nature, and Communities Program, for example, works to reduce the risks associated with climate-related natural disasters, while also improving adaptive capacity through improved natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. Additionally, through funding from the State Department, Guatemala benefits from USAID's E–CAM Regional Environment Program's work on regional adaptation measures focused on building capacity and governance structures to respond to the threats and potential impacts of climate change.

If confirmed, I will work through these programs to build resilience within Guatemala to respond to the impacts of climate change and to improve domestic capabilities to the Guatemalan Government to develop their own mechanisms to respond to these vulnerabilities.

Question. If confirmed, how would you address the ongoing conflicts around mines and hydroelectric dams in Guatemala?

Answer. The Department of State continues to closely monitor all potential areas of conflict surrounding mega projects in Guatemala. We were encouraged that the Guatemalan Government recently became a "compliant country" in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which means it has agreed to work with civil society and international community to increase the transparency of the mining sector. If confirmed, I will encourage the Guatemalan Government to work closely—and peacefully—with communities involved in mega projects, including mines and hydroelectric dams, to ensure an open and peaceful dialogue and that the Guatemalan Government complies with its domestic and international legal obligations

relating to these projects. It is imperative the Guatemalan Government, communities, and companies involved find a sustainable way to deal with these types of conflicts.

If confirmed, I will support all parties in their efforts to reach an agreement, if the parties believe that would be helpful.

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to encourage companies to advance and respect human rights?

Answer. In Guatemala, the U.S. Government has prioritized the promotion of respect for human rights. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all companies—foreign and domestic—integrate respect for human rights into their business practices, guided by the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. We are already doing this in Guatemala under the CAFTA–DR Enforcement Plan, which seeks to protect the human and labor rights of domestic employees. Given the large extractives industry in Guatemala, we will encourage companies and the Government of Guatemala to join the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, an initiative that guides companies on providing security for their operations in a manner that respects human and labor rights.

If confirmed, I will encourage continued dialogue between government, private sector, and civil society representatives to provide an avenue to address concerns relating to the respect for human and labor rights in Guatemala, through the Voluntary Principles, among other mechanisms.

NOMINATIONS OF JANE HARTLEY, JOHN BASS, KEVIN O'MALLEY, BRENT HARTLEY, AND JAMES PETTIT

TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Hon. John R. Bass, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey
Jane D. Hartley, of New York, to be Ambassador to the French Republic and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Principality of Monaco
Kevin F. O'Malley, of Missouri, to be Ambassador to Ireland
Brent Robert Hartley, of Oregon, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia
James D. Pettit, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher Murphy presiding.

Present: Senators Murphy, Shaheen, Kaine, Johnson, and McCain.

Also present: Senators Clair McCaskill and Roy Blunt.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator MURPHY. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will now come to order. I am pleased to welcome all of our nominees and their friends and family who have come here today to support them. We have two panels today. The committee is going to be considering the nominations of John Bass to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, Jane Hartley to be the U.S. Ambassador to France, and Kevin O'Malley to be our Ambassador to Ireland. Then on the second panel we are going to consider the nomination of James Pettit to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Moldova and Brent Hartley to be the United States Ambassador to Slovenia.

Suffice it to say this is probably one of the busiest days we have had in our subcommittee. The three nominees before us represent three of the iconic diplomatic posts for the United States around

the world. Our second panel will have as its subject two countries that are no less important to U.S. security interests.

So we will begin with introductions of the nominees, you will be invited to give your opening statements, and then answer questions from the panel.

We are blessed to have with us Senator McCaskill, who is here but has to leave for other obligations, to introduce Mr. O'Malley. We may be joined by Senator Blunt as well, but at this point I will recognize Senator McCaskill for the purposes of an introduction.

STATEMENT OF HON. CLAIRE MCCASKILL, U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSOURI

Senator MCCASKILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator Johnson and the other Senators who are here this morning, for giving me a few minutes to talk about an extraordinarily American story. Kevin O'Malley is a second generation Irish American. He is a direct descendant from Irish grandparents on both sides of his family, and up until this confirmation process actually held dual citizenship in Ireland and the United States. Of course, he gave up that dual citizenship as part of this confirmation process.

He has got a wonderful wife and two great sons, and he has been the kind of guy that everyone would want to call their friend. He is smart, strong, loyal, hardworking. I think one of the things that I want to point out to the committee is that he is one of the very few lawyers that I know that is comfortable on either side of the table. There is a tendency in the legal practice to get biased and decide that you are going to be in one area or the other in terms of how you represent clients. Kevin has been a lawyer who has steadfastly maintained that part of being a lawyer is to defend people who have been sued and also sometimes to sue people for causes he believes is just.

So I think that is a good preparation for the job of Ambassador, because he does see both sides and he has been able to work hard on both sides of the table. As evidence of how well he is respected for that, in 2013—the highest award you can receive from your peers in St. Louis is the Award of Honor by the Lawyers Association of St. Louis. This award is given annually to a trial attorney whose service to the profession and community merits special recognition. He was honored for 10 years of his service as a Federal prosecutor to the Department of Justice and a record of defending physicians and hospitals in medical malpractice suits and also as his role in representing plaintiffs in some other matters, and also as a senior author for the nine-volume Federal Jury Practice and Instruction treatise that is actually used in Federal trials.

So he has academic chops, he has community involvement, he has great professional expertise, and he loves his country, but he also cares deeply for Ireland, which I think is a great combination. I also should point out that he served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve, so he has that military background also, which I think is essential as he represents our interests in one of our important allies. Especially at this time of conflict around the world, cementing our relationships with our colleagues that are our allies, the NATO allies, are very, very important.

And that's why I hope, for all of these nominees, these three and the two that follow, I hope that the committee can move quickly, because clearly it is a time in the world that we need the voice of America at every table, in all of these countries. That is why these ambassadorships are in fact so critical.

I know my colleague Senator Blunt is very supportive of this nominee. I am sure he will be here some time during the hearing this morning. He has expressed his enthusiastic support for Kevin O'Malley's nomination to this important position, and I know that you will be kind enough to give him a chance to say a word when he does arrive.

And I thank you all for giving me a few minutes to introduce my friend and somebody who I think will be the essence of a great public servant to the Nation we love. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator McCaskill. Thank you for taking time to join us this morning.

I believe that Senator Blunt is on his way, so while we are waiting why do I not introduce our other two nominees. In doing so, I will say just a quick word about the countries to which you are being nominated for by way of my opening remarks. Then when Senator Blunt comes, we can introduce him, have Senator Johnson make some opening remarks, and then get to your testimony.

I am really pleased first to introduce Jane Hartley to the committee. She has got a rather impressive career in both the public and private sector, but it all pales in comparison to the most important thing on her resume, which is that she grew up in Waterbury, CT.

She is currently the chief executive officer of the Manhattan-based Observatory Group, where she advises multinational corporations and financial institutions about policy developments and investment. She is a graduate of Boston College. She began her career here in Washington, where she worked as the White House public liaison in the White House Public Liaison's Office and as the director of congressional relations at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

She is an experienced leader both in the private and public sector, with significant experience in the global economy, including the bulk of her experience in and around Europe. She will bring a range of all of this experience to serve her well as she faces a number of challenges and opportunities if confirmed to be our next Ambassador to France.

A word on France. Our friendship, of course, dates back to the very beginning of our Republic and indeed our Nation's first diplomatic, Benjamin Franklin, who served with distinction as our first Ambassador to France. Today France remains a steadfast partner of the United States, grounded in our shared values and our rich communal history. France and the United States collaborate on every arena, from commerce, where commercial transactions between our two countries reach a billion dollars every day, to defense and security, where we cooperate to counter the terrorism of extremist groups in Africa to the Middle East, to diplomacy, where our diplomats are working side by side right now in the P5+1.

But even amongst the closest of friends, some challenges remain. One example is France's decision to go ahead with sales of the am-

phibious assault Mistral warships to Russia even after Russia's belligerent and illegal actions against Crimea in Ukraine.

Ms. Hartley, we look forward to hearing your thoughts on these and other important issues.

Let me introduce John Bass and then we will go to Senator Blunt. We are pleased to have with us Ambassador John Bass, a distinguished career member of the Foreign Service with deep knowledge of Europe and Eurasia and extensive crisis management experience. He is currently the Executive Secretary of the Department of State, a position he has held since 2012.

I got to know him as our Ambassador to Georgia, and previous to that he was a leader of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Baghdad. He has demonstrated over and over again an ability to lead challenging missions to promote U.S. interests. Back in Washington he has held numerous leadership roles within the State Department. He is the recipient of three Meritorious Honor Awards and five Superior Honor Awards, in addition to his Group Honor Awards.

He graduated from Syracuse University, speaks fluent Italian and French. I am sure his Turkish is improving by the day.

I am confident that Mr. Bass is going to bring all of his talent to strengthening our bilateral relations with Turkey. As you know, Turkey is one of our most important and complex relationships. So this nomination is an honor and a challenge even for the most experienced of our diplomats. It is a NATO ally of the United States and Europe since 1952, but the ongoing crises in Iraq and Syria are at the top of our agenda with Turkey. I have been to the refugee camps that they are hosting on the Syrian border and personally witnessed the extraordinary generosity of the Turkish people and their government.

We also continue to value Turkey's contributions to ISAF in Afghanistan and other NATO operations, including their agreement to host a U.S. early warning radar system.

But we hope that you do not neglect, if you serve in this post, the stalled rapprochement with Israel and peace negotiations with Cyprus. Resolutions of these conflicts could bring some much-needed stability to the region.

Turkey is holding its first direct Presidential election next month and I strongly believe that we need an ambassador in place by the first round of voting. I urge my colleagues to agree to consider this nomination of our Ambassador to Turkey and all of our nominees before the August recess.

We welcome you to the committee as well.

Let me now thank Senator Blunt for joining us. Senator McCaskill gave us some opening words on Mr. O'Malley and we welcome yours as well.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROY BLUNT,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSOURI

Senator BLUNT. Well, thank you, Chairman, and thank you for your indulgence in letting me come a little late. Chairman Murphy, Senator Johnson, Senator McCain, Senator Kaine, I am glad to be here joining Senator McCaskill as we have an opportunity to introduce Kevin O'Malley to be the United States Ambassador to Ire-

land. I may say a few things that Senator McCaskill has already said, but we have probably waited long enough to have an Ambassador to Ireland that things can be repeated here with somebody as qualified as Mr. O'Malley is for this job.

He really comes here with 40 years of public service and private service, including service in the United States Army. I think he is a very qualified nominee. He understands our country and understands the country that he will represent our country in.

He was born and raised in St. Louis, MO. He is highly respected in that community and in our State. He is a second generation Irish American, capable of representing the values and the understanding of our country in that country in a significant way. He served as a special attorney for the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section of the United States Department of Justice from 1973 to 1979, and then became the Assistant United States Attorney in St. Louis.

He currently serves in a number of capacities, both as part of the litigation practice group at Greensfelder Attorneys in St. Louis, but also working in a number of capacities to help other attorneys better understand their responsibilities. He serves as a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and is continually recognized as one of the best lawyers in America.

In 2009 our Governor, Jay Nixon, appointed him to be the only nonphysician member of the Missouri Board of Healing Arts. This is a group that licenses and disciplines in that area of health care, and he was recently selected to serve as the president of that board.

Again as the only nonphysician on the board, his colleagues on that board chose him to lead the board.

In 1968 he was a community ambassador in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Later, in the 1990s he served as an instructor for the American Bar Association Central and European Law Initiative in Moscow and later in Warsaw. He is a leading advocate of education. He brings to this nomination an incredible background and even, in visiting with him, a more incredible enthusiasm for this job, for our State, his State and my State, for our country, a great appreciation for the country where he will serve.

I certainly think the President has made a great choice in nominating him for this job and look forward to seeing the committee action and hopefully soon to see him serving as our Ambassador to Ireland.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Blunt. I know you have a busy morning, but thank you for lending your voice to introduce Mr. O'Malley.

Now let me turn it over to Senator Johnson for opening remarks.0

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to thank Senator Blunt for coming here and introducing Mr. O'Malley.

Just to keep it brief, I want to thank the nominees for taking time to visit with me in my office. I want to thank you for your coming here to testify today and certainly your willingness to serve, and just look forward to your testimony. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. All right, let us get to it. We will start from my left to right, so let me introduce Jane Hartley to begin with testimony.

STATEMENT OF JANE D. HARTLEY, OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO

Ms. HARTLEY. Thank you, Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the committee. It is a great honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to France and Monaco. Before I begin, please allow me to introduce you to my dear husband, Ralph Schlosstein, who has been so supportive in this process. If you do me the honor of confirming me, Ralph is looking forward to coming with me to Paris. My daughter, Kate, and my son, Jamie, are not able to be present, but they are here with us in my heart and they make me proud every day of my life.

I am deeply grateful to both the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me to serve as chief of mission to our oldest friend and ally. I am also grateful to the Senators and staff members who took the time to meet with me. I appreciated those meetings and I learned from them, and I hope that dialogue will continue.

Some 60 Americans have served as our Nation's highest representative to France. Our first two Ambassadors, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, arrived in Paris 235 years ago. In this century, the list is an honor roll of patriotism and accomplishment: Bruce, Dillon, Shriver, Rohatyn, and many, many others. It is humbling to be nominated to join that company. The honor is magnified because, if confirmed, I will become only the second woman to serve in this position, after the late Ambassador Harriman.

Last month on June 6, D–Day, President Obama and President Hollande stood side by side at Omaha Beach in Normandy and paid a tribute to the Americans who fought to liberate France. When Hollande visited Washington in February, he went to Arlington and presented the Legion of Honor to the Unknown Soldier. France remembers and deeply values our sacrifice.

Today France is a key NATO ally and stands by our side on almost every major issue. Our work together on counterterrorism activities is intense and growing, especially in Africa. France is an indispensable partner in the Middle East. It remains absolutely committed to preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I will remind French leaders that this is not the time for companies to engage in business as usual with Iran.

France has been a forward-leaning partner on Syria, trying to increase pressure against the Assad regime, and France has played an important role in responding to the crisis in Ukraine, rallying the European partners to keep up pressure on Russia, including through sanctions. As the members of the committee are aware, France signed a contract with Russia years ago to deliver two *Mis-*

tral-class ships. If confirmed, I will press French leaders to make the right decision regarding delivery of these ships.

While our work together on political and security issues commands the headlines, our economic ties are no less important. We want to ensure that any U.S. firm can take advantage of export opportunities to France. We must keep engaging France on the benefits of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and we want to encourage French investment in the United States that creates jobs. French firms already employ 500,000 Americans. If confirmed, I will build on these already strong trade links that bind our countries.

I believe that my experience as a private sector business executive has especially qualified me for this opportunity. For 20 years, I have been the CEO of a global macroeconomic and political consulting firm. Also, as a board member of a public company and as former vice chair of the Economic Club of New York, I have developed relationships with central bankers, finance ministers, and business leaders throughout Europe and particularly in France.

If confirmed, I will apply my experience running organizations to managing our large, diverse mission to France. This talented, dedicated team advances our national interests and protects U.S. citizens every day. It would be an honor to lead them and to serve with them.

My father ingrained in his children a deep belief that we were lucky to be living in the greatest country on Earth. He believed deeply and taught us that the highest honor anyone could attain was to serve our country. I still remember my parents' pride when I began my public service career 35 years ago, first as director of congressional relations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where I learned firsthand the importance of the legislative branch, and then serving on President Carter's staff at the White House.

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the distinguished committee, if confirmed by the United States Senate, I will do everything in my power to strengthen and deepen the ties that have bound France and America together since the birth of our great country.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hartley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JANE D. HARTLEY

Thank you, Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the committee. It is a great honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to France and Monaco.

Before I begin, please allow me to introduce to you my dear husband, Ralph Schlosstein, who has been so supportive in this process. If you do me the honor of confirming me, Ralph is looking forward to coming with me to Paris. My daughter, Kate, and my son, Jamie, are not able to be present. But they're here with us in my heart and they make me proud every day of my life.

I am deeply grateful to both the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me to serve as chief of mission to our oldest friend and ally. I hope that you will consider that trust well placed, and that the committee and the Senate will award me the great honor of your confirmation.

Only some 60 Americans have served as our Nation's highest representative to France since our first Ambassador, Benjamin Franklin, arrived in Paris over 235 years ago. Franklin was succeeded by another American Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson.

In this century, the list is an honor roll of patriotism and accomplishment—Bruce, Dillon, Shriver, Rohatyn, and so many others. It is humbling—and challenging—to be nominated to join that company.

The honor is magnified because, if confirmed, I would become only the second woman to serve in this position, after the late Pamela Harriman.

This year's events commemorating the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings during World War II offered a special reminder of the long and close relationship America has had with France over almost two and a half centuries.

Last month, on June 6, President Obama and President Hollande stood side-by-side at Omaha Beach in Normandy and paid tribute to the Americans who fought to liberate France. Nine of your colleagues attended with the Presidents that morning at the American cemetery. Our sacrifice is remembered and deeply valued in France.

When President Hollande was here in Washington last February, he went to Arlington and presented the Legion d'Honneur to the Unknown Soldier—as the representative of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II.

Today, France stands by our side on almost every major issue. France is a unique ally in terms of its military capability and political willingness to deploy force in harm's way in pursuit of our common foreign policy interests. Our operational cooperation within NATO—and beyond— has vastly improved since France's 2009 reintegration into the Alliance's military command structure. Our work together on counterterrorism activities is intense and growing, especially in Africa.

Twice in the past 18 months France has led the international community's response to crises in Africa. Its troops and airstrikes halted the advance of al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups in Mali. Another large deployment prevented humanitarian catastrophe in the Central African Republic. France's facilities, relationships, and expertise are a significant capability multiplier for U.S. efforts in the region.

France is an indispensable ally in the Middle East. President Hollande has been unequivocal that Iran must not acquire a nuclear weapon, and France remains resolutely committed to the P5+1 negotiations. If confirmed, I will also remind French leaders this is not the time for our companies to engage in "business as usual" with Iran.

France has been a forward-leaning partner on Syria, working closely with us to increase pressure against the Assad regime. France has helped lead efforts to support the Syrian opposition, remove the regime's chemical weapons, provide humanitarian assistance, and reach a political solution. The French Government takes the threat of foreign fighters returning from Syria very seriously and its authorities have made several arrests in recent months. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Government works closely with France on this emerging threat to our common security.

France has played an important role in responding to the crisis in Ukraine, rallying its European partners to keep up pressure on Russia, including through sanctions. We support President Hollande joining forces with Chancellor Merkel to push for a diplomatic breakthrough between Russia and Ukraine. As members of the committee are well aware, France signed a contract with Russia in 2009 to deliver two "Mistral-class" helicopter carrier ships to Russia. President Obama has made clear we have concerns about "continuing significant defense deals with Russia" given its actions to destabilize its neighbors. At the same time, the President said the U.S.-French relationship "has never been stronger," which means we can discuss this issue frankly. U.S. officials repeatedly stress our strong concerns to the French. If confirmed, I will continue to press French leaders to make the right decision regarding delivery of these ships.

The leaders of our two countries are in constant dialogue. President Obama hosted President Hollande in February for the White House's only state visit since early 2012—a reflection of the vitality of the U.S.-French relationship. During that visit, the President took Hollande to see Monticello—the home of our third President, who had been our second Ambassador to France. Secretary Kerry's dozen visits to France during the past 17 months also underscore the robust health of our cooperation.

While our work together on political and security issues commands the headlines, our economic ties are no less important. France is the world's fifth-largest economy and remains one of our top economic partners.

Drawing on my decades of experience as a CEO and a business executive, if you do me the honor of confirming me, I will focus on building on the trade links that bind our countries together—links that, as you know, are already very strong.

Our transatlantic commerce creates jobs on both sides, for enterprises large and small. We want to ensure that any U.S. firm can take advantage of opportunities to export to France. In 2013, the United States exported $32 billion worth of goods

to France, and we are France's top trading partner outside of the European Union. We must keep engaging France on the benefits of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, making the case that an ambitious agreement can create more economic growth and jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

French investment in the United States creates jobs. U.S. affiliates of 2,300 French firms employ half a million Americans at an average annual wage of nearly $80,000. And many French firms are looking at the U.S. rather than France for future investments. In fact, the total stock of French foreign direct investment in the United States is 10 times the combined FDI of the BRICS countries.

If confirmed, I will be able to use my decades of professional experience with running organizations to lead our large, diverse Mission to France. Around 900 U.S. and locally employed staff work at our Paris Embassy and six constituent posts. This talented, dedicated team advances our national interests and protects U.S. citizens every day. It would be a true honor to serve with them.

For 20 years I have been the CEO of a global macroeconomic and political consulting firm, with a particular focus on Europe. I am a member of the Board of Directors of Heidrick & Struggles, a large global executive search firm with a substantial European presence. As the former Vice-Chairman of the Economic Club of New York, I have moderated many sessions with key European policymakers.

I have served on the Executive Committee of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. And I have been an active member of the Committee on Foreign Relations for over 10 years.

My family and I have a deep and abiding respect for the importance of public service. I still remember my parents' pride when I began my public service career 35 years ago. First, as Director of Congressional Relations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development—where I learned first hand the vital role of the legislative branch. And, later on, serving on President Carter's staff at the White House.

My father ingrained in his children a deep belief that we were lucky to be living in the greatest country on earth. He believed deeply, and taught us, that the highest honor anyone could attain was to serve our country.

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of this distinguished committee, if confirmed by the United States Senate, I will do everything in my power to strengthen and deepen the ties that have bound France and America together since the birth of our great country. I look forward to this extraordinary challenge and hope to have the chance to serve the United States of America at this important moment in history.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Ms. Hartley.

Ambassador Bass.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN R. BASS, OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Ambassador BASS. Mr. Chairman, with your permission I would like to submit my full statement for the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and all the members of the committee. I am honored to come before you to be considered for the position of Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, and I am grateful for the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work with all of you to protect and advance our interests by promoting security, prosperity, democracy, and human rights in Turkey and in the many places where we work together.

I am joined today by members of my family: my wife, Holly, who also serves the Nation as a career officer; my sister, Kristin Bass, my mother-in-law, Mary Holzer. I am also joined by colleagues who served with me in Baghdad and became family during my time there.

I have spent much of my career working to achieve a cornerstone of U.S. policy—completing the project of building a Europe whole, free, and at peace. In each chapter of that process, Turkey has fig-

ured prominently. As you noted, Mr. Chairman, our partnership has never been more important or more complex. A NATO ally for 62 years, Turkey is an important security partner, helping us foster stability from Kosovo to Afghanistan and from Libya to the Horn of Africa.

Turkey faces very real threats from conflict in Iraq and Syria. ISIL's gains in Iraq indeed pose dangers for all of us, as its seizures of Turkish citizens demonstrate, and we continue to urge their immediate release. Turkey has borne a significant burden from hosting more than one million Syrians displaced by the conflict.

Turkey is a key member of the Friends of Syria Core Group and we work together to support the moderate opposition and to pursue a political solution to the conflict. We also work with Turkey to address risks from terrorists and foreign fighters exploiting Turkey's geography.

Turkey is acutely aware of the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran and understands the importance of supporting the sanctions regimes in place.

The instability in the region means Ankara needs to renew or to build stronger relations with Israel, Cyprus, and Armenia. We encourage Turkey and Israel to normalize their official relations. In Cyprus, Turkey's role in support of the peace process is vital to reunifying the island as a bizonal, bicommunal federation. There is a real chance for a just and lasting resolution of this long-standing conflict and, if confirmed, I will work closely with you and your colleagues and support the U.N.-facilitated settlement talks to help Cypriots achieve this vital goal.

We continue to encourage Turkey and Armenia to move toward normalization, to create the peaceful, productive relationship the people of both countries deserve. On this year's Remembrance Day, Prime Minister Erdogan's condolences to descendants of those Armenians killed indicates that the space for dialogue is opening. But more can and must be done.

As President Obama said before the Turkish Parliament in 2009, democracies "must move forward. Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and vibrant civil society." If confirmed, I will stand by these principles and urge the Turkish Government to continue efforts to more fully integrate its Kurdish and other minority populations and to reopen the Halki Seminary.

The United States will continue to uphold our values and urge transparency, accountability, and full respect for the rule of law. Turkey's citizens are having a robust conversation on these issues. Success in these areas would be a strong signal that Turkey's democracy is moving forward.

Mr. Chairman, Turkey's strong growth has tripled its economy in recent years and our exports to Turkey have tripled over the last decade. But we can do more, and if confirmed I will be an advocate for U.S. business and find new ways to expand educational, technology, and other exchanges.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed I pledge to safeguard those Americans in my mission and to provide great service to all American citizens in Turkey.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear here today. I look forward to continuing our work together if confirmed and to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bass follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BASS

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and all the members of the committee. I am honored to come before you to be considered for the position of Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, and I am grateful for the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work with all of you to protect and advance our interests by promoting security, prosperity, democracy and human rights—both in Turkey and in the many places beyond its borders where we work together.

I'm grateful to be joined today by members of my family—my wife, Holly, who also serves the Nation as a career officer; my sister, Kristin Bass; and my mother-in-law, Mary Holzer. I also want to recognize colleagues here today who became my family during our work on the front lines of diplomacy in Baghdad.

I have spent much of my career working to achieve a cornerstone of U.S. policy—completing the project of building a Europe whole, free, and at peace. In each chapter of my efforts—from conventional arms reductions across the former Soviet bloc, through the bloody wars in Bosnia and Kosovo and the enlargement of NATO and the EU, to our work with European friends to address new threats further afield from terrorism, violent extremism and a prospective nuclear Iran, Turkey has figured prominently. I've watched Turkey's transformation into a modernized G20 economy and a confident partner of the United States in many new areas of the world. Our partnership has never been more important—or more complex.

Our core security partnership has anchored our relationship for decades—and with good reason. A NATO ally for 62 years, Turkey has bordered potential or active conflicts for that entire period. In recent years, it has stood with us in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya. It hosts key elements of NATO's missile defense architecture. Turkey has joined fellow allies in rejecting Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea and encouraging de-escalation of the ongoing crisis. It also is contributing military assets to reassurance activities in Central and Eastern Europe.

At the same time it supports collective security, Turkey faces very real challenges on its own borders. ISIL's gains in Iraq pose significant dangers for regional and international security, as the group's seizure of Turkish citizens and diplomats demonstrates; we continue to urge their immediate release. Turkey is working closely with us and other partners to help Iraqis achieve the objective of a federal, democratic, pluralistic, and unified Iraq.

Even before ISIL's metastasis into Iraq, Turkey was grappling with the spillover of terrorism and violence from the war in Syria. Over 70 Turks have died as a result of cross-border fire or terrorism emanating from Syria. Just as the United States has provided more than $2 billion in humanitarian assistance for Syrians affected by this conflict, Turkey has also borne a significant burden from hosting more than 1 million displaced Syrians. The Turkish Government has dedicated enormous resources to operating 22 refugee camps, while facing ongoing challenges in providing services to the many Syrians who struggle to survive in urban areas.

Turkey has been a critical facilitator of U.S. assistance to Syrian people in need and to the moderate Syrian opposition. Turkey is a key member of the Friends of Syria Core Group, and we are working closely with Turkey to find a political solution to the conflict and reinforce support for the moderate opposition. Concurrently, we are working with the Turkish Government to mitigate the risk posed by violent extremists and foreign fighters exploiting Turkey's geography. If confirmed, I will work closely with Turkey and other regional partners to stem the flow of fighters, money, and expertise to and from Syria.

Our cooperation has been similarly important on Iran, with respect to nonproliferation matters generally and on sanctions specifically. As a neighbor, Turkey is acutely aware of the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran, and understands the importance of supporting the sanctions regime to spur Iran to meet international obligations on its nuclear program.

The instability along Turkey's southern border gives renewed urgency for Ankara to build stronger relationships with other neighbors—Israel, Armenia, and Cyprus. We continue to encourage Turkey and Israel to restore positive official relations by completing the normalization process, which would enhance regional stability and complement their continued strong trade and investment relationship. In Cyprus,

Turkey—along with Greece—is playing an important and constructive role in supporting the peace process. As Vice President Biden reiterated during his historic May visit to Cyprus, the United States remains committed to supporting the U.N.-led effort to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicommunal federation. After four decades of division, there is a real chance for a lasting settlement that would bring positive benefits to the entire Eastern Mediterranean. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work closely with you and your colleagues to help the parties achieve this vital goal.

One issue that confronts all democracies as they look to the future is how they deal with the past. We continue to encourage Turkey and Armenia to move toward normalization as a means of creating the peaceful, productive, and prosperous relationship that the people of both countries deserve. On this year's Remembrance Day, Prime Minister Erdogan expressed his condolences to the grandchildren of those Armenians killed during World War I. That gesture and other positive efforts by the Turkish Government in recent months indicate that the space for dialogue is opening. But more can be done, and we encourage both sides to pursue a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts surrounding the tragic events of 1915.

Turkey is one of the oldest democracies in the region. But as President Obama noted when visiting Ankara in 2009, "Democracies cannot be static—they must move forward. Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and vibrant civil society that only strengthens the state, which is why steps like reopening the Halki Seminary will send such an important signal inside Turkey and beyond." Five years later, events have led to questions—including from members of this committee—about the trajectory of Turkish democracy: whether media and online freedoms are adequately guaranteed; whether rule of law is sufficiently protected; whether citizens have the right to free assembly and expression; whether the judicial system is free from political interference; and whether the voices of all minorities are being heard.

These are, ultimately, questions Turks will answer through the choices they make, but we will continue to advocate—as we do around the world—for transparent and accountable government. As Turkey prepares for its first direct Presidential election in August, the ongoing debates in Turkey could lead to an even stronger and more successful democracy—if Turks embrace tolerance and respect for a diversity of viewpoints. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will urge Turkey to live up to all the universal democratic principles, enshrined in its own foundational documents and international commitments, that undergird true national strength. Allowing space for free and independent media, strengthening the rule of law and checks and balances, empowering women, and encouraging a robust role for civil society—these steps not only make countries freer, but also help them grow. In the same vein, we commend the important steps to advance peace talks between the government and Turkey's Kurds, which could bring an end to 30 years of armed conflict and lead to a more stable and prosperous Turkey.

Mr. Chairman, Turkey's democratic progress over the past decade has spurred strong growth, tripling the size of its economy. U.S. exports to Turkey also tripled in the last decade. But for all the growth in bilateral trade, Turkey is still just our 34th-largest trade partner, at about $18 billion in total trade in 2013. We can, and should, do much better than this. If confirmed, I will be an advocate for U.S. business who leads our mission in Turkey to strengthen business-to-business ties, identify opportunities for Turkish investment in the U.S., and promote the National Export Initiative. I further expect that my work promoting the integrity of independent institutions, the rule of law, and respect for fundamental freedoms will serve to bolster Turkey's reputation as a country with which U.S. companies want to do more and better business.

Investment in our political, security, and economic ties with Turkey and the surrounding region would yield little without the ties between our two peoples and societies that are so fundamental to U.S.-Turkey relations. In 2012–2013, Turkey sent more students to American universities than any other European country. If confirmed, I will sustain and amplify our public outreach in Turkey, finding new ways to connect our two societies through education exchange programs, science and technology partnerships, and entrepreneurship programs.

And finally, a word about a core purpose of our overseas missions: service to Americans—whether they are your constituents with an interest in Turkey, or our fellow citizens visiting or living in Turkey. I pledge to provide the highest level of service to all of them with the same focus and energy which I and my colleagues will apply to promoting American interests and values. Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Ambassador.
Mr. O'Malley.

STATEMENT OF KEVIN F. O'MALLEY, OF MISSOURI, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND

Mr. O'MALLEY. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am honored and pleased to be here as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Ireland. I would like to publicly thank the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and their trust, and I am grateful to Senators McCaskill and Blunt for their support and for being here with me today.

I am so fortunate to be able to be here today as an American asked to represent my country, one that I love and that has given so much to me, in Ireland, a land and a people that has given so much to America and that so many of us hold so dear. Both of my parents were Irish, and I trace my most recent Irish roots to my grandparents and my aunts and my uncles, who came from Westport in County Mayo at the beginning of the 20th century. I have always enjoyed traveling in their footsteps, crisscrossing Ireland from Dublin to Galway, from Cork to Mayo. I found there is an unbreakable bond and a deep kinship between the people of the United States and the people of Ireland.

From the time of our Nation's founding, thousands of courageous Irish men and women came to the New World. They signed our Declaration of Independence, they fought in our Revolutionary War, and they drafted our Constitution. The sons and the daughters of Ireland are etched into the cornerstone of the United States of America.

I learned to love Ireland and all things Irish initially seated at the feet of my parents and my aunts and my uncles and both sets of grandparents. But Ireland, I learned, was more than just a place; it was a way of life—hard work, spiritual values, family, determination, and wit.

Today, to no one's surprise, Ireland is one of our closest friends and most stable trading partners. More than $38 billion in trade passes between the United States and Ireland each year. The United States exports more than $6 billion of goods to Ireland each year. I am confident that even that can be improved upon. Trade and investment ties between the United States and Ireland will be further strengthened if we can reach agreement on the ambitious Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

While always adhering to its neutrality, Ireland is our constant partner in dangerous peacekeeping missions throughout the world. Irish troops participate, for example, in the NATO mission in Afghanistan, and it has sent much-needed troops to the Golan Heights and has given millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to Syria's refugees.

But the United States and Ireland also face several challenges together. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 has brought years of reduced strife and reduced bloodshed to Northern Ireland, but this work is not yet done. Very courageous people were willing to take the first steps toward peace and reconciliation 16 years ago. While real tangible progress has been made, much more needs to be done in order to completely devolve the government, to achieve a vibrant

economy, and to create a pluralistic shared society in Northern Ireland.

President Obama has asked me, a trial lawyer, a writer, and an educator, to firmly represent our values in Ireland. But he has also asked me to listen to our friends there. In dealing with the peace process, for example, he trusts that I will be both steadfast and flexible, standing by our convictions while seeking conciliation.

Another issue affecting the special kinship between our two countries is the changing face of Ireland. Today Ireland looks very different from what President Kennedy saw when he visited 50 years ago. We must be careful not to rely only upon our historical friendships, but must constantly renew our alliance to keep it healthy and vital. For example, 30 percent of Ireland's population today is under the age of 24 and one in six is born outside of Ireland. As Ireland transforms into a more multicultural society, we must include Irish citizens with ancestry in Asia and Africa and the Middle East in that special bond shared between previous generations of Irish and Americans.

The new generation of Irish seeks connection to the United States through business and technology partnerships, music, and the arts. We must therefore build bridges to ensure that our special friendship remains timeless. Both the young and the old in Ireland should understand that they have no better friend in the world than the United States of America. It is my intention, if confirmed as the United States Ambassador to Ireland, to broaden and strengthen our special bonds, to increase the opportunities for trade and prosperity, and to work for a just and a permanent peace. No American, and particularly no Irish-American, could ask for a more meaningful undertaking.

Thank you very much for considering my nomination. I would like to submit my complete statement for the record and I will be happy to answer any questions that the committee might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. O'Malley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KEVIN F. O'MALLEY

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to be here today as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Ireland. I would like to publicly express my gratitude to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have shown in me by this nomination. I also thank you and this committee for considering the nomination.

I am so fortunate to be before you today as an American asked to represent the United States—a country that I love and that has given so much to me—and to represent my country in Ireland—a land and a people that has given so much to us and that so many of us hold so dear. Personally, I trace my Irish roots to my grandparents who came from Westport, County Mayo, in the beginning of the 20th century. I have enjoyed discovering the land of my grandparents, crisscrossing Ireland from Dublin to Galway, from Cork to Mayo. There is an unbreakable bond and a deep kinship between the people of United States and the people of Ireland. How did this come to pass? What makes this relationship so very special?

The United States is, of course, a nation of immigrants. From the time of our Nation's founding, thousands of Irish men and women came to the new world. This legacy is forged into the very cornerstone of the United States of America. Nine of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Irish. Six of the 36 delegates to the convention which drafted our Constitution were Irish. An estimated 30 percent of the soldiers in the Revolutionary Army were Irish. These immigrants from Ireland were not just looking for a better life; they were prepared to build one in the new world. From this start, Irish immigrants made contributions to the United States in construction, railroads, and commerce. They contributed to our Nation as

policemen, firefighters, politicians, educators, as well as winners of Oscars, Emmys, Grammys, Pulitzer, and Nobel Prizes.

I learned to love Ireland and all things Irish seated at the feet of my parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Ireland, I learned, was more than just a place—it was a way of life: Hard work; Spiritual values; Determination, and, Wit.

When Ireland won its independence, the United States was one of the first nations to recognize its status as a country and to send an ambassador. We have been with Ireland and Ireland has been with us ever since.

Ireland is today one of our most reliable allies and stable trading partners. More than $38 billion of trade passes between United States and Ireland each year, with the United States exporting more than $6 billion worth of goods to Ireland. I am confident we can build on that. Irish companies employ over 120,000 persons in the United States. Some 700 U.S. firms employ approximately 115,000 people in Ireland. These U.S. companies generate approximately 26 percent of Ireland's GDP. Ireland is one of the largest sources of direct foreign investment in the United States. Last year Forbes Magazine listed Ireland as the best country in the world within which to do business. Trade and investment ties between the United States and Ireland will be further strengthened if we can reach agreement on an ambitious Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Although always adhering to its neutrality, Ireland is our constant partner in peacekeeping missions throughout the world. Irish troops participate in the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Ireland also sent much-needed troops to the dangerous Golan Heights during the Syrian crisis, when no other developed country answered the call. They also send peacekeepers to places like Lebanon, Mali, Western Sahara, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kosovo.

As a meaningful way to honor the victims of its own famine, Ireland provides nutritional assistance to infants and mothers in Zambia. And recalling its own efforts to emerge from its own economic crisis, Ireland has offered millions of dollars of humanitarian assistance to those suffering in Syria's crisis.

The United States and Ireland face several challenges together. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 ended years of strife and bloodshed to Northern Ireland, but this work is not done. Courageous people were willing to take the first steps toward peace and reconciliation 16 years ago. While there has been real progress, more must be done to fully devolve government and achieve a vibrant economy and pluralistic, shared society. As President Obama said in his speech to Northern Ireland youth in Belfast last June, the people of Northern Ireland will "have to choose whether to keep going forward." The United States will be there to help.

Another issue affecting the kinship between our two countries is the changing face of Ireland. We must be careful not to rely only upon the historical friendship, but must constantly renew our alliance to keep it healthy and vital. We must continue to build new connections, to and with young American and Irish leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators.

Today's Ireland, after all, looks very different from the one President John F. Kennedy visited 50 years ago. Among the 28 countries of the European Union, Ireland has the fastest growing population due to both increased immigration and higher birthrates. Approximately 33 percent of the population of Ireland is under the age of 24. One in six people residing in Ireland today was born elsewhere. In just a few years, our fond memories and family ties, although a strong historic foundation for relations, will simply not be enough. The new generation of Irish seeks connections to the United States through business and technology collaboration, music, and the arts, too. As Ireland transforms into a more multicultural society, we must include Irish citizens with ancestry in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in the special bonds shared between previous generations. We must, build new bridges to ensure this friendship remains timeless.

I believe that the relationship between United States and Ireland is truly unique—molded in cultural and family ties, strengthened by trade and commercial successes, and celebrated through politics, music, literature, the arts, and shared concern for peoples beyond our own borders. It is my intention, if confirmed as the United States Ambassador to Ireland, to represent our great country to one of our greatest and closest friends, to broaden and strengthen our bonds, to work for a just and permanent peace, and to increase opportunities for better lives. No American, and particularly no Irish-American, could ask for a more meaningful undertaking.

Thank you for considering this nomination. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you all three of our panelists. We will now engage in a round of 7-minute question periods.

First let me start with you, Ambassador Bass. There is a real story to be told about Turkish impressions and opinions of the United States before the war in Iraq and after the war in Iraq. We have almost come to accept that there is going to be a general negative feeling about the United States in the Middle East, but in a place like Turkey, under the Clinton administration the Pew polling work that is done on an intermittent basis in countries around the world showed a fairly robust reservoir of goodwill for the United States. Things are very different today, to the point that your predecessor, the Ambassador that you are going to be replacing, has been at times roughed up pretty badly by the Erdogan administration and the press, being accused of several outlandish conspiracy theories.

Our ability to work with the Turks on, let us say, something as important as the new NATO missile shield is dependent in part about what the people of Turkey feel about the United States. It is a long time since we made the decision to invade Iraq and so what are the things that need to be done that you can help work on that will improve the opinion of Turks with respect to the United States? What is the underlying reasons for the level of distrust? How can we make it better so as to give Erdogan or whoever is going to be the follow-on leader of that country more political impetus to cooperate with us?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, thank you for that question. I think we have to do several things simultaneously. I would characterize it as investing in the long aspects of this relationship, the important pieces of the relationship, and not simply the urgent pieces. We have to be able to do both and we have to expand, even as we address the urgent issues of the day, our work together on those other deep, important pieces.

Historically, there has long been suspicion of United States or western motives in Turkey that come out of its creation as a modern state, as you know. It is clear that there on top of those potential cultural predispositions is a degree of either lack of information or misinformation about the United States and its policy. I think one of the things we need to be focused intently on is intensifying our efforts to tell our story and reach more populations in Turkey, and particularly the generation that is now coming of age that will inherit whatever relationship we have.

Senator MURPHY. You spoke a little bit about the Kurdish population there. We tend to talk about the conflicts in Syria and Iraq as binary, Shia and Sunni, and yet in both there is a very complicated question about the future of the Kurdish populations in both of those places. What is the ability to work with the Turks as leaders to try to figure out the future of Kurdish Government, autonomy, other related issues, not just within Turkey itself, but within Iraq and Syria?

Ambassador BASS. First off, let me say we are pleased by the degree to which the government in Ankara is working to continue and reinforce the ongoing peace talks with those of its Kurdish citizens who have been engaged in conflict over the past 30 years. To the extent that conflict can be brought to a final close, that is good for the region, it is good for Turkish stability. Only recently, we

have seen some good steps forward to legalize the ongoing peace talks so that folks can negotiate freely.

With respect to the broader Kurdish populations in neighboring states, I think it is important that the Turks continue to have a strong, productive relationship, particularly with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq, but to do so in a way that reflects our overarching commitment to the unity and stability of Iraq. That is something we have been working quite closely with Ankara on as we have been trying to help the Iraqis develop and put in place a new government.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Hartley, let me turn to you. The name of the company today is the Observatory Group, but it was previously the G7 Group, which speaks to the focus of a lot of your work, primarily anchored in Europe and G7 nations. As you mentioned in your opening statement, you know a lot about some of the economic calculus made in France. There is a worry that as we move forward on the TTIP negotiations that France is going to have some special considerations that will make it difficult for them to sign on to a final agreement. At the outset, they were a little bit nervous about, for instance, the protections they traditionally enjoy when it comes to their audio-visual industry.

So maybe you can give us a little bit of insight as to what the French disposition is as we head into the more serious rounds of negotiations on a free trade agreement with Europe and potentially whether there is reason to worry about their commitment to an ultimate deal.

Ms. HARTLEY. Thank you, Senator, for the question. As we know, right now the French economy is fairly weak. President Hollande actually has said publicly that he is supportive of the trade deal. There are issues. You are right, there are specific areas where we still disagree, where we are still discussing, where we are still in discussions.

I think in terms of the mission one of the things that would be very important in terms of public diplomacy would be to make sure the public knew what a trade deal would do for the economy of France, because even right now if you look at polling in France the public supports the trade deal. It is only when you get down to the specifics.

So I look forward to working with you and I look forward very much to reinforcing the message that trade is actually good for jobs in both countries.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. O'Malley, when we talked in my office last week we were looking forward to the July 12 marches to see if they came off in a peaceful manner. By and large, they did. What does that say about the prospects for continued discussions with respect to Northern Ireland, in particular the Haass proposals which have been sort of the standing foundation of the potential settlement moving forward?

Mr. O'MALLEY. Thank you, Senator. I think everyone is relieved that so far the marching season has gone relatively well. There have been, as you know, far worse periods during these particular summer marching seasons. But we are not through with the marching season yet.

I think we should point out the good and try to protect against the bad. I think it is important to recognize the courage that people exercised in renouncing violence and stepping forward and attempting to make a new life for the people in Northern Ireland and the border counties. But there still remains work to be done. Dr. Haass and Dr. O'Sullivan when they were in Ireland just recently really laid out proposals which could make this whole marching season issue—could resolve it in a permanent way, so that every year everybody would not be on edge when the summer marching season came.

So if confirmed, I would urge all parties to return to the table and to try to adopt an agreement along the lines that Dr. Haass recommended recently.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me pick up on that point, because it is exactly where I was going to go to out of your testimony. You said: "More must be done to fully devolve government and achieve a vibrant economy and a pluralistic, shared society." Can you get into the specifics of what that Haass agreement really is talking about? What is the "much more" that needs to be done?

Mr. O'MALLEY. What needs to be done is to follow the Haass recommendations. Dr. Haass recommended several things. There were agreements that were reached about dealing with the past, but they were not fully resolved. There were issues regarding how to deal with flags and emblems, but they were not fully resolved. There were issues dealing with how the government was going to interact, but they were not fully resolved.

I think that it is important to get to—if confirmed, to be able to meet with all of the parties involved in these talks and find out precisely where all the sticking points were, why this agreement, which was widely, widely praised, did not go through.

Senator JOHNSON. You mentioned agreement on flags. It seems like there has got to be more significant issues than that.

Mr. O'MALLEY. To the Northern Irish, those are significant issues. They have a resonance there that you or I may not fully, fully appreciate or fully feel. But that is very important to a segment of the population, and that has to be dealt with.

Senator JOHNSON. I appreciate that.

Northern Ireland has a 12.5 percent tax on business and as a result there have been a number of American companies that have started operations there, certainly part of the process of trade between the two countries. Certainly in the political realm here in this country it seems like there is a resentment about that fact in some cases. I just kind of want to get your views on, what do you think about that American investment in Ireland taking advantage of that 12.5 percent tax rate? I just want your views on that.

Mr. O'MALLEY. Sure. I think you meant Ireland has a 12.5 rate.

Senator JOHNSON. What did I say?

Mr. O'MALLEY. Northern Ireland.

Senator JOHNSON. Oh, I am sorry. Ireland.

Mr. O'MALLEY. I think it is a little bit higher in Northern Ireland at the moment.

There are a number of reasons why American companies have found Ireland to be an attractive place to do business in Europe, and those are some of the compelling reasons. It is an English-speaking country. It is a country that has a well-educated and dedicated workforce. It is a country that appreciates America and American goods. Ireland is in the euro zone and is in the EU, and it is strategically located at the entrance to Europe. I think all of those considerations and probably many more have to do with Ireland's success in attracting American business.

Senator JOHNSON. I realize there are more factors to it. But again, addressing the 12.5 percent, there seems to be some resentment. Do you share that resentment? Do you think that is an appropriate thing, for governments to compete with tax structures and regulatory structures to attract investment? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Mr. O'MALLEY. I know, Senator, that both the United States and the European Union are having discussions with Ireland about that tax rate. If confirmed, I would participate in those discussions with them.

Senator JOHNSON. Is your knowledge that the administration is opposed to that 12.5 percent rate? Are they trying to entice or induce Ireland to increase that tax rate?

Mr. O'MALLEY. I do not know, Senator, the precise answer to that question. I would be happy to get back with you on that. I do not know that the administration has taken a position one way or the other on another country's tax rate.

Senator JOHNSON. OK.

Mr. O'MALLEY. And I do not know that anyone else has taken a position on our tax rate.

Senator JOHNSON. Fair enough.

Mr. Bass, talking earlier about the issues between the Kurds and Turkey. Certainly I have been in contact with citizens of the Kurdish region, and they are certainly pressing for independence. Reading the press, it is sounding like Turkey may be more open to that prospect, even though they have been utterly opposed to it in the past. Am I reading that right? Is there a growing possible acceptance on the part of Turkey to have an independent state of Kurdistan?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, in our conversations with the Turkish Government they have continued to advocate the importance to Turkey and its interests of a stable, unified, federal Iraq. We are continuing to work closely with them to try to bring that about.

It has been very painful for those of us who invested parts of our professional lives in Iraq over the last 10, 11 years to see the recent turn of events. If I am confirmed, I will certainly continue to work to bring that result about in partnership with our Turkish friends and to stay in a close dialogue with them about their interaction and relationship with the officials and the citizens in the KRG.

Senator JOHNSON. What are the current pressing issues between the Kurdistan region and the Turkish Government?

Ambassador BASS. There is a variety of cross-border issues of interest. Obviously, the rebels in southeastern Turkey over the 30 years of their insurgency have crossed back and forth from north-

ern Iraq, so the Government of Turkey worked very closely with the authorities in northern Iraq to enable them to address some of those flows in both directions.

There is quite a strong trade and economic relationship as a result of the KRG's increased self-reliance on its own resources and there is an energy relationship between them as well.

Senator JOHNSON. Can you speak to the transportation of oil from Kurdistan through Turkey and what our policy is toward that, and then really how Turkey is viewing that?

Ambassador BASS. We do not take a position on the merits of the specific sales. We have expressed to both parties concerns that the disputes within Iraq about legal title to that commodity may wrap those cargoes up in ongoing litigation once they are out.

I think the most important thing from our perspective is to help stabilize oil exports from Iraq, to make sure those revenues are available to all the citizens of Iraq and shared equitably within a Federal unified state.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all very much for being here this morning and for your willingness to serve this country. This is a particularly turbulent time in the world and I think it is a time where working with our allies is particularly important. So you will be in critical places at a time in our history which will really be important.

I am also especially pleased to see my friend Jane Hartley here and share in your enthusiasm at being only the second woman nominated to be Ambassador to France and hopefully to serve in that position. So thank you.

I am going to begin with you. It was very interesting to see the recent elections in the European Parliament and France's anti-EU party, the National Front, won the most seats with 25 percent of the vote. I wonder if you could speak to what you think the implications of that election and the changes might be for French policy toward the European Union?

Ms. HARTLEY. Well, as we spoke before, France is having a difficult time. The economy is quite tough over there right now. Unemployment is running at about 10 percent. That was an issue during the parliamentary elections. The one thing I would note on the parliamentary elections, there was low turnout, so it is unclear what that may mean for the general elections that are coming up in 2017. But the National Front is a force and they will continue to be a force in French politics.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Bass, July 20 marks the 40th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus. I am sure we are always concerned when a country is invaded, and particularly here where Cyprus has been partitioned since that time, basically. I wonder if you see any indications that Turkey may be ready to try and play a constructive role in looking at reunifying Cyprus and if there is more that we can do to encourage that kind of a role.

Ambassador BASS. Thank you, Senator. We continue to support very strongly the ongoing discussions between both communities on

the island under the auspices of the U.N., with the goal of a lasting settlement on the basis of a bizonal, bicommunal federation. In recent months, I think we have seen the government in Ankara, as well as the government in Athens, both contributing to that process of helping these two communities talk through the differences and try to identify the ways forward to a lasting settlement.

It is something that has been quite a high priority. As you know, Vice President Biden was in Cyprus in May; Secretary Kerry very focused on this. I have been in a couple of conversations with him of late where he has wanted very much to turn to this in the coming months. If I am confirmed, I certainly will help to the greatest extent possible my colleagues working in Cyprus, in Greece, and here in Washington to continue to support the efforts under way to bring this to a lasting settlement.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Obviously, Turkey is in a critical place, not only in terms of their influence throughout the greater Middle East, but also in terms of their geography. As we look at conflicts in Syria, as we look at what is happening in northern Africa, can you talk about how we can—maybe what we are already doing to work with Turkey to address some of those conflict areas?

Ambassador BASS. Thank you. We are already doing quite a bit of work. Turkey cochairs with us the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, which is a group of about 30 like-minded countries who are working together to help other countries develop their own capacity to address some of these challenges at home before they become much bigger problems for a wider region. The Turks have taken a particular focus on the Horn of Africa and have been doing quite a bit of work with the Somali Government.

Within their more immediate neighborhood, of course, we have had very good cooperation in recent months in addressing some of the consequences of the conflict in Syria and the increase in fighters, money, exploiting Turkey's geography in and out of those conflict zones. Our belief is that the Turks understand this is an acute threat for all of us and we have seen some important steps from them to address some of the issues that were potentially making their geography more attractive.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. O'Malley, Ireland was one of the countries hardest hit by the financial crisis in 2008. It is my understanding that the IMF and the EU is relatively pleased with the progress that Ireland has made with some of the austerity measures that have been put in place. I wonder if you can speak to whether they are in a position now to begin to do more investing and to roll back some of those austerity measures and what the future for the Irish economy is based on where they are now?

Mr. O'MALLEY. Yes, Senator, thank you. The Irish were hit terribly, as you correctly point out. To their credit, they undertook very painful austerity measures in order to recover. All of the signs, as you pointed out, have indicated that Ireland is on its way back and has arrived at a place where they are, for example, now their long-term sovereign debt has been upgraded from BBB-plus to A-minus. Ireland is now—has returned back into the bond market, where it can sell bonds.

So I think all of the indicators are that the austerity measures have worked. What precisely the Irish are going to do from now on I think is really a matter of internal Irish politics. They had an election recently. They have had a cabinet reshuffle and my guess is that they are discussing those measures as we speak.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you and congratulations to all of the witnesses for your nominations. Mr. Bass, Ambassador Bass, let me begin with you. I had visited the refugee camps, Syrian refugee camps, in Adona. I have been very impressed, as you pointed out, with the degree to which Turkey is doing yeoman's work to take care of nearly a million refugees from Syria. In a population of 75 million people, a million refugees is a big chunk of people. Similar generosity is being shown by Jordan and Lebanon in the region.

I remember being there and wondering how the U.S. would respond to refugees fleeing violence coming to the United States and have not been particularly proud of recent response to refugees fleeing violence in Central America coming to the United States. So that should make us even appreciate what Turkey does even more.

Yesterday the U.N. Security Council took a step that was a positive. This committee had passed a resolution that was passed out of the floor of the Senate in March calling for unfettered cross-border humanitarian aid deliveries even without the Syrian Government's approval. That had been blocked in the U.N. Security Council by Russia and China, but yesterday they acceded to a resolution that was passed unanimously to basically allow cross-border aid under a U.N. sanction.

Two of the border crossings identified for this aid to be delivered are in Turkey. I would like you, if you would, just to talk about what you might be able to do as an ambassador, representative of the United States, the Nation that is the largest provider of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees, what you can do together with the Turkish Government to facilitate greater humanitarian aid deliveries inside Syria?

Ambassador BASS. Thanks very much for raising that. We have had a very good, close, collaborative relationship with the Government of Turkey, both to address those refugee outflows that you identified, but also to work to get more assistance into Syria to support the moderate opposition and to enable them to try to provide a degree of governance and services to the populations within those areas that are under their control.

We have a pretty extensive group of experts in and around Adona who work directly with other relief-providing agencies and with the Government of Turkey on these issues, and we will certainly be looking for additional opportunities to expand and intensify that work.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Bass.

Ms. Hartley, in your opening testimony you talked about a concern that I just want to follow up on. The French Government has been a very strong partner with the U.S. in the P5+1 discussions to find an end to any nuclear weaponization program in Iran,

sometimes even really playing the bad cop in the negotiations, and we appreciate it. But at the same time, there seems to be a little bit of a double standard, whereas the French Government has been strong, but French businesses have been seen to really want to get back into the investment game with Iran.

You commented upon that as something that you might be able to do as Ambassador, is to really point out that there should not be a back door to allow French corporations to evade sanctions. Talk a little bit about that challenge and how you would intend to address it in your capacity?

Ms. HARTLEY. Thank you, Senator. I share your concern. As you know, recently a group of French businessmen did go to Iran. Secretary Kerry voiced his opposition, and I was pleased to see the French Government back us up, and no business deals were done.

I will make that very clear, that—I will reinforce that statement and while I am Ambassador, until the situation with Iran is resolved, there will be no business as usual.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I really encourage you in that. I think it is important to do this diplomacy, but I do worry about companies trying to race ahead of whether—we will know soon whether we are going to be able to find a meaningful path forward with Iran. So I would encourage you to make that a primary area of focus.

Mr. O'Malley, I was in Ireland during the local and EU parliamentary elections that took place at the end of May and the general interpretation when I was there was that the elections sort of were antiausterity and a little bit anti-Europe. Those were the impressions at the immediate time those elections took place. Now that the dust has settled and I know there has been some Cabinet reshuffling because the Taoiseach's party, Fine Gael, kind of took it on the chin in those elections, what is the current sort of internal politics in Ireland surrounding—you talked a little bit about the austerity, but even the relationships with the EU and Europe?

Mr. O'MALLEY. I think, Senator, that the dust really has not quite settled yet from the elections. The Cabinet reshuffling just took place last week and I think everyone is still examining where it is. We know that Ireland is very committed to the EU, and we know that Ireland is very committed to the austerity proposals that made their assent from their financial crisis so successful. So I do not anticipate that there would be any dramatic change in the Irish policy toward the austerity program.

I think there was a great deal of frustration expressed during the elections, but I think that the Irish have adopted a very firm course. That course has been proven to be successful, and I do not anticipate that there will be any dramatic changes. I look forward, if confirmed, to talking to the Taoiseach and to get a better internal view of exactly what the long-term plan is.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. O'Malley.

One final question. Another area of concern when I was recently in Ireland was the announced reopening of a potential criminal case against Gerry Adams over a very gruesome murder that took place many, many years ago. Now, the precipitating factor was the opening of an archive at Boston College that was oral histories given by folks who were connected with the IRA that were thought

to be closed until everyone passed away. But someone did pass away, the archive became available, at least with respect to that history, and then this notion of a criminal investigation has been restarted.

A lot of question about is that just an isolated incident or is there some desire to now spend more time looking in the rear view mirror than in the windshield and going back and relitigating all of these matters that were hopefully resolved to some significant degree in the Good Friday Accords. I know the younger generation in Ireland, the kids, they do not even remember anything about the Troubles. It is a pretty remarkable story and the U.S. has a lot at stake in trying to continue on the path forward.

Do you have any sense about that particular criminal matter? While that is domestic politics, do you think it suggests a broader unraveling of the Good Friday Accords and kind of a decision by some to start looking more backward than forward?

Mr. O'MALLEY. Senator, I have two thoughts on that. One, the first is that the Boston College study, which was a totally private academic interest here, the release of any more of the data in that I do not believe will affect the peace process. I think that the Accords are strong. I think there has been now 16 years of experience with them. So that the truth or whatever is found in the Boston College study will not cause anyone to repudiate the Accords or to go backward.

But I do think, and I feel strongly, that that incident with the detention of Mr. Adams and the whole look backward compels, compels us to urge the five parties to get back to the table and to adopt the proposals that Dr. Haass recommended not very many months ago, because there needs to be a system in place to deal with these issues as they are going to continue to arise. So, if confirmed, I will do my best to convince the parties to go back, to have a comprehensive, a cohesive way to deal with these very troubling emotional issues.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. O'Malley.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bass, do you think the Turkish Government is in favor of the establishment of safe areas protected by a no-fly zone inside Syria?

Ambassador BASS. I think the Turkish Government is looking for ways to push forward in promoting a solution to the conflict in Syria.

Senator MCCAIN. I would like the answer to the question.

Ambassador BASS. I would like to take that back, if I may.

[The written reply submitted by Ambassador Bass to the requested information follows:]

Turkish officials have expressed interest in the idea of a no-fly zone over the course of the conflict in Syria. For example, during his May 2013 visit to Washington, Prime Minister Erdogan stated publicly that the decision to establish such a zone would need to come through the U.N. Security Council, and if it did, Turkey would support the idea. Turkish officials also made clear their desire for close consultations with the United States and the international community to find the means for a negotiated, political transition in Syria. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with Turkey to coordinate support for the moderate Syrian opposition, to provide humanitarian support for refugees in Turkey and cross-border assistance

to Syrians in need, and to bolster our already-strong bilateral military ties with Turkey.

Senator MCCAIN. Turkey has been, I think you would agree, has been a principal channel for the flow of people, arms, and logistical assistance to the rebels. Has the Turkish Government changed its border policies in light of ISIS' so far successful campaign in Iraq?

Ambassador BASS. My understanding, Senator, is that the Turkish Government has been very careful about people flowing across those borders, and we have had good cooperation in recent months to address these challenges of additional fighters and potentially money flowing in and out of the conflict zones.

Senator MCCAIN. Are you concerned about Prime Minister Erdogan's desire to change the constitution and other actions that we have seen on the part of Erdogan as a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. Prime Minister Erdogan is the leader of a democratically elected parliamentary democracy.

Senator MCCAIN. I am aware, I am aware of that.

Ambassador BASS. We will obviously look closely at whatever steps he takes——

Senator MCCAIN. Do you believe that many of the things, actions that he has taken—suppressing the social media, YouTube and Twitter, restrictions on Internet freedom and independent media—is this a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. I would say they are inconsistent with our concept of a strong vibrant democracy.

Senator MCCAIN. I would like a yes or no. I would like a yes or no answer.

Ambassador BASS. I can tell you that we will continue to underscore our concerns——

Senator MCCAIN. I would like a yes or no answer, Mr. Bass. You are putting your nomination in jeopardy by not answering the question. Do you believe—it is a pretty simple, straightforward question—that, with his repression of social media, his desire to change the constitution to give more power to the Presidency, which he obviously will be, do you believe that that is a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. I think if those steps were taken without appropriate checks in place——

Senator MCCAIN. He is taking those steps, Mr. Bass. Again, this is really a little frustrating. I would like an honest answer. Do you believe that there is a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, I think if these possibilities become realities in law, then those would be——

Senator MCCAIN. You do not think they have become realities now?

Ambassador BASS. Well——

Senator MCCAIN. The suppression of YouTube, the suppression of Twitter.

Ambassador BASS. We have seen the constitutional court——

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to support this nominee's nomination and I will hold it until I get a straight answer.

I think it is a fairly straightforward, question, Mr. Bass. Is it a drift toward authoritarianism?

Ambassador BASS. It is a drift in that direction, yes, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you. It took 3 minutes and 25 seconds of my 5-minute time.

Mr. O'Malley, there is a question of the Shannon Airport preclearance agreement. I do not know—for our men and women in uniform. I hope that you will have a look at that. We would like to facilitate that process as so many of our military personnel flow through the Shannon Airport, where they are, as you know, most hospitable and very nice people there, no matter what hour of the day or night we happen to arrive there on our CODELs.

Ms. Hartley, as you know, President Hollande has indicated his government plans to honor its contract to sell two *Mistral*-class amphibious warships to Russia. The first ship will arrive in October. Do you think that that is a good idea?

Ms. HARTLEY. No, I think it is a terrible idea. I share your concern. The President has communicated with President Hollande, has told him that we do not think this is the time to be doing defense deals with Russia. I completely agree with that and if I am confirmed I will reinforce that message when I arrive in France.

Senator MCCAIN. As you know—thank you. As you know, they have had significant involvement in Mali. In fact, we visited there and have seen the significant French and excellent professional capabilities. Do you think we ought to be assisting them and cooperating more in this effort in Mali?

Ms. HARTLEY. My impression is that we are working with them, providing technology and other things. They clearly are the boots on the ground. I think having France there, it is very sophisticated. It is a force multiplier for us. France has continued to spend I think 1.9 percent on its defense budget and that is a positive. So working with them helps both of us, and they help us a lot by being the boots on the ground in Africa.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator McCain.

I just have one followup for you, Ambassador Bass. It is on this question that Senator McCain raised. Let me ask it in just a slightly different way. What are the U.S. levers to try to slow this march toward the suppression of speech. We have got a problem in that there is a pretty weak opposition in Turkey that should be doing a lot of that work by itself. Without it, it is left to the international community to put pressure on them. Senator Johnson and I have been very vocal, for instance, about the suppression of Twitter.

You are going to have a lot of irons in the fire when you are sitting with Erdogan and his deputies. How do you continue to raise these issues amidst all sorts of other very important diplomatic and military cooperation that are happening? And will you commit to us as a committee to make sure that these issues related to the suppression of free speech and free assembly are still top of mind for our Embassy there?

Ambassador BASS. Absolutely. It will be very important to continue to press the Turkish Government, to be clear about our beliefs, our values, our commitment to democratic values and human

rights, and to find ways to try to influence the discussion in Turkey in a way that shows the potential consequences for Turks if they continue down a path that would make Turkey less democratic. I do not think there is any question that that would be of enormous concern to us going forward.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Any further questions for this panel? [No response.]

If not, thank you very much for joining us today. We look forward to moving your nominations as quickly as possible through the committee. You are excused and we will now seat our second panel.

Ms. HARTLEY. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. We are now pleased to welcome our two panelists in the second round, considering the nomination of James Pettit to be Ambassador to Moldova and Brent Hartley, our second Hartley of the morning, to be Ambassador to Slovenia.

Despite the recent ratification of an association agreement with the EU, Moldova finds itself in a tenuous position between the West and Russia. As the poorest country in Europe and a former Soviet state, Moldova's economy at times seems inextricably linked to that of Russia as it continues to struggle with Russian export bans, instability in Transnistria, and a crushing debt to Gazprom. While Moldova celebrates its newly signed agreement and visa-free travel to Europe, it also desires to regain a positive relationship with Russia. The two should not be mutually exclusive.

If confirmed, Mr. Pettit, you will need to navigate these geopolitical challenges in find new ways in which the United States can support Moldova's important political and economic reform efforts.

Senator Shaheen and I, along with other members of the committee, recently introduced a bipartisan resolution outlining the United States commitment to Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we look forward to engaging in an open dialogue about U.S. support for Moldova.

Moving west geographically speaking, the United States has long considered Slovenia as important strategic NATO ally in the western Balkans. Like Moldova, Slovenia is also still grappling with its past as an ex-Communist state. While it is considered to be one of the most politically and economically stable countries in the EU, it is currently undergoing significant political upheaval as a result of alleged corruption and economic crises.

If confirmed, Mr. Hartley, you are going to be facing the challenge of navigating these domestic difficulties as well as broader European security challenges.

Let me quickly introduce our witnesses and then we will get right to your testimony. Mr. Pettit has been nominated to be Ambassador to Moldova. He is a career member of the Foreign Service, currently serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Consular Affairs at the Department of State. He has spent a third of his career living in the former Soviet Union, previously serving as deputy chief of mission in Kiev and as deputy general counsel and political officer in Moscow. He has served in Vienna, Taipei, Guadalajara, as well as back here in the State Department.

He speaks Russian, Spanish, German, Mandarin Chinese, received his B.A. from Iowa State University and a master's degree from the National War College.

Brent Hartley has been nominated to be Ambassador to Slovenia, as mentioned. He is a highly distinguished Foreign Service officer, currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs at the Department of State.

We welcome both of you to the panel today, and we will start, Mr. Hartley, with your testimony, and then move to Mr. Pettit.

STATEMENT OF BRENT ROBERT HARTLEY, OF OREGON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Mr. HARTLEY. Thank you very much, Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson. I would like to submit my full statement for the record if I may. I am honored to be here before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the eighth Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Slovenia. I am deeply grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to justify their faith and yours in my ability to advance our strategic, economic, and political interests with Slovenia.

I am also grateful for the love and flexibility of my wife, Elizabeth Dickinson, who is here today with us, my daughter, Eleanor, and my son, Charlie. My 33-year Foreign Service career has been largely dedicated to strengthening our relations with European allies and partners, and my wife has been with me every step of the way.

If confirmed, I will seek to sustain and deepen our political and security cooperation with Slovenia. This year Slovenia is celebrating its 10-year anniversary of NATO and EU membership. Slovenian soldiers have served side by side with U.S. Forces in Afghanistan since 2003. Slovenians have served in international peacekeeping missions around the world, including Lebanon and Syria. It has also been a close U.S. partner in defending human rights, combating human trafficking, and safeguarding religious freedom around the globe.

We share a particular priority on promoting stability in the Balkans, including by encouraging the integration of Balkan States into NATO and the EU. Slovenian soldiers deployed in NATO stabilization operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and they continue to contribute to the EU successor mission in Bosnia and maintain over 300 soldiers in Kosovo in the KFOR operation. As a result of its Balkan experiences, Slovenia also remains dedicated to addressing the safety of civilians during conflict, demining, and conventional weapons destruction.

We welcome Slovenia's continued strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its implementation of international sanctions in the face of Russia's occupation of Crimea. We are also working together to address urgent humanitarian challenges in Syria, Iran's nuclear proliferation, and Libya's stability, and we are working with Slovenia, as we are doing throughout the EU, on energy security and diversification of energy resources.

Our military-to-military relations are excellent, characterized by hundreds of military exchanges, six codeployments with the Colorado National Guard in Afghanistan, and a rich foundation for future cooperation. Unfortunately, severe defense budget cuts resulting from recent economic difficulties have left Slovenia well below the NATO goal of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense. If confirmed, I will work to encourage the Slovenian Government to reverse cuts in defense and to address the structural challenges exposed by the country's economic downturn.

Outgoing Prime Minister Bratusek's government and the central bank took a positive step in 2013 to recapitalize Slovenia's banking sector and restore market confidence, and the euro zone recovery has brought some economic relief as well. Yet many challenges remain. The United States and European Union agree that the country's next leaders must stabilize the banking sector, rationalize public finances, and follow through on commitments to privatize state-owned enterprises.

We are looking forward to working with the new government, once it is formed following the July 13 elections, on these challenges. These vital economic reforms will help ensure a level playing field for U.S. business. If confirmed, I will seize every opportunity to build Slovenian support for the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and to open doors for U.S. trade and investment.

Even as Slovenia works to recognize its economic potential, it has only recently begun to deal with a complex and painful historical legacy concerning different narratives of violence during and after World War II. This legacy profoundly affects contemporary political, social, and even economic life. Some Slovenian leaders, most notably President Pahor, have stepped forward to urge dialogue and reconciliation. We support this effort because it is in both our interests. Slovenia will be a stronger ally and trade partner as it finds a way to deal with its past.

Finally, if confirmed, my Embassy team and I will continue to engage the Slovenian public on all levels. We will work to promote our top policy priorities through exchange and educational programs. We will advocate accurate reporting on the United States to a media often overly skeptical of U.S. policies. And we will go directly to the people to talk about U.S. policy and values through our ever-expanding social media toolkit.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hartley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRENT ROBERT HARTLEY

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

I am honored to be here before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the eighth Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Slovenia.

I am deeply grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed by the Senate, I will do my utmost to justify their faith in my ability to further enhance the strong U.S.-Slovenia relationship.

My 33-year Foreign Service career has been largely dedicated to advancing our relations with European Allies and Partners. If confirmed, I will work with the excellent Country Team at Embassy Ljubljana to promote our strategic, economic and political interests with Slovenia.

In its 23 years of independence, Slovenia has built a laudable record of international engagement and commitment. This year, Slovenia is celebrating its 10-year anniversary of NATO and EU membership. Slovenian soldiers have served side by side with U.S. and NATO Forces in Afghanistan since 2003. Slovenians have served in international peacekeeping missions in hot spots around the world, from Lebanon to Kosovo, from Syria to Mali. Slovenia has also been a close U.S. partner in the United Nations and other international venues to defend human rights, combat human trafficking, and safeguard religious freedom around the globe. In particular, Slovenia has raised the profile of the critical challenge of protecting civilian populations during conflict.

In this regard, Slovenia has placed a high priority on promoting stability and development in the Balkans by encouraging the integration of Balkan States in Euro-Atlantic structures such as NATO and the EU. From an operational standpoint, Slovenian soldiers deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) in 1997, and they continue to reinforce Bosnian stability by contributing to the EU's successor mission, ALTHEA. Slovenia has been a major KFOR contributor in Kosovo from the very beginning and still maintains a strong presence of over 300 soldiers. Slovenia also remains dedicated to addressing the safety of civilians and twin challenge of demining and conventional weapon destruction through ITF Enhancing Human Security initiative.

Our security relationship is only getting broader. We welcome Slovenia's continued strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its implementation of international sanctions in the face of Russia's occupation of Crimea. We are working together to address the urgent humanitarian challenges in Syria, respond to Iran's nuclear program, and to promote Libya's stability and prosperity. And we are working with Slovenia and throughout the EU on energy security issues, including the need to diversify energy sources to mitigate dependence on Russian gas.

Slovenia's relationships with the U.S. European Command and the Colorado National Guard through the State Partnership Program are excellent. In the context of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and NATO, Slovenia hosts several top-tier training exercises annually. The Slovenian Armed Forces' 21-year relationship with the Guardsmen of Colorado has resulted in hundreds of military exchanges, six codeployments in support of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, and a rich foundation for future cooperation.

Unfortunately, severe defense budget cuts resulting from the last several years of economic difficulties have left Slovenia well below the NATO goal of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense.

If confirmed, I will work with the Country Team to encourage the Slovenian Government to reverse this worrying trend in defense budget cuts and to address the structural economic challenges exposed by the country's economic downturn since 2009.

Outgoing Prime Minister Bratusek's government and the Slovenian Central Bank took a positive step in 2013 to recapitalize Slovenia's banking sector and restore market confidence. Yet many challenges remain. The United States and the European Union agree that Slovenia needs to reduce the public sector's role in the economy and repair significant fiscal imbalances.

Although the Eurozone recovery has brought some economic relief, the country's next leaders must take urgent action to stabilize the banking sector, rationalize public finances, and follow through on commitments to privatize state-owned enterprises. We are looking forward to working with the new government, once it is formed following the July 13 elections, on these challenges.

These vital economic reforms will help ensure a level playing field for U.S. business, a high priority for any chief of mission. If confirmed, I will seize every opportunity to build Slovenian support for the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and to open doors for U.S. trade and investment in an EU market with real untapped potential for U.S. companies. Approximately 60 U.S. companies already operate in Slovenia—including for example a significant Goodyear production facility. Through continued intensive commercial diplomacy, I am confident that Slovenia will become more open to American investments and a more attractive destination for American exports.

Even as Slovenia works to recognize its economic potential, it has only recently begun to deal with a complex and painful historical legacy—concerning different narratives of violence during and after World War II—that profoundly affects contemporary political, social, and even economic life. Some Slovenian leaders, most notably President Pahor, have stepped forward to urge dialogue and reconciliation. Embassy Ljubljana supports this effort because it is in both U.S. and Slovenian interests: open dialogue regarding these events can help create a political environ-

ment more conducive to addressing, for example, Slovenia's difficult economic circumstances. Slovenia will be a stronger ally and trade partner as it finds a way to deal with its past.

Finally, if confirmed, my Embassy team and I will continue to engage the Slovenian public on all levels to realize these goals. In addition to continuing joint cultural initiatives that have proven popular with Slovenians, we will work to promote our top policy priorities through exchange and educational programs that encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, and greater regional and international cooperation. We will advocate accurate reporting on the United States to media that are often overly skeptical of U.S. foreign policy. And we will go directly to the people to talk about U.S. policy and values through our ever-expanding toolkit of social media products. Ultimately, it's the people-to-people outreach and diplomacy that can provide the foundation for us to achieve our policy objectives.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much. I shorted you on your bio, by the way. I just additionally add your service as Director for European Security and Political Affairs at the Department of State and Country Director for Pakistan, in addition to your receipt of two Senior Foreign Service Performance Awards, 11 Superior Honor Awards. The list goes on. We are very pleased that you are here before this committee.

Mr. Pettit.

STATEMENT OF JAMES D. PETTIT, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Mr. PETTIT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress to promote U.S. interests in Moldova.

Today represents an important point in a journey over the last three decades that has taken me to numerous parts of the former Soviet Union at various critical junctures. If confirmed, I hope to continue that journey and play my own small role in seeking a happy and successful outcome for the people of the Republic of Moldova.

I am accompanied today by my wife Nancy, who has witnessed the many changes in the region along with me and whose own insights and wisdom continue to help me on the way. Also here with me today are my brother, Gerry, my nephew, Brett, and his wife, Suzy.

Secretary Kerry visited Moldova in December 2013 and Prime Minister Leanca visited the White House in March of this year, in part to launch our bilateral strategic dialogue and reaffirm U.S. engagement in and support for Moldova's independence and European future. Our engagement is key to promoting security not just in Moldova, but in neighboring Ukraine and the region.

If confirmed, I will build upon this progress while seeking to fulfill our chief strategic objective, for Moldova to become a fully democratic, economically prosperous state, firmly anchored to Europe, within its internationally recognized borders and with an effective and accountable government. We believe European integration is the best road for Moldova's security and prosperity.

On June 27, the Moldovan Government signed an association agreement that includes provisions for establishing a deep and comprehensive free trade area, which will bring Moldova closer to the EU politically as well as benefit the country economically. This year the United States will provide over $31 million in assistance to Moldova to continue supporting these and other objectives.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Moldovan Government and in coordination with Moldova's European partners to support Moldova's efforts as it continues down its European path.

2014 is an election year for Moldova, with parliamentary elections scheduled for late November. While the country has made great strides since independence, challenges remain to consolidate its democracy and recent EU-oriented gains. Corruption continues to be the primary vulnerability plaguing Moldova's democracy, particularly its justice sector. To its credit Moldova's ministry of justice initiated a justice sector reform strategy to modernize Moldova's legal system and meet European standards. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Moldovan Government to implement these reforms.

Moldova remains Europe's poorest country. Around 22 percent of Moldova's GDP comes from remittances sent from Moldovans working abroad, the bulk of whom work in Russia. The United States seeks to strengthen Moldova's economy by promoting regulatory reform as well as increasing the competitiveness of core export industries. If confirmed, I will continue to advance these programs as well as work with the Moldovan Government to take further steps to buffer its economy against Russian pressure.

Moldova's primary security challenge is its unresolved conflict with the Transnistria region. The 5+2 negotiations on a political settlement involve not only the parties to the conflict, but also Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as mediators, and the United States and EU as observers.

Although Russia continues to be an important partner in this process, Russia's efforts to derail Moldova's European integration aspirations and its refusal to withdraw its troops from Transnistria pose significant threats. Russia has used a number of political and economic levers against Moldova, banning the import of Moldovan wine, increasing scrutiny of Moldova's agricultural exports, and threatening to cut off Moldova's gas supply and deport Moldova's migrant workers.

If confirmed, I will continue my predecessor's efforts to mitigate the negative effects of Russian pressure, help Moldova find new markets for its exports, and increase government-to-government coordination through the strategic dialogue.

I thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts about the relationship with Moldova. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and this committee. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have and will submit the remainder of my remarks to the record with your permission.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pettit follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES D. PETTIT

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson and members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I deeply appreciate the confidence and

trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress to promote U.S. interests in Moldova. Today represents an important point in a journey over the last three decades that has taken me to numerous parts of the former Soviet Union at various critical junctures. If confirmed, I hope to continue that journey and play my own small role in seeking a happy and successful outcome for the people of the Republic of Moldova. I am accompanied today by my wife, Nancy, who has witnessed the many changes in the region along with me and whose own insights and wisdom continue to help me on the way.

Over the last year, relations with Moldova strengthened significantly, with Secretary Kerry visiting Moldova in December 2013 and Prime Minister Leanca visiting the White House in March this year in part to launch our bilateral Strategic Dialogue and to reaffirm U.S. engagement in, and support for, Moldova's independence and European future. Continuing to strengthen our engagement is key to promoting security not just in Moldova but also in neighboring Ukraine and the region. If confirmed, I will build upon this progress while seeking to fulfill our chief strategic objective; for Moldova to become a fully democratic, economically prosperous state firmly anchored to Europe within its internationally recognized borders and with an effective and accountable government. With your permission, I would like to take a moment to touch upon core aspects of this objective—European integration, democratic development, market development, and security.

FIRST: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

We believe European integration is the best road for Moldova's security and prosperity. Over the last year, Moldova has made significant strides toward this goal. On April 28, the EU lifted its visa regime for Moldova, allowing Moldovan citizens with biometric passports to visit the Schengen region for up to 90 days without a visa. Within the last 2 months alone, 78,000 Moldovans traveled to Europe visa free. On June 27, the Moldovan Government signed an Association Agreement that includes provisions for establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, which will bring Moldova closer to the EU politically, as well as benefit the country economically by eliminating import duties on Moldovan products going to the EU—it is expected to boost Moldova's GDP by 5.4 percent. U.S. assistance has helped Moldova progress toward its European integration goal through programs that enhance government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizen interests, as well as improve the business climate. This year the United States will provide over $31 million in assistance to Moldova to continue supporting these and other objectives. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Moldovan Government and in coordination with Moldova's European partners to support Moldova's efforts as it continues down its European path.

SECOND: DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

2014 is an election year for Moldova with Parliamentary elections scheduled for late November. While the country has made great strides since independence, challenges remain to consolidate its democracy and recent EU-oriented gains. Corruption continues to be the primary vulnerability plaguing Moldova's democracy, particularly its justice sector. Besides hampering government effectiveness and rule of law, corruption has led to high voter disillusionment with the current governing coalition and could harm Moldova's continued European integration aspirations. To its credit, Moldova's Ministry of Justice initiated a justice sector reform strategy to modernize Moldova's legal system and meet European standards. The impact of this strategy can already be seen in the adoption of several pieces of new legislation, including anticorruption laws targeting judges and other public officials. U.S. efforts are focused on supporting this strategy by improving judicial administration, increasing the skills of judges and prosecutors, and supporting civil society advocacy. The other key component of our assistance program in this sector focuses on enabling local government to improve services for its citizens, as polling shows that locally elected officials are the most respected institutions in Moldova. Much work remains to be done. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Moldovan Government to implement these reforms and others necessary to fulfill the desires of Moldovan citizens for an accountable and corruption free government.

THIRD: MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Moldova remains Europe's poorest country with an approximate average salary of $290 a month. Around 22 percent of Moldova's $7.2 billion GDP comes from remittances sent from approximately 700,000 Moldovans working abroad, equal to one-fifth of the country's population—the bulk of whom work in Russia. While Moldova

exceeded international expectations and saw its GDP grow by 8.9 percent in 2013, further growth is in question due to lack of transparent, substantial legal safeguards for business and pervasive corruption, which deters foreign investments. The United States seeks to strengthen Moldova's economy by promoting regulatory reform, as well as increasing the competitiveness of core export industries, such as wine and fashion, enabling them to take advantage of the opportunities created through closer economic ties with Europe. In addition, through the 5-year $262 million Millennium Challenge Corporation compact that will close in September 2015, the United States is rebuilding a 93 kilometer road that will serve as a modern transportation corridor in Northern Moldova, and is rehabilitating irrigation systems, which will help strengthen the transition to higher value agricultural products. If confirmed, I will continue to advance these programs, as well as work with the Moldovan Government to take further steps to buffer its economy against Russian pressure.

FOURTH: SECURITY

Moldova's primary security challenge is its unresolved conflict with Russian-backed separatists in the Transnistria region. Closely related to this is the presence of Russian military forces in this same region, without Moldova's consent. Although there has been no armed conflict between the Government of Moldova and its separatist region in two decades, Russia insists its peacekeeping presence must remain until there is a resolution to this "frozen conflict." The 5+2 negotiations on a political settlement involve not only the parties to the conflict, but also Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as mediators, and the United States and EU as observers. The talks have stalled due in part to Russian and the separatists' unwillingness to engage in a political dialogue on the region's final status. Of continuing concern are media reports of increased Russian military activity in Transnistria, reports which remain unconfirmed in part due to the ongoing restrictions by Transnistrian authorities of access to the region by observers from the OSCE's Mission to Moldova. If confirmed, I will support OSCE efforts to find a peaceful resolution to this frozen conflict that guarantees Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while providing for a mutually acceptable special status for its Transnistria region. I will also work to ensure that the OSCE has unfettered access to all of Moldova, including its Transnistria region.

Although Russia continues to be an important partner in the ongoing 5+2 process and plays a large role in Moldova's economic and trade activity, Russia's efforts to derail Moldova's European integration aspirations and its refusal to withdraw its troops from Transnistria pose significant threats to the country's sovereignty, security, stability, and prosperity. Since September 2013, Russia has used a number of political and economic levers against Moldova, including banning the import of Moldovan wine, increasing scrutiny of Moldova's agricultural exports, and threatening to cut off Moldova's gas supply as well as to deport up to 265,000 of Moldova's migrant workers. In addition, Russian interests control much of Moldova's financial sector and its assets. Combined with the constant stream of anti-EU rhetoric from Russian television, a major source of news for Moldovan citizens, Russia's actions threaten Moldova's sovereignty, economic well-being and its European path. If confirmed, I will continue my predecessor's efforts to mitigate the negative effects of Russian pressure, help Moldova find new markets for its exports, increase government-to-government coordination through the Strategic Dialogue, help the Moldovan Government secure its borders by completing the $35 million Defense Threat Reduction Agency program that is building up the capacity of Moldova's border guards, and assist the Moldovan Government's efforts to counteract Russia's negative propaganda campaign.

While Moldova has come closer to its goal of European integration, its government still has much work to be done. If confirmed, I look forward to helping the Moldovan Government realize its citizens' European aspirations. At the same time, I will support any reasonable effort Moldova wishes to make in order to maintain trade and other relations with neighbors outside the EU on the basis of mutual respect and common interests, not on the basis of threats or political and economic pressure. This will contribute immeasurably to our long-standing objective of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

I thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts about the relationship with Moldova. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and this committee.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much to both of our nominees.

Let me start with the same question to both of you. You both have experience in Europe, varying levels of experience dealing with Russia. You are going to be in countries that have long-standing relationships with Russia, while also looking toward the West as well. One of the things that a lot of us have been struck by—certainly Senator Johnson and I talk about this a lot—is the major difference in the ability of Europe and the United States to communicate information to the countries in which you are going, to Moldova in particular, versus the ability of Russia to do the same. Russia has dramatically modernized and ramped up its propaganda efforts. This is particularly relevant in Moldova, but I am sure it is an issue in Slovenia as well.

With your broad experience in the region, what are your recommendations as to how the United States and Europe can try to compete in the information wars with Russia. Maybe I will put the question to you first, Mr. Pettit, in particular because you are going to have elections coming up in Moldova and an imbalance in information and its sourcing can have a pretty big impact on the outcome of those elections.

So what are your recommendations? I am more asking for your recommendations to us as a committee as we debate this question of how we better resource our side of the messaging operation here, without of course getting into the same kind of, I would argue, over-the-top propaganda that the Russians engage in?

Mr. PETTIT. Thank you, Senator, for that question, Mr. Chairman. It is indeed daunting, the competition with the Russian propaganda tools that they have, and it is hard to duplicate, and therefore needs to be countered in a different way. Eighty percent of Moldovans do get their news information from television. There are many, many Russian cable stations that are rebroadcast in Moldova and which reach an audience of almost the entire country. Most people in Moldova do speak and understand Russian very well. The programming is superior, it is very slick, it is well packaged.

In terms of countering that influence, we have to use the tools at hand. The U.S. does have RFE–RL. We do have our radio broadcasting programs. We do not have the equivalent of Russian television and therefore we have to use other tools. We have to use exchanges, we have to make ourselves available. High-level visits are very helpful. Several members of this committee have visited Moldova in recent months. This gives us access to Moldovan media. It allows us to do outreach.

If confirmed, one of my priorities will be to have mission members go out and do outreach throughout Moldova, including Transnistria, which we already do. These efforts are very, very important. We have 100 Peace Corps Volunteers in Moldova. All of these tools in their own way do help spread the message.

But of course, what is critical is that our EU partners also assist us in this effort, particularly since the signing of the association agreement.

Mr. HARTLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would second what Jim indicated with regard for the priority that we need to put on this issue and for the engagement of the entire Embassy staff in these efforts. I think the challenge that we face in this regard in

Slovenia is far less than what Jim will face in Moldova and other states closer to Russia and in countries where they have a Russian-speaking minority.

But nonetheless, it is critical that we get out and we are as active and creative as we can be. As I indicated in my statement, that is going to be a key priority for me if I am confirmed. The Embassy currently has a very active social media program, creative, educational, and other exchanges, including bringing interns in, partnering with the American Chamber of Commerce to bring interns in to work with American businesses during the summer months, in addition to some of the more classic exchanges that we have in the Fulbright scholarships, things like that.

I certainly agree with Jim that high-level visits help. General Breedlove, the Supreme Allied Commander and Commander of U.S. Forces in Europe, was there recently and we would certainly welcome members of the committee visiting as well.

Senator MURPHY. We will look forward to your thoughts on this subject. I think it is time that this committee has a more robust conversation about what new assets we can provide the information programs we already run. We made a commitment to Radio Free Europe when radio was the primary means by which people received information. That is not true today and it is a little hard to understand, if we still have a commitment to a concept like that, why we have not upgraded the technology to recognize how people get their information.

Back to you, Mr. Pettit. Talk a little bit about the association agreement. A big step forward for the Moldovans, but the question is how does it operate? What needs to happen in order to make the potential benefits of that agreement real? What do we need to be saying to the Europeans in order for Moldova to take advantage of the newfound abilities they have under that trade pact?

Mr. PETTIT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, the economic benefits for Moldova are almost immediate. Some analysts estimate that GDP should rise approximately 5.4 percent just in the first year because of the favorable treatment of Moldovan products. However, there is a lot of hard work to comply with EU standards, and that is going to be the most difficult part for the Moldovan economy, the Moldovan Government.

We have programs in place, as does the EU, to specifically assist Moldovan government, industry, with compliance. This is across the board. This is regulatory, this is meeting standards, this is rules applying to agriculture and tariffs and all sorts of things, including social components, such as human rights and governance. We have programs in all those areas. The EU has programs in all those areas. We see our role assisting Moldova in this aspect with attaining the necessary compliance with EU standards. It will be a definite benefit for the economy of Moldova, including Transnistria.

Senator MURPHY. People have posited that the sort of next shoe to drop in terms of Russia's ambitions to gain control over the near abroad is an increased level of Russian activity in Transnistria. They may not have to do that, given the fact that there are upcoming elections that are going to be hotly contested, and should the Communists win you could see a so-called democratic reorientation

of Moldova back to being within a closer sphere of influence with Russia.

So my guess was always that Russia was going to put its efforts into winning these elections, which may get them most of what they want anyway. What do we know about level of Russian activity in the early stages of the November elections? What is going to be the U.S. disposition on those elections and making sure that they are, at the very least, conducted in a free and fair manner?

Mr. PETTIT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is definitely Russian activity behind the political scenes in influencing electorates, particularly the more disaffected groups. As you may know, there are some ethnic divisions within Moldova, such as specifically Gagauzia, also places in the north that are more—that have more of a tilt linguistically and historically toward Russia.

The Russians definitely take advantage of that. As we had already discussed, the Russian propaganda machine is enormous. That said, the last parliamentary elections had many foreign observers and were deemed and fair and transparent. I am not as concerned about the process itself as what the results could be. We will work with whatever coalition emerges from the November elections. We have high hopes on the pro-European inclinations of the current coalition, but it bears noting that, even when the communists were in power, they were very amenable toward European integration and actually implemented some of the preliminary steps that led to the signing of the association agreement.

So the election results are impossible to predict. The Communist Party remains the largest single party, but it is not a majority. They would have to enter into a coalition with others. We are hopeful that the current European path will not be disrupted regardless of what the results are of the election.

Senator MURPHY. The Communist Party did oppose the association agreement, so it seems that for the time being they have cast their lot against European integration. We certainly know there is high levels of coordination between that party and the Russian Government. So I understand it is difficult for the United States to press political levers within a country when it comes to an election, but I hope we are not going into these elections with an optimism that a Communist majority is going to automatically continue a pathway toward European integration. I am not sure that that is a forgone conclusion.

Mr. PETTIT. You are absolutely correct, Mr. Chairman, that the Communists are publicly stating that they do oppose the association agreement. We are really talking about hearts and minds. Unfortunately, the polls do indicate waning support for the association agreement. A lot of that is based on misperceptions of what the result will be. So I think it is really in the arena of public opinion and outreach is where we have our work cut out for us, we, the EU, and the Moldovan Government, which also has to take responsibility to explaining to the electorate just exactly what the benefits are, which to us seem very clear, but have not been made clear to the electorate.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Hartley, we had a hearing last week on European energy security. In my opening comments I told a story about a recent visit that Senator McCain and Senator Johnson and

I made to Bulgaria, in which during our time there an announcement was made that Bulgaria was going to for the time being suspend work on the South Stream pipeline, and thereafter we were criticized in some sectors of the country as being Americans coming into Bulgaria and telling them how to run their business.

It struck me and still strikes me that the United States is in a no-win position. When we attempt to exert leadership to benefit our interests and European interests, we are criticized for being too heavily involved in other nations' business, and then if we are not showing that level of leadership we are told that the United States is sitting back and failing to show the same kind of leadership that we have in the past.

Slovenia is a member of the South Stream coalition. They have shown a willingness to move forward with the project, that is in contravention with the Third Energy Package from the EU. What is the current state of affairs with respect to South Stream in Slovenia? What are the things that you can do to try to convince them to stay on the same page as Europe when dealing with these complicated questions of energy transmission in and through the continent?

Mr. HARTLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a big question. The Slovenians seem very interested in their participation in the South Stream project, which is interesting in light of the fact that they only get about 10 percent of their energy from gas and they have access to hydroelectric power, nuclear power, and other alternatives. In some ways they are better set for pursuing a diverse energy base than many other countries in that area.

But nonetheless, they remain interested. From what I understand from public statements by Slovenian officials, however, they are not prepared to take on the European Commission's rulings with regard to how the South Stream project has been structured and the EU Commission's, the European Commission's opposition to it.

If confirmed, energy security and energy diversification will be an important priority. It is a very big issue, especially in light of Russian behavior toward Ukraine and the ability and the willingness it has shown to use its energy resources as a political tool. I would want to promote greater interconnectedness between—within the European gas and electrical network and encourage Slovenian interest that is already evident in the possibility of building a second nuclear reactor, the first of which they share with Croatia.

Senator MURPHY. All right. You guys got off the hook relatively easily today. Really important postings; looking forward to working with both of you; very excited to have such eminently qualified individuals going into very important posts for the United States.

We are going to keep the record open for members to pose additional questions to you and our first panel, only until the close of business tomorrow, in an effort to try to move your nominations as quickly as possible. So if you do receive questions, we hope that you will turn around answers as quickly as possible so that we can move your nominations, as well as the first panel's, through the committee in as expeditious a manner as possible.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:46 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BASS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. In the past few years in Turkey, some Turkish citizens have been organizing and participating in events to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. The United States consulate has sent representatives to some of these commemorations in Istanbul.

- Will you make participating in the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the genocide a priority for you and your staff? How do you personally characterize the events that took place between 1915–23 that resulted in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians and the killing of as many as 1,500,000 men, women, and children?

Answer. The U.S. Government acknowledges as historical fact and mourns that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. In recent years, a senior representative from our consulate in Istanbul has attended the April 24 commemoration event in Istanbul. This is typically the largest and most public event held in Turkey on Remembrance Day itself, and Istanbul is where the vast majority of Armenian citizens in Turkey now live. If confirmed, I will continue to make attendance at such commemoration events a priority, particularly in light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

The administration has commemorated the Meds Yaghem, and remains engaged in diplomatic efforts that support the President's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts." If confirmed, my role would be to represent faithfully the President's policies and priorities. I will continue to support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges their shared history.

Question. For over 20 years, Turkey has maintained an illegal blockade against landlocked Armenia, despite public calls from successive U.S. administrations for it to open Europe's last closed border without any preconditions.

- What steps will you take to move this issue forward and bring an end to the blockade?

Answer. It has been and remains the administration's policy to encourage Turkey and Armenia to reconcile their past and normalize relations as a means of creating the peaceful and prosperous bilateral relationship that the people of both countries deserve. The status quo is not beneficial for either side, and both countries would benefit greatly from increased direct trade and normal relations. Facilitating Armenia's regional integration by opening its border with Turkey is a priority for the United States.

If confirmed, this would be one of my key goals as Ambassador. I would work closely with colleagues in Washington and in our Embassy in Yerevan on this common objective, including taking every opportunity in meetings with government and civil society leaders to encourage greater dialogue. In addition, I would continue to support increased cross-border cooperation between the people of Armenia and Turkey through research initiatives, conferences, and exchange programs.

Question. Will you commit to meeting periodically with the Greek and Armenian American communities on a regular basis when you are in the United States?

Answer. If confirmed, it will be my honor and duty to serve as the representative of the U.S. Government and fellow American citizens to the Republic of Turkey. To that end, I look forward to engaging regularly with American citizen groups of all ethnic backgrounds who have an interest in our relations with Turkey, including and especially the Armenian American and Greek American communities.

Question. The recent conversion of two historic churches in Turkey into mosques and the threat of legislation that would convert the historic Hagia Sophia is of grave concern. Will you raise these concerns with Turkish authorities when you arrive in Ankara?

Answer. The State Department views the Hagia Sophia museum as a unique and historic symbol for Turkey and the surrounding region, and we strongly support maintaining the current status of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. We recognize and continue to emphasize U.S. concerns over the challenges religious minority

groups face in Turkey, including by highlighting instances of the conversion of other historic religious sites to mosques in our annual International Religious Freedom Report. The Government of Turkey has taken positive steps over the past year to return some properties to active religious communities, including the Mor Gabriel Monastery and 47 acres of property surrounding Halki Seminary, but more can be done. We currently have no confirmation of any serious effort to convert the Hagia Sophia to a mosque.

If confirmed, I will continue to stress to Turkish officials the global sensitivity of any move to change the current character of the Hagia Sophia. I also pledge to continue our policy and practice of regularly raising these concerns with Turkish officials and encouraging additional measures to strengthen religious freedom in Turkey.

Question. Less than 100 years ago, there was a vibrant and large Christian population in Turkey. Because of genocide and persecution, the population has been decimated and accounts for less than point 2 percent of the population today. In January 2011, President Obama noted the importance of "bear[ing] witness to those who are persecuted or attacked because of their faith."

- ♦ How will you address issues of religious persecution against Christians and other religious minorities with Turkish authorities?

Answer. Religious minority groups face continuing challenges in Turkey, as noted in our annual "International Religious Freedom Report." The State Department regularly engages at all levels with Turkish officials regarding the importance of religious freedom, including legal reforms aimed at lifting restrictions on religious groups, property restitution, and specific cases of religious discrimination. To this end, we strongly support efforts to reopen Halki Seminary on terms acceptable to the Ecumenical Patriarch. Furthermore, we condemn in the strongest terms violence toward all religious minorities, and we urge Turkish authorities to pursue investigations and bring perpetrators to justice.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Turkish Government to follow through on the return of religious minority properties and to take additional steps to promote religious freedom, such as allowing more religious communities to own property, register their places of worship, and train clergy.

Question. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Turkish invasion and occupation of Northern Cyprus. Peace talks restarted in February with the aim of creating a bizonal, bicommunal federation on the island. Thus far, confidence-building measures have been a sticking point, and other issues, such as property, are proving to be as difficult as they have been over the course of the last four decades.

- ♦ What efforts will you exert to encourage Turkey to proactively and productively engage in these talks in order to reach a final resolution that will reunify the island?

Answer. We welcome the constructive roles of both Turkey and Greece in support of the settlement process, including hosting historic visits by the Turkish-Cypriot negotiator to Athens and the Greek-Cypriot negotiator to Ankara. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work closely with my colleagues in Greece and Cyprus and give my full support to the efforts under the auspices of the United Nations Good Offices Mission to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicommunal federation that would bring security and economic prosperity to all Cypriots. I will also engage senior Turkish officials to promote a just and lasting comprehensive settlement on Cyprus.

Question. The Eastern Mediterranean could contribute to European energy security, but many analysts believe that the main impediment to greater oil and gas exploration is the lack of regional cooperation. Turkey's provocations in Greek Cypriot waters, such as its insistence on deploying small research and exploration ships off the island's southern coast, exemplify a barrier to greater regional cooperation.

- ♦ What do you believe are the opportunities for greater regional cooperation in exploring these resources? What is your plan for bringing Turkey to the table to negotiate in good faith? Are there any positive signs?

Answer. The discovery of offshore hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean has the potential to change the landscape for many countries in the region. If managed correctly, these resources could be a catalyst for increased cooperation and stability. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue ongoing U.S. efforts to ensure energy is used to promote cooperation and prosperity, rather than conflict.

There have been some encouraging signs. For example, a recent conference held in the buffer zone brought together Turks, Greeks, Israelis, Lebanese, Turkish Cypriots, and Greek Cypriots to discuss the future of hydrocarbon developments in the

Eastern Mediterranean. The gathering sent an important message about the potential role that hydrocarbon development can play in promoting greater regional cooperation and, ultimately, increased economic prosperity and energy security for Cyprus and its neighbors in the region.

The United States recognizes the Republic of Cyprus' right to develop its resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone. We also believe the island's resources should be equitably shared between both communities within the context of an overall settlement. Collaboration with regional partners such as Israel and Egypt could enable efficient development of these resources while also expanding potential for future cooperation on a wider range of issues.

Question. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is the spiritual head of 300 million Orthodox Christians who compose the world's second-largest Christian Church. As U.S. Ambassador, what will you do to encourage the Turkish Government to allow the reopening of the Halki theological seminary, cease interference in the election of church leadership, and encourage the return of other religious properties belonging to the Patriachate?

Answer. The United States strongly supports efforts to reopen Halki Seminary on terms acceptable to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Secretary Kerry and Vice President Biden have consistently called for the reopening of the seminary without preconditions, and the U.S. Embassy in Ankara and consulate general in Istanbul have engaged the Turkish Government on this issue regularly. If confirmed, I will continue to urge Turkish officials at the highest levels to reopen the seminary as a symbol of Turkey's commitment to religious freedom.

In addition, we support the Church's right to choose its own Patriarch, obtain citizenship for Church Metropolitans, and gain recognition of the Patriarch's ecumenical status from the Turkish Government. If confirmed, I will urge the Turkish Government to work cooperatively with the Patriarchate to resolve these and other matters of importance to Orthodox Christians and other religious minorities in Turkey. I will also continue to encourage Turkey to take additional steps to strengthen religious freedom, including allowing more religious communities to own property, register their places of worship, and train their clergy.

Question. In 2013 Turkey announced that it would procure the Chinese FD–2000 (HQ–9) air defense system. This system is not compatible with the evolving ballistic-missile shield being built in Europe.

- What is the administration doing, and what will you do, if confirmed, to ensure that Turkey does not coproduce an air and missile defense system with a Chinese Government-owned company which has repeatedly been sanctioned by the United States?
- If Turkey does pursue such cooperation with the Chinese, how would this affect other elements of U.S. and NATO defense cooperation with Turkey, including on missile defense and coproduction of the F–35 Joint Strike Fighter?

Answer. We have serious concerns about Turkey's decision to negotiate with a sanctioned Chinese company for an air and missile defense system that will not be interoperable with NATO. We remain actively engaged—at the highest levels—in urging Turkey to end negotiations with the Chinese and turn to a NATO interoperable tender. We have enlisted NATO and our allies in this effort; they share our concerns. Turkish officials have reaffirmed that negotiations with the Chinese have not concluded and have extended the tender period through August 28. They have indicated the door remains open for a revised U.S. proposal. We have made clear that if Turkey does choose a Chinese system, it cannot and will not be connected to NATO systems and may have other consequences for our defense relationship.

Other aspects of our defense cooperation with Turkey remain strong, including the strategically important access that Turkey continues to provide us to key bases and its hosting of the AN/TPY–2 missile defense radar. The Raytheon-Lockheed Martin bid would be NATO-interoperable and contribute to a stronger U.S.-Turkey defense relationship. Turkey remains a key partner in the F–35 Joint Strike Fighter program, and announced on May 6 its plans to order two F–35 aircraft. We have told—and will continue to reinforce to—Turkish officials that if they procure an air defense system from a sanctioned Chinese firm, it could inhibit our shared goal of expanding our economic and defense relationship.

If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to support and advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and investors, including those competing for business and contracts in the defense and security sectors, consistent with applicable U.S. law and regulations. That includes advocacy to promote the American consortium's bid for this air defense tender.

Question. Turkey ranks 154th among 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index. What concerns do you have about freedom of expression in Turkey in the aftermath of efforts by the government to ban Twitter and YouTube and enforce regressive new Internet laws? What can the United States do to raise these concerns, including in international fora, and to provide a forum for public opinion and the press in Turkey?

Answer. I share your concern regarding government actions that have weakened freedom of expression in Turkey, which the administration has conveyed both publicly and privately to the Government of Turkey. We believe that democracies are strengthened by the diversity of public voices, while an independent media operating without fear of retribution is crucial to ensuring transparency and accountability. The State Department has urged the Turkish Government to unblock its citizens' access to social media and ensure free access to all such platforms; we welcomed the Turkish constitutional court rulings in favor of restoring Twitter and YouTube. If confirmed, I will continue to call on the Turkish Government to ensure open access to information from many sources—including social media.

Question. The U.S. innovative pharmaceutical industry faces severe challenges in Turkey, including an arbitrary fixed exchange rate system that saddles the industry with an extra 50 percent erosion of their prices. This is on top of a pricing regime that already forces the industry to accept some of the lowest prices in the world, in a market that hopes to be a top 10 global economy by 2023.

- ♦ What will you to do to help resolve this long-standing, market-distorting, unfair trade practice?

Answer. I agree the fixed exchange rate currently utilized by the Turkish Government in connection with reimbursements for imported pharmaceutical products impedes access to the Turkish market by U.S. pharmaceutical companies. It also acts as a barrier to Turkey's access to the latest innovative medicines. The U.S. Government takes this issue very seriously and continues to urge changes in the pricing regime with senior Turkish officials. Most recently, Commerce Secretary Pritzker and Ambassador Froman raised pharmaceutical reforms with Deputy Prime Minister Babacan and Minister of Economy Zeybekci during the 2014 U.S.-Turkey Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation (FSECC) meeting in May.

If confirmed, I will encourage Turkey to work with the U.S. pharmaceutical sector to better understand their market needs. I will also work with our Foreign Commercial Service and U.S. companies to urge Turkey to implement key pharmaceutical sector reforms—and in doing so, to build momentum for a broader U.S.-Turkey trade relationship.

Question. Turkey has identified the pharmaceutical sector as a top priority for its government. However, U.S. innovative pharmaceutical companies continue to face a rash of highly punitive market access barriers that impede Turkish patients' access to medicines that are available to patients around the world, including in Europe and the United States. These barriers include marketing authorization and good manufacturing practices delays, uncertainty surrounding intellectual property protection, growing protectionist policies, a government-pricing regime that distorts the market through mandatory price discounts, and a draconian exchange rate system for pharmaceuticals. This exchange system is especially burdensome, as the industry must accept a forced devaluation that is currently 50 percent below market levels, despite a law and court rulings requiring the government to adjust the rate upward. This has been a top commercial priority for the Embassy and the former Ambassador.

- ♦ How will you work to improve the market conditions for the U.S. research-based pharmaceutical industry in Turkey?

Answer. I agree that the fixed exchange rate currently utilized by the Turkish Government in connection with reimbursements for imported pharmaceutical products acts as a barrier to Turkey's access to the latest innovative medicines. The issue of delayed marketing approvals as a barrier to access is also an area of concern for the United States.

During this year's Framework for Strategic and Economic Commercial Cooperation (FSECC), the Ministry of Health suggested Turkey would begin implementing a "parallel processing" approach to pharmaceutical product applications for good manufacturing practices inspections and marketing authorizations, which should accelerate the entry of innovative drugs into the market.

If confirmed, I will monitor these and other developments and encourage prompt implementation of such provisions. I will also press the Turkish Government to improve market conditions for the U.S. pharmaceutical industry in Turkey.

Question. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, foreign fighters and funding have flowed through Turkey and into Syria in ever-increasing numbers to extremist groups, giving them a major advantage over moderate, local, Syrian opposition forces. Many foreign fighters moving through Turkey come from North Africa, Western Europe, and even North America. Now there is a threat that these battle-seasoned fighters could return from Syria, via Turkey, intent on attacking their home countries. Furthermore, representatives of Syrian extremist groups are operating from eastern Turkey, where they meet with wealthy benefactors to raise funds.

- ♦ What should the Turkish Government be doing to stem the flow of fighters and funding through Turkey into Syria? How will you engage with the Turkish Government on this critical set of issues that pose security threats to the United States, regional partners, and NATO allies?

Answer. This is a critical issue for the United States and Turkey, as well as for the "source" countries from which foreign fighters are departing and then returning. Turkey faces particular challenges as violent extremists take advantage of its geographical location and high volume of legitimate travelers. As the conflict in Syria has continued, the increasing threat from violent extremists has prompted stronger action by the Turkish Government to counter foreign fighters traveling or moving money across its borders. For example, the Turkish Government is working to tighten entry and exit controls. The Turkish Government has also made significant progress in implementing terrorist designations.

If confirmed, I will continue our ongoing dialogue with Turkey to strengthen and intensify collective action to counter the threat posed by foreign fighters. I will also urge more focused, intense efforts to cut off financial flows to terrorist organizations through continued work with the multilateral Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Finally, I will work to ensure that U.S Government agencies present in Turkey—including the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, and Defense—are continuing to provide advice and technical expertise to help the Turkish Government share information about suspected or designated extremists and further strengthen border security.

Question. In March 2009, Assistant Secretary of State Phil Gordon, in response to a question I asked at his confirmation hearing before the Foreign Relations Committee, expressed his hope that the Turkey-Armenia border would be opened by October 2009. Today, nearly 5 years later, Turkey has refused to end its blockade of landlocked Armenia.

- ♦ In the past year, what adjustments has the executive branch made to its approach and policies to accomplish our repeatedly stated interest in seeing Turkey open this border? What progress can you report on this issue? Do you believe that Turkey's nearly 20 year strategy of blockading Armenia has been effective?

Answer. Both Turkey and Armenia are important friends and partners of the United States, and improving bilateral relations between them is an important priority for the administration. The status quo is unsustainable and detrimental to Turks and Armenians. It does not serve the interests of either society or contribute to stability across the region. Both countries would benefit from reopening the border. Increasing direct trade and contact between the two peoples would foster greater trust and understanding, and would help facilitate the necessary reconciliation between these two nations.

The administration has been focused on this goal for many years. Despite our best efforts, progress has unfortunately been limited, with fewer advances than we would have liked to achieve. In the last year, the administration has stepped up support and encouragement of government-to-government discussions. We have also sought new ways to actively promote greater people-to-people contacts and partnerships as well as other cross-border and regional initiatives. We will continue our efforts to build and expand commercial, social, and cultural ties between Turks and Armenians in order to foster good will and understanding, and to encourage their governments to reconcile their past and normalize relations.

The countries of the South Caucasus region are increasingly important strategic security and commercial partners for the United States and Europe. Armenia's full integration into the region remains a focus of U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues in Yerevan and in Washington to promote normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, including by reopening their shared border, which remains key to providing people in both countries with the stability and prosperity they deserve.

Question. What specific actions will you take, if confirmed, to mark the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide?

Answer. As the 100th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century approaches, Turkey must be proactive in seeking to come to terms with its past. If confirmed, I will personally encourage Turkish leaders to take meaningful steps toward reconciliation. The administration acknowledges the Meds Yeghern and mourns for the 1.5 million Armenians who were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. U.S. Government officials have commemorated this tragedy at Remembrance Day events in Washington and Yerevan, as well as in Istanbul, where the largest and most public event in Turkey takes place.

If confirmed, I would ensure senior-level representation by our mission to Turkey at such commemoration events. I would also do everything I could to advance concretely President Obama's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts." In advance of this important anniversary year, I would seek opportunities to support publicly the courageous steps taken by Armenian and Turkish individuals to engage in honest dialogue about their shared history. Finally, I would be happy to provide briefings to Congress on the status of these efforts and discuss additional steps that might also stimulate further progress.

Question. What assistance can you provide to American citizens who are the heirs of victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide with respect to their legal claims to property?

Answer. Though the U.S. Government is not a party to these cases, we continue to follow closely developments in the litigation. California's courts have dismissed several cases filed by Armenian descendants on procedural grounds, but some litigation remains pending.

We recognize these cases are more than just legal claims for the heirs of victims and survivors of the tragic events of 1915; they represent a deep and passionate search for resolution of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. These cases are also a stark reminder of the importance of ongoing U.S. Government efforts to encourage the Turkish and Armenian people and governments to heal the wounds of the past. If confirmed, I would seek to intensify support for the ongoing reconciliation efforts between these two nations, to allow them to move forward together toward a future relationship grounded in security and prosperity.

Question. What will you do to promote free speech about the Armenian Genocide within Turkey and end the gag-rule to allow their own history to be discussed freely?

Answer. I share your commitment to supporting freedom of expression, as democracies are strengthened by diverse voices in the public sphere. If confirmed, I will be a champion for this and other universal values, as I was during my tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Georgia, and urge the Turkish Government to demonstrate full respect for its citizens' right to engage in open debate and free discussion without fear of retribution.

The Department of State has supported civil society and people-to-people initiatives to encourage reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia, including programs that further the President's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts" regarding the tragic events in 1915. The upcoming 2015 anniversary of the Meds Yeghern presents an opportunity for Turkey to expand the political space for dialogue on this issue and chart a new course for the future. Both Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu have taken helpful steps in this direction in the last year, acknowledging the events of 1915 were "wrong" and "inhumane," and offering condolences for the lives that were lost. This was the first time in history that Turkish leaders have publicly made such statements.

If confirmed, I would encourage Turkish leaders to build off these statements and engage further in honest and open dialogue. I would also pursue opportunities to highlight the human dimension of this tragedy, including by continuing our current practice of meeting with courageous individuals in Turkey who are working to move forward the conversation about these countries' shared history.

RESPONSE OF KEVIN F. O'MALLEY TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) promotes economic development and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border areas of the Republic most affected by the conflict. Appropriations for the IFI averaged $23 million annually during the 1990s, and $18 million annually from 2000–10. Since FY 2011, funding has fallen to just $2.5 million, with the administration asking for no funding in its budget request.

♦ How has this significant decrease in funding affected our ability to promote development and reconciliation?

Answer. The United States continues to support Northern Ireland as it works to build a strong society, vibrant economy, and enduring peace. Since 1986, the United States has supported Northern Ireland's movement toward a shared future of peace and prosperity with over $530 million in U.S. foreign assistance to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) programs. Through the years, the fund has contributed to establishing stability and promoting peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border counties.

Given significant budget constraints and the need to focus scarce resources on the highest priorities globally, the administration did not request funding for IFI in FY 2015. However, with the funding provided from FY 2011 to FY 2013, and funding the administration expects to allocate for FY 2014, the United States will meet an existing $7.5 million commitment to the IFI's Peace Impact Program. The Peace Impact Program is part of a commitment to a lasting and sustained peace, targeting those communities in Ireland and Northern Ireland most prone to dissident recruitment and activity.

If confirmed, I will make it my priority to continue the United States support for the Northern Ireland peace process through diplomatic engagement and cultural and educational exchanges.

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BASS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. If confirmed as the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, you will be Ambassador during the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

♦ If confirmed, will you make participating in observances within Turkey that commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide a priority for you and your staff?

Answer. The U.S. Government acknowledges as historical fact and mourns that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. In recent years, a senior representative from our consulate in Istanbul has attended the April 24 commemoration event in Istanbul. This is typically the largest and most public event held in Turkey on Remembrance Day itself, and Istanbul is where the vast majority of Armenian citizens live in Turkey. If confirmed, I will continue to make attendance at such commemoration events a priority, particularly in light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

Question. Despite death threats and intimidation, Turkish scholars and writers have affirmed the Armenian Genocide.

♦ If confirmed, will you commit to meeting with these Turkish citizens who are risking their lives to urge their government to openly acknowledge the Armenian Genocide?

Answer. Over the last several years, the Department of State has supported civil society and people-to-people initiatives to encourage Turkey-Armenia reconciliation, including programs that would support the President's call for a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts regarding the tragic events in 1915. If confirmed, I will continue our current practice and meet with individuals in Turkey involved in these and similar efforts and support their courageous steps to foster a dialogue that acknowledges Turkey's shared history with Armenia.

Question. In your testimony, you mention the importance of normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia as a means to creating a peaceful, prosperous relationship that will benefit people of both countries.

♦ How does the failure of the Turkish Government to openly acknowledge the Armenian Genocide impede efforts to normalize relations between Turkey and Armenia?

Answer. To achieve full reconciliation, Turkey must come to terms with its past. While progress has been slow, there have been some recent signs of change, such as remarks by Prime Minister Erdogan this past April expressing condolences to the grandchildren of Armenians who suffered the tragic events of 1915. The administration will continue to encourage a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts in order to promote understanding between Turkey and Armenia. In addition, we will continue our efforts in support of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the opening of their land border. If I am confirmed,

I will also promote government-to-government discussions, as well as people-to-people, cultural and economic contacts and partnerships. Such interaction begins to build trust, which is an important step toward reconciliation. I stand ready to support all such efforts in service of reconciliation.

Question. For two decades, Turkey has maintained its illegal blockade of landlocked Armenia despite public calls by successive U.S. administrations for an end to Europe's last closed border.

♦ If confirmed, how will you work to end this illegal blockade?

Answer. It has been and remains the administration's policy to encourage Turkey and Armenia to reconcile their past and normalize relations as a means of creating the peaceful and prosperous bilateral relationship that the people of both countries deserve. The status quo is not beneficial for either side, and both countries would benefit greatly from increased direct trade and normal relations. Facilitating Armenia's regional integration by opening its border with Turkey is a priority for the United States. If confirmed, this would be one of my key goals as Ambassador. I would work closely with colleagues in Washington and our Embassy in Yerevan on this common objective, including taking every opportunity in meetings with government and civil society leaders to encourage greater dialogue. In addition, I would continue to support increased cross-border cooperation between the people of Armenia and Turkey through research initiatives, conferences, and exchange programs.

Question. Will you commit to meeting with the Armenian American, Greek American, Assyrian American and Kurdish American communities on a regular basis?

Answer. If confirmed, it will be my honor and duty to serve as the representative of the U.S. Government and fellow American citizens to the Republic of Turkey. To that end, I look forward to regularly working with American citizen groups of all ethnic backgrounds who have an interest in our relations with Turkey, including and especially Armenian American, Greek American, Assyrian American, and Kurdish American communities.

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BASS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Ambassador Bass, if confirmed as the United States Ambassador to Turkey, your tenure will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Commemorating this anniversary will be greatly important to Armenian communities around the world, including in Turkey and the United States.

Question. How do you believe the United States can help advance broader recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey?

Answer. Over the last several years, the Department of State has supported a number of civil society and people-to-people initiatives to encourage Turkey-Armenia reconciliation. This includes programs that support the President's call for a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts regarding the tragic events in 1915 which resulted in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. If confirmed, I will continue to promote these initiatives and explore whether there are other avenues that could further reinforce U.S. efforts to promote a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts and reconciliation between the two countries. I also look forward to meeting with the courageous individuals in Turkey who are taking steps to foster a dialogue that acknowledges Turkey's shared history with Armenia. Turkey must come to terms with its past, and I stand ready to support all such efforts.

Question. What role do you believe the U.S. Embassy and consulates should play in marking this important occasion?

Answer. The U.S. Government acknowledges as historical fact and mourns that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. In recent years, a senior representative from our consulate in Istanbul has attended the April 24 commemoration event in Istanbul. This is typically the largest and most public event held in Turkey on Remembrance Day itself, and Istanbul is where the vast majority of Armenian citizens in Turkey now live. If confirmed, I will continue to make attendance at such commemoration events a priority, particularly in light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

Question. How do you believe the failure to properly recognize the Armenian Genocide hinders the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey?

Answer. To achieve full reconciliation, Turkey must come to terms with its past. While progress has been slow, there have been some recent signs of change, such as remarks by Prime Minister Erdogan this past April expressing condolences to the grandchildren of Armenians who suffered the tragic events of 1915. The administration will continue to encourage a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts in order to promote understanding between Turkey and Armenia. In addition, we will continue our efforts in support of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the opening of their land border. If I am confirmed, I will also promote government-to-government discussions, as well as people-to-people cultural and economic contacts and partnerships. Such interactions begin to build trust, which is an important step toward reconciliation. I stand ready to support all such efforts in service of reconciliation.

Question. Do you agree with the accounts of U.S. diplomats, including Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, who served as U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, regarding the attempted annihilation of the Armenian people?

Answer. I am aware of the history of the tragic massacres and forced exile that occurred at the end of the Ottoman Empire, and with U.S. policy during that period. Ambassador Morgenthau's accounts, and the reporting of other U.S. diplomats, serve as important historical records of these tragic events from various perspectives. The individual stories of the tragedy are horrifying.

The U.S. Government acknowledges as historical fact and mourns that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. If confirmed as Ambassador, my role would be to represent faithfully the President's policies, as it has been in all of my previous assignments.

NOMINATIONS OF ERICA RUGGLES, GEORGE KROL, ALLAN MUSTARD, DAVID PRESSMAN, AND MARCIA BERNICAT

THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Erica J. Barks Ruggles, of Minnesota, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda

Hon. George Albert Krol, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan

Allan P. Mustard, of Washington, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to Turkmenistan

David Pressman, of New York, to be Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador; Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations

Hon. Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine, presiding.

Present: Senators Kaine and Risch.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FOR VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. This meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We have five nominees to consider today and forward to the full committee for their consideration. I appreciate that we have a little bit of a—some kind of a demonstration is blocking a couple of the nominees from being here right at the minute, but we will get started, nevertheless. I will do some opening statements.

And I think I will just go ahead and tell you about all five of the nominees in my opening statements, and then we will begin with testimony from Ms. Ruggles and Mr. Pressman, and we will allow the other three nominees to do their testimony when they arrive.

First, congratulations to you, and to all five of the nominees. It is an honor to be nominated to represent the United States in the

capacities for which you are nominated. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, it has been a privilege to work on the committee, and one of the things that is so exciting is the opportunity to meet Foreign Service officers of every grade and every capacity, both in Washington and around the world. We are served very, very well by some dedicated public servants, and many of them live in Virginia. So, I want to make sure I say that right up front.

The five nominees that we have today for a variety of positions are as follows: Marcia Bernicat to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh; George Krol to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan; Allan Mustard to be Ambassador to Turkmenistan; and then two witnesses who are here, David Pressman, who is the Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs to the U.N., with the rank of Ambassador, and an Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the U.N.; and Erica Barks-Ruggles to be Ambassador to Rwanda.

I am chairing this hearing, as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Near East, South, and Central Asia, where a number of these positions are in that real estate.

A few words about each of our five nominees: Ambassador George Krol is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister Counselor, currently serving as the U.S. Ambassador for the Republic of Uzbekistan, previously the Ambassador in Belarus, with many other assignments in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Welcome, to all of you. You came in quicker than I thought you were going to come in. I am very glad to have you here. Just starting the introductions.

Ambassador Krol has served much of his career in the former Soviet Union, developing deep knowledge of the region, and we are very, very pleased to welcome him here.

Ambassador Krol, welcome.

Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, who served previously as the Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, and she was confirmed by the Senate for those positions in 2008. Ambassador Bernicat is a Senior Foreign Service officer who has 33 years of experience. She is currently serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Human Resources, and previously she has served in many capacities, including overseas postings in Barbados, Malawi, India, Mali, France, and other positions.

Welcome. We are very, very glad to welcome you here.

Allan Philip Mustard is the most Senior Foreign Service officer in the Foreign Agricultural Service at U.S. Department of Agriculture, currently serves as Agricultural Minister Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India. He has broad experience in guiding economic reform assistance throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. An expert leader and manager, he served twice in Russia and speaks excellent Russian. He will be bringing essential skills to the task of furthering bilateral relations with the Government of Turkmenistan as it transitions to a market economy.

David Pressman is an American human rights attorney and former aid to U.N. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. He cur-

rently serves as Samantha Powers' counsel at the United Nation. David served as an advisor to Secretary Janet Napolitano and chief of staff to the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, also served as Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security responsible for policy development on global criminal justice issues. He was appointed by President Obama to serve as the director for the War Crimes and Atrocities on the National Security Council.

And finally, Erica Jean Ruggles is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, currently serves as consul general at the U.S. consulate in Capetown, South Africa, a position she has held since 2011. During her career, she has served as Deputy to the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., on detail as Director of the National Security Council, and Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. She has also had postings abroad in Norway, India, and elsewhere.

These five public servants have already demonstrated their mettle in difficult positions and are well qualified for the positions for which they have been nominated.

We are pleased to welcome you today. And what I would like to do is just begin with opening statements from each of the witnesses. I know you have submitted testimony for the record. It will be accepted in the record, but please take the time that you need.

We will begin with Ms. Ruggles, and we will work our way across the dais, and we will then prepare for my withering cross-examination. [Laughter.]

Ms. Ruggles.

STATEMENT OF ERICA J. BARKS RUGGLES, OF MINNESOTA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Thank you, Chairman Kaine. And thank you, to the members and staff who are here today.

It is, as you said, an honor and a privilege to appear before you today and to have been nominated as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda. I am humbled by the trust that has been placed in me by the President and the Secretary of State, and I hope that you will also find me worthy of your trust. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Rwanda.

I would like to start, if you would not mind, by acknowledging the presence of—behind me, of my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Taylor Ruggles. Without him and without our family's love and support, I would not be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I sit before your committee today an embodiment of what so many people in so many countries admire about the United States, the fact that, through hard work and a good education, anyone in America can become anything they want to be. In my 22-year career, I have seen people just like me, from modest backgrounds, with hardworking families, who have not had the opportunities I did simply because they were of a different race, tribe, ethnic group, religion, or gender. And, because of that, I have become a committed advocate for ensuring that every individual has—the opportunities they need to succeed.

Rwanda is a country that has been deeply riven by cycles of conflict, tragedy, and survival. Although Rwanda is still recovering

from the 1994 genocide that killed more than 800,000 innocent people, Rwandans have shown that recovery, reconciliation, and healing are possible, even in the aftermath of a genocide that no one believed possible in our time.

More, however, needs to be done to secure peace and democracy and further expand prosperity in Rwanda for the next generation of its citizens. Since 1994, Rwanda has made enormous progress in rebuilding itself by investing in the health and education of its people, laying the needed foundation for economic prosperity and sustainable growth. In the past 10 years alone, it has pulled over 1 million of its 11 million citizens out of poverty, doubled GDP, and had economic growth that has averaged over 6 percent.

Rwanda is working not only to create immediate short-term jobs and employment, but to develop a vibrant economy by meeting the basic needs of its population through building roads, providing safe water, transportation, and health care. Rwandan children have the highest primary enrollment rates in all of Africa. For both boys and girls, Rwanda is on track to achieve universal access to primary education by 2015, with a primary net enrollment rate of over 95 percent since 2012. And, unlike many countries in the developing world in which girls have limited access to education, Rwanda's young girls are enrolling in primary rates at above 98 percent.

To strengthen its economy, Rwanda has aggressively pursued a privatization policy that encourages foreign and local investment. It has diversified trade outflows and has worked strategically to achieve its goal of developing into a middle-income country by 2020 and becoming an important hub within the East African community for regional financial services, aviation, information technology, and tourism.

In addition to its economic progress, Rwanda has drawn on its own tragic history to try to alleviate conflicts elsewhere in the region. Rwandan police and troops are serving with distinction in U.N. and regional peacekeeping forces in Darfur, South Sudan, Mali, and Central African Republic. The United States has worked closely with Rwanda since 2006 in this regard, providing over $60 million in training, nonlethal equipment, and logistics support to enable Rwandan deployments in these missions.

The United States, in partnership with the international community, has also supported real developmental change in Rwanda. We remain Rwanda's largest bilateral donor, providing more than $200 million in foreign assistance in fiscal year 2013, including $90 million through the PEPFAR program.

Although Rwanda has made much progress over the last 20 years, there is still much we can do to encourage and support its development, particularly in the area of respect for human rights and the rule of law, ensuring freedom of expression for political activities and the media, and deepening Rwanda's democracy.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Rwanda, I will continue to urge the Rwandan Government to abide by its international human rights commitments, including respect for the freedoms of assembly and expression, which are crucial to the success of any democratic system of governance.

If confirmed, I will also continue to encourage Rwanda to play a constructive role in restoring peace and stability in eastern Congo,

including the full implementation of its commitments to the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework, the regional peace process, signed in February 2013. One of the core objectives of that framework is the eradication of all armed groups, including increased international regional efforts to neutralize the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, or the FDLR, as they are commonly known, a group whose members include individuals responsible for the genocide in Rwanda.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will commit all of my energy and experience toward strengthening the relationship between our two countries and advancing, to the best of my abilities, the U.S. goals of a democratic, prosperous Rwanda that is at peace with its neighbors.

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I will welcome your questions at the end.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Barks-Ruggles follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERICA BARKS RUGGLES

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today and to have been nominated by President Obama to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda. I am humbled by the trust placed in me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry in nominating me for this position. I hope that you will also find me worthy of that trust. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Rwanda.

I would like to acknowledge my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Taylor Ruggles. Without him, and our strong families' love and support, I would not be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I sit before your committee today an embodiment of what so many people in so many countries admire about the United States—the fact that through hard work, effort, and good education, anyone in America can become anything they want to be. I was born in the Midwest and had never even been on an airplane until I was 18, heading to university. As I did so, I felt the weight of ensuring I made the most of every minute of my education to further myself as I knew how much my family was sacrificing financially for me to go to college. That education opened up the world for me.

In my career, I have seen people just like me—from modest backgrounds with hard working families—who have not had the opportunities I did sometimes simply because they were of "another" race, tribe, religion, or gender. And because of that I have become a committed advocate for the need to give every child, every individual, the respect and opportunities they need to succeed.

Rwanda is a country that has been deeply riven by cycles of conflict, tragedy, and survival. Although Rwanda is still recovering from the 1994 genocide that killed more than 800,000 innocent people, Rwandans have shown that recovery, reconciliation, and healing are possible, even in the aftermath of a genocide that no one believed possible in our times. More, however, needs to be done to secure peace and democracy, and further expand prosperity in Rwanda for the next generation of Rwandan citizens.

Since 1994, Rwanda has made enormous progress in rebuilding itself by investing in the health and education of all of its people, laying the needed foundation for economic prosperity and sustainable growth. It has pulled over one million of its 11 million citizens out of poverty in the past 10 years, and doubled per capita GDP in that same period. Economic growth has averaged over 6 percent for the past 3 years.

Rwanda is working not only to create immediate short-term jobs, but to develop a vibrant economy by meeting the basic needs of its population for potable water, roads, transportation, and health care. Rwandan children have the highest primary school enrollment rates in Africa. For both boys and girls, Rwanda is on track to achieve universal access to primary education by 2015, with a primary net enrollment at over 95 percent since 2012. And, unlike many countries in the developing world in which girls have limited access to education, Rwanda's young girls are enrolling in primary school at a rate of about 98 percent. Rwanda has also increased

to well over 70 percent the number of children staying in school to complete their education.

To strengthen its economy, Rwanda has aggressively pursued a privatization policy that encourages foreign and local investment. It has diversified its trade outflows beyond traditional exports of tea and coffee to products such as pyrethrum (a natural insecticide), hides and skins, textiles, minerals, and specialty coffee. Rwanda is also partnering with foreign investors to increase its capacity in the areas of technology, telecommunications, and alternative forms of energy such as solar and hydropower. Rwanda has worked strategically to achieve its goal of developing into a middle-income country by 2020 and becoming an important regional hub within the East African Community for regional financial services, aviation, information technology, and tourism.

In addition to its economic progress, Rwanda has drawn on its own tragic history to try to alleviate conflicts elsewhere in the world. Rwandan police and troops have distinguished themselves as among the most capable and professional contingents to support United Nations peacekeeping missions in Haiti, as well as in regional and U.N. missions in Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, and most recently, Central African Republic. The United States has worked closely with Rwanda since 2006 in this regard, providing over $60 million in training, equipment, and, in some cases, logistical support to enable Rwandan deployments for these missions.

The United States, in partnership with the international community, has supported real, positive change in Rwanda. We remain Rwanda's largest bilateral donor, having provided more than $200 million in foreign assistance in fiscal year 2013, of which more than $90 million is used to support the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Though Rwanda has made much progress over the last 20 years, there is still much we can do to encourage and support its development, particularly in the areas of respect for human rights and the rule of law, ensuring freedom of expression for political activities and the media, and deepening Rwanda's democracy to permit peaceful political discourse and competition. If confirmed as Ambassador to Rwanda, I will continue to urge the Rwandan Government to abide by its international human rights commitments, including respect for the freedoms of assembly and expression, which are crucial to the success of any democratic system of governance. As Nelson Mandela, that great icon and statesman of South Africa said, "To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."

If confirmed, I will also continue to encourage Rwanda to play a constructive role in restoring peace and stability in eastern Congo, including through full implementation of its commitments to the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework, the regional peace process signed in February 2013 that is intended to end the recurrent, devastating cycle of conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and its negative impacts on the surrounding Great Lakes region. One of the core objectives of the Framework is the eradication of all armed groups, and this must include increased international and regional efforts to neutralize the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a group whose members include individuals responsible for the Rwandan genocide.

I believe the broad range of experience I have gained in my 22-year career as a Foreign Service officer will assist me in further advancing our goals with the Republic of Rwanda. As the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and as the Deputy to the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, I dealt with many of the kinds of issues that I would face, if confirmed, as the U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda. Having worked on Africa issues on and off since 1994, I have followed Rwanda's progress—and its ongoing challenges—with interest. My most recent posting in South Africa has only confirmed for me the important role that strong, independent democratic institutions—including independent courts, a free press and a vibrant civil society—play in safeguarding democracies and building more inclusive, more tolerant, and more stable societies.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will commit all of my energy and experience toward strengthening the relationship between our two countries and to advancing to the best of my ability the U.S. goal of a democratic, prosperous Rwanda that is at peace with its neighbors.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Ms. Ruggles.

Ambassador Krol.

STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE ALBERT KROL, OF NEW JERSEY, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Ambassador KROL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today in connection with my nomination to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan. And I am honored by the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in me with this nomination. And, if confirmed, I will endeavor to fulfill their, and your, high expectations of me to advance our country's interests in Kazakhstan.

And I am also honored to be sitting here before you today with my colleagues, with whom I have served and whom I greatly admire for their professionalism and their dedication to our country.

As a 32-year career officer of the United States Foreign Service, I can think of no greater honor and privilege to serve our country and represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States. And I am grateful for the support and inspiration my family members and friends have provided me through the years. And I count on their love and support in the future.

Encompassing the size—or, the territory the size of Europe, Kazakhstan possesses immense natural resources and is located at the crossroads of east and west and north and south, and its population is young and increasingly connected with the world around them. And, for the United States, our strategic goals in Kazakhstan are to facilitate and strengthen Kazakhstan's sovereignty and independence, its stability, its prosperity, and its democracy.

Our strategic partnership with Kazakhstan has become increasingly important as Kazakhstan assumes its rightful place on the world stage as a country of consequence. From the earliest days of its independence 22 years ago, Kazakhstan has made numerous wise decisions. It gave up its Soviet-legacy nuclear arsenal, which, at the time, was the fourth-largest in the world, and has become a leader in nonproliferation efforts around the world. And, from the beginning, Kazakhstan has pursued economic reform, and, as a result, is now a middle-income nation with the most advanced economy in the region. Kazakhstan has also actively promoted trade links east and west and north and south, and shares our vision of developing a New Silk Road to connect Central and South Asia.

Another wise early decision was to send many of its young citizens abroad for education, which is an investment that should pay off handsomely in both the public and private sectors of Kazakhstan.

Long a provider of humanitarian and development assistance in Afghanistan, as well as being an integral part of the northern distribution network into Afghanistan, Kazakhstan is now standing up, in collaboration with our own USAID, its own international development body, called KazAID.

And, in short, Mr. Chairman, Kazakhstan is a country with which the United States can work. United States investment in Kazakhstan has grown to roughly $31 billion, making Kazakhstan our most important economic partner in the region. We have expanded our ties in the security sphere and in the areas of economic

reform, education, and growth of Kazakhstan's civil society. And, if confirmed, I would use my diplomatic experience in the Central Asian region, where I now serve as Ambassador to Uzbekistan, and previously as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, to lead our mission in advancing our growing engagement with Kazakhstan in pursuit of our broad national interests, which are: strengthening long-term stability in Central Asia and the world, promoting American business, encouraging respect for universal human rights, and preventing any threats to our national security from emerging in this region.

Mr. Chairman, mutual interests and mutual respect underlie our relations with Kazakhstan, and only the people of Kazakhstan can, and should, freely determine their future development without outside interference or pressure. Respecting Kazakhstan's traditions and transition from its Soviet past, our approach is not to dictate to Kazakhstan its path of development, but to provide the people of Kazakhstan a strong example of a prosperous, rule-based democracy on which to build durable economic, social, and political stability. The choice will be Kazakhstan's to make, but the United States will always be a reliable, principled influence and partner for Kazakhstan's efforts to advance market reform and to develop into a free democratic society respectful of the rights and choices of its citizens.

As a current Ambassador and a U.S. taxpayer, I also understand the importance of being a responsible steward of the public trust, of public funds, property, programs, and personnel. And I recognize that security of the mission and its personnel is one of the highest priorities of any Ambassador, as is ensuring that the mission is a place where no one should ever suffer from discrimination, harassment, or exploitation of any sort. If confirmed, I would maintain these high standards of ethical conduct, fiscal responsibility, and security for our mission in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent most of my adult life in the diplomatic profession, and I have learned that the key to successful diplomacy is establishing and maintaining effective relationships. Clear communication is essential. At the end of the day, it is all about trust. This applies not only to engagement with foreign governments and societies, but also to engagement with Congress. And, if confirmed, I will always be available to this committee, its members and its staff, to discuss and work with you in pursuit of our national interests in Kazakhstan.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Krol follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEORGE A. KRO

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and other members of the committee. Thank for you for the opportunity to appear before you today in connection with my nomination to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

I am honored by the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will endeavor to fulfill their and your high expectations of me to advance our country's interests in Kazakhstan.

As a 32-year career officer of the U.S. Foreign Service and as an American citizen, I can think of no greater honor and privilege than to serve our country and represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States. I am grateful also

for the support and inspiration my family members and friends have provided me through my years of service to our Nation and I count on their love and support in the future.

Encompassing a territory the size of Europe, Kazakhstan possesses immense natural resources and is located at the crossroads of east and west, north and south. Its population is young and increasingly connected with the world around them. For the United States, our strategic goals are to facilitate and strengthen Kazakhstan's sovereignty and independence, its stability, its prosperity and its democracy.

Our Strategic Partnership with Kazakhstan has become increasingly important as Kazakhstan takes its rightful place on the world stage as a country of consequence. From the earliest days of its independence 22 years ago, Kazakhstan has made wise decisions. It gave up its Soviet-legacy nuclear arsenal, which at the time was the fourth-largest in the world, and has become a world leader in nonproliferation. From the beginning, Kazakhstan has emphasized economic reform and, as a result, is now a middle-level-income nation with a financial system that largely meets international standards. Another wise, early decision was to provide international education for many of its young citizens, an investment that has paid off handsomely in both the public and private sectors of Kazakhstan. Long a provider of humanitarian and development assistance for Afghanistan, Kazakhstan is now standing up, in collaboration with our own USAID, its own international development body, KAZAid. This is a country the United States can work with.

United States investment in Kazakhstan has grown to roughly $31 billion, making Kazakhstan our most important economic partner in the region. We have also expanded our ties in the security sphere and in the areas of education and growth of Kazakhstan's civil society.

Kazakhstan has been a generous partner in Afghanistan and a vital link in the Northern Distribution Network, and is a strong supporter of building greater transport and commercial links across the region and beyond. Kazakhstan has also directly supported international efforts regarding Iran's nuclear program and has been not only a responsible partner but also a world leader in global nonproliferation efforts, having given up at its independence what was, at the time, the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal in the world. As Kazakhstan increases its role and voice in regional and international affairs, the United States wishes to be Kazakhstan's trusted strategic partner.

If confirmed, I would intend to use diplomatic experience in the Central Asia region where I now serve as Ambassador to Uzbekistan and previously as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, as well as my interagency contacts, to lead our mission team in advancing our growing engagement with Kazakhstan in pursuit of our broader national interests of strengthening long-term stability in the Central Asia region and the world, promoting American economic and business interests, encouraging respect for universal human rights and preventing any threats to our national security emerging from this region.

Mutual interest and mutual respect underlie our relations with Kazakhstan. Only the people of Kazakhstan can and should freely determine their future development without outside interference or pressure.

Respecting Kazakhstan's traditions and transition from its Soviet past, our approach is not to dictate to Kazakhstan its path of development but to provide the people of Kazakhstan a strong example of a prosperous, rule-based democracy on which to build durable economic, social and political stability.

The choice will be Kazakhstan's to make, but the United States will always be a reliable principled influence and partner for Kazakhstan's efforts to advance market reform and to develop into a free, democratic society respectful of the rights and choices of its citizens.

Having served as an ambassador twice before, and as a U.S. taxpayer, I understand the importance of being a responsible steward of the public trust, of public funds, property, programs, and personnel.

Security of the mission and all its personnel is one of the highest priorities for any ambassador as is ensuring that the mission is a place where no one should ever suffer from discrimination, harassment or exploitation of any sort. If confirmed, I would maintain these high standards of ethical conduct and security for our missions in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent most of my adult life in the diplomatic profession. I have learned that the key to successful diplomacy is establishing and maintaining effective relationships. Clear communication is essential.

At the end of the day, it's all about building trust. This applies not only to engagement with foreign governments and societies but also to engagement with Congress.

If confirmed, I will always be available to this committee, its members and staff to discuss and work with the committee in pursuit of our national interests in Kazakhstan.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Krol.

Mr. Mustard.

STATEMENT OF ALLAN P. MUSTARD, OF WASHINGTON, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO TURKMENISTAN

Mr. MUSTARD. Chairman Kaine, it is a great honor to appear before you today, sir, as the nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan. I am humbled by the confidence and the solemn trust bestowed upon me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry by this nomination. And, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your committee to advance America's interests in Turkmenistan.

The United States and Turkmenistan have a growing relationship that spans a broad range of issues, from regional security to energy cooperation to expanding economic engagement. Our nations share an abiding interest in Afghanistan's future, and Turkmenistan has been a strong partner in contributing to Afghanistan's stabilization and economic development, including by permitting humanitarian overflights for our military.

Boeing and GE are just two examples of American companies that have experienced great success in the Turkmen market, and I believe there are many more opportunities to expand our commercial relations.

However, our bilateral relationship is constrained by significant human rights concerns, because the government seeks to exert control over the lives of its citizens. If confirmed, I will work actively with the government to address the full range of human rights issues, including limitations on freedom of movement, freedom of expression, undue restrictions on religious practice, reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, and torture of prisoners. I believe that the sign of a mature bilateral relationship is one where we can have frank, open discussion with our counterparts on issues where we disagree. And, if confirmed, I will ensure that we maintain a constructive dialogue with the Government of Turkmenistan across the full spectrum of issues, even these tough ones.

The United States has made clear to Turkmenistan our enduring support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the administration has also emphasized that U.S. interest in the region is long-term. Turkmenistan has been an important contributor to Afghanistan's rebirth, providing discounted electricity, housing, hospitals, and other forms of humanitarian aid to its neighbor. Turkmenistan is also making major investments in infrastructure that will connect Afghanistan to the region and open its economy to Western markets. If confirmed, I will encourage Turkmenistan to continue to provide all possible support to Afghanistan.

As Turkmenistan seeks to diversify distribution of its significant natural gas reserves, the administration continues to encourage Turkmenistan to move forward with the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India, or TAPI, Pipeline, which could strengthen economic ties between Central and South Asia. U.S. firms have the experience needed to put the Galkynysh gas field, which would sup-

ply the TAPI Pipeline, into production. If confirmed, I would use my decades of experience in overseas commercial advocacy to support American companies in their efforts to invest in energy projects in Turkmenistan and, likewise, work with the top levels of government in Ashgabat to ensure their clear understanding of international energy projects and markets.

As noted earlier, the United States has a growing commercial relationship with Turkmenistan, and American companies are active across a growing range of sectors of the Turkmen economy, including energy, agriculture, and civil aviation. If confirmed, I will apply my more than 30 years of analytical, marketing, and trade policy expertise to advancing the interests of U.S. firms. I will also use my experience with Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization to encourage Turkmenistan also to join the WTO.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent 20 of my 29 years in the Foreign Service at U.S. missions overseas. Through my experiences abroad, I have come to believe that we make our greatest impact on a country through direct engagement with its people. My first job for the U.S. Government was as a Russian-speaking exhibition guide in the U.S.S.R., explaining American culture and our way of life to citizens of a one-party state with state-controlled media and a command economy. Later, as an agricultural officer, I was privileged to have opportunities to drive deep into the hinterlands of Russia, Mexico, Syria, and other countries, both to observe local crop conditions and to talk to local residents about America and our democratic form of government. These experiences proved to me the value of outreach at the grassroots level. Public diplomacy programs, educational exchanges, cultural programming, and engagement through American Corner libraries embody and convey our most cherished values and build enduring people-to-people ties that are the foundation for so much of what we do. In a country like Turkmenistan, which remains one of the most closed societies in the world, public diplomacy efforts can have an outsized impact. I will make these programs a priority, if confirmed as Ambassador.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I know that, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will ultimately be responsible for the safety and welfare of my Embassy colleagues and their families in a remote part of the world. Their safety and the safety of all Americans in Turkmenistan will be my top priority.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mustard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALLAN P. MUSTARD

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan. I am humbled by the confidence and solemn trust bestowed upon me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry by this nomination, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you to advance America's interests in Turkmenistan.

The United States and Turkmenistan have a growing relationship that spans a broad range of issues, from regional security to energy cooperation, to expanding economic engagement. Our nations share an abiding interest in Afghanistan's future, and Turkmenistan has been a strong partner in contributing to Afghanistan's stabilization and economic development, including by permitting humanitarian overflights for our military. Boeing and GE are just two examples of American companies that have experienced great success in the Turkmen market, and I believe there are many more opportunities to expand our commercial relations.

However, our bilateral relationship is constrained by significant human-rights concerns because the government seeks to exert control over the lives of its citizens. If confirmed, I will work actively with the government to address the full range of human-rights issues, including limitations on freedom of movement, freedom of expression, undue restrictions on religious practice, reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, and torture of prisoners. I believe that the sign of a mature bilateral relationship is one where we can have frank, open discussion with our counterparts on issues where we disagree and, if confirmed, I will ensure that we maintain a constructive dialog with the Government of Turkmenistan across the full spectrum of issues, even these tough ones.

The United States has made clear to Turkmenistan our enduring support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity and the administration has also emphasized that U.S. interest in the region is long term. Central Asia stands at the crossroads of the New Silk Road, connecting Asian and European markets, and Afghanistan is integral to the effort to strengthen the region through economic cooperation. Turkmenistan has been an important contributor to Afghanistan's rebirth, providing discounted electricity, housing, hospitals, and other forms of humanitarian aid to its neighbor. Turkmenistan is also making major investments in infrastructure that will connect Afghanistan to the region and open its economy to Western markets. If confirmed, I will encourage Turkmenistan to continue to provide all possible support to Afghanistan.

As Turkmenistan seeks to diversify distribution of its significant natural gas reserves, the administration continues to encourage Turkmenistan to move forward with the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India, or "TAPI," pipeline which could strengthen economic ties between Central and South Asia. U.S. firms have the experience and expertise needed to put the Galkynysh gas field, which would supply the TAPI pipeline, into production. If confirmed, I would use my decades of experience in overseas commercial advocacy to support American companies in their efforts to invest in energy projects in Turkmenistan and, likewise, work with the top levels of the government in Ashgabat to ensure their clear understanding of international energy projects and markets.

As noted earlier, the United States has a growing commercial relationship with Turkmenistan and American companies are active across a growing range of sectors of the Turkmen economy, including energy, agriculture and civil aviation. If confirmed, I will apply my more than 30 years of analytical, marketing and trade policy expertise to advancing the interests of U.S. firms. I will also use my experience with Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization to encourage Turkmenistan also to join the WTO.

I have spent 20 of my 29 years in the Foreign Service at U.S. missions overseas. Through my experiences abroad, I have come to believe that we make our greatest impact on a country through direct engagement with its people. My first job for the U.S. Government was as a Russian-speaking exhibition guide in the U.S.S.R., explaining American culture and our way of life to citizens of a one-party state with state-controlled media and a command economy. Later, as an agricultural officer, I was privileged to have opportunities to drive deep into the hinterlands of Russia, Mexico, Turkey, Syria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and other countries, both to observe local crop conditions and to talk to local residents about America and our democratic form of government. These experiences showed me the value of outreach at the grassroots level. Public diplomacy programs—educational exchanges, cultural programming, and engagement through American Corner libraries—embody and convey our most cherished values, and build enduring people-to-people ties that are the foundation for so much of what we do. In a country like Turkmenistan, which remains one of the most closed societies in the world, public diplomacy efforts can have an outsized impact. I will make these programs a priority if confirmed as Ambassador.

Finally, I know that, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will ultimately be responsible for the safety and welfare of my Embassy colleagues and their families in a remote part of the world. Their safety, and the safety of all Americans in Turkmenistan, will be my top priority.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Pressman.

STATEMENT OF DAVID PRESSMAN, OF NEW YORK, NOMINEE TO BE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR; ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. PRESSMAN. Chairman Kaine, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for this opportunity and for their confidence in me.

I would like, if I could, to briefly acknowledge the members of my family, who are spread out across the country from San Diego to New York watching this hearing. In particular, my twin boys, Conrad and Ezra, who are 18 months old, who are at home in New York with my partner, Daniel. They are the lights of my lives. And when you have twins, you are constantly exercising your multilateral diplomacy muscles at all times. [Laughter.]

Mr. Chairman, I have dedicated my professional life to public service at the State Department under two Presidents, as a human rights advocate and attorney, and as an Assistant Secretary at the Department of Homeland Security. I served in the Multilateral Affairs Directorate of the National Security Council, and, since last fall, have served as the counselor to Ambassador Power at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. I have had the chance to work with, around, and for the U.N. I have seen both its promise and its success, as well as its failures and its shortcomings. I have looked into the eyes of displaced and desperate people who counted on protection from nearby U.N. peacekeepers, but who were instead left to fend for themselves. I have also seen, however, the U.N. accomplish the seemingly impossible; deliver vaccines, despite government obstruction, to those who would otherwise perish; families evacuated from aerial bombardments that would otherwise have killed them.

From its founding almost 70 years ago, the U.N.'s record has been a mixed one. The organization is far from the panacea that some of its most fervent backers hoped it would become, nor is it the failure its most ardent opponents feared. Its record is truly mixed. It is both indispensable and it is flawed. But, it can advance our interests; and, as such, we must lead it, and we must reform it.

As our lives and our world become increasingly interconnected, so, too, do the threats to our security and liberty. Terrorists, proliferators, aggressors, cyber warriors, criminals, traffickers, and peddlers of repression do not respect borders. In responding to them, our efforts must transcend borders, as well. And, while no country can lead as effectively as ours can, it is not America's job to police every problem, to solve every crisis. That burden must be shared. And the United Nations, with strong and assertive American leadership, can help us protect our interests and promote international peace and security while more equitably distributing the burden for doing so.

If confirmed, I would be honored to join Ambassador Power in her determined work to make the U.N. more responsible, effective, and efficient. That means ensuring U.N. peacekeeping missions are well designed, properly resourced, and responsibly led. It means ensuring that peacekeepers who are supposed to be out patrolling and protecting civilians are not instead hunkering down on their bases. It means ensuring budget discipline, increasing transparency, and making sure that those who seek to report abuse in the U.N. system can do so without fear of retribution. It means ensuring that we live up to the spirit of the U.N.'s own charter by putting an end to the campaign of bigotry and discrimination directed against the state of Israel at the U.N. It means ensuring that voices of liberty and freedom are not muffled by noises of repression and extremism at the U.N. We can, and we should, make the U.N. work to advance our interests and security.

Because of U.S. leadership today, U.N.-backed and African Union-led peacekeepers are playing important roles in repelling terrorist organizations operating in Somalia while U.N. peacekeepers are helping stabilize northern Mali against the threat posed by al-Qaeda-affiliated and other extremist groups. Because of U.S. leadership, the U.N. is on the front lines of preventing regional instability by trying to end conflict and curb suffering in Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Because of U.S. leadership, the United Nations helped lift Cote d'Ivoire out of the arms of a strongman intent on defying the democratic will of Ivoirians.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, let me just say that I believe we can, and we should, use the United Nations to advance our security, protect our interests, and promote our values, and that, by so doing, we can make the world a safer, more just, and more humane place.

It is to those ends that I pledge my best efforts, if confirmed. And it is with gratitude that I thank you and the members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. And, of course, I would be pleased to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pressman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID PRESSMAN

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for this opportunity and for their confidence in me.

I would like briefly to acknowledge members of my family who are spread out across our country from San Diego to New York watching this hearing.

I have dedicated my professional life to public service—at the State Department under two Presidents, as a human rights advocate and attorney, and as an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. I served in the Multilateral Affairs Directorate of the National Security Council and, since last fall, have been Counselor to Ambassador Power at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

I have had a chance to work with, around, and for the U.N. I have seen both its promise and its success; as well as its failures and its shortcomings. I have looked into the eyes of displaced and desperate people who counted on protection from nearby U.N. peacekeepers, but who were instead left to fend for themselves. I have also seen, however, the U.N. accomplish the seemingly impossible: deliver vaccines despite government obstruction to those who would otherwise perish; families evacuated from aerial bombardments that would otherwise have killed them.

From its founding almost 70 years ago, the U.N.'s record has been a mixed one; the organization is far from the panacea that some of its most fervent backers hoped it would become, nor is it the failure its most ardent opponents feared. Its record is truly mixed. It is both indispensable and it is deeply flawed. But it can advance our interests, and as such we must lead it and we must reform it.

As our lives and our world become increasingly interconnected, so too do the threats to our security and liberty. Terrorists, proliferators, aggressors, cyber warriors, criminals, traffickers, and peddlers of repression do not respect borders. In responding to them, our efforts must transcend borders as well. While no country can lead as effectively as we can, it is not America's job to police every problem, to solve every crisis. That burden must be shared; and the United Nations, with strong and assertive American leadership, can help us to protect our interests and promote international peace and security, while more equitably distributing the burden for doing so.

If confirmed, I would be honored to join Ambassador Power in her determined work to make the U.N. more responsible, effective, and efficient. That means ensuring U.N. peacekeeping missions are well-designed, properly resourced, and responsibly led. It means ensuring that peacekeepers who are supposed to be out patrolling and protecting civilians are not instead hunkering down on their bases. It means ensuring budget discipline, increasing transparency, and making sure that those who seek to report abuse in the U.N. system can do so without fear of retribution. It means ensuring that we live up to the spirit of the U.N.'s own Charter by putting an end to the campaign of bigotry and discrimination directed against the State of Israel at the U.N. It means ensuring that voices of liberty and freedom are not muffled by the noises of repression and extremism at the U.N.

We can and we should make the U.N. work to advance our interests and our security. Because of U.S. leadership, today, U.N.-backed and African Union-led peacekeepers are playing important roles in repelling terrorist organizations operating in Somalia, while U.N. peacekeepers are helping stabilize northern Mali against the threat posed by al-Qaeda-affiliated and other extremist groups. Because of U.S. leadership, the U.N. is on the front lines of preventing regional instability by trying to end conflict and curb suffering in Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Because of U.S. leadership, the United Nations helped lift Cote d'Ivoire out of the arms of a strongman intent on defying the democratic will of Ivoirians.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, let me just say that I believe we can and should use the United Nations to advance our security, protect our interests, and promote our values; and that by so doing, we can make the world a safer, more just, and more humane place.

It is to those ends that I pledge my best efforts, if confirmed, and it is with gratitude that I thank you and the members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Pressman.

Ambassador Bernicat.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT, OF NEW JERSEY, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Ambassador BERNICAT. Mr. Chairman and members of the staff, I am honored to appear before you today. I would like to sincerely thank the President and the Secretary of State for the trust and the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce Kathryn Bloom White and Luther White, my sister and brother-in-law, and Thomas Darby, a dear friend with whom my sister and I share a proud Jersey Shore upbringing. Not here today, my sons, Sumit Nicolaus and Sunil Christopher, hail from the subcontinent, and, like their father, Olivier, and me, have enthusiastically called the world our classroom.

It is an honor to be nominated to serve the United States in such a strategically important country at such a critical time for our bi-

lateral relationship. As the world's eighth-largest country by population and third-largest Muslim majority nation, Bangladesh is known for its moderate, secular, pluralistic traditions.

With a consistent annual economic growth rate of roughly 6 percent, Bangladesh aspires to become a middle-income country and is an increasingly important trading partner and destination for U.S. investment. Strategically situated between a growing India and a newly opening Burma, it is well positioned to play a key role in linking South and Southeast Asia.

Labor rights and workplace safety remain a top U.S. priority. We need Bangladeshis to ensure there will be no more heartrending tragedies like the Rana Plaza building collapse or the Tazreen Fashions factory fire. With support from the United States and other international partners, Bangladesh has begun to make progress in transforming its garment sector. If confirmed, I pledge to you that I will actively further our efforts to strengthen respect for labor rights and to improve workplace safety.

Bangladesh is on pace to meet many key U.N. Millennium Development goals. Its development success story spans the past two and a half decades, and the United States has been proud to assist in achieving those successes. Bangladesh is the largest recipient of U.S. assistance in Asia, outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a focus country for three of the President's key development efforts: global health, global climate change, and Feed the Future. The United States also works closely with Bangladesh to combat trafficking in persons, mitigate the threat of natural disasters, strengthen counterterrorism, maritime security, and peacekeeping efforts, and combat trafficking in drugs and arms. I look forward, if confirmed, to continuing robust support for these important partnership efforts.

The strong U.S.-Bangladesh relationship allows us to discuss our differences in a spirit of candor and openness. The United States remains concerned about recent trends in democracy and human rights in Bangladesh. The parliamentary elections of January 5 were undeniably flawed, and Bangladesh's main political parties urgently need to engage in constructive dialogue that leads to a more representative government. We remain gravely concerned, as well, about a tax on religious and ethnic minorities, political violence, and extrajudicial killings. If confirmed, I will work hard to support efforts to promote accountability and strengthen human rights and democracy in Bangladesh. We will work with the government, civil society, and Bangladeshis of all walks of life to ensure an environment that encourages the broadest and fairest participation. I will, if confirmed, passionately advocate policies that enshrine respect for human rights and diversity, room for civil society to flourish, space for the free and peaceful discussion of political differences, and adherence to the rule of law by an independent judiciary.

The United States supports bringing justice to those who committed atrocities in the 1971 war with fair and transparent trials held in accordance with international standards. I will, if confirmed, continue to support the right of civil society organizations to operate independently and to express their views openly. We

also encourage the government to ensure the continued effectiveness of Grameen Bank and protect its unique governance structure.

The most serious responsibility of any chief of mission is to ensure the safety and security of our staff abroad. Our Embassy in Dhaka works closely with Bangladeshi counterparts to ensure protection of personnel and facilities, which will remain a top priority of mine, if confirmed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your strong interest in South Asia and the positive role that the United States can play. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work with you, your committee, and other Members of Congress to advance America's interests in Bangladesh and throughout the region. It would be a great privilege to serve the American people.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bernicat follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I would like to sincerely thank the President and the Secretary of State for the trust and confidence that they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce Kathryn Bloom White and Luther White, my sister and brother-in-law; and Thomas Darby, one of my dearest friends since third grade with whom my sister and I share a proud Jersey Shore upbringing. My sons, Sumit Nicolaus and Sunil Christopher, hail from the subcontinent and have enthusiastically called the world their classroom, as has their father, Olivier Bernicat. It has been my privilege to serve the American people in eight countries across five geographic regions over the past three decades.

It is an honor to be nominated to serve the United States in such a strategically important country, at such a critical time for our bilateral relationship. As the world's eighth-largest country by population and third-largest Muslim-majority nation, Bangladesh is known for its moderate, secular, pluralistic traditions. With an annual economic growth rate of roughly 6 percent each year, Bangladesh aspires to become a middle-income country and is an increasingly important trading partner and destination for U.S. investment. It is strategically situated between a growing India and a newly opening Burma, and therefore is well-positioned to play a key role in linking South and Southeast Asia.

Labor rights and workplace safety in Bangladesh remain a top U.S. priority. We need Bangladeshis to ensure there will be no more heart-rending tragedies like the Rana Plaza building collapse or the Tazreen Fashions factory fire. With support from the United States and other international partners, Bangladesh has begun to make progress in transforming its garment sector. If confirmed, I pledge to you that I will actively further our efforts to strengthen respect for labor rights and to improve workplace safety in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's growth extends beyond its economy, as the country is on pace to meet many key U.N. Millennium Development Goals. It has been a development success story over the past two and half decades and the United States has been proud to assist Bangladesh in achieving these successes. Bangladesh is the largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance in Asia outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a focus country for three of the President's key development efforts: Global Health, Global Climate Change, and Feed the Future. The United States has also worked closely with Bangladesh to combat trafficking in persons and mitigate the threat of natural disasters, to which Bangladesh, due to its geography, is particularly prone. I look forward to the opportunity, if confirmed, to continue to support these important partnership efforts. In addition, if confirmed I look forward to continuing to advance our cooperation on strengthening security, including on issues of counterterrorism, maritime security, peacekeeping and combating trafficking of drugs and arms.

The strong U.S.-Bangladesh relationship allows us to discuss our differences, when they occur, in a spirit of candor and openness. In this context, we have noted the United States remains concerned about recent trends in democracy and human rights in Bangladesh. The Parliamentary elections of January 5 were undeniably flawed, and Bangladesh's main political parties urgently need to engage in construc-

tive dialogue that leads to a more representative government. We remain gravely concerned about attacks on religious and ethnic minorities, political violence, and extrajudicial killings allegedly committed by security forces. If confirmed, I will work hard to support efforts to promote accountability and strengthen human rights and democracy in Bangladesh.

If confirmed, I will work with the government, civil society and Bangladeshis of all walks of life to ensure an environment that encourages the broadest and fairest participation. I will, if confirmed, passionately advocate policies that enshrine peaceful democratic values, including respect for human rights and diversity, room for civil society to flourish, space for the free and peaceful discussion of political differences unmarred by violence, and adherence to the rule of law by an independent judiciary. The United States supports bringing to justice those who committed atrocities in the 1971 war, but those trials should be fair and transparent, and in accordance with international standards. We will also continue to support the right of impressive Bangladeshi civil society organizations to operate independently and to express their views openly, recognizing that such institutions play an important role in any flourishing democracy. We also encourage the government to ensure the continued effectiveness of Grameen Bank and protect its unique governance structure.

The most serious responsibility of any chief of mission is to ensure the safety and security of our staff abroad. Throughout the tense lead-up to and aftermath of the elections this past January, our Embassy in Dhaka worked closely with law enforcement and security counterparts to ensure protection of personnel and facilities, which will remain a top priority if confirmed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your strong interest in South Asia and the positive role the United States can play as our government rebalances to that continent. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work with you, your committee and other Members of Congress to advance America's interests in Bangladesh and throughout the region. It would be a great privilege to represent the people of the United States of America.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

And two prefatory comments and then I will ask questions. And I am actually going to move in a different order than the opening statements. But, I know, first, that all of us probably have half of our mind on this Malaysian Air downing in the Ukraine, and it is just—there is unreported—there is unconfirmed reports that there may have been Americans onboard. Under any circumstance, whether or not, this is a very, very dangerous event, and our prayers are with the victims. But, also, it points out the high stakes of the work that you all are doing. The world is a very, very challenging place right now.

And, second, on a happier note, I want you to each know I was your agent this morning. I was at a nomination hearing for General Dunford to be the next Commandant of the Marine Corps, and I stressed upon the General the importance of the Marine Security Guard Program. The Marine Security Guards who police our embassies are trained at Quantico, in Virginia, and that program is a very important one. It is been growing, in the aftermath of the Accountability Review Board report that came out following the Benghazi tragedy. You each mentioned the security of your people and the safety of your people in your statements, those of you who are assuming mission command, and I know that that Marine Security Guard component is going to be a critical ally as you go forward. And so, I wanted to make sure that General Dunford knew that, of the many issues that we care about with respect to the Corps, the Security Guard Program is an important one. And I think he certainly, himself, understands that importance.

Ambassador Bernicat, if I could begin with you. You mentioned the flaws in the January 2014 election. And there was a boycott of the election by the BNP, and other flaws. How have these flaws,

including that boycott, affected the, sort of, legitimacy of the elections as it is perceived by the Bangladeshi population? And, you know, what can or is being done to try to resolve concerns and, hopefully, plan for better elections in the future?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Thank you, Mr. Senator.

We are very concerned that the current legislature contains the majority of members who ran unopposed because of that boycott. That cannot be a representative body of governance. And so, we have pressed, we continue to press, from the day after the election, for the establishment of an all-inclusive political process that is free and fair, and free especially of violence, because that has been, unfortunately, a hallmark of the last year and a half, as well, in Bangladeshi politics, to have Bangladeshis come to resolution and develop a government that is more representative.

That said, at the same time, we have been able to work effectively—and continue to work effectively with Bangladesh on a whole host of bilateral issues of concern to both our governments and the broader region.

Senator KAINE. Madam Ambassador, how concerned are you about Islamist militancy in Bangladesh today? Is it a major concern or is it an issue that is not too, sort of, imminent and urgent?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Sir, I have spent the majority of my career serving in countries with either Muslim majority populations or significant Muslim populations, and I would simply say, Muslim population or not, absent a free and representative government and economic system that allows for broad participation, the risk for terrorism and the growth of extremism remains high. And so, we can do no more good, I think, in Bangladesh, than to continue the programs we have to counter those trends. Bangladesh is on a very impressive trajectory. Our job should be to ensure that that trajectory continues, in terms of economic growth and reinforcing what is a deep pluralistic tradition within the Bangladeshi people to make sure that extremism does not grow.

Senator KAINE. Let me ask you about a couple of issues of this kind of inclusion. There is a history of inclusion. We want to make sure it continues. You mentioned the Grameen Bank in your testimony—is Dr. Yunus still the subject of government harassment, or not?

Ambassador BERNICAT. He is no longer associated with——

Senator KAINE. Right.

Ambassador BERNICAT [continuing]. Grameen Bank.

Senator KAINE. Right.

Ambassador BERNICAT. And we have made strong representations, and will continue to do so, that a proposed law and any other actions do not undermine a governance board that is run by the members, specifically women. We want to make sure that the legacy that Dr. Yunus has given the world is not undermined, because, of course, we have all benefited from the microfinance model he began there.

Senator KAINE. The Senate has acted recently to pass legislation—we passed a resolution last week, we have passed another resolution this week—dealing with increasing complaints about oppression of religious minorities in different regions of the world. What are we currently doing to protect religious minorities in Ban-

gladesh? And are recent incidents of violence against Hindus part of a larger trend or seen as sort of, you know, unfortunate, but not necessarily a trend?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Well, there has been a general trend of increasing violence—political violence, extrajudicial killings—over the last year and a half. And religious minorities have been among those targeted, but certainly not exclusively targeted.

First and foremost, we have shown a light on this behavior. We bring to the government's attention reports of these acts. We publish them in our reports on human rights and on religious freedom. And we are working with the government, as well as asking the government, to be accountable for these actions, to investigate them and then to bring the perpetrators to justice; again, within the full framework of international standards of justice.

Senator KAINE. I would encourage you, and all of you, in this way. You know, there are—people ask about the influence that America has in the world. And one of the ways we best influence is by being exemplary. And there are a number of areas where we are exemplary. And the religious pluralism of American society, the fact that people can live next door to each other, work together, you know, go to school together—that if they had been in, maybe, original countries of origin, they would be at odds. Instead, in the United States, it works so well. Not that we are without flaws. We have flaws in every area. But, this is really a great example. Journalistic freedom is another example. We often think of these as sort of, you know, kind of soft skills. But, they really need to be held up as beacons in the world, because they are things we should be proud of. And I think we can help other nations embrace religious pluralism, as well. And I would encourage all of you in that.

In the past, the military has played an active role in Bangladeshi politics, kind of depending upon perceived threats either to them or the threats they perceive in the country. What are the prospects that the military will sort of be intervening in to the political process in the future, as you see it today?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Right. Of course, the Bangladeshi military has a long and proud tradition. We have a very active security assistance program. Bangladeshis have—in fact, 88 Bangladeshis have lost their lives around the world in peacekeeping operations in 25 different countries. We continue to work and train with the Bangladeshis to reinforce human rights, to impress upon the government that the government intervening—excuse me—the military intervening undermines the democratic process, that a true and republican military is the best defense, if you will, for a democracy. And we will continue to do that. There have been some troubling trends, as you are aware, of military involvement in efforts to address counterterrorism and other violence, domestically.

Senator KAINE. Madam Ambassador, we had a hearing yesterday in the committee about the United States-India relationship, and the timing was really to coincide with the beginning of Prime Minister Modi's tenure. There was a lot of discussion in the hearing about the India-Pakistan relationship, but not questions, really, about the India-Bangladesh relationship. Could you talk a little bit about that relationship, especially in light of the new government in India?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Yes, thank you for that question. I have worked in or on India, dating back to 1988, actually. And it is refreshing to see that Prime Minister Modi has reached out to all of India's neighbors as his first acts. And I think that those are very positive signs.

We share with India a desire for a region that is better and more interconnected, because it is the least interconnected region, particularly from an economic standpoint. And we share, also, with India a desire to see Bangladesh be a strong pluralistic democracy that is free of political violence and that, of course, is stable. And so, we work constantly with India, as well as our other diplomatic partners to that end. And I think Prime Minister Modi's early actions are very encouraging in that regard.

Senator KAINE. They certainly are encouraging, in terms of his own actions; and they were received that way in Bangladesh, as well.

Ambassador BERNICAT. Yes. Yes, absolutely.

Senator KAINE. The last question I would like to ask you is—you mention in your testimony the really significant and—tragedy in Rana Plaza last year, and the other factory, as well. What has the—and we had a hearing on this topic, probably about a year ago on this committee, at Senator Menendez's instance. What progress has been made in the last year toward addressing some of these workplace safety, building standard, and labor rights issues?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Out of the most horrific garment-industry tragedy ever in history has arisen an extraordinary interagency and international program, or set of programs, to address both worker safety and worker rights, in terms of the ability to form unions and to have their grievances heard. In the last year, we have come together as an interagency to support these efforts within Bangladesh, and especially—I think we have to give a nod to the private sector—there are over 150 unions that have been registered with the government, and there have been over 20 factories that have been closed due to imminent danger of physical safety. The government has opened a public Web site, although it has not yet uploaded the data, regarding the inspection of factories, which is ongoing. We are supporting efforts, as is the private sector, to hire and train more inspectors. And we will continue to press in all of these areas.

Senator KAINE. And, Ambassador Bernicat, when you mention the private sector, that includes U.S. companies have been actively engaged in this effort?

Ambassador BERNICAT. Yes, absolutely, and we have worked together with the International Labor Organization, as well.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you very much.

I will now move to Ambassador Krol.

I have had a number of meetings, both in the Foreign Relations context—I recently met with the Kazak Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Umarov, and I have also met with Kazakhstan military officials as they have visited us in our Armed Services portfolio. If you would—your background and work in this region is pretty important—talk about, to the extent that you have—you know, you are sort of aware of this—how have Russian-Kazak rela-

tionships been affected by all the controversy recently in the Ukraine?

Ambassador KROL. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I believe that, like all countries that had been all part of the one country, the Soviet Union, they are all looking and watching as—what is going on with Russia and Ukraine very intently. And Kazakhstan is one of them. Kazakhstan has a particular relationship with Russia, a long border, about 20 percent of its population are Russian-speaking up in the north. They are members of a Eurasian Economic Union, Customs Union, as well as the Collective Security Treaty Organization that they have. And so, they are very intimately concerned about developments in that region. And I believe they do believe that there should be a peaceful resolution with full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. And that is something that, I think, throughout its own independent existence, Kazakhstan has been particularly concerned about maintaining for itself. It exists in a very important geostrategic place, between Russia, China, and then, to the south, the rest of Central Asia, as well, and it wants to maintain very constructive economic and political security relationships with its neighbors, but based on the principle of respect for its territorial integrity and its independence. And that is something that, as an American policy, that we have been supporting ever since we recognized the independence of these former republics of the Soviet Union. And we were the first to recognize Kazakhstan's independence.

So, yes, they are very concerned, and hope that this will resolve itself in a peaceful way before their own reasons of their own population, but for the entire region.

Senator KAINE. What is the current state of the Kazakh-Russian relationship?

Ambassador KROL. Well, as I said, that they have a strategic partnership, and they——

Senator KAINE. In these organizations that you mentioned.

Ambassador KROL. That is right, that most recently they joined a—created a Customs Union with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, and which has been turned into a—an Economic Union that will—basically, it creates a—one customs space and—with tariffs, and allowing, basically, a one market of the three countries that are members of this union. So, they are very much entwined with that. And, as I said, they are also members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization that—of the former states of the Soviet Union, and Kazakhstan is a member of that, and they are engaged in maneuvers and have a close security relationship, as well as in the air defense of the—this space is also included in the Russia-Kazakhstan airspace area, as well. So, it is a very close relationship and one, however, that is—they feel has to be based upon respect for their independence—political independence and territorial integrity.

Senator KAINE. Kazakhstan has been a very strong partner of the United States in all the work that we have done in Afghanistan—military partner; it is been of significant assistance in a northern route to retrograde personnel and material. Kazakhstan

has done a significant job in the education of Afghani students, college students, and has done that pretty significantly.

What—do the Kazakh Government have concerns about the post-2014 transition of the U.S. role in Afghanistan? And how could we work to allay concerns, if they have them?

Ambassador KROL. Yes, Mr. Chairman, that—even though Kazakhstan does not have a border with Afghanistan, nevertheless, they and other countries in the Central Asian region are quite concerned about developments in Afghanistan, because it can affect their security. They would not like to see Afghanistan fail, and they would not like to see it to become a platform for extremism or terrorism that can affect their populations and their security. And that is why Kazakhstan and other countries in the region have been particularly supportive of efforts to stabilize Afghanistan politically as well as economically, and that will continue.

We keep a very close consultative relationship with Kazakhstan and other countries in the region to keep them abreast of our policies and what we are doing in Afghanistan, and in emphasizing the point that we are not abandoning Afghanistan, that we are transitioning to another relationship with Afghanistan that is equally important and that will be even more engaged with Afghanistan in order to see it succeed and stabilize as a unitary state. And that is what countries like Kazakhstan are interested in hearing from us, and not just hearing from us, but seeing that that is the case, but also partnering with the United States and other countries to ensure that Afghanistan will become and remain a stable state that can be integrated into the larger economy.

Senator KAINE. What role is the United States playing in any current efforts to try to encourage Kazakhstan to supply energy to Europe via the Caspian pipeline system?

Ambassador KROL. Well, the—most of Kazakhstan's energy resources go out through a pipeline that goes mostly through Russia, and then there is another line that goes through China, but they have also established a line that does go through to Turkmenistan and also to build up the port of Aktau on the Caspian Sea, which could be used for sending liquified natural gas across the Caspian in order to reach into the pipeline that goes through the Caucasus. There are—they can also do tankers and things of that nature, as well, as they are developing the fields that are in the northern Caspian region. So, that is another part of their own desire to diversify their—as it were, their exports of their energy resources to—through the Caucasus, across the Caspian, as well as in the more traditional directions that they have had.

Senator KAINE. I think you mentioned in your testimony the bid of Kazakhstan for membership in the WTO. Could you talk a little bit about the current status of that bid?

Ambassador KROL. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Kazakhstan does wish to become a member of the WTO. The United States wishes to assist it to become a member of the WTO. And there have been very intensive technical discussions between the United States and Kazakhstan on their WTO accession. The fact that Kazakhstan is a member of the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union has added some technical issues that have to be resolved, particularly on tariffs and on sanitary—

phytosanitary, that is—international standards that we are working on with Kazakhstan. And so, it is a very active issue that we are working on with the Kazakhstani authorities. And we hope that this can be concluded relatively soon.

Senator KAINE. Could you offer kind of a current status of human rights or democratization issues in Kazakhstan? Particularly, I asked Ambassador Bernicat about religious freedom. I would like your thoughts on that, as well.

Ambassador KROL. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

That the issues of human rights and religious freedom and the like are issues that have been of concern of the United States in Kazakhstan, not that this is an area that is an area of religious violence and the like; it is just the matter of encouraging greater openness in—and space in their society and in their laws in order to recognize that people could have choices in their religious beliefs and not to be so repressed in being able to express their religious beliefs, as well as their political beliefs, as well as their—as well as any of the beliefs and choices that people would have in a free and democratic society.

I mean, coming out of this 70-some years of being part of the Soviet system, it is a very difficult transition of the mindset that the people can be trusted to exercise responsibility along with the freedoms that they would have. And this is an area that we, the United States Government and our agencies, as well as American civil society, wish to work very constructively with Kazakhstan in developing this atmosphere of greater space for civil society and respect for religious diversity, as well as diversity across the board.

And, you know, if I am confirmed, this would be certainly a very important element of my work in Kazakhstan, and it is, again, a matter of trying to develop a constructive relationship on these issues, and to move from concern—expressing of concern to really seeing developments that are effective, you know, on the ground and affecting people's lives and opening up this space for civil society, for political pluralism and religious pluralism.

Senator KAINE. I know, in 2011, Kazakhstan passed a religious registration law requiring the registration of religious organizations if they have certain membership at a local level or at a national level. And the justification asserted was a concern about religious extremism. Is there a significant challenge of religious extremism as destabilizing to the Kazakh Government, in your view?

Ambassador KROL. Well, right now I would say no, because it is not an area that there has been a great deal of religiously based violence. I think they are looking at a preventative strategy of trying to prevent influences that could lead to religious extremism. There have been some unfortunate examples of suicide bombings and related events in Kazakhstan in the recent past, and I think that has caused them to look at ways how they can deal with this issue so it does not become a greater issue in their society. And our encouragement is not to repress, but it is basically how to deal with the issue of preventing violent extremism by basically allowing greater openness for people to express themselves peacefully in their religious beliefs, as well as in their secular beliefs. And so, that is an ongoing dialogue and activity that we have with Uzbekistan—with Kazakhstan because of the importance of this for

the future to prevent this situation of developing, where there would be more homegrown religious extremism and violence in their own society.

Senator KAINE. We see this same, you know, delicate balancing everywhere in the world. The concerns about terrorism and extremism, you know, often—and often in a legitimate way—create a need to try to control, a bit. But, if you do that too much, then you may actually create the self-fulfilling prophecy that a feeling of repression by the government can actually make these problems worse. And, you know, trying to assist in challenging circumstances in this is not an easy balance to strike.

But, thank you for your testimony.

Ambassador KROL. Absolutely.

Senator KAINE. I will now move to Mr. Mustard, with respect to Turkmenistan.

The administration has been pretty positive in its description of Turkmenistan as I—the quote that I saw was "an enabler for regional stability," acknowledging the importance of economic and humanitarian support, and also support, as you testified, of the overflights to Afghanistan. How do you see Turkmenistan's role changing in the region as we enter into a new phase of our involvement in Afghanistan?

Mr. MUSTARD. Thank you for that question, Mr. Chairman.

I see Turkmenistan becoming somewhat more important than it already has been because of the role that it has in linking Afghanistan to Europe and to other parts of Asia, looking at what Turkmenistan is doing, in terms of developing a railroad that will establish links between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Afghanistan connecting to the main line going up into Kazakhstan, also the gas pipelines that will allow Central Asia to link to Europe as well as to other parts of Asia, particularly South Asia. And then the New Silk Road Initiative that would—really the biggest manifestation of that, Mr. Chairman, is the TAPI Pipeline that would have with it not only a gas pipeline, but potentially also a road network—railroad network that would really open up Central Asia, including Afghanistan, to new markets in South Asia.

So, I think Turkmenistan will become more important, not less important.

Senator KAINE. Can you talk a little bit about the progress either—on both the TAPI Pipeline, but also on any efforts to look at more delivery of energy to Europe?

Mr. MUSTARD. On TAPI, the good news is that we do have the intergovernmental agreement in place. The bad news is that it seems to have stalled, at this point. So, one of my priorities, if I am confirmed as Ambassador, will be to sit down with the Turkmenistan Government and get TAPI moving again.

On the Trans-Caspian Pipeline, that is also a priority to try to get the connection between Turkmenbashi Port and Baku Port so that we can start delivering gas through that pipeline, as well. These will all be priorities.

Senator KAINE. I will ask you the same question I asked Ambassador Krol, which is, the events in Ukraine, for a country that has been part of the Soviet Union in the past—I know that they—that—you know, that that has to be a huge factor right now in

Turkmen politics—what is the current status of the relationship between Turkmenistan and Russia? And how is the Government of Turkmenistan looking at these unfortunate events?

Mr. MUSTARD. The Turkmen Ambassador to Moscow made a statement, 2 days ago, to the effect that Turkmenistan considers Russia to be a strategic partner, but does not intend to join the Eurasian Union. So, it will maintain its policy of positive neutrality and will not join into security agreements or multilateral economic agreements.

In terms of the events in Ukraine, the United States Government has made it clear to Turkmenistan that we support Turkmenistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as a matter of policy, and that will not change.

Senator KAINE. And talk a little bit about the current relationship between Turkmenistan and China, if you would.

Mr. MUSTARD. China is now Turkmenistan's largest trading partner and is the largest consumer of Turkmenistan's natural gas. And, conversely, China is a very large investor in infrastructure in Turkmenistan, not only in natural gas and in other fossil energy, but in other infrastructure, as well. So, it is a very large and growing relationship.

Senator KAINE. And, finally, the relationship with Iran. That is also one of the largest markets for Turkmenistan. Has Turkmenistan generally abided by the Iran sanctions regime that we have put in place?

Mr. MUSTARD. Yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. That is—thank you for that.

Talk about current human rights, kind of, status issues in Turkmenistan, any that you—will cause you concern or would be areas of priority as you begin this position.

Mr. MUSTARD. The United States Government is very deeply concerned about the status of human rights in Turkmenistan. And, as I said in my opening statement, we believe that a mature relationship allows for a dialogue about these human rights issues.

Turkmenistan is a party to international conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture. And we will continue to call upon Turkmenistan to observe the conditions of these agreements and to ensure that all persons on its territory enjoy the civil rights that are under these conventions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mustard, I appreciate it.

Mr. Pressman, your testimony about the U.N. being both necessary and always vexing was very true. It is an organization that would not exist, had the United States not shown leadership in creating it, even in the mid-1930s, as the League of Nations was collapsing. President Roosevelt realized there would need to be a successor and started to lay the plans for it before World War II delayed the plans. But, I still consider it a real mark of pride that it was America that recognized that we really needed to create such an institution.

That said, for reasons that you have described, and others, we often scratch our head about things that the U.N. does. And so, I appreciate your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Maybe just a couple of questions about it. One of the things that is been the most discouraging, in this committee, has been the repeated votes by China and Russia in the Security Council to block what we consider as necessary action in Syria. Last week was a good week. After a resolution promoting cross-border humanitarian aid that was passed in February generally had not produced significant result, because the aid was only to be allowed at the approval of the Syrian Government, the Security Council, last week, did a resolution that called for the cross-border delivery of aid whether or not the Syrian Government allowed it. That was a positive step. And the fact that Russia and China voted for that after blocking similar resolutions in the past was important.

But, it does raise the question about Security Council reform. And I know there have been a number of, you know, thoughts and ideas thrown around about reforming the Security Council. What is the current status of reform efforts? And what are your thoughts about what our policy should be with respect to reform?

Mr. PRESSMAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question.

The United States believes that the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole needs to—as one of the central pillars of the international security architecture, needs to reflect the changing world that we live in. As such, with respect to the Security Council, the administration has articulated the view that we are open, in principle, to a modest expansion of the permanent and nonpermanent membership of the Council. That said, with respect to the permanent members of the Council, it is critical that we consider their capacity to meaningfully contribute to maintenance of international peace and security. We do not think it would be a productive exercise to open up the veto arrangement. And these conversations are sensitive, and they continue in New York, but they are important to have.

Senator KAINE. Let me ask you about one area. I mean, the United States has been a huge financial supporter of the U.N., but one area where we have been falling behind is in some of our peacekeeping dues payments. Is that affecting our ability to pursue, or effectively pursue, our interests at the U.N., or is that issue of the dues for peacekeeping activities not really a factor in the influence that we have?

Mr. PRESSMAN. Mr. Chairman, the ability of the United States to lead at the U.N. is directly tethered to our meeting our bills and our responsibilities. We—by virtue of meeting our—of not going into arrears in areas like peacekeeping, we have managed to sustain and maintain greater leverage over troop contributors, over the way peacekeeping missions are shaped, ensuring that they are responsible and that they are effective. So, it is critical.

Now, underlying the question, I recognize, is a concern that many members of the Senate have with respect to how peacekeeping budgets are going up and up and up. And, if I could, Mr. Chairman, is—just reflect for a moment that we were making increasing demands on the U.N. peacekeeping system, just in the last several years, with several new missions that we, the United States, has turned to the United Nations, because we see peacekeeping as an effective and cost-effective way to advance our own national security interests around the world. That said, we also be-

lieve that the assessment scales under which these things are calculated—and it is complicated with respect to the regular budget and its relationship to the peacekeeping budget—needs to reflect the changing world in which we live in, as well. And these are negotiated at every—3-year intervals. And, as we approach the next round of negotiations in 2015, one of the things that Ambassador Power seeks to do—and, if confirmed, I would certainly support her—is try to ensure that the way that we are assessed reflects the realities of a changing economy.

Senator KAINE. How confident are you that the peacekeeping mission to the Central African Republic, which I guess will deploy in September, will have the resources that it needs to carry out the stabilization and civilian protection missions of that peacekeeping effort?

Mr. PRESSMAN. Chairman, the situation in the Central African Republic is grave. It is extremely serious. Ambassador Power has now visited the Central African Republic twice. I was honored to travel with her on one occasion there. It is in—because of U.S. leadership, we—and because of a multiplicity of commands that were on the ground—you had a African Union contingent, you had an EU contingent, you had a French contingent—and because of the gravity of the situation and U.S. leadership, we decided to go ahead and authorize a U.N. peacekeeping operation, as your question reflects.

Your question also reflects an awareness that it is hard, given the increasing demands on peacekeeping, to find the right enablers and the right troops, particularly in a situation like CAR, where there really is very little infrastructure that preexists to support the deployment of troops. So, everything is having to be built. We are—as recently as this week, the Security Council was briefed on this. This is something we are tracking daily. Ambassador Power has committed that, on September 15, when MISCA, as it is known, the African Union troop, transitions to MINUSCA, the U.N. peacekeeping operation, that we are in as good a position as possible. I would—it would not be fair to say I have great confidence that we are going to be where we need to be on September 15, but we are trending in the right direction.

Senator KAINE. And let me ask about another one, in Africa, the importance of U.N. efforts to assist displaced civilians who are seeking refuge in U.N. compounds in South Sudan. Talk a little bit about the current status there.

Mr. PRESSMAN. It is—Senator, thank you—the situation in South Sudan is similarly horrendous and deeply concerning. I mean, at present, we have approximately 100,000 internally displaced persons who are hunkered down on UNMIS, the U.N. peacekeeping operation there, compounds, because they fear for their lives if they leave. In addition to that 100,000, we have approximately a million other IDPs floating about South Sudan, we have a famine warning that was—just went into place, which means that those million IDPs are about to become a million hungry IDPs.

So, the—what the U.S. has done with respect to the South—the mission in South Sudan is really important, which is, as the crisis emerged—the most recent crisis emerged, at the end—December of last year—we essentially reformed, almost entirely, giving it—al-

most doubling its authorized troop ceiling and trimming back its pretty expansive mandate to focus almost exclusively on protection of civilians and monitoring human rights abuses.

That said, Senator, I think it is clear, to you and to anyone who looks at the situation, that fundamentally the parties—President Kiir and Riek Machar—need to actually live up to their Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and perform the responsibilities that they have said that they would. And until that happens, we are going to be living in a very dire situation, and the lives of civilians in South Sudan will continue to hang in jeopardy.

Senator KAINE. How important is it, in your view, that the U.S. continue its support for the U.N. mission and also the French forces in northern Mali?

Mr. PRESSMAN. Senator, it is critical. What—the Mali MINUSMA, the U.N. mission in Mali, is an excellent example of the United States using U.N. peacekeeping to help protect our direct national security interests. We have AQIM elements floating around in northern Mali. We have a situation where the Government of Mali needs the international community's help. There is, similarly—somewhat related to CAR, there is a division of labor, so to speak, within Mali, in which you have Operation French—the French Operation Serval, which is taking a more offensive counterterrorism approach; MINUSMA, which is trying to hold the large population centers to ensure that they are—they do not become victims to the prey of al-Qaeda-affiliated extremists. And, similarly, you have an EU contingent on the ground that is working to build up the capacity of the Malian Government to deal with this crisis. This is important work, it is hard work, it is dangerous work. We have lost U.N. peacekeepers, including recently, in this effort, but it is one that the United States should—and, if confirmed, I would look forward to the opportunity to continue to—support.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Mr. Pressman, for your answers.

And now, Ms. Ruggles, I will say that Senator Coons really wanted to be here, for you and, to some degree, to pose those last questions to Mr. Pressman, as well. He could not be here today, but, as he waited, he thought, giving you a quicker hearing might be more important to you than waiting until he could come. [Laughter.]

So, I just will say that I am speaking with some passion from Senator Coons, obviously, as well.

Your post is a very important one. You know, one of the—you know, Rwanda has an iconic place in, sort of, our collective memory and thinking about human rights issues in the world, because of the tragedies that occurred there. Now, that creates pressure to do very well, but it also creates a wonderful opportunity. When there have been tragedies such as Rwandans have been impacted by, then positives can also generate, not only attention, but a sense of hopefulness. Well, there may be other tragic or hard situations, but look what is happening. And I like the fact that, in your testimony, you focused on a number of instances—school attendance and things like that—in Rwanda that are real positive news stories. I think it is important that we point those out, because there are other desperate situations in the world, where people would want

to see that situations that were desperate, or more so a number of years ago, are now pointing in the right direction. So, I think part of your task—not that I would advise you how to do your job, but I think part of your task is to shine the spotlight on positives in Rwanda, because I think that has a benefit to the U.S. relationship with Rwanda, but I think it has a broader benefit, as well.

Let me begin with political scenarios in Rwanda. President Kagame's term expires in 2017. What are, sort of, likely political scenarios, post the end of his term?

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Well, the—as you point out, Mr. Chairman—and I thank you for adding me to this hearing, and please thank Senator Coons on my behalf, as well—the second term for President Kagame expires in 2017; two 2-year terms is the term limit in the constitution. And, at this point, it is unclear how that is going to play out. This is the first time that—under this constitution, that they will have had that scenario. And so, one of the things that I will focus on, if confirmed, when I go out there is making sure I am engaging in a broad political dialogue with all the actors, civil society as well as the government, to hear how they are planning for those elections, how they are planning to handle the inevitable contest that happens when you have the—have term limits. And I look forward to having that dialogue, because I think it is an important signal, both for the people of Rwanda, but also for the region.

Senator KAINE. Talk a little bit about how you envision your—division of responsibilities of your working relationship with the U.S. Special Envoy, Russ Feingold, to the DRC in the Great Lakes Region. Have you talked about this challenge? It is not a challenge; it is a great opportunity——

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Absolutely.

Senator KAINE [continuing]. To have you both working on this mission.

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have to say, I have the greatest admiration for former Senator Feingold in his new role as special envoy. I think he has taken a very difficult situation, 18 months ago, when he first came onboard, and really dug in and worked with all of the Ambassadors in the region, as well as all the regional actors, to try and tackle some of the very, very tough issues that are really the underpinning for the continued instability in eastern Congo and throughout the region—the refugee flows, the armed groups. And the inability to build those trust bonds has been a real issue since 1994, since the genocide. And he has taken that head-on. And the fact that he is now working with all the governments on implementing—truly implementing the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework Agreement that was signed in February last year, dealing with the FDLR. They have now agreed to a 6-month timeframe, with a 3-month checkpoint half way through that timeframe, to begin the process of disarmament of the FDLR. Now, that has to be taken seriously by all governments, but, if they are—if we are able, all of us collectively, to implement that, that will go a long way towards getting rid of the instability, the continued distrust between the governments in the region, of each other, and tackling some of those underlying instability issues, much as the defeat of the M–

23 last year after the U.N. Intervention Brigade was signed off by the U.N. Security Council, has led to a lessening of the violence and an increase in the trust between the various parties. It is far from a perfect world, but he has been doing a terrific job.

I would view my role, if confirmed, out there as being one of supporting his role and working as part of a team, because we are going to need a team approach between myself and all of the colleagues in the region, working with Senator Feingold, if we are going to help the governments of the region build that trust that we need for them to have to then build the economic prosperity that they should be building across those borders, and to be building the cross-border roads and transportation networks that are badly needed to make sure that economic growth actually comes to those regions.

Senator KAINE. One of the themes in all of your testimony, and some of the questions with the four mission chiefs here, proposed mission chiefs, is sort of the space for civil society in the companies—in the countries that you will—where you will serve. There have been some reports that that space has been kind of narrowing in Rwanda. Talk about, kind of, your perspective on that now, and what you believe you can do, as Ambassador, to, you know, in the right pace, a right pace for Rwanda, see that the space opens for civil society participation.

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The existence of a strong, vibrant civil society, including free media, NGOs, watchdog groups, is important and absolutely critical for any democratic society. It is something that we hold dear here, and it is something I have seen in my most recent posting in South Africa, the huge institutional importance of those groups, as well as strong, vibrant political opposition parties to make sure that there is that political dialogue.

And, if I am confirmed, one of the things that I will commit to is working with all the various actors across Rwanda to help encourage that kind of dialogue, because they do have a lot to deal with from their past. A huge amount of distrust from—arising from the genocide, which is still fairly recent, only 20 years—and recognizing that, and helping them think about, "How do you work through that dialogue?"—I would view this as part of my role, but also hearing from everybody their concerns and how they can move forward as they are now turning to the next generation. Their youngest—their younger generation was born after the genocide, and they do not come carrying all of that baggage. Maybe some of it, but not all of it. And helping them figure out how to work through that, I view very much as part of our role, as you said, as an exemplar, the United States being the exemplar to others.

Senator KAINE. One of the things that interests me as I travel for Foreign Relations is the degree to which, in countries where there has been significant sectarian schisms—and the genocide in Rwanda would be the most extreme, certainly more extreme than countries I have visited—but, to what degree in a nation's military are they able to integrate throughout the military, at every level, leadership to, you know, the first day enlisted, a real pluralistic and inclusive sense? How cohesive—are you aware of, sort of, this issue within the military in Rwanda, and their capabilities? But,

in a way, more—I am just kind of more interested in how cohesive the military is across these schisms that still are fresh with many people.

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. Mr. Chairman, I do not have an ethnic breakdown of the military, but what I will tell you is that the Rwandan military and police force have both been very professional, extraordinarily good partners for us. In peacekeeping missions, they have stepped up to the plate in tough places, like CAR, where we were having problems, and come in with the Africa Union mission to stabilize—help stabilize the situation there; similarly in AMISOM in Somalia. And they have been one of the groups that has been the most flexible in saying, "We will join a regional force and then go over to a Blue Hat." And the level of professionalism they have exhibited, and cohesiveness that they have exhibited, has—is really extraordinary.

So, as a cohesive military unit, they work very well together. I would have to get back to you on the ethnic breakdown.

Senator KAINE. No, that is good evidence, though, I mean, if they are able to work together in tough circumstances. If there was a lot of internal morale challenges, that would demonstrate itself in performance. And so, I am happy to hear your perception of their effectiveness in these operations.

Just one last thing, just kind of educate myself. Main strengths and weaknesses to the current Rwandan economy.

Ms. BARKS-RUGGLES. The main strengths and weaknesses. They have a great record of economic growth, but from a very low base. So, keeping that going, and making sure that they are actually taking what has been extraordinary reforms to make themselves open for business, if you will—they are considered number one by the World Bank now in the sub-Saharan Africa, for the ease of doing business—and building upon that and taking that to the next level. So, from a high level of growth from a low base, and turning that into, now, the middle-income country they aspire to be.

One of the areas where they have been really focusing on is Internet technology and renewable energy. We have a $325 million methane gas investment from a U.S. corporation there, and another large renewable energy investment that is going in there. And I think all those are signs that they are taking seriously how to move their economy into the 21st century.

However, 70 percent of their population still depends, at least in large part, on subsistence agriculture for their income. And so, learning how to take that and turn that into a much more market-oriented agricultural economy and pushing entrepreneurship so that people can come off the subsistence farming and start growing those small businesses that grow jobs, is going to be their challenge for the coming two decades.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that testimony.

All you have all demonstrated great competence and professionalism in your answers, very thoughtful answers. And we would be lucky to have all of you, with your expertise, serving in the capacities for which you have been nominated.

Again, I say what I said at the start of the hearing, the opportunity, as a member of the committee, to visit our personnel—Foreign Service personnel abroad, whether it is people on their first

tour or whether it is seasoned professionals like you all are, is always—I always walk away from those, very impressed with the work that is done. And I know a lot of Americans probably think of Foreign Service as just—what a super-glamorous profession. And it has its glamour, and it has its unique opportunities to consider the world your classroom. But, there is also a great degree of sacrifice—moving repeatedly, changing jobs—that is not easy for spouses and kids and other family members and friends. But, the more you know about what our Foreign Service professionals do, the more one comes to admire the quality of the work under the circumstances in which it is performed. So, I want to thank you all for your service.

If members of the committee choose to file additional questions in writing, I will ask them to do that by noon tomorrow; and I will appreciate your responding promptly, should those be filed. We will try to act promptly in the full committee on these nominations.

And again, I thank you.

And, with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AND LETTERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The 2013 State Department Human Rights Reports on Bangladesh notes that disappearances and extrajudicial killings continue to be committed by security forces such as the paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and that human rights violators operate in an atmosphere of impunity. Would you support the establishment of an independent commission:

- To assess the Rapid Action Battalion's performance;
- To identify all those plausibly deemed to be involved in serious violations such as extrajudicial killings who should be excluded from a reformed RAB and prosecuted; and,
- To develop an action plan to transform RAB into an agency that operates within the law and with full respect for international human rights norms?

Answer. If confirmed, I will maintain the U.S. Government's insistence that the Government of Bangladesh hold its security forces accountable for any violations of internationally recognized human rights. I will push the Government of Bangladesh to transform the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) into an agency that operates within the law and with full respect for international human rights. The establishment of an independent commission is one such way to conduct thorough, timely, and credible investigations of all alleged human rights violations and abuses in a manner that is fair and transparent to both the victims and the accused. If Bangladesh moves to create an independent commission, we will support that effort. Meanwhile, I am encouraged by the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh to establish the RAB Internal Enquiries Cell, to train requisite staff as part of a campaign to investigate misconduct and abuses, and to hold members of the RAB accountable for their actions.

Question. Will you commit to consulting regularly with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on your efforts to support labor rights and factory safety in Bangladesh?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our active engagement with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the important issue of labor reform in Bangladesh. I very much appreciate the role this committee plays in joining our efforts to promote U.S. interests and support the people of Bangladesh, particularly in defense of labor rights and worker safety. I value the consultation and cooperation offered by the committee because it strengthens our hand in promoting real and enduring change for workers in Bangladesh. If confirmed, I will invite committee members and staff to visit Bangladesh so we can further collaborate to advance labor rights and safety.

Question. I am concerned about progress on expanding U.S. efforts to assist independent workers' organizations in Bangladesh.

The FY 2014 Appropriations bill states "Bangladesh.—Of the funds appropriated by this act under the heading 'Development Assistance' that are available for assistance for Bangladesh shall be made available for programs to improve labor conditions by strengthening the capacity of independent workers' organizations in Bangladesh's readymade garment, shrimp, and fish export sectors." The conference report language states: "The agreement provides $5,000,000 to improve labor conditions in Bangladesh as described in the Senate report, to be provided through an open and competitive process, and not less than the budget request for democracy and governance programs."

The Senate report states "Bangladesh.—The Committee directs the Secretary of State to prioritize assistance to labor programs in Bangladesh and recommends $5,000,000 to improve labor conditions in Bangladesh's readymade garment, shrimp and fish export sectors. The Committee expects the Department of State and USAID to provide training for workers on understanding and asserting their rights, including by improving the capacity of independent worker organizations. The Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Labor should coordinate efforts to avoid unnecessary overlap and work in consultation with the Government of Bangladesh and the International Labor Organization on an integrated approach."

Last month, USAID told SFRC staff that "USAID's new $5 million labor activity will focus on ready-made garment and shrimp/fish sectors to increase the capacity of workers and improve conditions both in their workplaces and communities by addressing a range of issues, including women workers' safety, union representation, gender-based violence, health care, education, child protection, sanitation, and living conditions."

While "health care, education, child protection, sanitation, and living conditions" are causes worthy of U.S. support, they are outside the scope of legislation that focuses on strengthening the capacity of independent workers' organizations in Bangladesh's ready-made garment, shrimp, and fish export sectors. Why are these areas included within the scope of the $5 million procurement for labor rights?

Also, I am concerned that if a procurement vehicle is not issued by February 1, 2015, or current programming is not extended, there will be a lapse in programming on strengthening the capacity of independent workers' organizations in Bangladesh. USAID told SFRC staff that it will release the Request for Applications by the end of FY 2014. Given that timeline, can a contract competition and final award be completed before February 1, 2015, so that there is no lapse in programming?

Answer. I welcome this committee's continued attention to labor rights in Bangladesh and know that congressionally funded programs to promote freedom of association in the garment and shrimp sectors are making a real difference on the ground to improve labor rights and ensure workers have a voice.

Following the announcement of the Senate's FY 2014 Appropriations bill, an interagency team from the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Labor visited Bangladesh to identify areas of need for the new program and ensure there was no unnecessary overlap with programs already in place. Based on their recommendations, I assure you that the focus of the new program will be to directly improve labor conditions by strengthening the capacity of independent workers' organizations. Specifically, USAID assistance will support the ability of workers to organize independently and strengthen the capacity of these worker organizations to address the issues they identify as most pressing, such as protection of labor organizers, improvement of workplace safety, mitigation of environmental hazards, and ensuring timely payment of wages. While workers have identified improving health care, education, child protection, sanitation, and living conditions as needs, this program would not directly address those issues. Rather, it would seek to support the capacity of workers to organize independently and address such conditions as they themselves prioritize them.

Given the timeline to implement the program, we do not foresee any gap in funding. The existing Global Labor Program will run through January 2016, and the new labor program will be awarded in early FY 2015. For roughly 1 year, the two programs will run concurrently and will be closely coordinated.

RESPONSES OF GEORGE ALBERT KROL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. I appreciate Kazakhstan's aspiration to become one of the top economies in the world and support U.S. efforts to that end, including for Kazakhstan's bid to join the WTO. I also believe that if Kazakhstan seeks to be held to a higher

standard in the economic realm, it should also be held to a higher standard on democracy and human rights and not simply compared to its neighbors. I remain concerned about the imprisonment of Mr Kozlov and urge you to continue to raise his imprisonment with Kazakh officials. The space for civil society appears to be closing in Kazakhstan.

♦ With that in mind, what do you expect the U.S. efforts to support civil society can achieve in the coming year?

Answer. What our efforts can achieve over the next year will ultimately depend on the choices that the Government of Kazakhstan itself will make. The United States, however, seeks to be a partner to the Government of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstani civil society in our advocacy for stalled legislation designed to strengthen state support for nongovernmental organizations by introducing an independent grantmaking system. The U.S. mission in Kazakhstan will also work with the government and civil society to encourage the development of implementing regulations that ensure that the new criminal and other related codes passed earlier this year will be implemented in ways that do not constrain the space for civil society.

The United States strongly supports the development of a sovereign and independent democratic Kazakhstan that seeks to protect the universal human rights of all its people, and we strongly welcome the government's repeated statements of commitment to meet this goal. We also value that our strategic partnership with Kazakhstan that is the basis for an open and frank dialogue on human rights and religious freedoms as well as on our continuing concern about the judicial process that resulted in the imprisonment of Mr. Kozlov.

Question. I am concerned about the ubiquitous nature of media from Russia in Kazakhstan. What specific efforts is the U.S. taking to support the development of the professionalism of the media sector in Kazakhstan? If an increasingly professionalized media can be developed, will the Kazakh Government provide space within which they can operate and conduct genuine and credible reporting?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the development in Kazakhstan of a professional, free, and independent media. In support of this goal, we have provided Economic Support Funds to nongovernmental organizations that support the Kazakhstani media's ability to provide accurate, unbiased, and objective information to the citizens of Kazakhstan.

Current USAID programming to strengthen the development of a professional, independent, and commercially competitive media sector in Kazakhstan includes a regional network that broadcasts social, economic, political, and children's programming every day in four languages to over 20 local partner television stations. In addition, we are supporting the production and distribution of quality television content to a regionwide network of 43 independent local stations.

Our mission is also increasing its outreach to Kazakhstani media via various social platforms in both the Kazakh and Russian languages and as a result is receiving significantly more requests for interviews with U.S. officials. More can be done to expose the Kazakhstani public to a broader range of information and opinions. To this end, we are exploring the expansion of the media-hub program to create a platform for U.S. voices, including U.S. policy experts and scholars, to engage more broadly with media throughout the region.

RESPONSES OF ALLEN P. MUSTARD TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question #1. Human rights and democratic development remain substantial hurdles to deepening our relationship with Turkmenistan. Last May, I sent a letter to President Berdimukamedov calling for the release of several prisoners of conscience (see attached). Will you commit to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that you will advocate on behalf of these and other prisoners of conscience and that you will work with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to ensure a coordinated State Department approach to addressing these issues? Will you also commit to consulting with SFRC on human rights issues?

Answer. The State Department has been steadfast in raising human rights concerns with Government of Turkmenistan interlocutors. Our bilateral relations with other nations should be broad-based and true to our fundamental values, not limited solely to those areas where we find easy agreement. The State Department, including our Embassy in Ashgabat, regularly engages with Turkmenistan across the spectrum of human rights issues, and has been a strong advocate for prisoners of conscience. We also seek to advance these issues through multilateral venues, including funding International Organization for Migration (IOM) and U.N. Develop-

ment Program (UNDP) programs that promote antitrafficking in persons and other human rights initiatives. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing these practices.

The Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor provides valuable expertise on the many difficult human dimension issues that constrain our bilateral relationship with Turkmenistan and I look forward to working closely with them if I am confirmed. I also commit to being at the committee's disposal to discuss human rights or any other issues that may be of interest to you and I look forward to our continued collaboration to advance America's interests in Turkmenistan.

Question #2. With the intergovernmental agreement in place, and in light of the lack of progress on the pipeline, what are the next concrete steps that the U.S. can take to encourage the development of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline?

Answer. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI) is a long-term project with enormous potential long-term benefits, but it can only succeed if it is done on a commercial, economically sustainable basis. TAPI appears to have nearly all of the essential elements to succeed, including strong political support. What is missing, however, is a commercial champion. Without the involvement of an international oil company (IOC) to work in cooperation with Turkmengaz in the development of gas production and serve as commercial champion for the project, it is doubtful that the project will be financeable.

The State Department is encouraging the Government of Turkmenistan to sign confidentiality agreements with U.S. IOCs in order to allow those companies to evaluate the commercial viability of the project and participate in a consortium that will both develop the gas field that will supply TAPI and also build the pipeline. We are also working with the downstream countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India) to encourage them to work with Turkmenistan to develop a TAPI project based on economically and commercially sound principles. Further, the administration consults regularly with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which is also providing technical assistance to the TAPI partner countries.

While the U.S. Government negotiated the terms of a nonbinding intergovernmental framework arrangement with Turkmenistan on energy cooperation, the framework has not yet been signed.

Continued political investment and technical assistance by the U.S. government will be needed to advance TAPI, particularly efforts to convince Turkmenistan to press forward on TAPI with IOC upstream involvement. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Turkmen to take the necessary steps to make TAPI a viable project.

Question #3. What are the main impediments to progress in the Trans-Caspian pipeline? What steps will you take to address these issues?

Answer. There are both political and commercial impediments to progress on the Trans-Caspian pipeline. Russia and Iran have stated that a Trans-Caspian Pipeline cannot be built unless all five littoral states agree, and both have raised strong objections to the project. Their opposition is based largely on ostensible environmental grounds, despite the fact that there are hundreds of miles of pipelines already operating in the Caspian. In fact, gas from Turkmenistan flowing to European markets could threaten Russia's strong position in those same markets. Long-standing disagreement between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan over the disputed Serdar/Kapaz field in the Caspian Sea would also need to be resolved, although relations appear to be improving with several high-level bilateral meetings between the two countries this year.

In addition to these political impediments, Turkmenistan will also have to attract commercial partners, including an international oil company (IOC), to help build, finance, and operate the pipeline. To date, the Turkmen Government has not been willing to provide acceptable terms for an IOC's access to its onshore gas fields (which would feed the pipeline), and without such terms, an IOC is not likely to be interested in the project.

If confirmed, I would encourage Turkmenistan to finalize the trilateral agreement currently under negotiation with the European Union and Azerbaijan that would form the legal basis for a Trans-Caspian pipeline. I would also draw on my decades of commercial-advocacy experience to help open opportunities for U.S. energy companies to bring their expertise and participate in the Trans-Caspian Pipeline consortium.

LETTER ATTACHED TO QUESTION NO. 1 SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

ROBERT MENENDEZ, NEW JERSEY, CHAIRMAN

BARBARA BOXER, CALIFORNIA
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE
RICHARD J. DURBIN, ILLINOIS
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
TIM KAINE, VIRGINIA
EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS

BOB CORKER, TENNESSEE
JAMES E. RISCH, IDAHO
MARCO RUBIO, FLORIDA
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
JEFF FLAKE, ARIZONA
JOHN McCAIN, ARIZONA
JOHN BARRASSO, WYOMING
RAND PAUL, KENTUCKY

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

May 1, 2014

His Excellency Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov
President of Turkmenistan
c/o Embassy of Turkmenistan
2207 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear President Berdimuhamedov:

I write to express my concern about the detention of nine Jehova's Witnesses, currently being imprisoned for exercising their freedom of religion in Turkmenistan. International human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Freedom House have characterized these prisoners as conscientious objectors for objecting to military service. The current known imprisoned conscientious objectors - all of them Jehovah's Witnesses - are:

Zafar Abdullaev, age 26; Sentenced to 2 years in March 2012
Navruz Nasyrlayev, age 22; Sentenced to 2 years in May 2012
Dovran Matyakubov, age 21; Sentenced to 2 years in December 2012
Yadgarbek Sharipov, age 21; Sentenced to one year in December 2012
Matkarim Aminov, age 22; Sentenced to 2 years in January 2013
Arslan Dovletov, age 21; Sentenced to 18 months in January 2013
Atamurat Suvkhanov, age 27; Sentenced to one year in March 2013
Amirlan Tolkachev, age 21; Sentenced to 18 months in July 2013
Suhrab Rahmanberdiyyev, age 18; Sentenced to 18 months in November 2013

Seven of the nine current conscientious objector prisoners, as well as a number of former prisoners have lodged complaints with the United Nations Human Rights Council protesting against their imprisonment and mistreatment. The complaints note that most of the conscientious objector prisoners have regularly been subjected to solitary confinement, and have been brutally beaten. The continued detention of these individuals is inconsistent with our countries' cooperation in many other areas and symbolic of a troubling pattern of harsh treatment for political prisoners.

Accordingly, I ask you to please clarify the circumstances surrounding the arrest, detention, as well as the health of these individuals, issues the U.S. government has previously raised directly with you during the Annual Bilateral Consultation in Ashgabat in January. We further ask that, given the deeply troubling questions regarding the validity of these cases, you consider granting them amnesty. Their release would further our growing and important bilateral relationship.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
Chairman

RESPONSES OF ALLAN P. MUSTARD TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

Question. For years I have been urging the Government of Turkmenistan to release a number of political prisoners languishing in its jails, including Annakurban Amanklychev, Sapardurdy Khadzhiev, and Gulgeldy Annaniyazov (see attached letters). Last year my staff and that of Senator Boxer traveled to Turkmenistan to further press for their release. Amanklychev and Khadzhiev were released early from

their sentence in 2013, but Annaniyazov remains in jail. These cases are unfortunately only examples of a larger lack of political freedom in Turkmenistan. Can you comment on your commitment to pursuing political freedom and human rights should you be confirmed as Ambassador to Turkmenistan?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, one of my very top priorities will be to urge Turkmenistan to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, ensure accountability for torture and other human-rights violations, allow civil-society groups to function freely, and build fully democratic institutions. As party to a number of international human-rights conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, I will remind government officials of Turkmenistan's obligations to respect and ensure to all persons on its territory the rights that it has recognized and guaranteed under those conventions.

The Department of State has regularly raised Gulgeldy Annaniyazov's case directly with Government of Turkmenistan interlocutors since 2008. The case was recently raised by the U.S. delegation at our Annual Bilateral Consultations on January 14, 2014, in Ashgabat, and Ambassador Robert Patterson discussed the case with Deputy Foreign Minister Vepa Hajiev again on February 12. The Embassy followed up with diplomatic notes requesting amnesty for Annaniyazov on the occasion of Turkmenistan's February 19 Flag Day holiday, Constitution Day on April 22, and Night of Omnipotence at the end of July (Turkmenistan customarily amnesties prisoners on the occasion of national holidays). Annaniyazov's case and our related due-process concerns have also been referenced in numerous public statements by the United States at the annual OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (HDIM) in Warsaw. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing the United States advocacy for Annaniyazov's release.

LETTERS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

RICHARD J. DURBIN
ILLINOIS
ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510–1304

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

August 14, 2012

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov
President of Turkmenistan
Presidential Palace
74400 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Dear President Berdimuhamedov:

I write to request your consideration of a humanitarian gesture to resolve the detention of a number of Turkmen citizens that are considered prisoners of conscience by many in the United States Senate and prominent human rights groups. Some years ago, you showed compassion in releasing such a person, Mukhametikuli Aymuradov, and I appeal to your leadership to show similar consideration around the upcoming October 28 Independence Day holiday with three other detainees.

More specifically, prominent international organizations, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and at least twenty of my colleagues in the US Senate have raised concerns over the last several years regarding the detention of Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, Annakurban Amanklychev, and Sapardurdy Khadzhiev. Annaniyazov is a long-time political dissident who left Turkmenistan in 2000 to settle in Norway as a political refugee. He reportedly returned to Turkmenistan in June 2008 to visit family and was arrested for entering Turkmenistan without a valid visa. After a closed trial on October 7, 2008, he was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiev are members of the human rights organization, Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation. After being held incommunicado under reportedly harsh conditions, they were convicted in August 2006 and sentenced to seven years in jail.

With Messrs. Amanklychev and Khadzhiev's sentences concluding next year, a pardon around the upcoming Independence Day offers a reasonable opportunity to move beyond these long-troubling cases. Allowing Mr. Annaniyazov to return to Norway would offer an equally agreeable path forward.

As your respected Ambassador Orazov here in Washington has often pointed out, our two countries share a great many common interests – ones that I believe can and should be strengthened. One way to continue on such a path is to quietly resolve these cases on humanitarian grounds. I would hope to have my Senior Foreign Policy Advisor Chris Homan visit your historic nation in early October to further respectful discussions on these cases and continue building our nations' relationship.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

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durbin.senate.gov

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2013

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov
President of Turkmenistan
Presidential Palace
74400 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Dear President Berdimuhamedov:

We understand that two Turkmen citizens of particular concern to us and others in the United States Senate, Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiev, have recently been released from prison and allowed to return to their families. Some months ago, our staff traveled to Turkmenistan to discuss their detention and well-being and our hope for their timely release. We want to recognize and thank you for your government's hospitality on this visit and for your leadership in releasing Amanklychev and Khadzhiev.

As our staff discussed with Deputy Foreign Minister Vepa Hadjiyev in Ashgabat and on many occasions with Ambassador Orazov here in Washington, our two countries share many common interests – ones that we believe can and should be strengthened. We believe continued compassion and tolerance for those hoping for greater political openness in Turkmenistan, including Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, will greatly advance that relationship.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

CC: Deputy Foreign Minister Vepa Hadjiyev

RICHARD J. DURBIN
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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durbin.senate.gov

November 23, 2010

Ambassador Ian Kelly
U.S. Mission to the OSCE
Obersteinergasse 11/1
A-1190 Vienna, Austria

VIA FAX: (+43) 1 31339 3136

Dear Ambassador Kelly:

In light of the upcoming OSCE summit in Kazakhstan, I want to bring to your attention the troubling cases of three political prisoners in Turkmenistan. I understand Turkmenistan will be at the summit and believe it important that its human rights record be a matter of transparency and discussion.

For almost two years, I and a number of other senators have been urging the Turkmen Government to release Annakurban Amanklychev, Sapardurdy Khadzhiev, and Gulgeldy Annaniyazov – all apparent political prisoners. While the Turkmen government did release one of four originally referenced detainees, it has rebuffed repeated appeals on behalf of these three remaining prisoners. Turkmenistan's OSCE delegation should be asked to directly account for these individuals and the country's human rights record should be an important criterion for maintaining its OSCE membership.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter sent by 21 senators to Secretary Clinton on this matter from earlier in the year.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Richard J. Durbin

cc: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 5, 2010

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write to request your help in addressing the continued detention in Turkmenistan of journalists Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiev and civic activist Gulgeldy Annaniyazov. A number of us wrote to Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow in December about these detainees, all of whom have been characterized as prisoners of conscience by several human rights groups. We remain deeply concerned about the treatment and detention of these individuals and ask that their cases be raised at the highest levels in upcoming bilateral consultations with the Turkmenistan government.

Mr. Amanklychev and Mr. Khadzhiev, both members of the human rights group the Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation, were arrested in 2006. At that time, they were reportedly helping French journalists film a documentary on Turkmenistan. Government officials later said that they were "gathering slanderous information to spread public discontent." These individuals, who have now been imprisoned for nearly four years, were not informed of the criminal charges against them until nearly one month after their arrests and were not allowed to call witnesses during their brief trial.

Mr. Annaniyazov, a long-time political dissident, served four years in prison during the 1990s for participating in "anti-government" demonstrations. After his release, he moved to Norway as a political refugee. While reportedly visiting family in Turkmenistan in 2008, Mr. Annaniyazov was arrested on the basis that he did not posses valid travel documents and possibly other undisclosed charges. He has been held incommunicado since receiving an 11 year sentence following a closed trial in October 2008.

According to Turkmenistan's constitution, all citizens enjoy freedom of association, freedom of press, and freedom of speech. In addition, the constitution guarantees criminal defendants the right to be promptly notified of charges against them, the right to present a defense, and the right to a public trial. Messrs. Annaniyazov, Amanklychev and Khadzhiev's arrests, trials, and ongoing detentions fall short of Turkmenistan and international standards for due process of law. Their detentions also raise concerns about political intimidation in Turkmenistan.

Under President Berdimuhamedow's leadership, Turkmenistan has taken a few steps to improve its human rights record, including releasing political prisoner Mukhametikuli Aymuradov and pardoning many other prisoners who were detained during his predecessor's period in office. The release of Messrs. Annaniyazov, Amanklychev, and Khadzhiev would be another important step in that process.

We thank you for your assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Senator Richard J. Durbin

Senator Sam Brownback

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin

Senator John Kerry

Senator Patrick Leahy

Senator Carl Levin

Senator Joe Lieberman

Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Senator George Voinovich

Senator Robert Menendez

Senator Mark Begich

Senator Mary Landrieu

Senator Dianne Feinstein

Senator Arlen Specter

Senator Chris Dodd

Senator Mark Udall

Senator Evan Bayh

Senator Bernie Sanders

Senator Frank Lautenberg

Senator Sherrod Brown

Senator Herb Kohl

NOMINATIONS OF JOHN TEFFT, DONALD HEFLIN, CRAIG ALLEN, EARL MILLER, MICHELE SISON, STAFFORD HANEY, AND CHARLES ADAMS

TUESDAY, JULY 29, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Hon. John Francis Tefft, of Virginia, to be Ambassador of the United States to the Russian Federation

Donald L. Heflin, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cabo Verde

Craig B. Allen, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam

Earl Robert Miller, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana

Michele Jeanne Sison, of Maryland, to be the Deputy Representative to the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and Deputy Representative in the Security Council of the United Nations; and to be Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Deputy Representative to the United Nations

Stafford Fitzgerald Haney, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica

Charles C. Adams, Jr., of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:32 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Corker, Flake, and McCain.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

The CHAIRMAN. We have three panels today. I will chair the first panel, which will be the nomination of John Francis Tefft to be Ambassador to Russia. We will then pass the gavel to Senator Coons, who will chair our second panel of nominees: Donald Heflin, to be Ambassador to Cabo Verde; Craig Allen, to be Ambassador

to Brunei Darussalam; and Earl Robert Miller, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana.

Then Senator Coons will pass the gavel to Senator Kaine, who will chair our third panel of nominees: Michele Sisan, to be Deputy Representative to the U.N. with the rank of Ambassador, along with two associated positions; Stafford Fitzgerald Haney, to be Ambassador to Costa Rica; and Charles Adams, to be our Ambassador to Finland.

Let me welcome our first nominee, John Tefft. Ambassador Tefft has been a Career Foreign Service officer since 1972, and deserves at this critical time to be given every consideration by the committee. Let me say that the geopolitics is vastly different from what we confronted during the last hearing for a U.S. Ambassador to Russia in 2011. In my view, we cannot afford to wait to send an Ambassador to Moscow, as Senator McCain just urged us to do.

Before we begin, I just want to express my concern about Russia's violation of its obligations under the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Russia's violation is a very serious matter, and it is vital that it comply with its obligations under the treaty and eliminate any prohibited items in a verifiable manner.

The INF Treaty is a cornerstone of European security and was one of the first steps the United States and the then-Soviet Union took to end their cold war confrontation. The treaty sought to eliminate the nuclear threat to Western Europe and the European parts of the Soviet Union. The fact that Russia is now violating its obligations is another sign that under President Putin Russia is operating in a manner that threatens the security of all European states.

In view of that reality, we cannot delay in sending someone, not when President Putin enjoys soaring domestic approval ratings, but continues to double down on his reckless course in Ukraine that has resulted in terrible tragedy and loss of innocent life with the downing of the Malaysian Flight 17 by pro-Russian rebels supported and supplied by Putin, not when the Ukrainian Army is making advances in the east and Moscow is answering by putting more heavy weaponry into the irresponsible hands of rebel militias.

In fact, last week, along with the Chairs of other Senate committees responsible for national security, I signed a letter to President Obama asking for immediate sanctions against Russia's defense sector, including state-owned Rosoboronexport, to prevent Russia from providing weaponry, equipment, or assistance and training to separatists in Ukraine.

It is my view that we must also consider broader sanctions on Russia's energy and financial industries and other sectors of the Russian economy, as appropriate. We also need an ambassador in Moscow as events continue to unfold. I hope that both sides of the aisle will agree to expedite Ambassador Tefft's nomination at this critical time. He has served as U.S. Ambassador a total of three times, and each time to a country of the former Soviet Union—Ukraine, the Republic of Georgia, and Lithuania. He is also a lifelong student of Russia and the former Soviet republics. We need Ambassador Tefft's knowledge and experience in Moscow to address not only the crisis in Ukraine, but also President Putin's blatant disrespect for human rights, complete control of media, sys-

tematic erosion of the rule of law, and flouting of international law and norms, all which affect our bilateral relationship.

So we welcome you, Ambassador, to the committee. I am going to call upon Senator Corker for his remarks. When Senator Corker is finished, please invite or recognize any of the members of your family who are here. I understand you have had a multidecade partner in your efforts, and we appreciate her willingness to once again allow you to serve your Nation, and we understand the sacrifices that she and other members of families, both in your case as well as the other nominees, face when they are willing to serve their country abroad.

Senator Corker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

Senator CORKER. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. I want to second the comments, the laudable comments that have been made about your previous service, and also thank your spouse for her willingness to come out of retirement. I know you were living here. I know there are grandbabies in the region, and yet you are heading back to Russia to serve our country.

I think everybody on this committee just about has expressed strongly their concern about Russia's actions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. I think there has been a lot of frustration, I know there has been by most, relative to the sanctions that have been put in place. I do want to say I applaud the sanctions that were put in place the day before the Malaysia flight was shot down. I think there may be something much—we have not seen the details yet, but it looks like that us and Europe have come more closely together, and hopefully we will know the details of that soon.

But you go to Russia at a time that, as was mentioned, it is very important. I think your service in the other countries nearby are very helpful, not only to all of us, but to those countries and to Russia. I might add, everyone here knows that Russia had to agree, in spite of his service in these other countries which obviously geopolitically they believe pose some threat to them, they have to agree to the fact that he is our nominee. So you are going there under challenging circumstances, as has been mentioned, as the chairman mentioned this morning, the news that all of us have known previously, that it was announced that we are actually going to bring forth these charges relative to the INF Treaty; it really makes it an additionally challenging time.

The type of issues that we are seeing in eastern Ukraine and in Crimea are the kind of, that should they get out of hand, could lead to some really terrible global issues. I think all of us have been concerned again, many of us, that the tepid response we have had may lead an emboldened Putin to continue on.

It now appears that possibly he is beginning to get some degree of pushback within the country. Hopefully that is the case. I know he has been riding a strong nationalistic popularity because of what he has been doing, but I do hope our Nation and Europe will continue to work together to put pressure on him to get him to move away from the types of actions that he has taken.

Importantly, I hope you as Ambassador will do everything you can as one Ambassador to make that happen. I know your access to Putin will be a little different than the access you had in the other countries that you served, but I am very glad you are willing to do this and look forward to your testimony.

I will say, on the confirmation, this committee has actually been really incredible as far as getting nominees out on a bipartisan basis very quickly to the floor. I do hope in this case—many of them have been held up, as we know. But I do hope in this case we will figure out a way to get you out very, very quickly and get you on your way to Russia. So thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ambassador Tefft, your full statement will be included in the record, without objection. I may have to interrupt you if we get—we have a 10th member who is on his way here. I believe Senator Durbin is on his way. So I may have to interrupt you, though I hope we will get through your testimony before that moment comes. But I just want to excuse myself up front.

With that, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN FRANCIS TEFFT, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Ambassador TEFFT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am very grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador of the United States to the Russian Federation. I am grateful to you and to Senator Corker and Senator McCain for the kind remarks you have made about me and my wife. I have to say to you as someone who has been a private citizen working in the private sector for the better part of the last year, I have appreciated and admired the work of this committee and the leadership you have provided on not only the situation in Russia and Ukraine, but also more broadly on foreign affairs. So I thank you for that.

If I am confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the members of this committee and your staff, as I have done before in my various assignments. Clearly we face, as you have said, some of the most challenging times in the relations between the United States and Russia since the end of the cold war.

I would just like to say a couple of words from my prepared remarks that we have submitted to the record. I would like to say that our relations with Russia today are obviously, as you said, in serious trouble. The future is uncertain. The United States cannot ignore the fundamental challenge to the international order posed by Russia's actions in the Ukraine crisis. Russia's efforts to annex Crimea, which we will never accept, have violated the core precepts of intelligence law and have shredded the very fabric of freely adopted obligations among Europe's nations that have kept the peace for nearly 70 years.

Russia's policy of destabilizing parts of eastern Ukraine violates the sovereignty of its neighbor. They also undercut the solemn obligations Russia itself undertook to observe the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

As you said, Mr. Chairman, and as President Obama and many European leaders have emphasized, adherence to the structure of

European security is vital. The horrendous shootdown of the Malaysian airliner and the loss of almost 300 innocent lives has truly shocked the world and underlined the importance of resolving this crisis quickly and peacefully.

In this environment, I believe we must continue to talk clearly to our Russian interlocutors and to make sure Russian officials and citizens understand American policy, our interests, and our values. At the same time, managing this crisis effectively and wisely will require that our own government continues to know as precisely as we can what the Russian side is thinking, what their objectives are, and why they are taking the approaches they do even when we find them unacceptable.

If given the opportunity to serve, I will try to do just that, to engage in frank and difficult diplomacy.

Mr. Chairman, one of the great privileges of my career has been to lead the teams of committed Americans serving our country at embassies overseas. If confirmed, I will do my best to lead the highly professional and motivated team that we have at our Embassy in Moscow and at our three consulates across Russia.

Finally, I appreciate very much what you said about my wife. I would like to recognize her in front of all of you. She has been my indispensable partner in this career from the very beginning. In addition to her own professional accomplishments as a biostatistician and a nurse, she has made her own unique contributions to representing our country in every post in which we have served. I know she will do that again and bring her invaluable experience to bear in Moscow.

I would also like to thank my wonderful daughters, Christine and Kathleen. They make me proud every day. They have been supportive of my work throughout my career. Kathleen is here today along with her husband, Andy Horowitz. My daughter, Christine, is unfortunately at home, or fortunately at home, taking care of our 10-day-old second granddaughter. Her husband, Paul Stronsky, is here with us today, as is my wife's cousin, Margie Klick, and her husband, Randy, and Jose Yacub, who is my administrative assistant at the RAND Corporation.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for letting me make those remarks. I am prepared now to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Tefft follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador of the United States to the Russian Federation. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for their support and for their confidence in recalling me to government service. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely once again with the members of this committee and its staff, as we face some of the most challenging times in the relations between the United States and Russia since the end of the cold war.

I have had the privilege of serving my country for nearly 41 years as a Foreign Service officer, much of that time in Eastern and Central Europe. Three times I served as a U.S. Ambassador—most recently in Ukraine, and previously in Georgia, and Lithuania. I also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow—and for 10 months of my assignment I was Chargé d'affaires at the Embassy.

As an Ambassador my most important responsibility and highest duty has been to promote and defend the interests of the United States. Over the course of my career, I have tried to do that as best I can, to advance the objectives of our country and to represent the values and ideas for which the United States stands.

Mr. Chairman, our relations with Russia today are in serious trouble and their future is uncertain. The United States cannot ignore the fundamental challenge to the international order posed by Russia's actions in the Ukraine crisis. Russia's efforts to annex Crimea—which we will never accept—have violated core precepts of international law, and have shredded the very fabric of freely adopted obligations among Europe's nations that have kept the peace for nearly 70 years. Russia's policy of destabilizing parts of eastern Ukraine violates the sovereignty of its neighbor. It also undercuts the solemn obligations Russia itself undertook freely to observe the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. As President Obama and many European leaders have emphasized, adherence to the structure of European security is vital. The horrendous shootdown of the Malaysian airliner and loss of almost 300 innocent lives has shocked the world and underlined once again the importance of resolving this crisis quickly and peacefully.

In this environment, we must continue to talk clearly to our Russian interlocutors and make sure Russian officials and citizens understand American policy, interests, and values. At the same time, managing this crisis effectively and wisely will require that our own government continues to know as precisely as we can what the Russian side is thinking, what their objectives are, and why they are taking the approaches that they do even when we find them unacceptable.

If given the opportunity to serve, I will try to do just that—to engage in frank and difficult diplomacy.

Historically, we have had many dimensions to our relationship with Russia, chief among them human rights and democracy, security and arms control, and economic and business affairs. We must continue to press all of these in concert. We also need to be ready to engage in cooperation on the international stage when it is clearly in our interest—for example, to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons. And we must work to preserve people-to-people ties, even during times of severe tensions.

If confirmed, I will also do my best to engage Russians from all parts of that society. I will try to explain what we stand for, and to promote respect for the dignity of every citizen, democratic values, good governance, and rule of law. I say this in the conviction that the most effective antidote to Russian propaganda mounted against the United States is simply stating the plain truth about our country and our values.

If given the opportunity to serve again, I will also use the resources at my disposal to promote and protect U.S. economic interests in the Russian market. My record on supporting American business over the course of my career is clear. I will vigorously oppose corruption, and I will do my utmost to ensure America's firms receive equal and fair treatment in trade and investment transactions in accordance with U.S. law and WTO rules.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, America's relations with Russia have a long and complex history.

We have been allies and we have been adversaries.

We have cooperated and we have clashed.

But, one constant has been our country's enduring engagement with Russia, its people, and its government. That engagement reflects geographic, economic, and geopolitical realities. We have no alternative to managing and conducting our relations in a way that most effectively advances and protects American interests and global peace.

Just as our interests and values now require intensive diplomacy accompanied by firm sanctions to counter Russia's recent threats to European stability, it is inescapable that pursuing America's most important interests around the world will sometimes also mean working with Russia. We need to identify and counter terrorist threats, stem narcotics flows, ensure aviation and maritime safety, counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, verifiably reduce nuclear arsenals and eliminate nuclear fissile material wherever it is in the world. America cannot address these tasks alone. But Russia remains a critical international player in many of these matters, and America's hand can become stronger when our interests and Russia's align.

If confirmed, I will use all the resources at my disposal to pursue American goals through diplomatic engagement with the Russian Government, and I will promote expanded ties between the American and Russian people.

Mr. Chairman, one of the great privileges of my career has been to lead the teams of committed Americans serving our country at embassies overseas. If confirmed, I will do my best to lead our highly professional and motivated team at the Embassy in Moscow and in our three consulates across Russia. This is a team of skilled officers and staff. I know that the Americans who serve our country in Russia understand the importance of their work. It will be an honor to lead them. And, Mr. Chairman, if the Senate chooses to place its confidence in me as U.S. Ambassador

to Russia, I will ensure that we conduct our business in a manner that is fully consistent with the highest standards of ethical and moral values.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to recognize my wife, Mariella, who has been my indispensable partner in this career from the very beginning. In addition to her own professional accomplishments as a biostatistician and a nurse, she has made her own unique contributions to representing our country in every post in which we have served. I know she will once again bring her invaluable experience to bear in Moscow. I would also like to thank my wonderful daughters, Christine and Cathleen. They make me proud every day, and have been supportive of my work throughout my career.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the privilege of appearing before the committee. I am prepared to answer any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, most nominees take a full 5 minutes, so I want to congratulate you on your brevity.

Ambassador TEFFT. This is the experience after you do this four times, sir. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let me first welcome all of your family, and we appreciate again their willingness to share you with the Nation.

Since I am sanctioned and cannot go to Russia to visit you if you get confirmed, I hope to be able to have an open line of communication with you so that we can talk about issues as we move forward.

Ambassador TEFFT. Absolutely, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I thought that after the tragedy of the Malaysian Airline flight that President Putin would have a different vision of where he was at, that he would change course, that it would be an off-ramp. But he seems to have doubled down. His invasion of Crimea, what is going on there, upends the international order. I know that when I was in Europe the Europeans are shocked because they never thought that that was going to be one of their challenges. They thought security challenges were more in the context of modern day terrorism, not the actions of a state actor.

So how do you look at that reality, knowing that you are going into a set of circumstances under which, instead of what we would think would be the normal course of events, such as deescalating, moving in a different direction, what would be the response when we see Putin doubling down? How do you view that? How do you engage in that as you go to Russia?

Ambassador TEFFT. I think, as you say, the $64,000 question is what is exactly President Putin's approach at this point. You were not the only one, Senator, who thought that this horrible tragedy provided an opportunity to disengage, to find a way to resolve this horrible conflict that is killing people every day in eastern Ukraine.

I do not know specifically what President Putin's plans are. I note, like you, that the sanctions—that Europe has increased substantially its sanctions today, going into sectoral areas, according to what I have read in the press. My understanding is that we are now going to add some additional sanctions ourselves.

I would also note, as you mentioned, that we saw this week criticism of President Putin, specifically the press interview that was given by his very old friend and adviser, former Deputy Prime Minister Kudryn, who was quite clear about his concern, not just with the Ukraine crisis and the impact this was going to have on the economy, but also the individuals in the society, the ultranationalists, who he was quite critical of.

We know from different press articles and other things that many in the business community are very concerned at the way

things are going. This is not just sanctions. I know from my work at RAND that there are businessmen who are not sanctioned or not party to this, but they have lost deals because they have lost foreign capital that they had counted on to either expand or to even continue operating.

So the pressure is clearly there. I cannot tell you—I wish I could tell you how I could see the denouement of this. But I think we need to, as I said, keep the pressure on and to continue to give President Putin an opportunity to find a way to deescalate this crisis and to bring an end to the conflict in Ukraine along the lines that President Poroshenko has outlined.

The CHAIRMAN. What do you think should be our response to the administration's statement that Russia has violated their treaty obligations?

Ambassador TEFFT. I think this is a very serious matter, Senator. It obviously goes to the core of trust. I understand that in international relations trust is one component, but I hope that the Russians will seize the opportunity that we have offered to come to the table, to meet with our experts, to try to resolve this, to shelve this particular weapons system and to bring themselves back in compliance with the INF Treaty.

The CHAIRMAN. I would assume that if you are confirmed this is an issue that you will drive significantly on behalf of the administration, because there are those of us in the Congress who knew about this, based upon what was then classified information, and now that it has become public have been very concerned about where this is leading and where it is heading.

If you look at the multiplicity of actions that Russia has taken and now you add this dimension to it, you begin to wonder how much the international order has been upended by President Putin.

Ambassador TEFFT. I agree with you, sir. I would say that back during the Soviet days, I was on the Soviet desk twice, two 3-year tours, and one of the things I spent a lot of time on was arms control. So I have got to dust off some of my knowledge and bring it to bear. But I will do my best to press this issue when I am in Moscow if confirmed.

The CHAIRMAN. Finally, if we cannot go ahead and deter or get Russia to change course, one of my hopes is that we will look at in the sectoral sanctions that we are looking at energy. I am really concerned that we, who lead the world in a shale revolution, are going to help the Russians create a Russian shale revolution that will give them more gas and greater ability to leverage it, as they have leveraged it in Ukraine, as they are leveraging it against Europe.

The last thing that is in the national intelligence and security of the United States is to have our technology sold to the Russians so that they can have a shale revolution, so they can have more energy, so they can have more resources and more leverage against Europe and other countries. So I hope you are going to look at that closely with the State Department and members of the U.S. Department of Energy, because I think that is a sanction that has long-term consequences for the Russians in terms of both what they can do moving forward and what the consequences are economically.

Ambassador TEFFT. I will, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, thank you for your opening comments.

The INF Treaty obviously was relative to proximate locations to Russia. Therefore the violations were violations that, if they continued, were violations that would have had an impact on Europe in general. My guess is some of them already were aware of these violations due to their intelligence. But do you see this having any impact relative to the other issues we are dealing with Russia on right now?

Ambassador TEFFT. Well, I think it goes to the——

Senator CORKER. I am talking about with the European community that we are working with.

Ambassador TEFFT. Right, I understand. My understanding, Senator, is that the allies are being briefed at NATO today or tomorrow—I am not sure exactly when—to go over this. They, like the committee, have been apprised of the problem before; they have known of it. I think our European allies should be very concerned because, as we all know, the INF missiles are the ones that most apply to the European Continent. We worked very hard back in the eighties to get that INF Treaty to preserve the security and to make the security of Europe indivisible from our own.

Senator CORKER. When you talked about off-ramps, hopefully we will continue to look at possible off-ramps for Putin. As the chairman mentioned, you would have thought the downing of the passenger aircraft would have been the perfect off-ramp. Instead, he turned into the wind and doubled down.

What types of off-ramps do you see as being possible in the future with actions being as they have been from him?

Ambassador TEFFT. Well, I watched Secretary Kerry this morning on television when he appeared with the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, my friend Pavlo Klimkin. And the Secretary was again emphasizing, sir, that he had talked apparently to Foreign Minister Lavrov this morning, reiterated the readiness of the United States and Ukraine to engage in negotiations at any stage, to meet at any time to try to do this, based on the peace plan that President Poroshenko has outlined.

I am not aware of any particular meeting coming up that would provide an opportunity like that, but the Secretary seemed to indicate that he was ready at any stage to engage in something like that. I think a lot depends on what the policies of President Putin are.

Senator CORKER. The Hague recently ruled that Russia had basically stolen $50 billion from shareholders of Yukos. It seems like there are numbers of issues that are occurring right now. Hopefully, that will affect some of the elite. But I know we talked some about that yesterday. I assume that you will be forceful in pursuing that to its end, and that we have U.S. shareholders who also were damaged in that process.

Ambassador TEFFT. Yes, sir. In all my career in my other assignments, I have made promoting the fair treatment of American businesses and investors one of my top priorities, and I will certainly do that. I am also cognizant that there is a provision in the Rus-

sian-Moldova Jackson-Vanik Repeal and the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act which obliges the administration to help American investors who were victims of this, and I will certainly do that. My Embassy and I—I think the Embassy has already been engaged on this and I will certainly continue to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker, if you would yield for just a moment.

Just for members of the committee, what I intend to do is when Senator Corker finishes his line of questioning, recess the nomination hearing, meet off the floor quickly, reconvene the business meeting, have hopefully a successful vote, come back and continue the nomination hearing.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. I have had ample time to spend with our nominee. I am thankful that he is willing to do this. We had a long, long conversation yesterday. So in order to expedite our business meeting, I will stop and thank him again for his willingness to serve our country in this way.

Ambassador TEFFT. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Corker.

Ambassador, we have a vote for the head of the Veterans Administration, so we are going to go do that. I urge members who want to come back for this hearing to come back immediately thereafter. So, we will briefly recess, subject to the call of the chair.

[Recess from 2:55 p.m. to 3:17 p.m.]

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing will come back to order. Ambassador, thank you for your forbearance.

I believe that Senator Corker was the last member, so Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, thank you very much for sticking with us today. This is important, so we want to be able to get the nominees that were underlying in the business meeting through, but also make sure that we get a chance, as Senator McCain and Senator Menendez have stated, to get you through this process and through the Senate by the end of the week.

Thank you for spending a little bit of time with me earlier this week. I maybe want to allow you to elaborate on a conversation that we were having about how you interpret the events of the last 6 months with respect to whether or not it is a display of Russian strength or Russian weakness. Nothing is that simple, but there have been a lot of pundits who have suggested that this is Putin pushing around the rest of the world, getting his way in essentially resetting international norms through aggressive behavior. Then there is a whole other school of thought which suggests that this was a panicked reaction by a leader of a nation who is in retreat in a lot of ways, unable to control the allegiances of former republics, an economy which has failed to diversify in any meaningful way.

I know it is not simple to just sort of suggest which direction Russia is heading in, but tell me sort of how you interpret the motivations for these exceptional actions in Ukraine?

Ambassador TEFFT. Thank you very much, Senator. When I have been in Moscow recently in May and in April working, doing my job for the RAND Corporation, I have met with many Russians. Certainly the predominant view there was that the decision to go into Crimea was something of an impulsive decision following the breakdown of the agreement that had been brokered by the three European Union Foreign Ministers back in late March.

I know that that agreement—that while there are many in Russia who think that it was something that was broken down by some kind of plot or some kind of plan, was in fact something spontaneous. Nobody knew that President Yanukovych was leaving, was leaving.

But I think the other thing as I look back on the Ukraine crisis, I think there is a fundamental misunderstanding on the part of many in the Russian leadership. I have had this conversation, private conversations as well. They did not understand what was really at stake on the Maidan. When I left Ukraine it was very clear if you looked at the polling that President Yanukovych was not only very unpopular, but something on the order of 74 percent of the people said they thought the country was going in the wrong direction.

When I left it was still—the plans were still on the books to move ahead with becoming a member of the European—an associate member, an association agreement with the EU. When that fell apart and the demonstrations developed, it was not hard to understand why that was happening.

I think that for me personally one of the things that is so frustrating here is that this did not need to happen. A lot of the things that have occurred in Ukraine and the Russian response did not have to happen. They could have had a better relationship with Ukraine if they had tried.

But there is this strong view that President Putin has enunciated many times of a Eurasian union. It is pretty clear that not just the people of Ukraine do not want to be part of a Eurasian union. They wanted to have a good relationship with Russia. I will be honest. When I was in Moscow—or I was in Ukraine, I, speaking on behalf of the administration and the United States, said we supported the EU association agreement, but we also believe strongly that there should be a good relationship between Ukraine and Russia. And most Ukrainians I knew understood that very, very clearly.

Unfortunately, choices were made the other way. I hope that this is an aberration. I think the strong international response to this has sent a pretty clear message. I think you can read some of the commentaries in Russia and see that there are a lot of people raising the larger question of is this the right policy approach, is this the best way to build relationships with our neighbors, is this the best way, in the words of some Ukrainians—of some Russians, is this the way we should treat our cousins across the border in Ukraine?

Senator MURPHY. I want to ask one more question. You had this challenge in Ukraine. You will have it again in Russia. How do you continue to advance a dialogue that is happening with the Russians on a number of fronts, whether it be Iran or Afghanistan,

while pressing the case for more political discourse and the greater ability for dissidents to express themselves?

What has been remarkable during this period of time over the last 6 months is very quietly Putin has also been increasing a crackdown on political discourse, most recently essentially eliminating the ability of small television channels in that country to advertise, to receive revenues necessary for their existence, essentially shutting the doors on a number of different independent outlets throughout the country.

So you have gotten real good at this over the years. What do you see in Moscow as the ability of our Embassy to continue to promote freedom of expression, to continue to promote those who would try to protest this government with an increasing foot on their neck as they try to do it?

Ambassador TEFFT. Well, I will very much try to, as I said, have very candid and serious talks with the Russian leaders. The Embassy, the U.S. Government as a whole, has developed ways to get our message out and our support for those themes.

The other thing that I have done in my previous assignment and I would expect to do in Moscow is work very closely with our European allies, with the EU Ambassador, who is a very distinguished diplomat, the former Foreign Minister of Lithuania, who I know well, along with other ambassadors, to try to bring to bear, if you will, the predominance of persuasiveness, I would hope.

I have no illusions in saying this. In one of my conversations yesterday with one of the other Senators I made the point that, looking at how we actually conduct our public diplomacy, looking at not just how we are doing, but how effective we are being with social media and other things, in a society that, as you say, is very increasingly restricted in terms of the ability of embassies and other governments to get their message out, it is going to be something I will spend a lot of time on. One of the things as I prepare to go out in consultations here is to be hard-minded about the effectiveness of that and to try to come up with the best ways we can move forward.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. No, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ambassador, let me ask you some final questions, unless a member returns. You were our Ambassador in Georgia in 2008.

Ambassador TEFFT. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And you experienced Russia's provocative behavior in that post. How do you compare what Russia did in Georgia in 2008 with what you see in Ukraine in 2014?

Ambassador TEFFT. I think what we have seen in Ukraine is actually a much more organized, at least as I understand it, operation. Certainly the Russians prepared their forces before the war actually broke out. They were massed north of the border. But the operation as it came into Georgia was not militarily as well organized, I think, as certainly what we have seen in Ukraine, not just in Crimea, but I also have the sense that in Ukraine there was much more direct coordination between Moscow and these fellows

that they have on the ground out there. At least that is the impression I have in reading about it.

Then there are lots of articles in the newspaper about the various people of the Russian Special Services, as well as the GRU, the intelligence side of the military, and their direct involvement, people who were involved not just in Georgia, but in Chechnya and Crimea. I saw the other night a CBS correspondent who said: This is the same fellow I saw in Crimea back last fall and I have seen him once before in another place.

Clearly there is a coterie of people who have been designated, who are the ones who do these things.

The CHAIRMAN. Some of us look at what happened in the Ukraine and in Moldova and say to ourselves, well, this is a repeat of a game plan, maybe a little different in terms of the specificity or exactness of Russian troops versus those who are not insigniaed being sent in, but in essence creating frozen conflicts, which perhaps serves his purposes just as well as an actual outright invasion.

What do you think about that?

Ambassador TEFFT. I always have the impression in Georgia that there was a fundamental miscalculation. You remember early on in the conflict they bombed some of these apartment buildings in Gori, the city right in the center of Georgia. I think the calculus was somehow we are going to get these people angry and they are going to turn against President Shakashvili, turn against their government. Actually, what happened was the exact opposite. Even people who were bitter political enemies of President Shakashvili's came out and said: He is our President, he is the President of independent Georgia, and we support him for that, even as we criticize him.

I think there was a miscalculation, and I do not know in the Russian system who was responsible for that, but I think that is there.

I think you could also—I think historians will know better when we have more information, but I think some of the things that have been done in eastern Ukraine have been done—have been a miscalculation. The impression I always had when I left a year ago was that there was a very big generational difference in east Ukraine. I found many of the students and younger generation people there very much—they are critical of their own government in Kiev, but not wanting to be a part of Russia. They wanted to be a part of an independent Ukraine. They wanted to see that Ukraine changed.

So I think there was a miscalculation on the part of Russia that somehow saw all these huge numbers of people, the Novi Rossiya, as President Putin called it, as being ready just to kind of embrace Russia and become a part of Russia. And I do not think that was ever in the cards.

The CHAIRMAN. One final question. Some of us read the responses about Russia becoming self-dependent, insular in terms of global economic issues, which I find incredibly hard to believe. I believe that what Putin has done here has actual, maybe not in the short term, but in the mid to longer term, real consequences for Russia economically.

Ambassador TEFFT. Absolutely.

Senator MURPHY. And woke up the Europeans to think about how they diversify and become more energy independent, as well as others. What do you think is some of the inherent problems Russia would face if it tried to become autodependent?

Ambassador TEFFT. I just do not see in this global market, in this globalized world that we live in, how withdrawing into yourself, into an insular kind of nation, is going to help you. Number one, economically you are not going to succeed. We all know that you need capital, you need foreign customers. Russia needs to develop manufactures and things that it can sell in the world, not just extractive minerals that are the fundamentals of their national economy today.

I just think that it is really a big danger. I was very intrigued, as I mentioned to you yesterday, the comments that were made by former deputy prime minister Kudryn, who was very clear in a Tass interview, not just that the Ukraine policy was wrong, but that those—he spoke out very strongly against the ultranationalists and saw them taking Russia in the wrong direction.

Clearly, this is going to be one of the key things that I and my staff are going to have to watch in Russia as the battle between the ultranationalists, if you will, and the modernizers or those who want to have Russia as part of the global economy and the global political system push ahead. It is going to be a key, I think, a key part of any analysis of Russia.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you for your insights. Clearly, having a Russia that is part of the international order, both in terms of security, as well as economic issues, is the preferable course of events. But how we get there is still a road map to be determined.

Senator Corker, are there any other questions?

Senator CORKER. No.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. There are no other questions for you, Ambassador. We are in the midst of discussions as to how we might accelerate your nomination to be considered by the full Senate.

Excuse me a moment. [Pause.]

So, with the thanks of the committee for your testimony, you are excused.

Ambassador TEFFT. Thank you very much, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. I do not know if there will be any questions for the record. If there are, I would urge you to answer them expeditiously so that we can move your nomination.

Ambassador TEFFT. We are poised and ready. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. That is what we want to hear.

At this point Senator Coons is going to preside over our next panel of nominees, and I thank Senator Coons for his willingness to do so.

[Pause.]

Senator COONS [presiding]. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to call to order the second panel of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, considering three ambassadorial nominees. I am pleased to chair this hearing to consider the nominees for Botswana, Cabo Verde, and Brunei. All three of our nominees

have impressive records of accomplishment and I look forward to hearing their priorities for advancing U.S. interests.

Our first nominee is for Botswana, long known as one of the most stable and democratic countries on the continent, a close ally of the United States. It has made smart investments in education and health care, dedicated a large portion of its capable military to addressing wildlife trafficking. But despite these positive trends, there are challenges in terms of having the second highest HIV–AIDS rate in the world, rising wildlife trafficking challenges, and reports of marginalization of the San people.

Earl Miller, the nominee for Botswana, is a career Foreign Service officer currently serving as consul general in Johannesburg, and is deeply familiar with regional issues as a result of his posting in southern Africa. His knowledge of the region, his previous service in Botswana, and his leadership skills will allow him to bring strong contributions to this mission.

Next we consider Cabo Verde, an island nation off the northwest coast of Africa, known for having grown to become a stable, democratic, lower middle-income country, a strong ally and partner of the United States, in part due to our strong investment ties and shared regional concerns, such as countering narcotrafficking off the coast. In addition, there is a sizable Cabo Verdean diaspora community in the northeastern United States, with which I have long been familiar.

Mr. Donald Heflin brings extensive regional leadership experience. A career Foreign Service officer, he currently serves as the director for consular affairs visa office and previously served as principal officer in Nuevo Laredo in Mexico, and gained regional expertise as the deputy and later Acting Director of the State Department's Office of West African Affairs.

Last but certainly not least, we consider Brunei, a small country in Southeast Asia. Brunei recently implemented a new penal code rooted in a strict interpretation of sharia law, which includes measures such as the death penalty for adultery, homosexual acts, and insulting the Koran, prison sentences for pregnancy out of wedlock or failing to pray on Friday. These new restrictions will, moreover, apply to all Bruneians, including the 22 percent who are not Moslem. These regulations are troubling and I am hopeful our next U.S. Ambassador will encourage the government to protect human rights, dignity, and freedom of belief for its people.

Brunei is also an increasingly important partner for achieving U.S. objectives, one of four states that launched the TPP, a cornerstone of the administration's economic engagement strategy in Asia. It also opposes territorial aggression by China in the South China Sea and therefore it is imperative our Ambassador skillfully manage bilateral relations in order to achieve regional goals.

For this post, the President has nominated Mr. Craig Allen, who has spent three decades living and working in Asia. A career member of the Foreign Commercial Service, class of minister counselor, Mr. Allen most recently served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for China at the Department of Commerce. He also served as senior commercial officer at the U.S. consulate in Johannesburg, senior commercial officer in Beijing, and deputy senior commercial officer in Tokyo.

I would now like to invite my colleague Senator Flake to make any opening statement he would like before I invite our nominees to make their opening statements. Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks for being here. I have met with two of you in the last little bit in my office. I look forward to your testimony and thank you for your service.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Flake.

I would like to welcome our nominees and encourage you to take the time to introduce your families and friends, who we all know are an essential part of your service in government. We are grateful for their sacrifices as well as yours and for their ongoing support.

Mr. Heflin.

STATEMENT OF DONALD L. HEFLIN, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CABO VERDE

Mr. HEFLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Coons, members of the committee, it is my honor to appear here today as the President's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cabo Verde. I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for this tremendous vote of confidence and for this opportunity to come before you.

I wish to acknowledge my daughter, Sara, who is here with us today. Sara is currently a junior at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee and lived in six countries growing up. Her first posting as a Foreign Service kid started when she was 8 weeks old.

I regret my parents did not live long enough to be here today. They both devoted their entire adult lifetimes to public service, highlighted by my father's 4 years as a pilot during World War II.

The 10 islands that make up the Republic of Cabo Verde are just off the West Coast of Africa. Cabo Verde enjoys a vibrant, multiparty political system and an unbroken history of civilian rule since its independence in 1975. It is a success story of progress, prosperity, political stability, and democracy. Cabo Verde and the United States have enjoyed warm relations since we first opened our consulate there nearly 200 years ago.

There are more than 450,000 Americans of Cabo Verdean origin. Many of these families immigrated to New England during the days of the great 19th century whaling fleets, which they worked on. They participate fully in the life of our great country and many of them wish to invest in the prosperous future of Cabo Verde.

The United States and Cabo Verde are partners on a number of important matters. Among them maritime security and transnational crime are key. The government of Cabo Verde strongly supports counternarcotics maneuvers and is a gracious host to U.S. ship visits. Cabo Verde is a model in the region for strategic partnership. If confirmed, it is my goal to maintain and enhance this multilateral and interagency cooperation.

U.S. engagement and support of Cabo Verde's economic and commercial development is bearing fruit. Cabo Verde's first Millennium Challenge Account compact was successfully completed in 2010, producing significant gains in all three of its projects: first, im-

provements in transportation networks, facilitating integration of internal markets; second, improvements in water management and soil conservation, which promoted increases in farm profits and incomes; and third, support to Cabo Verdean microfinance institutions. It is my hope if confirmed to engage Cabo Verde in consolidating these gains.

Cabo Verde's continued strong government performance resulted in its selection as the first country in the world to qualify for a second Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, which began in 2012 and is focused on carrying out wide-reaching reforms in the water and sanitation and land management sectors. These two compacts support Cabo Verde's overall national development goal of transforming its economy from aid dependency to sustainable private sector-led growth.

Mr. Chairman, prior assignments in Africa and in African affairs have equipped me with the cultural and regional knowledge and language skills to relate to the Cabo Verdean Government and people. Similarly, if confirmed I will draw upon my 27-year career in the Foreign Service, including my experience as principal officer in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, to effectively lead the U.S. mission in Praia, Cabo Verde. I look forward to entering entry-level officers who staff many of the Embassy's positions.

If confirmed, my number one priority will be to promote the safety and welfare of American citizens in Cabo Verde.

I would be pleased to answer any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Heflin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DONALD L. HEFLIN

Chairman Coons and members of the committee, it's my honor to appear here today as the President's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cabo Verde. I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for this tremendous vote of confidence and for this opportunity to come before you.

I wish to acknowledge my daughter, Sara, who is here with us today. Sara is currently a Junior at Austin Peay State University, and lived in six countries growing up. Her first posting as a Foreign Service kid started when she was 8 weeks old.

I regret that my parents did not live long enough to be here today. They both devoted their entire working lives to public service, highlighted by my father's four years as a pilot in World War II.

The 10 islands that make up the Republic of Cabo Verde are just off the west coast of Africa. Cabo Verde enjoys a vibrant, multiparty political system and an unbroken history of civilian rule since independence in 1975. It is a success story of progress, prosperity, political stability, and democracy.

Cabo Verde and the United States have enjoyed warm relations since we opened our first consulate there nearly 200 years ago. There are more than 450,000 Americans of Cabo Verdean origin. Many of these families have lived in New England since originally immigrating to work on the 19th century whaling ships. They participate fully in the life of our great country, and many of them wish to invest in the prosperous future of Cabo Verde.

The United States and Cabo Verde are partners on a number of important matters. Among them, maritime security and transnational crime are key. The Government of Cabo Verde strongly supports counternarcotics maneuvers and is a gracious host to U.S. ship visits. Cabo Verde is a model in the region for strategic partnership. If confirmed, it is my goal to maintain and enhance this multilateral and interagency collaboration.

U.S engagement in support of Cabo Verde's economic and commercial development is bearing fruit. Cabo Verde's first Millennium Challenge Account Compact was successfully completed in 2010, producing significant gains in all three of its projects, namely: (1) improvements in transportation networks facilitating integration of internal markets; (2) improvements in water management and soil conservation, which promoted increases in farms profits and incomes; and, (3) support to

Cabo Verdean microfinance institutions. It is my hope, if confirmed, to engage Cabo Verde in consolidating these gains.

Cabo Verde's continued strong governance performance resulted in its selection as the first country to qualify for a second Millennium Challenge Account Compact, which began in 2012 and is focused on carrying out wide-reaching reforms in the water and sanitation and land management sectors. These two compacts support Cabo Verde's overall national development goal of transforming its economy from aid-dependency to sustainable, private-sector led growth.

Mr. Chairman, prior assignments in Africa and in African Affairs have equipped me with the cultural and regional knowledge and language skills to relate to the Cabo Verdean Government and people. Similarly, if confirmed, I will draw upon my 27-year career in the Foreign Service, including my experience as Principal Officer in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, to effectively lead the U.S. Mission in Praia, Cabo Verde. I look forward to mentoring entry-level officers who staff many of the Embassy's positions. If confirmed, my number one priority will be to promote the safety and welfare of American citizens in Cabo Verde.

I would be pleased to answer any of your questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much, Mr. Heflin.

Mr. Miller.

STATEMENT OF EARL ROBERT MILLER, OF MICHIGAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

Mr. MILLER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana. I appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me by putting my name forward for your consideration.

I am also deeply grateful for the support of my wife, Ana, and sons, Andrew and Alexander. They are back in Johannesburg, sir. Our first overseas assignment in the Foreign Service was in Botswana, a country we love dearly.

During my 27 years in the Foreign Service, I have had the privilege of serving in senior leadership positions at a variety of challenging posts. Over the past 3 years, as the U.S. consul general in Johannesburg, South Africa, I managed the rapid growth of one of our busiest regional support and training centers. Our multiagency consulate general in Johannesburg is now larger than many U.S. embassies in Africa, an expansion reflecting in particular our growing economic partnership with southern Africa.

Mr. Chairman, Botswana is one of Africa's great success stories. It is one of the continent's longest standing multiparty democracies and one of the United States' most reliable partners in Africa.

Our current engagement in Botswana across a range of issues underscores the country's potential as a regional and in some instances global partner for the United States. Our joint efforts to combat HIV–AIDS has made a worldwide contribution to the global evidence base on HIV treatment and prevention. If confirmed, I would draw on my law enforcement experience to be a strong advocate for the International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana, a partnership between our two nations that trains police officials from 34 African countries. Botswana also hosts the International Broadcasting Bureau's Voice of America relay station, serving most of the African Continent.

Botswana has worked with us to promote democracy, good governance, and human rights. It has taken principled stands on these

issues at the United Nations, the African Union, and the Southern African Development Community. Botswana has a strong military-to-military relationship with the United States. The Botswana Defense Forces' current leadership is U.S. trained and is one of the continent's strongest supporters of AFRICOM.

Botswana has many key assets U.S. investors look for: stability, a reputation for transparency, respect for rule of law, and generally favorable investment conditions.

The Southern African Development Community is headquartered in Gaborone. If confirmed, I will serve as the United States representative to SADC, recognizing regional integration is essential to the long-term stability and prosperity of southern Africa.

Botswana is a regional leader and strong partner on conservation and environmental issues, such as managing regional water supplies and combating wildlife trafficking, a serious and growing problem across the continent.

Botswana does confront serious challenges. Botswana's HIV prevalence of 25 percent among young adults is the second-highest in the world. The decline in diamond reserves constitutes Botswana's greatest strategic challenge since its independence. As diamond resources dwindle, the country must find an alternate source of revenue or it could upend the country's development trajectory.

Botswana suffers from income inequality, poverty, high unemployment, aging infrastructure, and a need for a more skilled labor market. Women are disproportionately affected by HIV and gender-based violence is a serious problem.

The United States is keenly interested in Botswana maintaining a strong, stable, and reliable partner. Botswana is an example of what is possible in Africa and why it matters. If confirmed, I would work to enhance Botswana's potential and support the country as it addresses its economic, environmental, and health challenges to the benefits of both our nations.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Miller follows:]

TESTIMONY OF EARL ROBERT MILLER

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana. I appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me by putting my name forward for your consideration. I am also deeply grateful for the support of my wife, Ana, and sons, Andrew and Alexander. Our first overseas assignment in the Foreign Service was in Botswana, a country we loved dearly.

During my 27 years in the Foreign Service, as both a diplomat and federal law enforcement officer, I have had the privilege of serving in senior leadership positions at a variety of challenging posts. The success of our diplomacy depends on our people. If confirmed, I will make it my highest priority to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of our mission employees and all Americans in Botswana. Over the past 3 years, as the U.S. consul general in Johannesburg, South Africa, I managed the rapid growth of one of our busiest regional support and training centers. Our multiagency consulate general in Johannesburg is now larger than many U.S. Embassies in Africa, an expansion reflecting, in particular, our growing economic partnership with Southern Africa.

Mr. Chairman, there is nowhere I would rather serve than Botswana. It is one of Africa's great success stories. It is one of the continent's longest-standing

multiparty democracies. Botswana has also been one of the United States most reliable partners in Africa.

Our current engagement with Botswana, across a range of issues, underscores the country's potential as a regional, and in some instances, global, partner for the United States. Our health partnership, particularly our joint efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, has made a worldwide contribution to the global evidence base on HIV treatment and prevention. The Botswana Combination Prevention Project that our two countries launched in late 2013 is an important component of the President's commitment through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to achieve an AIDS-free generation. If confirmed, I would draw on my significant law enforcement experience to be a strong advocate for the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Botswana, a partnership between our two nations that trains police officials from 34 African countries, and has made a significant contribution to our continentwide efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, improve governance, protect human rights, combat wildlife trafficking, and advance peace and security. Botswana also hosts the International Broadcasting Bureau's Voice of America relay station, serving most of the African Continent.

Botswana has worked with us to promote democracy, good governance, and human rights throughout the continent. It has regularly taken principled stands on these issues at the United Nations, the African Union, and the Southern African Development Community. Botswana also has a strong military-to-military relationship with the United States. If confirmed, as both a former Marine Corps officer and senior diplomat who has worked closely with U.S. and host government armed forces around the world, I would prioritize further strengthening these ties. The Botswana Defense Force's (BDF's) current leadership is U.S.-trained and does not shy away from partnering with the United States. The BDF is one of the continent's strongest supporters of AFRICOM. Last year, Botswana approved the basing of an Air Force C–12 in Gaborone, and in the first 9 months, the C–12 team supported missions within the region.

There are significant economic ties between the United States and Botswana. The United States imports between 200 and 300 million dollars of goods and services from Botswana every year and is the top purchaser of polished diamonds, which form over 70 percent of Botswana's exports. Botswana has many key assets that U.S. investors look for: stability, a reputation for transparency, respect for rule of law, and generally favorable investment conditions.

The Southern African Development Community, or SADC, is headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. Botswana is influential in this group of 15 southern African nations. If confirmed, I will serve as the United States representative to SADC. Regional integration and cooperation are essential to the long-term stability and prosperity of all of Southern African nations. I would look forward to exploring appropriate opportunities to work with SADC to promote these objectives.

Finally, Botswana is a regional leader and strong partner on conservation and environmental issues. On challenges such as managing regional water supplies, sustainable growth and combating wildlife trafficking—a serious and growing problem across the continent—Botswana is in many respects an impressive model. The Government of Botswana has taken on a leadership role within southern Africa on wildlife trafficking. In late 2013, we partnered with the Botswana Government in organizing the Gaborone Wildlife Enforcement Network conference, which resulted in 10 southern African nations recommending formation of the Wildlife Enforcement Network of Southern Africa (WENSA), a regional antiwildlife trafficking entity. We are working with Botswana's Ministry of Environment, Wildlife, and Tourism on a followup conference, which we hope will take place later this year, aimed at drafting and finalizing the WENSA's foundational documents.

Despite Botswana's impressive development history, the country confronts serious challenges. Botswana's HIV prevalence rate of 25.4 percent among 15–49 year olds is the second-highest in the world. Our investment of more than $700 million through PEPFAR over the past 10 years has aided the Government of Botswana in its response to HIV/AIDs. Botswana's epidemic has reached a tipping point—for every one new person on treatment, there is less than one person newly infected. But many challenges remain.

The decline in diamond reserves constitutes Botswana's greatest strategic challenge since independence. Diamond revenues, though well-managed in Botswana, constitute the largest source of government revenue and are used to improve the lives of its people. As diamond resources dwindle, the country must find an alternate source of revenue or face a severe economic downturn. If Botswana fails to meet this challenge, it could upend the country's development trajectory and severely constrain Botswana's capacity to cope with health challenges associated with one of the world's highest HIV prevalence rates. This could put the sustainability

of our $700 million PEPFAR investment at risk, make it difficult for Botswana to sustainably manage its globally significant natural resources, particularly the Okavango Delta and its wildlife, and undercut Botswana's influence in the region.

Botswana's current diamond-wealth translates into a $6,200 GDP per capita, relatively high for a developing country. Despite this high GDP rate, Botswana suffers from income inequality, poverty, high unemployment, aging infrastructure, and a need for a more skilled labor market. The top 20 percent of income earners in Botswana account for 70 percent of the country's household consumption, while over one-fifth of Botswana's population lives on less than $1.25 per day. In Botswana's remote rural communities, poverty is particularly acute; in the least populated district, nearly one in two people are impoverished with no realistic prospects for living standard improvement on the horizon. Women are disproportionately affected by HIV, and gender-based violence is a serious problem.

Botswana is a strong and vocal partner of the United States today because of strong relationships forged 20 years ago in universities, military academies, and through programs such as the Peace Corps. If I am confirmed, I will build on these types of relationships with the rising generation of Botswana. Youth make up the largest segment of Botswana's population: over half of the population is under age 25. The United States is viewed positively by Botswana's youth, which opens important opportunities for us to influence the next generation of Botswana's leaders.

The United States is keenly interested in Botswana remaining a strong, stable, and reliable American partner. Botswana has consistently been successful, a source of hope for others, and an example of what is possible in Africa, and why it matters. If confirmed, my goal would be to work to enhance Botswana's potential and support the country as it seeks to address its economic, environmental, and health challenges. These goals require robust diplomatic, development, and defense engagement on our part.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Allen.

STATEMENT OF CRAIG B. ALLEN, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, members of the committee, thank you very much. It is a great honor to appear before you today.

Before beginning my testimony, it is my privilege to introduce to you my family: my wife, Micheline Tusenius, our two children, Christopher and Caroline. It also gives me great pleasure to introduce my very proud 90-year-old mom, Betty Allen, my brother, Scott Allen, and my three nieces, Lisa, Jessica, and Sarah.

As a veteran Foreign Service officer with six previous assignments, I want to thank my family for their extraordinary flexibility, patience, and many sacrifices. In particular, I would like to thank my wife ,Micheline, who has forsaken her own career for our family, giving me the opportunity to serve the American people overseas.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed it would be an honor to serve my country as the United States Ambassador to Brunei. The United States and Brunei have enjoyed strong and prosperous relations since 1850, when our two countries signed a treaty of peace, friendship, commerce, and navigation. Still in effect today, this treaty has underpinned our close cooperation for 160 years.

The United States and Brunei have a long history of working together to promote peace, stability, and development. If confirmed, I hope to continue that tradition and strengthen our relationship for the 21st century.

Today the United States relationship the Brunei rests on two central pillars. The first is growing economic partnership and the second is expanding regional cooperation. Our economic partnership is manifest through rapidly expanding trade. In 2013 American companies exported $559 million worth of goods and services to Brunei and we regularly enjoy large bilateral trade surpluses. Recently Brunei purchased $600 million worth of U.S. military and civilian aircraft.

Our bilateral economic cooperation is further demonstrated by rapidly increasing investment flows, including $116 million worth of American investment in Brunei in 2012.

Finally, as you noted, Mr. Chair, Brunei was a founding member in the launch of TPP negotiations, and indeed they are a key part of our effort to finalize a high standard agreement for the 21st century.

The second pillar of our relationship with Brunei concerns regional issues. Brunei successfully chaired ASEAN last year. They have long been an important member of the region, and recently the United States and Brunei have cooperated on a number of matters of great importance to Southeast Asia. For example, we have launched the joint English language enrichment program for ASEAN, a $25 million, 5-year initiative funded by the Bruneian Government. Also, Brunei and Indonesia joined us in founding the U.S.-Asia Comprehensive Energy Partnership, and to support this goal the Export-Import Bank of the United States and the energy department of Brunei's Prime Minister's office are collaborating on a $1 billion Ex-Im program to further finance U.S. exports to the region.

In addition, we have an active and growing defense cooperation relationship, highlighted by Brunei's active participation in annual exercises with the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Brunei has hosted a large humanitarian assistance exercise which brought together servicemembers from the United States and the region.

Certainly there are challenges, Mr. Chairman. As you noted, Brunei's sharia law has caused serious concerns. The first phase of this law went into effect on May 1. We are concerned that the code criminalizes several aspects of freedom of religion, including apostasy, and we are concerned over some of the punishments that have been announced for future implementation. We are also concerned, as you noted, Mr. Chairman, that it criminalizes consensual same-sex conduct between adults.

Freedom of expression and freedom of religion, which includes the right to change one's religion, are fundamental human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While we understand that no physical punishments have been implemented under the current phase of the law, Brunei should ensure that its law prohibits torture or other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment.

While Bruneian officials have offered assurances that the standards that will be applied under the sharia system will be so exacting that it will be almost impossible for there to be a conviction that would result in sentences such as stoning or amputation, the threat of such extreme punishment still raises concern.

To these ends, we regularly communicate with Brunei regarding fundamental human rights and encourage the Government of Brunei to uphold its international commitments. We are watching closely to see how the law is being implemented.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today and giving my nomination your kind consideration. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Allen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CRAIG B. ALLEN

Chairman Coons and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today.

Before beginning my testimony, it is my privilege to introduce you to my family: my wife, Micheline Tusenius, and our two children, Christopher and Caroline.

Please also allow me to introduce you to my very proud 90-year-old mother, Betty Allen; my brother, Scott Allen; and, my sister, Sara Bowden.

As a veteran Foreign Service officer with six previous overseas assignments, I want to thank my family for their extraordinary flexibility, patience, and many sacrifices.

I am especially grateful to my wife, Micheline, who has forsaken her own career for our family—giving me the opportunity to serve the American people overseas.

This month marks my 29th year in government. During this period, I have worked at the Department of Commerce on issues associated with Asia for 25 years. In the course of my work, I have visited Brunei twice and been intimately involved in our trade relationship with Brunei, ASEAN, APEC, and the region.

Indeed, it is fair to say that I have been preparing for this moment for 29 years, and thus I am grateful to you for considering this nomination.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, it would be an honor to serve my country as the United States Ambassador to Brunei.

The United States and Brunei have enjoyed strong and prosperous relations since 1850, when our two countries signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation. Still in effect today, the treaty has underpinned our close cooperation for the last 164 years. More recently, the United States was one of the first countries to recognize Brunei's independence from the United Kingdom in 1984. In the 30 years since then, the United States and Brunei have worked together to promote and foster peace, stability, and development, and if confirmed, I hope to continue that tradition and strengthen our relationship for the 21st century.

Today, the United States relationship with Brunei rests on two central pillars. The first is our long-standing, robust, and growing economic partnership. This economic cooperation is manifest through the continuously expanding trade between our two countries, to the great benefit of both. In 2013, United States companies exported $559 million of goods and services to Brunei, and we regularly enjoy annual trade surpluses. Our positive cooperation is further demonstrated by the continuous and increasing investments U.S. companies are making in Brunei, including $116 million worth in 2012. Recent Bruneian purchases of U.S. military and civilian aircraft totaling $600 million further attests to the strength of the economic relationship. Finally, Brunei was a founding party in the launch of the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations and is a key part of current efforts to finalize a high-standard TPP agreement that will promote jobs and growth in the United States, Brunei, and across the Asia-Pacific region.

The second pillar of the relationship is our engagement with Brunei on regional issues. Brunei was the chair of ASEAN last year and has long been an active and positively engaged member of the region. Recently, the United States and Brunei have cooperated to address a host of matters important to Southeast Asia. Together we launched the English Language Enrichment Project for ASEAN, a $25 million, 5-year initiative—funded by the Bruneian Government—that seeks to strengthen ASEAN's global engagement through improved English language capacity and advanced educational and teaching opportunities in the region. In 2012, Brunei and Indonesia joined us in founding the U.S.-Asia Pacific Comprehensive Energy Partnership, which supports efforts to bring cleaner, more reliable sources of energy to the Asia-Pacific region by focusing on four priorities: renewables and cleaner energy; power markets and interconnectivity; the emerging role of natural gas; and sustainable development including rural electrification and energy efficiency. In support of those goals, a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Export-

Import Bank of the United States and the Energy Department of Brunei's Prime Minister's Office calls for information sharing and up to US$1 billion in Ex-Im Bank loans to finance U.S. exports in support of selected projects in the region. In these ways we are moving forward with Brunei to address regional issues vital to the maintenance of stability and growth.

In addition to these programs, the United States and Brunei cooperate on a host of other issues. We have an active and growing defense cooperation relationship, highlighted by Bruneian participation in annual exercises with U.S. Pacific Fleet, including the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training exercise and, in 2014, for the first time, RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific Exercise). In addition, in 2013 Brunei hosted a large Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief exercise which brought together servicemembers from the United States and the region. The importance of this kind of training was clearly demonstrated just a few months later by the tragedy of Typhoon Haiyan, for which both the United States and Brunei offered assistance. Strides have also been made elsewhere: in 2013 Brunei was removed from the Special 301 Watch List in recognition of its efforts to protect intellectual property. Lastly, cultural, educational, and people-to-people ties continue to grow and define our bilateral relations in new and positive ways. Of particular note, the U.S.-Brunei English Language Enrichment Program for ASEAN is a novel way to improve English language skills throughout the region. Together, these programs highlight a multifaceted relationship that is both deep and broad, and one that is central to both promoting U.S. interests and the region and fostering the peace and stability that continue to bring economic growth.

Certainly, there are challenges in the relationship. The United States has serious concerns regarding certain provisions of Brunei's Sharia penal code, the first phase of which went into effect on May 1. We are concerned that the code criminalizes several aspects of freedom of religion, including apostasy, and we are concerned over some of the punishments that have been announced for future implementation. We are also concerned that it criminalizes same-sex conduct between adults. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion, which includes the right to change one's religious beliefs, are human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While we understand that no physical punishments have been implemented under the current phase of the law, Brunei should ensure that its law prohibits torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. While Bruneian officials have offered assurances that the standards that will be applied under the Sharia system will be so exacting that it will be almost impossible for there to be a conviction that would result in sentences such as stoning or amputation, the threat of such punishment still raises concerns. To these ends, we regularly communicate with Brunei regarding fundamental human rights and encourage the Government of Brunei to uphold its international commitments. We are watching closely to see how the law is being implemented. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will focus on working with Brunei authorities on these important issues, using every tool available to me to encourage Brunei to move expeditiously toward full compliance with international human rights standards.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today and for giving my nomination your serious consideration. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Allen.

Then we will start 5-minute rounds. If I could first, Mr. Heflin, just two questions on maritime security and the diaspora. I am particularly interested in how we engage the diaspora in the United States in economic investment, in deployment and in political relations back to their country of origin. As you referenced there is a sizable Cabo Verdean community in New England. What could we do to more successfully engage the African diaspora in the United States, which is a critical competitive advantage lacked by China, Brazil, Russia, India, others? What more could we do?

Mr. HEFLIN. Mr. Chairman, as you know, the diaspora from Africa and other countries often leads the way in our relationships, including our economic relationships, with African countries. The Cabo Verdean community in New England has already shown interest in investing in the open economy of Cabo Verde.

Right now the sky is the limit. For instance, looking at trade figures recently between the United States and Cabo Verde, they are fairly low. Typical exports from Cabo Verde to the United States in a given year are about a million, two million dollars, and from the United States back to Cabo Verde $8, $9, $10 million. Those could go up dramatically. If confirmed, I intend to work on fostering trade ties.

There is also a very interesting proposal on the table from one of the New England colleges to open a campus in Praia to begin to prepare Cabo Verdean students to come up and study at the university level in the United States That is something my successor may well push over the top—my predecessor may well push over the top during our time there, and if not if confirmed I intend to.

Senator COONS. I would be interested in followup from you once confirmed, presuming confirmation, about exactly how we can do a better job at engaging diaspora communities.

Second, on maritime security. You referenced narcotrafficking as a major concern for me and for many off the Coast of West Africa, in addition to illegal fishing. Could you just explain the extent of the cooperation between the United States and Cabo Verde in combating both narcotrafficking and illegal fishing in the Western Coast of Africa?

Mr. HEFLIN. Happy to, Mr. Chairman. We have had engagement on a lot of different levels with a lot of different agencies between the United States and Cabo Verde.

AFRICOM's naval assets regularly conduct exercises and ship visits down there and over the years we have given the Cabo Verdeans three ships, including a 51-footer, that they put to good use. Their problem obviously is in the sea lanes between them and West Africa and traffic coming over from South America and heading up toward Europe.

We also helped them start a command center, called COSMAR, in which they have formed an interagency group to start to get control of their own water, which, as you know, in African countries the problem sometimes is narcotraffickers, but sometimes overfishing or other economic losses from their waters. So with a small and very able coast guard-type navy, this command center that we have worked with them on, our Coast Guard works with them closely, and the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement also has programs with the Cabo Verdeans. They have been a very good partner.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Mr. Miller, you referenced Botswana has one of the most stable, capable militaries. We have a close police training relationship in Botswana. They are also a strong supporter of AFRICOM. What else do you think Botswana could do to play more of a role in supporting regional security efforts and what more could we be doing to combat wildlife trafficking? Botswana has historically done very well, but issues with some of its neighbors are preventing predictable long-term success and we have, I think, a real challenge, not just in Botswana, but in the entire region in wildlife trafficking.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you for the question, Senator. I have seen firsthand in South Africa over the last 3 years the devastation caused by the increasingly sophisticated and lethal wildlife traf-

ficking syndicates. The Botswana Defense Force is the first line of defense in Botswana to combat wildlife trafficking. It is a highly regarded, well respected defense force.

We have a number of programs in place to assist the BDF and the Government of Botswana with antipoaching operations, including classes on antitrafficking investigations, money-laundering investigative courses to strike at the roots of the syndicates that are behind many of the trafficking outfits in the region.

We are strong supporters of Botswana's establishing a wildlife enforcement network for southern Africa in Botswana. The only way we will solve this problem is through a regional and ultimately a global approach.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, and thank you to your families as well for the sacrifices that they have made and continue to make. I know it is quite a commitment. I spent 1 year overseas—we had a child just a year and a half old—in Namibia, and I look at that and think of the difficulty that is, to have one child away from cousins and parents, grandparents and everything else, and you have done it many, many times. Your service is appreciated, all the families in particular.

Mr. Heflin, with regard to Cabo Verde, the Millennium Challenge, again we are in the second iteration. What did we learn in the first? What lessons are we taking forward and how can we make sure that we expand on the benefits?

Mr. HEFLIN. Millennium Challenge Corporation has not quite finished its after-action report on the first compact. The second compact, it was decided to spend the first 2 years getting the legal and regulatory framework in place, and it is coming along nicely. Once that is done and only once that is done will we move on to construction and other spending.

Senator FLAKE. Mr. Allen, the trade surplus, that is a pretty good surplus we have got. How much of it traditionally is military equipment or planes? Is that typical year to year or is that just a bump lately?

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Ranking Member Flake. The trade surplus and the trade numbers are quite volatile. Last year we delivered several aircraft and that skewed the numbers. We have a number of other aircraft, large aircraft deals in the pipeline, and thus I would consider it a rising trend in U.S. exports to Brunei in the foreseeable future—aircraft, oil equipment, consumer goods, food, and a good number of other commodities as well.

Senator FLAKE. The only economy is certainly shrinking from where it was. How much longer? They are looking to revive it for as long as they can. They are certainly looking to diversify and that will be a lot of your role, and certainly I think why they have so much interest in the TPP. We appreciate their leadership and help there. I hope it is something that the Congress can give the President the tools to actually give effect to.

But in the area of diversification, what are they doing?

Mr. ALLEN. Sir, I share your sentiments entirely with regard to TPP. The IMF just this week or last week released a report sug-

gesting that Brunei's GDP would be trending upward toward 6 percent this year and next. So their economy is doing quite well.

In terms of diversification, they are trying to move downstream in the petroleum business, develop tourism and other service exports, and develop other segments of their economy that employ more Bruneian citizens, and integrate themselves better in ASEAN and in the region.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Miller, I have not spent much time in Botswana. I spent a year in South Africa, a year in Namibia, and 6 months in Zimbabwe, so I have kind of surrounded it. But actually when I got back to college I wrote my master's thesis trying to explain Mugabe's hold on the electorate in Zimbabwe during the eighties. Now I think we have determined what that hold is. It is brute force and chicanery lately.

But now I think all of us are trying to explain the hold he has on the rest of Africa. It has been very disappointing to see particularly the other SADC countries countenance what has gone on in Zimbabwe. Botswana I will note was the one country to be somewhat critical initially, but then kind of fell in line with the other southern African countries.

What can you do in your role to make sure that there is the appropriate pressure and the appropriate stand taken by SADC countries at least standing up to what should not be countenanced in Zimbabwe? Long question, sorry.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you for that question, Senator. President Khama has taken some lonely and courageous and principled stands within SADC as a proponent of human rights and democracy across Africa, including Zimbabwe. He supported the global political agreement and sent a robust election observer delegation to Zimbabwe for the recent elections and was critical within SADC for the elections failing to abide by SADC's own standards.

Botswana and Zimbabwe enjoy full diplomatic relations, but Botswana is not shy about criticizing what it sees as violations of human rights in Zimbabwe.

I will take every opportunity to engage at the highest levels with the Government of Botswana and within SADC on issues of human rights. I would look forward to working with Ambassador Bruce Wharton and his fine team in Harare on regional human rights and good governance issues.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you. In most cases here—I mean, SADC has some great governing principles, as does the AU, and I think all we need to do is make sure these countries stand up for their own standards. Certainly Botswana has been more willing to do so than other countries in the region. Please pass on our thanks for that, and hopefully we can foster that kind of attitude to stand up for not Western standards or U.S. standards, but the standards, the election standards and otherwise, human rights standards, that SADC has itself propounded and other countries in the region.

But again, thank you all for your service. I have no doubt that you will serve the country well in this capacity.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Senator.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Flake.

I have just a few more questions, if I might, for Mr. Allen, who I did not get to in my first round. If you would, just speak further about how you are going to address the issue of sharia law and some challenges that may create for us in terms of further progress on TPP or our relationship with Brunei?

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Chairman. Firstly, I share your sentiments exactly on sharia, Brunei's sharia penal code. I think that the first thing that we need to do is monitor implementation, watch very closely. Thus far they are in the very early stages of this and we therefore need to monitor closely. We need to increase our dialogue on the importance of human rights and our expectations of human rights in Brunei.

We need to remind the Government of Brunei when and if it becomes necessary, when it becomes necessary, of their international human rights obligations. We need to speak out in favor of our principles, and I will not be shy in upholding our principles with the government and the people of Brunei.

With regard to TPP, it is useful to note that Brunei was a founding member, part of the P4. It is also important to note that trade is an important—trade and investment, economic exchange, is an important way to broaden support for the universal values that we hold dear. We have not used trade agreements in the past to address religious concerns.

Vis a vis the specific strategy for TPP, I would have to refer you to USTR, which is of course leading those important negotiations. But I look forward to being a partner with them to ensure the passage of TPP and also ensuring that our views on human rights are known and hopefully respected in Brunei.

Thank you.

Senator COONS. Well, given your long career service in Commerce, I would also be interested in how you view intellectual property rights, whether you view them as central to our making progress on TPP with Brunei and how essential you think advocating for a regime in trade that respects and protects American intellectual property rights, how central you think that is.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Senator. I believe it is absolutely essential. Intellectual property rights are core to our economy and, more particularly, to our future economic growth.

With regard to Brunei, there still are some intellectual property right problems, but they were lifted off of USTR's special watch list recently, thus indicating some progress made. That said, I understand that there still are problems and I look forward to working with the government of Brunei to further clean up and improve the protection for intellectual property rights.

Within the context of TPP, those negotiations are ongoing and clearly very important to our future economic prosperity and growth.

Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much, Mr. Allen.

Senator Flake, any further questions?

Senator FLAKE. No, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COONS. Well, with that I would like to thank all three of our nominees today. I would like to also thank, if I might, Mr. Heflin's daughter, Sara, Mr. Miller's wife, Ana, and sons, Andrew

and Alexander, and of course Micheline Tusenius and Christopher and Caroline. Thank you all for your support. I know there are many others here as well. We are grateful that you stuck with us and we are grateful for your willingness to serve.

Then we will keep the record of this panel open until noon tomorrow, Wednesday July 30, and I will recess for a third panel.

[Recess from 4:08 p.m. to 4:10 p.m.]

Senator KAINE [presiding]. This third panel of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is now called to order. When I asked folks to assemble, I betrayed my trial lawyer roots by indicating that the "witnesses" should take their places. These are not witnesses; they are nominees, and we are very, very glad to have all three of them here.

What we will do is, I will do a brief introduction of each of the three. Then I will ask them to make opening statements in the order that I introduced you, and following that I will have questions for each of you. Normally we would have other committee members here, but normally we do not do three panels. So you may only have to face my withering cross-examination this afternoon.

But again, welcome to all. These are all quite important positions.

So, to begin with introductions: Michele Sison has served as U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives since 2012. She previously served as assistant chief of mission in Baghdad, Iraq, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, and U.S. Ambassador to the UAE. She holds the rank of Career Minister in the U.S. Foreign Service. Her early assignments include: service as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for south Asian affairs and positions in Pakistan, India, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Benin, Togo, and Haiti, in the 32 years since 1982 when she joined the Foreign Service.

Sison also served as the State Department's director of career development in assignments in 2010 and 2011. She received her bachelor degree in political science from Wellesley and also studied at the London School of Economics. She is the mother of two grown daughters.

Ambassador Sison, welcome.

Our next two nominees are ambassadors in different ways. While they have not served in the Foreign Service, they have both served a huge percentage of their professional career as Americans abroad. The millions of Americans we have who live abroad, who proudly represent the United States as they do their business and raise their families abroad are ambassadors in a different way.

S. Fitzgerald Haney is a Principal and Head of Business Development in Client Service for Pzena Investment Management. He also has served as a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council since 2013. Quickly, his business background: from 2006 to 2007 he served with International Discount Telecommunication; 2002 to 2006 he was director of strategic planning at Depository Trust and Clearing Corporation; from 1999 to 2001 he was a senior associate at Israel Seed Partners in Jerusalem, Israel; previously vice president of marketing and strategic planning at Citicorp-Citibank in Mexico City and Monterrey. Prior to that, he had various positions with Pepsico, including significant stints in

Sao Paolo, Brazil, and also in Mexico City and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

He began his career after his bachelor's and master's degree from Georgetown, serving as a Procter and Gamble assistant brand manager in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Welcome, Mr. Haney. It is good to have you here.

Finally, Charles Adams is the Managing Partner of the Geneva office of the international law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer and Feld. He has worked in Geneva for over 20 years, serving as managing partner for two law firms, and his practice focuses heavily on international arbitrations in Europe and around the world.

He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Virginia School of Law, was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Kenya from 1968–70, and grew up living the patriotic and peripatetic life of a child of a long-time member of the American Foreign Service.

So, Mr. Adams, welcome to you as well.

I would like to ask you each now to make opening statements. Your written statements will be submitted for the record, but if you could speak for about 5 minutes that would be great, and then I will ask each of you questions. I will begin with Ambassador Sison.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHELE JEANNE SISON, OF MARYLAND, NOMINATED TO BE THE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, AND DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS; AND TO BE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED STATES DURING HER TENURE OF SERVICE AS DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Ambassador SISON. Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations. I am grateful to the President, Secretary Kerry, Ambassador Power for their faith and confidence in my ability to represent the American people at the United Nations.

I know my daughters, Allie and Jessica, are watching this hearing out in Arizona on their laptops and I would like to give them a heartfelt shout-out in recognition of the many years they spent accompanying me around the globe as Foreign Service kids. My two girls truly are my pride and joy.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed I look forward to advancing America's interests at the United Nations at a time of unprecedented challenges. President Obama has stressed that the global nature of the threats facing the world today cannot be adequately addressed by one nation alone. For that reason, America depends upon and must continue to demonstrate leadership within an effective, responsive, and responsible international system.

I have been privileged to serve our country three times as U.S. Ambassador, as you mentioned, in the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka, and Maldives. Throughout my career I have worked with our international partners on issues as varied as nonproliferation, counterterrorism, climate change, and post-conflict transition. Representing our Nation in challenging posts around the world from Haiti to Cote d'Ivoire and Pakistan to Iraq, I have

seen the United Nations—I have seen that the United Nations, for all its shortcomings, has the ability to complement and amplify U.S. efforts to achieve a number of our foreign policy goals, including to prevent and end armed conflicts, ensure accountability, and build the conditions for a lasting peace.

On the ground, I have worked alongside U.N. colleagues to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance to communities racked by conflict and natural disaster. And I have coordinated closely with U.N. personnel on efforts to aid refugees and internally displaced persons.

As U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, I witnessed how U.N. peacekeepers contribute to allaying tensions along the blue line between Israel and Lebanon. I have vigorously promoted U.S. interests by urging our partners overseas to adhere to U.N. Security Council resolutions designed to deter the proliferation efforts of Iran and North Korea, al-Qaeda-linked terrorism, and other grave threats to peace.

Of course, there can be no sustainable peace without justice and the rule of law. I have worked closely with the U.N. throughout my career to promote accountability and respect for human rights, as well as to address the issue of sexual or gender-based violence in conflict. While I believe no country can lead as effectively as the United States, it is not our Nation's job to solve every crisis around the world. The U.N. is an important forum for sharing that burden internationally.

If confirmed, I will seek to expand the number of capable and willing partners working with us at the U.N. on each of the issues I have mentioned and will seek to unite them in a common cause in tackling our many common challenges.

Finally, although I recognize the U.N.'s potential to advance critical U.S. priorities, I am also well aware of the U.N. system's limitations and the challenges it faces to ensure that its important work is performed efficiently and effectively. Some of these challenges are internal to the U.N. system and some reflect the competing priorities of its member states.

If confirmed, I will actively pursue our shared priority of ensuring that American taxpayer resources are used effectively to advance U.S. goals and objectives. I pledge to work to ensure U.N. fiscal discipline, transparency, ethics, oversight, and reform. I will also continue this administration's firm commitment to fight any unfair bias against Israel at the U.N.

Mr. Chairman, I have worked closely with this committee throughout my career and I greatly respect the active role of the committee in shaping American foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with you to advance U.S. national interests at the United Nations. I am honored to appear before you today and I appreciate your consideration of my nomination.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Sison follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR MICHELE JEANNE SISON

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations. I am grateful to the President, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for their faith and confidence in my ability to represent the American people at the United Nations.

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I have been privileged to serve our country three times as U.S. Ambassador: in the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka and Maldives. Throughout my career, I've worked with our international partners on issues as varied as nonproliferation, counterterrorism, climate change, and post-conflict transition. Representing our Nation in challenging posts around the world—from Haiti to Cote d'Ivoire, and Pakistan to Iraq—I have seen that the United Nations, for all its shortcomings, has the ability to complement and amplify U.S. efforts to achieve a number of our foreign policy goals, including to prevent and end armed conflicts, ensure accountability, and build the conditions for a lasting peace.

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Finally, although I recognize the U.N.'s potential to advance critical U.S. priorities, I am also well aware of the U.N. system's limitations and the challenges it faces to ensure that its important work is performed efficiently and effectively. Some of these challenges are internal to the U.N. system, and some reflect the competing priorities of its member states. If confirmed, I will actively pursue our shared priority of ensuring that American taxpayer resources are used effectively to advance U.S. goals and objectives. I pledge to work to ensure U.N. fiscal discipline, transparency, ethics, oversight, and reform. I will also continue this administration's firm commitment to fight any unfair bias against Israel at the U.N.

Mr. Chairman, I've worked closely with this committee throughout my career, and I greatly respect the active role of the committee in shaping American foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with you to advance U.S. national interests at the United Nations.

I am honored to appear before you today and I appreciate your consideration of my nomination. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Sison.

Mr. Haney.

STATEMENT OF STAFFORD FITZGERALD HANEY, OF NEW JERSEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA

Mr. HANEY. Chairman Kaine, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Costa Rica. I am profoundly humbled by this opportunity to serve and thank the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues to protect U.S. citizens in Costa Rica, deepen the bonds that unite our countries, and advance U.S. interests in Central America.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to acknowledge my family who are here with me today, starting with my wife, Rabbi Andrea Haney, and my children Asher, Nava, Eden, and Shaia. If I am confirmed, my wife and our four children will be joining me in San Jose, and it is only through their love and support that I am here today.

I would also like to acknowledge my brother-in-law, Adam Dobrick, and my sister-in-law, Alison Dobrick, and various friends supporting us today.

Finally, I would also like to mention my mother, father, and brother, who are here with us in our hearts. My mother, Sandra Haney, was and still is my hero. Working days and studying at night, she showed us by her example that the United States is truly a land of opportunity. She was also a link in a long line of family that has in various ways served our Nation proudly. From a fifth great-granduncle who fought in the Revolutionary War, to my brother who served both overseas and at home, to my great-uncle who recently received an honorary doctorate in public service, we have a long and proud tradition of serving our Nation. It is in my mother's honor and in her memory that I hope if I am confirmed to dedicate my service.

Costa Rica is an important ally in a region of critical strategic importance to the United States. It is the most stable democracy in Central America. Its strong commitment to investing in education and health has helped it achieve literacy, life expectancy, infant mortality, and income levels that are considered among the best in the region.

It is no surprise that these positive attributes have attracted significant numbers of U.S. citizens and today approximately 100,000 call Costa Rica home and more than 1 million visit annually. If confirmed, their safety and well-being will be my top priority.

Despite its successes, Costa Rica, like its neighbors, confronts many challenges, including security challenges, as international drug trafficking organizations and organized crime increasingly penetrate Central America. The United States and Costa Rica enjoy an excellent partnership in security cooperation. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government of Costa Rica to ensure that organized crime does not undermine the country's economy and democratic institutions.

Another of my highest priorities if confirmed will be promoting greater Central American integration. The region will not prosper without better regional cooperation on trade, infrastructure development, energy integration, and investment.

Given its stability and relative prosperity, Costa Rica is not a source of the unaccompanied young people who have been streaming north to escape poverty, violence, and hopelessness, and in fact is itself a destination. Costa Rica can play a constructive role in working to create conditions in Central America that are conducive to reducing poverty and violence. President Solis has emphasized he is committed to working to promote regional integration and prosperity, and if I am confirmed I will support him in those efforts.

I have many years experience living and working in the international businesses in Latin America and understand the region and its challenges. As was made clear during the recent investment promotion visit to the United States, Costa Rica is serious about improving its business climate and attracting foreign investment. If confirmed, my private sector experience would be an asset in helping Costa Rica advance in those areas. It would also serve me in working to advocate for stronger intellectual property protection, promote entrepreneurship and private-public partnerships, and ensure that U.S. companies and investors encounter a fair and level playing field for doing business in Costa Rica.

If confirmed, I will also work closely with Costa Rica to advance the many other policy objectives and priorities the United States and Costa Rica share. Costa Rica shares our commitment to protecting democratic freedoms and human rights and has made it clear it will resist any attempts to weaken the inter-American human rights system. Costa Rica will also continue to be a strong partner with the United States on initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change and promote renewable energy use and sustainable development.

I believe Costa Rica has the opportunity to become a regional hub of innovation, good governance, and increased competitiveness. As our dedicated team at Embassy San Jose states, a safe, prosperous, and green Costa Rica benefits the citizens of both our nations.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for your consideration of my nomination and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Haney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY STAFFORD FITZGERALD HANEY

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Costa Rica.

I am profoundly humbled by this opportunity to serve and thank the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Costa Rica and deepen the bonds that unite our countries.

With the Chairman's permission, I would like to acknowledge friends and family who are with me today; starting with my wife, Rabbi Andrea Haney, and my children, Asher, Nava, Eden, and Shaia. If I am confirmed, my wife and our four children will be joining me in San Jose, and it is only through their love and support that I am here today. I would also like to acknowledge my mother-in-law, Betsy Dobrick, my brother and sister-in-law, Adam and Allison Dobrick, and various close friends who are here today and whose support means so much to me and my family.

Finally, I would also like to mention my mother, father, and brother, may they rest in peace, who are here with us in our hearts. My mother, Sandra Haney, was, and still is, my hero. As a young widow with two young children, she left home and family to provide my brother and me with the best education and opportunities she could. Working during the day and going to school at night, she showed us, by her

example, that the United States is truly the land of opportunity for those who work hard on a level playing field. She did not have it easy as a single African-American woman raising two children alone in the 1970s, but she never gave up and she knew her sacrifices would allow her children to have a better life. It was her firmly held belief, one that she passed on, that America's core values should serve as an example throughout the world. She also was a link in a long line of family that has, in various ways, served our Nation proudly. From a 5th great-granduncle who fought in the Revolutionary War, to my brother who served both overseas and at home, to my great-uncle who recently received an honorary doctorate in public service and was recognized by the Tennessee state legislature, to my mother's marches and sit-ins to protest what she saw as injustices not compatible with the America we aspire to be—we have a long and proud tradition of serving our Nation. It is in my mother's honor and in her memory that I hope, if I am confirmed, to dedicate my service.

Costa Rica is an important ally in a region of critical strategic importance to the United States. It is the most stable democracy in Central America, and its long-held traditions of protecting human rights and freedom of expression are a model for the region. Its strong commitment to investing in education and health has helped Costa Rica achieve literacy, life expectancy, infant mortality, and income levels that are significantly better than and serve as a good example for the rest of Central America. It is no surprise that these positive attributes have attracted significant numbers of U.S. citizens to the country. Today, approximately 100,000 U.S. citizens call Costa Rica home, and more than 1 million visit annually. If confirmed, their safety and well-being will be my top priority.

Despite its successes, Costa Rica, like its neighbors, confronts many challenges, including security challenges, as international drug trafficking organizations and organized crime increasingly penetrate Central America. The United States and Costa Rica enjoy an excellent partnership in security cooperation. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government of Costa Rica to ensure that organized crime does not undermine the country's economy and democratic institutions.

If confirmed, another of my highest priorities will be promoting greater Central American integration. The region will not prosper without better regional cooperation on trade, infrastructure development, energy integration, and investment. Greater integration has long been an aspiration in Central America, but effective mechanisms for achieving that goal have remained elusive. The United States can play a constructive role in helping Central America create jobs and economic opportunities for its 43 million people by helping the region improve infrastructure, integrate markets, reduce nontariff barriers, and benefit more from its free trade agreement.

Given its stability and relative prosperity, Costa Rica is not a source of the unaccompanied young people who have been streaming north to escape poverty, violence, and hopelessness, and, in fact, may be a destination itself. Costa Rica can play a constructive regional leadership role in working to create conditions in Central America that are conducive to reducing poverty and violence and creating jobs and opportunity. President Solis has emphasized he is committed to working to promote regional integration and prosperity, and, if confirmed, I will support him in those efforts. I will also work to create strong linkages between the American Chambers of Commerce in Central America, so that the private sector is fully incorporated into the process of seeking solutions to the region's development challenges.

I have many years' experience living and working in international business in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and Brazil. I understand the region and the challenges it faces. As President Solis made clear during his recent investment-promotion visit to the United States, Costa Rica is serious about improving its business climate, and attracting foreign investment. If confirmed, my private sector experience would be an asset in working with Costa Rica to advance in those areas. It would also serve me to advocate for stronger intellectual property protection, promote entrepreneurship and private-public partnerships, and ensure that U.S. companies and investors encounter a fair and level playing field for doing business in Costa Rica.

If confirmed, I will also work closely with Costa Rica to advance the many other policy objectives and priorities the United States and Costa Rica share. Costa Rica shares our commitment to protecting democratic freedoms and human rights, and has made clear it will vigilantly resist any attempts to weaken the Inter-American Human Rights System. Costa Rica will also continue to be a strong partner with the United States on initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change and promote renewable energy use and sustainable development. I believe Costa Rica has the opportunity to become a regional hub of innovation and the potential to assume a leadership role in advancing good governance and prosperity throughout Central America.

As our dedicated team at Embassy San Jose states: A safe, prosperous, and green Costa Rica benefits the citizens of both our nations.

Mr. Chairman, committee members, I thank you again for your consideration of my nomination to serve as Ambassador to Costa Rica, and I welcome your questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Haney.

Mr. Adams.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES C. ADAMS, JR., OF MARYLAND, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

Mr. ADAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, and it is a tremendous honor to have been asked to serve in this post. Like my colleagues, I thank President Obama and Senator Kerry for the confidence that they have shown in me and if confirmed very much look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to further U.S. interests in Finland.

I regret only that my wife, Vera, and my 12-year-old daughter, Maya, who if I am confirmed will accompany me to Helsinki, could not be here with me today. I hope that they are watching on the Internet back at home in Geneva, although it is way past Maya's bedtime by now.

I hope also watching is my son, Matthew, who is 31, who lives and works in Los Angeles, of whom I am very proud and who has been a great support to me throughout the process leading up to my appearance here before you today.

I do have here a group of dear friends and law partners whose support I very much appreciate also.

If I may, I would like to say just a few words about why my appearance here today before you is of such personal significance to me. As you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, my late father Charles C. Adams dedicated the entirety of his professional career to representing the United States as a Foreign Service officer, devotedly supported throughout by my late mother, Florence Schneider Adams.

They and what came over time to be a family of six kids spent many years in posts all over the world, principally in Europe and Africa, between assignments back home here in the United States. I thus had the opportunity to witness at firsthand, through the eyes of the Foreign Service brat that I was, the tremendous skill and savvy and dedication and courage that my parents and all other professionals of the Foreign Service brought to their service to their country and the burdens and the sacrifices that they were prepared to endure.

After service in the Peace Corps in Kenya in 1968 to 1970 and after law school at Mr. Jefferson's university in Charlottesville, I chose to enter the private sector, and I have practiced international law and international arbitration at high levels for now over 40 years. But I always have had very close to my heart the idea that as a salute to the memory of my mom and dad and to the magnificent men and women of the Foreign Service with whom they served, that I might some day be afforded the opportunity and the

extraordinary privilege to serve my country as an ambassador of the United States.

And should I be honored by the confirmation of this nomination, that long-held aspiration will have been fulfilled.

I am very excited that the President has asked me to represent the United States in Finland. Finland is a very close U.S. partner. During the cold war Finland served as a key interlocutor between East and West, hosting numerous international summits, including those leading to the Helsinki Final Act, the founding document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which will celebrate its 40th anniversary next year.

Finland has been a member of the European Union since 1995, has developed an innovation-led economy, engages closely with the United States and the NATO Partnership for Peace program, including in Afghanistan, and leads in promoting human rights around the globe. Finland's participation in multilateral fora is a core component of its foreign policy. Finland is an important partner of the United States in international organizations like the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. And if confirmed, I will work to sustain and advance the strong U.S.-Finland bilateral relationship.

I will work to do so by championing U.S. national interests across three areas: our shared security, shared prosperity, and shared values. First, on our shared security, ever since 1950 Finland has been a dedicated participant in U.S. peacekeeping missions around the world and, although not a member of NATO, Finland is a participant, as I said, in the Partnership for Peace and maintains very high levels of cooperation with us.

Finland has also played a critical role in addressing the crisis in Syria through its participation in the mission to transport and destroy Syrian chemical weapons and has provided $21.9 million in humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people.

Second, the United States and Finland share the vision of a strong, robust, trans-Atlantic economy that delivers for all of our citizens, and if confirmed one of my top priorities will be to increase economic cooperation between Finland and the United States through expedited, expanded bilateral trade through the TTIP, Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Finland has played a very active role in advancing our shared security, economic and social values, and if confirmed I look forward to representing my country and advancing a still deeper connection between the United States and Finland. I am very grateful for the opportunity to address you and am at your disposal to answer any questions you may have. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Adams follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHARLES C. ADAMS, JR

Mr. Chairman and honorable members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland. It is a tremendous honor to be asked to serve in this post, and I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to further U.S. interests in Finland.

With your kind permission, I would like to say a few words about my personal background and why this makes the privilege to serve as an Ambassador so meaningful, if confirmed by the Senate.

My late father, Charles C. Adams, dedicated the entirety of his professional career to representing the United States as a Foreign Service officer, supported throughout by my late mother, Florence Schneider Adams. They, and what came over time to be a family of six children, spent many years in posts all over the world, principally in Europe and Africa, between assignments back home here in the United States. I had the opportunity to witness at first hand, through the eyes of the "foreign service brat" that I was, the enormous skill, savvy, dedication, and courage that my parents, and all other professionals of the Foreign Service, brought to their service to their country, and the burdens and sacrifices they were prepared to endure.

After service in the Peace Corps in East Africa in 1968–70, I chose to enter the private sector, and have practiced international law and policy at high levels for now over 40 years. But I have always had close to my heart the idea that, as a salute to the memory of my mom and dad, and to the magnificent men and women of the Foreign Service with whom they served, I might someday be afforded the extraordinary privilege of serving my country as a United States Ambassador.

I am very excited that the President asked me to represent the United States in Finland. Finland is a close U.S. partner. During the cold war, Finland served as a key interlocutor between East and West, hosting numerous international summits, including those leading to the Helsinki Final Act, which will celebrate its 40th anniversary next year. Finland has been a member of the European Union since 1995, has developed an innovation-led economy, engages closely with us as a NATO partner, including in Afghanistan, and leads in promoting human rights around the globe.

Finland's participation in multilateral fora is a core component of its foreign policy. Finland is an important partner of the United States in international organizations like the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

If confirmed, I will work to sustain and advance the strong U.S.-Finland bilateral relationship. I will work to do so by championing U.S. national interests across three areas: our shared security, shared prosperity, and shared values.

First, on our shared security: ever since the 1950s, Finland has been a dedicated participant in U.N. peacekeeping missions around the world. Although not a member of NATO, Finland is a participant in NATO's Partnership for Peace program and maintains a high level of cooperation and interoperability with the Alliance.

Finland has contributed troops to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and has pledged $8 million per year from 2015 to 2017 in support for the Afghan National Security Forces. Finland has taken the lead on implementation of UNSCR 1325, the Resolution for Women, Peace and Security, which seeks to protect women's rights and participation in Afghan society.

Finland also played a critical role in addressing the crisis in Syria through its participation in the mission to transport and destroy Syrian chemical weapons and has provided $21.9 million in humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people.

Second, the United States and Finland share the vision of a strong, robust transatlantic economy that delivers for all our citizens. That is why, if confirmed, one of my top priorities will be increasing economic cooperation between Finland and the United States, through expanded bilateral trade and investment. Finland strongly supports a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which, if successfully negotiated, could further increase bilateral economic ties and strengthen the overall U.S.-EU economic relationship. I will also work closely with the Finns on the increasingly important Arctic region. Finland is eager to work with us on our upcoming chairmanship of the Arctic Council, and will take over the chairmanship after us in 2017.

Finally, on our shared values, the U.S.-Finnish relationship continues to thrive because of the strong people-to-people ties between our two nations. These relationships are the lifeblood of the U.S.-Finnish partnership. If confirmed, I will travel throughout the country meeting with students, media, local officials and civil society listening to their priorities and concerns and speaking to the enduring value of our cooperation.

Finland has played an active role in advancing our shared security, economic, and social values. If confirmed, I look forward to representing my country in advancing a still deeper connection between the United States and Finland.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have addressed you today, and am at your disposal to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much, Mr. Adams. Wonderful testimony, both written and oral presentations from each of you.

I will start, Ambassador Sison, with you. I share your opening comments about the U.N., were my views exactly. The U.N. is frequently vexing and frustrating and yet it is a proud U.S. accomplishment. Even as the League of Nations was unwinding in the 1930s, long before the Second World War started, President Roosevelt in his first term knew there would need to be a successor and began to plan for the creation of the U.N. as early as 1933 or 1934. The war delayed it, but obviously it was—the U.S.'s participation, leadership, financial support, has been critical to the organization, and I think we can be proud of many of the accomplishments of the U.N. over the course of its history.

Still, there are challenges at the U.N. One of the ones that has sort of been most vexing to me has been the relative impotence of the Security Council in dealing with the civil war in Syria. The United States is the largest provider of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in the world, but much of that aid has been to Syrian refugees outside of Syria. The Bashar al-Assad government has not been cooperating significantly with humanitarian aid delivery, except in various fits and starts when the PR would suggest that he should. But often in the U.N. Security Council, except for one or two occasions, Russia, usually with the agreement of China, has blocked resolutions to take a more vigorous posture.

If you would, offer your thoughts on the Syrian refugee crisis, which I think is one of the greatest humanitarian crises of the last 50 years, and what the U.N. can do more, especially in light of the recent resolution that Russia signed onto, even to allow cross-border humanitarian aid without the agreement of the Bashar al-Assad government?

Ambassador SISON. Thank you, Senator. Indeed, after 3 years of fighting there are more than 10.8 million people in need of assistance and 6.4 million internally displaced, due of course to the actions of the Assad regime and its actions against the Syrian people.

U.S. leadership has been critical at the United Nations in addressing these pressing humanitarian assistance needs. As you noted, the second humanitarian assistance U.N. Security Council resolution was just passed this month, July 14. UNSCR 2165, as you noted, authorized the U.N.'s use of four border crossings from Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq to deliver the humanitarian assistance. And just last Thursday we saw the first convoy of nine trucks cross into Syria with nine truck loads of badly needed foodstuffs and medicines.

Of course, there is also pressure on the countries outside of Syria, Syria's neighbors: Lebanon, I understand you recently traveled out there; Jordan, Turkey, of course. That has impacted those neighboring countries as well, and I will get back to that in a moment.

U.S. leadership at the U.N. has been critical in focusing an overall strategy to continue to push as much humanitarian assistance into Syria through, as possible, through all available channels. There is a dual strategy that we are promoting with the U.N., funding organizations with a presence in Damascus, yes, including the U.N., but also funding organizations, NGOs and U.N. agencies, to conduct this cross-border humanitarian assistance deliveries into the areas where the most vulnerable populations are located.

Of course, this is very challenging for the U.N. agencies on the ground. Severe security challenges. The Assad regime's minimal steps to facilitate cross-line and cross-border access. Those aid agencies out there are having a challenging time to get this assistance to the millions of people in need.

Now, I mentioned the focus also on the neighboring countries, because of course there have been outflows of Syrian refugees into Lebanon, into Turkey, into Jordan. So U.S. leadership is also working to keep those borders open to those seeking to flee; advocacy for increased donor support to assist these vulnerable populations, and to provide not just humanitarian assistance, but development aid, in those neighboring countries.

The U.N. is now integrating what they call the resilience pillar, having a regional response plan that addresses the economic and development needs of these receiving countries. So again, U.S. leadership has been critical in addressing the needs on the ground, and of course in getting those two humanitarian assistance resolutions through the Security Council, as well as the chemical weapons U.N. Security Council resolution.

Senator KAINE. I am so glad that you mentioned your service in Lebanon and connected it to it. When I was in Lebanon in February, talking to a nation with a population of about 4 million that is dealing with a million refugees that have arrived in the space of 3 years made me wonder, how would the United States deal with people fleeing violence from other countries in those numbers. We have seen a little bit of how we would respond recently as people fleeing violence in Central America have come to our southern border.

But the challenges that—I believe the challenges that this humanitarian crisis will continue to present will be a major part of your daily headache and responsibility there.

It has to my way of thinking disclosed some continuing challenges with the Security Council and they may not be easy to fix. But what are your thoughts about proposals that are on the table to potentially consider either enlarging the membership of the Security Council or changing the way that the membership is chosen?

Ambassador SISON. Thank you, Senator. In terms of U.N. Security Council reform, of course the United States believes that the Security Council and the U.N. in general need to reflect the world that we live in, 21st century. The administration is open in principle to a modest expansion of the permanent and nonpermanent memberships, although I would underscore that any consideration of expansion of the permanent membership would of course need to take into consideration the ability to contribute commensurately to the U.N. Charter's requirements of maintaining peace and security around the world. We would remain opposed, however, to any alteration or expansion of the veto.

Senator KAINE. What is the current status of the U.S. contributions to the U.N. peacekeeping operations, since you mentioned that very important mission? There has been some controversy about the status of U.S. contributions to that particular mission in general. We have been such a sizable funder of U.N. operations. Talk a little about that and whether you see the need for any addi-

tional U.S. peacekeeping operations in response to security challenges that are out there now?

Ambassador SISON. The United States, indeed, is the major contributor to peacekeeping operations with our assessment at 28.4 percent now, Senator. Of course, U.N. peacekeeping operations in many of the hot spots around the world promote U.S. national security interests by helping preserve or stabilize, restore international peace and security, including in places of direct U.S. national interest. Here I am thinking of Mali, for example, where we saw al-Qaeda-linked terrorists threaten not only Mali, but the region.

Moreover, U.N. peacekeeping operations help us maintain global stability, avoid the need for more costly intervention. Yes, we do contribute over a quarter of U.N. peacekeeping operations' costs. Other member states, however, share that burden with the remaining 70-plus percent, as well as contributing their troops and police.

So we can think of this as a global bargain, if you will, with over 100,000 peacekeepers deployed, coming from 122 countries around the world into these hot spots around the world, over 16 multidimensional U.N. peacekeeping operations.

Senator KAINE. How about financial reform? I spent a day at the U.N. when Ambassador Rice was the U.N. Ambassador. I would recommend it to all my colleagues on Foreign Relations to go spend a day at the U.N., visiting various missions, visiting the Secretary General. I went to a Security Council meeting.

I asked Ambassador Rice when I walked into my meeting with the Secretary General: Is there something that you want me to say that will be helpful to you? Very high on her very short list was to continue to press the case for management and budgetary reforms at the U.N. You alluded to that in your testimony as a priority. Would you talk a little bit more about that?

Ambassador SISON. Thank you, Senator. If confirmed, one of my top priorities of course would be to be very focused on making sure that U.S. taxpayer dollars going into the regular budget assessment or peacekeeping budget assessment, that those U.S. taxpayer dollars are being used wisely and well, and that our U.S. leadership at the U.N. is focused on making it more transparent, more effective, more efficient.

I can see as I prepared for this hearing, sir, that this has been a very successful focus for our U.S.–U.N. team up there in New York. U.S. leadership at the U.N., for example, in the 68th session achieved a 1-year freeze in professional staff salaries and a 2-year freeze in benefits. This is pathbreaking, groundbreaking, up at the U.N.

U.S. leadership continues with a focus on curbing growth in the compensation costs up there at the U.N. In April of this year the United States cochaired the Geneva Group, which is a group that looks at these management and budgetary issues, and we advocated additional measures to reduce staff compensation growth across the U.N. common system. We have also focused on the ballooning U.N. air travel expenditures. We have focused on our U.S. Government U.N. transparency and accountability initiative, which is a comprehensive review of each U.N. entity's audit and whistleblower protections. We are working closely with the U.N.'s Office

of Internal Oversight Services, which is the entity that focuses on waste, fraud, and abuse. Of course, the United States has been right up there in front, strongly supporting efforts to further strengthen OIOS's audit and investigation functions.

Senator KAINE. Could you talk a little bit—I am very happy you mentioned one of the areas that we often find vexing, which is some reflexive anti-Israel policies in the U.N. I remember when I was in Israel in April 2009 as Governor of Virginia. There was a U.N.—I believe it was UNESCO—meeting in Geneva that one of the invited keynote speakers was Ahmedinejad, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad of Iran, and to have a Holocaust denier speaking to an international organization of that kind—and the sad coincidence of timing, it was during Yom Hashoah in Israel, and it just seemed so odd.

There are many instances like that, where in the U.N., as an American audience looking on, we see that reflexive anti-Israel attitude. What can you do to deal with that? Let us bring it to a point that we are all very concerned about now. Talk a little bit about the role that the U.N. can play in trying to find a path to a cease-fire in Gaza, where in the calm of a cease-fire the issues and grievances can be put on the table so that we can continue the quest to find that path to what the U.N. called for in 1947, which is a peaceful Israel and Palestine living side by side?

Ambassador SISON. Yes, thank you, Senator. Indeed there is all too often an unfair, biased targeting of Israel in many U.N. fora, and if confirmed I would certainly work and do my utmost to fight against this type of unfair and biased targeting of our friend and ally, Israel.

There have been a number of positive agenda actions, if you will, including Israel in a number of key consultative groups recently. For example, the Western European and Others grouping out in Geneva, the so-called JUSCANZ human rights consultative group up in New York. These consultative groupings are really where a lot of the work behind the scenes at the U.N. is accomplished, and by bringing Israel into these consultative groupings I believe we can definitely move forward in addressing some of our mutual concerns.

On the second aspect of your question, Senator, of course we saw yesterday, just after midnight Monday, the U.N. Security Council calling for immediate and unconditional humanitarian cease-fire. Of course, we have seen Secretary Kerry and Secretary General Ban Ki-moon out in the region over the last several days, last week. Of course, the immediate goal for all of us is stopping the violence, to look for a cessation of hostilities, to look for a cease-fire along the contours of the November 2012 Israel-Hamas cease-fire.

So the U.N. of course is out there with U.S. support, providing assistance to the civilian population through the U.N. Relief Works Agency. But the bottom line—and this is the political good offices, of course, of the U.N., the United States, and many others—is to work for a cease-fire, an end to the violence. Of course we condemn Hamas's attacks against Israel, support Israel's right to defend itself, but at the same time—at the same time, are very concerned

about the civilian deaths, Palestinian civilians, Israeli civilians, Israeli IDF soldiers.

So the bottom line is all of us working together to stop the violence, to promote a ceaselfire agreement.

Senator KAINE. Well, you are coming to the position at a challenging time. There are so many other issues I could ask you about, but in September we have both the visits of the heads of state to the United Nations as well as the U.S. turn to be in the lead position in the Security Council, and much work to do. But I appreciate your service and congratulate you on your nomination.

Let me move to questions for Mr. Haney. We have really been grappling with this issue of the unaccompanied minors coming to the border. We are trying to learn a little bit from Costa Rica because, while the countries in the northern triangle are the three countries, are the primary countries where these youngsters are coming from, including seeking asylum in Costa Rica and other nations, they are generally, the countries where these countries are coming from struggle with high levels of corruption in law enforcement and the judiciary.

But Costa Rica is known for a largely uncorrupt police force. Along with effective law enforcement, Costa Rica enjoys low levels of impunity compared to northern triangle neighbors, where roughly 9 of 10 cases are never even prosecuted.

You alluded to this a bit in your testimony, but what are some of the factors that explain this difference and how can Costa Rica potentially serve as a model for the other nations in the region?

Mr. HANEY. Senator, thank you. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your question. As you said, I think Costa Rica has the opportunity to serve as a model for the rest of the region as a home-grown success story, if you may, of what the emphasis on human rights and democratic institutions that have been long established within the Costa Rica history.

Costa Rica has, because of its investment it has made in education and in health, it has achieved a level of prosperity, and without violence, that its neighbors lack, unfortunately, today. I think with the help of President Solis, who is very focused on regional integration and very focused on how Costa Rica is not an island, it is part of the isthmus, and will face the same challenges sooner or later as its neighbors do if it does not help come to some kind of agreement on how we can best face these challenges.

So I think Costa Rica just by its following the current path that it is on can set a good example. I think you mentioned the judiciary and the police. We have done a lot of work with both in Costa Rica. We have a very strong partnership as far as security cooperation, as far as capacity-building and training. I think that with our ongoing support Costa Rica will maintain that and can actually serve as a center for training for the rest of the region as well.

I think it is very important that we always do remember that you cannot be more willing than your partner and you cannot get your partner to be more able than they are. I think in Costa Rica we have a very unique opportunity for a very willing and capable partner at the same time.

Senator KAINE. I share your assessment. One danger that I would see that we might have in Costa Rica is—I lived in Hon-

duras 30 years or so ago and I kind of pay attention, special attention to Honduras, which is now, sadly, the murder capital of the world. It was not that way when I lived there. It was not that way 15 years ago. But it seemed to be that there was some significant success in U.S. efforts to fight drug trade in Mexico and Colombia, but drug trade is mobile, almost like capital is, and as there were more effective law enforcement efforts in the countries where there were serious problems some of the traffickers and transit routes rerouted. And to the extent that we take some significant steps with respect to the northern triangle countries, there could be pressure for them to reroute to Costa Rica as well.

So that is something that will require ongoing significant security work between the nations. It is good to know that the partnership is strong and that the civil institutions begin with a strength.

Let me switch to a strength of yours, which is on the international economic side, given your background. Costa Rica has been the most stable, not just from a security standpoint, but economically, of the countries in Central America. But recently there have been some concerns. American firms have done some downsizing and at least cited as a reason for the downsizing—there may be other reasons—that they were concerned about some of the potential fiscal policies of the incoming President Solis. So we saw some American firms, like Intel and Citibank, reduce some of their presence—I am sorry, Bank of America, not Citibank—reduce some of their presence, citing that.

What do you think of the current sort of economic climate, fiscal climate, in Costa Rica, and what can you do with the experience you bring to the table to promote U.S. foreign direct investment there and find opportunities for American businesses as well?

Mr. HANEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the best example—the best indication we have had of the current administration, President Solis's, commitment to making Costa Rica as attractive as possible for U.S. and other foreign investment is the fact that his first trip outside of the region as President was an investment promotion trip here to the United States, where he went to Silicon Valley, to New York, and then eventually D.C.

I think that he very well made the case that Costa Rica realizes that it has some challenges around some bureaucracy, around infrastructure, that it needs to work on, both physical as well as investment, but overall that the country was very willing and looking for that FDI, that foreign direct investment, and to work with U.S. corporations in country.

So while Intel did, for example, shut one of its fab plants down in Costa Rica or is in the process of doing so, at the same time it announced that it is opening up a mega-lab, an R and D center, within the country. So I think that also points to one of my key priorities, which is Costa Rica can serve as a hub of innovation. It has the human capital because it has invested in education over the last few generations.

So I think my private sector background of working both with entrepreneurs as well as with the broad overall international business, I would hope to help Costa Rica address some of the issues that might be limiting additional investment from U.S. firms within the country.

Senator KAINE. What is your sense of how Costa Rica has taken advantage of CAFTA? Have they tried to leverage the free trade agreement in Central America and the Dominican Republic effectively or do you think there is still some significantly greater up side that could be realized in looking at trade?

Mr. HANEY. Thank you, Senator. I think as far as Costa Rica goes, by almost any measure of success it has been the most successful country within CAFTA. It was the last one, as you know, to actually implement after a national referendum. But it today accounts for about 40 percent of all CAFTA trade, just Costa Rica alone.

So I think—but I still think there are opportunities within Costa Rica's ability to leverage CAFTA to its benefit, both within country—I think it can go deeper into the Costa Rica economy. So we are looking at additional inclusion around development. So not just the first tier, not just the export sector, but we are really thinking of how do you drive the benefits of CAFTA into the small and medium enterprises, which will be really the engine for ongoing continued economic development within Costa Rica.

I think on the second point, that Costa Rica, and I think all the CAFTA countries themselves, have not taken as much advantage of the intraregional trade as they can. So while they have been very focused on exporting to the United States and taking advantage of the CAFTA–DR that way, the trade within the seven countries themselves has not blossomed as one would hope. I think that is one of the tools we have to help address some of these core issues that are driving some of what we have seen of late within Central America.

Senator KAINE. And President Solis's regional integration goal would suggest that would be something that he would also share, a priority he would share.

Mr. HANEY. Correct. He has stated many times that he believes that only with regional integration will Costa Rica and the region itself be able to be competitive in the 21st century. When you think about Costa Rica, which has done fairly well for itself—it is an upper-middle-income country—but it is under 5 million people. President Solis recognizes that a market of 5 million versus a market of 43 million, which is all the Central American countries together, is a vast difference on investment and scalability.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Haney, thank you very much for your answers.

Let me move to Mr. Adams now. Talk about the very delicate issue of the Russia-Finland relationship? Even to today, as the EU in the last couple days have been grappling with sanctions of Russia following activities in the Ukraine and the downing of the Air Malaysia flight, Finland's economy is very connected to the Russian economy, tourism, and other ways. They have been a little bit reluctant, but seem to be a solid partner in the announcements we are seeing come out of the EU today.

But talk a little bit about that relationship and the current status of it especially in light of the activities involving Russia and its neighbor in Ukraine?

Mr. ADAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recent events in the Crimea and in the Ukraine have put something of a spotlight on pre-

cisely the subject that you have mentioned, the long historical relationship of Finland and Russia. As you know, Finland at one time, from 1809 to 1917, was part of Russia as an autonomous grand duchy of the tsar. And from December 6, 1917, forward, the date of Finland's independence, its relationship with Russia has been a complex and delicate one.

Naturally, with 1,300 kilometers of border, this is the second-longest border of Russia with its neighbors to the west after the Ukraine. The economic ties have been very strong. Russia is Finland's single largest export market. It is its second-largest supplier after Sweden in the most recent statistics, for fiscal 2013.

It is true that Finland's economy to a substantial degree is interlinked with that of Russia. On the other hand, Finland has been a staunch supporter of the EU and has stated its intention of implementing and enforcing to the fullest degree the EU sanctions recently announced against Russia, this notwithstanding the fact that of all the members of the EU it is Finland which in proportional terms could be said to have the most to lose. But notwithstanding, Finland is very much behind the full set of sanctions recently announced.

What also I think is important to take note of is the fact that Finland is in a unique position, because of its proximity and historical connection to Russia, to state the position of the EU and to state the position of the United States as Finland's partner within the Partnership for Peace in NATO on the issues which have brought this crisis to a head.

Just last week, President Niinisto in a telephone conversation with President Putin emphasized the necessity of Russia's doing that which would be required to resolve the crisis and to get past the matter of sanctions in the interest of Russia and in the interests of Finland as well, in order that the matter of the sanctions could be addressed in the context of a resolution of the crisis which is at hand.

Finland has played a constructive role, will continue to play a constructive role, and if confirmed I will continue to encourage Finland in taking a strong stand in alliance with its partners within the EU and in also implementation of the policy which has been that of the United States.

Senator KAINE. You indicated in your opening testimony that Finland had often played a role of an interlocutor between the United States and the old Soviet Union. That role of interlocutor could be as important in the 21st century as it was in the 20th. As you point out, for cultural reasons they have a unique ability to do that. I would encourage you in that regard.

Are there any issues with respect to the negotiation of the TTIP that either will cause controversy in Finland or where Finland and the United States are currently likely to not see eye to eye?

Mr. ADAMS. Actually, Mr. Chairman, Finland is a particularly strong proponent of TTIP and has taken positions within the councils of the EU which are much more aligned with those of the United States with respect to the issues currently under discussion than some of the countries of the EU to the south, particularly when it comes to issues pertaining to agriculture and to geographic indicators.

Finland has been looking forward to a successful conclusion of the round of negotiations on TTIP because Finland, as does the United States, views this accord or the potentiality of this accord as a strong impetus to increase trade, to increase shared prosperity, to increase job creation, both within the EU and in the United States.

Senator KAINE. One of the areas where the United States and Finland would seem to have a lot in common and the ability to learn from one another is the great innovation culture that Finland has been known for. I doubt it is—I suspect it is a causal relationship, not even—more than even a correlation, that they are also known for educational success. My wife is Secretary of Education in Virginia and recently met with the Minister of Education from Finland on a trip to the United States.

Talk a little about that sort of innovation and education success culture in Finland and how you might as Ambassador share best practices back and forth between the United States and Finland?

Mr. ADAMS. I would be happy to do that, Mr. Chairman. You correctly say that innovation has been a hallmark of modern day Finland and the source of its quite remarkable success. For a country of 5.3 million people, Finland punches far above its weight in matters of innovation, in matters of technological development.

The United States has recognized this. The United States has looked for ways to enhance its cooperation with Finland in areas of innovation. In point of fact, the United States Embassy in Helsinki in February of last year inaugurated its own innovation center as a part of the Embassy complex in the presence of President Niinisto and Members of his Cabinet, the purpose of the innovation center being to function as a focal point and as a forum for interchange between the United States and Finland in precisely this area.

Another way in which I think these shared exchanges can be enhanced is through the International Visitor Leadership Program, of which Finland has been a very active participant. In fact, President Niinisto himself is an alumnus of an International Visitor Leadership Program visit to the United States, as are several of the Members of his Cabinet. And many of these exchanges have focused on the area of education, where, as you say, Finland and the United States each will greatly benefit from a continuation of these exchanges in looking to further the excellence of the respective systems of education.

Senator KAINE. One last question for you, Mr. Adams, and you alluded a little bit to this in your testimony. But just talk about the current status of U.S.-Finish defense cooperation, which I know would have a sensitivity because of Finland's geography and proximity to Russia. But it seems like the partnership has been a good one and I would like you to elaborate a little bit on that.

Mr. ADAMS. It has been an excellent one, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned, Finland is not a member of NATO. It is a member and full participant in NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Currently Finland has 95 troops in Afghanistan. There are 21 in Kosovo in the context of the NATO peacekeeping program in that country. Finland has also been a participant over the years in various U.N. peacekeeping missions.

The United States and Finland have emphasized the point of the interoperability of Finland's military and of its equipment with that of NATO, and Finland has proven to be a very strong customer of the United States in military procurements. So that, notwithstanding the sensitive aspects of the issue of the defense relationship and the military relationship and security relationship between Finland and the United States, given the geographical proximity of Finland's neighbor to the east, this is an area which, if confirmed as Ambassador, I would look forward to continuing to consolidate and enhance.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Mr. Adams.

Well, a few concluding remarks that I have. The testimony and questions have been thorough and impressive. One of the wonderful things about being on the Foreign Relations Committee is the opportunity to travel, especially to the Near East, South, and Central Asia, where my subcommittee chairmanship is, but also to Latin America because of personal interest. When I do travel, I have an opportunity to interact with a lot of wonderful Foreign Service professionals.

This post will be a great honor to you because it is an honor to represent the country, it is an honor to be nominated by the President. But it is also an honor to lead wonderful people, and you will each have the opportunity to do that in your capacities.

I try to make it a habit when I travel to have a roundtable meeting with young Foreign Service officers who are in their first or second tour, often working in the consular desk, and talk to them about what they are doing. I am just so impressed.

Sometimes the experiences are a little grave. I was with a number of young Foreign Service officers who showed me around the memorial in the Embassy compound in Beirut. I think Americans in our collective memory, we remember well the bombing of the Marine barracks, but the U.S. Embassy was bombed and many were killed. And the U.S. Embassy annex was bombed and many were killed. And others who served in ambassadorial posts lost their lives as well. The commitment that people have who serve in very dangerous parts of the world is something that is really notable.

Sometimes it is more lighthearted. I was in Egypt and met with young Foreign Service officers, and a woman on her first tour, who was I think a Virginia resident, was talking about needing to leave our meeting for her Friday Skype date. When I asked what that was, her husband is in the Foreign Service too and he is serving thousands of miles away and they dress up and get a glass of wine in front of each other and they talk by Skype across the miles.

The service provided by our men and women who serve in the State Department is superb. I think the American public now, thank God, we reflexively and sincerely offer thanks to men and women in the military who serve all over the country. But we have an awful lot of public servants who might be in the Foreign Service or the DEA or the Department of Commerce or billets of the Peace Corps all over the world, and that service is impressive, too. I have a feeling that one of the honors that will be the most powerful in your experience, should you be confirmed—and I am confident you will be—will be the opportunity to lead some many wonderful pub-

lic servants. That is something that would be a very exciting aspect of the job, I am sure.

So thank you for the testimony today and your willingness to serve. Congratulations on your nomination. I will announce that we will keep the record of this hearing open until noon tomorrow in case there are any members of the committee who have questions who were not able to attend today that they would like to submit for the record. I would urge all of you to respond promptly to written questions should they be submitted.

But with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:08 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN FRANCIS TEFFT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. Given the current state of relations between Russia and the West, under what circumstances and caveats should the U.S. consider reengaging with Russia in security cooperation activities?

Answer. In response to attempted annexation of Crimea and ongoing efforts to destabilize eastern Ukraine, the U.S. Government has taken a number of actions, including suspending bilateral discussions with Russia on trade and investment; suspending other bilateral meetings on a case-by-case basis; and putting on hold U.S.-Russia military-to-military engagement, including exercises, bilateral meetings, port visits, and planning conferences.

However, where it is in the U.S. national interest to engage, for example, on the New START Treaty or on Iran's nuclear proliferation, we will continue to engage. Although the current situation has significantly undermined mutual trust, no one should forget that even in the darkest days of the cold war, the United States and Russia found it in our mutual interest to work together on reducing the nuclear threat. But we have and will continue to limit cooperation in other areas as long as Russia is unwilling to be a good neighbor and reliable partner in the region.

The administration believes that we can make progress in areas where there is a shared understanding between Moscow and Washington on what might threaten us all. In a globalized world we must never cease to address such security challenges, even in the context of profound disagreements with the Kremlin over other matters, such as Ukraine.

Question. Now that the administration is discussing the INF Treaty violation at the highest levels with the Russian Government, what is the U.S. strategy to achieve compliance from Russia with the INF Treaty? What actions are the Obama administration prepared to take beyond simply asking the Russians to halt development and testing of systems that violate the central tenets of the treaty?

Answer. The administration will work to resolve the compliance issues outlined in the report through bilateral and multilateral means.

Our next steps will be to intensify our diplomatic efforts with Russia to seek its return to compliance and we will also be consulting with allies.

We have notified Russia of our determination and are prepared to discuss this in a senior-level bilateral dialogue immediately, with the aim of assuring the United States that Russia will come back into compliance with its treaty obligations.

The United States will, of course, consult with allies on this matter to take into account the impact of this Russian violation on our collective security if Russia does not return to compliance.

Question. What assurances do we have, given the identified violation of the INF Treaty, that Russia intends to continue compliance with other current obligations under treaties related to arms control? Should we trust those assurances?

Answer. Current tensions with Russia highlight the importance of predictability and confidence-building provided by arms control treaties. This is especially the case with the continued successful implementation of the New START Treaty and the security and predictability provided by verifiable mutual limits on strategic weapons. The New START Treaty enhances our national security and strategic stability with Russia and both the United States and Russia are implementing the treaty's

inspection regime. We assess that Russia is implementing and complying with the New START Treaty, and that the treaty remains in our national security interest. We take questions about compliance with arms control treaties very seriously and are continuing to monitor Russian compliance with all arms control treaties.

Question. Under the current circumstances, is the administration still pursuing negotiations on further nuclear reductions?

Answer. As President Obama said in Prague in 2009 and reiterated last year in Berlin, the United States and Russia possess 85 percent of the world's nuclear forces and both countries should continue the process of reducing their nuclear arsenals. The United States and Russia are continuing to implement the New START Treaty. Although the United States remains open to further nuclear reductions with Russia, Russia has made clear it is not prepared to pursue nuclear reductions beyond New START, and this is not a current focus of discussion between our countries.

Question. What are the tripwires that would cause the United States to determine that New START and the INF Treaty are no longer in the national interest?

Answer. The United States believes that the INF Treaty serves the mutual security interests of the parties—not only the United States and Russia, but also the 11 other successor states of the former Soviet Union, which are also States Parties to the treaty and bound by its obligations. Moreover, this treaty contributes to the security of our allies and to regional security in Europe and in the Far East. We will continue to monitor Russian activities, to keep Congress informed of our diplomatic efforts, and to consult with Congress on our next steps.

The New START Treaty enhances our national security and strategic stability with Russia and both the United States and Russia are implementing the treaty's inspection regime. We assess that Russia is implementing and complying with the New START Treaty, and that the treaty remains in our national security interest.

It is the policy of the administration to take compliance issues very seriously and to seek to resolve them. Consequences of noncompliance with treaty obligations should be appropriate to the specific circumstances and considered on a case-by-case basis.

Question. Will you commit to maintaining the position that U.S. missile defenses and use doctrine are not open for negotiation with the Russian Government under any circumstances?

Answer. As the President has stated on numerous occasions, the United States will not agree to any commitments on missile defense that would limit our ability to defend the United States, our troops, and our allies and partners.

Question. What engagement is still under way with Russia, and what future plans does the administration have, to establish a follow-on agreement akin to the treaty of Conventional Forces in Europe?

Answer. No engagement with Russia is underway regarding a follow-on agreement to the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). Over the last year the U.S. Government has been consulting with NATO allies regarding ideas to update the conventional arms control regime in Europe. Any future decision to engage on these issues with Russia would be an alliance decision and would depend on the circumstances at the time. The United States, along with 28 other States Parties, continues to implement the CFE Treaty and to call on Russia to fulfill its obligations under the treaty.

Question. What efforts will you pursue, in tandem with other officials within the U.S. Government, to gain full compliance by the Russians with the Open Skies Treaty?

Answer. The Department of State, together with other U.S. Government agencies, will continue to raise Russian compliance and implementation issues regarding the Open Skies Treaty bilaterally via diplomatic channels, as well as in the Open Skies Consultative Commission in Vienna.

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN FRANCIS TEFFT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. On June 26, Secretary of State Kerry said that Russia should disarm separatists in eastern Ukraine in "the next hours" or face sectoral sanctions. Since then, Russia has actually increased its support to pro-Russian separatists.

- What is your assessment regarding the ongoing impact of American actions taken thus far on President Putin's calculus?

Answer. We have been very clear with the Russians that a failure to change their behavior would come with costs. The United States, together with our EU and G7 partners, has imposed real costs that are already having strong negative impact on the Russian economy, and will continue to do so if Russia does not follow through on its commitments. We have sought to have the greatest impact on those whose actions have threatened the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as key companies in the strategic sectors of banking, energy, and defense technology. In addition to the sectoral sanctions announced by the President on July 16 and July 29, the United States remains prepared to take further measures if Russia does not take steps toward de-escalation.

President Putin himself has said that Western sanctions imposed on Russia have had real impact on domestic businesses, including limiting access to funding for many Russian companies. Russian economic officials have also conceded that Western sanctions are having a significant impact on the Russian economy. Aside from the uncertainty that sanctions have introduced to the Russian market, these impacts include economic growth projections revised downward to near-zero percent, currency intervention by the Russian Central Bank, capital flight, ruble depreciation, declines in the Russian stock market, increasing inflation, and downgrades to Russian debt.

Question. Under President Putin's leadership, the Russian opposition has come under increasing pressure. Freedom of the press and freedom of expression continue to be severely limited. If confirmed, do you pledge to be vocal in your support for Russian civil society and an independent press and to meet frequently with members of the Russian opposition?

Answer. The administration's commitment to democracy, human rights and civil society in Russia will remain firm. If confirmed, I will ensure the human rights work that has defined America to generations of Russians continues, confident that this is not just the right thing to do, but is also the best investment in future good relations between our two countries.

Question. Given the administration's decision to finally state publicly that Russia is not in compliance with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, does the administration support the United States unilaterally continuing to abide by a treaty that the other party is not complying with?

- Will a copy of President Obama's letter to President Putin on this issue be shared with Congress?
- How many times and at what level have U.S. concerns about Russian noncompliance with the INF Treaty been raised with the Russians since May 2013?

Answer. The United States believes that the INF Treaty serves the mutual security interests of the parties—not only the United States and Russia, but also the 11 other successor states of the former Soviet Union, which are also States Parties to the treaty and bound by its obligations. Moreover, this treaty contributes to the security of our allies and to regional security in Europe and in the Far East. For that reason, we will make every effort to get Russia to return to compliance with its obligations and to ensure the continued viability of the treaty.

The President sent a letter to President Putin on this matter and this issue has been raised with Russia by senior administration officials numerous times over the course of the past year. It is a long-standing practice across administrations not to share diplomatic exchanges. We will continue to keep Congress informed on these issues and will work to address Members' concerns through appropriate channels.

Question. You have served in several U.S. embassies in eastern Europe. How do you assess Vladimir Putin's regional ambitions? Based on your time in Georgia and Ukraine, how do you think he will continue to respond to the westward-oriented path of those countries and Moldova?

Answer. President Putin presides over a Russia with serious systemic problems, and has been quite consistent about his worldview, as laid out in his 2007 address at the Munich Security Conference. Nonetheless, the United States does not see this as a zero-sum game. For example, while the United States strongly supports Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries' bids for greater economic and commercial ties with their European partners, we do not believe this must be at Russia's expense. Expanded trade ties will help increase prosperity for all parties, including Russia. Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine showed great determination in finalizing their association deals with the EU in June and the United States will not accept any attempt to limit the sovereign choices of these countries, but they have great potential to increase trade with Russia and Central Asia as well.

Question. For the 2nd straight year, Russia was listed as a Tier 3 trafficking country in the Trafficking In Persons Report. Last year when they were originally downgraded to Tier 3, Russia accused the United States of using "unacceptable" methodology and did not make an effort to improve their efforts.

♦ How do you plan to constructively engage on the issue of human trafficking?
♦ What benchmarks must Russia meet to be removed from Tier 3?

Answer. Russia was downgraded to Tier 3 in 2013 in accordance with requirements of a 2008 amendment to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which added a provision that limited the number of years a country can remain on the Tier 2 Watch List. Russia remained on Tier 3 in the 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report. In 2013 and 2014, Russia lacked a national action plan to combat trafficking, a single coordinating authority for antitrafficking efforts, and funding in the federal and local budgets for trafficking prevention and victim protection. These deficiencies illustrated Russia's low political will to address human trafficking and led to Russia's Tier 3 ranking. The United States and Russia have had regular dialogue over the years on the issue of human trafficking. If confirmed, I will continue to engage with our Russian counterparts to encourage them to move forward with their draft national action plan. For specific benchmarks, I would point you to the Trafficking in Persons Report 2014.

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR MICHELE JEANNE SISON TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In March, the United Nations Security Council's North Korea Sanctions Committee sanctioned the operator/manager of the *Cong Chon Gang,* a North Korean vessel interdicted by Panama smuggling 240 tons of weapons from Cuba to North Korea. According to the committee's report, the *Chong Chon Gang* interdiction constituted the largest amount of arms and related materiel interdicted to, or from, North Korea since the adoption of the Security Council Resolution 1718 in 2006. The report also notes the collusion of North Korean and Cuban officials and expresses concern over North Korea-Cuba military cooperation.

♦ (a) What specific actions does the administration plan to take to ensure Cuba is sanctioned for this egregious violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions?

Answer. Willful violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions are very serious matters. Since Panama's interdiction of the *Chong Chon Gang* in July 2013, the United States has been working to ensure that all those responsible for the violation are accountable for their wrongdoing.

We have worked to maximize the diplomatic cost Cuba has suffered for its role in the *Chong Chon Gang* incident. Cuba's diplomatic efforts have failed to convince most countries that Cuba did not break any rules.

To underscore Cuba's role in this violation, the United States has repeatedly condemned Cuba's role in this violation in meetings of the U.N. Security Council and the Security Council's DPRK Sanctions Committee.

To emphasize further this point, we pushed for the committee to adopt an Implementation Assistance Notice on this incident to make clear to the world the facts of the case and to convey the clear and unanimous conclusion of the U.N. Sanctions Committee, which we share, that this transaction violated sanctions.

Through this Notice, the international community has also refuted Cuba's erroneous and misleading claim that this arms shipment was allowed under U.N. Security Council resolutions.

In more concrete terms, Cuba has suffered a disrupted commercial transaction, with various costs due to the seizure of approximately 240 tons of arms and related materiel (these items were not returned).

Going forward, we intend to ensure that the Security Council, the DPRK Sanctions Committee and the U.N.'s Panel of Experts (POE) continue to subject Cuba to extra scrutiny in light of this incident. We will continue to advocate for sharp committee responses and clear rebukes to Cuba for its role in this violation.

♦ (b) If confirmed, would you support publicly revealing the names of North Korean and Cuban officials, as well as entities, involved in these violations and included in the report's confidential annex? Please explain.

Answer. The United States generally supports the public release of U.N. sanctions Panel of Expert reports to their respective committees, but such reports are confidential. The committee can agree, by consensus, to publish these reports or otherwise release certain information included in them.

Last winter, the United States proposed that the committee release information contained in the POE's confidential incident report. Certain members of the committee, however, objected to our proposal.

While we are bound by confidentiality rules, we continue to pursue ways to secure the release of more information that could help member states implement the U.N. sanctions, as well as to examine additional steps under domestic authorities or bilaterally with other member states to achieve that same objective.

♦ (c) If confirmed, would you recommend designating under U.S. law all officials and entities involved in these violations?

Answer. Imposing sanctions on sanctions violators can be an important tool to improve enforcement of these measures.

On July 28, 2014, the U.N. Security Council DPRK Sanctions Committee designated Ocean Maritime Management Company, Limited (OMM), the operator/manager of the vessel *Chong Chon Gang*, for a targeted asset freeze. On July 30, 2014, the Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Chongchongang Shipping Company and Ocean Maritime Management Company, the two North Korean companies that attempted to import a concealed shipment of arms and related materiel from Cuba to the DPRK aboard the DPRK-flagged cargo vessel *Chong Chon Gang* in July 2013. The Treasury Department also identified as blocked property 18 vessels in which these companies have an interest, including the *Chong Chon Gang*. These designations and identifications were made pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13551, which blocks the property of persons who, among other things, have attempted to import arms or related materiel into the DPRK.

Although the Treasury Department cannot comment on other pending or possible investigations, it has maintained a comprehensive sanctions program against Cuba since 1963, under which all Cuban entities and individuals are blocked, pursuant to 31 C.F.R. part 515.

Should we uncover information sufficient to pursue sanctions against any additional individuals or entities involved in the *Chong Chon Gang* incident, I would certainly support and encourage such action wherever appropriate.

RESPONSES OF AMBASSADOR JOHN FRANCIS TEFFT TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. We have known for months about Russia's violation of the INF Treaty, but it took almost a [year to] officially acknowledge the violation and brief NATO. Why did it take so long to inform our friends of this violation? Now that the administration has acknowledged the violation, what do you believe is your role in improving Russia's compliance with INF and other international arms treaties? Will you provide a copy of the letter President Obama sent to President Putin?

Answer. When specific questions arise about a country's treaty implementation, decisions can only be made about whether those issues constitute noncompliance after a careful, fact-based process, which includes diplomatic work and thorough interagency consideration.

We believe that the treaty benefits the security of the United States, our allies, Russia, and the other 11 States Parties to the treaty. For that reason, we will make every effort to get Russia to return to compliance with its obligations and to ensure the continued viability of the treaty.

We can confirm that the President did send Putin a letter on this issue; however, it is a long-standing practice across administrations not to share diplomatic exchanges. We will continue to keep Congress informed on these issues and will work to address Members' concerns through appropriate channels.

Question. Yesterday an international tribunal determined that Russia expropriated Yukos Oil Company and owes over $50 billion to the majority shareholders in Yukos. I understand this is the third international tribunal to determine that Russia expropriated Yukos and must pay compensation. Yet American investors lost over $12 billion and have received no compensation. Americans do not benefit from today's decision, unless the State Department informs Russia that it expects compensation for its citizens as well.

Answer. The decision announced this week in an arbitration brought against Russia by the majority Yukos shareholders does not directly impact U.S. investors, who do not benefit from an applicable treaty through which to bring their claims directly against Russia. The United States is not a party to the Energy Charter Treaty, under which this arbitral award was rendered.

However, the Department will study the decision carefully and determine how it, and the underlying evidence presented in that case, might be helpful in the Department's consideration of the complex legal and factual issues presented by the U.S. investor claims. If confirmed I will continue to follow up on this case.

Question. Congress has directed the State Department and USTR to report on their advocacy for U.S. investors in Yukos Oil Company, but little has been done. As Ambassador, what steps would you take to press Russia to fulfill its obligation to compensate these American investors?

Answer. Promoting the fair treatment of U.S. investors in Russia is a top priority, which was also the intent of Congress in including a Yukos provision in the Russia and Moldova Jackson-Vanik Repeal and Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012.

The Department of State has been closely following the Yukos matter, and has raised it with the Russian Government on numerous occasions, including demarches to the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Russian Ambassador in Washington. The Department will look for opportunities to continue to advocate for U.S. investors in Yukos, as appropriate, under the current political circumstances.

Question. Do you believe harassment of U.S. Embassy personnel is a serious issue at U.S. diplomatic facilities in Russia? What steps will you take to reduce the level of harassment? Will you commit to reviewing the role of Foreign Service nationals at U.S. diplomatic facilities in Russia, especially among the security personnel?

Answer. The protection and security of the personnel working at our diplomatic facilities is of the highest priority.

Where harassment may exist, I will do everything in my power to advocate on behalf of all of our personnel stationed in Russia, and to raise the issue with the Russian Government wherever prudent. We will pursue cooperation with local and national law enforcement bodies when possible, and I will work closely with the mission's security experts on our security and safety practices.

The Department also takes the question of Foreign Service nationals seriously and would be available to discuss in a classified setting.

Question. Do you believe it is vital that U.S. diplomatic facilities in Russia contain spaces to conduct classified discussions and briefings? Will you to push upgrade and improve these capabilities at U.S. consulates in Russia?

Answer. We are committed to ensuring that the U.S. mission to Russia is able to fully carry out its duties, including classified meetings and discussions.

The Department will continue to review the status of our diplomatic facilities in Russia to determine if any upgrades are necessary.

NOMINATIONS OF WILLIAM V. ROEBUCK; JUDITH BETH CEFKIN; BARBARA A. LEAF; AND PAMELA LEORA SPRATLEN

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

William V. Roebuck, of North Carolina, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain

Judith Beth Cefkin, of Colorado, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Fiji, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Republic of Kiribati, the republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu

Barbara A. Leaf, of Virginia, to be Ambassador the United States of America to the United Arab Emirates

Pamela Leora Spratlen, of California, to be Ambassador to the republic of Uzbekistan

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:33 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine, presiding.

Present: Senators Kaine, Murphy, Risch, Rubio, and McCain.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FOR VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. This meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is called to order.

We have the fortune today to be conducting this hearing concerning the nominations of four long-time public servants to important ambassadorial posts.

Senator Risch, the ranking member on the Committee on Near East, South, and Central Asia, is en route and has indicated he does not want to delay the beginning of this hearing, so we will begin.

I will do introductions of the four nominees before us.

Following, each will give opening statements. Try to keep those to 5 minutes or less. And we will then get into questions. I have a number of questions for each of you, and I am sure other Senators who attend will, as well.

The nominees today are William "Bill" Roebuck, who is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of counselor, and cur-

rently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Egypt and Maghreb Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs of the Department of State. Mr. Roebuck has served in a variety of positions during his career as a Foreign Service officer, at State Department HQ, but also in Libya, Iraq, Israel, Syria, Jamaica. Prior to serving in the Foreign Service, he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cote d'Ivoire.

Barbara Leaf is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, and currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Arabian Peninsula overseeing relations with the Gulf in Yemen and 10 other diplomatic posts. Ms. Leaf has served in a number of positions within State Department HQ, but also at Iraq, Italy, Bosnia, Herzegovina, France, Egypt, Israel, and Haiti.

Thank you, Ms. Leaf.

Judith Cefkin is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, and currently a senior advisor for Burma in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the Department of State, a position she has held since 2013. She has served previously in positions in main State, but also Bangkok, Bosnia, Herzegovina, the Philippines, and France.

And finally, Pamela Spratlen is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, and currently is U.S. Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan. She has served previously in positions in Russia and Kazakhstan.

And, Ambassador Spratlen, welcome.

The nominees are all people with tremendous public-service background. And I will just say to each of you, I just returned with five other Members of Congress from a 9-day CODEL in Tunisia, Morocco, and Spain, where we interacted, not only with the Ambassadors in each of the countries, but one of the things I do when I travel is, I always try to have a roundtable discussion with first- or second-term FSOs to talk about their lives and hear about their excitement in representing the United States, but also the challenges, and especially challenges that can exist in serving in some of the more difficult bits of real estate where we have embassies and consulates around the world. Anytime I do that, I always walk away with a real sense of pride in the kinds of people that we send. You are all nominated for capital-A Ambassador, but you will be working with a whole lot of small-a ambassadors. Everybody who represents the United States in any of these positions, whether it is a consular officer or anybody in the Department of State, or whether it is somebody who is working for an agency like the DEA or the Department of Commerce or, you know, any other agency—Ex-Im Bank, where we have people abroad—they are small-a ambassadors for the United States, and we have a superb team of people who sacrifice and serve. And I am always struck by that when I travel.

So, thank you for your commitment to service. Congratulations on being nominated for the positions—Mr. Roebuck for Ambassador to Bahrain; Ms. Leaf to Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates; Ms. Cefkin, Ambassador to Fiji; and Ambassador Spratlen to be Ambassador to Uzbekistan. Congratulations on those nominations. We will do all we can to move them promptly.

And what I would like to do is now start with opening statements. And why do I not just start with Mr. Roebuck, and then we will move across the table.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM V. ROEBUCK, OF NORTH CAROLINA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Chairman Kaine. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain. It is a great honor as well as a dream of every Foreign Service officer to be in this position.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to include my full statement for the record. I will just make a brief oral statement——

Senator KAINE. All of your statements will be included for the record.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you.

I would like to start by acknowledging my wife, Ann, without whom I am quite confident I would not be sitting in this chair today. She and my son, William, who could not be here because he just began his freshman year at the College of Charleston last week, they both accompanied me on many challenging assignments overseas and provided invaluable support.

Those challenging assignments have included, as you mentioned, Senator Kaine, Jerusalem, Gaza, Damascus, Baghdad, and Tripoli, where I fostered political dialogue, helped governments address threats posed by violent extremism, promoted and protected human rights, supported elections, and encouraged regional security efforts between neighbors. I believe those experiences have seasoned me as a diplomat and positioned me well to take on this challenging assignment, if confirmed. I have also had great mentors in the Foreign Service who have ensured that I drew the right lessons from those challenging experiences.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Bahrain have long shared important mutual interests demonstrated through our history of close bilateral cooperation, which we deeply value. Bahrain and the United States share key strategic goals reflected by the fact that our security relationship has grown over the years. Today, more than 8,000 Americans who are attached to the Fifth Fleet and to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command live and work there. Although we took the decision to limit certain aspects of our security cooperation following the unrest in Bahrain in 2011, our military relationship with Bahrain remains fundamentally strong and mutually beneficial. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Bahrain and with my colleagues at the Department of Defense to ensure that our security partnership remains strong.

While mutual concerns about regional stability motivate our close cooperation on security matters, we also have a strong foundation to build on in the areas of trade and finance. Bahrain has one of the most open economies in the region, and our bilateral trade has doubled to nearly $2 billion a year since our Free Trade Agreement entered into force in 2006.

With respect to the political situation in Bahrain, we encourage all of Bahrain's constituencies to work in good faith to develop a

broad consensus on addressing the underlying social and economic grievances that drove the protest of 2011. We think that a successful political compromise that allows these political societies to participate in upcoming elections would be the surest signal of Bahrain's progress toward reform and reconciliation. I believe strongly that a country that protects and promotes human rights will ultimately be a more stable country and a more effective security partner. If confirmed, I will make a strong case, both publicly and privately, to explain why political dialogue, reform, and promoting human rights are in Bahrain's long-term interest. The recent expulsion by Bahrain of a senior American diplomat was a significant setback in this regard. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we continue to have an open and honest dialogue with Bahrain on the full range of issues affecting our bilateral relationship, including human rights.

Finally, should I be confirmed as Ambassador, protecting U.S. citizens in Bahrain will be one of my highest priorities. I have served at a number of high-threat posts, where security for Americans was a critical priority, most recently as Chargé d-Affaires at our Embassy in Libya, and I know the type of team effort that is required with the Embassy Country Team, with local security officials, and with the broader American community.

The United States/Bahrain relationship has translated into economic, social, political, and cultural benefits for the people of both countries. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that Bahrain can continue to rely on the United States and that we can continue to rely on Bahrain as an effective partner.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Roebuck follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM V. ROEBUCK

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain. It is a great honor, as well as the dream of every Foreign Service officer, to appear before you today. I am extremely grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have shown in me. If confirmed, I look forward to representing the American people, and to working with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests with Bahrain.

I have spent most of my career posted in the Middle East, including assignments in Jerusalem, Gaza, Damascus, Baghdad, and Tripoli, fostering political dialogue, providing support for elections, helping governments address the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, promoting and protecting human rights, and encouraging regional security efforts between neighbors, I believe those experiences have seasoned me as a diplomat and positioned me well to take on this challenging assignment.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Bahrain have long shared mutual interests in regional security, demonstrated through our history of close bilateral cooperation and partnership. We deeply value this friendship, rooted in the history of our two peoples dating back to the early years of the 20th century. If confirmed, I will work to maintain, expand, and deepen this partnership, while also continuing our support for King Hamad's efforts to bring reform, political dialogue, and reconciliation to Bahrain. My experience teaches me that these priorities are not mutually exclusive—in fact, I think they are inextricably linked. This approach will strengthen Bahrain's long-term security, stability, and prosperity.

Bahrain and the United States share key strategic goals, reflected by the fact that our security relationship has grown over the years. Our Navy arrived in Bahrain during the 1940s, and today more than 8,000 Americans who are attached to the Fifth Fleet or U.S. Naval Forces Central Command live there. We work closely with

the Bahraini Defense Forces, in particular their Navy and Air Force, on a range of fronts, including counterterrorism and antipiracy operations. Bahrain has pledged to help fight terrorists in Iraq and Syria; welcomed the appointment of Iraqi Prime Minister designate Al-Abadi; deployed its navy and ground forces in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; commanded the coalition task force responsible for maritime security in the gulf; and sent air, ground, and naval assets to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Although we took the decision to limit certain aspects of our security cooperation following the unrest in Bahrain in 2011, our military relationship with Bahrain remains fundamentally strong and mutually beneficial. If confirmed, I will look forward to collaborating with the Government of Bahrain and my colleagues at the Department of Defense to help Bahrain develop its defense capabilities to provide for its own defense, and to improve interoperability with our forces. Going forward, the U.S.–GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum, launched jointly in 2012 by Secretary Clinton and the GCC Secretary General, will be an important mechanism by which I hope to make progress on our partnership with Bahrain, addressing air defense, maritime security, cyber attacks, and other threats.

The State Department provides counterterrorism and critical incident response training for the Bahraini law enforcement units that provide security for U.S. naval facilities and the U.S. Embassy, and that act as Bahrain's primary internal security force. Bahrain is also a valuable partner in disrupting illicit finance flows to terrorist organizations. Bahrain hosts the Secretariat for the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a regional body that coordinates efforts against terrorist finance. In addition, Bahrain is a member of the Egmont group, the international coordinating body for Financial Intelligence Units, which facilitates global cooperation in the fight against terrorist financing. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize our close counterterrorism partnership with Bahrain.

While mutual concerns about regional stability motivate our close cooperation in security matters, we also have a strong foundation to build upon in the area of trade, and financial cooperation.

Bahrain is one of the most open economies in the Middle East/North Africa region and shows a continued commitment to economic diversification and reform. Bilateral trade last year reached $1.7 billion—more than double the levels since before the free trade agreement entered into force in 2006. More American companies are setting up shop in Bahrain every year. Consistent with the President's National Export Initiative and Secretary Kerry's directive that we improve our effectiveness at economic and commercial diplomacy, if confirmed, I will ensure that all our Embassy's agencies and sections understand the priority we place on commercial diplomacy and that they are working closely with stateside offices to vigorously promote the export of U.S. manufactured goods, services, and farm products to this important market. If confirmed as Ambassador, I would also seek to encourage more Bahraini students to study at U.S. colleges and universities.

Let me say a few words about the political situation in Bahrain: We encourage all of Bahrain's constituencies to work in good faith to develop a broad consensus on how to address underlying social and economic grievances that drove the protests of 2011. We think that a successful political compromise that allows these political societies to participate in the upcoming elections would be the surest signal of Bahrain's progress toward reform and reconciliation.

The Government of Bahrain has made some important strides in implementing the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry recommendations to advance a reform and reconciliation agenda. For instance, the government has created a victims compensation fund that has distributed about $6 million to the families of 39 victims of the 2011 violence and appointed an ombudsman to the Ministry of Interior. It is important to acknowledge King Hamad's leadership in initiating the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, for accepting the recommendations put forward in the report, and for committing to implement reforms. The government has more to do on a range of BICI recommendations.

I believe that a country that protects and promotes human rights will ultimately be a more stable country and a more effective security partner. If confirmed, I will make a strong case both publicly and privately for why political dialogue, reform, and promoting and protecting human rights are in Bahrain's long-term interest. The recent expulsion by Bahrain of a senior American diplomat was a significant setback in this regard. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we continue to have an open and honest dialogue with Bahrain on the full range of issues affecting our bilateral relationship, including human rights.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, should I be confirmed as Ambassador, protecting U.S. citizens in Bahrain will be one of my highest priorities. In the course of my career, I have served at a number of high-threat posts, where security for Americans was a

critical priority. I served recently for 6 months as Chargé d'Affaires at our Embassy in Libya, where I worked closely with my regional security officer and his team, and ensured close coordination with local law enforcement and with the American business community outside the Embassy. I understand that the safety and security of American citizens is a critical priority and I believe my experiences as a diplomat in the region have equipped me well to address this issue effectively.

The U.S.-Bahrain relationship has translated into economic, social, political, and cultural benefits for the people of both countries. I am committed to further building up these vital partnerships in the Kingdom and further solidifying our unique relationship that is based on mutual respect and a long history of consultation between friends. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that Bahrain can continue to rely on the United States and that we can continue to rely on Bahrain as an effective partner.

Thank you again for this opportunity and I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Roebuck.

Ms. Cefkin.

STATEMENT OF JUDITH BETH CEFKIN, OF COLORADO, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI, THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU, THE KINGDOM OF TONGA, AND TUVALU

Ms. CEFKIN. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu. I am grateful to the President and Secretary for their confidence in nominating me for this position, and I am equally grateful to receive your consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my husband, Paul Boyd, who is also a Foreign Service officer. He has just capped over 40 years of public service, including combat service with U.S. Special Forces, work in law enforcement, and, for the past 30 years, we have shared the adventure of the Foreign Service.

Senator KAINE. And where is Paul? Thank you.

And where is Ann? Is Ann here with you, Bill?

Thank you both. I just wanted to make sure I know who you are. Thank you.

Ms. CEFKIN. Thank you.

My Foreign Service experience has taught me the power of our country's values-based diplomacy. If confirmed, I will relish the opportunity to draw on the lessons of my many years of regional policy experience also to advance U.S. strategic interests in the South Pacific.

As a Pacific nation, the United States shares an important history with our Pacific Island nations. We also share a common destiny. This is reflected in President Obama's rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. If confirmed, I look forward to working in partnership with the five nations to which I would be accredited to seek to ensure that our common future is one of prosperity, peace, stability, and human fulfillment.

Perhaps nowhere is the need for this focus more compelling than on the waters that bind us, those of the mighty Pacific Ocean. As Secretary Kerry noted when he organized the recent Oceans Con-

ference, our oceans facilitate our trade and provide much of the food we eat, and even the air we breathe. Yet, today Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Tonga, and Fiji face dramatic challenges related to rising sea levels, ocean warming and acidification, marine pollution, and overfishing. These challenges threaten the very existence of them, these populations. They also threaten broader global commerce and food security, issues that directly impact the United States. If confirmed, I will strive to advance solutions to improve regional environmental management, support adaptation projects, and promote sustainable fisheries methods.

The Pacific Islands are global players. Both Fiji and Tonga have been important contributors to international peacekeeping operations. We also work closely with Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu, and Tonga in the U.N. They take very seriously their responsibilities in that forum.

Furthermore, Fiji plays an important role in the Pacific region as a hub for commerce, diplomacy, academic affairs, transportation, and communications. And Suva is headquarters for the Pacific Island Forum and the Secretariat for the Pacific Community regional offices. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to build this regional and global cooperation.

Success in tackling our common regional and global challenges will depend on fostering internal strength of our Pacific Island partners that comes from strong democratic institutions, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The Pacific islanders share our values, but realizing them, in practice, has been challenging. We are encouraged that, after 8 years of a coup-installed military regime, Fiji is scheduled to hold elections next week that offer the hope for a return to democratic governance. If confirmed, I will take great satisfaction in working to build foundations of democracy and good governments through all means available to us.

Embassy Suva is responsible for the United States largest geographic consular district in the world. At the same time, the region is challenged by frequent natural disasters. If confirmed, I will make emergency preparedness and attention to support for American citizens a priority focus.

My career at the State Department has taught me that our people are our most precious resource. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to lead Embassy Suva's diverse and dedicated team of American and local staff and support our 85 Peace Corps Volunteers who are in Fiji and Tonga, and I will work diligently to ensure our mission community's safety and security and to advance the professional enrichment of every member of our team.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for considering my nomination. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with Congress to realize the full potential of our Pacific partnerships. It would be my pleasure to answer any questions that you have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Cefkin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JUDITH B. CEFKIN

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Republic of the Fiji Islands, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary

for their confidence in nominating me for this position, and I am equally grateful to receive your consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my husband, Paul Boyd. Paul, who is also a Foreign Service officer, has just returned from his assignment in Seoul, Korea. With this assignment, Paul has capped over 40 years of public service, including combat service with the U.S. Special Forces and 9 years as a police officer. For the past 30 years, we have shared the adventure of the Foreign Service.

As a Foreign Service officer I have been privileged to serve in a varied and fascinating mix of assignments touching on practically every region of the world. Certainly, the Asia-Pacific region has been a cherished area of focus, and much of my career has been dedicated to issues of countries in transition, striving to advance democratic and economic development. In my current position as senior advisor for Burma, I have been honored to work closely with Congress to elaborate strategies to expand freedom and opportunity for the people of Burma as they navigate a historic transition.

As Deputy Chief of Mission in Thailand, I took pride in motivating collaboration among a diverse and dynamic 3,000-person interagency team to enhance Bangkok's position as a regional platform supporting programs and operations throughout Asia. And as Deputy Chief of Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was gratifying to guide U.S. initiatives to cement the peace established by the Dayton Accords and encourage Bosnia's path toward integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions.

My experience has taught me the power of our country's values-based diplomacy. If confirmed, I will relish the opportunity to draw on these lessons and my many years of regional policy experience to advance the United States strategic interests in the South Pacific.

The United States is a Pacific nation. We share an important history with the Pacific Island nations. We also share a common destiny. This is reflected in President Obama's rebalance to the dynamic Asia-Pacific region. If confirmed, I look forward to working in partnership with the five nations to which I would be accredited to seek to ensure that our common future is one of prosperity, peace and stability, and human fulfillment.

Perhaps nowhere is the need for this focus more compelling than on the waters that bind us—those of the mighty Pacific Ocean. As Secretary Kerry noted when he organized the recent Oceans Conference, our oceans facilitate our trade and provide much of the food we eat and even the air we breathe. This is abundantly true for the Pacific. Yet, today, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Tonga, and Fiji face dramatic challenges related to rising sea levels, ocean warming and acidification, marine pollution, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and overfishing. These challenges threaten the very existence of some of their populations. They also threaten broader global commerce and food security—issues that directly impact the United States. If confirmed I will strive to advance solutions to improve regional environmental management, support adaptation projects, and promote Exclusive Economic Zones' surveillance arrangements and sustainable fisheries methods.

The Pacific Island nations are global players. Both Fiji and Tonga have been important contributors to international Peacekeeping Operations. Fijian forces are currently participating in the U.N. Disengagement Observer Force mission in the Golan, the Multinational Force and Observers mission in the Sinai, and the U.N. Assistance Mission in Iraq, where they are responsible for providing security for mission personnel and facilities. Tonga was an early member of the Coalition to liberate Iraq, and until April of this year provided security at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu are also committed to their responsibilities as U.N. members, and the United States cooperates closely with them on a wide range of issues in that forum. Furthermore, Fiji plays many important roles in the Pacific region as a hub for commerce, diplomacy, and academic affairs as well as transportation and communications. Suva is home to the University of the South Pacific and the headquarters of the Pacific Islands Forum, the preeminent multilateral organization in the region. It is also home to regional offices of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, which manages technical and development programs throughout the Pacific. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to build this regional and global cooperation.

Success in tackling our common regional and global challenges will depend on fostering the internal strength of our Pacific Island partners that comes from strong democratic institutions, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The Pacific Islanders share our respect for democratic values, but realizing those values in practice has been challenging, most notably in Fiji and to varying degrees in the other countries as well. We are encouraged that after 8 years of a coup-installed military regime, Fiji is scheduled to hold elections on September 17 that offer the hope of

return to democratic governance. The Kingdom of Tonga, which has also made progress toward a more representative form of government, holds its elections later this year. If confirmed, I will take great satisfaction in working to build foundations of democracy and good governance through all means available to us, including by expanding people-to-people ties and nurturing civil society. And as a special personal priority, I will champion efforts to combat violence against women—sadly, a challenge with which all too many South Pacific women struggle.

Embassy Suva is responsible for the United States largest geographic consular district in the world—over 2 million square miles. In addition to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu, that includes French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna. An estimated 45,000 American Citizens are resident in these countries and territories and 30,000 more are estimated to visit each year to enjoy the region's wealth of natural wonders and rich cultural diversity. At the same time the region is challenged by almost yearly cyclones, floods, and tsunami warnings. If confirmed, I will make emergency preparedness and attention to support for American citizens a priority focus.

My career at the State Department has taught me that our people are our most precious resource. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to lead Embassy Suva's diverse and dedicated team of American and local staff and to support our 85 Peace Corps Volunteers who are serving in Fiji and Tonga. I will work diligently to ensure our mission community's safety and security and to advance the professional enrichment of every member of our team.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for considering my nomination. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to realize the full potential of our Pacific partnerships. It would be my pleasure to answer any questions that you might have.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much, Ms. Cefkin.

Ms. Leaf.

STATEMENT OF BARBARA A. LEAF, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Ms. LEAF. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the subcommittee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my very best to uphold my responsibilities on behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by recognizing and thanking my family who are here today with me: my husband, Chris, our wonderful daughters, my mother, Madonna, my sister, Mary Beth, and my brother, Tim. My family's loving support and willingness to bear sacrifice in their own right have been indispensable to my ability to serve our country wherever needed.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my career working in or on the Middle East, serving in Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jerusalem. Most recently, I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Arabian Peninsula, where the growing importance of the UAE in the region and as a foreign policy partner for us were driven home almost daily.

The UAE shares many of the same interests that animate our own regional and international policies, and our two governments work closely on these shared priorities. The Emiratis have sent troops to Afghanistan and given nearly a billion dollars in aid there. On Iraq, they have provided substantial diplomatic and humanitarian support since 2003, and I believe we are about to see that reach new levels of cooperation as we confront ISIL together.

The UAE remains engaged with the moderate Syrian opposition, pledging $360 million in humanitarian assistance. The UAE sup-

ports international sanctions on Iran and P5+1 negotiations to negotiate a comprehensive solution on Iran's nuclear program.

In Egypt, the Emiratis have pledged over $7 billion in aid and work with the Egyptian Government and the United States to foster economic recovery and stability there. The UAE has also provided a central political and financial underpinnings to U.S.-led efforts on the Middle East—on Middle East peace efforts.

And on Libya, we share a goal of a stable democratic state, and we are consulting closely to synchronize our efforts.

The UAE is a first-rate military partner, and Emirati troops and pilots have participated with the United States in five major coalition operations since 1990. Bilateral defense cooperation is superb. The Port of Jabel Ali is the U.S. Navy's busiest overseas port of call, hosting more of our ships on liberty calls than any other port outside of Norfolk. The Emirates play host to some 3,000 U.S. military personnel and U.S. military assets that support and undergird regional security.

Our bilateral trade is an especially vital part of the relationship. The UAE is the largest market for U.S. goods and services in the Middle East, with a trade surplus of over $22 billion last year, our third-largest globally. Over 1,000 American firms have regional headquarters in the Emirates, working in petroleum, defense, education, and health care.

The UAE is also a regional leader on energy diversification and met the gold standard in 2009 on nonproliferation when it signed a 30-year 1-2-3 Agreement with the United States that opened the door to partnering with us on civil nuclear technology. In doing so, the Emirates took on a voluntary obligation to forgo domestic uranium enrichment and nuclear fuel reprocessing. They will rely on international markets for fuel for the four nuclear power plants they are constructing.

One of the Emirates' most noteworthy human capital investments is the drive to bring women into all levels of government and business. Women make up 70 percent of university graduates today. They are training as military pilots. And, increasingly, they fill key diplomatic and government positions. Four Cabinet Members are women. The UAE stands out in the region in recognizing it cannot realize its potential without the full participation of half of its citizenry.

The United States works closely with the UAE on human rights and countering trafficking in persons. And, while it does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, it is making significant efforts to do so: prosecuting cases, funding shelters for victims, and implementing public awareness campaigns. That said, there is more work to be done on these and other human rights issues.

In the wake of the region's 2011 revolutions, we have seen the UAE act against certain civil society organizations and curtail certain activities of individuals. The UAE views the forces of extremism that stalk the region today as the preeminent threat to the modern, moderate, forward-looking country built with breathtaking speed and success by the country's founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. But, in defense of that project, the UAE Government has periodically encroached on its citizens' freedoms of

expression and association. If confirmed, I pledge to engage in a productive and candid dialogue on these issues, working from the core values and democratic principles that define America.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, there is no question that the United States has a deeply committed foreign policy and security partner in the UAE. If confirmed, I pledge to work with its government to promote our national security and a more stable and prosperous Middle East. I will advocate aggressively for U.S. companies.

And, finally and most importantly, more than 50,000 American citizens make the UAE their home, in addition to our own diplomatic and military personnel. If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to protect the safety and security of the dedicated men and women at our mission, as well as that of all Americans living, working, or traveling in the UAE.

I appreciate the committee's oversight of our mission in the United Arab Emirates, and, if confirmed, look forward to hosting members and staff there.

Thank you for letting me appear today before you, and I would be happy to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Leaf follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BARBARA A. LEAF

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the subcommittee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. I am deeply humbled and grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my best to live up to their trust and to work as closely as possible with this committee to carry out my responsibilities on behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission I would like to submit my full statement for the record and begin by expressing my enormous appreciation for the support of my family, who are here today with me: my husband, Chris, and our two wonderful girls. Suffice to say that that my family's loving support and willingness to bear sacrifice in their own right have been indispensable to my ability to carry out my responsibilities as a Foreign Service officer. I would also like to thank my mother, Madonna, and sister, Mary Beth, who have joined us today.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my career working in or on the Middle East, including in assignments in Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jerusalem. Most recently I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Arabian Peninsula, where the growing importance of the UAE in the region, as well as its critical value as a foreign policy partner for the U.S., were driven home almost daily.

The UAE is a young nation gifted with extraordinary resources and ambitions to match. It is a country that benefited early on from the region's oil wealth, but one which took a longer view of what success would look like, committing to economic diversification, education of its people, moderate government, and global engagement. In the last decade in particular, the UAE's role on the world stage has evolved accordingly, as it has increasingly demonstrated leadership in grappling with global issues such as violent extremism, illicit trade and proliferation, and poverty. If confirmed, I pledge to broaden and deepen our cooperation with the UAE on these and the many other issues of direct national security interest to the U.S.

The UAE shares many of the same goals and interests that animate our policy in the region and internationally, and our two governments work closely and collaboratively on these shared priorities. As a member of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan since 2003, the UAE has sent troops to Afghanistan, and, in the last 5 years alone, has contributed nearly $1 billion for humanitarian aid and reconstruction in that country. On Iraq, the UAE has provided substantial diplomatic, humanitarian, and other support to U.S.-led efforts, and I believe we are about to see that reach new levels; in 2008 the UAE forgave over $7 billion in Iraqi debt, and it has contributed over $60 million in aid to Iraq since 2009. On Syria, the UAE remains engaged with the United States in supporting the Syrian Opposition, is an active member of the Friends of the Syrian People (FoSP) Core Group known as the London 11, and has pledged $360 million in humanitarian

assistance for Syria and the region. On Iran, the UAE supports international efforts to implement sanctions on Iran and the P5+1's efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution on Iran's nuclear program. In Egypt, the UAE has pledged over $7 billion in loans, grants and in-kind goods while working with the Government of Egypt and the U.S. to foster economic reform there. On Libya, we share with the UAE a goal of a stable, democratic end state. We are consulting closely with the UAE on Libya, and we are continuing to make clear to all countries with an interest in Libya that we believe unilateral foreign intervention undermines the process of achieving a stable government. The UAE, along with other Arab League states, has played a key supporting role in the Middle East peace process, urging both sides to remain committed to achieving a durable peace. The UAE has also been a major provider of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian Authority and in Gaza. It has been a supporter of the post-conflict reconstruction process in Somalia, providing extensive aid ($213 million since 2009) and establishing formal diplomatic ties with Somalia in 2013. As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which brokered the historic political transition in Yemen in 2011, the UAE supports the Yemeni Government's efforts to achieve peace and stability. The UAE is also a valued member of the multilateral Friends of Yemen group, and has contributed over $1.3 billion in aid to Yemen since 2009.

The UAE is a strong military partner and a reliable contributor to coalition operations, participating in five major such efforts with the U.S. since Operation Desert Storm. This cooperation is only amplified on a bilateral basis. The port of Jebel Ali in Dubai is the U.S. Navy's busiest overseas port-of-call, hosting more Navy liberty ship visits than any other port outside of Norfolk. The UAE plays host to some 3,000 U.S. military personnel and key U.S. military assets. The UAE is one of our largest Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customers, with over 90 implemented FMS cases valued at approximately $19.2 billion. The UAE has actively participated in international operations to police the gulf and has supported U.S. forces in our various military operations in the region. The UAE's security partnership with the U.S. and the international community is not new; in 1999, the UAE was among the first non-NATO states to publicly support NATO's bombing campaign in Kosovo, and the UAE sent almost 1,500 peacekeeping and special operations troops to participate in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission there, the single largest contribution to the mission by a predominantly Muslim state. During Operation Desert Storm, UAE troops took part in the Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsula Shield Force, participating in the liberation of Kuwait in March 1991; UAE forces also participated in international coalitions in Somalia and Libya.

Our trade relationship with the UAE is an especially vital part of the bilateral relationship. The UAE is the largest market for U.S. goods and services in the Middle East. Our bilateral trade surplus in 2013 was $22.3 billion, the third-largest surplus in the world for the United States. The United States continues to be a premier destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) from the UAE, with the Emirates now among the top 20 sources of FDI into the United States. Just as significantly, the UAE is a great place for American business. With its infrastructure and business and logistical services, the UAE has become the regional headquarters for over 1,000 American companies active in the petroleum, defense, services, education, and health care sectors. It has developed a leading role in business services, including finance and logistics, and has emerged as the preeminent business hub between Asia and Europe. Dubai's Emirates Airlines is the single largest customer for Boeing's 777 aircraft.

The UAE is also a partner on energy policy and environmental responsibility. While it holds nearly 8 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and nearly 5 percent of proven gas reserves, the UAE has also sought to expand to renewable energy and is home to the newly established International Renewable Energy Agency. The UAE early on made a commitment to diversify its economy beyond fossil fuels, adopting long-term plans to develop its manufacturing base, services sector, and nonoil trade. In 2012, the UAE launched a long-term Green Economy Initiative, which aims to make the UAE a world leader in energy efficiency and environmental safety. As part of its effort to diversify its energy sources, the UAE is constructing four civil nuclear power plants, the first of which is expected to start operating in 2017, and is reported to be considering the construction of additional plants after that. U.S. companies including Westinghouse Electric and Bechtel are providing equipment, fuel, and design and project management services for the Baraka project. The vision of the UAE on sustainability can also be seen with the establishment of the Masdar Institute, which was created in cooperation with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a cutting edge institution looking at ways to meet the energy challenges of the future.

In the area of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the UAE takes its international obligations seriously. In my own time working on Middle East issues, I have seen a significant evolution of the UAE's approach to proliferation—from a country with many informal and unregulated trade routes, to a global trade leader and regional transshipment hub that is taking meaningful steps to ensure its trade links are not exploited by illicit actors. Not only has the UAE cooperated vigorously with U.S. law enforcement on interdiction, but it has also helped conduct interdiction training for other gulf countries.

In another sign of the UAE's forward-thinking support for international standards, in 2009 the UAE signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with the U.S. This 30-year agreement, which allows the UAE to partner with the U.S. on civil nuclear technology, includes a voluntary obligation by the UAE to forgo domestic uranium enrichment and nuclear fuel reprocessing and instead rely on existing international markets for nuclear fuel.

One of the UAE's most noteworthy efforts in human capital terms is its effort to involve women in all levels of government and business. In 2012, the UAE adopted a requirement that the boards of directors of all UAE Government agencies and corporations must include women. Emirati women make up 70 percent of the UAE's university graduates today. Four UAE Cabinet Ministers are women—including international cooperation and development minister Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, who was on Forbes magazine's 2007 list of the 100 most powerful women in the world, along with UAE businesswoman Fatima Al Jaber. The UAE stands out in its recognition that it cannot realize its economic, political and cultural potential without the full participation of half of its citizens. It goes without saying that, if confirmed, I will look for opportunities to encourage just this kind of forward-thinking among Emirati leaders at all levels of society, to increase opportunities for women to participate fully in business, government, and society.

The U.S. also works closely with the UAE on human rights and countering trafficking in persons. The UAE is working to improve its response to the scourge of forced labor and forced prostitution, particularly among the substantial foreign migrant worker population the country hosts. The Department's most recent congressionally mandated Trafficking in Persons report found that the UAE does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but that it is making significant efforts to do so. During the past year, the UAE continued to prosecute sex trafficking cases, fund shelters for sex trafficking victims, and implement public awareness campaigns.

That said, there is more work to be done on these and other human rights issues. While the UAE Government provides some avenues for migrant workers' complaints, some forced labor victims remain unidentified, unprotected, and are vulnerable to being punished for offenses committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking. Over the last several years, in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, we have also seen the UAE act against certain civil society organizations, shutting down offices of organizations such as the National Democratic Institute and Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and curtailing certain activities of individuals. The UAE views the forces of extremism which stalk the region today as the preeminent threat to the modern, moderate, forward-looking country built with breathtaking speed and success over the last 40 years, by the country's founding father, Shaikh Zayed al-Nayahn. But in defense of that project, the UAE Government has periodically encroached on its citizens' freedoms of expression and association. If confirmed as U.S Ambassador to the UAE, I pledge to engage in a productive and candid dialogue on these issues, working from the core values and democratic principles that define America.

As the UAE's political and economic prominence only continues to grow, so too must our engagement. With Abu Dhabi's growing engagement in some of our top foreign policy priorities including Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, there is no question that the United States has a serious and committed partner in the UAE. If confirmed, I pledge to work with the UAE Government to promote our foreign policy objectives and a more stable and prosperous Middle East.

The UAE is ripe for increased U.S. business as Abu Dhabi invests to diversify beyond oil production and Dubai continues its expansion as a regional and global commercial hub. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador, I will advocate aggressively for U.S. companies and work to find new export opportunities for American goods and services in the UAE.

It goes without saying that paramount among my priorities, if confirmed, will be the welfare, security, and interests of all American citizens in the UAE. More than 50,000 American citizens make the UAE their home; add to that the staff in the U.S. diplomatic mission and U.S. military personnel in the UAE. If confirmed, I pledge to do everything possible to protect the safety and security of the dedicated

men and women at our mission, as well as that of all Americans living and working or traveling in the United Arab Emirates.

I appreciate and value this committee's oversight of our mission in United Arab Emirates. If confirmed, I look forward to welcoming the committee's members and staff to the UAE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to address the committee. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ms. Leaf.

Ambassador Spratlen.

STATEMENT OF HON. PAMELA LEORA SPRATLEN, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the United States Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

I am deeply grateful for the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have entrusted in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen bilateral relations with Uzbekistan and promote U.S. interests and values there. I look forward to working with Congress in pursuit of these goals.

My 25 years in the Foreign Service have prepared me for this position. I know and appreciate the region. As the U.S. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, I have the opportunity to implement important U.S. security, human dimension, and development policies in a fragile democracy. As the Deputy Chief of Mission in Kazakhstan, I helped deepen our partnership with that country, a key ally during the time that it hosted the 2010 summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. As Director for Central Asian Affairs and then-Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, I became well acquainted with U.S. policy priorities in Uzbekistan and played a role in the earliest days of the South and Central Asia Bureau. With the experience I have gained to date, I feel well prepared to tackle the challenges and seek opportunities for the United States in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan lies at the heart of Central Asia and is the most populous country in the region. Since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States has always maintained a strong commitment to Uzbekistan's sovereignty and stability. The United States also remains committed to encouraging Uzbekistan's development toward becoming a more tolerant, prosperous democratic society that cooperates effectively with its neighbors, adheres to its international obligations, and promotes peace and stability domestically, regionally, and globally.

Uzbekistan is an important partner in our ongoing efforts to help neighboring Afghanistan reach its full potential. Uzbekistan continues to provide vital assistance to Afghanistan in the form of electricity that keeps the lights on in homes and businesses across Kabul. The only railroad that connects Afghanistan to the outside world runs through Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is also a key link in the northern distribution network, which helps keep U.S. and NATO troops well supplied and helps U.S. and NATO forces remove cargo from Afghanistan now that the mission there is in tran-

sition. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to continue that important support.

Our security cooperation with Uzbekistan is in a time of transition, but will continue to focus on the common goal of preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorists. Increased cooperation with Uzbekistan on a number of training programs would help prevent a resurgence of terrorism in the region, stem the flow of illegal narcotics, and prevent human trafficking and illicit smuggling. Our security cooperation also includes efforts to professionalize the conduct of security forces and reinforce the need for accountability in law enforcement institutions. If confirmed, I would build on our existing partnership to continue this cooperation.

Uzbekistan's large population and energy and mineral resources make it a natural choice for U.S. companies seeking to invest in Central Asia. The United States has been working with Uzbekistan to improve its investment climate and foster a cooperative regional economic environment. If confirmed, I will encourage Uzbekistan to implement necessary changes to further attract U.S. investment, diversify its economy, and promote regional and economic connectivity.

As Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, I have highlighted the importance of nurturing nascent democratic institutions, civil society groups, and a free and open media. I also understand the profound importance of protecting respect for human rights, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to comply with all of its international legal obligations on human rights. I will also continue to press the government on specific prisoner cases, such as those raised by Senator Menendez and others in recent letters to President Karimov. I will work closely with my government counterparts in a diverse array of civil society institutions to address concerns about forced and child labor, allegations of torture, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, restrictions on independent civil society opposition and media, as well as religious freedom.

I know from my past experience on Central Asian affairs that progress on some of the issues will not be easy. If confirmed, I am fully committed to working with Members of Congress, the executive branch, and the people of Uzbekistan to make concrete progress on tough issues, like human rights and economic reforms. I will employ constant engagement to stress the need for meaningful action in these areas.

I place the utmost importance on protecting American citizens and U.S. values overseas, and, if confirmed, I will focus my efforts on protecting U.S. citizens and their interests in Uzbekistan.

The position of Ambassador is a position of public trust, and I take this responsibility very seriously. Direct engagement with the people of Uzbekistan will be a priority if I am confirmed. Public diplomacy efforts, outreach, and educational exchanges promote mutual understanding and foster deeper bilateral ties.

Finally, I place great emphasis on strong leadership. If confirmed, I will bring my experience, enthusiasm, and knowledge to bear as I lead the mission to the best of my ability.

I thank you for your consideration of this nomination, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Spratlen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAMELA L. SPRATLEN

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the United States Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Uzbekistan. I am deeply grateful for the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have entrusted in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen bilateral relations with Uzbekistan and promote U.S. interests and values there. I look forward to working with Congress in pursuit of these goals.

My 25 years in the Foreign Service have prepared me for this position. I know and appreciate the region. As the U.S. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, I have had the opportunity to implement important U.S. security, human dimension, and development policies in a fragile democracy. As the Deputy Chief of Mission in Kazakhstan, I was able to help deepen our partnership with Kazakhstan, a key ally during the time the country hosted the 2010 summit of the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe. During my tenure as Director for Central Asian Affairs and then Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, I became well acquainted with U.S. policy priorities in Uzbekistan and played a role in the earliest days of the South and Central Asia Bureau. With the experience I have gained to date, I feel well-prepared to tackle the challenges and seek opportunities for the United States in Uzbekistan.

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Uzbekistan's large population and energy and mineral resources make it a natural choice for U.S. companies seeking to invest in Central Asia. The United States has been working with Uzbekistan to improve its investment climate and foster a cooperative regional economic environment. If confirmed, I will encourage Uzbekistan to implement necessary changes to further attract U.S. investment, diversify its economy, and promote regional economic connectivity.

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imprisonment, restrictions on independent civil society, opposition, and media, and religious freedom.

I know from my past experiences on Central Asian affairs that progress on some of the issues I just described will not be easy. If confirmed, I am fully committed to working with Members of Congress, the executive branch, and the people of Uzbekistan to make concrete progress on tough issues like human rights and economic reforms. I will employ constant, consistent engagement to stress the need for meaningful action in these areas.

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Finally, I place great personal emphasis on strong leadership. If confirmed, I will bring my experience, enthusiasm, and knowledge to lead the mission to the best of my ability.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Spratlen.

We will have 7-minute rounds of questions. And if we do not get to you on a first round, do not relax, because we will often have multiple rounds.

I will start with Mr. Roebuck. I was very distressed about the news of the recent arrest of a prominent human rights activist, Meriam al-Khawaja in Bahrain. If you could, describe the status of that case and what the State Department is doing to raise that issue, please.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

We have followed this case closely. We are aware of Ms. Khawaja's arrest. We have raised this case publicly with the Bahraini Government, and we have also done so privately. And we have urged the government to ensure that Ms. Khawaja's due-process rights are protected, that she has the right to expeditious judicial proceedings, access to a lawyer, and hopefully that this matter will be resolved as quickly as possible. So, we have raised this matter, and we are following it very closely.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator KAINE. Sort of in a related area, and then I think a number of the questions about Bahrain will be dealing with this. The Bahraini Government—and you alluded to this—expelled visiting Assistant Secretary Tom Malinowski, and the ostensible reason was for holding a meeting with opposition representatives without government officials present. Also, Representative Jim McGovern and human rights researchers have been denied entry in Bahrain. Talk about the current status of the dialogue between the governments on the situation with Assistant Secretary Malinowski and how you, in your post, will handle the issue of interacting with all segments of Bahraini society, including folks associated with opposition parties.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator.

The expulsion of Assistant Secretary Malinowski, we have made clear to the Bahraini Government, was unnecessary and unhelpful. We have dealt with the aftermath of the expulsion primarily through diplomatic channels. We believe the Bahraini Government has understood our position clearly. We expect, going forward, that the Bahraini Government will take steps more consistent with our

strong bilateral relationship, and that they will address this issue. We continue to support a strong reform reconciliation process in Bahrain, hopefully leading to inclusive elections across broad Bahraini society sectors.

With regard to the return of Assistant Secretary Malinowski, I have discussed this with Assistant Secretary Malinowski. He wants to return at a time that would be most helpful. We have discussed this with the Bahraini Government. They have indicated they would welcome his return. And so, we are discussing with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the timing for that.

Bottom line, we have made our position known to them. We expect, in the future, that they will take steps more consistent with our strong bilateral relationship and with existing diplomatic norms.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. What is the—I was in Bahrain in December 2013, and one of the issues at that time—it was a significant point of discussion, and I imagine it still is—is the status of U.S. arms sales to Bahrain. It is been significant, but there has also been suspensions of arms sales because of human rights concern. What is the current status of the situation with respect to the arms sales between the United States and Bahrain?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Senator, we continue to carefully evaluate our security cooperation posture toward Bahrain. We have not made changes in the policies recently. We will consult closely with Congress before making any such changes.

At present, we are withholding the export of lethal and crowd-control items intended predominantly for internal security purposes, and certain other items. We have resumed, on a case-by-case basis, the export of certain items related exclusively to external defense, counterterrorism, and the protection of U.S. forces in Bahrain. Our strong assessment is that we continue to have a very strong security partnership with the Government of Bahrain. And, if confirmed, I will do everything I can to strengthen that relationship.

Senator KAINE. There is some difference of opinion, I think, on the degree to which Iran is supporting Shiite hardline opposition factions within Bahrain. What is your current understanding of the role that Iran is playing, if any, in civil unrest in that country?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Senator, we have seen Iranian attempts, in the past, to exploit and exacerbate sectarian unrest of the kind that is going on in—and has gone on—in Bahrain. They do this to advance their own agenda and to undermine peace and stability in the region. I think it is inevitable that prolonged unrest and instability in Bahrain would open the door to Iranian influence among extremists in that country. We also believe that further efforts at reform will promote reconciliation, restore confidence. And, in doing so, it lessens sectarian tensions and it denies Iran the ability to exploit such situations.

Senator KAINE. I am trying to remember, from my visit last December, the population of Bahrain is—the leadership is predominantly Sunni, but the population is dramatically—65–70 percent Shia. Do I remember that correctly?

Mr. ROEBUCK. The population is about 1.25 million, and the figures that you have given are approximately the breakdown we understand on the demographics.

Senator KAINE. One last question, and then to Senator Risch.

Another key influence in Bahrain is Saudi Arabia, because of their closeness to the Bahraini Government. Are we working in tandem with Saudi Arabia in efforts to promote, you know, additional reforms or the national dialogue efforts to reduce unrest in Bahrain? Does Saudi Arabia play a role in that effort?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator.

The Saudis have a very important relationship with Bahrain. They are close allies. I think it is fair to say that they have significant influence. And we believe that the Saudis can play a positive role. We discuss this issue and related regional issues with the Saudis on a regular basis.

We also underscore, with the Saudis and with our other gulf partners, the importance to Bahrain of a reconciliation process, reform and political dialogue, not only for Bahrain's security and stability, but also for regional security and stability. And we will continue those discussions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Roebuck.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Roebuck, let us take the Malinowski incident first. Did State Department know that the meeting was going to take place with the opposition prior to the time it took place?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Yes, sir, we did. This was part of an arranged schedule of meetings that Assistant Secretary Malinowski arranged with the Embassy. This is a fairly typical way that a U.S. Government official would fly into the country and arrange a set of meetings across the board with all sectors of a political society.

Senator RISCH. So, was the Bahrainian response to that a surprise to State Department?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Yes. I would say that we were—I think that is a fair description. As I noted to Senator Kaine, we found the response of the Bahraini Government unnecessary and unhelpful, and we made that clear to them in the aftermath of the expulsion.

Senator RISCH. But, at this point, the wound is healed, you say that Malinowski's now welcome back in Bahrain? Did I catch that right?

Mr. ROEBUCK. I would say, Senator, that we are continuing to address this issue. We have discussed it at the most senior levels with the Bahraini Government. They understand the importance of taking corrective action, and they have indicated that they would welcome Senator Malinowski back. So, we are considering that and considering the proper timing for a return visit.

Senator RISCH. Do they appreciate the fact that they have overreacted on the issue?

Mr. ROEBUCK. I think that the Government of Bahrain has understood our position, which we have made clear, publicly and privately. I think they understand the need to take corrective steps, and they have indicated that they would do so.

Senator RISCH. I guess the thing I am struggling with here, as you can see, is that a lot of us, when we go to various countries,

meet with the opposition. I mean, it is not—like you say, it is not an unusual thing. And I am just—I am wondering what happened, here, that caused this kind of a reaction.

Mr. ROEBUCK. I think, Senator, that the negotiations and the dialogue that have gone on between the government and the opposition over the last couple of years has taken place in a difficult atmosphere, with a lack of trust on both sides, and that sometimes, you know, this atmosphere has prompted reactions—temporary reactions that require a change of course in—a course correction subsequently down the line. I think that is in the period where we are now.

Senator RISCH. Again, though, what—the description of the situation between the in-power and the opposition, that is not unusual. I mean, the description you gave is what usually happens in these circumstances. So, I am just—I am surprised at the reaction.

In any event, let us move on. I have a very local issue, and that is that the small arms sales to Bahrain is very important to my State, in that we do have a growing industry, manufacturers of small arms. And because of the sanctions that have been in place, they have some sales—specific sales that were stopped, as far as Bahrain is concerned, and they ask me, "Well, you know, what are you trying to do, here?" And you explain to them that what you are trying to do is to get some conformance to certain standards, as far as human rights are concerned. And, of course, they come back and say, "Well, look, if we do not sell them these, they are going to the Italians, or they are going somewhere, because these small arms are ubiquitous and easily obtained on the market, so you are not really gaining anything by stopping these kinds of sales, when they are easily obtainable from about anywhere."

What do I respond to them when they say that?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Senator, thank you for the question.

I think the response needs to be that the United States maintains a relatively comprehensive arms policy with any given country. We have established a set of arms policies with regard to Bahrain, carefully vetted in our interagency process. We do not have plans to change it now, but we are looking carefully at when we would change it down the line.

I think that the current policy toward arms reflects our strong security cooperation with Bahrain, but it also reflects our other interests and values, and that we are postured about where we need to be, overall, with regards to our arms policies. I understand the particular issue you raise with some group of sales in that larger policy, but I think, overall, we are where we need to be right now with regard to our arms policy regarding Bahrain.

Senator RISCH. I heard what you just said, and I appreciate that. And I do not think there is anyone that wants to undermine the objective of trying to get compliance to basic human rights standards. After listening to your answer, I am not persuaded that stopping them from buying something in the United States that they can buy anywhere on the market is going to have any influence whatsoever in their decisionmaking. Again, do not get me wrong, I want to see you continue to pressure and attempt to get compliance, but I have real difficulties believing that keeping out of their hands an item that they can buy anywhere reaches that goal. And,

for Idahoans that want to work and for the good-paying jobs that are created here, it would seem to me that, if they are not created here, they are going to be created in China or Italy or somewhere like that. So, I hope you would keep that in mind as you help to form policy in that regard.

And my time is almost up, but I want to—a very short question for Ms. Leaf.

There has been quite a bit of disagreement between the UAE and Qatar regarding the Muslim Brotherhood. Could you talk about that for just a minute and what you think is the prescription for trying to resolve that?

Ms. LEAF. Thank you, Senator.

You know, the UAE and Qatar are two parts of a larger set of discussions and disputes that have been ongoing in the GCC. We saw, in the spring, a rather dramatic demonstration of that, when the Saudis, Emiratis, and Bahrainis withdrew their ambassadors.

What I would say, more broadly, is that the GCC has gone through these kind of internal disputes before, and they have come together. And we saw evidence of that this last weekend, when there was a GCC Foreign Ministerial, and they closed ranks. It is not to say they have thoroughly resolved these disputes. One of them is over the issue—as you say, over the issue of support to the Muslim Brotherhood or each state's stance on the Muslim Brotherhood, but they closed ranks in a very important way, and I think that is a reflection of all of the member states' recognition that there are huge security challenges afoot in the Middle East that directly threaten their interests and that now is the time to pull together in—and I think we are going to see evidence of that to an even greater degree over the coming days as we work with the GCC, including both of those members, in confronting ISIL.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time is up.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Ms. Leaf, I could not disagree with you more. It is unprecedented what the other countries did when they withdrew their ambassadors. You will have to tell me another time when that happened. The Qataris continue to provide funding to the most extreme elements, particularly in Iraq and Syria. The Qataris have, basically, been the strongest supporters, not just of the Muslim Brotherhood, but their money is going to people like al-Nusra, people like ISIS, and others. How can you sit there and say that this is just something normal? And, because they had a meeting of the GCC, that certainly does not address the issue—you are going to be the Ambassador to UAE, but our problems with Qatar are very deep-seated, ranging from funding to money laundering to all kinds of problems that we have with the Qataris. It is well known that they are extending financial and other support to the most extreme elements that we are trying to fight against. Would you disagree with that?

Ms. LEAF. Senator, I would say that they have a history with a number of Islamist movements in the region, and I think this——

Senator MCCAIN. Wait a minute. Let me——

Ms. LEAF. Sorry.

Senator MCCAIN [continuing]. Just stop you right there. "Have a history." Are they still doing it?

Ms. LEAF. Senator, I cannot discuss all of this in this setting. I would be happy to take these questions back and provide a fuller response in a classified setting.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, until you can give me a full response, in response to published information in newspapers and television and radio all over America and all over the world, then you have got the wrong guy, here. This is a serious problem of Qatar's assistance to these radical elements and funding which is going on as we speak. So, to just say, "Well, this kind of thing has happened before," it has not. And it is very serious. And, as long as ISIS is able to do the things they are doing with the assistance and cooperation of Qatar, our challenge with ISIS is dramatically, significantly increased.

I had not even intended, frankly, to ask you a question. But, when you sit there and say, "Well, this is just a normal thing," it is not normal. It is not. And the relations between Qatar and Iran are also troubling. That is not normal. It is not what we are trying to achieve in the Middle East.

So, I will be submitting to you some questions that are based on public information—not on sensitive information, but based on public information. And I would expect an answer from you.

But, believe me, I have spent enough time over there to know that this is a normal situation, the behavior of Qatar.

And, by the way, do you know whether UAE and Egypt notified the United States of America when they launched airstrikes against Libya?

Ms. LEAF. Senator, regarding this incident that you are referring to, there is very little that I could say in this hearing, but I would be happy to ask for a classified briefing for you on that matter.

Senator MCCAIN. I am not going to a classified hearing with you. I am asking you a question, whether the published reports, in the New York Times and the Washington Post, that UAE and Egypt launched airstrikes in Libya—whether the United States of America was informed by them, or not. Do you refuse to answer that question?

Ms. LEAF. No, Senator, I will answer that question. I cannot speak to those reports in this setting.

Senator MCCAIN. Then I cannot support your nomination if the Senate of the United States is not entitled to have that information.

Ms. LEAF. Senator, I would be happy to provide that to you in a classified setting.

Senator MCCAIN. It is not necessary, in a classified setting, if it is published information whether it is true, or not.

Ms. LEAF. I am aware of what the press has reported, but all I can say to you, Senator, in this setting, is the following, that I would be happy to take that back. I cannot——

Senator MCCAIN. What is classified about it? They either told the United States of America, or not. What is classified about that?

Ms. LEAF. Senator, I would be happy to take it back.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, perhaps you can tell me, in preparation for this hearing, why you were told that that—were you told that that is classified information?

Ms. LEAF. These are all issues—related to those events, they are classified, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Ms. Cefkin, I have a special feeling—it is nice to see you again—I have a special feeling for Fiji, and I wish you well. They have been through a terrible, difficult time, and I am interested in your assessment as to whether this first-time election in so long is going to be successful, or not. And thank you for—they are wonderful, gentle people, and they have had a very great—great difficulties in recent years. So, I thank you for your service. And I am interested in your assessment. I think it is September 17, is going to—the vote is going to be?

Ms. CEFKIN. Thank you very much for that question, Senator.

You are correct, the vote is scheduled for September 17, next week. We are working very closely with an international coalition led by Australia and Indonesia that is organizing international observers. We have several Americans that will participate in that observer mission. We have also been providing some voter education support through NGOs to the people of Fiji to help support a credible election outcome.

Of course, there are various predictions. I am reluctant to speculate and to give you any absolute prediction about what the outcome will be, but we remain cautiously hopeful that there will be a credible election that takes place that will allow us to move to another phase of our cooperation, our relations, and to look for ways to continue to deepen support for democratic institutions and democratic culture in Fiji.

We have, and we—the United States—will continue to urge that Fiji continue the progress, build on this progress, to further expand the rights of its citizens to fully participate, to fully enjoy freedom of expression and organization. We know that—I know, from my personal experience, that transitions are difficult, that they take time, generally. One election is not sufficient to complete the process of democratic transition. But, yes, we are committed, and, if confirmed, I will make that an absolute priority to focus on support for democratic development in Fiji.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, there are many places where Ambassadors are very important. It is one of those. And I know you will be working closely with, especially, the Australians, as well as the other countries in the region that have imposed embargoes and other restrictions on Fiji. And I appreciate very much what the Australians, particularly, have done in addressing this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I had additional questions, but I would wait until next round if——

Senator KAINE. Thank you. Senator McCain, you can continue. I am going to have some additional questions, too, but I will hit cleanup if you want to continue, and then we will move to Senator Rubio.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you. I just wanted to talk to Mr. Roebuck for a minute.

The situation in Bahrain is pretty clear cut in some respects, I think, in that there has been a suppression of the opposition and

the treatment of Tom Malinowski is not an acceptable situation. Obviously, we cannot have our representatives thrown out of a country that is supposed to be a friend of ours. But, at the same time, there is ample evidence of Iranian influence; in fact, even Iranian weapons have been intercepted trying to be delivered to the opposition. So, it is not just a sort of a human rights issue and lack of democratization. We have got the Iranians playing heavily, here. And I am curious, How do we balance that, in your view? And, by the way, it is good to see you again, and thank you for your service.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Tell me how we can thread that needle.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator.

As you indicate, we have a range of important interests in Bahrain. I have addressed the human rights dimension of our relationship in some detail in the—in my statement and in the questions. We will continue to raise those important issues.

We also have, of course, a very, very important security partnership with Bahrain. They host NAVCENT, they host the Fifth Fleet, 8,000 servicemembers live and work there. This hosting allows us to do a range of incredibly significant——

Senator MCCAIN. I understand all that.

Mr. ROEBUCK. OK. Got it.

So, the security relationship is very important. We want to ensure that that is maintained.

On the human rights and the internal security situation that you mentioned, we are encouraging the government and the opposition to continue political dialogue reform efforts and a reconciliation process to address the type of social and economic grievances that you allude to. They have had problems. There was significant unrest in 2011. And the efforts of the——

Senator MCCAIN. I want you to get to Iran.

Mr. ROEBUCK [continuing]. And the efforts of the—thank you, sir—the efforts of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry have been important to help them address these issues.

With regard to Iran, we are aware of Iranian attempts to have influence in Bahrain, in places like Bahrain, where there is sectarian unrest. I think it is inevitable that, you know, given that unrest and instability, they are trying to take advantage of that situation. We are aware of the reports that you mentioned. Much of the discussion surrounding these reports, Senator, is limited to classified sourcing and information. It is difficult for me to get into too much of it. But, your basic point about this involvement is accurate, in the broad sense——

Senator MCCAIN. So, is there not a—this is my final question—is there not a real threat, here, that this could turn into a—basically, a proxy war between the Saudis and the Iranians?

Mr. ROEBUCK. I think there is always a risk of outside powers getting involved in a situation like in Bahrain, where there has been——

Senator MCCAIN. Well, the Saudis have already been in, militarily, once.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Correct. They went in as part of the GCC Peninsula Shield Forces for a few months in 2011. There is that danger. And I think it is—and it is important that we continue to talk

closely with our allies, like the Saudis, ensure that they are playing a positive role. We believe, from our discussions, that they want to play a positive role. It is 2014 now, it is not 2011. I think they understand the—that. And I think, on the Iran side, you know, we continue with the P5+1 talks. Bahrain and others in the region clearly understand the dangers of a nuclear Iran to the region and to the world. And we will——

Senator MCCAIN. Well, could I say——

Mr. ROEBUCK [continuing]. Continue to address that——

Senator MCCAIN [continuing]. I am not so worried about a nuclear Iran, in this case, I am worried about Iranian arms and equipping the opposition and you are getting into a real firefight, here.

But, I thank you, Mr. Roebuck, and I thank you for your previous service. And you are inheriting a very, very delicate situation, where a lot of interests have to be balanced, here, probably one of the most difficult that I know of in the entire region.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, sir.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

Thank you all for your willingness to serve or prior to service to our country.

Mr. Roebuck, the bulk of my questions in the time I have will be toward you, just simply because of my interest in Bahrain and what is occurring there.

You may have answered this already. I may have missed it, so I may be restating it. But, I want to talk about the expulsion of Tom Malinowski, ostensibly for holding a meeting with the Wefaq representatives without a government representative present. My understanding is, the government also, reportedly, barred a Member of Congress, in the last few weeks, from visiting the country, based on a similar concern.

If and when, as I anticipate you will be, you are confirmed as Ambassador of the United States, do you plan to comply with this requirement, that they have a government representative anytime we meet with members of an opposition party?

Mr. ROEBUCK. No, sir, Senator Rubio. We have made it clear to the Bahraini government that this an unacceptable condition. It is not only unacceptable in Bahrain, it is worldwide. There are established diplomatic protocols for such meetings. And we use those types of—we expect compliance with those types of international norms in our meetings worldwide. And that goes for Bahrain, also.

Senator RUBIO. Well, there is an invitation out to Mr. Malinowski to return to the Kingdom. Do you know, what is the status of that? And have they set any "ground rules," for his return, for him to be able to come back?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Senator, I spoke with Assistant Secretary Malinowski late last week about this. He wants to return at a time that would be most helpful to the broader political dialogue and reconciliation process. We have discussed this at senior levels with the Bahraini Government. They have indicated they would wel-

come him back. They understand the need for corrective steps to address the previous expulsion. And we will continue to work through this issue to try to resolve it. But, the conditions that you cite would not be acceptable for a return visit, and that has been part of the broader conversation.

Senator RUBIO. Now, I want to get a little broader on this, and I think some of the questions around here have touched upon it, because Bahrain is a nation that I have taken an interest in, a couple of years ago, for reasons of both human rights and geopolitical reality. And, you know, I believe human rights should always be at the forefront of what we do from a national security perspective and from a foreign policy perspective. And so, I was deeply concerned to see that a minority in that country felt oppressed and felt like they did not have the space to speak out in the Kingdom. And we engaged ourselves early in that conversation; in fact, met with some young people from there that expressed to us that their desire was not to overthrow the Kingdom, but simply to create a political accommodation where they had a greater role and more of a voice.

As that process has broken down over the last few years, you have begun to see evidence or indications that the opposition in the country has become increasingly potentially more radicalized, or at least elements of it there have become more radicalized, and that potentially have created stronger links with Iran as their sponsor in these efforts.

The answer we always get back, whenever we express our desire to speak forcefully on these issues of human rights, is, we have to be careful not to go too far on human rights, I am told, because Bahrain has such critical importance to the United States, from a geopolitical perspective, that somehow we need to push aside the human rights considerations because they are such an important partner in that region, from a defense perspective.

I think that is troubling and shortsighted, for a couple of reasons. One, I think it undermines our credibility, when we go around the world talking about how we are fighters on behalf of human rights and democracy, freedom, and the liberty of all people, and, on the other hand, we are willing, or appear willing, to tolerate it in some parts of the world because they are good partners. We did that in the cold war, as well, in many instances. And I do not criticize it now, and hindsight is always 20/20, but it was, to some—we still, in some extent, pay the price for that in some parts of the world.

The other is, I think it is actually bad for our allies, because, when they do this, when you have a large number of people in this country—in this instance, not even a minority—I just called it a minority; it is not a minority, but a group that feels being oppressed because they do not have a voice—I think, long term, that is unsustainable. If you are an ally of the United States, what we should be explaining to these countries—and I hope that we are—is, "What you have today is an unsustainable position. You have got to create space for every segment of your society to be involved. Otherwise, you have put for yourself—you put yourself in an unsustainable long-term position that actually is ripe for the sorts of instability that do not just undermine you, but ultimately undermine our standing in that part of the world." But, again, the argu-

ment I get back is, "We have got to be careful not to push too hard, because Bahrain is too important."

I will say that in 2013 a former Director of National Intelligence, Dennis Blair, said, "Bahrain needs the United States, from both the security and economic points of view, more than the United States needs Bahrain." He went on to say, "The Fifth Fleet Headquarters should be moved back onboard a flagship as it was until 1993. Permanent basing in a repressive Bahrain undermines our support for reform and is vulnerable if instability continues."

So, I guess my point is, as you walk into this role there, what is your view of this balance, to the extent there needs to be a balance? And how would you—and, furthermore, how would you evaluate our alternatives for the naval support activity facility in Bahrain? How crucial is that facility? How crucial is that facility being stationed in that place, in Bahrain? How crucial is that to U.S. defense strategy in the Persian Gulf region?

But, the first one is the most important. How do you view that balance? Because I am not even sure there should be a balance, per se. I think all of our national security and foreign policy credibility is undermined when we are seen to be the sponsor of, and looking the other way to, repression.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

I believe there does need to be a balance. I think that a country that promotes and protects human rights will be ultimately a more stable country and can be a more effective security partner. My commitment is to make the case, publicly and privately, if confirmed, to the Bahrain Government that it is in their long-term interest to promote and protect human rights, and also to support a vibrant political dialogue, reform, and reconciliation process. My view—and I think our policy is informed by this view—is that these two objectives—security partnership and human rights—are not in conflict, but that they mutually reinforce each other. I think it takes work to make sure that the policy functions in that way, but I do believe that that is a fundamental understanding of our policies towards Bahrain.

I do think that the hosting of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, the Fifth Fleet, in Bahrain is incredibly important to our regional interest. That deepwater port's central location allows us to cover 2.3 million square miles of critical oceans and seas, demonstrate resolve to Iran, ensure the free flow of oil and commerce, and mount counterterrorism, counterpiracy, counternarcotics efforts.

So, yes, it is critical, but I believe we can balance that interest with our concern for human rights. And it is absolutely essential that we do so.

Thank you, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Can I just——

Senator KAINE. Please continue.

Senator RUBIO. Here was what I would just say. When you go that part of the world or you speak to people and say, "Well, why is the United States involved, and why do we care about what is happening in different parts of the world?"—one of the things we should always lead with is, "Well, we care about human rights. There are certain realities," I mean, this Nation was founded on

the principle that all human beings were created equal, endowed by a creator with certain rights that belong to them that are not granted to them by government. These are the founding principles of our Nation. And I think we have been a beacon to the world for over 240 years because we have been willing to go around the world and help those who aspire to that for themselves. It gives credibility to—and standing. And it makes us more than just a geopolitical player. It makes us, in essence, someone other countries look at as an inspiration.

Here is where we run into trouble. When you go to these parts of the world and say, "Well, you care about human rights, and you care about democracy, and you care about freedom unless it is some country that is critically important to you in some way. Then you are willing to look the other way. I mean, you looked the other way in Saudi Arabia, where there are no human rights, per se, where women are not even allowed to drive a car. You look the other way in Bahrain." You know, and I have had these conversations, where they are—you know, where I have explained to Bahraini officials that it is critical that the space be created, because what they have, long term, is a powder keg.

People are not all of a sudden just going to decide to take it. This will continue to be a problem, and an unsustainable one.

And I look at other examples, where, over time, we were able to convince allies of ours, in a different era—the Philippines comes to mind—where, slowly but surely, we pressured and put—during the Reagan administration, created conditions, where eventually that dictatorship fell and transitioned to a democracy, albeit one that has some challenges, but certainly no longer governed by a dictatorship, as an example of a role the United States should also play. If we are truly someone's ally, I think it is critical for us to explain and be forceful and continuing to nudge them toward a sustainable position that honors both human rights and democracy and does not cost us our credibility. Because I think when we look the other way, whether it is Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, or anywhere else, and say, "We care about human rights unless we happen to have bases in your country and you are helping us achieve some other foreign policy objective"—I actually think that threatens and undermines our credibility, our standing, and ultimately those countries, as well. So, as their allies, I think it is important that we continue to be forceful in explaining to them that, if they do not create these spaces where people can become legitimate and open and free parts of that society, where they feel like they have an outlet and a voice in the politics for those nations, those countries are in an unsustainable place and ultimately are going to continue to be places where Iran and others can come in and try to exploit that division.

So, I hope you will use this post as an opportunity to continue to further that dialogue and continue to nudge them in that direction. Otherwise, the situation they find themselves in is unsustainable, and I think Bahrain will continue to be susceptible to Iranian influence trying to stir up Shia militants and others to take actions against the Kingdom.

So, thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

Ms. Leaf, let me pick up with you on the—I want to make sure I understand the dialogue you had with Senator McCain. We are very concerned on the committee, as you know, about this issue of the airstrikes in Libya. And I have seen it—you know, I have seen it kind of interpreted a couple of different ways. One interpretation is, you know, "How dare something like this happen without the U.S. being deeply involved." I think a willingness to publicly self-police in the region is actually—could be a real healthy thing. I think this has been a region where often nations have, you know, quietly told us we need to do things, and they have been unwilling to stand up and do things themselves. Nevertheless, there is—you know, there is a lot of concerns about how it could be interpreted.

I understood your answers to be, this question about whether the United States was notified is certainly a question that is important, that is worthy of an answer, the Senate should get an answer, but, to answer that question, you would have to reveal what you know through classified information that you are not at liberty to reveal. Is that basically correct?

Ms. LEAF. Yes, that is the—that is correct, Senator. And I—what I would say is there are more things that I simply cannot discuss in this setting, much as I would like to be responsive to Senator McCain's question, and to your own. I think perhaps if it is helpful, I could add a few comments about the larger issue of the U.S. and UAE collaboration on Libya, because that actually is a policy——

Senator KAINE. That would be helpful.

Ms. LEAF. Thank you. That is an issue that we have been discussing in some depth with Emiratis since—well, since at least the spring and into the summer, and we are going to have another round of such discussions, in addition to the—to very regular senior-level contacts that we have between our government and theirs.

Libya is a place that the Emiratis engaged on as part of the NATO-led coalition, as you know, Mr. Chairman, and they have had an abiding interest, as we do, in seeing that country stabilize and become secure. And their concerns have been growing for some time, which they have reflected to us, about the growth of Libyan and transnational extremist groups.

So, we are enhancing—we are deepening the dialogue with them and other key partners on this issue as we speak.

Senator KAINE. You talked a little bit about events of the last weekend in kind of a—at least, kind of at face value, a reunification of some of the foreign ministers in the GCC. I am also struck, as I watch this—sometimes there is a theatrical element to breaks, and then there is a theatrical element to reunifications. And I am trying to determine what is theater and what is real.

Talk a little bit about the events of the last weekend and, sort of, what that——

Ms. LEAF. I would——

Senator KAINE [continuing]. Suggests to you is occurring.

Ms. LEAF. I would be happy to do so. In fact, I mean, these are very serious differences of view that have roiled the waters of the GCC. So, I perhaps gave an impression that it was business as normal. I would not by any means suggest so. Rather, that the overriding security challenges that have beset the region over the last couple of years and really have perhaps crested at this point in

Iraq with the emergence of, really, a truly terrifying and brutal movement—ISIL—that has had a very sobering effect on many people across the region, not the least of which are GCC partners.

I would not suggest that they have been able to put all differences aside on the issues that Senator McCain addressed. Far from it. And it was dramatic, what occurred in the spring. It was significant. But, there has been a pretty steady pulling together over the last weeks, in part led by the Saudi Government. But, I think it is a collective reflection that we see right now that they have got really, really bigger fish to fry, if you will. They are addressing their internal differences over the Muslim Brotherhood and other issues. They are addressing them as brothers in a family.

Senator KAINE. What more can the UAE do to support countries like Lebanon and Jordan with the Syrian refugee issues? I know they have been engaged on this humanitarian front, but talk a little bit about the status of that engagement, what more they can do.

Ms. LEAF. I will do so, happily.

The UAE is a really generous foreign assistance donor. I was looking at figures the other day that indicated they have provided assistance to 137 different countries around the world. Jordan ranks right at the top of their regional priorities. And the figure that I mentioned earlier is really meant to address this wave of Syrian refugees and the enormous impact that that has had on Syria's neighbors. Jordan and Lebanon together remain key diplomatic and humanitarian assistance priorities for the UAE. That goes without saying. Without us even raising it, that is a priority for that government.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ms. Leaf.

Ambassador Spratlen, a couple of questions. Talk a little bit about the current status of, sort of, democratization and human rights in Uzbekistan. And, in particular, I am always interested whether U.S. and other international-based NGOs are able to operate freely in the country. If you could address that issue.

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Kaine.

Yes, the issue of human rights has been at the top of U.S. priorities with Uzbekistan for as long as we have had our diplomatic relations with them, over 20 years. And, as you may know from having read some of the congressionally mandated reports—the Human Rights Report, the International Religious Freedom Report, and others—Uzbekistan, quite unfortunately, ranks very, very low, in global terms, when it comes to compliance with internationally respected human rights norms. As a result, this is a conversation we consistently have as part of our bilateral relationship. I think one of the main differences is that Uzbekistan is a country that has a great deal of concern about the issue of terrorism, about the issue of dissent. And the central government uses considerable resources to constrain that dissent.

What I would also say, however, is that Uzbekistan highly values its relationship with the United States. We know each other well. And I think those conversations that we do have with them quite regularly are built on mutual understanding and mutual respect. But, what we would like to see is for the Uzbekistan government

to recognize that it is in its own interest to meet those international commitments.

With respect to the international human rights community, we are aware that there are a number of groups, such as Human Rights Watch and Freedom House and so on, that previously operated in Uzbekistan and have not been able to do so for a number of years. It is also true, however, that in recent years, I would say that the relationship with Uzbekistan has been improving. And that would include in terms of our conversations with them about human rights. And, while we have not seen, necessarily, actions on the part of the government that would signal a change in their policy, we have seen that they have been willing to release some prisoners when we, the United States, has made those requests, and we also know that a limited number of international human rights organizations are operating in Uzbekistan. For example, the National Democratic Institute is operating there, and they have a very good professional.

This individual just recently arrived, and so we will have to see what will happen with the person's ability.

The issue really—to operate there—the concern is that this—the operating space for human rights for civil society is really quite narrow in Uzbekistan. And the only thing I can say, Senator, is that this is very much a high priority for me in my current position, and it will remain so. We have had some limited successes in Uzbekistan. And I think as we continue to press, not only at the Embassy level, but with our visitors, we will continue to make the case that it is in the interest of Uzbekistan to narrow the gap between its international commitments and put the realities that we see on the ground.

Senator KAINE. I am aware of some reports that anticipate a possible retirement of the President, President Karimov, and that there could be some kind of internal power struggle among political elites in that event that could be destabilizing. I mean, those are in country; you know, those are issues that will be decided there. But, what is your current, sort of, outlook on the political stability of leadership in Uzbekistan?

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Well, I would say that political stability is really at the top of Uzbekistan's priorities. It has been led by Islam Karimov since the independence of Uzbekistan in 1991. I do not really want to get into speculating about——

Senator KAINE. Right.

Ambassador SPRATLEN. [continuing]. What will happen in the future. I think that we just have to watch very carefully what happens. There are all kinds of scenarios that might occur, but I think the most important thing is for us to deal with the reality that we have in Uzbekistan right at the moment. I think, from the point of view of President Karimov, he is very proud of the fact that the country has been very, very stable. I think there are a lot of things that could be different in Uzbekistan, and we have, as I said, been able to have those conversations with them. But, I would prefer not to speculate about what might happen in the future about the leadership.

Senator KAINE. I want to ask you some questions about the current energy outlook in Uzbekistan. Can they produce additional gas

for export? Is there any ability for them to use those resources to enter the European market? Would Russia try to block them from doing that? Talk a little bit about energy resources and their potential in Uzbekistan.

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Certainly. Thank you for the question.

Senator, during the Soviet period, Uzbekistan was really at the center of the energy situation for the countries in the region. It was really the hub. After the breakup of the former Soviet Union, and with the independence of all of the states, what turned out to be true is that countries like Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan ended up being the places that had enormous reserves for oil and gas. Uzbekistan does not have those kinds of resources, the kinds of resources that Azerbaijan, that Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have. However, they do strategically use the oil and gas revenues that they do have. Of course, it is very important to them to use those resources for domestic consumption. They also sell to China. In the past, Russia has been an important customer of theirs, but, of course, the economic situation in Russia right at the moment has caused some changes in that. But, I would say that, yes, energy is important for Uzbekistan, but they are not going to be playing this—the kind of major role in the global energy market and for Europe that some of the other countries in the region have played.

Senator KAINE. How would you characterize the current relationships between Uzbekistan and Russia, on one hand, and Uzbekistan and China, on the other?

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Well, I would say the most important thing about Uzbekistan as a state is that it highly values its sovereignty and its independence, and it does not want to be put in a position of being forced to choose its partners. And, therefore, I think it has been very shrewd and very careful in developing relations with a variety of major partners. Obviously, as a former Soviet state, the relationship with Russia is an important one. But, I think Uzbekistan has signaled, in a number of ways, that it intends to safeguard its sovereignty. It was previously a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. It pulled out of that. It suspended its membership a couple of years ago. I think that was a kind of signal of their independence. And they have had a very robust relationship with China that has been developing at a very measured but important pace since 1991. In 2012, they raised the level of their relationship with China to a strategic partnership, and there have been exchanges of visits between Presidents that have been marked by signing various documents. And the relationship continues to grow strongly economically. There are some 500 companies—Chinese companies operating in Uzbekistan, and there is significant economic activity on the part of China.

So, what I would say is that Uzbekistan is using its relationships with major partners to ensure that it maintains its sovereignty and its independence, that it is not forced to choose partners, but, at the same time, that it sustains relationships that are meaningful and important to them.

With respect to Russia, I would just note that there are a considerable number of Uzbekistan citizens who work in the Russian Federation, and that the remittances that they send back home are extremely important to Uzbekistan's GDP.

So, I would say that these relationships, both with Russia and with China and with other important partners, continue to develop and grow, but all with the idea that Uzbekistan is at the center of it, wanting to safeguard its sovereignty and its independence.

Senator KAINE. One last question, and it deals with equitable water-sharing in Central Asia. I understand that Uzbekistan has some concerns about hydroelectric dams being built in neighboring countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. But, what is the appropriate role that we can play to encourage equitable water-sharing in these Central Asian nations?

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Well, Senator, yes, you have touched on one of the most sensitive questions in the region right at the moment. Uzbekistan is a downstream country, and the countries such as the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan hold significant hydropower resources. And, in the case of Tajikistan, there is an interest in building a major dam project, which Uzbekistan has very strongly opposed.

What I would say is that the United States, as a matter of policy, is interested in having—we believe that all of the countries of Central Asia would prosper more and would enjoy more stability and security if they cooperated together. And this is also true in the area of water resources.

With respect to the specific issue of the Rogun Dam, our goal and, I think, the role of the United States is really to facilitate the dialogue and to ensure that the negotiations or the discussions that take place among countries are done—happen on the basis of facts, happen on the basis of what is technologically true. But, we know that these are also political questions for the country, for the individual countries.

But, the main role for the United States is to be a facilitator of dialogue. And if confirmed, of course, that is a role I will continue to play.

Senator KAINE. Ambassador Spratlen, thank you for those answers.

And, Ms. Cefkin, I would—this is a little bit of a followup on a line of questioning from Senator McCain, as well. But, I was intrigued, your position in Fiji in a time of political transition—how can you draw on your experience in working on Burma issues, which has been through an important transition—and you have, you know, seen that up close and personal—how can you draw on that experience to assist in your efforts, your work in—with Fiji?

Ms. CEFKIN. Thank you very much, Senator, for that question.

That is correct, that I feel very privileged that, through many of my assignments, the constant thread has been working with countries that are in transition, that are striving to develop their democratic systems, as well as promote their economic development. And I find great personal satisfaction in engaging on those issues.

I think that, first and foremost, what I have learned is the importance of really building people-to-people ties and networks. We have such a wealth, in the United States, of groups ranging from our nongovernmental organizations to our academic institutions to our government officials that can bring a lot of expertise and experience that they have to share. And I find, in general, that people

of the countries do aspire to really take on board these lessons, and they are very hungry for the information.

So, I certainly will look, if confirmed, to tap our programs through our public diplomacy programs and through whatever assistance resources are available to continue to expand that people-to-people engagement, as well, of course, as our diplomatic engagement and making sure that our positions on these issues are clearly understood.

Senator KAINE. To what extent has the ban on U.S. military assistance to Fiji sort of affected our objectives in the region?

Ms. CEFKIN. Well, I think certainly, Senator, that there is a very clear strategic importance to this region that can greatly benefit from greater military engagement. We have seen, as I noted in my comments, that several of these countries, including Fiji, have been very willing participants in international peacekeeping operations. They have participated with us, in the case of Tonga, in the coalition in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Currently, we have 45 Fijian peacekeepers who are being held captive in the Golan. So, it shows very much their willingness to accept risk, to support global peacekeeping. So, it would be, obviously, I think, to our benefit, if their political conditions allow, for us to be able to expand our support to them in these efforts.

And we also, I am happy to say, have a wealth of expertise in the United States Government, and resources also on the law enforcement front, where we are working very closely with these countries to support their surveillance efforts to protect fisheries. So, I think that we would hope to be able to look for opportunities to expand those efforts.

Senator KAINE. I was in the Sinai in February and had a chance to visit with the multinational force of observers that, since the 1970s, I guess, has been performing the border security with Israel in that region. And Fiji plays a major presence in that, and has for years. And while I did not visit their units, the American military personnel who were sort of head of that operation had very, very complimentary things to say about the Fijian commitment to this mission, these peacekeepers there in the Golan and other places. They have been a good partner in some very important parts of the world. And I hope the political transition would move at a pace where we would feel more comfortable in expanding our degrees of military cooperation.

You raised the issue of climate change in Fiji, and the other nations that you represent are affected by this. Has the—when we, as the United States, are in international fora concerning climate change issues, you know, do we publicly give support to, or raise the issues of, these small Pacific nations who are certainly seeing some of the most dramatic impacts of changing climate?

Ms. CEFKIN. Thank you for raising this very important issue, Senator.

Yes, we are working very closely with them in international fora, in international negotiations, U.N. Climate Convention negotiations, as well as through other less formal fora; for example, the Oceans Conference, which Secretary Kerry organized, in June this year. Several of the Pacific Island nations were represented at a very senior level, including Kiribati. President Tong, of Kiribati,

was one of the keynote speakers, and he made the very important point that, really, these countries are on the front lines of this effort, the strategic priority of mitigating climate change and preserving our ocean resources, that these countries, in many senses, are our early warning system, and the very dramatic existential challenges they are facing, from rising ocean levels, warming, acidification, and overfishing, is quite dramatic. We are working with them through some USAID resources on climate adaptation projects to support their communities' efforts to find ways to adapt and help mitigate the effects of climate change. We are working with them on programs to help improve environmental governance and also efforts to look at alternative energy resources. So, that is another important tool we have to support our common interest in working to mitigate climate change and to help preserve ocean resources. Through our public diplomacy programs, we have sponsored groups that have been able to come and to learn the benefit of some of our experiences.

So, there are a number of activities that are ongoing, where I think we are working very cooperatively together. And it is very important that we continue to do so.

Senator KAINE. I would definitely encourage that we do more of that. You know, this is in the, kind of, "for what it is worth" category. In Virginia, as I deal with Virginians on climate issues, some climate issues are perceived by Virginians to—Virginians actually are very concerned about the issue, overwhelmingly believe that humans are having an impact on climate, it is a serious thing, we ought to do something about it. What to do about it, how quickly to—how quickly to take those steps, there are a lot of differences of opinion there. But, many climate issues, Virginians kind of see as "tomorrow issues" that we ought to do something, because we want tomorrow to be OK. But, sea level rise is a "today issue" in Virginia. It is very visible. It is not a tomorrow issue that is kind of theoretical, "We should get to it sometime"; it is a today issue. And if it is a today issue in the Hampton Roads part of Virginia, it is a today issue probably on steroids in the nations where you will be serving. And I think people can see that so visibly that it has a way of convincing people of the science and of the urgency of a response. So, I think, working together with these nations is not only in their interest, but it also, I think, can have the ability of really shining a spotlight and educating people about the critical nature of this challenge that we are all dealing with as a planet. So, I would encourage you in those ways.

Last question I wanted to ask is this. We have our own policy with respect to these nations, but Australia and New Zealand do, as well. Talk a little bit about the relationship between the United States, Australia, and New Zealand and how we work together to coordinate economic or diplomatic or strategic efforts in the region.

Ms. CEFKIN. Senator, thank you.

They are, of course, very critical partners for us in working in the South Pacific, as also is the United Kingdom, which, of course, has deep historic interest and connections. And we are working very closely with them, both bilaterally and multilaterally, and informally in a smaller like-minded grouping. We are regularly sharing our assessments and our plans and looking for synergies where

we can collaborate. For example, on this issue of working on environmental management, currently the United States and New Zealand are cooperating on a very important waste management project in Kiribati. We are active partners in the various regional fora that are currently active in the region, including the Pacific Island Forum. And so, we work closely with them on all those levels.

But, you are right. Obviously we all have mutual interests, but first and foremost, if confirmed, I would be very attentive to, fundamentally, what is the U.S. interest and what can we do and what can we bring to the table in support of our common objectives.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much.

Well, this will conclude the hearing. I will ask that the record remain open until 5 p.m. on Friday for members of the committee who want to submit questions for response by any of the nominees.

Again, I will state what I stated at the beginning of the hearing. Each of you have very distinguished and very diverse careers of serving this country in a variety of places, including in some challenging assignments, and we are in your debt for your service. We thank you and wish you the best, going forward.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF WILLIAM V. ROEBUCK TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. In President Obama's 2011 speech following the outbreak of peaceful protests in Bahrain and other Arab nations, he said to the Bahraini Government, "The only way forward is for the government and the opposition to engage in a dialogue, and you can't have a real dialogue when parts of the peaceful opposition are in jail." I hope that this message has been reiterated privately, though it has not been publically reaffirmed. Other civil society leaders have been detained such as human rights defender Meriam al-Khawaja, who testified in the House in 2011. She was arrested on her return to Bahrain on Saturday, August 30, and international NGOs believe she was targeted for her international advocacy work in Washington and elsewhere.

- Does the President's call for the release from prison of peaceful opposition leaders remain U.S. policy?
- Is President Obama's message one you will be conveying publicly and privately to the Bahraini Government?

Answer. Yes—it remains our position that peaceful members of Bahrain's political opposition should be released; such imprisonment undermines the right of political expression and compromises the atmosphere for reconciliation.

We have repeatedly voiced concern about these cases, both publicly and privately, at the highest levels. As I said in my statement, if confirmed, I will make a strong case for why political dialogue, reform, and promoting and protecting human rights are in Bahrain's long-term interest.

- If confirmed, how will you engage with the Bahraini Government and opposition leaders to move forward with a national dialogue and political process?
- What specific ideas or proposals do you plan to offer?
- Are there specific actions that the Government of Bahrain or opposition societies have already taken that represent significant steps toward reconciliation?

Answer. I believe a stable Bahrain will be a more stable partner to the United States, and that the country's long-term stability requires advancements in its reform and reconciliation agenda. If confirmed, I will commit to supporting the Bahraini people in seeking a resolution to Bahrain's ongoing unrest. This is a Bahraini challenge that will require a Bahraini solution, but Bahrain's partners, including the United States, can also be supportive in the process.

Both sides—the government and the opposition—have taken good-faith steps toward reconciliation, but there is much more to be done. Before bringing any specific proposals to the table, I would first want to engage with the range of Bahraini stakeholders and assess how I can be helpful to the process.

Question. The U.S. Government has called on the Government of Bahrain to fully implement all of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), including Recommendation 1722(a), which requires investigations into all gross violations of human rights, including torture and extrajudicial killings, and that officials "at all levels of responsibility" be included in the scope of the inquiry.

- ♦ If confirmed, how will you encourage the Government of Bahrain to take steps to fully implement the BICI recommendations, including undertaking credible investigations into the role of all levels of Bahraini security forces in the torture and extrajudicial killings of its citizens?

Answer. King Hamad has repeatedly reaffirmed his commitment to implementing reforms. The Bahraini Government has taken some important steps in line with BICI's recommendations, including rebuilding mosques, establishing the Ombudsman's Office, establishing a Special Investigative Unit, establishing the Commission on the Rights of Prisoners and Detainees, some training of police in human rights standards, and other measures.

However, the Government of Bahrain has more to do on its implementation of unfulfilled BICI recommendations and we will continue to press them on this. We have stated publically and privately that the Government has made no meaningful progress on accountability for abuses committed by security forces, media incitement, or antitorture safeguards. In fact, we have unfortunately seen backsliding in some of these areas, including reduced sentences for the few security officials convicted of mistreatment and ongoing cases of individuals subject to arrest and long prison sentences for peaceful political expression.

Implementation of the BICI recommendations is an important tool to move beyond the events of 2011. This report, however, did not fully address the broader social, political, and economic concerns that many Bahrainis have voiced and that a successful National Dialogue may begin to address. If confirmed, I will engage Bahraini stakeholders on the BICI recommendations, and more broadly, on the dialogue and reconciliation process.

Question. Over the past several months, Bahrain has established new trade and military ties with Russia, including ordering a new weapons system from Russian state arms company Rosoboronexport.

- ♦ How should the United States interpret this warming relationship and how should we respond?

Answer. Bahrain, like many of its Gulf Cooperation Council partners, has a diverse range of defense relationships, but its preeminent defense relationship is with the United States. Our Navy arrived in Bahrain during the 1940s, and today more than 8,000 Americans who are attached to the Fifth Fleet or U.S. Naval Forces Central Command live there. We work closely with the Bahraini Defense Forces, in particular their Navy and Air Force, on a range of fronts, including counterterrorism and antipiracy operations.

Bahrain is an important partner of the United States and our mutual interests intersect more than they diverge. If confirmed, I will directly engage the Government of Bahrain to ensure that the space where our interests overlap continues to grow.

Question. For several years the U.S. Government has refrained from selling certain items—including TOW missiles, Humvees, and crowd control items—to Bahrain, citing concerns of "increased polarization" throughout Bahrain and "the excessive use of force and tear gas by police." The U.S. Government has continued to sell Bahrain numerous other items that are used reportedly only for "external defense," though several Foreign Military Sales cases remain on hold.

- ♦ Please list the FMS cases that remain on hold. What is the administration's policy on steps that need to be taken in order to lift the hold on these cases?

Answer. We continue to withhold the transfer of items to Bahrain that could be used for internal security, including small arms and crowd control items. We will be pleased to provide a list to the committee via confidential means. The administration does not currently have plans to modify our security cooperation policy with Bahrain. We continually reassess the policy and the situation in Bahrain, and we will continue to consult with the Congress prior to enacting any changes to the policy.

♦ Do you assess that if these holds are lifted, Bahraini security forces will use U.S. origin items responsibly?

Answer. Whether a government would use defense articles appropriately is a critical factor we consider in making arms transfer decisions for any country. The Conventional Arms Transfer policy, updated in January 2014, provides significant detail into how these decisions are made.

If confirmed, a principal factor in my recommendations to the Department of State on the appropriateness of any arms transfer to Bahrain will be whether such defense articles would be appropriately used if transferred.

Question. If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy in Bahrain, as well as the steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, helping the Government of Bahrain end impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. The Department closely monitors human rights developments worldwide, including for evidence of misconduct by foreign security forces. This information is used for various purposes such as policy decisions or the annual Report on Human Rights, and is retained for use in Leahy vetting.

Leahy vetting takes place when assistance is proposed for a unit or individual member of foreign security forces. Bahrain is no exception. If confirmed, I will ensure that Embassy Manama and the Department of State continue to gather information on the conduct of Bahraini forces that will be taken into account in Leahy vetting and for any future security assistance to Bahrain.

RESPONSES OF BARBARA A. LEAF TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. A coalition of nations is currently forming to defeat the regional threat caused by ISIS. Does the U.A.E. actively support this coalition led by the United States? If so, what will the U.A.E. contribute?

Answer. The UAE has been one of the earliest and strongest voices supporting the international coalition to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In addition to private expressions of support for the U.S.-led campaign against ISIL, the UAE on September 3 issued a statement unequivocally condemning ISIL's atrocities and calling on the international community to take action against extremism and terrorism. In a September 10 Wall Street Journal op-ed, UAE Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef al-Otaiba wrote of the threat posed by Islamic extremism, and said, "Now is the time to act," including through direct intervention.

We have been in touch with the UAE and many other partners on the need for an international coalition to combat ISIL and we are pleased with the UAE's initial response. Secretary Kerry will continue to meet with regional partners, including the UAE in Jeddah to continue working out details of this coalition. Most of the specific military and security contributions of gulf partners will be classified, but we are prepared to provide a briefing on this subject in a classified setting.

Question. The State Department describes the U.A.E. as a "key partner."

♦ A. How would you define the core elements of our strategic relationship with the U.A.E.?

Answer. The core elements of our strategic partnership with the UAE are our shared goals for a stable region, our military and security partnership to confront the threats to the region, and our significant trade relationship.

On security, over 3,000 U.S. military personnel and key U.S. military assets are deployed to UAE bases. The UAE has been a reliable contributor to international coalition operations, participating in five major efforts with the United States since Operation Desert Storm—the only Arab country to do so. The UAE Air Force is built around the F–16 fighter, and the UAE has acquired a range of U.S. weapons systems to make its military interoperable with U.S. Forces. The UAE military is among the most capable in the Middle East, and the UAE modeled its new National Defense College on our own.

The UAE is one of our most important trading partners in the Middle East, importing over $22 billion in U.S. goods in 2013. It is the largest destination for U.S. exports in the region. In November 2013, Boeing and GE announced orders of over $100 billion for aircraft and engine sales to Etihad Airways, Emirates Airlines, and Flydubai. These combined deals, the largest in civil aviation history, will support hundreds of thousands of U.S. jobs for the next decade.

The Emiratis have been an important partner on Afghanistan, where they have fielded troops as part of ISAF; on Syria, where they are engaged in support for the SOC and in humanitarian relief efforts to offset the huge strain placed by Syrian refugees on neighboring countries such as Jordan; on Iran, where they have strongly supported and implemented a broad range of sanctions; and on Somalia, where they play a key role in stabilization efforts and counterpiracy.

♦ B. In your opinion, how does the U.A.E. view this relationship?

Answer. Speaking from my experience as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Gulf Affairs, and my many conversations with Emirati leaders, I am confident that the UAE values its relationship with the United States deeply. We have differences of perspective and approach on issues from time to time, as we do with even our closest allies. However, Emirati leaders are clear that they aspire to a truly strategic relationship with the United States, and view U.S. leadership in the region as indispensable to the UAE's security.

♦ C. Is the United States regarded as an indispensable partner of the U.A.E.?

Answer. I believe the relationship is hugely valuable to both parties, and if confirmed I will work to ensure that the partnership continues to support U.S. national security objectives regionally and internationally.

Question. According to State's Human Rights Report, the U.A.E. has an estimated 20,000 to 100,000 Bidoon (stateless individuals) who are mostly Baluchis or Pakistanis who came to the U.A.E. before there were defined boundaries. In many cases these individuals have lived there for centuries.

♦ What progress is being made by the U.A.E. Government to address the problems routinely faced by the Bidoon, including harassment and discrimination?

Answer. In July 2012, the UAE Government expanded the mandate of a government committee charged with reviewing requests for citizenship. Under the broader mandate, the committee could take up applications of those Bidoon who could satisfy certain legal conditions to be eligible for naturalization and subsequently could gain access to education, health care, and other public services. Separate from that, Bidoon who register with the government are able to receive identification cards, which allow individuals to work in public sector jobs and obtain medical services. The government is working with individual Bidoon to correct their residential status, and some Bidoon have begun to attend public schools alongside Emiratis. Some Bidoon have availed themselves of another country's citizenship, namely that of the Republic of Comoros, to gain a passport and legal identification under a program supported by the UAE Government. Nevertheless, if they were deported, the Republic of Comoros would not accept these persons.

More work must be done to ensure that the status of these stateless individuals is rectified. The U.S. Embassy regularly raises these concerns with the UAE Government, and meets with stateless individuals to stay apprised of the current situation facing the Bidoon.

Question. The U.A.E. has long-standing worker rights issues for noncitizens, including allegations in May of serious abuse toward South Asian workers constructing buildings for an Abu Dhabi branch of NYU.

♦ A. What is the U.A.E. doing to correct these abuses?

Answer. On the specific question of the NYU allegations, NYU Abu Dhabi is working on an ongoing basis with the Mott McDonald Group, a third-party auditor. In addition, the government of Abu Dhabi and the New York University announced in June that Daniel Nardello, a former Assistant U.S. Attorney in New York, would lead an investigation to inquire into labor conditions at NYU Abu Dhabi.

While the UAE Government views labor conditions as a serious issue, and UAE law prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor, enforcement of the law is far from adequate. The Emirati Government has taken some steps to prevent forced labor, including developing a Wages Protection System (WPS), an electronic salary transfer system intended to ensure timely and full payment of agreed wages. The government fines employers who violate workers' rights by entering incorrect information into the WPS, not paying workers for over 60 days, making workers sign documents falsely attesting to benefits, or making workers pay recruitment fees issued by the Ministry of Labor or recruitment agencies. The Ministry of Labor made 200 inspection and followup visits to recruitment agencies. The Ministry's Combating Human Trafficking Department conducted 474 inspection visits. However, the government rarely prosecutes potential forced labor cases under the country's antitrafficking law and does not provide protection services for forced labor victims.

- B. How can the Embassy help the U.A.E. to develop laws or other mechanisms to stop these problems?

Answer. As part of our ongoing dialogue with the UAE Government, the Embassy urges the UAE to continue investigating any allegations of abuse, as well as to pursue new means of protecting laborers and improve labor conditions.

- C. Has the Embassy used the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) in the last 12 months to train prosecutors and/or judges handling worker abuse cases?

Answer. During the past 12 months, our Embassy has sought to use the IVLP program to familiarize UAE judges with U.S. practices on worker/labor abuse cases during a Single Country Program (SCP) arranged for the Dubai Judicial Institute in December 2013. While the SCP was focused on cyber crime, Mission UAE recommended that the visiting group engage with New York's Court Innovation Center because of the center's focus on human trafficking issues. This meeting took place, and the judges reported that it was one of the most productive of their trip.

RESPONSES OF PAMELA LEORA SPRATLEN TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. I sent a letter to President Karimov in May to express concern about the imprisonment of Dilmurod Saidov, Salijon Abdurakhmanov, Akzam Turganov, Bobmurod Razzokov, and Muhammad Bekjanov. Several human rights groups as well as the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor have highlighted the political nature of these cases and called for their release.

- What is the current status of these five prisoners?
- Please provide a summary of recent U.S. efforts to secure their release.
- If confirmed, how will you advocate on behalf of these and other prisoners of conscience in Uzbekistan?

Answer. These five prisoners remain incarcerated. Muhammad Bekjanov is in urgent need of medical care because his health has severely deteriorated over the last 15 years he spent in prison. In a press release after a January 2014 prison visit, human rights activists reported that Salijon Abdurakhmanov's health had improved after he received 2 months of treatment for a stomach ailment. Dilmurod Saidov stated that he had not been subject to mistreatment and had been exempted from physical labor while Akzam Turgunov reportedly linked an improvement in his prison conditions with the June 2013 letter that Senator Durbin and 11 of his colleagues sent to President Karimov.

The United States has ongoing concerns about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. The Department of State consistently raises prisoner cases at the highest levels of the Uzbekistani Government, and we have made specific inquiries about the plight of several prisoners. In May 2014, Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns raised the cases of Dilmurod Saidov, Salijon Abdurakhmanov, and Akzam Turganov with Foreign Minister Kamilov. On April 28, the State Department Spokesperson publicly highlighted the case of Muhammad Bekjanov as part of the Department's 2014 Free the Press Campaign. The State Department highlighted Bobmurod Razzokov's case in its most recent Human Rights Report.

If confirmed, I will employ persistent engagement with the Government of Uzbekistan to advocate on behalf of these and other prisoners of conscience in Uzbekistan, and for needed broader reforms to address torture, due process, and other serious human rights concerns. I will use congressionally mandated reports, multilateral fora, and my own good offices to urge the government to end its practice of politically motivated imprisonment. I will also encourage the government to allow civil society organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross access to prisons to monitor conditions there. I will work with Members of Congress to amplify the messages of advocacy on behalf of prisoners of conscience. Prisoner cases will be a top priority for me if confirmed.

Question. Large-scale, government-organized use of forced labor, particularly for harvesting cotton, is a serious and entrenched human rights issue in Uzbekistan.

- If confirmed, what approach will you take with the Government of Uzbekistan to persuade it to end this practice?
- What role, if any, can the United States play in supporting agricultural sector reforms that will end the use of forced labor?

Answer. The State Department has long-standing concerns about forced labor of children and adults in Uzbekistan, as evidenced by Uzbekistan's Tier 3 ranking on the State Department's "Trafficking in Persons Report." If confirmed, I will continue

to make ending the forced labor of children and adults in Uzbekistan a top priority. To this end, I will continue to work with the Government of Uzbekistan and the International Labor Organization (ILO) on a program for cooperation aimed at ultimately eliminating forced labor in Uzbekistan. If confirmed, I will urge the government to continue to engage with the ILO and press for further action by the government to address the forced labor of 15–18 year olds and of adults. If confirmed, I will also seek to hold the Government of Uzbekistan to its recent commitment to keep all children under the age of 18 out of the cotton fields during the 2014 harvest, which began on September 8.

The United States can continue to press for agricultural sector reforms that will end the use of forced labor. The United States strongly supports the ILO's recently established Decent Work Country Program (DWCP), and if confirmed, I will continue this important support. The DWCP is designed to help Uzbekistan comply with international labor standards and will analyze the forced labor problem in Uzbekistan, including the economic, political, and social causes, and provide specific recommendations to the government on how to improve. Given the complexity of this problem, if confirmed, I will employ steady, persistent engagement over the full course of my tenure as Ambassador with the goal of ultimately ending the forced labor of adults and children in Uzbekistan. If confirmed, I will also work with Members of Congress and civil society to address this problem.

Question. I am concerned about the nature of our security cooperation with Uzbekistan and strongly support the assistance conditions outlined in section 7076 of the FY14 appropriations law related to human rights, the establishment of a multiparty political system, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, and the independence of the media. In July, the administration exercised a national security waiver to continue assistance to Uzbekistan despite lack of progress on those issues.

- Can U.S. security assistance be used to leverage progress on democracy and human rights?
- Does exercising this waiver diminish the U.S. ability to promote the democratic principles outlined in section 7076 of the FY14 appropriations law?
- How will you specifically work to advance the principles laid out in section 7076 of the FY14 appropriations law?

Answer. Increased security cooperation with Uzbekistan has afforded us the opportunity to address issues like respect for human rights with Uzbekistan's security forces. We view the expanded access afforded by this enhanced cooperation as an opportunity to make the point to our Uzbekistani partners that effectiveness in countering terrorism and violent extremism—our common objective—is undermined by repression of citizens' rights.

Our security cooperation is complemented by a foreign assistance portfolio that aims to increase civil-society participation in government decisionmaking and support rule-of-law and judicial reform. Several of our programs, such as exchanges and health sector cooperation, increase our ability to promote the democratic principles outlined in prior congressional legislation by promoting engagement with the people of Uzbekistan.

Exercising this waiver does not diminish the U.S. ability to promote democratic principles. It allows the United States to provide assistance to the central government of Uzbekistan, including nonlethal equipment to enhance Uzbekistan's ability to combat transnational and terrorist threats. Enhancing Uzbekistan's defensive capacity improves the security of the United States supply transit system to Afghanistan and our ability to support U.S. troops there.

The State Department anticipates that the nature of our security cooperation with Uzbekistan will soon transition from NDN-focused to an effort aimed at preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorists who seek to attack U.S. interests or the homeland. The United States seeks to cooperate with Uzbekistan on preventing a resurgence of terrorism in this region, particularly through training on counterterrorism and counternarcotics missions. Uzbekistan is an increasingly important partner in these efforts, especially in light of the threat that terrorist groups like ISIL pose to the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Tashkent's steadfast efforts to improve the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. I believe that respect for human rights and security cooperation both are high priority objectives, and if confirmed, I will pursue U.S. objectives vigorously in both arenas. If confirmed, I will employ persistent, pragmatic engagement at the highest levels to urge Uzbekistan to improve its human rights record. I will press for expanded operating space for civil society and partner with both domestic and international nongovernmental organizations to hold the Government of Uzbekistan accountable on respect for fundamental freedoms. I will also use U.S. assistance programs to effect the changes called for by

prior congressional legislation. Finally, I will regularly consult with Members of Congress in order to keep them informed on Uzbekistan's progress.

Question. If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy in Tashkent as well as the steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, ending impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. Encouraging accountability and respect for human rights among security forces features prominently in the U.S. security relationship with Uzbekistan. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to improve its human rights record and end impunity for human rights violators, especially among security forces.

If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Tashkent's effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act, commonly known as the Leahy amendment. Embassy Tashkent has a comprehensive system in place to implement the Leahy amendment, commonly known as "Leahy vetting." If confirmed, I will ensure we are conducting Leahy vetting based on the most complete information available. If the vetting process reveals credible information that a unit or a security force member has committed a gross violation of human rights, the Embassy will deny that unit or individual from receiving assistance and will notify the host government promptly. In these cases, if confirmed, I will instruct my team to join me in strongly encouraging Uzbekistan to take effective steps to thoroughly investigate any allegations of gross human rights violations.

To assist Uzbekistan in ending impunity for human rights violations by security forces, if confirmed, I will use existing and future military exchange and assistance programs to promote respect for human rights among Uzbekistan's security forces. Also, if confirmed, I will stress with my Uzbek interlocutors that the lack of sufficient progress on human rights will continue to constrain our bilateral relationship. Finally, if confirmed, I will keep Members of Congress informed of our efforts and cooperate closely with the legislative branch on improving Uzbekistan's overall human rights record.

RESPONSES OF RABBI DAVID SAPERSTEIN TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Many who support your nomination differ with you on questions related to religious freedom, such as the meaning of marriage and the right to life.

- ♦ May I have your assurance that you will use your position to protect the religious freedom of those who disagree with you on issues such as same-sex marriage and abortion?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to serve in leadership roles in interfaith coalitions spanning all major faith groups, and in faith groups in the United States with a broad range of theological views. My work with these groups has been driven by our shared values, including the universal freedoms of thought, conscience, and belief. This includes the freedom to manifest one's beliefs not only through worship but through teaching, preaching, practice, observance, and political expression. If confirmed, I will work to ensure these internationally recognized rights of religious freedom for everyone, including those with differing views on marriage and abortion.

Question. On numerous occasions, I have voiced concern on the issuance of the Country of Particular Concern designations. Until recently, the administration had waited almost 3 years to reissue this designation.

- ♦ Would you support making the CPC designation an annual occurrence as part of the International Religious Freedom Report rollout?

Answer. The International Religious Freedom office leads an annual review of all Countries of Particular Concern and other countries where gross violations of religious freedom are alleged to occur. If confirmed, I will participate fully in the annual review of countries and work within the Department of State to regularize the designation or redesignation processes as appropriate. The CPC process should be regular and systematic to be most effective. Indeed, under IRFA, we do not need to wait for the annual report if designation of a country is justified. Ultimately, my goal will be to put the CPC designations to the most effective use possible to encourage needed reform. We will use the CPC process, plus a range of diplomatic tools, in our efforts to end violence and discrimination and promote international religious freedom.

Question. A common concern is that the Ambassador at Large is buried in the bureaucracy at the State Department, without the authority or resources to accomplish anything. In the past, the State Department's treatment of this position has shown that it is a far lesser priority than, for example, the Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues.

- Who will you directly report to?
- Have you received assurances that you will be given the authority and resources to succeed?
- If after you enter your post, you find that you do not have the tools to succeed, will you return to this committee and recommend changes to the International Religious Freedom Act?

Answer. If confirmed, I will serve as the principal advisor on religious freedom issues to the President and Secretary of State. The office that supports me is located administratively in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), permitting me to draw on DRL's staffing, resources, and administrative support. I will report my findings and advice directly to the Secretary, as I deem appropriate, and I look forward to working with colleagues throughout the State Department and interagency to coordinate policy on religious freedom issues. If confirmed, I promise to work closely with this committee and Congress to advance our shared goal of promoting religious freedom worldwide.

Question. Earlier this year, Boko Haram kidnapped nearly 300 school girls in Nigeria. Although some of these girls have escaped, most remain captives of this terrorist organization. The Christian Association of Nigeria and International Christian Concern have stated that the majority of the girls kidnapped were Christian and that is why this particular school was targeted.

- Would you agree that Boko Haram is a terrorist organization with a religious agenda aimed at persecuting Christians?
- If confirmed, what specifically would you do to address the problem of religious persecution in Nigeria and to assist Nigeria's Christian community, which is increasingly under attack from Boko Haram?

Answer. Boko Haram, seeks to impose its violent extremist ideology on the territory it controls and was designated a terrorist organization on November 13, 2013, Boko Haram has murdered more than 5,000 people over the last 4 years. Their attacks have included indiscriminate acts of violence and targeted violence against perceived enemies and while the majority of their victims have been Muslim, the group has deliberately targeted Christians, as well as Muslims who spoke out against or opposed their radical ideology.

The Department takes the issue of religious persecution in Nigeria very seriously, and if confirmed, addressing this will be a priority for me. In fiscal years 2012 and 2013, the Department of State allocated approximately $35.8 million in security assistance programs that benefited Nigeria, subject to congressional notification and approval. The Department of State is working with vetted police and civilian security components to build Nigerian law enforcement capacities to investigate terrorist cases, manage explosive devices, and secure Nigeria's borders. The Department of State is also supporting training of a vetted Army infantry unit to combat Boko Haram militarily.

If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Nigeria, Nigerian religious leaders, and civil society groups in their efforts to combat Boko Haram and to promote respect for ethnic and religious diversity as a central component to bringing peace and stability back to the people of Nigeria. If confirmed, I will also support DRL's work with Nigerian civil society to increase accountability for perpetrators of violence by addressing the ethnoreligious violence in the Middle Belt and by building strong, nonpartisan institutions.

Question. Religious freedom violations rarely occur in a vacuum; they are usually deeply connected to a complex context: deep-rooted militant religious nationalism in countries like Burma, Sri Lanka, and India, repressive regimes like those we see in China, Central Asia, Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea, internal conflict and the influence of terrorist or criminal groups as we see in Pakistan and Indonesia or religious extremism of the sort we see in much of the Middle East but also on the rise in North Africa and parts of Asia. U.S. policy on international religious freedom is often further complicated by economic or geopolitical strategic relationships and interests.

- As Ambassador, how will you seek to address the root causes of international religious freedom violations in a holistic way—within the State Department, but also with Congress, the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and the White House's National Security Council?

Answer. Threats to international religious freedom worldwide are interlinked with many other factors, such as repressive regimes, internal conflict, and violent extremism. Promoting religious freedom is a whole-of-government effort, and effectively elevating and advocating for religious freedom requires a unified effort to engage with foreign governments on this issue. If confirmed, I will highlight international religious freedom concerns at all levels within the State Department, including our missions around the globe and I will seek to work cooperatively with the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and with the White House's National Security Council. In addition, if confirmed, I will pursue discussions with civil society members, including religious leaders, people of faith, and NGO representatives, regarding the root causes of religious freedom violations and will work multilaterally as well as bilaterally to urge and advance reforms.

NOMINATIONS OF PETER ZUMWALT; ROBERT YAMATE; VIRGINIA PALMER; RABBI DAVID SAPERSTEIN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

James Peter Zumwalt, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

Robert T. Yamate, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Union of the Comoros

Virginia E. Palmer, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi

Rabbi David Nathan Saperstein, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:05 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher A. Coons presiding.

Present: Senators Coons, Kaine, and Flake.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE

Senator COONS. I am pleased to chair this hearing for the ambassadorial nominees to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar and Comoros, and Malawi, as well as for the nominee to serve as our Ambassador at Large for Religious Freedom. All four individuals before us today have impressive records of accomplishment and I look forward to hearing their priorities for advancing U.S. interests and goals.

Our first nominee is to serve in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. Senegal has a strong record as a stable democratic partner, a regional ally in peacekeeping and counterterrorism. Especially since the election in 2012 of President Sall, Senegal has also been a partner in countering corruption and promoting growth. In contrast, Guinea-Bissau has faced numerous challenges, including civil war, coups, and narcotrafficking, that have contributed to instability.

James Zumwalt, nominee for the post in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, is a career Foreign Service officer currently serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan and Korea. He has experience with difficult circumstances which have well prepared him for this post. He led the interagency team that managed the U.S. response to the 2011 tsunami and previously served in the DRC.

Next we consider Malawi, a country that recently experienced elections that were successful and is working to improve development and governance and growth. Malawi has been a strong contributor to regional peacekeeping missions and is an MCC partner.

Virginia Palmer, our second nominee, is a career member of the Foreign Service with a distinguished record, most recently serving as DCM in the Embassy in South Africa. I had the privilege, indeed the joy, of visiting Ms. Palmer and seeing her leadership firsthand during a CODEL last year and was impressed with her broad understanding of regional dynamics, including the importance of AGOA and the U.S. economic relationship.

Next we consider Madagascar and the Comoros. Madagascar is finally emerging from 5 years of unrest and transitioning to a democratically elected government. Resumption of its eligibility for AGOA is an indicator of its recent progress. Challenges remain and the next U.S. Ambassador will have to work on continuing to rebuild our ties.

Meanwhile, Comoros has a strong relationship with the United States, particularly as it relates to security. Robert Yamate, our nominee to serve in both countries, has experience serving in Madagascar in addition to other valuable African posts. His experience on the continent, most recently as DCM in Senegal, makes him a strong candidate for reestablishing and strengthening our ties with Madagascar and Comoros.

Finally, we consider Rabbi David Saperstein, our nominee for Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, a critically important issue as religious minorities face grave threats around the world. Just yesterday Senator Kirk and I cochaired the first Senate Human Rights Caucus event, focusing on the brutal human rights violations perpetrated by ISIS in Iraq and Syria, including violence against Christians, Yazidis, Shia, Sunnis, and others.

As religious minorities face persecution globally, I am pleased President Obama has nominated Rabbi David Saperstein for this important post. As the first chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, he has ably demonstrated his ability to defend and advance U.S. values and protect religious freedom.

I would like to welcome all our nominees and encourage them to introduce their families. These positions require a whole-of-family effort and we are grateful for your sacrifices and ongoing support. But first I would like to invite Senator Flake to give his opening statement.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Coons.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF FLAKE, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

I appreciated the opportunity to meet all of you in my office earlier this week and last week. I really appreciate the sacrifices that

the families go through, for a lot of these far-away posts in particular. Some of you have been doing it actually a long time. I enjoyed meeting Ms. Palmer also last year on a different CODEL and look forward to hearing from you, and I appreciate your willingness to serve.

Thanks.

Senator COONS. I would now like to invite each of our four nominees to make your opening statement and to introduce your families. Let me start with Mr. Zumwalt.

STATEMENT OF JAMES PETER ZUMWALT, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA–BISSAU

Mr. ZUMWALT. Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Flake, I am honored to appear before you today. I wish to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for United States Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my wife, Ann Kambara, who is sitting behind me, and until last month also served her country as a Foreign Service officer. Since we met 31 years ago, we have worked together in a variety of countries and in Washington. Ann has been my anchor, my sounding board, and my inspiration. She has supported me enthusiastically as I prepared for this new opportunity to serve.

I also wish to acknowledge my mother, who I think is watching this hearing. She is the person who first stimulated my interest in foreign cultures and she supported my career choice to join the Foreign Service, even though she knew it would mean that we would live far apart. So, Mom, thanks so much for your love and your support all of these years.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission I have a written statement that I would like to submit for the record.

Senator COONS. Without objection.

Mr. ZUMWALT. Thank you.

As a regional leader, Senegal has helped to resolve conflicts by deploying peacekeepers across Africa, and we have worked together with Senegal to combat religious extremism, transnational crime, and infectious diseases. If confirmed, I would work closely with the government and civil society in Senegal to sustain and build upon this partnership.

Senegal is one of our most important African partners. As you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, the 2012 Presidential election reinforced Senegal's role as a model of stable democracy. We share common values, including religious tolerance and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity. President Macky Sall's visit to Washington, DC, for the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit underscored the importance of our partnership. If confirmed, I would look forward to strengthening our close ties.

Senegal is also a leading U.S. development partner, where the United States Agency for International Development, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Peace Corps, and other U.S. agen-

cies build regional infrastructure, improve food security, and strengthen education and health care services. If confirmed, I would continue these efforts to help Senegal achieve inclusive economic growth, including through expanded bilateral trade and investment flows.

As you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, Guinea-Bissau has suffered from decades of poor governance and widespread corruption, which have weakened state institutions there. However, we do see signs of progress. Guinea-Bissau held parliamentary and Presidential elections in April and May of this year. Bissau-Guineans voted in large numbers, highlighted the people's desire for domestic and responsive government.

Following the inauguration of a democratically elected president, President Jose Mario Vaz, the United States lifted restrictions on foreign assistance. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Guinea-Bissau and our international partners to support this democratic process. In order to break its cycle of instability, the Guinea-Bissau Government must address reconciliation, combat trafficking of narcotics and natural resources, and implement economic reforms. But if confirmed I would travel frequently to Bissau to build strong relationships with the government, with civil society, business, and religious leaders, and with the people of Guinea-Bissau in order to advance U.S. interests there.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Flake, for your continuing interest in Africa. We are truly fortunate to enjoy strong bipartisan support from the Congress for our efforts to promote democratic values, sustainable economic development, and to strengthen people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, with your committee, and other Members of Congress to represent the interests of the American people in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

I would be happy to answer your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Zumwalt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES PETER ZUMWALT

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I wish to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my wife, Ann Kambara. Ann, until last month, also served her country as a Foreign Service officer. We met 31 years ago when we both worked at our mission in Japan. Since then we have worked together to advance U.S. interests in a variety of countries and in Washington. When we worked together far from home, Ann became my anchor, my sounding board and my inspiration. She has supported me enthusiastically as I prepare for this new opportunity to serve. If confirmed, it would be a great honor and privilege to promote again U.S. interests in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Senegal is one of our most important African partners. The transparent, free, and peaceful 2012 Presidential election reinforced the country's role as a model of stable democracy in Africa. We share common values, including democracy, religious tolerance, and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity. President Macky Sall's visit to Washington, DC, to participate in the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit last month—where he agreed to play a leading role to establish the Partnership on Illicit Finance, an anticorruption and transparency initiative—and President Obama's visit to Senegal last year further underscored the importance of our bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our shared democratic values and our close ties.

Senegal is a leading U.S. development partner in West Africa, where investments by the United States Agency for International Development, the Millennium Chal-

lenge Corporation and other U.S. agencies are helping to build rural infrastructure, improve food security, and strengthen education and health care services. In addition, 220 American Peace Corps Volunteers play an important role in grassroots development and building people-to-people ties. To reinforce these efforts, the Government of Senegal this year unveiled an ambitious development plan, which aims to accelerate economic reforms, and mobilize private sector investment in order to boost economic growth. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to help Senegal achieve inclusive economic growth, including through business climate reforms to facilitate private sector-led growth. Senegal is well-positioned to build on its role as a regional business hub, and, if confirmed, I would engage U.S. and Senegalese Government and business leaders to promote bilateral trade and investment.

As a regional leader, Senegal has helped to resolve conflicts across the continent—most recently by deploying peacekeeping troops to the U.N. Mission in Mali. As a result of Senegal's commitment to promoting peace and security, Senegal was selected as one of six countries to participate in the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, a $110 million, 3–5 year initiative announced at the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit. Senegal also serves as an important partner for the United States as we work together to combat religious extremism, transnational crime, and infectious diseases in West Africa. If confirmed, I would work closely with the government and civil society in Senegal to sustain and build upon our regional partnership to promote democracy, economic development, and combating transnational threats.

Under President Sall's leadership, we have seen significant progress in the Casamance peace process—Africa's longest running conflict. Negotiations continue and we hope the remaining obstacles to a long-lasting peace agreement will be resolved. We support the peace process through our Casamance advisor, based at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar. In addition, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Agriculture and the Millennium Challenge Corporation are also engaged in programs and projects which contribute to regional stability and prosperity. If confirmed, I would continue to prioritize the Casamance peace process in our engagement with Senegal.

Guinea-Bissau has suffered from decades of poor governance and widespread corruption, which have weakened state institutions and rendered the government ineffective in providing basic services to its citizens. However, we are beginning to see progress. Guinea-Bissau held parliamentary and Presidential elections in April and May of this year, 2 years after a military coup. Bissau-Guineans went peacefully to the polls in the large numbers, highlighting their strong desire for democracy and responsive government.

Following the inauguration of democratically elected President Jose Mario Vaz, the United States lifted coup-related restrictions on foreign assistance to Guinea-Bissau. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Guinea-Bissau and our international partners to determine how best the United States can support democratic progress. In order for Guinea-Bissau to break its cycle of instability, its government must address reconciliation, combat trafficking of narcotics and natural resources, and implement multisector economic reforms, which would increase investment, spur sustainable development, generate employment, and reduce poverty. If confirmed I would continue to promote U.S interests in Guinea-Bissau from the U.S. Embassy in Dakar. Embassy Dakar officials, including one position dedicated full time to Guinea-Bissau, will continue to play an invaluable role by traveling frequently to Guinea-Bissau to build strong relationships with government, civil society, business, and religious leaders, to inform our policy, and to advance U.S. interests.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Flake, for your continuing interest in the United States relations with Africa. We are fortunate to have the strong bipartisan support for our efforts to promote democratic values, sustainable economic development, and vibrant partnerships through people to people ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, your committee and other Members of Congress in representing the interests of the American people in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

I would be happy to answer your questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Zumwalt.

Mr. Yamate.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT T. YAMATE, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE UNION OF THE COMOROS

Mr. YAMATE. Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Flake, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee as Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and the Union of the Comoros. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our relationships with the Government of Madagascar and the Government of the Comoros.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me at this time to introduce to you my wife, Michiko, who has been my partner and confidante through almost 30 years of Foreign Service assignments.

My career with the Department of State, particularly my postings in Africa, has given me the expertise and experience that will enable me to lead our relationships with Madagascar and the Comoros effectively. I particularly enjoyed my assignments in the region, in Dakar, Abidjan, Harare, and, most significant in today's discussion, Antananarivo, where I served over 20 years ago.

This is a critical time in our engagement with Madagascar. The 2009 coup resulted in sanctions and restrictions during the regime of the de facto government. After nearly 5 years of international isolation, President Rajaonarimampianina's win in the 2013 democratic elections has given us to opportunity to engage with the new government in support of the country's domestic, development, security, and economic improvement.

The new Government of Madagascar outlined in their general state policy its principal priorities: alleviating poverty and instability, strengthening rule of law, combating corruption, increasing foreign direct investment, and developing the private sector.

Mr. Chairman, Madagascar has unique and abundant flora and fauna, 80 percent of which are endemic to this island nation. Madagascar is known for its rosewood as well as its diverse wildlife, including lemurs and tortoises. Due to illegal harvesting and export, this valuable natural heritage is under threat. With our assistance restrictions lifted, USAID has allocated $2.5 million in fiscal year 2014 funds to help protect the country's unique ecosystem, working toward the United States aim of conserving global biodiversity.

In June of this year, the U.S. Government reestablished Madagascar's eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act, creating new opportunities for employment for thousands of Malagasy and improving the business and investment climate. Strengthening the economy is crucial to Madagascar, where the latest figures for 2012 show that 81 percent of the population lives on less than $1.25 per day. Natural disasters, including periodic cyclones, droughts, and locust infestations have further compromised the living standard of the Malagasy people. USAID's development assistance programs continue to play a significant role in preserving the health and welfare of millions of Malagasy.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed I will also serve as Ambassador to the Union of the Comoros. Our aim is to expand positive relationships in these strategically located islands, which are home to moderate Sunni Muslim communities and a fledgling democratic state.

Comoros is in its second decade of democratic rule, with peaceful transfers of power since 2001.

While we lack a full-time U.S. presence in the Comoros, we maintain a close relationship with our public affairs programming, mil-to-mil cooperation, and regular weekly visits by a full-time Comoros action officer resident in Madagascar. If confirmed, I plan to visit the Comoros regularly.

Looking ahead, if confirmed I look forward to the opportunity to serve as Ambassador to Madagascar and the Comoros, to advance and strengthen our relationships with both countries in a number of areas, notably development, stability, and economic cooperation.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, I thank you for considering my nomination and I look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Yamate follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT T. YAMATE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee as Ambassador to the Republic of Madagascar and the Union of the Comoros. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our relationships with the Government of Madagascar and the Government of the Comoros.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me at this time to introduce to you and the rest of the committee my wife, Michiko, who has been my partner and confidante through almost 30 years of Foreign Service assignments.

My career with the Department of State, particularly my postings in Africa, has given me the expertise and experience that will enable me to lead our relations with Madagascar and the Comoros effectively. I particularly enjoyed my assignments in the region, in Dakar, Abidjan, Harare, and, most significant in today's discussion, Antananarivo where I served over 20 years ago.

This is a critical time in our engagement with Madagascar. The 2009 coup resulted in sanctions and restrictions during the regime of the de-facto government. After nearly 5 years of international isolation, President Rajaonarimampianina's (Ra-Jo-Nar-Mam-PYANN's) win in the 2013 democratic elections has given us the opportunity to engage with the new government in support of the country's democracy, development, security, and economic improvement.

The new Government of Madagascar outlined in the "General State Policy," its principal priorities: alleviating poverty and instability, strengthening rule of law, combating corruption, increasing foreign direct investment, and developing the private sector. The U.S. goals in Madagascar align well with Madagascar's and also include promoting good governance and respect for human rights. President Rajaonarimampianina has taken steps in the right direction. The Ministry of Justice's recent assessment of anticorruption efforts, carried out in conjunction with the United Nations Development Program is one such step. Early in his Presidency, Rajaonarimampianina also dismantled two military units that were believed to have committed human rights abuses and illicit activity. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work with my counterparts to increase the capacity of the Malagasy maritime forces and law enforcement entities.

Mr. Chairman, Madagascar has unique and abundant flora and fauna, 80 percent of which are endemic to this island nation. Madagascar is known for its rosewood, as well as its diverse wildlife, including lemurs and tortoises. Due to illegal harvesting and export, this valuable natural heritage is under threat. With our assistance restrictions lifted, USAID has allocated $2.5 million in FY 2014 funds to help protect the country's unique ecosystem, working toward the U.S. aim of conserving global biodiversity.

The U.S. Embassy in Antananarivo is committed to supporting the National Export Initiative in Madagascar, increasing exports from America. The best prospects for exports and investment lie in the extractive, construction, tourism, and textile sectors. In June of this year, the U.S. Government reestablished Madagascar's eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), creating new opportunities for employment for thousands of Malagasy, and improving the business and investment climate.

Strengthening the economy is crucial in Madagascar, where the latest figures from 2012 show that 81 percent of the population lives on less than $1.25 per day. Natural disasters—including periodic cyclones, drought, and locust infestation—have further compromised the living standard of the Malagasy people. USAID's development assistance programs continue to play a significant role in preserving the health and welfare of millions of Malagasy. In FY 2014, we intend to provide $63 million for food aid and health programs.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will also serve as Ambassador to the Union of the Comoros. Our aim is to expand positive relationships in these strategically located islands, which are home to moderate Sunni Muslim communities and a fledgling democratic state. From the time Comoros gained independence from France in 1975 until 2000, Comoros suffered 20 coups or attempted coups. Today, I am happy to note, Comoros is in its second decade of democratic rule, with peaceful transfers of power since 2001. President Dhoinine (dwah-hee-NEE-nee) came into power in 2011, and welcomes increased U.S. Government engagement with Comoros to improve the capacity of government operations, provide English language instruction, encourage U.S. direct investment, and enhance security cooperation. While we lack a full-time U.S. presence in the Comoros, we maintain a close relationship with our public affairs programming, mil-to-mil cooperation, and regular weekly visits by a full-time Comoros officer resident in Madagascar. If confirmed, I plan to visit the Comoros regularly. In addition, the Department of Defense supports an English-language military training facility and medical clinic.

Looking ahead, if confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to serve as Ambassador to Madagascar and the Comoros, to advance and strengthen our relationships with both countries in a number of areas, notably development, stability, and economic cooperation. Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the committee for considering my nomination, and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Yamate.

Ms. Palmer.

STATEMENT OF VIRGINIA E. PALMER, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

Ms. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake. It is a very great honor and privilege to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. I appreciate the confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have expressed in me by putting my name forward for your consideration.

I am also truly grateful for the support of my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Ismail Asmal, who is here with me today, my daughters, Aliya and Nadia Asmal, who have served for five tours overseas with us—Nadia is here today and her sister is watching online from California—and my parents, Richard and Becky Palmer, who first exposed me to the international world and allowed me to take those grandbabies far away. My mother is here today.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress to promote U.S. interests in Malawi, including strengthening Malawi's democratic institutions, encouraging economic growth, and improving health and education there. In many jobs since joining the Foreign Service in 1986, but particularly in overseas assignments as DCM in South Africa and Vietnam, as economic counselor in Nairobi, and political chief in Harare, I worked to promote good governance and private sector-led economic growth. If confirmed, this is the experience I will draw on to lead the terrific team that we have at the Embassy in Malawi to advance U.S. interests there.

Over the last 20 years, Malawi has had multiple democratic transfers of power from one political party to another. When former

President Bingu wa Mutharika died unexpectedly in 2012, principled leaders demanded and achieved a constitutionally correct handover of power, a triumph for Malawi. Malawi's 2014 elections marked another democratic milestone for Africa. The election of President Peter Mutharika was unambiguous and power again passed peacefully from one party to another.

If confirmed, I will work to further develop democratic institutions in Malawi. I look forward to supporting priorities shared by the United States and Malawi of improving Malawi's public financial management, modernizing the civil service to increase government accountability, and ending corruption.

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, with per capita GDP of only $226. Over 45 percent of Malawians are under the age of 15, presenting daunting economic and educational challenges as Malawi strives to meet the Millennium Development Goals. If confirmed, I will support U.S. Government efforts to encourage private sector-driven sustainable economic growth to help alleviate this crushing poverty.

A member of the New Alliance for Food Security, Malawi has committed to improving its investment climate and to expanding its markets. Our Feed the Future program, which focuses on crop diversification and enhanced trade, is directly supportive of the new alliance and will make Malawi more food secure. Our $350 million Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, which will help with infrastructure improvements and power sector reforms, will expand access to much-needed electricity and encourage private sector investment.

Our broad economic engagement in Malawi is complemented by our strong commitment to health and education assistance, vital to helping Malawi's human capital. The United States is the largest bilateral donor to the Malawi health system, with a 2014 budget of $155 million. If confirmed, I will work to maximize the effectiveness of our PEPFAR and other health care programs in Malawi.

Improvements in Malawi's education system are likewise essential if Malawi is to achieve its full potential. If confirmed, I will be proud to lead the United States efforts to bolster the quality of primary education, a $20 million annual investment to promote literacy and encourage children, particularly girls, to stay in school.

Finally, our security cooperation with Malawi is outstanding. In recent years, the United States has trained six battalions of Malawian peacekeepers who have been deployed in the DRC and in the Cote d'Ivoire. In 2013 and 2014, Malawi hosted the largest counterterrorism exercise on the African Continent and a regional peacekeeping exercise, both sponsored by the U.S. Africa Command. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our strong security cooperation to advance our shared objective of peace and stability in Africa.

Despite its challenges, Malawi holds great promise and is a strong partner of the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the momentum of the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit and to working with the Government of Malawi and its people on our shared goals of a healthier, more prosperous Malawi with an even stronger partnership with the United States.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and I would be happy to take any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Palmer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VIRGINIA E. PALMER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake and members of the committee, it is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. I appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me by putting my name forward for your consideration. I am also deeply grateful for the support of my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Ismail Asmal, my daughters, Aliya and Nadia Asmal, and my parents, Richard and Becky Palmer.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress to advance U.S. interests in Malawi, including strengthening its democratic institutions, encouraging economic diversification, and building its health and education capacities.

I most recently served as Deputy Chief of Mission to the Republic of South Africa. There, I helped manage one of the largest U.S. missions in Africa. Since joining the Foreign Service in 1986, I have served as the Department's Director for Economic Policy in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, as the Economic Counselor at Embassy Nairobi, and as a political officer at Embassy Harare—positions in which I promoted democracy and encouraged economic growth and better governance. If I am confirmed, I will draw on these experiences to lead our team in advancing U.S. interests in Malawi.

During its first three decades as an independent country, Malawi was a one-party state. Since 1994, when the people of Malawi voted in their first democratic, free, and fair elections, Malawi has undergone peaceful transfers of power among political parties. When former President Bingu wa Mutharika died unexpectedly in 2012, principled leaders demanded and achieved a constitutionally correct succession—a triumph for Malawi. Malawi's 2014 elections marked another democratic milestone for Africa. In the election of President Peter Mutharika, power again peacefully and democratically passed from one party to another. Despite these successes, there still is work to be done. If confirmed, I will work to further develop democratic processes and strong governing institutions in Malawi. I look forward to supporting priorities shared by the United States and Malawi of improved public financial management, civil service modernization, reduced corruption, and increased government transparency and accountability.

A major U.S. Government priority in this nation of 16 million persons, with a per capita GDP of only $226 dollars, is to encourage private-sector driven, sustainable economic growth. As a member of the New Alliance for Food Security, Malawi has committed to improving its investment climate and to expanding its markets. Our Feed the Future program, which focuses on crop and nutritional diversification, value addition, and enhanced trade, is directly supportive of the New Alliance, and strengthens Malawi's resilience and food security. Our $350.7 million Millennium Challenge Account Compact will expand access to electricity and encourage private sector investments through infrastructure rehabilitation and energy sector reforms. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing this objective.

Our broad economic engagement in Malawi is complemented by our strong commitment to health and education assistance, vital to building Malawi's human capacity. Nearly 60 percent ($153 million) of the United States $257 million in assistance to Malawi in FY 2013 went to combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases. If confirmed, a priority for me will be to maximize the effectiveness of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief program (PEPFAR) in Malawi. Malawi can only achieve its full potential if it enjoys improved basic education. If confirmed, I will be proud to lead the United States support to bolster the quality of primary education—a $20 million annual investment—to promote literacy and encourage children, and particularly girls, to stay in school.

Malawi maintains outstanding security cooperation with the United States. Malawi has been a peacekeeping partner in the State Department's Africa Contingency Operations and Training Assistance (ACOTA) program since 1998. Four battalions of ACOTA-trained Malawian peacekeepers deployed to Cote d'Ivoire in 2012 and 2013 and two battalions deployed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2013 and 2014. In 2013, Malawi hosted Epic Guardian, the largest counterterrorism exercise on the African Continent, with 1,000 U.S. and Malawian military, police, and civilians. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our strong security coopera-

tion and assistance, to advance our shared objective of supporting peace, stability, and respect for human rights in Africa.

Malawi faces significant challenges. Over 45 percent of Malawi's population is under the age of 15, presenting daunting economic and educational challenges for the Malawi Government, as it strives to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition, Malawi has a nearly 11 percent adult HIV prevalence rate and a very high degree of risk for major infectious diseases. U.S. partnership is integral to combating these problems so Malawi can keep moving toward achievement of the MDGs.

Despite these challenges, Malawi holds great promise. Malawi is a strong partner of the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the momentum of the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit, advancing youth leadership in programs such as the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, and working with the Government of Malawi and its people on our shared goals of a healthier, better educated, more prosperous citizenry that embraces democratic values.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Palmer.

Rabbi Saperstein.

STATEMENT OF RABBI DAVID NATHAN SAPERSTEIN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR AT LARGE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Rabbi SAPERSTEIN. Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Flake, I thank you also for this hearing to consider my nomination as the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom. I am honored to appear before you, just as I am honored by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me.

First, if you will allow me, I would like to pause and remember for a moment those we lost 13 years ago on this date. We honor all the survivors of those tragic events. We stand with the families and loved ones of those who perished. As we say in the Jewish tradition, [*zichronom livracha*], "May their memories ever be for a blessing."

I want to acknowledge today and introduce the presence of my wife, Ellen Weiss, a distinguished journalist; one of my sons, Daniel, a wonderful musician and ceramist. Another son, Ari, is watching online from California, himself a writer and painter. My remarkable colleagues are here from the Religious Action Center of Reformed Judaism, and the superb and dedicated staff of the International Religious Freedom Office at the State Department, and an array of religious leaders from varied faith traditions and political persuasions, who have long been my partners in our work for justice and religious freedom.

Like most Jews, I know all too well that over the centuries the Jewish people have been the quintessential victims of religious persecution, ethnic cleansing, and demonization. We have learned all too painfully the cost, the terrible cost, when good people remain silent in the face of religious oppression.

This is just one key reason why I cannot remain silent today, when we see the historic Christian, Yazidi, and other communities in Iraq and Syria being devastated; when we see Baha'is in Iran, Tibetan Buddhists in China; Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Bahrain; Rohingya Muslims in Burma; all victims of either governmental or societal discrimination, harassment, persecution, or physical attacks. And even in Western Europe we are witnessing an alarming resurgence in anti-Semitic discourse and vio-

lence against Jewish communities. Sadly, this list is far from exhaustive.

Religious freedom faces daunting and alarming challenges worldwide. Recently we have all witnessed the nightmare unfold of tragic violent attacks by ISIL against Yezidis, Christians, Alawites, Shabak, Turkmen, Shia, and others, including members of their own sect, Sunni Muslims, in parts of Iraq and Syria. Using claims of religion to justify their abhorrent behavior, we see ISIL terrorize vulnerable groups based on religious and ethnic identity with death by beheading, crucifixion, stonings, ethnic cleansing, desecration and destruction of religious properties, forced conversions, forced marriages, rape. It is a symptom of a worldwide challenge.

Our goal must be to ensure the internationally recognized right of religious freedom for everyone. It is an urgent task and the needs are great. Toward that end, if confirmed I will do everything within my abilities and influence to engage every segment of the State Department and the rest of the U.S. Government to integrate religious freedom into our Nation's statecraft and foreign policies. Counterterrorism, conflict stability efforts, economic development, human rights—all these foreign policy goals and more require the stability, security, and contributions of members of religious majorities and religious minorities in countries across the globe if we are to further and achieve our Nation's values, interests, and agenda.

If confirmed, I pledge to ensure the integrity of the annual International Religious Freedom Report. I expect to regularize annual review of country designations for Countries of Particular Concern, which I believe are key instruments in motivating progress on religious freedom. And if confirmed I commit to continue the close working relationship that I had when I chaired the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), with USCIRF and the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Office and to consult closely and fully with Congress, for I know full well that we do the best work when the legislative and executive branches are reinforcing each other's respective efforts.

In sum, religious freedom was essential in the founding of America. Our magnificent Bill of Rights began with religious freedom, knowing without it all freedoms were imperiled. So to the religiously oppressed in every land who live in fear, afraid to speak of what they believe in, who worship in underground churches, mosques, or temples lest authorities discover and punish them for devotion to an authority beyond the state, who languish in prisons, bodies broken, spirits too often disfigured, simply because they love God in their own way or question the existence of God, who feel so desperate that they feel forced to flee their homes to avoid killing and persecution because of their faith, to all of them together, the State Department, the Congress, you and I, if you confirm me, can be a beacon of light and hope. I pray that contributing to that dream will be my legacy if you confirm me.

Thank you again for your consideration. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Rabbi Saperstein follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RABBI DAVID NATHAN SAPERSTEIN

Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Flake, and members of the committee, thank you for this hearing to consider my nomination as Ambassador At Large for International Religious Freedom. I am honored by this opportunity to appear before you, as I am honored by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me to serve our Nation in advancing the right to freedom of religion around the world.

First, I want to pause and remember those we lost on September 11, 13 years ago. On this day, we stand with their families and loved ones, and honor all survivors of those tragic events. As we say in the Jewish tradition: "zichronom livracha—may their memories ever be for a blessing."

I want to acknowledge the presence today of my wife, Ellen Weiss, a distinguished journalist, and my son, Daniel; my remarkable colleagues from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; and an array of religious leaders from varied faith traditions and political persuasions who have been my partners in the vital work we have done to help ensure that religious freedom and our shared values of human dignity, justice and peace flourish more fully in our nation and around the world.

Indeed, it has been one of the great opportunities of my life to have had the opportunity to play a leadership role in interfaith coalitions that span many, diverse faith groups around the world, and faith groups in the United States with a broad range of theological views. To current events, efforts to isolate extremist groups willing to use force to impose their views on others must include, among other things, empowering and strengthening civil society actors (including religious communities) that subscribe to the rule of law, freedom of religion, and principles of religious tolerance and coexistence. I hope I can draw on those long relations and experiences in this urgent task.

I want to express, as well, my abiding appreciation to the members of this committee, and to the Congress, for consistently elevating international religious freedom issues and concerns. Enacting the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) sent a clear and strong signal that the universal right of religious freedom would be a priority in U.S. foreign policy. I was honored to have worked closely with key Senators and other Members of Congress of both parties in the shaping of that legislation as part of the broad coalition of religious organizations and denominations who so staunchly supported the passage of IRFA.

During my career, my mandate has covered a wide range of issues. I believe that the ability to see the interconnected relationship of varied issues will be an asset for the work of the International Religious Freedom office. But there are few issues that have been as central to my career as that of religious freedom, and with it the universal freedoms of thought, conscience, and belief—including freedom to change one's religion or beliefs, and to manifest one's beliefs not only through worship but through teaching, preaching, practice, and observance—as well as the right to hold no religious beliefs.

I started young in my exposure to these issues in that my father, a beloved congregational rabbi for 60 years and my mother, herself active in varied social justice causes, managed to travel to some 80 nations, sometimes bringing my brother and myself, visiting Jewish communities and engaging with other religious leaders wherever they could. Both spoke widely to community forums on issues of Jewish and religious life across the globe. They were outspoken advocates for Soviet Jewry long before it became the norm. My older brother, Marc Saperstein, a leading Jewish historian, has written extensively on the history of Jewish-Christian relations.

Like most Jews, I know all too well that, over the centuries, the Jewish people have been a quintessential victim of religious persecution, ethnic cleansing, and demonization. We have learned, first hand, the costs to the universal rights, security and well-being of religious communities when good people remain silent in the face of such persecution.

This is just one key reason why I cannot remain silent today, when we see historic Christian, Yezidi, and other communities in Iraq and Syria being devastated; when we see Bahais in Iran; Tibetan Buddhists in China; Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Bahrain; Rohingya Muslims in Burma—all victims of governmental or societal discrimination, harassment, persecution or physical attacks. And even in Western Europe we are witnessing a steady increase in anti-Semitic discourse and violence against Jewish communities. Sadly, this list is far from exhaustive but shows the broad range of very serious threats to religious freedom and religious communities in nearly every corner of the globe.

It was these passions that led, 16 years ago, to my engagement with passage of IRFA. And, I suspect, my track-record of engagement with religious freedom issues led in 1999, to the honor of being appointed to the first USCIRF—and the subse-

quent honor of being chosen unanimously by my colleagues to serve as its first Chair.

This nomination comes at a time when forces aligned against religious freedom have grown quite strong. Encouragingly, in many countries, such freedoms flourish. Yet in even more, religious freedom faces daunting and alarming challenges. Seventy-five percent of the world's population lives in countries where religious freedom remains seriously limited, and many religious minorities face persecution, intimidation and harassment.

Recently, we have all seen the tragic violent attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) against Yezidis, Christians, Alawites, Shabak, Turkmen Shia, Sunnis, and others, in parts of Iraq and Syria. ISIL, and groups like it, use violence to impose their views on others who do not share them, and use the claims of religion to justify their abhorrent behavior as they target vulnerable groups based on religious and ethnic identity. They terrorize their neighbors and offer nothing but death, forced conversions, forced marriages and rape. ISIL's attacks illustrate, in real time, just how vulnerable religious minorities can be to violence, displacement, marginalization, gender based violence, and property destruction. This, Mr. Chairman, to say nothing of the unspeakable atrocities they have committed against members of their own sect, Sunni Muslims, who make up the majority of the Syrian population. We have witnessed ISIL crucify members of their own Sunni sect in public squares in Raqqa and stone to death Sunni women accused of adultery, proudly tweeting and posting these horrific acts on YouTube and other social media. Indeed, ISIL's brutality spares no one.

Our goal should be to ensure the internationally recognized right to religious freedom for everyone. It is an urgent task, and the needs are great. With President Obama, Secretary Kerry, Under Secretary Sarah Sewall, and Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski, we have gifted leadership deeply committed to this agenda. I am well aware that the strong leadership of an Ambassador at Large is more important now than ever, and we should participate in this important work both because it is the right course of action, and because it is in our national interest. Toward that end:

- If confirmed, I commit to using this position fervently (and fiercely) to advocate for the rights of individuals to choose, change, and practice their faith safely, to end blasphemy and apostasy laws, and without government interference or the threat of violence or marginalization, to ensure that people are free and safe to assemble, worship, teach, learn, and share their faith with others.
- If confirmed, I will seek to engage every segment of the State Department and the rest of the U.S. Government, to integrate religious freedom into our Nation's statecraft: counterterrorism, conflict stability efforts, economic development, human rights—all these foreign policy goals need the stability, the security, the contributions of members of religious majorities and religious minorities, in every country, to further our Nation's values, interests, and agenda.
- If confirmed, I pledge to ensure the integrity of the annual International Religious Freedom Report. I expect to regularize annual reviews of country designations for Countries of Particular Concern (CPCs) to ensure timely and appropriate designation of CPCs and Presidential Actions, which I believe are key instruments in motivating progress on religious freedom.
- If confirmed, I will do everything within my abilities and influence to continue the close working relationship with USCIRF and consult closely with the Congress. I know full well from my tenure on USCIRF that we do the best work when the legislative and administrative branches are reinforcing our respective efforts.
- If confirmed, I pledge to elevate the focus on religious freedom in regional and multilateral organizations, and within the international community at large.

And if confirmed, I will work closely with all faith groups domestically and abroad, and expand efforts to coordinate with outside stakeholders and civil society groups in order to pursue our religious freedom goals abroad. To this end, I will work closely with my long-time friend, Shaun Casey, a brilliant and talented leader, appointed by Secretary Kerry to enhance the Department's engagement with religious leaders in the United States and across the globe.

In sum, religious freedom was essential in the founding of America, and the American people continue to value the freedoms of religion, thought, conscience, belief, expression, and association. We began our magnificent Bill of Rights with a commitment to religious freedom, knowing that without it, all other freedoms were imperiled. And so too today.

I am dedicated to advancing those freedoms, and hope to be able to do so from the position of Ambassador At Large for International Religious Freedom.

Allow me to conclude with a personal story. In 1939, my father traveled throughout Palestine and Central Europe on the eve of the Second World War. He was one of the last to see the glory of European Jewry in full bloom before the nightmare of Nazism enveloped and destroyed it. He visited Danzig, now Gdansk, just days after the Nazis had been elected in the May elections. He went with enthusiasm to see the magnificent historic main synagogue of this vibrant Jewish community. To his utter dismay; it lay in ruins, only the portal over what had been the beautiful entrance front doors was still intact. On the front lawn, there was a sign that had been erected during the election campaign by the Nazis which said "Komm lieber Mai und mache von Juden uns jetzt frei—come dear month of May and free us from the Jews." With tears welling up in his eyes and a chilling sense of the impending disaster symbolized by this scene, his glance gazed upward and then he saw the words—the ancient vision of Malachi, still inscribed over the remaining doorway: "Halo Av echad l'chulanu; halo eyl echad b'ra'anu:have we all not one Father? Has not one God not created us?" (Mal. 2:10). Two visions: one of hatred and tyranny, the other of brotherhood and sisterhood, of unity and peace; one of oppression, the other of freedom; one of darkness and despair, the other of light and hope. This is the choice we face today with a sense of great urgency.

To the religiously oppressed in every land who live in fear, afraid to speak of what they believe in; who worship in underground churches, mosques or temples—lest authorities discover and punish their devotion to an authority beyond the state; who languish in prisons, bodies broken, spirits too often disfigured—simply because they love God in their own way or question the existence of God; who feel so desperate that they flee their homes to avoid killing and persecution because of their faith—to all of them, together, you and I, the State Department and the Congress, can be a beacon of light and hope. Should you confirm me, I pray that contributing to fulfilling that dream will be my legacy.

Thank you again for your consideration and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Rabbi.

We will now go to questions in 7-minute rounds. If I might, Mr. Zumwalt, first just speak, if you would, for a few minutes about how we could continue to strengthen and broaden our security cooperation with Senegal; and if you would talk as well to how we might make progress in combating narcotrafficking in Guinea-Bissau?

Mr. ZUMWALT. Thank you. We have a very strong relationship with the Senegalese military. As you know, Senegal is a net provider of security and today they are participating in peacekeeping operations throughout Africa. So some of our engagement is involved in trying to strengthen their capabilities to provide that peacekeeping.

But we also, the Senegalese military and we, have other areas of cooperation—border security and the increasing capability to combat the narcotrafficking and the smuggling that you mentioned. Also, maritime security is important. Senegal has an important fishing industry and they need ought protect their resources.

For Guinea-Bissau, you are very correct to identify narcotrafficking as one of the key issues. The challenge really is narcotraffickers look for the weak link, the country with weak judicial systems and not having the rule of law. So I think since we now have had a democratic transition, one of the things we need to do is to look how can we strengthen the judicial system, the law enforcement capabilities, also to talk frankly about corruption and issues there to see if we can reduce the attractiveness of that country to narcotraffickers.

Senator COONS. Mr. Yamate and Ms. Palmer, both the countries to which we hope you will be confirmed, Madagascar and Malawi, are AGOA eligible, but have not really fully taken advantage of

AGOA. Would each of you in turn speak to how you might work to strengthen the opportunities they might have, given the significant challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in Madagascar and in Malawi.

Mr. Yamate.

Mr. YAMATE. Thank you. Madagascar has just recently become AGOA eligible, after 5 years of being ineligible following the coup of 2009. Prior to 2009, Madagascar utilized AGOA basically to their fullest within the textile industry. Forty-five percent of their exports for Madagascar was through AGOA in the textile area. Now, currently it is down to just over 20 percent.

Madagascar, the Government of Madagascar and President Rajaonarimampianina is very, very thankful for reestablishing AGOA benefits. There is still some work to be done in getting that process utilized. But there are approximately 50,000 individuals who lost jobs because of the loss of AGOA. This is an absolute positive again for AGOA and for AGOA eligibility, and Madagascar is very much going to benefit from it.

Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Ms. Palmer.

Ms. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. About 90 percent of Malawi's exports to the United States enter duty-free under AGOA, GSP, or MFN. I think the basic problem is that Malawi is not exporting very much, and U.S. Government efforts will be, or are centered on, improving their economic standard.

We need to focus on agriculture. Eighty percent of the Malawians are working in the agricultural field. So we need to help them with crop diversification, with value addition, and with trade facilitation so that they can trade with their neighbors better and produce better for export to us.

They also need to address governance challenges that I mentioned briefly, and the President has been very committed to tackling corruption. We will also be helpful with the MCC account in helping them to have better power, which will help manufacturing in general and commercial agriculture in Malawi.

Senator COONS. What is the status of the MCC compact, which was recently restored? What do you see as the opportunities for its full restoration and progress?

Ms. PALMER. Actually, progress has been good in the year since it was begun again. They are doing the initial sort of survey work and contract-letting and they are talking to the power utility, ESCOM, about power sector reforms that are required. They have had structural engineers look at the major hydrodam to see what kind of infrastructure improvements need to be made, and they have conducted a survey to improve the transmission lines.

I think that the MCC is going to be vital to getting Malawi the electricity it needs. Only 7 percent of Malawians have access to electricity and they cannot have the economic growth that we need without having it.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Rabbi Saperstein, thank you for your stirring opening statement and for your passionate commitment to religious freedom. Like you, I am deeply troubled by the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe and

globally and by the sweep of oppressions that you cited in your opening statement.

Please tell me, if confirmed, what role would you play, first in partnership with the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism? Then second, what do you consider your priority actions, in addition to this, to take on all the different challenges you spoke about, from ISIS's barbaric actions against Christians and Yazidis to oppression of Muslims in Burma? Last, to that end, do you have the resources you need?

Rabbi SAPERSTEIN. Senator Kaine, it is good to see you, sir.

The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism that exists in the State Department work in a fully integrated manner within the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), and particularly with the International Religious Freedom Office. Special Envoy Ira Forman has done a superb job on this, traveling tirelessly, visited 17 countries.

Just last week I attended a gathering he had of the key people throughout the State Department who work on this issue and the prominent leaders of the American Jewish community and the European Jewish community. It was a very productive meeting, mapping out the problems in more detail and what strategies would be most effective to respond to them.

So we would work very closely. It is a joint responsibility between the Religious Freedom Office and the Special Envoy's office to address this issue, and if confirmed I would be working with someone who is a personal friend that I have worked with for many, many years. Together, I think we reinforce each other. I think that is true of all the special envoys.

In terms of the enormity of the problems we face, there are certain urgent priorities simply by the facts on the ground, what is happening in the CAR, what is happening in the Near East region, and particularly in Iraq. I am prepared to travel anywhere that I can be of help to an already superb staff in the International Religious Freedom Office that is fully engaged. It was their relationships with many of these religious minorities in Iraq that provided invaluable information that helped guide the response of our armed forces and our diplomatic forces in addressing the rise of ISIL, the plight of the Yezidis, and the challenge to the Christian communities there.

We have the situation in Pakistan and other countries across the globe which are urgent challenges. I am really prepared to work as tirelessly as I can to focus on where I think we can make a real difference, or where the urgency of the moment requires a response. We cannot do everything, but if there are countries we can actually move to improve the situation that is where I want to focus my efforts.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Rabbi.

Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

I appreciate the answers so far. Mr. Zumwalt, when we talked in my office we talked about the trouble with Ebola a few countries away, but in the region, and Senegal's response not to have flights go, for example, to Liberia and how that kind of imperils our ability to get people there when flights do not fly, in terms of international

aid workers and others. What can we do to help them address the concerns that they have, the security concerns and health concerns, but also help out the international community here?

Mr. ZUMWALT. Thank you very much for that question. Ebola is a very serious problem that requires a sustained, coordinated U.S. Government effort to help countries who are affected by Ebola to deal with the issue. I think from the perspective of the Embassy in Dakar, if I were confirmed I would have four priorities for dealing with Ebola. The first would be to make sure that the United States Government were approaching the problem in Senegal with a whole-of-government response. We have many talented, good people from CDC, Department of Defense, AID, and other places who each are doing good work, but we have to make sure we are presenting a very coherent approach toward the government.

The second priority would be coordinating with other donors to make sure that we are not leaving gaps or overlapping or overwhelming the host government with requests for information. So the donors would need to work together, and it is ideally suited in Dakar to do that because all the donors are present there.

Third would be the relations with Senegal, and really we would have three aspects to that. One is assessing the situation and making sure that policymakers back in Washington understood the situation on the ground. Senegal, as you know, has had one Ebola case they are working hard to prevent others from occurring.

But the second is to understand the government and what it is trying to do. You mentioned the reaction the Senegal Government had is to close off flights, which we do not think is the right action. But we need to understand why they are taking this action and help them deal with the concerns they have about the public health situation in Senegal.

Then finally, the last priority in our communications would be influencing Senegal's actions. I think you have laid out one important area where perhaps we would prefer a different approach, and so we need to engage and talk to the government.

Then finally, the fourth priority as a mission I would have is the safety, welfare, and security of American citizens. We have about 6,000 Americans living in Senegal. Many of them are in remote places. So if I were at the mission I would want to make sure that American citizens had the information they needed to make the right kind of decisions to protect their own health and welfare of themselves and their families.

Thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Yamate, you mentioned the unique flora and fauna that Madagascar has. It is certainly envied by a lot of places. We have committed, you mentioned, $2.5 million, USAID, to help them conserve and protect their ecosystem. How can we leverage that? That is not a lot, but can we leverage that with other partners and with the host government to help out?

Mr. YAMATE. Absolutely, sir. Leverage is necessary and we need collaboration, cooperation with all the different sectors, nongovernment organizations, the government itself, and all members of society, to work in preserving this ecosystem which exists nowhere else in the world.

Senator FLAKE. Do you think the government values that sufficiently now?

Mr. YAMATE. Yes, they do. In their general state policy that they have just brought about about a month and a half ago, this is one of their main priorities, is preservation of the environment, which includes flora, fauna, animal life, rosewood. Rosewood logging, illegal logging, is ongoing. There is very strong ongoing effort by the government of President Rajaonarimampianina to try and offset the rosewood logging. My understanding is that most recently within the last week there have been individuals at the highest level that have been identified and we are hopeful of arrests in the near future.

But again, this is a concerted effort led by the Government of Madagascar, but also with the assistance and with the acknowledgment of the international community.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. Last, and my confirmation for you hinges on this, can you spell the President's name? [Laughter.]

Mr. YAMATE. I will have to get back to you about that. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. It is only 19 letters. Come on.

Ms. Palmer, you mentioned education and 45 percent of the population under the age of 15. That is something important, and particularly for young girls. What percentage of young girls make it through the primary education system there?

Ms. PALMER. Just over 50 percent, I believe, sir. And even fewer then complete high school. Apparently, a Malawian girl has a 50 times higher chance of being married in her late teens than she does of going to university.

Senator FLAKE. Do we have programs to help? Do we think that we can push that number higher?

Ms. PALMER. Absolutely, sir. We are working primarily on teacher preservice and in-service training and providing textbooks and then doing work with communities to encourage the cultural values necessary to keep girls in school.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Saperstein, I just wish you were a little more passionate about the issue that you are facing here. [Laughter.]

I am completely kidding, for anybody who did not get that. But we had a great discussion in my office and here again it is evident that you care very much about the topic. We spoke at length in my office about the challenges you face, particularly with countries that we have other relationships with, and it is difficult to pressure them on these particular issues, but to find ways, and I think you have identified some ways, that we can elevate these religious freedom issues into the other discussions that we have. So I look forward to supporting your nomination. In the interest of time, I will not ask you to go into any of those. I know that you have thought deeply and have worked a lifetime on this.

I appreciate all of you have devoted your careers to representing the United States around the world and I really appreciate what you are doing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Flake.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Chairman Coons.

Thank you to the witnesses. Congratulations on your nominations and thank you for your service. I visited last week American consuls and Embassies in North Africa and Spain, and I always try to meet with first-term FSO's when I do. I am always just struck by we have some great capital "A" Ambassadors; we also have some spectacular small "a" ambassadors all over the world. You are lucky to be working with such a good organization and we are lucky to have you serving in this way that involves some significant personal sacrifice.

I am going to focus my questions on Rabbi Saperstein. Let me start off by putting a lot of pressure on you. I heard the historian Gary Wills speak once and he said that every great idea in the American Constitution had been in some other constitution and we were just good scavengers of picking really good ideas and putting them together, save one. And the one that was really uniquely American was the protection of free religious exercise, and also the absence of an established religion, that all could worship as they please or not and there would not be any punishment or preference because of how you made that choice.

That was a conceptual idea that could have led to a society indifferent to religion. Instead, it has led to a society that is very spiritual in nature. Look at this accident of who you have up on the stage here, the dias: Senator Coons worked with the Council of Churches in South Africa; Senator Flake did missionary service with the Mormon Church in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia; I worked with Jesuit missionaries in Honduras.

We have a society that tolerates free exercise, but it does not lead to an indifference. It leads to a real flourishing of spirituality and religious organizations. It has had to mature. The Mormons were subject to significant prejudice. Catholics have been at times. So it has not all been smooth, and it is not smooth today.

The United States still has such a leadership role to play in the world. In the 20th century it was our industrial might and military might in World War I and World War II that played such an important role in our global leadership. In the 21st century we still have a leadership role to play, an important one, and one of the important, maybe one of the most important, things we can do is be a beacon or example to nations of a place that tolerates a diversity of religious feeling and opinion and has had a flourishing culture where we live and work and go to school with people of different religious backgrounds and we make it work.

As we see these challenges that you alluded to in your testimony in any part of the world, we just have such a leadership role to offer. I think your position as Ambassador for this first freedom, we call it in Virginia—it was put in the First Amendment for a reason when Madison was drafting the Constitution. We can hold ourselves out as an example of hope where people of different backgrounds can live together productively and happily.

I really was excited that you as the first chair of the U.S. Commission in International Religious Freedom have taken this post, because you have this in your DNA and your bloodstream. I really just want to encourage you. We should raise the profile of religious freedom issues and raise our, in a humble way, our example of a

society that gets it right more often than not on this. We should raise this across the board in everything we do, in foreign policy and structurally throughout the Department of State. And you have the profile to do that.

We talked yesterday in my office and one of the things I did not know and I was interested in was your discussion of how the Department of State's report to Congress on international freedom is now not just used by the United States, but other nations who do not have the ability to do their own are actually using that report in positive ways. Could you talk a little bit about that?

Rabbi SAPERSTEIN. Well, the Framers of the U.S. Constitution had the revolutionary idea that our rights would not depend upon our religious identity, our religious practices, or our religious beliefs, and that our rights came from within and were not just granted by the state. This is an idea that has helped reshape the world. Slowly, steadily, though it has ebbed and flowed, we are making progress.

So take the religious freedom issue. We created this idea. We, you, the Congress of the United States, created this idea of an Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom. Now there are a score of countries around the globe that either have their own ambassador, minister, special offices, or councils designated for advocating for religious freedom. And it is spreading across the globe. It is not just western countries now. Morocco is undertaking this effort. The President of Senegal has announced that he is going to be gathering Muslim leaders and scholars from sub-Saharan African to talk about religious freedom and minority religions.

This is a model that is spreading across the globe. One of my priorities will be to actually reach out to these representatives, because if we can coordinate and reinforce our efforts can be far more effective than what any one of us could do alone.

So that vision really has begun to transform the world. It will not be an easy task to get where we want to go, but, working together, we will achieve much more than any of us alone.

Senator KAINE. I look forward to working with you in that regard.

Again, I thank all the witnesses.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Kaine. I always enjoy your questions. I wish you could come to every one of our hearings.

If you will forgive me, as all the witnesses know, given the pending briefing for all Senators on ISIS, although we have many more questions we wish we could force you to ask, your written statements, your personal testimony, your answers to our questions have been compelling and engaging, and thank you very much for your willingness to serve, for your long records of service both in advancing the principles of religious freedom and in representing our Nation in many places around the world.

I would also like to thank Ann, Michiko, Ismail, Nadia, Becky, and Ellen, as well as Daniel, who have all shared your wonderful parents with us, your spouses, your children with us, over so many years. We are grateful to your families for their support.

We will leave the record open until Tuesday, September 16, for any members of the committee who were not able to join us today who may wish to submit questions for the record. With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:49 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

NOMINATIONS OF ROBERT CEKUTA; RICHARD MILLS; JESS BAILY; MARGARET UYEHARA

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Robert Francis Cekuta, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan
Richard M. Mills, Jr., of Texas, to be Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Armenia
Jess Lippincott Baily, of Ohio, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia
Margaret Ann Uyehara, of Ohio, to be Ambassador to Montenegro

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher Murphy, presiding.

Present: Senators Murphy and Johnson.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator MURPHY. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will now come to order.

Good morning. Welcome to our nominees and their families, other guests who are joining us here today.

We are considering the nomination today of Robert Cekuta to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Richard Mills to be Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, Jess Baily to be Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia, and Margaret Ann Uyehara to be our Ambassador to Montenegro.

To begin with, Senator Johnson and I will give brief opening statements. I will very quickly introduce our nominees with short bios, and then the floor shall be yours.

One year ago, this likely would have been a very different hearing. Many of the questions would be the same: the frozen conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the name issue in Macedonia, the status of Montenegro's NATO accession. But today, even those questions are going to be informed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, by the realization that Russia does not view its neighbors as sovereign, independent states who will determine their own destinies. There has been a paradigm shift in Euro-

pean security, and we are unlikely to go back to business as usual any time soon.

As a result of this shift, you can expect that Congress is going to be more engaged in many of the challenges that you are going to be taking on in your new assignments. This includes energy security, economic development, NATO and EU integration, good governance and respect for ethnic minorities.

The Balkan region in particular deserves additional U.S. attention and resources. Montenegro is close to attaining NATO membership, and I encourage you to help them get over the finish line. In the meantime, we look forward to seeing progress in areas such as press freedom and the rule of law. Macedonia has contributed significantly to NATO operations in Afghanistan, and they too deserve an opportunity to join the alliance. The so-called name issue has persisted for too long. It is holding back the Balkans' Euro-Atlantic integration. Unresolved ethnic tensions in Macedonia are a potential flashpoint, and I hope that our next Ambassador will find ways to promote reconciliation.

Moving to our nominees from the Caucasus, Armenia is further behind in terms of economic growth and political independence from Moscow, and it was disappointing to see Armenia cast one of the few votes against condemning Russia's annexation of Crimea. Nevertheless, we should continue to find ways to work with Armenia, strengthen their democracy, help them reduce their regional isolation. Ultimately the United States benefits from having a strong, independent, prosperous partner in Armenia.

Azerbaijan is an increasingly important partner in this area particularly when it comes to energy security. And I am pleased that our nominee has significant experience on this particular subject. While there are lots of areas that we are going to work with, one area that I hope that you will not neglect is the importance of an active civil society and a peaceful political opposition. Senator Johnson and I have both worked together on raising concerns about a growing crackdown on civil society activists, and my colleagues and I here in the Senate are going to continue to raise those concerns.

We are glad that you are all here. We look forward to your testimony, and let me turn it over to Senator Johnson for opening remarks.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RON JOHNSON, U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN

Senator JOHNSON. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have done your usual good job of summarizing the issues with the four countries.

I just want to thank the nominees for coming here to testify today and thank you for your willingness to serve. Being an ambassador of the United States is a serious responsibility. I certainly hope that you will convey our intentions to the country, that you will be representing the United States. I believe the United States is, although not perfect, a phenomenal force for good in the world, and we want to help people. Your jobs as ambassadors are to convey that to the peoples of those countries, but also to make sure that we here in Congress and America in general understand the

issues and the viewpoints of the countries that you will be representing America to. So it is kind of a dual role. It is very similar to business. You have a sales guy. He is certainly representing your products to the customer but he is representing the customer back to the company.

So, again, I just want to thank you for your willingness to serve and look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

I will introduce you from our right to left and then you can give testimony in that same order.

First, Robert Cekuta is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He has served most recently as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Energy Resources of the Department of State. Mr. Cekuta has developed a deep energy expertise and broad experience in fostering democratic and free market reforms, which are going to be key issues in Azerbaijan. He played a critical senior management role in establishing the new Energy Bureau where he has developed programs advancing global energy security, while overseeing initiatives to fight corruption and build good governance and accountability when it comes to oil and gas production.

Mr. Cekuta earned his bachelor's degree from Georgetown, a master's degree from the Thunderbird School of Global Management, and a master's degree from the National Defense University.

Richard Mills, Rick Mills, is our nominee to the Republic of Armenia, another career member of the Senior Foreign Service. Most recently he served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Beirut. Mr. Mills has served with distinction at some of the most difficult and important posts in the Foreign Service. Known for raising morale within his assigned missions and engaging local media and officials to effectively articulate U.S. policy, Mr. Mills will bring essential skills to the task of furthering bilateral relations with the Government of Armenia, an important U.S. partner in Eastern Europe.

Mr. Mills earned his bachelor's degree from Georgetown as well, a J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law, and a master's degree from the National Defense University.

Jess Baily, a good friend of members of this committee, is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service as well. Most recently served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Turkey where he skillfully managed a complex mission in a NATO ally in the heart of a critical region. His years of experience in Europe, his strong interagency and management skills, and his public diplomacy expertise will enable him to further bilateral relations with the Government of Macedonia and engage effectively with the Macedonian public.

Mr. Baily is the only member of this panel who was wise enough to get his undergraduate degree in Connecticut from Yale University, and he has his master's degree from Columbia, which is located, I think, in a State near Connecticut. [Laughter.]

Margaret Uyehara is another career member of the Senior Foreign Service. Most recently she served as Executive Director to the Bureaus of European and Eurasian Affairs and the International Organization Affairs in the Department of State. She has three decades of experience managing Department of State staff and resources in the Balkans, in Washington, and around the world. She

is going to bring these essential skills to the tasks of developing a cadre of largely entry-level officers at the Embassy in Montenegro and to further bilateral relations with the Government of Montenegro, a key U.S. partner in the Balkans.

Ms. Uyehara earned her bachelor's degree at Kalamazoo and also studied at Georgetown University.

Margaret, I understand that you have four of your five children—three of your five children today. As the father of two young ones myself, I am ready to vote for you simply based on your impressive family management experience alone.

Thank you all for being here. Why do we not start with you, Mr. Cekuta, and move down the row?

STATEMENT OF ROBERT FRANCIS CEKUTA, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. CEKUTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, for the privilege of appearing here as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Azerbaijan. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to testify and am humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and with all Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States in Azerbaijan.

I would like to introduce my wife, Anne, who has joined me. Our daughter, Margaret, our sons, Matthew and Stephen, are unfortunately unable to be here today.

For over 36 years, I have been dedicated to promoting U.S. foreign policy interests around the world. As Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the State Department's Energy Resources Bureau, for example, I worked to advance U.S. energy policy in complex regions from the Middle East to the Caucasus to Ukraine. My unwavering focus throughout my career has been to advance U.S. interests, including universal values of democracy, strong rule of law, and the protection of human rights and dignity.

Many of you have been personally engaged on developments in Azerbaijan. It is a country with a rich history and with the potential for a bright and prosperous future. Our relationship is important not just to our two countries, but to Azerbaijan's neighbors and to the wider region. We stand only to gain from a stable, democratic, peaceful, prosperous Azerbaijan strategically linked to the United States and to our European friends and allies.

Since establishing diplomatic relations, we have worked with Azerbaijan on three equally important areas, each of which is key to its full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community: security, energy, and democracy.

The United States has long recognized Azerbaijan as a stalwart partner on international security. After the attacks of September 11, then-Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev was among the first to extend support and to offer close cooperation to combat terrorism. That cooperation continues. American and Azerbaijani troops served together in Kosovo and Iraq. They serve together now in Afghanistan where Azerbaijan has shown a sustained commitment to the international effort, including its part of the Northern Distribution Network for supporting NATO's operations.

If confirmed, I will also work to enhance our security cooperation in other areas, including border security, nonproliferation, and countering human trafficking.

The United States and Azerbaijan have also cooperated for over 20 years on energy. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and progress on the Southern corridor for gas are powerful symbols of Azerbaijan's commitment to global energy security, a key element of our efforts to diversify energy routes and sources for European markets. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Azerbaijan to diversify its energy routes and bolster its critical energy infrastructure protection.

Just as we continue cooperating on energy and security, we must work with Azerbaijan to advance democratic institutions and processes and to strengthen the rule of law.

Azerbaijanis point to the 1918 constitution to say they were the Muslim world's first democracy and that women could vote in Azerbaijan before they won that right here in the United States. That constitution and republic fell in 1920, but it set a tradition of which Azerbaijanis can be proud.

Azerbaijan lives in a very difficult neighborhood. It must maintain its security and stability, but these can only come with a strong commitment to democratic principles, including respect for the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. This is an area of great concern to the administration, as I know it is for you and for your colleagues here in Congress. If confirmed, I will work ceaselessly with Azerbaijanis to build the strong democracy and economy they want and deserve.

Finally and no less importantly, Azerbaijan is a pivotal player in the region's peace and stability, and there is no higher priority for achieving a more secure and prosperous future for the Caucasus than the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As cochair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States continues helping all sides achieve a peaceful, lasting negotiated settlement for the conflict based on the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the U.N. charter, including the non-use of force or threat of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

The United States has made major efforts to facilitate a settlement. On September 4, the Secretary met with the two Presidents at the NATO summit to discuss a way forward. We publicly commended the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan for these important steps, and we encouraged them to continue to discuss elements of a settlement. Such meetings must continue. Only a negotiated settlement can lead to a long-term peace and stability in the region. If confirmed, I will support the administration's commitment to achieving this goal.

As President Obama stated in June, "True democracy, real prosperity, lasting security—these are neither simply given, nor imposed from the outside. They must be earned and built from within." If confirmed, I will do all I can to work with Azerbaijanis to build a strong, vibrant, modern democracy and sustainable, diversified economy they want and deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cekuta follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT F. CEKUTA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and distinguished members of the committee, for the privilege of appearing here today as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Azerbaijan. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to testify this afternoon, and am humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and all Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States in Azerbaijan.

I would like to introduce my wife, Anne, who has joined me here today, along with my daughter, Margaret. My sons, Matthew, who is working in Maine, and Stephen, who has just started university, are unfortunately unable to be here.

For just over 36 years, I have been dedicated to promoting U.S. foreign policy interests across the world. Most recently, as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the State Department's Energy Resources Bureau, I have worked to advance U.S. energy policy in some of the most complex regions from the Middle East to the Caucasus to Ukraine. The core objective of my work has been boosting our energy security and diversifying our supply.

In this and all my previous assignments, my work has been defined by an unwavering commitment to advancing U.S. interests, including universal values of democracy, strong rule of law, and the protection of human rights and dignity. As Deputy Chief of Mission in Tirana, I advocated judicial independence, expansion of the operating space for civil society, and supported electoral reform in Albania. If confirmed, I will bring all of these experiences to bear in the service of advancing these and other core U.S. interests in Azerbaijan.

Many of you have been personally engaged on developments in Azerbaijan. Senator Cardin just led an OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation to Baku in June and chaired a hearing on Azerbaijan prior to that trip. Azerbaijan is a country with a rich history and has the potential for a bright and prosperous future. Our relationship with Azerbaijan is important not just to our two countries, but to Azerbaijan's neighbors and the wider region. The United States and Azerbaijan stand only to gain from a stable, democratic, peaceful, prosperous Azerbaijan strategically linked to the United States and our European friends and allies.

In the 22 years since the United States and Azerbaijan established diplomatic relations, we have worked with Azerbaijan on three equally important areas—security, energy, and democracy—necessary for the country's full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. Allow me to speak to each of these three areas briefly.

The United States has long recognized Azerbaijan as a stalwart partner on international security. We remember that following the attacks of September 11, 2001, then-Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev was among the first to extend a hand of support and to offer his country's close cooperation in our efforts to combat terrorism. That cooperation continues. American and Azerbaijani troops served together in Kosovo and Iraq. They serve together now in Afghanistan where Azerbaijan has shown a sustained commitment to the international effort including its role as a transportation route in the Northern Distribution Network for supporting NATO's operations. Thousands of flights have crossed Azerbaijan's airspace en route to Afghanistan, and thousands of containers have departed Baku in support of the International Security Assistance Force.

If confirmed, I will also work to enhance our security cooperation in numerous other areas, including border security, nonproliferation, and countering human trafficking. Later this month nonstop flights will begin between Azerbaijan and the United States, following several years of cooperation in bolstering Azerbaijan's civil aviation safety and security capacity.

The United States and Azerbaijan have also enjoyed more than 20 years of cooperation on energy security. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the progress on the Southern corridor for gas represent powerful symbols of Azerbaijan's commitment to global energy security—a key element of our efforts to diversify energy routes and sources for European markets. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Azerbaijan to diversify its energy routes and bolster its critical energy infrastructure protection.

But, just as we continue our security and energy cooperation, we must also continue our efforts to work with Azerbaijan on advancing democratic institutions and processes, and strengthening rule of law. Both are essential to ensure long-term stability and to help Azerbaijanis unleash the full potential of their country. Democracies only thrive when they are bolstered by an independent judiciary, respect for the rule of just laws, a free media, a vibrant civil society, pluralism, competitive,

democratic electoral processes, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of assembly, association, expression, movement, and religion.

Azerbaijanis point to their 1918 post-Tsarist constitution to say they were the Muslim world's first democracy and that women had the right to vote in Azerbaijan before they won that right in our country. That constitution and republic fell in 1920, but it is a tradition of which Azerbaijanis can be proud. Recently, Azerbaijan decided to continue a well-publicized program to decrease corruption at lower levels of public administration. The government established six administrative service centers in Baku and the regions, which function as one-stop centers for government services from nine ministries, where Azerbaijanis can obtain documents such as birth certificates and marriage licenses. However, much more needs to be done to combat corruption and protect those who identify it.

We recognize that Azerbaijan lives in a very difficult neighborhood and must maintain its security and stability, which the United States strongly supports. But we also recognize that the security, stability, and prosperity that Azerbaijan seeks can only come with a strong commitment to democratic principles, including respect for rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Those are critical components of security and stability for any country. This is an area of great concern to this administration, as I know it is for you and your colleagues in Congress. If confirmed, I will do everything in my power to work with Azerbaijanis to build the strong, vibrant, modern democracy and sustainable, diversified economy that they want and deserve.

Finally, but no less importantly, Azerbaijan is a pivotal player in the region's future peace and stability. And there is no higher priority today for achieving a more secure and prosperous future for the Caucasus than the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As a cochair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States continues to assist all sides as they seek to achieve a peaceful, lasting negotiated settlement of the conflict based on the U.N. Charter and relevant documents, and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, including the nonuse of force or threat of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

The Secretary of State and Ambassador Warlick have made major efforts to facilitate a settlement. On September 4, Secretary Kerry met with the Presidents at the NATO summit in Wales to discuss a way forward in peace negotiations. We publicly commended the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan for these important steps, and we encourage them to continue to discuss elements of a settlement.

Such meetings must continue, as only a negotiated settlement can lead to long-term peace and stability in the region. If confirmed, I will support the administration's commitment, at the highest levels, to achieving this goal. In this, I will support the efforts of the U.S. cochair, Ambassador James Warlick, as we work closely with the sides to reach a settlement.

As President Obama stated in June in Warsaw, "True democracy, real prosperity, lasting security—these are neither simply given, nor imposed from the outside. They must be earned and built from within." If confirmed, I will do everything in my power to work with Azerbaijanis to build the strong, vibrant, modern democracy and sustainable, diversified economy that they want and deserve. And I will work to advance our relationship in ways consistent with our shared interests and our shared values.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Mr. Mills.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD M. MILLS, JR., OF TEXAS, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Mr. MILLS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Johnson.

Twenty-three years ago, I served as the Department of State's first desk officer for the newly independent Armenia. So it is a particular honor for me to be before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia.

With me today is my wife, Leigh, a retired Foreign Service officer who has been my partner throughout this two-decade career from desk officer to this hearing.

Mr. Chairman, the goal of our Armenian policy is straightforward: a free and prosperous Armenia at peace with its neighbors. Achieving this goal means helping Armenia strengthen its democracy and fight corruption, liberalize its economy, resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict peacefully through the Minsk Group process, and to reconcile with its neighbor Turkey through a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the sufferings of the Armenian people. If confirmed, these will be my priorities.

Like you, Mr. Chairman, while we have been clear about our disappointment over some of Armenia's recent decisions such as its vote in the U.N. General Assembly with Russia against upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the U.S. Government's commitment to a strong bilateral relationship with Armenia remains unchanged. Armenia's decision in September 2013 to end its negotiations with the EU on a comprehensive free trade area and to join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union I think underscored the need to achieve our goals of decreasing Armenia's regional isolation and bolstering its economic and security independence. If we achieve that, this will give Armenia greater ability to build economic and security relationships with a range of partners, including not only Russia, but its immediate neighbors, the Europeans, and the United States as well. We are stressing, since Armenia's decision, that strengthened economic collaboration with the United States and Europe can complement Armenia's future membership in the Eurasian Economic Union.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of Armenia and Turkey's signing of the protocols on the establishment of diplomatic relations and the development of bilateral relations. We continue to emphasize the importance of proceeding with final approval of these protocols, without preconditions or linkage to any other issues. We have been clear that responsibility for moving forward now lies with the Turkish Government, and we continue to press at the highest levels for Turkish movement and ratification of the protocols.

Efforts toward Turkish-Armenian reconciliation are especially important at this time, as I know you know, because the United States and the world will stand in solidarity with the Armenian people next year to mark the centenary of one of the 20th century's worst atrocities when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. In advance of this tragic anniversary, it is important that Turkey engage with Armenia to achieve a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts so that the two nations can begin to forge a productive relationship.

The protracted conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh continues to be a source of concern to the U.S. Government, as you heard from my colleague. The administration is committed to a peaceful settlement through the Minsk Group process. Secretary Kerry delivered this message when he met with the Presidents at the NATO summit in Wales on September 4. If confirmed, I will coordinate with Ambassador James Warlick, the U.S. cochair of the Minsk Group, on how

Embassy Yerevan and I can assist the administration's efforts to facilitate followup meetings in the months ahead.

Our goal of a free and prosperous Armenia equally requires work inside Armenia itself. There are many fronts in this effort: progress on democratic and economic reforms, increased respect for human rights, and combating corruption. If confirmed, I will build on my predecessor's public and private advocacy these issues, as well as work to effectively implement targeted U.S. assistance programs that can focus on the development of civil society and judicial independence.

In addition, I will continue our efforts to advance market reforms with the goal of increased bilateral trade and investment to the benefit of both countries.

My work 23 years ago introduced me to Armenia, its inspiring history, and its capacity for political and cultural renewal. If confirmed, I look forward to enhancing my understanding of the country and to working closely with the members of this committee and with the Congress as a whole in representing my fellow Americans as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia.

Thank you. I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mills follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD M. MILLS

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, and distinguished members of the committee.

Twenty-three years ago, I served as the Department of State's first desk officer for newly independent Armenia, so it is a particular honor for me to be before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia. With me today is my wife, Leigh, a retired Foreign Service officer, who has been my partner throughout my two-decade, professional journey from desk officer to this hearing. It means a great deal to me that she was able to join me here today and, if I am confirmed, will be with me in Yerevan.

My parents blessed me with curiosity about the world and a conviction that a public service career dedicated to promoting understanding of the United States and our values would be a fulfilling one. My parents were my inspiration to join the U.S. Foreign Service. Even though they were not able to travel from Texas to be here today, they are both certainly here with me in spirit.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will build upon the achievements of my predecessors and continue the Obama administration's commitment to achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives for Armenia.

The goal of our Armenian policy is simple: a free and prosperous Armenia, at peace with its neighbors. Achieving this goal means helping Armenia strengthen its democracy and rule of law; liberalize its economy, expand trade, and attract diversified foreign investment; resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict peacefully through the Minsk Group Process; and to reconcile with its neighbor Turkey through a full, frank, and just acknowledgment of the painful elements of the past. If confirmed, these will be my priorities.

While we have been clear about our disappointment over some of Armenia's recent decisions, such as its vote in the U.N. General Assembly with Russia against upholding Ukraine's sovereignty that put Armenia at odds with the overwhelming majority of the international community, the U.S. Government's commitment to a strong bilateral relationship with Armenia remains unchanged. Armenia's decision, in September 2013, to join the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union and to end its negotiations with the European Union on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, served to emphasize the need to achieve our goals of decreasing Armenia's regional isolation and bolstering its economic and security independence. This would give Yerevan greater ability to build economic and security relationships with a range of partners, including not only Russia, but its immediate neighbors, the EU, and the United States as well. We have stressed since Armenia's decision that strengthened economic collaboration with the United States and Europe can complement Armenia's future membership in the Eurasian Economic Union.

Important to reducing Armenia's isolation and bolstering its economy is timely progress toward reconciliation with neighboring Turkey. This year marks the fifth anniversary of Armenia and Turkey's signing of the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations. We continue to emphasize the importance of proceeding with final approval of these Protocols, without preconditions or linkage to other issues, and have been clear that responsibility for moving forward lies with the Turkish Government. The administration will continue to press at the highest levels for Turkish ratification of the Protocols. While the Protocols remain the administration's preferred path to normalized relations, the process outlined in the Protocols has stalled. The pressing need for reconciliation between the two states requires that both sides consider other confidence-building measures that they could take now pending progress on the Protocols.

Efforts toward Turkish-Armenian reconciliation are especially important at this time, as the United States and the world will stand in solidarity with the Armenian people next year to mark the centenary of one of the 20th century's worst atrocities, when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. In advance of this tragic anniversary, it is important that Turkey engage with Armenia to achieve a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts so that both nations can begin to forge a relationship that is peaceful, productive, and prosperous.

The protracted conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno- Karabakh continues to be a source of concern to the U.S. Government, especially as the loss of life on both sides of the line of contact has tragically and sharply increased over the last few months. The administration is committed to a peaceful settlement through the Minsk Group process. Secretary Kerry delivered this message when he met with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents at the NATO summit in Wales on September 4 to discuss a way forward in peace negotiations. If confirmed, I will coordinate with Ambassador James Warlick, the U.S. cochair of the Minsk Group, on how Embassy Yerevan and I can assist the administration's efforts to facilitate followup meetings in the months ahead.

As important as it is to assist Armenia to build relations with all of its neighbors and secure a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, our goal of a free and prosperous Armenia equally requires work inside Armenia as well. There are many fronts in this effort: enhanced progress on democratic and economic reforms; increased respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and strengthened rule of law and systemic reforms to combat corruption that address the real concerns of Armenian citizens and international investors. If confirmed, I will build on my predecessor's advocacy on these issues and work to implement targeted U.S. assistance programs that place a strong emphasis on the development of civil society, good governance, and judicial independence.

Our military cooperation with Armenia is strong and deepening. As a result of that military cooperation and U.S. support, Armenia is expanding its peacekeeping commitments with the U.N. in the Middle East, in addition to its long-standing efforts in support of the peacekeeping missions in Kosovo and with ISAF in Afghanistan.

In addition, I will continue our efforts to deepen economic ties, increase trade and investment, and advance market reforms, with the goal of increased bilateral trade and investment to the benefit of both countries. We have had success working with our Armenian partners in the U.S.-Armenia Task Force (USATF) to strengthen the business and investment environment in Armenia and are considering whether to begin negotiations with Yerevan on a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. There are opportunities for significant trade and investment in Armenia, especially in the county's information technology sector. But before Armenia can unleash the full potential of U.S. and foreign business interest, there must be progress on issues such as intellectual property rights protection, customs reform, and respect for contracts, so if confirmed these will be priorities as the Embassy works to strengthen the rule-of-law inside Armenia. There are also opportunities to leverage public-private partnerships, especially drawing on the resources and knowledge of the Armenian-American diaspora, to augment what is overall a decreasing foreign assistance budget for Armenia. If confirmed, I will continue my predecessor's focus on pursuing such partnerships.

Mr. Chairman, I want to close by assuring you that, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you, with members of this committee, and with the Congress as a whole in representing my fellow Americans as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia. And, in accordance with the Foreign Service's own values and traditions, I will, if confirmed, report candidly and objectively to Wash-

ington about developments in Armenia and provide recommendations for action that I believe are in the best interests of the United States.

My work 22 years ago introduced me to Armenia, its inspiring history, its capacity for political and cultural renewal, and its potential to be a catalyst for regional economic development. If confirmed, I look forward to enhancing my understanding of the country and the region by working with you, the Armenian Government, the Armenian people, and the Armenian-American community.

Thank you and I welcome your questions.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Mr. Baily.

STATEMENT OF JESS LIPPINCOTT BAILY, OF OHIO, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Mr. BAILY. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, I am honored to appear to you today as President Obama's nominee for the position of United States Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia. And I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, this committee, and the Congress to advance and protect United States interests in Macedonia.

I am proud to be accompanied today by my wife, Capie, a former Foreign Service officer; our son, Noah, a college sophomore in Connecticut and Navy ROTC student; and my sister, Mary Wheeler. Unfortunately, my parents, Joan and Oliver Baily, who did so much to nurture my enduring curiosity in the world were not able to attend today. My family has provided me unwavering support through 29 years of moves around the world, often in challenging places. To Capie and Noah, thank you for sharing with me the joys and the hardships of this fantastic and rewarding career.

Having returned 2 weeks ago from serving for 3 years in Turkey, I am as aware as you of the worrisome set of challenges which require effective U.S. diplomacy. As Russia sows conflict in Ukraine and ISIL terrorizes fragile societies and preys on vulnerable recruits, the United States must fortify relationships with friends and partners to achieve our shared goals of peace, prosperity, and security. And while Macedonia has not yet achieved full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, we share the goal of forging a Europe whole, free, and at peace, and we confront global challenges together.

Macedonia has been a steadfast partner in international security operations. This past July, Macedonia deployed its 17th rotation of troops in Afghanistan and has affirmed its willingness to stay beyond 2014. At the U.N., Macedonia has supported Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. And earlier this month, Macedonia's Parliament passed legislation to address the problem of foreign fighters. It is in the United States interest that we continue to help this committed friend and partner achieve readiness for NATO and EU membership.

Mr. Chairman, we are all familiar with the long-standing dispute between Macedonia and Greece over the former's name, and the resulting stagnation in Macedonia's NATO and EU accession processes. If confirmed, I pledge to bring my diplomatic experience to bear on helping Macedonia to work with Greece to find a mutually agreeable solution to this issue. Such a resolution would increase

security and stability in Macedonia, in the Balkan region, and across Europe.

And even as we encourage resolution of the name issue, our Embassy in Skopje works daily to increase security, promote the rule of law, and media freedom, combat terrorism, and expand trade and investment. My experience in leading multiagency missions and in working with Europe and the United Nations has prepared me to help Macedonia confront the challenges it faces today. Among these is full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which ended the civil conflict in 2001. And although the largest ethnic Albanian party is in the ruling coalition, gaps persist between ethnic Albanian and Macedonian populations. If confirmed, I would build on the efforts of our Embassy to encourage all parties to bridge ethnic divides and seek a common future.

And while Macedonia has developed strong democratic structures, the United States, the European Union, and most importantly Macedonian citizens have expressed concerns about freedom of the press, the independence of the judiciary, and corruption. The United States is already a partner in addressing these issues, and should I be confirmed, I will engage with the leaders and the public on Macedonia's reform agenda and not only because that agenda advances its membership in European institutions. A free media, an independent and impartial judiciary, and a transparent government strengthen the democracy and promote the prosperity to which Macedonians rightly aspire. Along with Macedonia's economic reforms, they are critical to opening up new opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.

And of course, while working on these issues, I will always remember that my top priority is to serve and protect U.S. citizens, whether colleagues working in the mission, Peace Corps Volunteers, U.S. investors and exporters, or your constituents in need of help.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, thank you very much for this opportunity to appear today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Baily follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JESS LIPPINCOTT BAILY

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for the position of United States Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia, and I am grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress to advance and protect U.S. interests in Macedonia.

I am proud to be accompanied by my wife, Capie, a former Foreign Service officer; our son, Noah, who just began his sophomore year as a Navy ROTC student at Yale; and my sister, Mary. Unfortunately, my parents Joan and Oliver Baily, who did so much to nurture my enduring curiosity about the world, were not able to attend. Diplomatic service is a team effort. My family has provided me unwavering support through 29 years of moves around the world, often in challenging places and uncertain times. To Capie and Noah, I owe my enduring thanks for sharing with me the joys and hardships of this fantastic and rewarding career.

Having returned last week from serving 3 years as Deputy Chief of Mission in Turkey, I am as aware as you that we face a worrisome set of global challenges in which effective diplomacy is essential to defeating the forces that threaten democracy and peace. As Russia sows conflict in Ukraine and ISIL terrorizes fragile societies and preys on vulnerable recruits internationally, the United States must fortify relationships with friends and partners to achieve our shared goals of peace,

security, and prosperity. While Macedonia has not yet achieved full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community—and certainly work remains to be done as it continues down that path—we share the goal of forging a Europe whole, free, and at peace and confront together global challenges.

Macedonia has been a steadfast partner in international security operations: this past July, 153 Macedonian soldiers deployed in the country's 17th rotation to Afghanistan to provide force protection at International Security Assistance Force headquarters in Kabul. Macedonia is one of the highest per capita contributors to ISAF. It has affirmed its willingness to stay in Afghanistan beyond 2014; and it supports the EU peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the U.N. mission in Lebanon. In March, Macedonia voted in favor of the U.N. General Assembly resolution supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity. And earlier this month, Macedonia's Parliament passed legislation to address the problem of foreign fighters. As our committed friend and partner, Macedonia deserves our assistance in achieving readiness for NATO and EU membership. It is in the United States and Europe's interest that we continue to lend that help.

Mr. Chairman, we are all familiar with the long-standing dispute between Macedonia and Greece over the former's name and with the resulting stagnation for Macedonia's NATO and EU accession processes. If confirmed, I pledge to bring my diplomatic experience to bear on helping Macedonia as it works with Greece to find a mutually agreeable solution. When Macedonia and other countries of the Western Balkans gathered in Berlin 2 weeks ago, they declared that this dispute "must urgently be resolved by a willingness to compromise on all sides." Six years have passed since NATO's Bucharest Summit Declaration promised an invitation to Macedonia as soon as the name issue was resolved. A resolution will be a key step toward increased stability and security in Macedonia, in the Balkan region and across Europe.

Even as we encourage resolution of the name issue, our Embassy in Skopje works daily to increase security, promote the rule of law and fundamental rights, combat terrorism, and expand trade and investment—in partnership with our European allies. My experience in leading complex missions in Ankara and Erbil and in working with Europe and the United Nations has prepared me to help Macedonia confront the challenges it faces today. The 13th anniversary of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which ended the civil conflict in 2001 by providing a plan for ensuring equal rights for citizens of all ethnicities, just passed, but there is more work to be done on implementation of the agreement. Although the largest ethnic Albanian party is in the ruling coalition, gaps persist between the ethnic Albanian and Macedonian populations, as evidenced by protests this summer. If confirmed, I would build on the efforts of our Embassy team to encourage all parties to bridge these ethnic divides and to call on leaders from both sides to increase interethnic communication and understanding.

And while Macedonia has developed strong democratic structures, the United States, the European Union, other friends of Macedonia, and—importantly, its own citizens—have expressed concerns about the freedom of the Macedonian press, the independence of the judiciary, and the transparency of government finances. As Assistant Secretary Nuland said at the Croatia Forum in July, "as we look to shore up the values at the core of the transatlantic community, the fight against corruption and democratic backsliding must now be an equally frontline concern." The United States is already a partner in confronting these challenges. Should I be confirmed, I will engage with leaders and the public on Macedonia's reform agenda, and not only because that agenda advances its European Union candidacy. A free media, an independent and impartial judiciary, and transparent government decisions strengthen the democracy and promote the economic prosperity to which Macedonians aspire. Along with Macedonia's economic reforms, they are critical to opening up new opportunities for bilateral trade and investment, another U.S. priority.

Of course, while working to help Macedonia reinforce its democratic institutions and achieve its full Euro-Atlantic aspirations, I will always remember that my top priority is to serve and protect U.S. citizens, whether colleagues working in our mission, U.S. investors and exporters, or your constituents in need of help. Such service remains a core task of our overseas missions.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to appear today. I look forward to working with you if confirmed and to answering any questions you may have for me.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Ms. Uyehara.

STATEMENT OF MARGARET ANN UYEHARA, OF OHIO, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO MONTENEGRO

Ms. UYEHARA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Johnson.

It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Montenegro. I deeply appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and Congress to protect and promote U.S. interests in Montenegro.

My husband and best friend, Michael, also a career Foreign Service officer, is not here today, but he is no doubt watching from Belgrade streaming live where he just began a new assignment with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

My son, Andrew, and my daughter, Leilani, who is teaching English in Japan, are also not here, but they are here in spirit.

But I am delighted to have my other three children with me: my daughter, Malia, an undergrad at the University of Virginia; my son, Chris, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of North Carolina; and most importantly—sorry, kids—my son, a captain in the U.S. Army who just returned from a yearlong deployment in Kuwait and surprised the heck out of me on Saturday night, by the way. It is on YouTube.

I could not be prouder of all of them and grateful for their love and support and indeed the support of all of my colleagues, many of whom are sitting right back behind me this morning.

Today's hearing marks a pivotal moment in my 32-year Foreign Service career. In my current position as Executive Director for European and Eurasian Affairs and International Organizations, I lead a team responsible for the support of 79 overseas posts with over 26,000 people and an annual operating budget of over $700 million. This team is the operational backbone of our foreign policy in the region and at the world's key international organizations. Over the years, I have worked to increase efficiency and contain costs, all the while ensuring that our diplomats have the resources necessary to represent our interests abroad. I believe my decades of experience will enable me to be an innovative and effective leader of our mission to Montenegro and a partner to the Montenegrin Government and its people as they progress on their path toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

If confirmed, my top priority will be ensuring that Montenegro attains full partnership in the Euro-Atlantic community. A democratic and prosperous Montenegro that meets the requirements for NATO and EU membership will be a stronger, more capable partner for the United States. Montenegro has been steadfast in its commitment to becoming a NATO ally and has already shown that it is a dedicated security partner by deploying forces in NATO, EU, and U.N. missions from Africa to Afghanistan. Importantly, in the wake of the current crisis in Ukraine, Montenegro sent a powerful signal by voting with the United States and the overwhelming majority of the international community on the U.N. resolution condemning Russia's actions in Ukraine and publicly supporting the EU sanctions.

Recognizing this commitment to Euro-Atlantic values, NATO Foreign Ministers agreed this past June to begin an intensified and focused dialogue with Montenegro to assess its readiness for NATO membership and promised to review its progress no later than the end of 2015. This decision recognizes the great strides Montenegro has already made and how very close it is to the finish line. If confirmed, I will work closely with Montenegro as it focuses on the areas that are instrumental to eventual NATO membership.

But our shared interests extend far beyond security. Montenegro's continued economic growth and prosperity yield direct benefits for U.S. investment, exports, and jobs. Major U.S. companies are doing business in Montenegro with several important projects on the horizon. But there is room for even greater growth. If confirmed, I will work with Montenegro's already active business community to strongly advocate for U.S. businesses. Together, I am confident that we can further enhance the economic ties that bind our two nations and help create jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

A key element in the United States-Montenegrin economic and security relationship is the guarantee of transparent and accountable public institutions steeped in the rule of law. Montenegro has worked to root out its corruption. It is forming a fully independent special prosecutor's office to fight organized crime and has established a new preventive anti-corruption agency. But more can be done. And the United States is a strong partner in these efforts. If confirmed, my team and I will continue that collaboration to advance the goal of a Montenegro that is a democratic source of stability in the Balkans.

And finally, if I am confirmed, I pledge to place the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Montenegro and our mission above all else and to provide excellent services to all U.S. citizens in Montenegro.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Johnson, our relationship with Montenegro is an important one, built on shared commitment to Euro-Atlantic values, security, prosperity, democracy for all Americans and Montenegrins. And if confirmed, I pledge to work with you to further advance those values in the service of our common strategic goal: a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to answering any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Uyehara follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARGARET ANN UYEHARA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Montenegro. I deeply appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and Congress to protect and promote U.S. interests in Montenegro.

My husband and best friend, also a career Foreign Service officer, is not able to be here today but he is no doubt watching from Belgrade, where he just began a new assignment. But I am delighted to have my daughter, Malia, an undergrad at UVA, with me. My other four children could not be present, but they are here in spirit. My sons, Andrew, and Ryan, a Captain in the U.S. Army, is returning today from Kuwait where he has just finished a tour of duty with a Patriot missile unit, defending our freedom. Leilani is teaching English in Japan, and Christopher is earning his Ph.D. I could not be prouder of all five of them and grateful for their

love and support. Lastly, I am touched by the presence of a great number of my other family here today: my Foreign Service family of colleagues.

Today's hearing marks a pivotal moment in my 32-year Foreign Service career, 12 years of which I have spent either in Europe or working directly on European issues. In my current position as Executive Director for European and Eurasian Affairs and International Organizations, I lead a team responsible for the management and support of 79 overseas posts, which translates to a team of over 26,000 people worldwide, through an annual operating budget of $700 million. This team is the operational backbone of our foreign policy in Europe and Eurasia and our representation at the world's key international organizations. Over the years, I have worked to increase efficiency and contain administrative costs overseas, all the while ensuring that our diplomats have all the resources necessary to effectively represent our interests abroad. And serving in positions around the world, from Tokyo to Kiev, I have witnessed first-hand the important role the United States plays in working with countries as they strengthen their security, grow their economies, and fortify their democratic institutions. I believe that my decades of experience will enable me to be an innovative and effective leader of our mission to Montenegro and partner to the Montenegrin Government and its people as they progress on their path toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

If confirmed, my top priority will be ensuring that Montenegro attains full partnership in the Euro-Atlantic community. A democratic and prosperous Montenegro that meets the requirements for NATO and EU membership will be a stronger, more capable partner for the U.S. Montenegro has been steadfast in its commitment to becoming a NATO ally, and has already shown that it is a dedicated security partner by deploying forces in support of NATO, U.N., and EU missions from Africa to Afghanistan. Montenegro is currently providing force protection in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force. And it enjoys an enduring partnership with the Maine National Guard through our State Partnership Program. Importantly, in the wake of the current crisis in Ukraine, Montenegro sent a powerful signal by voting with the United States and the overwhelming majority of the international community on the U.N. resolution condemning Russia's actions in Crimea, and publicly supporting EU sanctions against Russia.

Recognizing this commitment to Euro-Atlantic values, NATO Foreign Ministers agreed this past June to begin an intensified and focused dialogue with Montenegro to assess its readiness for NATO accession, and promised to review Montenegro's progress no later than the end of 2015. This decision is a recognition of the great strides Montenegro has already made and of how close they are to the finish line. If confirmed, I will work closely with Montenegro as it focuses on the areas that are instrumental to eventual NATO membership.

Our shared interests extend beyond security. Montenegro's continued economic growth and prosperity yield direct benefits for U.S. investment, exports, and U.S. jobs. Major U.S. companies are doing business in Montenegro with several important projects involving U.S. companies on the horizon. But there is room for even greater growth. In particular, Montenegro's energy sector presents opportunities for hydroelectric power expansion and off-shore oil and gas exploration. If confirmed, I will work with Montenegro's already active business community, including the American Chamber of Commerce and U.S.-Montenegro Business Council, to strongly advocate for U.S. business in Montenegro. Together I am confident that we can further enhance the economic ties that bind our two nations and help to create new jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

A key element in the U.S.-Montenegrin economic and security relationship is the guarantee of clean, transparent accountable public institutions steeped in the rule of law. The fight against corruption must be at the front lines of this effort. Montenegro has worked to root out corruption. It is forming a fully independent Special Prosecutor's Office to fight organized crime and corruption and has established a new preventive anticorruption agency. But more must be done.

The United States is a partner in these efforts. We are providing law enforcement and prosecutorial training to the Government of Montenegro to help in this critical work. And next week, in fact, Montenegro's top jurist—the President of the Supreme Court of Montenegro—will be here for meetings at the U.S. Supreme Court. If confirmed, I will continue our collaboration aimed at bolstering rule of law and fighting corruption. I will work with my team to advance the goal of a Montenegro that is a democratic source of stability in the Balkans.

Finally, if I am confirmed for this position, I pledge to place the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Montenegro and our mission above all else, and to provide excellent service to all U.S. citizens in Montenegro.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, our relationship with Montenegro is an important one—built on our shared commitment to security, prosperity, and

democracy for all Americans and Montenegrins. If confirmed, I pledge to work with this committee to further advance these values in the service of our common strategic goal: a Europe whole, free, and at peace. Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much.

Where is Ryan? Ryan, we have a great deal of gratitude for all of the children of diplomats. We know the sacrifice that you make. But you are rising above and beyond the call. Thank you very much for your service. Thank you for being here. Thank you for surprising your mom.

Let me start with Mr. Cekuta and Mr. Mills and dig a little bit deeper into the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Russia has, at times, taken steps to destabilize the conflict in large part by providing military support and arms to both sides of it and then has also tried to play a role as a mediator as well. I would love for both of you—I will ask you, Mr. Cekuta, first and then Mr. Mills. What is your understanding of Russia's sincerity about trying to play a role to bring this conflict to an end? What are Russia's interests in this conflict remaining frozen, semifrozen versus their interests in trying to gain some resolution? And is there any prospect, amidst the tensions that exist over Ukraine, for the United States and Russia to work together, to the extent that we do have common interests? So a multipart question.

Mr. CEKUTA. Thank you, Senator. Those are very important points and things which we will need to be considering if we are confirmed in this job.

The United States, along with Russia and France, have been cooperating working together as co-chairs of the Minsk process to find a way forward on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, to find a solution to that issue. Our cochair, Ambassador Warlick, has been working closely with his counterparts in this process. I note that President Putin organized a meeting earlier this past summer in Sochi with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents. But I also would note that the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents met last November under the auspices of the Minsk Group process, met with Secretary Kerry this past September 4th on the margins of the NATO summit.

The Minsk Group process is the one that seems to have the greatest—which enjoys the confidence of all the parties and which seems the best way forward. And I think, Senator, if confirmed, this will be the area where I would see working closely with Ambassador Warlick to move this process ahead and find a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Thank you.

Mr. MILLS. Mr. Chairman, I would just echo what Bob has said. Just I would underscore Ambassador Warlick in all his discussions with me has emphasized that he works well with his Russian cochair and they have been an active participant in the Minsk Group process.

As Bob said, meetings with Presidents can be helpful in moving the negotiations along, but we are being very clear to both sides that the Minsk Group process remains the best process and mechanism for reaching a solution on this issue because it is the process that the two parties have the most confidence in.

I think in terms of arms being provided into the region, we are concerned about arms that come from anywhere that could destabilize the situation. And so we watch that and monitor that very, very carefully.

It will be, obviously, a priority for both Bob and I to remain in contact ourselves, but to work with Ambassador Warlick to move the issue forward.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Baily, you touched on some recent concerns raised about ethnic tensions within Macedonia, and of course, ethnic reconciliation is a key element of the lasting regional peace in the Balkans. And so you have got a Slavic majority and an Albanian minority. You have got reports of rising tensions. You have got, as you mentioned, the Ohrid Agreement.

What is your understanding of where the Ohrid Agreement stands? I know you are not there yet, so you are not deeply enmeshed in this process. But you talked broadly about what our mission can do there to try to get at this maybe increasing problem. Maybe provide us a little bit more specificity as to what the United States can do possibly within the context of that agreement to try to make the situation better, not worse.

Mr. BAILY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a good observation.

The Ohrid Agreement, as you know, ended a civil conflict and sought to bring active participation by the Albanian minority into both the governance of the country as well as its economy and give it a future within Macedonia. In many respects, there has been important progress. As I mentioned, the leading Albanian party is now part of the governing coalition. There is more local governance at a local level so that people have more control over their lives, but there is a lot more to do. As we saw in the demonstrations that occurred this July after a verdict, many Albanians have questions about the fairness of the judiciary. And so that is an area where we are working very actively to increase trust in the judiciary not only for just ethnic Albanians but for Macedonian citizens at large.

We are also working in many areas, public diplomacy through our Peace Corps programs to build a sense of a common future and of tolerance between the ethnic Albanian and Macedonian populations. I would note that, of course, within the fabric of Macedonian society, there are more than Slavs and Albanians. There are Turks. There are Roma and others. So this is a microcosm in many ways of the richness of the Balkans. And to get all those populations to see a common future, I think the United States has an important role given our own history and our own set of values in this.

Senator MURPHY. You mentioned the lack of faith in the judiciary. In 2005 when Macedonia was originally considered for EU candidate status, they were considered a real success story within the western Balkans. And since then, there have been significant reports of backsliding in terms of their commitment to democracy and the integrity of their institutions.

Again, I am asking you a question that you may not have a handle on until you are there, but do we have any sense of what has been the precipitating cause of some of the deterioration of their democratic institutions and judicial institutions?

Mr. BAILY. I think one of the primary causes is a sense of greater politicization of some of these institutions, including the judiciary, including the media. And so the United States does have efforts in our assistance programs, in our public diplomacy programs to address those. We have increased training within the judiciary, introduced things like sentencing guidelines to ensure fairness, auto case management so that you can avoid perhaps politicized case assignment, codes of ethics and so forth. But fundamentally we think that it is important to have a strong and free and impartial media as well to serve as an important check on political power. That is another area where we are working. I look forward to looking into all these things and to find out how we can be more effective.

Senator MURPHY. I will save my questions for Ms. Uyehara for the second round.

Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Certainly as the chairman and I have traveled together in Eastern Europe, a recurring theme always is corruption in government. You see where the Eastern European countries have rooted out the most corruption, are the ones that are more successful, places like Poland.

Ms. Uyehara, you mentioned an anticorruption process in Montenegro. We met an incredibly courageous young woman in Romania, head of their special corruption prosecution group. She was under a death threat. We found it extremely important that the United States support those efforts. Can you speak to that in terms of what your intentions would be within Montenegro to support their anticorruption efforts?

Ms. UYEHARA. Thank you very much, Senator. That is a great question and it is certainly a very, very important issue for us, all of us on this panel, but throughout particularly the area and in Montenegro. Corruption is a horrible thing. To speak very bluntly, it corrodes society. It undermines people's faith and confidence in public institutions, and it prevents the kind of economic growth and development that all of our countries definitely need particularly in this environment.

Montenegro, from my reading and preparing for this hearing, very much recognizes that it needs to do more in this regard. We have a very robust and very targeted rule of law program with two very excellent resident legal advisors in Montenegro and work very closely with all members and levels of the judiciary, the police force, and the prosecutors to try to reform those institutions and to try to make them more accountable and transparent. Certainly if I am confirmed, Senator, I will do everything I can to make sure that we have a very targeted, focused effort that yields the greatest possibility of results, and I will work very closely with all levels of society and nongovernmental institutions, as well as the Montenegrin Government, to make sure that they have a more robust society and respect the rule of law, sir.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. I appreciate that. I think those individuals fighting against corruption in those countries really do value the leadership of America, the support of America. So I would certainly encourage that activity.

Mr. Mills or Mr. Cekuta, either one of you or both of you can answer this question. I would like to be brought up to speed in terms of the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. What issues were at the heart of it? What issues may have been resolved? What issues still remain unresolved in the process? Let me start with you, Mr. Mills.

Mr. MILLS. The conflict is over 20 years old, Senator, as you know. It involves competing claims to the Nagorno-Karabakh territory. Warfare back and forth in the early 1990s resulted in Armenia assuming responsibility for the territory. And its cease-fire was imposed in 1994. There is a line of contact between the two sides. The Minsk Group process was created to resolve the future status of this territory. We have had some breakthroughs in the past, but we have not been able to get the two sides to reach a final solution.

I think there is wide recognition that any settlement will require respect for basic principles contained in international law, the U.N. charter, and the Helsinki Final Act. And three principles will be key to any settlement: nonuse of force, nonthreat of use of force; respect for territorial integrity; and respect for the self-determination of peoples. Any solution requires involvement of all those three principles and it will require agreement from all the parties involved.

I think Ambassador Warlick himself laid out the elements for a solution in his speech he gave at the Carnegie Institute here in Washington in May. So I would refer you to those as very useful. They have gotten a lot of attention in both countries. And the process is moving forward. Ambassador Warlick is actually in Yerevan today building on the meeting that the Secretary had with the two Presidents on September 4. And he himself was quoted in the papers this morning as saying that he believes there is a window of opportunity now for the sides to move forward. Ultimately, though, it will require compromise from both sides and preparing peoples on all sides for compromise based on those principles.

Senator JOHNSON. What I am hearing is none of the issues have been resolved. There has been a framework. There are discussions going on, but the heart of the issues is still there and it is going to require compromise. Nothing has been resolved. Is that basically true, Mr. Cekuta?

Mr. CEKUTA. Thank you, Senator.

I think I agree with what Rick said, and I think the point here is that from talking to Ambassador Warlick and our understanding where he sees the situation right now and what he has put forward in his Carnegie statement back in the spring, the outlines for an agreement seem to be there. And the principles for reaching that agreement are sort of in place. The question now is bringing the two sides together. And this is what can be done from the Minsk Group. This is what the Secretary was trying to do in the meetings in Wales earlier this month and where Jim is working right now to try to bring this together.

One of the things which I think is important to bear in mind is that there is no military solution to this conflict, that it really is something that needs to be worked out and it can be worked out. And so one of the things, I think, for both Rick and for me to be doing will be working with Jim, working with the Minsk Group to

try to help build the framework for an agreement that could bring peace to this part of the world.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you. I am almost out of time. I will just wait for a second round, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Ms. Uyehara, I want to talk to you about Montenegro's potential NATO membership. We talked about this privately. I am a believer that Montenegro is ready and could have been offered a plan for membership in Wales. And my frustration has been that it has not appeared clear to me that Montenegro has been told in explicit enough terms exactly what they need to do from here until now, as you mentioned, 2015 when a decision will be made up or down.

What is your understanding of the communication that has been made to Montenegro as to what they need to do, and what is the role of our Embassy to try to get them from here to there in time for this decision to be made next year?

Ms. UYEHARA. Thank you very, very much, Senator.

As I mentioned in my testimony, certainly assisting Montenegro in its quest for full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community and to fulfill its aspirations to join NATO will be one of my top foreign policy priorities, if I am confirmed as Ambassador. And I agree with you, Senator. We need to do everything we can to help them ensure that they are ready when NATO and the NATO allies decide that they want to offer them a place in that community.

In June, the NATO Foreign Ministers offered to begin an intensified and focused dialogue with Montenegro. That includes a number of visits both to Montenegro and of Montenegrins coming to Brussels to discuss exactly what the criteria are and what they need to do. The NATO Foreign Ministers identified four areas where there needed to be continued progress, and those areas include defense and intelligence sector reforms and bolstering public support for NATO, as well as the rule of law issues that we have talked about previously.

I am personally very excited. This offers a great opportunity for Montenegro to showcase its successes and really to demonstrate its strong and sustained track record of reforms.

If I am confirmed, I will definitely work very closely with the Montenegrin Government and with our allies to ensure that Montenegro knows exactly what it needs to do and is ready to get across the finish line.

Senator MURPHY. You talked about public support. Montenegrins have a very clear memory of the damage done by NATO bombing in the 1990s, but this is clearly a place where our Embassy, where our Ambassador can make a difference in trying to build public support for a new NATO mission. I would assume that that is a place that you can be of help.

Ms. UYEHARA. Thank you, Senator. Absolutely. I very much look forward, if I am confirmed, to getting out and taking every public speaking opportunity and every public diplomacy opportunity there is. I tend to be a bit of an extrovert, and I think this would be a great—both in my role and personally, I look forward to meeting as many people as I can really talking about the benefits of NATO membership, as well as the responsibilities, the very important responsibilities, that go with it.

Senator MURPHY. I will just end not in the form of a question but as my one editorial comment of the hearing, which is that as we seek to craft a unified transatlantic response to Russian aggression, I believe it is critical in order for us to maintain the commitment of open doors that NATO historically has had. If the message is sent forth that the doors are shut and that countries like Montenegro and Georgia that, while they have obstacles, I believe are ready for membership action plans, do not have a pathway into NATO, then it rewards the kind of tactics that Russia is using to try to destabilize countries from inside. This is exactly what Russia wants. Russia wants an EU and a NATO that has no interest in continuing to expand partnerships. And I think that this is important for the future of the bilateral relationship, that we would be strong players in bringing Montenegro across the finish line. But I think that this is a critical component of a larger strategy to answer this new security paradigm inside Europe.

Mr. Cekuta, just one more question for you. I want to draw on your experience in energy security and have you just talk a little bit about the prospects for TAP and its potential ultimately for enlargement—it is only about 2 percent of Europe's energy needs but could be larger—and then the future prospects of a trans-Caspian pipeline that can bring gas through Azerbaijan from Turkmenistan into Europe. What are the prospects for these pipeline projects to make a difference in Europe, and what can we do to help them along?

Mr. CEKUTA. Thank you, Senator. It is also a particularly timely question because this weekend we will see the ceremonial groundbreaking, if you will, for construction of the Southern Corridor of the new pipeline from Azerbaijan across through Turkey to Italy.

In terms of energy diversification, Azerbaijan is—well, it is the country which actually did have the first oil well. It has tremendous energy resources. More work will need to be done to develop them in the area I would see where it would be a great focus for the Embassy both in terms of the broader security picture, as well as an area where we could be working with U.S. companies both in terms of oil companies but also the services companies, the technology companies that can help provide what is needed for a country to develop its energy resources.

The United States has been long engaged with Azerbaijan and with other European countries in terms of diversifying routes and diversifying sources of energy. This is one of the things which has become increasingly important I think particularly in the recent months and an area of great focus for the United States and something where I know in my former work in the Energy Bureau, my boss, Ambassador Pascual, was focused very much on engaging with the European Union, with the countries in the region to find ways forward and an area where I think we will continue to be engaged. Diversification of energy and those resources is going to be important for the well-being and for strengthening the European economy and for the ability of those countries to be able to stand up and conduct the foreign policies they want to do.

Senator MURPHY. Lastly, Mr. Cekuta, I hope that at the top of your list, we will be raising concerns with the Azerbaijan Govern-

ment regarding the number, the increasing number of individuals whose imprisonments have very troubling political overtones. Senator Durbin, Cardin, and I recently sent a letter to President Aliyev expressing concerns. We are particularly concerned with two individuals, Leyla and Arif Yunus, who are leaders of the Democracy Unit but may both be in failing health. I hope that you will raise those specific concerns regarding those prisoners but make the more general issue one of top concern while you are there.

Mr. CEKUTA. Thank you, Senator.

As I noted, there are three pillars we need to be working on in our relationship with Azerbaijan: security, energy, and democracy, rule of law. And you have put your finger on one of the areas that is really important. I very much share your concerns. It will be one of the things which I will look into when I get there. It is an area that we will work on, but I need to get on the ground and understand it a little bit better. But thank you very much, Senator, for making that expression.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Baily, I just had to take advantage of the fact that you have recent experience in Turkey. As we are facing a very real threat from ISIS, both regionally as well as worldwide, including here in America and the West, I am very supportive of President Obama's desire to assemble a coalition of the willing. I think I share the disappointment that Turkey did not step forward and offer a full partnership in allowing us to, for example, use the Incirlik Air Base for potentially launching strikes.

Can you just give us some insight in terms of what Turkey was thinking, why they would be reluctant to do so as a full member of NATO, also being, I would think, threatened and concerned about the growth of ISIS?

Mr. BAILY. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

As you noted, Turkey is a tremendously important partner of the United States in dealing with Syria, in combating terrorism. They have taken in millions of Syrian refugees and displaced persons. They are working to try to secure their border to stop the flow of foreign fighters. They have several of their diplomats who are right now held hostage by ISIL forces in Mosul. And we have had a number of strong partnerships with Turkey in combating these.

Secretary Kerry, as you know, was just out in Ankara last Friday, and I think he will be testifying later today before this committee. I can give you my view. I think he can give you a fresher view from speaking with President Erdogan and Prime Minister Davutoglu and other Turkish leaders. So I will leave it to the Secretary, I think, to give a fuller assessment of where we are today with Turkey.

Senator JOHNSON. I understand that, and I will potentially ask that question of the Secretary. You have been there. And this is just a genuine desire to understand what their thinking is.

Listen, I am pretty sympathetic with the fact that they have 40 diplomats who are being held hostage right now. Is that why they are being restrained here? Quite honestly, that would make some sense. I am just trying to understand.

Mr. BAILY. That is certainly one of the issues, sir, that has them concerned, as it would any government. I think they also probably want to fully understand the long-term strategy going forward not only with regard to ISIL but with regard to the Assad regime. I think that is also a concern. So from my experience in working with Turkey, I think we have a good dialogue, and I think together we have a long history of coming together with common solutions. So I am confident that Turkey has condemned ISIL, has condemned al Nusrah, and will be a partner and is a partner in this effort.

Senator JOHNSON. I certainly have been disappointed over the last few years with the direction that Turkey has moved. Internally in terms of a free, democratic society, moving more toward more autocratic rule, more Islamic. And to me, this is just another symptom or a symbol of that movement away from a strong western democracy toward a different form of government, more autocratic. Am I incorrect in that perception?

Mr. BAILY. Sir, we would share many of the perceptions you have just said particularly in terms of checks and balances within the system, concerns that we have expressed regarding freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. We detail those in reports publicly. We bring those up in conversations privately. I think that Turkey has a strong history of secular democracy, and so I think there are many in Turkey who are also sharing those concerns and it is important to work with them on these issues as well.

Senator JOHNSON. What is the best way to work with them? How can we shape them? How can we pull them back in a better direction? Let us put it that way.

Mr. BAILY. Well, I think you would look to what Turkish leaders have said. They want to have the highest standards of democracy. They are a candidate member of the European Union. They are a member of other European institutions. And so I think one of the ways we can do that is to remind Turkish leaders, to remind the Turkish people of the very values to which they aspire. I think that is an important role. And I think it is one that is shared by many, many Turks. Some of these issues in terms of religious expression and other issues within Turkey have a long history and have a different history than in this Nation. So I think that is an important way to do it. But these are values that Turks share. I have come to know that over 16 years and working there.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

I just want to close out by, again, thanking the nominees here for serving your Nation over a number of years. I think the chairman probably shares my view. I have been involved in the Foreign Relations Committee now for only a little over a year and a half. I have been, as we have traveled around, just incredibly impressed with the quality, the dedication, and the professionalism of the members of our Foreign Service. I think all four of you represent that dedication, that quality of individual, that type of commitment to your profession. So I just want to thank you for your willingness to serve. God bless you and I wish you the best of luck in your posts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. A well-said wrap-up. We are going to potentially give you some homework assignments in that we are going to close the record at 5 o'clock today. So if there are any additional questions for the record from our colleagues, we would appreciate you turning them around very quickly so that if there is a chance to get you on the agenda for tomorrow, we are available to take advantage of it. I cannot promise that that will happen, but we are going to expedite the formal closing of this hearing for 5 o'clock today to at least make that an available opportunity.

Thank you all for being here. Thank you to your families, and this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:02 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ROBERT FRANCIS CEKUTA TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. I was deputy chief of mission in Albania in the late 1990s and worked with the Albanian Government, political figures, civil society, USAID, other donors, and the OSCE to help create or rebuild institutions to put the country back on a track toward rule of law and a market economy following the political, economic, and social disruptions resulting from the collapse of a massive set of pyramid schemes. The focus was on allaying suspicions, reforming and strengthening the laws and institutions for the conduct of elections, reinforcing the idea that allowing different views leads to a healthy, stable country, and strengthening the ability of the post-Communist Albanian media to report developments freely. While the country's progress after the 1997 crisis was not always straight-forward, the changes I and the Embassy helped put in place contributed to Albania being able today to be a member of NATO and pursue EU membership.

Promotion of human rights and democracy has been an important aspect of other subsequent jobs I've held as well. As Economic Minister Counselor in Berlin, I was the point person working with Germany to boost the country's efforts to combat trafficking in persons. As Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department's Energy Resources Bureau, a key focus was working with other countries to strengthen rule of law and fight corruption and the so-called "resource curse" that has meant that the benefits of developing oil, gas, or other extractive industries in resource-rich countries have flowed to only a few individuals rather than helping grow the overall economy and yield benefits to the broader population. In this connection, I sat on the Board of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative for more than 2 years, and worked to develop and implement the EITI's new global standard, and to support the fight against corruption in a number of countries around the world.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Azerbaijan? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Azerbaijan? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge the Azerbaijani authorities, consistent with Azerbaijan's constitutional and international commitments, to ensure freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, to foster an environment conducive to a vibrant and peaceful civil society, respect pluralism, and to strengthen judicial independence and due process. I look forward to working closely with all partners to ensure that civil society can conduct its work as effectively as possible.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Azerbaijan in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. It is a cause for concern that the authorities have erected challenges and obstacles for U.S.-funded and other organizations. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Azerbaijan to create an environment in which civil society can operate

freely, and I will work closely with all partners to ensure that they can conduct their work as effectively as possible. Rule of law is critical to democratic and economic development as well as to human and national security. The Department has raised our concerns about respect for human rights and the rule of law in Azerbaijan with the government and has spoken out publicly about these concerns.

For example, during this year, we have raised our concerns bilaterally and at the OSCE Permanent Council about the arrests and sentencing of civil society activists and journalists as well as the adoption of recent legislative amendments that have restricted the activities of nongovernmental organizations in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's progress in this area would help to deepen our bilateral relationship.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Azerbaijan?

Answer. Yes, and, if confirmed, it will be among my first priorities upon arriving in Azerbaijan. I will continue the Embassy's current commitment to have Embassy officers, at all levels, meet with those outside of the government, such as civil society representatives, and independent journalists, to demonstrate our support for universal values of pluralism and fundamental freedoms.

Question. Secretary Kerry met with the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Sargsian and Aliyev, respectively, at the Wales NATO summit on September 4, 2014, regarding renewed fighting in July along the Nagorno-Karabakh line of contact. Given the importance of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and ensuring it does not turn into an all-out conflict, what is the administration currently doing to support the OSCE Minsk Group Talks? Has there been progress in the Minsk Group talks toward reaching a political settlement? What are the chances an all-out conflict will resume?

Answer. The OSCE Minsk Group has continued to engage with the sides at the highest levels and to promote dialogue to help them reach a peaceful settlement. In November 2013, Presidents Aliyev and Sargsian met for the first time in almost 2 years in Vienna, under the auspices of the Minsk Group cochairs. The administration is also committed to a peaceful settlement through the Minsk Group process. Secretary Kerry delivered this message when he met with the Presidents at the NATO summit in Wales on September 4 to discuss a way forward in peace negotiations. We encourage the Presidents to continue to work with the cochairs and discuss elements of a settlement.

Question. Clashes this year along Nagorno-Karabakh's Line of Conflict have been the worst since the cease-fire was signed in 1994, claiming 15 lives this summer. If confirmed, how will you respond to these new instances of aggression and provocation? What will you do to support the successive appeals by the Minsk Group and the United Nations Secretary General for Azerbaijan to withdraw its snipers from the line of contact, which Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh have agreed to do?

Answer. The United States strongly condemns violations of the cease-fire and deeply regrets the loss of life that resulted from these incidents along the Line of Contact. We have frequently, publicly, and privately, called upon both sides to take all measures to respect the cease-fire. If confirmed as Ambassador, I, too, will strongly advocate for de-escalating tensions and preparing the public for a peace the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan deserve. I will also support the U.S. cochair of the OSCE Minsk Group, Ambassador James Warlick, in his efforts to help achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to meeting with the Armenia-American diaspora in the U.S. before you take up your post, and regularly meet and communicate with the diaspora thereafter, on progress toward lifting the Azeri blockade of Armenia and other Azeri policies that run counter to U.S. policies intended to encourage regional cooperation and economic integration?

Answer. Yes, and, if confirmed, meeting with Armenian and Azerbaijani-American diaspora groups will be among my first priorities. Long-term stability and economic prosperity in the Caucasus is dependent on the full normalization of relations among all the states in the region. The United States has long believed that opening the border between Turkey and Armenia would contribute to regional stability and economic development. If confirmed, I will strongly support the administration's efforts to pursue regional peace and reconciliation. I would make a strong case that Azerbaijan—along with Armenia and Turkey—stands to gain from a Caucasus region that is stable, secure, and at peace.

Question. By any measure, the human rights situation in Azerbaijan has deteriorated over the last year. Freedom House, in its annual Freedom in the World report,

determined that freedom declined in 2013, and has stated that the country is in the midst of what some would call the most brutal crackdown on civil society in recent history, citing arrests and attacks against the media, activists, and government critics, as well as travel bans, the freezing of bank accounts, and public smears to silence dissent. According to international NGOs, the Azerbaijani Government currently has over 100 political prisoners.

♦ If confirmed, what will you do to secure the release of these political prisoners and advocate against these myriad and worsening human rights abuses?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge the Azerbaijani authorities, consistent with Azerbaijan's constitutional and international commitments, to ensure freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, to foster an environment conducive to a vibrant and peaceful civil society, respect pluralism, and to strengthen judicial independence and due process. I will follow up on the U.S. Statement at the August 14 OSCE Permanent Council, which urged "the Government of Azerbaijan to halt the continuing arrests of peaceful activists, to stop freezing organizations' and individuals' bank accounts, and to release those who have been incarcerated in connection with the exercise of their fundamental freedoms." I look forward to working closely with all partners—domestic and international—to ensure that civil society can conduct its work as effectively as possible.

Question. The Djulfa Armenian cemetery, an over 1,300-year-old Armenian cemetery that used to have thousands of intricately carved tombstones, has been desecrated but has not been included in the State Department's International Religious Freedom Report or its Human Rights Report? Why has the Djulfa Armenian cemetery been excluded from these reports? If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to restore, preserve, or protect the Djulfa Armenian cemetery as a holy site?

Answer. I do not know why the Djulfa Armenian cemetery was not mentioned in the State Department's reports at the time of its desecration, but I can assure that—if confirmed—I will direct my staff to include recent developments related to this cemetery in Department reports such as the annual International Religious Freedom Report on Azerbaijan. The United States condemned the desecration of the Djulfa Cemetery and urged the Azerbaijanis to investigate the incident. Despite our repeated requests to visit the Djulfa Cemetery, local authorities have so far refused permission to do so. If I am confirmed, I will amplify our concerns to the Government of Azerbaijan. If confirmed, I also will urge the government to protect the rights and holy sites of all groups.

Question. The European Court of Human Rights recently requested that Azerbaijan explain the circumstances surrounding its refusal to repatriate to Armenia the remains of Karen Petrosyan, an Armenian and political prisoner who was taken into captivity on August 7, 2014, and died shortly thereafter while in captivity. If confirmed, will you commit to actively support the efforts of the United States, France, Russia, and the International Committee of the Red Cross to ensure the remains of Mr. Petrosyan are returned to his family?

Answer. We lament the death of detainees in custody and call on the sides to investigate when such incidents occur. We will continue to encourage all sides to continue to work with international humanitarian organizations to repatriate remains of the deceased and call on the sides to fulfill their humanitarian obligations. The tragic loss of life in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia reminds us that there cannot be a military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Only a lasting and peaceful settlement can bring stability, prosperity, and reconciliation to the region. As a cochair of the Minsk Group, the United States remains firmly committed to working with the sides to achieve peace.

RESPONSES OF RICHARD M. MILLS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. The United States believes that ensuring respect for human rights, rule of law, and democratic processes is fundamentally important to Armenia's political and economic development as well as its internal stability and security. If confirmed, I will bring hands-on experience in these areas gained from many of my previous tours, but especially from my work in post-Soviet St. Petersburg in 1993–95 and in Baghdad from 2009–10.

In St. Petersburg, I identified nascent civil society groups, focused on good governance and human rights, whose work could benefit from U.S. Government support, worked to obtain appropriate program funding and training for them, and provided these new organizations with guidance on identifying other possible sources of support in the United States. I built partnerships among these groups to increase their leverage and influence, using the consulate's convening power to chair regular meetings in which they came together to pursue strategies to move forward legislation or to create public campaigns to reach a broader public in northwest Russia. As the Democracy Advisor at Embassy Baghdad I managed approximately $100 million in State Department-funded programs designed to build grassroots, democratic infrastructure and support Iraqis working to protect human rights. A particular focus of my work was to promote an Iraqi parliamentary election process in 2010 that was free, fair, and carried out in accordance with international standards. I targeted our programs to train Iraqi media on the principles of balanced election reporting, ensure local community and constituent issues were part of the political debate, and provide Iraqi civil society and political parties with poll watching capability, using new social media techniques. In addition to meeting with activists across Iraq, I worked with colleagues at the Embassy, USAID and other U.S. Government agencies to bring concerns about the election process to the attention of Iraqi officials and media for resolution. The international monitors that traveled to Iraq to monitor the 2010 election process and voting praised them for meeting international standards, transparency, and media coverage. This experience will inform my efforts to work closely with Armenian political parties and Government to help foster the same kind of positive process in advance of parliamentary elections in 2017.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Armenia? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Armenia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. If confirmed, strengthening democracy and human rights in Armenia will be a high priority. Despite some positive steps in areas such as freedom of association and the press over the past 5 years, much remains to be done in Armenia. I will continue to regularly highlight in my discussions with Armenian officials the importance of democratic reform, including strengthening the rule of law bolstered by an independent judiciary, combating corruption, and conducting democratic electoral processes.

In addition, I will continue to emphasize Embassy engagement and public solidarity with those outside of the government, such as opposition party leaders, civil society representatives, and independent journalists, to demonstrate our support for the universal values of pluralism and fundamental freedoms. I will actively seek partnerships with like-minded organizations and individuals to advance our democracy and human rights goals, and, if confirmed, want to explore with the Armenian-American community ways it can enhance its ongoing contributions to strengthening judicial independence, ensuring freedom of assembly and expression, and supporting an open, vibrant, and prosperous society.

Among the goals of all these efforts will be to work with Armenian political parties and the government to help foster Armenian parliamentary elections in 2017 that meet international standards and reflect fundamental freedoms. As a first step, I will encourage the government to work closely with the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to implement the electoral reforms ODIHR proposed following Armenia's last parliamentary elections in 2012 and Presidential election in 2013.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Armenia in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. Despite some positive steps in areas such as freedom of association and of the press over the past 5 years, much remains to be done in Armenia.

Systemic corruption is Armenia's primary obstacle to its democratic development. Corruption is too common in Armenia and hinders economic growth, undermines public confidence in government and the rule of law, and fosters cynicism about the efficacy of democratic change. It is positive, however, that President Sargsian and newly appointed Prime Minister Abrahamyan have spoken publicly about the need to combat corruption in order to stimulate the economy and enhance Armenia's growth as a society. If confirmed, I intend to follow up on their pledges to address the issue.

The Armenian Government has taken some steps to address corruption and is working on a new anticorruption strategy. These steps have produced some mean-

ingful progress, as evidenced by Armenia's improved score on the Millennium Challenge Corporation's corruption index in FY14 over the previous year. In addition, USAID, through technical assistance and local government support, is implementing programs to increase the level of transparency and accountability in government by supporting procurement reform initiatives and efforts to improve public access to government-held information.

If confirmed, I am committed to working with the government and civil society to help them each move forward, and cooperate where necessary, to address corruption and promote democratic governance.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Armenia?

Answer. Yes, and, if confirmed, it will be among my first priorities upon arriving in Armenia. I will continue the Embassy's current commitment to have Embassy officers, at all levels, meet with those outside of the government, such as opposition party leaders, civil society representatives, and independent journalists, to demonstrate our support for universal values of pluralism and fundamental freedoms.

Question. Secretary Kerry met with the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Sargsian and Aliyev, respectively, at the Wales NATO summit on September 4, 2014, regarding renewed fighting in July along the Nagorno-Karabakh Line of Contact. Given the importance of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and ensuring it does not turn into an all-out conflict, what is the administration currently doing to support the OSCE Minsk Group Talks? Has there been progress in the Minsk Group talks toward reaching a political settlement? What are the chances an all-out conflict will resume?

Answer. The OSCE Minsk Group has continued to engage with the sides at the highest levels and to promote dialogue to help them reach a peaceful settlement. In November 2013, Presidents Aliyev and Sargsian met for the first time in almost 2 years in Vienna, under the auspices of the Minsk Group cochairs. The administration is also committed to a peaceful settlement through the Minsk Group process. Secretary Kerry delivered this message when he met with the Presidents at the NATO summit in Wales on September 4 to discuss a way forward in peace negotiations. We encourage the Presidents to continue to work with the cochairs and discuss elements of a settlement.

Question. It is estimated that Russia supplies Armenia with nearly 80 percent of its energy needs. What assistance is the U.S. providing to Armenia to help it diversify its energy portfolio and decrease its dependence on Russia? Russia, under the Presidency of Vladimir Putin, has placed a high priority on exercising its military and economic influence in Armenia. If confirmed, how will you counter Russia's growing influence in the country?

Answer. The U.S. has provided approximately $82 million since 1993 through the Department of Energy and Nuclear Regulatory Commission to upgrade the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant (ANPP) and to ensure the safest possible operation until its closure. For example, the U.S. began providing training to the Armenian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (ANRA) on internationally recognized approaches to performing nuclear power plant safety analyses and funded equipment upgrades at ANPP. USAID has also provided approximately $85 million in assistance since 1992 on energy efficiency and energy regulation. Currently, USAID is funding a $5.6 million program on clean energy and water to promote alternate energy sources, as well as supporting Armenia's energy security and regional integration.

The best way to counter Russia's influence in Armenia is to maintain our effort to decrease Armenia's regional isolation and bolster its economic and security independence. We will make clear to the Armenian people, business community, and officials that the door to strengthened economic collaboration with the United States and Europe remains open. We will continue to work with our Armenian partners to continue its democratic and economic reforms and preserve the progress made in the Eastern Partnership over the past 3½ years, in addition to the reforms made through the U.S.-Armenia relationship, spanning over 20 years.

Question. If confirmed, you will be Ambassador to Armenia during the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. On this 100th anniversary, as a representative of the government and people of the United States, a nation that is home to well over a million Americans whose families were decimated by the Genocide, how will you demonstrate America's uncompromising commitment to forcefully condemn and properly commemorate all instance of genocide, regardless of foreign pressures or political considerations?

- Will you commit to participating in events to recognize the Armenian Genocide's 100th anniversary?

In your written testimony, you state that 2015 will "mark the centenary of one of the 20th century's worst atrocities, when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire," and that "it is important that Turkey engage with Armenia to achieve a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts so that both nations can begin to forge a relationship that is peaceful, productive, and prosperous."

- What do you characterize as a "full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts?" If confirmed, what will you do to encourage Turkey to fully recognize the Armenian Genocide?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the tradition of officially participating in the memorial event in Yerevan every April. The event will have special resonance in 2015, as Armenia and the world will mark the centenary of one of the 20th century's worst atrocities, when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. I will work to identify ways that the Embassy can amplify our message to the Armenian people that the United States stands in solidarity with Armenia at this time of remembrance and acknowledgement of the facts of that terrible time.

To achieve full reconciliation, Turkey must come to terms with its past. Delays in fully addressing this history only add to the pain experienced by many Armenians and Armenian-Americans. Enhancing contacts could begin to build trust, which is the necessary first step to reconciliation. If confirmed, I will work to continue to promote not only government-to-government discussions, but also people-to-people contacts, cultural and economic partnerships, and other cross-border and regional initiatives.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to meeting with the Armenia-American diaspora in the U.S. before you take up your post in Yerevan, and regularly meet and communicate with the diaspora thereafter?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I intend to meet with representatives of the Armenian-American diaspora community as part of my preparations before departing for Yerevan. I will continue the practice of my predecessors by communicating regularly, including meetings whenever possible, with members of the diaspora during my tenure as Ambassador to Armenia.

Question. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations by Armenia and Turkey. As you reference in your written testimony, the process outlined in the Protocols has stalled. If confirmed, what will you do to put pressure on Turkey to normalize relations with, and end its blockade of, landlocked Armenia, which destabilizes the region and prevents Armenia's further development?

Answer. We support the work done by both Armenia and Turkey to normalize relations. In particular, we strongly support efforts by the Turkish and Armenian people to work through this painful history in a way that is honest, open, and constructive. We continue to emphasize the importance of proceeding with final approval of these Protocols, without preconditions or linkage to other issues, and have been clear that responsibility for moving forward lies with the Turkish Government. And we continue to encourage both Turkey and Armenia to pursue direct talks that would facilitate normalization. Armenia has reached out recently by sending Foreign Minister Nalbandyan to President Erdogan's inauguration. Facilitating Armenia's regional integration by opening its border with Turkey is a priority for the United States. If confirmed, this would be one of my key priorities as Ambassador—not only by supporting government-to-government discussions—but by promoting people-to-people contacts and partnerships, and other cross-border and regional initiatives. Contact begins to build trust, and trust is the necessary first step to reconciliation and conflict resolution. Clearly, the status quo is not helpful to anyone.

RESPONSES OF JESS LIPPINCOTT BAILY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy has been a central part of my career, not only in the public diplomacy positions I have held, but also when I worked on policy issues before the U.N. Security Council and when I held leadership positions in Turkey and Iraq. My most important actions include promoting independent media in Senegal, where state press organizations dominated; providing grants to emerging civil society organizations in Turkey in the 1990s when government restrictions hindered their growth; and helping the Kurdistan Regional Government improve the rule of law and its judicial system, assisting a variety of organizations to highlight concerns about freedom of expression and media in Turkey.

In addition to specific programs and activities, as an American official, I have also engaged activists, government critics, and ethnic and religious minorities as important voices in their societies. Our actions as U.S. Government officials convey respect and often provide hope to people working against difficult odds. I know this from conversations with the individuals whom I have helped, from a struggling opposition editor in Senegal in 1988 to an academic imprisoned in Turkey in 2013. Finally, I am particularly gratified to have led Mission Turkey's efforts to establish a U.S. Government structure to coordinate assistance to Syrian civilians in Turkey and in Syria. This team delivered humanitarian aid to millions of displaced and injured Syrians and strengthened the ability of civil society and local government councils to deliver much-needed services.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Macedonia? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Macedonia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The Government of Macedonia generally respects the human rights of its citizens, but as the State Department Human Rights Report has documented, we have identified concerns, including the rule of law, interethnic relations and minority rights, and media freedom.

Politicization of the judicial system undermines courts' independence, transparency, and respect for human rights, including the appearance of selective prosecution of the government leaders' political enemies. Tensions between ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian populations and their respective political parties continue to complicate individuals' opportunities for education, employment, and political participation. Interethnic tensions have exacerbated, and been exacerbated by, several recent high-profile court cases.

Promoting media freedom has been a key U.S. priority in Macedonia, and is of particular interest to me as a public diplomacy officer who has worked on media issues throughout my career. Most media outlets are owned by or have strong ties to political parties. Government spending on media advertising can exert heavy influence over media content.

If confirmed, I will continue to place a premium on the Embassy's human rights and democracy promotion. I will also work closely with the OSCE and EU missions in Macedonia, which have programs in these areas that complement U.S. efforts. As a signatory to the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the United States coordinates closely with the EU, OSCE, NATO, and others to encourage continued reforms in Macedonia, and should I be confirmed, I would continue our work through these invaluable partnerships. U.S. assistance is now primarily geared toward rule of law, democracy and good governance (including support for independent media), economic growth, education, border security, and military reform. I would lead Embassy Skopje in urging the Government of Macedonia to address rule of law issues, especially official interference in the judiciary, while maintaining an overall cooperative relationship.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Montenegro in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. The potential obstacles to addressing the human rights issues will be their long-standing and pervasive natures. It will require sustained effort by the Macedonians themselves, and continued strong advocacy from the United States and other leading international community partners, to address these concerns. Macedonia's multiethnic coalition government has made some reform progress, but the pace has slowed. Despite regular pro-reform rhetoric, coalition partners VMRO–DPMNE and DUI have enacted few meaningful reforms in recent years. Macedonia is proceeding with the legislative and practical implementation of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement, including working toward equitable representation of minorities in state structures and decentralization of authority to the municipal level; however, accusations are common from minority ethnic groups, particularly ethnic Albanians,

that the government is not doing enough to implement the agreement. Of particular concern are the areas of rule of law and media freedom, but I would continue to encourage increased judicial independence, which would boost the currently low level of public trust in the judiciary. Additionally, Macedonia has passed many laws that should improve the investment climate and interethnic relations, and accomplish other necessary reforms, and the Embassy continues to encourage their full implementation. Still, reliable implementation of existing laws is needed.

Notably, Macedonia has sustained its Tier 1 in the State Department's annual TIP reports since 2011. Aside from Slovenia, Macedonia is the only country in the Balkans to hold a Tier 1 status. The Government of Macedonia fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. We consider this a success story in our bilateral relationship, as last year the Government of Macedonia identified more victims of trafficking and adopted a budget for the implementation of the national action plan for 2013. However, the government decreased law enforcement efforts by investigating and convicting fewer offenders. We have recommended additional law enforcement efforts to combat TIP, and improved victim identification and protection, and have encouraged the government to work closer with nongovernment organizations to achieve this goal.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Macedonia?

Answer. As I have throughout my Foreign Service career, I would welcome and seek out opportunities to engage with human rights and other NGOs both in the U.S. and Macedonia. Should I be confirmed, I would continue the excellent ongoing collaboration between our Embassy in Skopje and NGOs in Macedonia, from the grants our Public Affairs Section gave to the Holocaust Fund of the Jews from Macedonia this past year, to the planned support of youth LGBT through the BeLonG project as a way to prevent bullying, with the long-term goal of fostering inclusiveness and tolerance in schools. Our Embassy also already partners with some excellent NGOs that focus on human rights issues, whose work I hope to further build upon, including Open Gate La Strada on antitrafficking, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, and HERA, which works toward advancing sexual and reproductive rights.

Question. Macedonia has asserted its right to use and be recognized by it constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia, since its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Greece, whose largest province is also called Macedonia and whose heritage provides legitimate claims to use of the name, has requested that Macedonia include a geographic qualifier, such as Northern Macedonia, to distinguish itself.

- How would you characterize Greece's claims to the name Macedonia? If confirmed, will you support efforts to resolve the name dispute during your tenure as Ambassador to Macedonia?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the ongoing U.N. mediation effort, led by Matthew Nimetz, to settle the issue in the near term. We also continue to support active engagement between Athens and Skopje. We encourage both governments to be flexible and cooperative in this process. We will embrace any mutually acceptable solution that emerges from the negotiations.

Regional stability in Southeast Europe is a U.S. priority. Greece and Macedonia are both important partners in that regard. The status quo prevents the full integration of Macedonia into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

We look to political leaders of both countries to exercise leadership. This dispute is more than 20 years old. It is in both parties' interest to finally bring this issue to a close. If I am confirmed, I will continue to emphasize in my dealings with Macedonian authorities that flexibility and compromise are absolutely necessary.

RESPONSES OF MARGARET ANN UYEHARA TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have worked diligently to ensure that our efforts to promote human rights and democracy have had the resources necessary to be efficient and effective. As Executive Director for European and Eurasian Affairs and International Organizations (EUR–IO/EX), I have been a staunch supporter of U.S. Government policies for the OSCE, particularly the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and its efforts to promote democracy and

the rule of law throughout the OSCE region and beyond. Specifically, my office provided funding for our contributions to ODIHR, including our support for Election Observation Missions (EOMs) throughout Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia.

In the past year, EUR–IO/EX established six new Foreign Service positions in Kiev and sent over 100 people on temporary duty deployments to ensure that Embassy Kiev had adequate staff—including a senior Assistance Coordinator—to support the critical activities to support Ukraine's democracy including its crucial May 25. Separately, we also obtained the additional resources to add another full-time human rights officer within the Europe and Eurasia Bureau in Washington, to create a three-member team. This allowed us to be more responsive to the human rights challenges in the European region, including an expanded focus on anti-Semitism, Roma issues, LGBT rights, civil society, and religious freedom.

In addition, I have directed the provision of additional financial and human resources to U.S. Embassy Kosovo, which has strongly supported the development of effective democratic, political, and rule of law institutions in the aftermath of that country's independence struggle. My team ensured that Embassy Tbilisi was able to sustain its operations, another locale where U.S. support has played a leading role in advancing democracy. My office was also instrumental in helping ensure that the United States was appropriately represented in the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva. Since we joined the HRC in 2010, my office has provided creative and cost-effective staffing to ensure the advancement of U.S. policy goals in that international body.

Earlier in my career, as the Management Counselor at Embassy Kiev from 2005–08 in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution, I successfully obtained the necessary resources for the Embassy to support democratic development in Ukraine. As Chief of the American Citizens Services Unit at Embassy Tokyo from 1995 to 1998, I recognized the conditions for U.S. citizen and all prisoners were of grave concern. Prisons were not heated, often leading to frostbite in the winter, and meals provided often did not give sufficient calories to U.S. citizen prisoners. I engaged vigorously with the Government of Japan to improve prison conditions and worked closely with the Embassy's political section to more appropriately detail these problems in the State Department's annual Human Rights Report. Thanks to my team's efforts, we garnered improved medical care, warmer winter clothing, and better reading materials for prisoners. One U.S. citizen, who was in solitary confinement, was not permitted even a radio in his cell. His only contact was my quarterly visits. With vigorous advocacy, he was given access to both print material and a radio.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Montenegro? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Montenegro? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. As the State Department has documented in the annual Human Rights Report, pervasive corruption—marked by nepotism, political favoritism, and weak controls over conflicts of interest in all branches of the government—represent the country's most serious human rights problem. A second major problem has been societal discrimination and violence against minorities, including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, and the Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian ethnic minorities. A third major problem is the chilling effect on freedom of expression created by the continuing harassment of journalists and the failure to resolve several past cases of violence and threats against journalists and government critics.

To address these problems, I would, if confirmed, support efforts to make Montenegro's law enforcement institutions more professional, competent, and able to effectively fight corruption and bring to justice those who commit violent acts against minorities or harass journalists. I would likewise support the work of the independent human rights Ombudsman in Montenegro, and continue to support and strengthen civil society, which serves as an important watchdog over the police and justice system. In that regard, I would support the Civil Society component of our Resident Legal Advisor program, which provides grants to NGOs involved in raising public participation in, and awareness of, ongoing rule of law reform efforts. I would also ensure that the Embassy continues advocacy on this issue in public and in private, which has proved effective in drawing attention to deficiencies and encouraging better compliance with international norms.

Progress in all of these areas will require sustained efforts over time. I firmly believe that Montenegro can—with continued U.S. and EU assistance—achieve real progress in all of these areas and thus further the protection of human rights in Montenegro. My hope, if confirmed as Ambassador, is to see steady progress in mak-

ing the police and judiciary more professional and accountable, closer to Western standards, and to see stronger protection of the media.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Montenegro in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. The potential obstacles to addressing the human rights issues are tied up in the issues themselves: corruption, discrimination, and limits on freedom of expression are pervasive and long-standing societal ills that will take time to eradicate completely. Their entrenched nature will be our principal challenge, as will obtaining adequate funding to continue our sponsored programming. Fortunately, for fiscal year 2014, the United States is providing $4.5 million in foreign assistance to Montenegro; assistance which will help to strengthen judicial institutions; combat trafficking in persons, organized crime, and corruption; and support exchange programs to bolster civic participation and civil society. Our targeted assistance programs showed impressive results in the past year. For example, with the help of the Embassy's Resident Legal Advisor and Senior Police Advisor, Montenegro agreed this year to establish a new fully independent Special State Prosecutor's Office, a new elite police team to support the Special Prosecutor, and a new preventive Anti-Corruption Agency. The challenge will be in helping Montenegro ensure that its reform efforts take root and strengthen.

Additionally, while the Government of Montenegro has made significant efforts to combat trafficking in persons, it does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking as established by Congress, and is thus ranked Tier 2 in the Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report. Some positive efforts highlighted in the 2014 report include the government's increase of the anti-trafficking budget; elevation of the National Coordinator position from under the Ministry of Interior to an independent agency; and the conviction of more trafficking defendants than in previous years. However, challenges remain, including limited law enforcement efforts resulting in few prosecutions and inadequate victim identification efforts.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Montenegro?

Answer. I am fully committed to meeting with human rights and other NGOs both in the U.S. and Montenegro. I am a strong believer in the value of civil society, NGOs, and public advocacy groups as drivers of human rights protection and continuing democratic progress in many countries. Should I be confirmed, I would continue the excellent work already in progress by our Embassy in Montenegro to support the rights of the country's vulnerable populations, including women, at-risk youth, ethnic minorities, and the LGBT community. The Embassy's notable support to the LGBT community through participation in Podgorica's first Pride March and its widely covered statements of public support, as well as its work with the Red Cross to organize a youth camp for children from economically and socially vulnerable households are strong examples of the foundation on which I hope to build, if confirmed, once I am on the ground in Montenegro.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT FRANCIS CEKUTA TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. According to U.S. and Azerbaijani NGOs, there are approximately 100 political prisoners in Azerbaijan. What will you do to support democracy and human rights activists at a time when the government is intensifying its crackdown on civil society? Will you maintain regular contacts with these activists and speak out publicly in their defense?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge the Azerbaijani authorities, consistent with Azerbaijan's constitutional and international commitments, to ensure freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, to foster an environment conducive to a vibrant and peaceful civil society, respect pluralism, and to strengthen judicial independence and due process. I look forward to working closely with all partners to ensure that civil society can conduct its work as effectively as possible.

Question. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) was forced to close its office in Azerbaijan earlier this year and IREX—a USAID contractor—is under criminal investigation. Moreover, subrecipients of IREX, the National Endowment for Democracy, and other U.S.-funded organizations have been denied access to their bank accounts and their leadership has been jailed in some cases.

- Is the current crackdown anti-American? What impact has the crackdown had on the U.S.-Azerbaijani relationship?

Answer. It is unfortunate that the authorities have erected challenges and obstacles for U.S.-funded and other organizations. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Azerbaijan to create an environment in which civil society can operate freely, and I will work closely with all partners to ensure that they can conduct their work as effectively as possible. Rule of law is critical to democratic and economic development as well as to human and national security. The Department has raised our concerns about respect for human rights and the rule of law in Azerbaijan with the government and has spoken out publicly about these concerns.

For example, during this year, we have raised our concerns bilaterally and at the OSCE Permanent Council about the arrests and sentencing of civil society activists and journalists as well as the adoption of recent legislative amendments that have restricted the activities of nongovernmental organizations in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's progress in this area would help to deepen our bilateral relationship.

Question. The State Department has been working for some time to secure a new Embassy compound (NEC) in Baku, in order to replace the current and arguably obsolete Embassy facility. Federal efforts to obtain a NEC, however, have proven difficult in the face of host government resistance, and have usually faced the most resistance when U.S. officials, including former Ambassador Richard Morningstar, have voiced their concerns about human rights and civil society abuses in Azerbaijan.

- What specific steps would you pursue as Ambassador to accelerate the acquisition of property for use for the NEC?
- Please provide details about how you would engage with the State Department's Office of Foreign Missions, which can theoretically leverage domestic property and other interests of the Azerbaijani Government in order to leverage acquisition of the NEC.
- What additional points of leverage, political or otherwise, would you pursue in order to accelerate the Azerbaijani Government's movement toward the provision of the NEC?

Answer. Protecting American citizens—both our Embassy staff and Americans working and traveling abroad—is one of the State Department's highest priorities. The State Department has been working to secure a site on which to construct a New Embassy Compound, fully compliant with current security standards, in Azerbaijan for several years now including visits by senior Department officials. This process requires cooperation by the Government of Azerbaijan. We have identified several prospective sites for this new compound. If confirmed, I will ensure that the acquisition of property and the construction of the needed New Embassy Compound remain a priority. Simultaneously, Azerbaijan is seeking a new Embassy building in Washington, DC, and discussions on reciprocal property issues between our two governments are ongoing.

Question. Russian aggression in Ukraine has demonstrated the pitfalls associated with an overreliance on Russia to fulfill the energy demands of American allies and partners in Europe. Despite Russian pressure, Azerbaijan is currently constructing the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), which will reduce Europe's dependence on Russian natural gas and increase the continent's diversity of supply.

- What else can the U.S. do to expand Azerbaijan's role in meeting Europe's energy requirements?

Answer. We will continue to work closely with Azerbaijan and other countries in the region to ensure that TANAP and the other parts of the Southern Gas Corridor are completed as quickly as possible. Further, we will encourage Azerbaijan to move swiftly to develop new fields in the Caspian. These gas fields have the potential to add significant volumes of gas to the Southern corridor beyond the gas from the Shah Deniz project, which will supply the initial gas to the Southern corridor. At the same time, we will work with both Azerbaijan and Turkey to identify other sources of gas that can be transmitted through TANAP and the Southern corridor, possibly including gas from Turkmenistan, Iraq, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Question. Azerbaijan has provided troops to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and facilitated the transport of supplies and personnel through the Northern Distribution Network (NDN). How important is Azerbaijan's troop contribution and role in NDN to coalition efforts on the ground in Afghanistan? Will the U.S. be able to rely on Azerbaijan's cooperation moving forward? What effect would Azerbaijan's withdrawal from this form of cooperation have on U.S. national interests?

Answer. Azerbaijan has been a strong supporter of coalition operations in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan has 94 troops deployed in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Azerbaijan provides valuable overflight, refueling, and landing rights for U.S. and coalition aircraft bound for Afghanistan. As such, Azerbaijan is a key node on the Northern Distribution Network allowing nonlethal goods to transit its territory to resupply our forces in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan has also contributed to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund, including a 1 million euro donation announced in January 2014.

If the Government of Azerbaijan scaled back its cooperation with the United States, it could harm our shared interests in building regional security, diversifying energy supplies, pursuing democratic and economic reforms, combating terrorism, and stemming the flow of illegal narcotics and weapons of mass destruction.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT FRANCIS CEKUTA TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. Earlier this summer, more than 20 Armenian and Azeri soldiers were killed during fighting along the Line of Contact—the deadliest cease-fire violation since 1994. This recent violence—which reportedly began after Azeri forces attempted to penetrate Armenian lines—is deeply concerning.

- ♦ If confirmed how will you respond, both publicly and privately, to new instances of Azerbaijan's acts of aggression and provocation, which continue to increase and claim more lives?
- ♦ How will you specifically work to ensure that the Azerbaijani Government respects the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group negotiated cease-fire?

Answer. The United States strongly condemns violations of the cease-fire and deeply regrets the loss of life that resulted from these incidents along the Line of Contact. We have frequently, publicly and privately, called upon both sides to take all measures to respect the cease-fire. If confirmed as Ambassador, I, too, will strongly advocate for de-escalating tensions and preparing the public for a peace the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan deserve. I will also support the U.S. cochair of the OSCE Minsk Group, Ambassador James Warlick, in his efforts to help achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Question. The previous two U.S. Ambassadors to Azerbaijan attempted to visit the Armenian cemetery of Djulfa to investigate the 2005 destruction of Armenian Khachkars, or burial monuments. The Azerbaijani Government officially denied both of their requests to visit the site.

- ♦ If confirmed, will you commit to attempt to travel to Djulfa to investigate the destruction of the cemetery? What steps will you take to ensure that other Armenian religious sites and monuments in Azerbaijan are protected?

Answer. The United States condemned the desecration of the Djulfa Cemetery and urged the Azerbaijanis to investigate the incident. Despite our repeated requests to visit the Djulfa Cemetery, local authorities have so far refused permission to do so. If I am confirmed, I will amplify our concerns to the Government of Azerbaijan. If confirmed, I also will urge the government to protect the rights and holy sites of all groups.

Question. Last month on Twitter Azerbaijani President Aliyev made numerous anti-Armenian statements and bellicose threats including that, "The war is not over. Only the first stage of it is. But the second stage may start too." President Aliyev also declared that, "We will restore our territorial integrity either by peaceful or military means. We are ready by both options."

President Aliyev has made previous public statements that "[Azerbaijan's] main enemies are Armenians of the world." Such statements foment anti-Armenian sentiment in Azerbaijan, which exacerbates existing tensions and makes it increasingly difficult to reach a permanent peace agreement regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

- ♦ If confirmed, what will you do to work with the Azerbaijani Government to strongly counter anti-Armenian sentiment and to build toward a long-lasting peace?

Answer. The United States has repeatedly called on the Presidents of both countries to prepare their publics for a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Inflammatory rhetoric undermines our common efforts to achieve peace. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will support U.S. Minsk Group Co-Chair Jim Warlick's efforts to help the sides reach a lasting settlement to the conflict. In addi-

tion, I will be an advocate for Track II diplomacy, and will support Ambassador Warlick's efforts to work with the sides on implementing people-to-people programs, which are so important for building trust between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Question. Congress has enacted legislation known as "Section 907" prohibiting U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan until it meets a number of conditions, including taking demonstrable steps to cease "offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh." However, the recent deadly violence in Nagorno-Karabakh and the threats of war made by President Aliyev call into question the Azerbaijani Government's commitment to a lasting peace.

- Is the Government of Azerbaijan fully meeting the conditions of section 907?
- Do you support continuing to waive section 907, as the administration has done for the last several years?
- Should the U.S. Government be providing military aid to the Government of Azerbaijan at the same time that it is committing acts of aggression and threatening renewed war against both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia?

Answer. Since 2002, Presidents have waived section 907 on an annual basis, opening the door for bilateral cooperation with Azerbaijan and assistance programs in areas limited to counterterrorism efforts, border security and protection, and maritime security. All security assistance and defense cooperation with Azerbaijan is carefully considered to ensure it does not undermine efforts for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

If confirmed, I will recommend to the administration the policies and programs that best serve the interests and goals of the United States in Azerbaijan and the region. We will pursue these policies in consultation with Congress, utilizing the resources that Congress provides.

RESPONSES OF RICHARD M. MILLS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. If confirmed, you will be Ambassador to Armenia during the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. On this important anniversary, how will you work to demonstrate America's commitment to forcefully condemn and properly commemorate all instances of genocide?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the tradition of officially participating in the memorial event in Yerevan every April, which will have special resonance this coming year, as Armenia and the world mark the centenary of one of the 20th century's worst atrocities, when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. I will work to identify ways that the Embassy can amplify our message to the Armenian people that the United States stands in solidarity with Armenia at this time of remembrance and is committed to remembering so that such dark chapters of human history are never repeated. My goal will be to honor this centenary by working to achieve the U.S. Government's goal of a full and just understanding of the facts of that terrible time.

Question. In 2013, trade between the United States and Armenia totaled approximately $192 million. What steps is the administration taking to increase trade between our two countries?

Answer. If confirmed, increasing trade to the benefit of both Armenia and the United States will be a personal priority, building on the work of my predecessors.

In the first instance, increasing trade requires addressing factors in Armenia that discourage international investment, so I will work to advance market reforms and increase the transparency of the business climate in Armenia. U.S. firms have told us that the lack of transparency regarding customs and tax administration, as well as a lack of respect for signed contracts, are significant factors discouraging investment in Armenia. I will use every opportunity to press Armenian officials to address these issues. There have been recent positive steps in the business and regulatory climate that can be built upon. We were encouraged by Armenia's implementation of civil aviation liberalization reforms, and a number of U.S. information technology companies have opened branches in Armenia, taking advantage of the skills of Armenia's work force in this sector.

In addition, if confirmed, I intend to work to provide U.S. businesses with information about opportunities involving Armenia and will work to identify new opportunities for U.S. exports to Armenia, such as the considerable opportunities for the establishment of U.S.-based franchises in Armenia. I will advocate on behalf of U.S. firms pursuing investment projects in Armenia, as well as support reforms to in-

crease business-to-business exchanges, such as the launch of a visa liberalization process.

Question. For two decades, Turkey has maintained its illegal blockade of landlocked Armenia despite public calls by successive U.S. administrations for an end to Europe's last closed border.

- How can the United States work to finally end this blockade which destabilizes the region and prevents economic development?
- If confirmed, how will you work within the State Department and with other regional governments to end this illegal blockade?

Answer. Facilitating Armenia's regional integration by opening its border with Turkey is a priority for the United States. Regional integration is in the economic interest of all the countries of the region and certainly in the U.S. interest. U.S. investment, for example, is hampered by regional divisions and closed borders.

If confirmed, working to promote open borders will be one of my key priorities as Ambassador—not only by supporting government-to-government discussions—but by promoting people-to-people contacts and partnerships, such as historical restoration projects, as well as other cross-border and regional initiatives, such as the possibility of reopening cross-border transportation and energy links. Contact begins to build confidence, and confidence is the necessary first step to reconciliation and conflict resolution. Clearly, the status quo is not helpful to anyone.

RESPONSE OF ROBERT FRANCIS CEKUTA TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Over the past year the environment for civil society, the media and opposition parties has deteriorated significantly. Some groups have put the number of political prisoners in Azerbaijan at almost 100. Most recently human rights defender, Ms. Leyla Yunus, and her husband, Arif Yunus, were charged with serious crimes. They remain in pretrial detention and are in poor health.

- As U.S. Ambassador, how would you engage with the Government of Azerbaijan to improve the rule of law and respect for civil society?

Answer. Azerbaijan's progress in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms would help to deepen our bilateral relationship. The United States believes that the rule of law and democratic institutions and processes are fundamentally important to Azerbaijan's political and economic development as well as its internal stability and security. We continue to call on the Azerbaijani authorities to strengthen due process, and judicial independence, ensure freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, and support an open, vibrant, and peaceful civil society. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Azerbaijan to create an environment in which civil society can operate freely, and I will work closely with all partners to help Azerbaijanis build the strong, vibrant modern democracy and pluralistic society they want.

RESPONSES OF ROBERT FRANCIS CEKUTA TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. Given Azerbaijan's ongoing war rhetoric, continued militarization and latest cease-fire violations what steps will you take to condemn or restrain threats or acts of aggression by Azerbaijan? Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of U.S. and OSCE efforts thus far to restrain Azerbaijan's threats and acts of aggression?

Answer. The United States strongly condemns violations of the cease-fire and deeply regrets the loss of life that resulted from these incidents along the Line of Contact. We have frequently, publicly and privately, called upon both sides to take all measures to respect the cease-fire. If confirmed as Ambassador, I, too, will strongly advocate for de-escalating tensions and preparing the public for a peace the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan deserve. The OSCE Minsk Group has continued to engage with the sides at the highest levels and to promote dialogue to help them reach a peaceful settlement. In November 2013, Presidents Aliyev and Sargsian met for the first time in almost 2 years in Vienna, under the auspices of the Minsk Group cochairs. The administration is also committed to a peaceful settlement through the Minsk Group process. Secretary Kerry delivered this message when he met with the Presidents at the NATO summit in Wales on September 4 to discuss a way forward in peace negotiations. We encourage the Presidents to continue to work with the cochairs and discuss elements of a settlement. I will also support the

U.S. cochair of the OSCE Minsk Group, Ambassador James Warlick, in his efforts to help achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Question. If Azerbaijan follows through on its declarations to renew its aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh, what would you propose as a response?

Answer. The United States has repeatedly called on the Presidents of both countries to prepare their publics for a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Inflammatory rhetoric undermines our common efforts to achieve peace. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will support U.S. Minsk Group Co-Chair Jim Warlick's efforts to help the sides reach a lasting settlement to the conflict. In addition, I will be an advocate for Track II diplomacy, and will support Ambassador Warlick's efforts to work with the sides on implementing people-to-people programs, which are so important for building trust between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Question. Fostering regional cooperation and economic integration in the South Caucasus is the stated policy of the United States. What actions will you take to confront Azerbaijan's continued attempts to isolate Armenia and what steps will you take to foster regional cooperation and economic integration?

Answer. Facilitating regional integration is a particular priority for the United States. We work steadfastly to end Armenia's isolation both by seeking a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and by promoting reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey. We believe regional integration is in the economic interest of all three countries and certainly in our interest. In looking at the region as a whole, our strategic interests are focused on several priorities: the advance of freedom and democracy; regional security, including counterterrorism and peaceful resolution of ethnic conflicts; and economic prosperity, including energy. All would benefit from neighborly relations and regional integration of the South Caucasus.

RESPONSES OF RICHARD M. MILLS TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. Do you agree with the accounts of U.S. diplomats, including Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, who served as U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, regarding the attempted annihilation of the Armenian people?

Answer. I have read original source material and later histories addressing the tragic massacres and forced exile that occurred at the end of the Ottoman Empire. I have also reviewed the independently published book titled "U.S. Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915–1917," which contains the reports submitted by various U.S. officials at that time, including Ambassador Morgenthau and other U.S. diplomats in the Ottoman Empire. They are all important, eyewitness records of these tragic events. In addition, I have read books by historians and journalists that address the subject. The individual stories that these histories contain are horrifying; the magnitude of the terrible acts these volumes report—over 1.5 million killed or forcibly deported—is simply incomprehensible.

Question. The written statement of the United States before the International Court of Justice in 1951 stated that: "the Turkish massacres of Armenians, the extermination of millions of Jews and Poles by the Nazis are outstanding examples of the crime of genocide." Do you agree with this statement by the United States that the Turkish massacres of Armenians is an example of the crime of genocide?

Answer. I, like all people of good will, mourn these tragic events and the great suffering experienced by the Armenian people. I, too, grieve the loss of so many innocent lives and fully respect that the Armenian-American community and the Armenian people want their pain and loss to be acknowledged. This is why the administration—and I—acknowledge and mourn the mass killings and forced deportations of over 1.5 million Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire as one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

Question. Do you acknowledge and recognize the record of the United States affirming the Armenian Genocide?

Answer. There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the U.S. Government—and I—certainly recognize and deplore the mass killings and deportations that occurred in 1915. I too mourn the loss of so many innocent lives and fully respect that the Armenian-American community and the Armenian people want their pain and loss to be acknowledged. As the President has emphasized in his April 24

Remembrance Day statements, the achievement of a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts of what occurred in 1915 is in all our interests.

Question. What instructions were you given, if any, regarding the use of the term genocide when referring to the Armenian Genocide of 1915 prior to this hearing?

Answer. Like all executive branch officials, I have a responsibility to represent the policy of the President on this and all other issues. The President's position on this issue is well known and on the record. The administration has consistently acknowledged, as a historical fact, that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. As the President has emphasized in his April 24 Remembrance Day statements, the achievement of a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts of what occurred in 1915 is in all our interests.

NOMINATION OF ANTONY BLINKEN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Antony John Blinken, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of State

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:01 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Corker, Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Flake, and McCain.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

The CHAIRMAN. This nomination hearing for Tony Blinken as Deputy Secretary of State will come to order. Let me welcome you back to the committee. As the former staff director of the committee for Chairman Biden at the time, you know as much about the nomination process as anyone, although perhaps you are less familiar with being on that side of the table.

Between your service here and in the White House, you also understand, I think, the challenge of managing multiple complex situations concurrently, and those experiences, I believe, will serve you well as confirmed for this position.

Your nomination as Deputy Secretary of State comes at a time when the United States is facing a range of critical challenges, from Ebola in West Africa to Russian aggression in Ukraine, to the challenge of countering ISIL in Syria and Iraq, to Iran's continued quest for a nuclear weapons program. At the same time, we are seeking to forge new global partnerships with India, in the Middle East and Asia, and looking for opportunities to expand American exports and business opportunities.

So there will be no shortage of critical issues that you will face. Each will require your full attention and the full attention of this committee, and I look forward to hearing your views on all of these issues and working closely with you on issues of mutual concern should you be confirmed.

Foremost on our national security agenda is countering the barbarity of ISIL, whose terrorist ambitions threaten our national security as well as the stability of the entire region. I would like to

hear from you today about the administration's views on a new ISIL-specific AUMF.

I was hoping that the committee would hear from security Kerry and/or security Hagel this week on the President's announced plan to work with Congress on a new AUMF, an authorization for the use of military force, but that did not happen. I continue to believe it is incumbent that Congress take the lead in authorizing the use of force, and in my view any prolonged military campaign requires a new, congressionally approved AUMF, and I believe that Congress should act and the administration should seek expeditious congressional action.

We also face a continued crisis in Ukraine, where the cease-fire is collapsing, as more Russian tanks, troops, and weapons cross the border into eastern Ukraine. In my view it is time to provide defensive lethal military assistance to Ukraine and escalate pressure on Putin. Sanctions are impacting Russia's economy, but Putin continues on a reckless path and all indicators point to an imminent offensive to carve out a land bridge to Crimea.

I believe we must be willing to raise the cost to Putin, which will only come through the provision of defensive lethal military assistance to the government in Kiev. Clearly, that is just a beginning of a long list of challenges. The diplomatic calculations are complicated, and all of these challenges will be part of your portfolio as the Deputy Secretary of State.

I know that there will be times when we will agree and times that we will disagree. But I look forward to working closely with you should you be confirmed. I think your experience to date poises you to do an excellent job in this regard. And I look forward to the answers to your questions, but unless they surprise me I look forward to supporting you.

Senator Corker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this hearing. I want to thank Mr. Blinken for his service to our country and his willingness to serve in this capacity.

This position I think, as most people know, is a very, very important position. The Deputy Secretary serves as the Secretary of State when the Secretary is out of country, and he also is the principal adviser to the Secretary. A lot of people, I think, do not understand the importance sometimes of this position, so it is very important, and it is important that he is a very candid adviser to the Secretary.

We have had the benefit of having someone who is a professional for 30 years. He has just left, and he is someone who is very independent. He shared the good, the bad, and the ugly. I know we had a very private conversation the other day. I hope you are going to be as forthcoming today as you were in our office.

But it is my strong desire that the person who fills this position is equally as independent and has the ability to share with us, because it is our liaison to be able to make the kinds of judgments we need to make here. On that note, I just have to say we have had some terse conversations in the past when I felt like, speaking

for the White House, I was being spun, I was not being talked to as a person about reality; I was being spun. We have had a conversation about that and likely will have a conversation today about that. But obviously this position is a very different position than someone spinning, if you will, for the White House and trying to paint a flowery picture about what has occurred.

So it will be your responsibility, if confirmed, to provide us the kind of information and work with us directly to help us create the best foreign policy for our Nation. It is my hope that during this hearing again you will demonstrate that independence. If you are confirmed, again I expect you to work very, very closely with us. Again I look forward to your testimony today, and again I want to thank you. I know we talked extensively about your background and your upbringing. I hope you will share some of that during your opening comments. But I do appreciate the fact that you have an extensive background and I do appreciate your commitment to serving our country in an appropriate way.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I know Senator Schumer wanted to be here to introduce you. But because of votes we decided to move up the hearing, with the agreement of the ranking member, in order to try to get the bulk of this hearing in before we have a large number of votes, votes that are going to take a fair amount of time. So I appreciate his willingness to come before the committee and recommend you to the committee and we look forward to putting his statement in the record.

Let me remind you that your full statement will be entered into the record, without objection. I would ask you to summarize in about 5 minutes or so, so we can get to the heart of questions and answers that the members are going to want to hear. I certainly invite you to introduce any family members who are here with you today, since we know that they are part of the sacrifice of serving our Nation and we thank them in advance for the support they lend you in carrying out your duties.

With that, you are welcome to proceed.

STATEMENT OF ANTONY BLINKEN, OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

Mr. BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, thank you very much. And to you members of the entire committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to become Deputy Secretary of State. I am grateful to the President for the privilege of this nomination and I am grateful to two past chairmen of this committee: to Secretary of State Kerry for his confidence in me; and to Vice President Biden for his friendship, his partnership, and his mentorship for more than a decade.

It is indeed a novel experience for me to sit on this side of the dais. For 6 years I served as staff director of this committee, in the majority, in the minority. I sat where Mr. Ryan and Mr. Munson are sitting right now, in my case behind then-Senators Biden, Helms, Lugar, Hagel, Dodd, Kerry, Obama, as well as several distinguished Senators who will be here today.

I watched them work together in the best tradition of bipartisan American foreign policy, to strengthen our diplomacy, to advance our interests and our values around the world.

During those 6 years, I developed enormous respect for the Senate as a whole and for this committee in particular, for its members, for its staff, and for its indispensable role in shaping our Nation's foreign policy. If confirmed, I will do my best to uphold the standards of professionalism that I learned here in this room, in these halls, and I pledge to work closely with all of you to try to fulfill the potential of American leadership.

There is another reason I am very attached to this committee. It confirmed my father, Donald Blinken, to be Ambassador to Hungary. It confirmed my uncle, Alan Blinken, to be Ambassador to Belgium. And just last year, it confirmed my wife, who is sitting behind me, Evan Ryan, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. So I really hope that nothing I do today gives you cause to break this fine tradition of diplomatic service in our family.

The CHAIRMAN. We hope you can do as well as she did. (Laughter.)

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just say—and, Ranking Member Corker, we have talked about this; Chairman Menendez, we have talked about this—I recognize that, if confirmed, I will play a difficult role. Part of my current job at the White House is to explain and defend this administration's policies, including with Congress. If confirmed, my new job would bring a different responsibility—to work with this committee and the leadership of the State Department to advance our foreign policy and the national interest around the world.

I have consulted with leaders I consider friends who played similar roles in the past, including Bob Zoellick, John Negroponte, Rich Armitage, Jim Steinberg, Strobe Talbott. I have to tell you that, if confirmed, my role model would be my immediate predecessor, Bill Burns, a man who epitomizes the word "professional," who served Republican and Democratic administrations alike with integrity, with balance, and with decency.

Let me also begin by thanking the committee for its work over the last 2 years. Whether it was the Ukraine loan guarantee, PEPFAR reauthorization, embassy security, OAS reform, pushing forward State Department nominees, this committee has played an indispensable role in translating our foreign policy vision into practice, and indeed bringing the vision itself. If confirmed to my new position, I would again want to work very closely with every member.

If I am confirmed, I would also be coming full circle to where I started in government 21 years ago, in the Department of State. Virtually every day since then—during my time at State; during 13 years over two administrations at the White House on the National Security Council staff; and during my tenure with this committee—I have worked with the men and women of the State Department. I have experienced firsthand their extraordinary leadership of our foreign policy at a time of immense challenge and change. I have watched them do more than most Americans will ever know to keep us safe, to keep us secure, to keep us prosperous. I have wit-

nessed their passion, I have witnessed their energy, I have witnessed their courage. And I have seen them bring luster and strength to a word that deserves our respect: diplomacy.

Just in the past year, American diplomacy has mobilized countries around the world to confront ISIL and Ebola, to sanction Russia for its aggression in Ukraine, to revitalize NATO's commitment to the defense of its own members. That same hard-nosed diplomacy, backed by the credible threat of force, eliminated Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles, achieved a first-step agreement with Iran that stopped and in some respects rolled back its nuclear program.

Secretary Kerry's personal diplomacy helped the competing Afghan political blocks achieve the first peaceful political transition in that country's history, and the Secretary has worked tirelessly to build a secure, lasting peace and the Jewish, democratic State of Israel and the Palestinians, just as we stand resolutely with Israel whenever and wherever it is under threat.

We saw American diplomacy in action this summer at the first-ever U.S.-Africa Leaders summit, building new relationships among governments, with the private sector, to unleash the next era of African growth, strengthen democratic institutions, deepen our security partnerships.

We saw it at the Inter-American Development Bank just a week ago, with Vice President Biden bringing countries together to support the leaders of Central America as they develop plans to strengthen their institutions and economies and combat the corruption, crime, and trafficking that affect us here at home.

Just this past week, we also saw it in Asia, where President Obama led our diplomacy to strengthen the core institutions in Asia, to enlist China in the effort to roll back climate change, to build greater confidence between our militaries, lower tariffs on information technology, expand visas to the benefit of our students, businesses, and the economy, to advance Burma's democratization, to bring the Trans-Pacific Partnership closer to fruition, representing 40 percent of world GDP.

You know, in a few weeks, just before Christmas, I think many of us, certainly we, will engage in what is an annual ritual, and that is to watch "It's a Wonderful Life" on television. We all know what happened to Bedford Falls when George Bailey was out of the picture, and to me, at least, it is self-evident where the world would be without American leadership in the picture on all the challenges I just mentioned.

So I would submit to you that the question before us is not whether America is leading, for I believe we are, but rather how we are leading, to what ends, to what effect? That is a proper subject for debate, discussion, and dialogue.

Mr. Chairman, I have submitted for the record some of my thoughts on the answer to this question. I would just like to leave you, if I could, with a personal note. I wanted to give you some very brief insight into what brought me to government service and what motivates me every day to carry out that service. I am very fortunate. I was born into a family that had done very well. I actually acquired four parents along the way. I am blessed with two

wonderful stepparents, as well as my parents, who have given me incredible love and support in everything that I have done.

I grew up in New York, then at an early age moved to France. In France I had the unique experience from age 9 to 18 of beginning to see the world through the eyes of others, but in particular to see my own country through the eyes of others. I found myself enlisted at a very young age in playing junior diplomat, trying to explain the United States to my fellow students. This was during the end of the Vietnam war, the cold war, Afghanistan. And I think that is what got me most motivated and interested to do this work.

But even more than that, it is the family story. I think we all come from family stories that resonate and move us in certain directions. My grandfather—my father's father—fled what is now Ukraine, fleeing a pogrom, coming to the United States like so many others, supporting his mother, his younger brother, working his way through school, sending his own sons off to Harvard, including my father, who became Ambassador to Hungary and was in Hungary and got the Hungarian Government to help bring in American troops so that they could go into Bosnia and protect its people. I am proud of my father every day for the way he has conducted his life and his service.

His wife, my stepmother, fled Communist Hungary, literally at night on a train, as a young child, spirited out of the country. Her mother, married in a sham marriage to get out of the country, she came to the United States. She was welcomed here, and she has given so much service over her life to the International Rescue Committee, to help others in need.

My own mother, who has spent her entire career bringing the greatest American artists around the world—at times when our policies are under challenge, that soft power that she has done so much to advance has done wonders for our foreign policy.

Finally, her husband, my stepfather. He was made an American by a special act of Congress. He served in the Kennedy administration. He started life in Bialystok, Poland. He is among, if not the youngest, survivor of Auschwitz, having spent 4 years in the concentration camps.

At the very end of the war, when he was being marched on a death march out of the camps—the allies were advancing from one side, the Russians from the other—he made a run for it, and he found cover despite the German fire. A day later, having taken cover, he heard a sound, a rumbling sound. It was a large tank, and as he looked out from his shelter he looked at the tank and, instead of seeing the dreaded swastika, he saw something else—a five-pointed white star.

And he ran for the tank. The hatch opened up. He got down on his knees and he spoke the only three words in English that he knew and that his mother had taught him: "God bless America." And the GI lifted him from the ground into the tank, into the United States, into freedom.

It is those experiences from my parents, their lives, their service, that have motivated me to come to this place and motivated me to want to do the job that I stand before you for consideration.

So, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, I am grateful for this opportunity. I am grateful for your consideration. I look for-

ward, if confirmed, to working with everyone on this committee, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Blinken follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANTONY J. BLINKEN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to become Deputy Secretary of State.

I'm grateful to President Obama for the privilege of this nomination and to two past chairmen of this committee—to Secretary of State Kerry for his confidence in me; and to Vice President Biden for his friendship, partnership and mentorship for more than a decade.

It is a novel experience for me to sit on this side of the dais. For 6 years, I served as staff director of this committee, in the majority and the minority. I sat where Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Munson sit—in my case behind then-Senators Biden, Helms, Lugar, Hagel, Dodd, Kerry, Obama, as well as several distinguished Senators here today. I watched them work together in the best tradition of bipartisan American foreign policy to strengthen American diplomacy and advance our interests and values around the world. During those 6 years, I developed enormous respect for the Senate as a whole and for this committee in particular—for its members, its staff, and its indispensable role in shaping our foreign policy.

If confirmed, I will do my best to uphold the standards of professionalism that I learned here, in this room and in these halls. And I pledge to work closely with all of you to fulfill the potential of American leadership.

There is another reason I am so attached to this committee. It confirmed my father, Donald Blinken, to be Ambassador to Hungary; my uncle, Alan Blinken, to be Ambassador to Belgium, and just last year, my wife, Evan Ryan, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. I hope that nothing I do today gives you cause to break this family tradition of diplomatic service.

I recognize that, if confirmed, I will play a different role. Part of my current job at the White House is to explain and defend this administration's policies—including with Congress. If confirmed, my new job would bring a different responsibility—to work with this committee and the leadership of the State Department to advance our foreign policy and the national interest around the world. I've consulted with leaders I consider friends who have played this role in the past—including Bob Zoellick, John Negroponte, Rich Armitage, Jim Steinberg, and Strobe Talbott. If confirmed, my role model would be my immediate predecessor, Bill Burns—a man who epitomizes the word "professional," and who served Republican and Democratic administrations alike with integrity, balance, and decency.

I want to begin by thanking the committee for its work over the last 2 years. Whether it was the Ukraine loan guarantee, PEPFAR reauthorization, Embassy Security, OAS reform, or pushing forward State Department nominees, this committee played an indispensable role in translating our foreign policy vision into practice.

If confirmed, my new position would bring me full circle to where I started in government 21 years ago: the Department of State. Virtually every day since—during my time at State; my 13 years over two administrations on the National Security Council Staff at the White House; and my tenure with this committee—I've worked with the men and women of the State Department. I've experienced firsthand their extraordinary leadership of our foreign policy at a time of immense challenge and change. I've watched them do more than most Americans will ever know to keep us safe, secure, and prosperous. I've witnessed their passion, energy, and courage. I've seen them bring luster and strength to a word that deserves our respect: diplomacy.

Just in the past year, American diplomacy has mobilized countries around the world to confront ISIL and Ebola, to sanction Russia for its aggression in Ukraine and to revitalize NATO's commitment to the defense of its members. That same hard-nosed diplomacy, backed by a credible threat of military force, eliminated Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles and achieved a first-step agreement with Iran that stopped and in some respects rolled back its nuclear program. Secretary Kerry's personal diplomacy helped competing Afghan political blocs achieve the first peaceful political transition in their country's history. And he has worked tirelessly to build a secure, lasting peace between the Jewish, democratic State of Israel and the Palestinians—just as we stand resolutely with Israel whenever and wherever it is under threat.

We saw American diplomacy in action this summer, at the first-ever U.S.-Africa Leaders summit—building new relationships among governments and the private sector to unleash the next era of African growth, to strengthen democratic institutions, and to deepen our security partnerships.

We saw it again at the Inter-American Development Bank, where Vice President Biden convened two dozen countries to build support for the efforts of Central American leaders to strengthen their institutions and economies, and combat the corruption, crime, and trafficking that affect our own security here in the United States.

And just this past week, President Obama led the administration's diplomacy in Asia to strengthen its core institutions; to enlist China in the effort to roll back climate change, build greater confidence between our militaries, lower tariffs on information technology and expand visas to the benefit of our students, businesses, and economy; to advance Burma's democratization; and to bring the Trans-Pacific Partnership closer to fruition—further liberalizing trade among economies that represent 40 percent of world GDP.

In a few weeks, just before Christmas, many of us will engage in an annual ritual: watching "It's a Wonderful Life" on television. We all know what happened to Bedford Falls when George Bailey was out of the picture. I think it is self-evident where the world would be without American leadership on all the challenges I just mentioned.

So I would submit to you that the question before us is not whether America is leading—for we are—but rather how we are leading—by what means and to what ends—now and into the future. That is the question we can—and must—answer together.

For all the progress we've made, many daunting challenges remain.

We've struck huge blows against al-Qaeda's senior leadership; now, we must defeat its progeny in the Middle East and North Africa, which threaten our interests, allies, and partners.

We liberated the people of Libya from a tyrant; now, we must work with the new government to fill a power vacuum and address that country's turmoil.

We eliminated the strategic threat posed by Syria's chemical weapons; now, we must stop a civil war that rages on, killing innocents, sending waves of refugees throughout the region and attracting violent extremists.

We've advanced nuclear security around the world, with countries taking concrete steps to secure or eliminate materials; now, we must press for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and pursue a comprehensive agreement to ensure that Iran's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

We have strengthened the security and resilience of the Internet that is so vital to our economy, safety, and health; now, we must get ahead of attacks by malicious governments, criminals, and individual actors.

We've made America the world leader in fighting pandemics and improving global health security—building on the work of the Bush administration; now our leadership is vital to checking the spread of infectious diseases, with new microbes and viruses and the potential deliberate release of pathogens all accelerated by globalization.

We've led the way in promoting more open governance, combating corruption and empowering civil society and young leaders in emerging democracies; now, we must help those making the transition from demanding rights and freedoms to building the institutions that can guarantee them.

We've emerged from the global economic crisis and revitalized our own economy as an engine for global economic growth; now, our leadership remains critical to prevent future crises that threaten global stability.

The strategic environment in which we must contend with these and other challenges is more fluid, fraught with complexity but also more full of opportunity than ever before.

Power among states is shifting, with new entrants and aspirants to the ranks of the majors.

Power is shifting below and beyond the nation-state, requiring governments to be more accountable to substate and nonstate actors—including increasingly empowered individuals.

The growing interdependence of the global economy and the rapid pace of technological change are linking people, groups, and governments in unprecedented ways—incentivizing new forms of cooperation but also creating shared vulnerabilities.

A struggle for power is underway among and within many states in the Middle East and North Africa—a combustible process of defining a new order.

The global energy market is in the midst of profound change, with developing countries now consuming more energy than developed ones and the United States,

the world's largest natural gas and oil producer, with our dependence on foreign oil at a 20-year low and declining.

To most effectively advance America's interests in such a volatile environment, we must lead with purpose—to ensure the security of our country, its citizens, our allies and our partners; to promote a strong U.S. economy; to advance our values; and to shape an international order that bolsters peace, security, and opportunity.

We must lead from a position of strength—with unrivaled military might, a dynamic economy and the unmatched strength of our human resources.

We must lead by example—lifting our citizens, growing our economy, and living our values here at home, all of which strengthen our leadership abroad.

We must lead with capable partners—because we can best advance our interests in an interconnected world when others are working with us, while recognizing that American leadership is necessary to mobilize collective action.

We must lead with all of the instruments of American power—with an ever-ready military and our economic might that can empower diplomacy and development.

And we must lead with perspective. For all our unique power, there are historic transitions underway in the world that are not about us and cannot be fully controlled by us. But American leadership, more than that of any other nation, can shape this change, mitigate its risks, and seize its opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, members of the committee—we all share a stake in, and a commitment to, the continued renewal of American leadership in the world. Congress plays a vital role in this. Our foreign policy is more effective and sustainable when it benefits from strong congressional engagement and oversight. Even when there are disagreements, I know firsthand and from both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue the imperative of open dialogue and working together. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to advance American leadership and diplomacy, to deliver results for the American people and to make our country—and the world—more peaceful and prosperous.

Thank you for your consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you. That is a very riveting personal history. That is very insightful.

Let me ask you a couple questions. As you know, the President has stated that he is interested in engaging Congress on a new AUMF. As you also may know, I am personally uncomfortable—and I understand all the claims of both constitutional and other authorities under existing AUMF's, but I am personally uncomfortable on relying on either the 2001 September 11 AUMF and certainly the 2002 Iraq AUMF to prosecute action against ISIL. I think if you are going to have, as the President has clearly stated, a new prolonged military campaign, that that needs a congressionally approved AUMF.

First of all, do you agree that we should be pursuing a new ISIL-specific AUMF?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. The President has said that the administration would be presenting what he thinks needs to be the set of authorities in that AUMF. In my own view, such an authorization for the use of military force should be specific to ISIL and should not—and should include authority, I should say, to go after individuals and organizations fighting for or on behalf of ISIL, should be limited to 3 years or some other reasonable timeframe, should foreclose the possibility of a large-scale, enduring ground combat mission that we saw in Iraq from 2003 to 2011 as some of the elements of it.

Do you agree that those are appropriate elements of an AUMF to address the ISIL-specific threat?

Mr. BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, without negotiating the specifics today, I think the elements you have laid out as a general matter would be appropriate. I know we have had some opportunity to dis-

cuss them and those would seem to me to form a good basis for a conversation on developing a new AUMF.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you on Ukraine. This committee has taken a forward-leaning view on a bipartisan basis about helping the Ukrainians not only financially, but also in defensive weapons. I know there has been a reticence by the administration to do that because we are going to, quote unquote, "provoke the Russians." Well, I do not think the Russians need much provoking because they seem to be acting without provocation.

They did it in the first instance when they invaded and ultimately annexed Crimea through irregular forces. Now, for the second time, with much less camouflage, they are engaged in having Russian troops, tanks, armored vehicles, surface-to-surface missiles—some of which I witnessed when I was in Ukraine—taking place in the original time, and now we see even after the cease-fire it happening again.

While I applaud the sanctions that the administration has pursued and this committee has supported, the reality is that unless there is a change in Putin's calculus which includes the cost of what he is pursuing in eastern Ukraine and from every information that we have seeking for that bridge to the sea there, that unless we change that calculus we are just going to see a continuous action moving forward.

So can you give me your insights—I am not talking about the administration, National Secretary Council. I am talking about what your insights are if you were to be confirmed in this position, as to what you would say about those views?

Mr. BLINKEN. Certainly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few things. Since the beginning of this crisis, we have sought to do three things. We have sought to support Ukraine, and I will come back to that. We have sought to impose costs on Russia for its actions in Ukraine. And we have sought to reassure our partners, particularly in NATO. And we have been moving aggressively, at least in my judgment, on all three of those lines of effort.

With regard to Ukraine, as you know, we have provided to date a significant amount of assistance, including about $100 million worth of security assistance, and this includes everything from the infamous MREs and blankets, but also, as you know, things like night vision goggles, protective vests, countermortar radar—which is in fact just being delivered—communications gear, transportation gear, et cetera.

We have not, you are right, provided lethal defensive assistance. Part of the reason has been that in our judgment, as much as we are able to throw at the Ukrainians, anyone can give them in terms of lethal support, unfortunately, if the Russians choose to, they will outmatch that easily.

That said, what we have seen in recent days and in recent weeks, including the blatant violation by Russia of the very agreements it signed, the Minsk Accords, which among other things require it to help reestablish the international border, to make sure that Ukraine has sovereignty over its own border, to make sure that that border is monitored and that there is a buffer zone—instead of doing that, it has gone in exactly the opposite direction. It has deployed more forces to the border. We have compelling in-

formation that those forces have been sent into Ukraine and sent to the separatists.

So the question of defensive lethal assistance has never been off the table. It remains on the table. It is something that we are looking at, and indeed the Vice President will be in Ukraine in the next few days and I am sure that will be a topic of discussion.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, we have worked very hard to impose significant costs on Russia for its actions there. I believe we have. The challenge is that many of those costs will play out over time. But I think some of them are already visible and they are getting more and more visible.

As a result of bringing the Europeans together on sanctions repeatedly, we have seen already a significant impact on the Russian economy. We have seen capital flight that is of great magnitude. We have seen foreign direct investment drying up. We have seen the ruble hit an all-time low. We have seen Russia having to dip into foreign reserves, $70, $80 billion.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me interrupt you—but we have seen that, too, and we have also seen Putin continue to invade Ukraine. So while I appreciate that it is not off the table, if we do not exercise the—from my perspective, if we do not exercise the ability to give Ukraine defensive weapons, maybe Russia can overpower it if it chooses to do so—I will not dispute that—but by the same token, the consequences of how many Russian sons will be sent back to Russia as a result of that has to affect Putin's calculation.

The problem is that as time progresses that becomes an increasingly less likely proposition and less effective. So I hope that you are going to calculate that in a much more significant way, because, yes, the sanctions are biting, yes, there are consequences, and also yes, they have not deterred Putin from acting.

Let me ask you one other question. There is a whole universe of the world to engage in here, so it is difficult. Let me ask you one other question. I specifically—working with Senator Rubio—looked at what was happening in Venezuela and said to ourselves: This is amazing; here in the Western Hemisphere you have a country that is violating its citizens' human rights simply protesting against its government, repressed by military force, and a country that, even though it has one of the largest oil reserves in the world, cannot put basic commodities on the shelves for its people. So people protest peacefully to try to make a point to their government.

We were rebuffed by the administration in pursuing sanctions against the Maduro regime. We gave time for everybody who had some expectation of negotiations, and they were going to get there and bring Maduro to a different place. And guess what, we are in the same circumstances. We have the leader of the opposition in a sham trial where he cannot even present defenses, which tells you everything about the legal system in Venezuela. And if I go visit Venezuela, the screening process I have to go through is with Cuban security agents who run Venezuela's security.

Can you really tell me that our policy there is a success or have we recalibrated and decided that at this point sanctions is an appropriate way to proceed?

Mr. BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, we share your views of the Maduro government and his leadership. We are working with partners in

Latin America to see if they could, with us and others, get some of the opposition leaders out of jail, move forward on electoral reform. In doing that, they told us that sanctions at that point might be counterproductive, and we thought it was worth letting them try, with our support, to move forward.

As we sit here today, that has not succeeded. They have tried. It has not produced results. So, given that, we would not oppose moving forward with additional sanctions. As you know, the administration took steps of its own this summer, in consultation with Congress, including visa restrictions on violators of human rights. But we would look forward to working with you to go further.

I think there is still an opportunity to try to get a reformed electoral commission that brings the opposition onto the commission, that has Congress do that before it gets pushed to the Supreme Court, where of course nothing will happen. I think that is worth a shot and I would like to be able to work, if confirmed, with you on that.

I would also say that you are exactly right, Maduro is going to have increasingly difficult problems delivering for his people. He needs oil to be at about $85 a barrel—and it is, of course, lower than that—in order for him to make good on his social contract. That is not happening. So I think the squeeze is getting tougher and tougher.

The last thing I will say on this: My cousin went to school with Leopoldo Lopez, so, believe me, I hear from her regularly about his status and what we are doing to help him.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, want to thank you for sharing the compelling stories of your family and again for your desire to serve in this way.

I think you know this because we have had this conversation, and I am sure you have read this, but there has been some concern about the President's desire, it seems, to have people that are very close to him in various positions and to be very insular. While your role in your current job is one to champion the administration's policies, as you mentioned in your opening statement, this one is very different. One of the criticisms of the administration, I think, it would be hard to debate, although I am sure it would be debated, has been that he has been a day late and a dollar short on so many things, has been cautious, has had internal debates that protract. Things fester, things get worse, it is very difficult to overcome, as your conversation with Chairman Menendez about Ukraine.

Do you believe you have the abilities in this other position to be a bulwark against this cautious navel-gazing and to bring clarity to foreign policy in a way that would allow our Nation to move ahead and show the leadership that you talked about in your opening comments?

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. In my current job, my role has been to try to bring what we call the interagency together, so that every voice is heard as we deliberate policy, we bring all of these judgments to bear, and then we try and lift up a recommendation to the Cabinet, to the President. Part of that is a deliberative process to make sure that everyone is heard and we factor everything in.

If I move over to the State Department, if confirmed, my job, among other things, will be to advocate strongly for the position of the State Department in those interagency deliberations, to do that and to try and move the process forward and to get decisions made.

Secretary Kerry is someone who is, as you know, a very passionate and energetic participant in that process. We worked very hard to deal with what is an extraordinary number of challenges that are all coming, so it seems, at the same time. But I pledge to you that, if confirmed, that is exactly what I will try to do. I have to say, I have tried to do that in my current job. I recognize the frustrations that emerge and it is something that I will continue to try to do if confirmed.

Senator CORKER. Thank you for that. I know that is the same answer you gave in the office and I appreciate that.

On Ukraine, to get specific, will you be urging, if confirmed, the Secretary of State to give lethal assistance to Ukraine now?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I believe that that is something that we must look at and look at——

Senator CORKER. I know looking at it is one thing. We have been looking at it now for a long time. The question is, yes or no: In this new position, as you leave the White House, where you have to be a part of whatever is decided there, will you—again, just to raise the cost; we understand that Russia is always going to be able to overwhelm a country like Ukraine. But will you, yes or no, urge the Secretary of State to pursue a policy of arming with lethal support—appropriate lethal support that they are ready for, Ukraine?

Mr. BLINKEN. I know this may not be a satisfactory answer. Here is what I can say. I have to keep what counsel I would give—what counsel I give now to the President, what counsel I would give to the Secretary of State if confirmed, private. That would be part of the job.

But let me say this——

Senator CORKER. What is your own view?

Mr. BLINKEN. I believe that, given the serious Russian violations of the agreement that they signed, the Minsk Accord, that one element that could hopefully get them to think twice and deter them from further action is strengthening the capacity of the Ukrainian forces, including with defensive lethal equipment. So that is why I think it is something that we should be looking at.

Senator CORKER. That is not as satisfactory as our conversation the other day, but I understand we are in a public setting.

The AUMF that the chairman discussed. It has been the tradition, it is the standard, that when an AUMF is sought, as you mentioned is semi-being sought, although being sought in a very tricky way, that the administration seeks explicitly an AUMF and actually sends a draft up of what they would like for it to be, and then we begin the negotiations. do you believe that it is appropriate that if an AUMF is going to be written that the administration explicitly seek that and that you and your office are up here with a draft in direct negotiations in seeking that, yes or no?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, first can I just thank you, the committee, you personally, the chairman, for the work that you have done in the past on the Syria AUMF a year ago, on the AUMF most recently.

As you know, we have said that we would welcome an AUMF. I can tell you, not only would we welcome it, we would like it, and we would like to have a targeted, focused AUMF that deals with the challenge before us, which is defeating ISIL. The question is what is the best way to get something that gets bipartisan support, because we are much stronger if the executive branch and the legislative branch are working together and acting together, especially on issues of war and peace. And if we can get an AUMF that gets broad support, there is no question we will be better off.

We have engaged, as you know, with you, with other Members of Congress, in recent weeks on an AUMF.

Senator CORKER. You have not engaged with me. That is totally untrue.

Mr. BLINKEN. All right. Well, I know we have engaged with certain members. Let me tell you that, going forward from today, we will absolutely actively engage with you, with other interested members, on trying to come up with an AUMF that answers what is needed, which is something that is focused on ISIL, that preserves the authorities the President needs to take action in the national interest, and I hope has everyone coming together so that we can demonstrate that we are united.

So the short answer is we want to work with you on that, we want to work with you on that in the days and weeks ahead.

Senator CORKER. A very important component of seeking an AUMF explicitly is laying out what it is the administration hopes to achieve. It is a very important element. And I know that when this was all announced this fall this was a half-baked deal. I actually believe that General Allen and others are putting some elements together that are beginning to make some sense. But I think it is very important—beginning to make some sense, I might add. I think it is very important for you to explicitly ask for it and to come up here and explain fully, both in classified settings and in public settings, what the Nation can expect as an outcome if, in fact, this is authorized.

On Iran, do you believe that Congress, who put the sanctions in place, working with the administration no doubt, do you think that Congress should have the right to vote on a deal that is maybe the biggest, one of the biggest, geopolitical decisions that is going to be made by this Nation, in the event an agreement is reached with Iran?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, Congress will vote on any deal. It will have to vote on any deal, because any deal at the end of the day would include at some point the lifting of sanctions.

Senator CORKER. But if you suspend sanctions, which you can do, certainly the permanent lifting we have to vote on. The moment you suspend sanctions, you break apart the international coalition. And you know that, and Iran knows that, and that is why they have been urging you to suspend. We know that, because they know that the moment you do that and you actually begin the actual lifting under that expansion you have broken apart the entire coalition that has put these sanctions in place.

So do you not think on the front end that Congress should play a role? I am not talking about on the permanent lifting, that could

be, by the way, years down the road. I am talking about on the front end.

Mr. BLINKEN. Our view would be that we would not even suspend sanctions until Iran has taken significant steps to comply with any agreement that is reached. We have to see that first before suspension.

Senator CORKER. I understand that.

Mr. BLINKEN. And then, precisely because the hammer that Congress has wielded and has held over the heads of the Iranians has been so effective, we want to keep that in place as long as possible. We also want to make sure that there is a snapback provision so that if any sanctions are suspended, not lifted, if Iran violates the agreement or cheats in any way, the sanctions can be snapped back with some automaticity to avoid exactly the problem that you rightfully raise.

Senator CORKER. And that addresses them violating the agreement.

Mr. BLINKEN. Absolutely.

Senator CORKER. What it does not address is on the front end, if Congress believes the arrangement you have reached, even if they honor it, is unacceptable. So again I would just ask, having come from this committee, stepping into now an independent position if confirmed, do you believe that we should have the opportunity to give an approval of an agreement that has so much to do with the future of that region and the world?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think if we get to an agreement and are able to reach one, one of the things that we need to talk about and work together on is how we can most effectively work together to make sure that it is implemented and the Iranians make good on their commitments. So there may be schemes under which Congress, acting at certain times in certain ways, will make that more effective. We should talk about that. Not knowing right now what any deal is going to actually look like, what the terms will be, what the commitments will be, what the timelines will be, I think it is something we should come back and talk about and figure out how we can most effectively continue to work together to make sure any deal is implemented.

Senator CORKER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. First, Mr. Blinken, thank you very much for your public service and thank you for sharing your family's story. It is inspirational.

I just want to underscore the point that Senator Corker just made, because I think there is bipartisan support for the comments that we must be together. I think there is concern. First, I want to compliment the administration for keeping the coalition together and keeping the sanctions in the position where it has kept Iran at the negotiating table. You have been effective in doing that.

There is concern that there will be some agreements reached in the very near future, by the 24th, that may jeopardize the unity of the sanctions moving forward. I would just urge you in the strongest possible terms to work with Congress so that we are together on the strategy moving forward with Iran.

Our greatest hope is that you reach a comprehensive agreement that prevents Iran from having a breakout capacity for a nuclear weapon, with inspections, et cetera. We look forward to that. If that is not the case, then I think it is critically important that we understand and are together on the strategy moving forward and that we are together in our resolve that Iran will not become a nuclear weapons state. I would just urge you to listen to what Senator Corker has said, because I think there is strong support in Congress for the statements that he made.

I want to underscore a point that Chairman Menendez said. We were talking about the sanctions in our hemisphere that you have imposed on visas. I also applaud the administration for imposing visa restrictions on Hungary in regards to six individuals who were implicated for corruption. Senator McCain and I have authored legislation that would make the Magnitsky sanctions global, which are basically visa bans, but add the ingredient that Congress can initiate a required review by the State Department on matters that we believe should be subject to consideration of visa restrictions.

You and I had a chance to talk and I very much appreciate your commitment to basic human rights and your understanding that the U.S. national security very much depends upon stable regimes respecting human rights, and that we need to be more open about that and making that more of a priority.

My point for raising that is that I will be looking for your leadership as to how we can move forward while making it clear that this country stands strongly in support of human rights, and that we will look at ways that countries are fighting corruption. Ukraine is a good example. We are all outraged by what Russia has done. We have provided a great deal of support. We are working with their economy. But they need to deal with their problems of corruption. We just had a hearing of the Helsinki Commission today and that was the centerpiece.

I want to ask you a question following up on the point that I raised in regards to a provision dealing with the mineral rights of countries and the provision that was included in the Dodd-Frank law, known as the Cardin-Lugar provisions, that the SEC is still struggling with. It requires transparency from the extractive industries.

The court sent back their first rulings because of First Amendment concerns and the SEC it is now prepared to issue its new regulations. The reason I bring it up is that the SEC is required to consider First Amendment issues, which they should, and one of the major concerns that was expressed by the administration when Dodd-Frank was moving forward was our need for stable energy supplies and the importance for transparency and the importance of investors knowing what countries are doing and where the funds are going.

It is my understanding that the communication from the State Department and the administration could be critically important to the SEC in underscoring the importance to our country of stable energy supplies. I would just urge you to please follow up on that, because time is running out on this issue.

If you want to respond, that is fine.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator. Let me just say very quickly, if confirmed I welcome following up. Even if not confirmed, if there is anything I can do to be helpful——

Senator CARDIN. You still have a day job.

Mr. BLINKEN. For the time being, thank you.

I just wanted to underscore one thing you said because I think it is so important: corruption and the work that you have been doing and the other members of this committee have been doing to combat corruption. One of the things I think that is a common denominator around the world of virtually every popular movement we have seen, whether it is in Ukraine or whether it is the Arab Spring, has been people rising up in disgust at corruption. It is one of the most powerful instigators of change.

We have been working in a very deliberate way over the last 6 years to focus on this issue. I think there is more that we can do and particularly more that we can do working with Congress. One of the issues I would welcome working on, if confirmed, with you and other members of the committee, are the efforts the United States is making to combat corruption, because we see it everywhere as an instigator of change and there are ways that we can use it effectively to help advance the kind of change that we would like to see.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for that, and I agree with you completely. In Tunisia, the Ukraine, it was about corruption; it was not about who was President or who the government was.

We just saw the recent tragedy in Israel at the synagogue, a barbaric act. Three Americans were killed. One was a relative of a constituent of mine, Judge Karen Friedman. So this hits us. It is against our own country in a way. If this happened in America there would be justified outrage and demand that our country take steps to protect the security of our country.

Israel always seems to be placed on the defensive when it come to defending its own people. Its only strong ally is the United States.

Will you continue to speak up for Israel's obligations to defend its citizens against these types of barbaric actions and preparing itself to defend the security of its own country?

Mr. BLINKEN. Absolutely. Senator, the United States has, is, and will continue to stand sentry, even if it is alone, against threats to Israel and against any attempt to undermine Israel's legitimacy. We do it day in and day out around the world in international organizations. Secretary Kerry is often at that post, again alone sometimes. We will do it as long and as hard as it takes. We will always be there.

What we saw this week was especially barbaric. Any terrorist attack is horrific. To do something in a place of worship is even beyond the pale of what we have seen before. You heard the President condemn it. Immediately the Secretary of State was on the phone with Prime Minister Netanyahu. President Abbas condemned it. Unfortunately, we saw Hamas' true colors come out in a statement glorifying it.

These murderers represent the extremism that threatens to bring the region into a bloodbath. So I think the first job—and it is incredibly difficult, especially when passions are high—is for

leaders to work to lower tensions, to reject violence, because majorities want peace. They want to work toward that. And we will work with anyone who wants that. We will work to isolate anyone who does not.

I have to tell you as well, these kinds of attacks are personal to me. I have a cousin who lives in Tel Aviv with her husband, her daughter, two sons. The daughter recently completed her military service. During Gaza this summer, her eldest son was in military training, and indeed he was training for the engineering unit that was the one that was going in to deal with the tunnels and the bombs. He was not deployed during Gaza, but he is now deployed. And another son is coming of military age.

We were getting emails from her throughout the summer about what it was like to live under the threat of these rockets and terrorists tunneling underground to try and kill or capture civilians. She talked about how the bomb shelter that they had at home, that is usually a storage room, now a bomb shelter. She talked about how, riding to work on her bike, she would ride with one earpiece out so that she could hear an air raid siren. She talked about living on a 90-second timer because that is how much time you have to get to a bomb shelter if the siren goes off. This is something that I feel is real, it is visceral.

We also saw the terrible tragedy of civilians and children being killed in Gaza. And I thought to myself as well, getting these emails from my cousin, what are Palestinian American mothers and fathers writing home to their families here about what they have experienced? We have to somehow remember the humanity that lies at the heart of all these situations. This is at the end of the day about men and women, mothers and fathers, daughters and sons. If we lose sight of that, we really lose.

But one thing is for sure and it is unshakeable. We have a fundamental commitment to Israel's security and to stand with Israel whenever and wherever it is under threat. I am very proud of the record of this administration in doing just that and it is something that will continue as long as we are acting.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Now, let me, for the edification of the members, advise you of what my intention is. My intention, since there are votes at 3 o'clock, is to ask Senator Kaine to take the chair shortly before. I am going to go vote and come back, try to keep this going as long as we can so that members can get their questions in. So if you are a little further down the rung before asking your question, you might want to go vote so you can come back and ask your question.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blinken, Monday is the 24th of November. What can we expect on Monday?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, as you know, the negotiating teams are engaged at this very moment——

Senator RISCH. Understand.

Mr. BLINKEN [continuing]. On working toward an agreement. So I do not want to prejudge what may happen or may not happen. Right now, I think it is going to be difficult to get to where we

want to go. It is not impossible. It depends entirely on whether Iran is willing to take the steps it must take to convince us, to convince our partners, that its planning would be for entirely peaceful purposes. As we speak, we are not there. The Secretary of State is prepared to engage directly and personally if we have enough to go on to move this over the goal line. But it is literally a minute-to-minute, hour-to-hour thing. I was getting emails before coming here.

As we speak, I can not tell you what to expect. I can tell you that in the days ahead as we move toward the 24th we will continue to be in very close consultation with you, with the Members of the Senate, with the Members of the Congress, on where we are, where this is going, and then, depending on where this goes, to work with you to figure out what the most effective next steps would be.

I wish I could tell you today, are we going to get a deal, are we not going to get a deal. I just can not.

Let me add one thing, though. We have been very clear that we will not take a bad deal, period. Any deal that we achieve has to effectively cut off Iran's pathways to a bomb. It has to deal with the Arak facility and its ability to develop a weapon through a plutonium path. It has to deal with Fordow, the buried facility, where it was before the interim agreement producing 20 percent. It has to deal with Natanz and an effort to accumulate a large number of centrifuges and a large stockpile and be able to produce material for a bomb very quickly. And it has to deal as effectively as possible with the potential for a covert program by having an unprecedented inspection and access regime. Then we will also have to deal with the possible military dimensions of the program, with missiles, and with the sanctions piece that we talked about earlier.

So as you evaluate anything that we are able to produce, you will rightly and appropriately evaluate it against all of those lines. That is what we need to be talking about as this moves forward, and I pledge to you that in the days ahead and the weeks we will be in very close contact as we see if we can get there.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. The operative words here are good deal versus bad deal. I have heard people from the State Department sit in the exact same chair you are sitting in and describe the last couple of deals as good deals. I have to tell you that I speak for myself, but I think probably for some other members of this committee, and that is our understanding of what a good deal is differed greatly from what the State Department's version of what a good deal was.

As you know, I was very critical of it. Other members of this committee were very critical of it. I certainly hope I do not have to be put in that position again.

I could not agree with you more. In fact, we told the Secretary of State just what the administration has been saying, and that is no deal is substantially better than a bad deal. Once that bad deal happens, you will never get that genie back in the bottle again and we are going to wind up having to live with what could be a very, very difficult situation.

So I caution you in that regard. I hope our definition and the State Department's definition of what is a good deal is substantially closer to the same point than it has been in the past.

Let me make a parochial pitch here that I have over and over and over again, and particularly to Wendy Sherman, who sat in that chair. I have a constituent that is being held there, Pastor Abedini. There is absolutely no reason he should be in prison in Iran. In addition to that, there are two other Americans that are there that are under the same circumstances, that should not be there.

It absolutely escaped logic to me why we released the billions of dollars that we did without demanding that those three be released before a penny changed hands. I just do not get it. Knowing how badly those people wanted the money, I just cannot understand why that was not the last consideration, the last requirement that was put on the table before the money changed hands.

I heard Wendy Sherman talk about it. There was a lot of talk. I still do not understand it. I would one more time say that if you do get close to that, that ought to be paragraph number 236 or whatever the last paragraph is, that this thing does not become operative until those three people walk free.

Again, just listening to you, I do not sense a lot of optimism that we are going to get to that point. But should we get to that point, I want to urge you in the strongest terms to see that those three people are turned loose and we can welcome them back here to America and my constituent back to Idaho.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, could I just say, first of all, thank you. I want you to know that every single day we are working for the release of Mr. Abedini, but also any other unjustly imprisoned American around the world. This is something that we are not only focused on, we are fixated on.

The only thing that we talk to the Iranians about other than the nuclear agreement on the margins of these conversations are the American prisoners who are there. This is something that we are determined to resolve. We are determined to bring our people home. You have my assurance that, if I am confirmed for this job, that will be at the very top of my agenda.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you very much. If I can put a little more strength into that, you know, there is a human side to this that never gets talked about. Mrs. Abedini lives in Boise, ID. She has children. The children have not seen their father for some time. They have family there. They have a close circle of friends there. This has a human component that does not get talked about. These people want their father, their husband, home very badly. I am glad to hear what you are saying, but I will be much happier when actual action takes place.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen, and I will ask Senator Kaine to preside.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Blinken, for both being here today and for your willingness to continue to serve the country. I want to follow up on Senator Risch's questions about the Iranian negotiations, because reports about those negotiations have suggested that, as you just did, that we are not close to reaching an agreement and that another extension might be something that people could agree on.

What positive signs or movement do we need to see in order to agree to another extension? Because I assume we would all argue that unless we think there is some reason to continue these negotiations we should not do that if they are not going anywhere.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, thank you. Here is the challenge. We are driving to the 24th. We want to see if we can get an agreement that answers our requirements, the requirements of the international community, and that is what we are focused on. As I said a moment ago, right now, if I am judging where we are, I think it will be difficult to get there, but not impossible, and it really depends on whether Iran can get to "Yes." The short answer is we do not know.

I do not want right now, at this delicate moment in the negotiations, in a public setting to get into the details, because we really have to leave that, and you will understand why, with the negotiators. However, I know that some of my colleagues were up on the Hill yesterday in a closed session going through in much more detail some of the elements of what we are looking for. I know that in the days ahead we will be doing more of that. I would welcome any opportunity certainly to talk individually or collectively, in the right setting, on those issues.

But at least as a public matter, I have to leave it to the negotiators to try to have to the flexibility to do the job and get the job done.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. Again to follow up on Senator Risch, I do hope that, in looking at an extension of negotiations, that we have some clear signs there is potential for movement if we are going to extend on our end.

To follow up on what is happening with ISIS, can you talk a little bit about the new administration in Iraq and whether they are making sufficient progress on engaging with the Sunni population so that we are seeing any real change there?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, you have raised a critical question and it goes to the heart of what we are trying to achieve and indeed what is necessary to achieve if there is going to be success against ISIL. One of the many failures of the previous Iraqi administration is that it failed to not only engage, but address, the legitimate grievances of the Sunni community. That created an environment in which large parts of that community either acquiesced to ISIL when it rose up or indeed even went into league with it because it saw it as the only way to advance its interests.

When Prime Minister Maliki, the former Prime Minister, was here in November 2013, I think before ISIL was on the map for most people, the President said to him in their meeting: The number one challenge you have is Al Qaeda in Iraq/ISIL—it was becoming ISIL—and we want to give you, and we are working to give you, the equipment and assistance you need to deal with it as a counterterrorism and military matter, but that is not enough. You have to deal with this problem comprehensively, you have to engage the Sunnis, you have to address their legitimate grievances. Otherwise we will not succeed. And, as we know, he did not.

The new government was one of the conditions that the President set before launching the comprehensive effort that we are making to counter ISIL and ultimately defeat it, precisely because

absent a government that was willing to engage the entirety of Iraq, to work with the Sunnis, to work with the Kurds, that strategy could not effectively succeed.

What we have seen, I think, is significant progress. I was in Iraq about 4 weeks ago for a week. I spent a lot of time with virtually all of the leadership in Baghdad on all sides: military leaders, economic leaders, all of the government leaders, the President, the Prime Minister, the head of the Council of Representatives, political party leaders. What I found was that virtually everyone was giving the benefit of the doubt to the Prime Minister and the new leadership to try to move the country forward.

He has taken a number of very significant steps already. First, the former Prime Minister, Maliki, had established something called the Office for the Commander in Chief to basically short-circuit the military and have it report directly to the Prime Minister's office and make it his personal service, which was a disaster. Prime Minister Abadi eliminated that office and fired the people in charge.

Last week he fired 36 generals, many of whom were beholden to the previous government, had a sectarian agenda, or were incompetent. That was significant.

Maybe most significant of all, there is a national program that they need to move forward on to address legitimate grievances of the Sunnis, but also they are seized with an idea that we have been working with them on and that is to form a national guard. What that would do would be to enlist from local communities and provinces people to protect those communities and provinces. So in the Sunni areas you would be enlisting Sunnis to protect their own. But they would be tethered to the state because it would pay their salaries and provide them with equipment.

This would build on and in a sense institutionalize something that was so successful in the 2006–2007 period and that was the Sons of Iraq during the surge. There is tremendous promise there.

It is going to take a little while to get that stood up. So meanwhile we have been working with the Iraqis—and the government is really pushing this—on a bridging mechanism to get there. That is, how can we now deal with the fact that many of these tribes want to work with the government, they see their future is better with Iraq than it is with ISIL, but they need support, they need equipment, they need money? So the government is working on a program, with our support, to bring in about 5,000 tribesmen, to pay them, to equip them, to get them working with Iraqi Security Forces right now to deal with ISIL.

So I came away from my most recent trip and from virtually daily engagement believing that the Prime Minister is moving things in the right direction, he is reaching out, he is engaging, and if that succeeds that offers real promise to our overall efforts.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I am almost out of time, but when we spoke on the phone we talked about the special immigrant visa program and the need to make sure that that moves forward. I wonder if you can tell me what we are hearing from Afghanistan now as we are looking at the drawdown of our troops and the importance of that program and whether we are going to be able to

provide the visas that are required for the people who are being threatened?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, first I want to commend your leadership on this issue. It has been absolutely instrumental in answering an obligation that I believe we have, and that is this program, addressed specifically to people in Iraq and in Afghanistan who have gone to work with us, who put their lives on the line for us, who put their families on the line by their association with us, deserve our every effort, if they qualify, to bring them to the United States and out of harm's way.

This is something that I have been focused on in my current capacity. It is something I believe in deeply. In Afghanistan, in a sense because of the success that we have had, we are running up against the limit and we need to be able to do more. We want to work with you very actively and aggressively to be able to do that, because we cannot abandon these people who put themselves on the line for the United States.

So I look forward, if confirmed, to working with you on those issues, and I really thank you for everything that you have done to date.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KAINE [presiding]. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blinken, again thank you for your service and your willingness to serve. I want to first acknowledge the fact that these issues you are dealing with, these problems, are enormously challenging. There is nothing easy about them whatsoever. What I want to try and find out during my questioning is, Have you, has this administration, learned from the misjudgments, past mistakes? Are we willing to recognize reality?

We talked a little bit earlier about Ukraine. I have heard members of the administration repeatedly talk about how Vladimir Putin is looking for off-ramps. I believe Vladimir Putin is looking for nothing but on-ramps. Can you just give me your evaluation of that? Do you really think that he is looking for a way out of this, a way out of this situation, or is he really looking to continue to be aggressive?

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator. In my judgment, President Putin has managed to precipitate virtually everything he sought to prevent through this crisis and through the aggressive actions he has taken in Ukraine. Ukraine is now more Western-oriented than it has ever been and indeed it has more of a national identity than it has had, and in effect, even with the terrible aggression in eastern Ukraine and Crimea, he has lost the bulk of the country.

He has precipitated as well NATO being more energized than it has been, Europe more focused on energy security. We talked a little earlier about the economic——

Senator JOHNSON. I really want my question answered. Is Vladimir Putin looking for off-ramps?

Mr. BLINKEN. To get to your question, because it is a very important one, I agree, Senator, here is the challenge. This is at least in my judgment. What has happened is this. President Putin has

probably lost his ability, as a result of their own mismanagement of the economy and in my judgment as a result of the pressure exerted, to deliver effectively for his people economically. Of course, oil prices have played a big part in that. That leaves him with one card and that is the nationalist card. When you play that card, I think in the short term it can be beneficial. You rally people around the flag, your numbers go up, and we have seen that.

Here is the problem. If you stop playing the card, people then start to focus on the fact that actually things are not going so well and you have led them down the wrong path. So that is why this is the challenge. He does need an off-ramp. Otherwise he will keep playing the card, he will keep taking steps that are dangerous and destabilizing and that are going to create even greater conflict.

So we thought, and we continue to believe, that the Minsk agreement that Russia signed was an appropriate off-ramp, if that is what you like to call it, for Russia and a way of moving forward to help Ukraine regain its sovereignty. Unfortunately, to date——

Senator JOHNSON. He is not taking it.

Mr. BLINKEN [continuing]. He has not taken it.

Senator JOHNSON. I thought President Poroshenko gave an extraordinary speech before a joint session of Congress. What was your reaction, what was the White House's reaction, to President Poroshenko reminding all of us that you cannot defeat Soviet aggression with blankets?

Mr. BLINKEN. We saw the President shortly after his speech to Congress and the President met with him, the Vice President, and others. And we have talked about this a little earlier in this, in today's session. We have worked very hard to support Ukraine across the board. We have worked to develop international support for its economy. We produced a package initially of $27 billion from the international financial institutions, the Europeans, and others. We are working now, as you know, to add——

Senator JOHNSON. We covered that ground. What was the reaction? Did it have any effect whatsoever on this administration's attitude?

Mr. BLINKEN. You asked at the outset, Senator, Do we go back? do we revisit things? do we rethink things? The short answer is "Yes," we do, almost literally every single day. As I noted earlier, we provided a significant amount of security assistance to date, more than $100 million. Again, it is beyond the blankets and the MREs. It really is things that matter in the field to the Ukrainians, as well as technical advice, assistance, et cetera.

That said, as I said earlier, we are continuing to look actively every day at other forms of assistance, including defensive lethal assistance.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Let us shift to ISIS and Iraq. I happen to believe it is a historic blunder, a strategic blunder, not leaving a stabilizing force behind in Iraq to be the glue to hold that coalition together. What was your reaction in January 2014 when you heard President Obama basically imply that ISIS was a JV team? Did that surprise you, that the President of the United States would say something like that?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I think as I recall the context of those comments was a distinction between terrorist groups that were fo-

cused inwardly and did not have an agenda that planned to attack the United States or, internationally, that did not have an international jihadist agenda and were focused primarily on their own countries. That was the distinction that was being made in that context. That is my recollection of it.

Senator JOHNSON. My recollection is you had the President of the United States trying to minimize the threat of a group like ISIS. Were you aware of the threat, the growing menace, that ISIS represented to not only the region, but also to the world?

Mr. BLINKEN. Absolutely. Let me, if I can, just tell you a little bit about that. And we can certainly talk about the drawdown and withdrawal from Iraq at the end of 2011. I am happy to come back to that.

From the moment that we withdrew our troops from Iraq, we worked literally from January 2012 to work our way back in to help the Iraqis develop a more effective means to deal with what was then Al Qaeda in Iraq and became ISIL. We said to the Iraqis at the time: You are making a big mistake if you take your foot off the throat of AQI. At that time they were down. The senior leadership had been decimated, the Iraqis were feeling overconfident.

But the fact of the matter is at that point in their history they wanted America out of Iraq.

Senator JOHNSON. Do you agree that was a mistake, to not leave a stabilizing force behind in Iraq? Do you think that policy has worked?

Mr. BLINKEN. I believe that we tried to leave a stabilizing force, precisely because we thought that having the ability to help the Iraqis develop a more effective counterterrorism means was necessary going forward. From 2012 on, we started to work aggressively to help them build up their capacity to deal with counterterrorism. We worked with them on developing targeting cells, on bringing more intelligence in, on arming them more effectively.

The year 2012 was an exercise in frustration. They did not see the problem. We pushed it. I worked with David Petraeus, who was CIA Director at the time, to do that. The Arab League summit came around in March 2012. We said: We will bring you ISR—intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance—to help protect the summit, and we thought that was a means to get better eyes on what was going on in Iraq, including the al-Qaeda threat. It became public. They would not do it.

But let me just quickly tell you what happened after that; 2013 rolled around and all of a sudden the Iraqis began to be seized with this problem because they saw ISIL emerging in Syria and spilling over into Iraq. They saw that they had a problem that we had been warning them about for more than a year. For a year starting in 2013, we led an effort and I led an effort to make sure that we were getting to the Iraqis the equipment they needed, the technical advisers and assistance they needed, the targeting cells, the ISR. We started to work with Congress on getting them more. And throughout 2013 I led 14 meetings of the Deputies Committee on that very issue. We were seized with this before ISIL was in the public eye.

Senator JOHNSON. Just one quick question. When you lay out a goal to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIS, do you think it is wise to signal to your enemy what you may or may not do to accomplish that goal? In other words, no combat troops on the ground. Do you think that is wise to signal? Whether you intend to do it or not, do you think it is wise to signal that to your enemy?

Mr. BLINKEN. What we have focused on in designing this campaign to deal with ISIL is a comprehensive effort that works on a military line of effort, but also dealing with the foreign financing, dealing with the fighters, dealing with the ideology.

On the military piece, we believe that it is not necessary and indeed it is not sustainable to have a repeat of what happened a decade ago, which was to have a large and indefinite American deployment of forces into Iraq or anywhere else to deal with this problem. What we believe is more effective and more sustainable is to strongly support a partner on the ground with air power, with intelligence, with training and equipping, with advisers, and they will then do the fighting to fight for the future of their own countries.

I believe that in Iraq we have the foundation and the makings of being able to do just that. We are working on the same thing in Syria. We believe that is the most effective and sustainable way forward to deal with the problem.

Senator JOHNSON. But taking——

Senator KAINE. I am sorry. Senator Murphy.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We have got votes on the floor, so I am going to try to be brief. A couple questions. Thank you for your service, Mr. Blinken. Long days, long nights. It is not going to get any shorter in your new capacity.

I want to ask you a quick question about your new job. You have done a good job of defending the administration's policy here this morning. Mark Mazzetti of the New York Times wrote a brilliant book a couple years back about the massive buildup of military capabilities at our covert agencies and the great frustration that exists at elements of the State Department when they are trying to conduct diplomacy abroad—he specifically was writing about a period from 2010 to 2012 in Pakistan—when they do not know what is coming at them from secret drone strikes in that instance, but other activities in other parts of the world.

We find the same frustration here when we are trying to evaluate whether or not we should authorize an overt arming and training of Syrian moderate rebels and we ask the question, well, what have we learned from the activities that have been openly reported thus far, we cannot get that information.

It strikes me that we have seen a massive outsourcing over the last 10 years of diplomacy from the State Department to the military and a substantial outsourcing of military activity from the Department of Defense to the CIA and to covert authority. You are moving from having an umbrella view of all of those activities to now a narrower window within the State Department, and I think you will find many people in that agency who have some serious questions about whether they can do their job when you have this

level of activity occurring without oversight from the State Department or from this committee, which is charged with overseeing American foreign policy.

I would love your thoughts about what mentality you are going to bring to the State Department, having viewed this in a more robust lens at the National Security Staff?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I think that is a very important question and it is one that we grapple with literally every day. Part of my responsibility right now in my current job—indeed, it is at the heart of the responsibility—is to bring the entire interagency together on any problem, to make sure that not only is every perspective and voice heard, but to make sure indeed that each agency and Department knows what the other is doing.

So when we have a meeting of the so-called Deputies Committee that I chair, not only is every agency there that is relevant to the question; we bring in, thanks to video technology, our ambassador from the field. We bring in, as appropriate, the station chief in the field. We bring in the relevant combatant commander or general in the field, precisely because we want to make sure that everyone knows and has full visibility onto what everyone else is doing, and to make sure that the appropriate departments and appropriate agencies and appropriate actors are the ones carrying out the appropriate responsibilities. That is something that is essential to the proper functioning of our government and our foreign policy, and it is something that I focus on every single day.

If I am confirmed and move over to the State Department, I will get to move one seat down on that table, off of the chairman's seat and one seat down. But I will continue to bring that perspective to bear on those deliberations, because what you pointed to is vitally important and it is the only way we can function effectively. Our ambassadors have to know what is going on from other agencies. The other agencies need to know what our diplomacy is doing. That kind of communication, coordination, if it does not happen it does not work.

Senator MURPHY. I would just argue for a historical realignment whereby diplomats are doing diplomacy, our warfighters are doing what they do best, and that our covert agencies are gathering intelligence. They have always done operations, but this is a pretty unprecedented scale.

Just one question on Russia and Ukraine. All of the conversation has been about—most of the conversation on this committee has been about whether we arm or whether we do not arm the Ukrainians. But it seems to me a lot of the conversation misses the broader picture, which is that Russia is employing a set of tools that is unprecedented. Somebody referred to a new phrase I had not heard of yesterday, that Russia has militarized information. They are using information, propaganda, payoffs, support for NGOs, in a way that we have no understanding of and no ability to match.

Now, we do not necessarily want to go tit for tat, but instead of spending all this time talking about what specific arms we are going to give to the Ukrainians, we should be paying attention to what Russia is doing today in Latvia, in Estonia, in Serbia, in Montenegro, to essentially try to prep the next set of crises. Hopefully, this committee will be able to grapple with the need to have a

much more robust conversation about how we meet those new Russian tactics.

Hopefully, I think you understand that, but it would be great to see some real proposals coming out of the State Department, some new innovative proposals about how we revamp programs like Radio Free Europe so that it has any semblance of a chance to match up against what the Russians are providing in the periphery of their area of influence.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, let me just say very briefly that that is something that, if confirmed, I would welcome working with you and other members of this committee on. You are exactly right, Russia has a panoply of asymmetric tools to wield influence in countries on its periphery, and we see that every day in the Baltics. We obviously see it in Ukraine and Georgia and Moldova. We see it in the Balkans and places farther flung.

For us to be effective, we have to be focused on that as well, and indeed we are. It is something we welcome working on with you. We have—just a small point on this, and in the context of Ukraine, we immediately stood up an effort that our Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Rick Stengel, has been running to work on countering the messaging, which is very, very strong and effective. You know the Russian propaganda machine at home. That is something we are working on very vigorously every day.

But the larger point that you make, this is an area where I think we could very profitably work together and I welcome doing that if confirmed.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blinken, on March—oh, by the way, over the weekend I was at a seminar, a panel with former Secretary Gates, former Secretary Panetta, and also former National Secretary Adviser Mr. Hadley. All of them strongly disagree with every one of your assertions here, particularly about the diminution of American power and influence throughout the world, including the fact that they said again, including Ryan Crocker, one of the most respected members of the diplomatic corps, have all said the administration could have succeeded in keeping United States troops in Iraq after 2011 if it had been more creative and determined. You and I had that discussion in my office and you made some assertions which are just patently false, which was very disappointing to me.

In March 2012 you said: "What is beyond debate is that Iraq today is less violent, more democratic, and more prosperous and the United States more deeply engaged there than at any time in recent history." I vehemently disagreed with that at the time. So did the rest of us. Now, will you admit you were wrong in that assessment?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, at the time——

Senator MCCAIN. Yes or no, will you admit that you were wrong with that assessment?

Mr. BLINKEN. At the time I made that—I stand behind the words I said at the time. I think they accurately reflected where we thought——

Senator MCCAIN. Even though we knew, we knew, that if all the troops were going to be removed that the ensuing situation would evolve, and predicted it. And you were celebrating the fact that we had no more troops left in Iraq. You celebrated it, and so did the President: the last troop, combat troop, has left.

By the way, the Baghdad chief of the New York Times said the administration was ignorant of reality, "and did not want to see what was really happening because it conflicted with their narrative that they left Iraq in reasonably good shape." You did not leave Iraq in reasonably good shape, Mr. Blinken, and the events afterward directly negated your assessment at the time. It is very disappointing to me that you will not even admit that you were wrong. You were wrong because you said you were leaving behind a prosperous and less violent, more democratic—and none of that—than any time in recent history.

Now, I would like to ask you some questions. Do you believe that we should be providing the Ukrainian resistance with weapons, with lethal weapons with which to defend themselves now? Not whether it is on the table or not. Do you believe we should be supplying them with weapons in order to defend themselves, yes or no?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, what I can say is I believe we need to consider that.

Senator MCCAIN. I am asking you whether you believe we should be giving them the weapons or not, Mr. Blinken, and that is a straightforward question.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, you will understand that the advice that I provide to the President——

Senator MCCAIN. I am not asking for your advice. I am asking you for your opinion. You are supposed to be coming before this committee and give us your views.

Mr. BLINKEN. My belief is that that can play a role potentially in deterring——

Senator MCCAIN. Let the record show, Mr. Chairman, that the witness would not answer the question. Now——

The CHAIRMAN. I will let the record reflect that the witness answered the question as he did.

Senator MCCAIN. Excuse me. He would not answer either in the affirmative or the negative in response. He would not answer in response to the question, the question I will ask one more time: Do you believe we should be supplying the Ukrainians with lethal defensive weapons, yes or no?

Mr. BLINKEN. And again, Senator, I believe that is something that we need to look at very actively.

Senator MCCAIN. After 4,000 dead and the country dismembered and 4,000 more Russian troops invading eastern Ukraine, and you think it is something that should be looked at. That is really quite interesting.

Do you believe that Bashar Assad is getting stronger now that we are attacking only ISIS in Syria?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I believe that as we work to build up the moderate opposition, as we make it a stronger counterweight not only to ISIL but to the regime, Assad will get weaker, his position will change——

Senator MCCAIN. But we are not attacking Bashar Assad, Mr. Blinken, and that is a fact. Are we?

Mr. BLINKEN. We are working to build——

Senator MCCAIN. Are we attacking or not?

Mr. BLINKEN. We are currently—no, we are not attacking Bashar Assad.

Senator MCCAIN. We are not attacking Assad?

Mr. BLINKEN. No, we are not.

Senator MCCAIN. At the end of September you stated: "The best way to deal with Assad is to transition him out so that the moderate opposition can fill the vacuum. That is what we have been working on."

At the G20 over the weekend, President Obama was asked if he was actively discussing ways to remove President Assad as part of a political transition, and his response was "No."

Are we working to transition Assad out or not?

Mr. BLINKEN. We believe, the President has said repeatedly—I am not sure the exact words that you are referring to, but I have heard him say repeatedly——

Senator MCCAIN. It is fairly simple. He said "No."

Mr. BLINKEN. Assad has lost his legitimacy. There is no way going forward that Syria can be stable with Assad in power. So what we have been looking——

Senator MCCAIN. So the President was incorrect, when asked if he was actively discussing ways to remove Bashar Assad as part of a political transition, and his answer was "No"?

Mr. BLINKEN. The President has been focused and consistent on the effort to support the moderate opposition, to build it up as a counterforce, to change the dynamic so that we can get to a political transition that winds up removing Assad.

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Blinken, you quite often referred about the moral obligations and the standing of the United States of America. Do you believe that it is moral for us to train Syrians to go into Syria, in this case in Saudi Arabia, to go into Syria and fight, when we are not attacking Bashar Assad and Bashar Assad is intensifying his attacks on the Free Syrian Army? Is that moral?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, we have been working now for more than 3 years to support the——

Senator MCCAIN. Again, we do not answer the question. It is too bad that you can not answer straightforward questions, Mr. Blinken. I want to ask you whether you think it is immoral or not for us to send these young Syrians into an environment where they will be barrel-bombed by Bashar Assad.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thanks to the work that we have been able to do with you, with Congress, we are now——

Senator MCCAIN. You have done no work with me. You have done no work with me, Mr. Blinken.

Mr. BLINKEN. On the Train and Equip Program for the Syrian opposition——

Senator MCCAIN. You have not worked with me on anything.

Mr. BLINKEN. Well, that is something that we would want to do and relish doing.

Senator MCCAIN. After 6 years, you would want to do that. I thank you.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, could I just—if I could just add. We have been working with the moderate opposition for nearly 3 years. We have been working to build them up, give them support, give them greater means to defend themselves——

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Blinken, when you say that it is very disturbing to me, because I know these people. I have been in Syria and I have met them. A lot of them that I have met with are now dead because we would not help them when the President of the United States said "No" to the recommendation of his Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and head of the CIA to provide arms to them. A lot of them have died. And we did not do all of those things you are saying, and there is ample proof by the fact of the situation that they are in today, which is probably more tenuous than it has ever been in history.

So again, I really take strong exception to hear you say something that I know, because I have been on the ground there, is not true. And I know these people very well. They feel abandoned. There have been many media reports, not just my reporting, but just a couple days ago in The Wall Street Journal. They feel abandoned and they have every reason to feel abandoned, and many of them are deserting to go to al-Nusra because they do not believe that they are getting any assistance.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, all I can tell you is from what I see, what I believe, what I know from what we have done. We have been working with them. We have been supporting them. We now have an opportunity, again thanks to the great work that has been done with Congress, to intensify and accelerate that effort, to give them even greater means to defend themselves, to defend their families, to defend their communities, to become a counterweight to ISIL, but also to become a counterweight to Assad.

We share the same objective. We would welcome continuing to work with you and deepen that and figure out a way to get it done effectively.

Senator MCCAIN. We know a way to get it done, Mr. Blinken. We have known it for a long time, a way to get it done, and we have articulated it time after time after time. And since that way was not pursued, we are now in the situation we are in today, whether it be Iraq or whether it be in Syria. Dividing Syria and Iraq into two different kinds of conflicts when we are fighting one enemy, of course, is bizarre.

One more point. I guess I am way over time. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. Just today we were meeting with some people who affirmed to us our belief, if you move everybody out of Afghanistan you will see the Iraq move again. Do you believe that we should leave a sustaining force in Afghanistan?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, to me the lesson for Afghanistan from Iraq is the need for political accommodation, what we did not get sufficiently in Iraq. At the time that I said the remarks that you referenced, I actually believed that we were in a position where Iraqis were working together politically within the confines of their constitution——

Senator MCCAIN. But you were wrong.

Mr. BLINKEN. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister chose to take Iraq in another direction. The foundation was there, the means

were there. It did not happen and that is something that unfortunately has stood Iraq in very bad stead.

But I believe one of the lessons we should draw from that—and you are right to focus on—is that, absent that kind of political accommodation and willingness to work together, it will be difficult to sustain all of the progress in Afghanistan. Happily, at least for now, we have in the new President, Mr. Ghani, the Chief Executive, Abdullah Abdullah, a commitment to work together inclusively, to bring the country together, and to give the investment that we made in Afghanistan the chance to succeed, including the Afghan Security Forces.

We need to keep that investment going, we need to keep the financing going, and we need to support them in their efforts. If that happens, I believe—and of course we have two more years to continue in an aggressive way to help build up and develop the capacity of those forces.

Senator MCCAIN. Unfortunately, Mr. Blinken—the time has expired. Unfortunately, you will be wrong again. If we do not leave a sustaining force behind, Afghanistan will collapse and you will be wrong again.

I thank the chair.

The CHAIRMAN. The chair has allowed the Senator greater time than he allowed himself.

We have one or two colleagues who wish to come back and ask questions. We have a second vote. I think it is important not to close the hearing so that we can have them have their expressions of whatever questions they want to ask you.

I would like to take, before I have to go vote, a moment to ask you two quick questions. Hopefully, you can answer them quickly. One is, when the United States invaded Iraq who was the big winner?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think you could point to a few potentially. And you are talking about in 2003?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. BLINKEN. I think certainly Iran benefited at the time. I think that arguably, unfortunately, al-Qaeda benefited because it was able to then develop a front in Iraq that it did not have. So there were some unfortunate consequences to that action.

On the other hand, thanks to the extraordinary sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, our diplomats, our civilians, whatever one thinks about the war and how it started and why it started, because of that sacrifice, because of that extraordinary effort over a decade, we gave Iraq a chance to succeed. We helped give it the institutions of governance. We helped create structures that could allow it to actually be something relatively unique in the region. And there was a moment, at least in my judgment, where people were actually working within the confines of the constitution and institutions, despite their tremendous differences, to move the country together. So——

The CHAIRMAN. And it is in that context that you made the comment that Senator McCain referenced?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. My own observation, as someone who voted against the war in Iraq, was that it was the biggest blunder that

we committed. We ended up, no weapons of mass destruction, no clear and present danger to the United States, no imminent threat, and the loss of so many lives and national treasure.

Now, we certainly cherish the contributions and the sacrifices made by American forces to ultimately liberate the Iraqi people. But at the end of the day, there is a lot of bad actors in the world. I can name a few that I would like to see go. You might imagine who is on the top of that list. And yet it is not in the national interest of the United States to necessarily pursue that course of action.

What we did is give Iran an opportunity for an ascendancy that creates challenges throughout the region. I just wanted to create context to your comments. And I have filibustered sufficiently to have Senator Kaine take the chair as I go to vote.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KAINE [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Blinken, for your service and your willingness to be here. What a position of honor your position will be. As a member of the committee, I visit a lot of countries and I always have meetings with FSOs, usually in their first or second term, to talk about their lives and their questions and their sacrifices. Sometimes they ask me about traffic in northern Virginia where they own property, but mostly we talk about the very serious issues that they deal with. What a wonderful bunch of people that you have worked with and you are going to continue to work with. So I will just start off by honoring them.

I think we do a pretty good job of acknowledging members of our military who serve now, but there are so many Americans abroad who are small "a" ambassadors, and we just need to thank all of them. So I think you are going to have a great opportunity to serve with wonderful people, and I know you know that.

Two thoughts on the AUMF process, and we talked a bit about this in the office. I do think it is a mistake for the administration not to have sent up AUMF language, because I think you are more likely to get an AUMF that you like if you send up language and you are less likely if you do not.

That being said, we are the article I branch. So I do not think there is any excuse for us not to do it and to do it with dispatch, and I hope we will. And I know we will work together on the terms of it.

So that is a critique. Let me now offer a compliment. Senator King and I visited the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar in early October to see the coalition in action. The administration—and it is both a military effort and a diplomatic effort, the efforts to pull together a meaningful coalition of nations who believe ISIL is a threat. It sounds good on paper and when you see it, it is even more impressive, the seamlessness of the coalition partners working together in the air strike campaign.

We were in a room that looked like the New York Stock Exchange, with big screens up, and folks from so many nations making hard decisions, but making them in an apparently seamless way. That was a month ago. It was highly impressive. So I know there is a lot of elements to this. The assembly of the coalition may be one of the most difficult, at least if the early evidence is an indication. We felt pretty positive about it, both Senator King and I. So I will offer that to you as a compliment.

One thing I would like to caution you, both in the State Department and all of us more broadly—and I would love to hear your response on it—is, do not let Iraq-Syria take our eyes off Afghanistan. We let that happen. I think we let that happen in 2003. I think we let it happen in 2006–2007.

I first was in Afghanistan in April 2006 as Governor visiting my Virginia Guards men and women who were serving there. I think it was the belief of a lot of the American both diplomatic and military leadership on the ground in Afghanistan at that point that Iraq was taking our attention away. The achievements that had been gained in Afghanistan as a result of American effort, diplomatic effort, military effort, had been significant—life expectancy advances, kids in schools. It is fragile under this new government. The formation of the new government is a huge tribute to your boss and to American diplomatic effort. But it is fragile.

While I am a supporter of an authorization for military action against ISIL in Iraq and Syria, I am mindful of the fact that we have turned our attention to one theater and then not paid the attention that was necessary. The Afghanistan situation is hopeful enough, but fragile enough, that if we turn our attention too dramatically to the events that are in the newspaper every day we run the risk of losing gains that have been achieved at an awful lot of sacrifice.

I would love to hear your thoughts on that.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, what you have just said resonates in a very powerful way and it resonates because you said it in this room. A decade ago in this room, President Karzai sat where I am sitting today and he said almost exactly what you said. This was before the war in Iraq and he was testifying on Afghanistan, and he said: It is not my role necessarily to give the United States advice about what it should do or should not do somewhere else, but I ask you, whatever you do, do not take your eyes off Afghanistan. So what you just said seems to have resonated across the decade back into this very room, and I could not agree more.

Secretary Kerry, as you know, is intensely focused on this question. Had it not been for his extraordinary personal diplomacy, I am not sure that we would have gotten the accommodation that we saw between President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah. That is a tribute to, and triumph of, American diplomacy and his personal engagement.

Now, you are exactly right, we need to help sustain that, and we are. We are very focused on giving them the support that they need to continue to move the country forward in an inclusive way. That is very much a focus of the Secretary and of the administration.

Second, I think you are right to underscore this because we have to sustain the investment we have made in Afghanistan. We made a commitment to help develop the Afghan National Security Forces. We got other countries around the world to do the same thing. Countries made commitments and pledges in Chicago and Tokyo militarily, on the financial assistance side. Those have to be sustained.

In fact, if you look at the assessments that have been done, our analysis and the analysis of the intelligence community is the single most important factor in helping Afghanistan continue to move

forward is sustained support from the intelligence community. So we hear very much what you are saying. We agree with it, and I think there is a vital role that we can play together working with the committee to make sure that we are doing justice to that.

Senator KAINE. There were early signs of success in the coalition government—the signing of the bilateral security agreement, the signing of the status of forces agreement, the reinitiation of a criminal investigation into corruption of the Kabul Bank, the signing of a long kind of—dust was all over it—potential energy deal with Pakistan, indicating potential for opening up better ties there. So there were some good early signs.

But a sign that is still a troubling one is the difficulty in the formation of a Cabinet. I know that the Afghan leadership is going to be going to a donors conference in London in early December, and I am sure the donors are going to pepper them with questions about that. The United States played such a key role in the diplomatic rapprochement between President Ghani and Executive Abdullah. That was key. I think there is going to be diplomatic roles to play in some steps along the way, including in this, in the formation of the government, because I can not imagine that conversation with the donors will go very well if they walk in and there is not tangible evidence of real progress toward the formation of an inclusive government.

Mr. BLINKEN. And we have made exactly that case to them.

Senator KAINE. Great.

So many other questions have been asked; numerous questions about Iran. Just one point about Iran. I think it was Senator Risch who said he had been a harsh critic of the administration or just a critic of the administration's proposal on the interim deal in the JPA. I was actually a real supporter. But I may be as hawkish on the ultimate, the big deal.

I really felt like the interim deal had to be done. There had to be an interim phased approach that was trust-building because of the lack of trust between the parties. When there is a situation that is just fundamentally characterized by lack of trust, the only way you get to a better place is to test each other out in small things and see if the tests are passed enough to move on to larger things.

So the interim deal, a huge supporter. But you are going to—you said you cannot say where it is going to go, but it is going to be one of three paths. It is either going to be a deal—then we will talk about whether it is a good or bad deal. If it is going to be no deal, that would be relatively clear. Unfortunately, we have to figure out the consequences. Or it is going to be some request for additional time to put it together. I think the body will be pretty tough on that. To the extent that the toughness of Congress is at all lost on the negotiators on the Iranian side, I know that our team over there will disabuse them of that notion as you are in the final phases before November 24.

Last thing; just a thought. I am over time, but, hey, I am the last guy with questions, so I can easily do this. Something I would like you to kind of respond to. We focus our energy, as we often should, as we should, on the problematic areas. We ought to focus our energy too, and you should, in states and areas where things are ac-

tually moving in a positive direction, try to shine a spotlight on them, try to encourage others to do the same.

In the first Arab Spring country, Tunisia, that I recently visited, the United States has played an important role and there have been important both parliamentary and now upcoming Presidential elections. That could be a significant success story of positive movement in the Arab world that I think should be an important area.

The United States-India relationship—you and I talked about this—I think is entering a new phase, for a variety of reasons, where there is a huge up-side opportunity on economic cooperation and trade, on military cooperation, on cooperation on cyber issues. There are a number of instances of economies and countries in Latin America. There are some that are going bad. We have had questions about Venezuela certainly, but there is also some very positive examples.

Let us not have all of our diplomacy or all of the energy of leaders like you be around the crisis zones where things are going bad. One of the ways you help things go better in places where they are going bad is to shine the spotlight on where they are going well and try to extract the lessons and use them, so lessons from Plan Colombia that can be used in Central America or lessons in Tunisia that can be used in other nations in northern Africa like Algeria as they probably approach a governmental transition within the next 5 or 10 years.

So I would just encourage you in that, and if you have any thought about that I would love to hear your response.

Mr. BLINKEN. Well, I appreciate very much that you just did put the spotlight on a number of very positive developments, ones where we have been working very hard, sometimes behind the scenes, sometimes quietly, supporting, providing assistance, giving advice, in just those ways. I think we have seen the United States-India relationship that you just pointed to come a remarkable distance. It started with the end of the Clinton administration. The Bush administration did a tremendous job in carrying the relationship forward, and now we have just had the extraordinarily successful visit of Prime Minister Modi here to the United States and an agenda that is working across virtually every issue of importance to us with India that we are carrying forward. There again, it is something where I think we could work together very, very profitably in the months ahead.

Latin America as well. Extraordinary success stories. We have seen countries make fundamentally important decisions about their macroeconomic policies that have been to their benefit, improving governance, dealing with security challenges with the assistance of the United States, including in Colombia, Mexico, now other places. There, too, is a lot to work with, to work for, and to work together on.

The long and short of it is I think you are exactly right that we should not lose sight of the good news, especially because if we can make sure that it actually gets deep-rooted, not only will that consolidate the good thing where it is happening, but, as you just said, it can serve as a model, lessons learned, inspiration for other places.

Senator KAINE. With the permission of the ranking member, just one other brief point before I hand it back to see if you have an additional round.

On the Latin America point, one of the things I have been struck by is, American foreign policy almost always has revolved around an east-west axis. We were worried about Europe, worried about the Soviet Union, worried about China. Even when we had a policy in the Americas, it has often really been a, well, we are worried about Europe in the Americas, so we have the Monroe Doctrine; we are worried about the Soviet Union in the Americas, so we are engaging in Truman Doctrine proxy activities there.

The concern in Latin America is often that they are a source of attention only upon a crisis. If there is undocumented kids coming to the borders in big numbers, we go and we work on that; those numbers abate, the attention kind of moves away.

But the reality of kind of the facts on the ground right now is Canada is our number one trade partner and Mexico is our number two trade partner. You could see foreign policy going on an east-west axis, but if you look at our economic activity it is probably much more north-south than it is east-west. If you look at who comes to this country, the origins of people living here, the languages that are spoken here, our cultural traditions are so oriented around the north-south axis.

I do talk—this committee, we will have meetings with heads of state of South American countries. They will tell us about the deep engagement of China in trying to do natural resource deals or trying to do things, and they will say that: We feel more cultural affinity with the United States, but we just do not see the level of engagement.

So I would just put that on your shoulders going into this position. Our economy is running north and south. The flow of people is running north and south. Our cultural traditions and heritages—we are a nation—next year is the 450th anniversary of the founding of St. Augustine, FL. We have been a Hispanic nation 42 years before Jamestown. But we do not make that a primary focus of our foreign policy, and I would just encourage you and your colleagues at the State Department to take advantage of the opportunities that seem to be low-hanging fruit in the hemisphere.

Mr. BLINKEN. I very much appreciate that, Senator. If I could just maybe say a very brief word to address it, because, first, I know from my conversations with the Secretary that this is something that he is personally very focused on. We have a very dynamic Assistant Secretary of State who I know, Roberta Jacobson, who does an amazing job every day.

But it is also something that the President and Vice President have been intensely focused on. The President has made six trips to Latin America as President. Just this year in 2014, because this is something I was able to witness, he received in the Oval Office the heads of Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Uruguay. He visited Mexico. And the Vice President has been a human dynamo on 8 trips to the region, 10 countries, constant phone engagement.

We have worked, as you know, to advance free trade agreements with Colombia, with Panama. We have established, precisely to

your point, economic dialogues with countries that are emerging in a big way—Mexico, Brazil. We have the Caribbean Security Initiative which is vitally important there. And of course there have been the responses to the crises as well—Haiti and then the unaccompanied children.

Then there is a very other important component to this. There is a very dynamic exchange component. We have 100,000 strong in Latin America and we have 72,000 students from the region studying in the United States today. That is an increase of about 8 percent over the previous year. We have 43,000 Americans studying in Latin America, which is also an increase.

So we think you are exactly right and we want to work on all of these different lines of effort to maximize the relationships, strengthen them. When you look at countries like Chile, like Peru, like Colombia, like Mexico and others, there is an extraordinary foundation for progress. And of course, if we are able to get the Trans-Pacific Partnership done, that, too, will further deep-root that progress.

Senator KAINE. Senator Menendez is returning. I am going to hand it back to him. Mr. Blinken, thank you for your testimony today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Kaine. I appreciate it.

Senator Coons, when he gets accommodated, will be next, and then, depending upon whether any other member up or not, we will be closing the hearing. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much, Chairman Menendez. Thank you for holding this hearing.

Thank you, Mr. Blinken, for long and honorable service to this Nation, your 6 years as staff director here on the committee and your very capable and dedicated service in the Obama administration and to my own home State, Vice President Joe Biden.

I also want to thank, in passing, Bill Burns as well, who has served very well as Deputy Secretary and is an accomplished Foreign Service officer. We thank him for his 33 years of service to our country.

If I might, Mr. Blinken, first an issue of particular interest to me, in part because I chair the Africa Subcommittee, in part because of its strategic importance for us, is the concern about failed states, about states—and I will just mention two—Somalia and the Central African Republic, where in one instance we had for nearly 20 years a complete collapse of centralized control or authority, and as a result real threats to regional and global security, and the other where there is an ongoing and significant humanitarian crisis.

Tell me how you think we might together get ahead of the issue of failed states around the world, and what is the proper mix between sort of economic and security and political initiatives to regain governance and to move forward in human rights and to secure and stabilize failed states in the region and the world?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, thank you for your leadership on this, for your work on this. I think you have identified one of the principal challenges we face, because we see again and again that where we

face problems one of the things that is at the root of the problem is a failure of a state, is the failure of governance, is the failure of institutions.

We have seen the incredible hope generated by, for example, the Arab Spring. But then, translating those hopes and aspirations on the street, into the institutions that can actually guarantee the rights and opportunities that people are clamoring for is a huge and indeed generational challenge, because unfortunately this does not happen overnight. So what we have tried to do—and you can go across the board. We talked about Tunisia a little bit earlier. We have now the great challenge in Yemen.

I think what you pointed to is essential, that in many of these places we have to take and we are taking a comprehensive approach to the problem. Often there is a military component because there may be a challenge from an insurgency, from a terrorist group. We have to help these countries develop the means and the capacity to deal with those problems.

But that is not sufficient. Unless we are able to help them develop the institutions of governance that give their people a sense that they can advance their interests through the democratic process, it is not going to work. Unless we can help them create institutions and economies that can actually deliver for people in their daily lives and that gives them the means not only to subsist, but to move forward, it is not going to work.

So I think what you alluded to is the need to look at these problems comprehensively to bring all of the different components of our government to bear on these problems, and to do it in a coordinated way, because what we do know is that if—and I know that, especially after a decade where our country has been engaged in two wars, with a large deployment of forces, that some people say, well, maybe this is a time to be a little bit less engaged. I think the answer is it is not. It is actually a time to be more engaged. But the question is how should we be engaged and how can we be engaged in a sustainable way that can actually help lift up some of the countries that are under challenge?

I think, for example, that the large-scale indefinite deployment of American forces is something that obviously would be a challenge to sustain. Developing the capacity of our partners to work on these problems is a more sustainable way to do it.

Similarly, as we look at the development agenda, we have the development goals that now need to be brought forward beyond 2015 and to work on those. The Bush administration created an extraordinarily powerful mechanism in the Millennium Challenge Corporation that has done remarkable work, and this is something that we have continued.

So it is a long way of saying that as we think about our engagement we have to address this question of failed states, but we have to figure out ways to do it that are sustainable, that we can keep going, that we can resource, and that we can bring all of government to bear on. Of course, I should add, the private sector and other sectors are absolutely critical. This summer, something that you played a leadership role in, the Africa Leaders summit, we brought to Washington, as you know, an extraordinary gathering of African leaders, and we worked with them to help unleash more

growth in Africa, also to deal with security challenges, institutional challenges.

A key component of that was bringing the private sector to the table and helping to strengthen those relationships. Power Africa is a wonderful example of the government and the private sector working together to help people in a meaningful way and to help economies develop a foundation that can carry them forward and actually prevent government failure, failed states, and so forth.

So there is a broad agenda there. This committee has done extraordinary work on it to date. If I move over to the State Department, that is something that I would welcome working with the chairman on, working with you on, and other members.

Senator COONS. I could not agree more. As you know, last night was the Millennium Challenge Corporations 10th anniversary event. I have had the opportunity to visit a half dozen states in Africa where they have made a real difference, and I think bringing the energy and the resources of the private sector, whether through AGOA, through the Partnership for the Future, or through MCC, to bear in making progress is critical.

I also just want to make sure that you are keeping in mind, that we all keep in mind, democracy, and civil society. On the continent of Africa at least, there are a half-dozen countries where leaders are seeking to change the constitution to extend their terms, to avoid the accountability of free, fair, and open elections. I think that is something we have to balance as well.

Mr. BLINKEN. Absolutely.

Senator COONS. You have been here a long time. So although I have many questions and I am confident you would answer them, let me just ask a last question if I could. Given your almost unique role as having served significantly here and now in the Executive Office and now going—of the President—and now going to the State Department, how can we improve communication, collaboration, and relationships, between this committee, this body, the Senate, and the White House?

Mr. BLINKEN. I actually think it is in a sense pretty simple, and it goes to something that Chairman Menendez talked to me about last week and something I feel very strongly about. That is giving real meaning to the word "consultation." I heard the chairman loud and clear. I also heard from Ranking Member Corker on this. I think we can always do a better job and I am determined to do a better job, if confirmed, in making that word mean what it means, which is not inform, but actually consult, work together, have a dialogue, try and develop these policies together. There will be places, obviously, where we disagree, as any executive and legislative do. But it is my conviction, from having spent 6 years here, having spent 13 years in the executive, that it sure works better when we are working together, and it does not work if we are not communicating and communicating in a meaningful way.

So I heard the chairman on that loud and clear. I am determined to do that if I am confirmed.

Senator COONS. I could not agree more, and whether it is the AUMF and the conflict with ISIS, the potential agreement with Iran and concerns about our vital ally Israel and our safety and se-

curity, the Rebalance to Asia, or the things we talked about in Africa, all of these, we are much more likely to be successful together.

Thank you for your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for making it possible for me to come and question. And I may not be the last.

Thank you so much for your testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. I apologize.

Thank you. Good to see you. I appreciate your time, and I will be brief. I know we have votes going on as well.

I have two followup questions. I understand you have already spoken about the issue of Venezuela. My understanding is, just to clarify on sanctions against government officials that are responsible for human rights violations or corruption, the administration's position, it is now willing to cooperate or be helpful in terms of sanctions legislation?

Mr. BLINKEN. That is correct, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. Can I ask, would the administration consider doing some of those things directly? They do have authority to take some of those actions. They already have with regards to the visas. Is that something that is being contemplated?

Mr. BLINKEN. That is something we would very much like to work on with you. As you know, we took the actions that we took this summer, indeed consulting with you on that, in terms of the visa restrictions that we did. As we had a brief opportunity to discuss, we have been focused on trying to see if our partners in Latin America could actually get results in terms of the opposition's agenda—getting people out of jail, advancing progress on the electoral commission, et cetera. I think, unfortunately, to date the effort has not borne fruit, which is why we think that working with you on what you have been proposing is something that we should do.

So certainly, if confirmed, and even if not, in my current capacity, I would welcome having that conversation and working on that with you.

Senator RUBIO. Then on the issue of Colombia briefly. As you are well aware, they have been negotiating, the government has been negotiating with the FARC over a potential peace agreement. That, of course, has been suspended because of the kidnapping of a Colombian general. One of the issues that arose during my recent trip there is that there may come a point where as part of those negotiations the FARC is asking that people currently in custody in the United States be released early, that their sentences be commuted. Can we rule that out now to make sure that it is clearly understood that that is not something the administration would ever support doing?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, what I can tell you is this. As you know, we are not a party to the negotiations, so we would have no requirement, whatever they negotiate, to send anyone back. We are obviously a strong ally of Colombia, as we strongly support the process, and as we go forward, if they call on us to play a role—and again, because we are not part of the negotiations, there is nothing we would be required to do—obviously I would commit, and I do here, to consult very closely with you about anything that

the Colombians may ask for in the future if something actually materializes in terms of a final deal.

Right now, as you know as well as I do, they are not there. We had the very unfortunate kidnapping of the general this week, and we are strongly supporting their efforts to try and carry this forward. But this is something, if the Colombians ask things of us, we would work with you to see what should be done

Senator RUBIO. Then my last question is: As you know, the current sanctions that exist toward Cuba have been codified via the Helms-Burton legislation and other previous pieces of legislation that have passed, that have been enacted in the past. Absent Cuba meeting the requirements of that legislation, do you anticipate during the rest of the President's term that there will be any unilateral change or any change in the United States sanctions or conditions against Cuba absent them meeting those conditions of democracy, human rights, and so forth, the things outlined in that legislation?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I think on Cuba let me just say a couple things if I could. First, I think we share strongly an understanding, and one that you have firsthand, of the nature of the regime. It has been an imprisoned island all my life, literally. I actually remember my parents talking to me about Cuba, that they had been able to visit in the 1950s before it became an imprisoned island. And of course, we know exactly what is going on today, the detentions, the harassment, the police state.

I think the question is—and I know we had a brief opportunity to discuss this—I think we all believe that change almost by definition will come, has to come, and the question is how do we best help the Cuban people prepare for that change. I know there are differences of views on the best and most effective way to do that in terms of getting them information, getting them resources, et cetera.

But to cut to the chase, obviously anything that might be done on Cuba will have to be consistent with the law; and second, anything that in the future might be done on Cuba would be done in full consultation, with the real meaning of the word "consultation" that I just alluded to, with this committee.

Senator RUBIO. I guess my point is there has been some chatter—and I understand some of it is just chatter, as happens in this town—that somehow in the next couple years, at the end of his term the President may seek to make some changes, perhaps even unilaterally, toward United States sanctions and policy toward Cuba, as some have advocated for. Is that being contemplated absent a real democratic opening?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think you know that the President has views on how to try to help move Cuba in a democratic direction, to help support people moving in that direction. If he has an opportunity, I am sure that is something he would want to pursue. But it depends on Cuba and the actions that they take. What we have seen, as I just alluded to, are actions in exactly the wrong direction—the detentions, the harassment. They talk about wanting to improve relations. They have, as you and the chairman know so well, Alan Gross, an American citizen, who is now in his fifth year of detention. You know, when you say you want to improve relations and

you are unjustly imprisoning an American, never mind what you are doing to your own people, that is usually problematic.

Senator RUBIO. I guess the only thing that concerns me—and I understand that perhaps you need to consult with them further. But the only thing that concerns me is I have not heard you say point blank that, absent democratic openings, we are not going to see actions on the part of this administration to weaken the current embargo and sanctions against Cuba.

Mr. BLINKEN. At least in my judgment, unless Cuba is able to demonstrate that it is taking meaningful steps to move forward, I do not see how you move forward in the relationship.

Senator RUBIO. When you say "move forward," move forward on democratic reforms, not simply economic reform.

Mr. BLINKEN. Not simply economic reform.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me thank you. Let me just say on this last topic, in which I obviously have a fair amount of interest, you know, going ahead—and Cuba is the only country in the Western Hemisphere that violated U.N. Security Council resolutions and sanctions in sending military equipment to North Korea. Yet we were relatively silent about that. If any other country would have done it, we would have been totally driving at the U.N. A different set of circumstances, they received no consequences.

Cuba does not meet the standards that the Summit of the Americas leaders set forth when it said that "The maintenance and strengthening of the rule of law and strict respect for the democratic system are an essential condition"—"an essential condition"—"of our presence at this and future summits." Clearly, Cuba does not meet that standard.

Cuba has an American citizen held hostage who did nothing but try to help the Jewish community in Cuba communicate with each other. And yet it wants to hold him hostage in return for Cuban spies, who were not benign spies—they were spies who were spying against our Defense Department, one of which integrated the Defense Department, Belen Ana Montes.

So I could go down a long list in addition to the human rights, which sometimes I think we cavalierly say, yes, there is detentions. Not there is detentions. There is arrests in which people are detained for long periods of time, years, simply because that which we enjoy in America they try to seek to exercise—free speech, protests. There are individuals, like the Ladies in White, who just every week march with a gladiola peacefully to church dressed in white to protest peacefully that their sons and husbands are in jail for no legal reason, and they are savagely beaten.

Sometimes we sort of gloss over all of this. This administration in its speech, when it started this administration at its inaugural speech, talked about opening up the hand to those who are willing to take it, and the clenched fist. Well, the administration has unilaterally opened up the hand and done a series of things, including more visits, more money flowing to Cuba—not just residents—not just families of United States citizens, but anyone can send money to Cuba. The regime has received those moneys because they are the ones who control the economy in the command and control

economy on the island; and at the end of the day, the regime has not reciprocated one scintilla, but has become more repressive.

I could go on and on. So I understand Senator Rubio's concerns, because I heard them as well. Talk about the whole question of consultation versus notification. This is the epitome of notification, but not consultation. And there will be a very significant response if what we have is notification and not consultation at the end of the day.

I appreciate your answers before the committee. I have one or two that I am not going to delay, that I am going to ask you to respond in writing. I am concerned about Turkey, its presence in the exclusive economic zone in Cyprus, which I think is a belligerent move, unnecessary, and to the detriment of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, as well as to our negotiations there. But I will allow you to respond to that in writing for me.

This record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow. I would urge you, if you get questions, which undoubtedly you will, to answer them as expeditiously as possible so that when we return from the Thanksgiving recess there can be a business meeting to consider your nomination before the committee.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:15 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

STATEMENT OF SENATOR CHARLES E. SCHUMER IN SUPPORT OF TONY BLINKEN

Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker, I would like to express my support for Mr. Tony Blinken who was recently nominated to be the next Deputy Secretary of State.

Tony is a native of New York City (Yonkers), and after his childhood, Tony attended college at Harvard University and successfully graduated Magna cum Laude. He then went on to Columbia Law School and got his JD with the goal of practicing law. After a short stint in private practice, Tony found his passion for foreign affairs writing at the New Republic Magazine and the New York Times.

After his career in journalism, he served at the State Department from 1993 to 1994 as the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, where he got his first taste of public service. Moving up quickly, he went on to work at the National Security Council under the Clinton administration for 7 years where he directed European Affairs and NATO policy.

After a year in the think tank world at the Center for Strategic and International Studies as a senior fellow, he came to the Senate where many of us worked closely with him on foreign affairs issues. He worked directly for this committee as the Democratic staff director during then Senator Biden's tenure as chairman and then ranking member. While holding this prestigious position for over 6 years, he organized hearings on Iraq in 2002 which helped spark a national debate before the war and played a key role in NATO enlargement and the civil nuclear agreement with India. He has traveled all over the world with Senator Biden and leading Republican Senators Lugar, Graham, and Hagel.

I want my friends and colleagues to know that Mr. Blinken, over the past several years in the administration, has acted with a cogency that denotes his extensive experience in handling flash points around the globe: Iraq, Russia, and the Middle East. As Deputy Secretary of State, no doubt these will be at the top of his portfolio.

As Assistant to the President and Principal Deputy National Security Advisor, he developed diplomatic relationships with multiple Iraqi governments in over 25 trips to Iraq; secured a deal on oil payments between the Iraqi Government, the Turkish Government, and Kurds; and chaired a series of high-level meetings in the region with senior leaders from Iraq, Jordan, the UAE, Turkey, and Egypt to help Iraq reintegrate with its neighbors.

On Russia—he was assertive up front, and kept his foot on the gas, pushing at each juncture to take steps to counter Russian aggression and their support of the rebels in eastern Ukraine.

And on the Middle East—Tony is a steadfast advocate for Israel's Iron Dome system. He was one of the first to jump and draft legislation to fund the system.

As the Deputy Secretary of State, Tony will come into this position with decades of foreign policy experience in dealing with the most important regions in the world, the ability to build bridges amid disagreement and dissent, and a sharp intellect to make sound policy decisions on complex issues. He is a well-known, successful, strategic thinker in the foreign policy arena. I give Tony my full support for his nomination and I urge my colleagues to support him as well.

RESPONSES OF ANTONY JOHN BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. European security also means energy security. Europe must diversify its supply and invest in its energy infrastructure. Greater regional cooperation, such as in the eastern Mediterranean, can help, but Turkey's provocations in Cyprus' EEZ are creating instability that puts at risk further exploration and the placement of projects that would benefit Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike.

- What actions have you taken and what messages have you sent about Turkey's decision to send its ships into Cyprus' EEZ?

Answer. I share your concern about recent developments and can assure you that the Obama administration remains strongly committed to a just and lasting settlement to reunify the island of Cyprus as a bizonal, bicommunal federation. If confirmed, I will reinforce our diplomatic efforts to achieve such a settlement. We support Cyprus' right to develop its resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and believe that the island's oil and gas resources should be equitably shared between both communities in the context of an overall settlement. Reducing tensions and getting the parties back to the negotiating table as soon as possible are critical to advancing the peace process.

The administration remains fully engaged with all stakeholders to reduce tensions over the EEZ and in support of United Nations Special Advisor Espen Barth Eide's efforts to move past the current impasse and resume negotiations. The Vice President spoke with President Anastasiades on October 31 and underscored our support for the Republic of Cyprus' sovereignty and right to develop resources in its exclusive economic zone, in keeping with customary international law. He also expressed our hope that all states in the region would pursue a mutually beneficial approach to developing energy resources. During the Vice President's November 21–23 visit to Turkey, he discussed with Turkish officials how Ankara can play a constructive role in defusing tensions and getting the talks back on track.

I appreciate your continued support of the settlement process. I assure you of the administration's unwavering commitment to resolving the long-standing division of the island, which we believe will enhance regional stability and prosperity, as well as improve the lives of all Cypriots.

Question. This summer, President Obama requested $3.7 billion in supplemental funding to respond to the refugee crisis that developed on our southern border. Not surprisingly, this crisis came after years of U.S. disengagement and sustained cuts to our foreign assistance budgets for Central America and the Western Hemisphere at large. While both President Obama and Vice President Biden have met repeatedly with Latin American leaders in the wake of this crisis, robust and sustained engagement still is needed.

- Will you make the crisis in Central America a priority? And will you commit to working to increase foreign assistance budgets for the Western hemisphere, a region whose security and economic development have a direct impact on the United States and its citizens?

Answer. The short answer to both questions is "Yes."

The administration remains firmly committed to partnership in the Western Hemisphere. Our goal is to strengthen democracy, advance prosperity, and ensure security in a manner that benefits all citizens.

The U.S. Government is making new investments in Central America and will continue to make the region a priority. Since 2008, $803 million has been appropriated for the Central American Regional Security Initiative. Additional investments, however, will be critical to respond comprehensively to the underlying factors that drive migration, particularly to advance prosperity and good governance.

Adequate resources for U.S. efforts in Central America will be critical to work collaboratively with partners in the region on shared objectives.

The administration's $300 million FY 2014 emergency supplemental reflected a request for a downpayment on needs for Central America. We are committed to working closely with Congress to secure the resources necessary for Central America. The Department expects that the administration's FY 2016 foreign assistance request to Congress will reflect additional prioritization on Central America.

Question. I was pleased to see Secretary Clinton and now Secretary Kerry take steps to move the State Department toward a stronger emphasis on the economic dimension in our diplomacy. And a few years ago the administration laid out a plan to reorganize some of our trade and development agencies in the hopes of making these institutions better aligned and more effective. This is an area in which I believe there is much work still to be done.

♦ Could you please discuss the current status of the State Department's progress in these areas, and what additional steps you are planning?

Answer. Secretary Kerry has established a Shared Prosperity Task Force to strengthen economic diplomacy as a central tenet of our foreign policy priorities. The State Department needs to be on the front lines promoting America's economic interests and our vision of a rules-based, transparent, global economy that serves the needs and aspirations of our own citizens and benefits people worldwide. We call this economic policy agenda "Shared Prosperity," to convey that our focus on expanding trade and investment opportunities for American business builds the conditions for a more prosperous and secure world.

The Shared Prosperity Task Force has set up Four Working Groups focused on building systems and capacities to succeed in this existential task.

The Knowledge Platforms Working Group, which our Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation (M/PRI) leads, is working to ensure that all State employees have the information they need deliver on our economic agenda and to make relevant information more available across multichannel platforms. In the 21st century, all State personnel deserve current information in real-time, and through these platforms we will better capitalize on our opportunities.

Our Human Capital Working Group, which our Human Resources Bureau (M/DGHR) leads, is revamping Foreign Service Institute training to include "Shared Prosperity" modules in its class offerings, from A–100 and other orientation classes through ambassadorial training. This working group is leading an effort to expand interagency "detail" opportunities for State Officers (beyond USTR) to include the Treasury Department, Commerce Department, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Office of Management & Budget.

Entrepreneurship is an essential element of American business culture, one which excites would-be entrepreneurs around the world, and offers opportunities to create jobs and more inclusive economic growth. Our Entrepreneurship Working Group is currently cataloguing and working to coordinate entrepreneurship initiatives that currently exist at the department.

The Jobs Diplomacy Working Group, which our Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) leads, is coordinating internally and with the interagency to be a more effective advocate for U.S. companies. This includes doing more to inform U.S. businesses of commercial opportunities abroad. In 2013, high-level State Department advocacy assisted with more than $5.5 billion in foreign government contracts being awarded to U.S. companies.

Additionally, our posts conducted over 80 calls with U.S. businesses through our "Direct Line" program, which is tailored particularly for smaller U.S. companies that often face steep challenges operating in foreign markets. Since its inception in 2012, nearly 200 embassies and over 5,000 U.S. companies have participated in Direct Line calls and webinars.

Over the past year, the Department also launched the Business Information Database System to alert U.S. businesses to significant international commercial opportunities, populating it with over $240 billion in leads.

Working with the Department of Commerce, we helped recruit over 1,300 attendees for the 2013 SelectUSA summit to attract job-creating foreign investment to the United States, and we have pursued an active trade policy agenda to expand opportunities for U.S. business in overseas markets. For instance, we helped to conclude the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and revive the WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA).

In the fast-growing area of digital commerce, the Department has led successful efforts to uphold the multistakeholder model of Internet governance and the ability of U.S. companies to operate across national boundaries.

We have made recent progress on market-opening aviation agreements with Mexico, Japan, and Ukraine and have worked to minimize commercial disruptions in other transportation markets.

The State Department and USAID have also helped U.S. business by providing critical support to partner countries in transition. For instance, we facilitated loan guarantees to key partners including Jordan, Tunisia, and Ukraine and led the multinational campaign that made 2014 the first year of full European Bank for Reconstruction and Development operations in the Middle East/North Africa region, with over $1 billion in finance for Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Finally, the Department has helped pave the way for expanded U.S. economic ties with African partners, culminating in a historic U.S.-Africa Leaders summit in August 2014.

Question. Though there are signs of what may be a slow-down of the spread of Ebola in Liberia, the number of new cases in Sierra Leone is on the rise. And recent news about the confirmation of new infections in Mali was very troubling. The epidemic has already taken a severe human toll, and has had a significant economic impact on already fragile economies. Today, the World Bank issued a revised estimate of the short- and medium-term economic impacts, projecting that the region could see $3–4 billion in lost GDP. This is a vast improvement over previous estimates; however, given the fragile nature of these economies and the poverty rates, this estimate is still worrisome. There are also possible political repercussions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea.

- How concerned should we be about political instability in West Africa as a result of the epidemic's continued spread?
- If confirmed, what role will you have in planning to mitigate such instability, and what steps will you recommend we take to support the governments in maintaining stability in affected countries?

Answer. Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea—the worst-affected countries—remain stable at this time. Mitigating the second order impact of the crisis is one pillar of our four-part strategy because both economic and/or sectoral decline will both impede the international response and render recovery a much longer process. We are responding at the community level, by providing food that we procure locally where possible and in order to prevent local market collapse, community care for families ravaged by the disease, and assistance, including bed nets, to address other urgent health requirements. Given the significant impact of the Ebola epidemic on the economies of the affected countries, we are working closely with and support the efforts of the World Bank and African Development Bank, and called for and have welcomed the International Monetary Fund's decision to provide debt relief in addition to grants and loans.

We must remain vigilant—there have been occasional security incidents pertaining to the Ebola outbreak. In Guinea, particularly in the remote Forrestiere Region, there have been incidents in which local communities have attacked officials and healthcare workers who were conducting outreach activities. Such attacks are likely fueled by a combination of fear and mistrust of government officials and outsiders. In Liberia, there have been localized incidents of unrest due to frustration over the failure of local authorities to collect bodies of the deceased or respond to requests for medical care in a timely manner. In the West Point neighborhood of Monrovia in August, the imposition of a quarantine led to violent protest that resulted in one death. While none of these countries have so far experienced widespread violence, protests, or instability, there is the risk that the ongoing crisis will fuel growing frustration, especially if the second-order effects on the economy, social fabric, and governance systems of these countries are not adequately addressed. If confirmed, I will ensure that our Embassies continue to monitor the security situation in West Africa carefully, and I will promote a whole-of-government effort to identify and address the potential drivers of instability, in close partnership with the governments of Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. The administration, in cooperation with our international partners, will continue our effort to stop Ebola at its source in West Africa, which is what we need to do to end the global security and health threat posed by the epidemic.

Question. South Sudan.—It has been almost a year since conflict broke out in South Sudan. During that time, nearly 2 million people have been displaced, and 4 million face food shortages. Aid groups are unable to reach significant portions of the civilian population due to insecurity, and there are allegations of human rights abuses by all parties to the conflict. At a meeting during the U.S.-Africa Leaders' summit in August, I urged President Salva Kiir of South Sudan to work toward a political solution to this man-made crisis. The Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan

and South Sudan has been leading U.S. efforts on pushing peace between various factions in South Sudan, and the United States has imposed targeted personal sanctions on some of the key actors in the conflict. Unfortunately, a peace agreement remains elusive.

- How effective, in your estimation, have the targeted sanctions been to date?
- If confirmed, will you be recommending expanding the sanctions to other individuals?
- When the administration announced targeted sanctions earlier this year, the State Department informed Congress that these measures were part of an effort to regionalize, even internationalize, sanctions. Where does that effort stand? Does the administration support an arms embargo?

Answer. The United States has utilized its targeted South Sudan sanctions Executive order to designate four individuals to date, two from the Government of South Sudan and two from opposition forces. We will continue to use the authority under the Executive order to hold accountable those who commit human rights abuses or obstruct the peace process. We have made this intention clear to the international community, including to regional governments brokering peace talks, and to the leadership of both of the warring parties. Targeted sanctions have been a necessary and effective tool to demonstrate the importance that the U.S. Government places on resolving this conflict and our commitment to hold accountable those who undermine peace and security in South Sudan.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) regional leadership has requested that increased external international pressure be brought to bear on the parties. Our imposition of sanctions was followed by similar actions from the European Union and Canada. The next step is to press ahead with a U.N. Security Council resolution establishing a U.N. sanctions regime. This process is currently under negotiation at the United Nations. We are working to ensure a robust U.N. Security Council sanctions regime which will demonstrate the international community's resolve in helping end the needless suffering of millions of South Sudanese.

Going forward, the Council will continuously review the appropriateness of these measures in light of the situation on the ground. We are continuing to review additional options to increase this pressure, as appropriate. We have and will continue to use all available tools to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and we are doing so in the context of a broad international coalition.

Question. Nigeria.—When I met with President Jonathan during the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit in August, we spoke of three key issues: security in the north, national elections in 2015, and the need for widespread inclusive development, particularly in the north. Since our meeting, Boko Haram has continued its rampage. Recent media reports claim that 4,000–5,000 refugees a week are crossing into Cameroon due to insecurity. I am deeply concerned about the safety of the Nigerian people as well as the implications for elections in February.

- Please speak to the administration's elections assistance strategy and how it will be impacted by the unrest in the north. Do you believe Nigeria can credibly move forward in February if the State of Emergency remains in place in the north, and insecurity significantly suppresses participation in the three affected northern states?
- What is the U.S. strategy related to ensuring there is an inclusive development agenda in northern Nigeria, and what programs and activities should we be implementing to prevent and or counter violent extremism in Nigeria?

Answer. As Nigeria looks ahead to the February 2015 general elections, the United States strongly supports a free, transparent, credible, inclusive, and nonviolent electoral process. We have consistently called upon all Nigerians to refrain from advocating, fomenting, or condoning violence before, during, or after the elections.

We have also worked with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as they administer a vote in which Nigerians are free to voice their opinions and participate in the electoral process without fear of retribution. We have also emphasized publicly and privately to political party officials, elected leaders, and candidates for office that they have a special responsibility to uphold these democratic precepts.

The United States remains committed to working with Nigeria to strengthen its democratic institutions in the years to come. A peaceful election in February 2015 will constitute a major step in that process.

The United States is committed to supporting Nigeria as it addresses the violence caused by Boko Haram. At the same time, Nigeria must take a comprehensive approach to fighting violent extremism that brings both civilian and security tools to the fight and protects innocent civilians.

Helping Nigeria to address this threat is a long-standing effort. Most recently, over the past 6 months the United States started sharing some intelligence with Nigeria, began training a new army battalion and will consider training additional battalions, and held numerous high-level discussions with Nigerian authorities to explore additional measures. The United States, along with the United Kingdom and France, is working closely with Nigeria and its neighbors to establish a Multi-National Task Force to coordinate regional efforts against Boko Haram.

Through the recently launched Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) we will provide $40 million in assistance to Nigeria and its neighbors—Niger, Cameroon, and Chad—to train personnel in border security, command and control, and other best practices to counter violent extremism. The Fund also provides assistance for the justice sector, rule of law programs, and stabilization efforts.

We are working closely with Nigeria and its neighbors to help counter extremism through existing programs like the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. We are also partnering with Nigeria through the President's Security Governance Initiative. Through these programs and initiatives we are helping the Nigerians to build up rule of law and to strengthen their security institutions. We will continue to seek other ways to assist Nigeria to counter Boko Haram and meet citizen security needs in the region.

USAID's programs targeting the Northeast of Nigeria include key elements of the U.S. Government's strategy to counter Boko Haram, and directly address the key, underlying drivers of the conflict. Humanitarian operations supported by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Food for Peace are ramping up to respond to the escalating challenges posed by growing numbers of internally displaced persons (IDP). OFDA's programs address challenges related to health; logistics; protection; livelihoods; capacity-building of Nigerian emergency management institutions; food security; and water, sanitation, and hygiene. USAID's Office of Food for Peace is finalizing a first wave of programming to more directly address the unfolding food security issues arising due to the conflict. At the same time, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is implementing an activity under its Support Which Implements Fast Transition (SWIFT) contract that will assist the Government of Borno State to build its capacity to respond to local needs. Complementing these emergency-response activities, USAID programming supports the delivery of urgent education services to IDPs and conflict-affected communities in the Northeast. As progress is made on these fronts, including on-ground security in the region, the mission intends to expand its local governance, health systems, and education systems programming into Borno State to help the state government make rapid advancements in its ability to deliver quality services to its citizens.

Question. President Obama recently made history by announcing a bold, joint climate commitment with China that is sure to reinvigorate international climate talks, but some in this body seem to think China needs to do little to meet their obligations. China's pledge on nonfossil energy will require roughly a trillion dollars in new clean energy investment or the equivalent of building one nuclear plant a week for the next 16 years.

- ♦ Do you think such a commitment is meaningless? And on the other hand, is it possible for China to attain?

Answer. The targets that China announced on November 12, 2014, are meaningful, ambitious and, we believe, attainable. China announced two major long-term commitments to address climate change: a goal to peak CO_2 emissions around 2030 and to make best efforts to peak early, and an intention to increase the share of nonfossil fuels in primary energy consumption from 15 percent in 2020 to around 20 percent by 2030, with current share estimated at around 10–11 percent.

China's first-ever announcement of a peak year for CO_2 emissions is a milestone. Achieving this peak around 2030 or earlier will require significant additional action by China starting today. A range of experts—including the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the Institute for Energy and Economics (Japan), and others—has projected that under current policies, China's CO_2 emissions will peak around 2040 or even later. A recent MIT study conducted in partnership with China's Tsinghua University, for example, suggests that peaking Chinese CO_2 between 2025 and 2035 will require aggressive decarbonization policies equivalent to a carbon tax rising to $38/ton in 2030.

China's commitment to achieve 20 percent of all energy from nonfossil sources by 2030 is also significant. We estimate that China will need to install 800–1,000 gigawatts of additional nuclear and renewable electricity generation capacity by 2030 to meet their goal. For reference, the entire U.S. generation capacity in 2012 was a bit less than 1,000 gigawatts. To meet its target, China will need to add

roughly 1 gigawatt of nonfossil electricity capacity to the grid every week between now and 2030. That's the equivalent of one nuclear power plant, 500 average-sized wind turbines, or 200,000 roof-top solar installations every week for the next 15 years. Achieving these commitments in the context of an economy growing as fast as China's will be challenging, and they will need to start immediately.

We expect that the targets China has set will be integrated formally into their 5-year planning process. We will be able to monitor progress through the biennial reports China is required to submit to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) every 2 years detailing action against international commitments. The administration insisted on these transparency provisions during the negotiation of the Copenhagen Accord to ensure that all nations could track each other's progress against targets.

This kind of parallel commitment by China is the type of action long called for by congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle to complement U.S. measures to reduce carbon pollution at home.

Question. Mr. Blinken, some are criticizing the President's recent pledge to commit $3 billion to the Green Climate Fund. Is this really all that different than President Bush's $2 billion pledge to the Climate Investment Funds in 2008?

Answer. A U.S. contribution to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) builds on a history of strong U.S. leadership to fund critical efforts to combat climate change around the world, including the Bush administration's pledge of $2 billion in 2008 to the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs). The CIFs are a set of World Bank trust funds created to support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries, and were designed as a transitional mechanism. The GCF builds on the work of the CIFs.

The United States has a compelling interest in enabling vulnerable countries to build resilience to climate change. More resilient communities are less likely to descend into instability or conflict in the aftermath of extreme climate events that would need more costly interventions to restore stability and rebuild. Building resilience also helps safeguard our investments in many areas, including food security, health, education, and economic growth. In addition, it is in our interest to help developing countries grow their economies in a way that minimizes dangerous carbon pollution.

The GCF will partner with developing countries to reduce their carbon pollution and strengthen their resilience. It will leverage private sector investment and help spur global markets in clean energy technologies, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and manufacturers who are leading the way to a low-carbon economy, including those from the United States.

The U.S. pledge has succeeded in spurring other donors to step up to the plate. So far, a range of contributing countries as diverse as Japan, Germany, Canada, Panama, Mongolia, Mexico, and Korea has pledged a total of over $9.7 billion to the GCF, with more pledges expected soon.

Question. China Maritime Security.—Although I was pleased by the Confidence Building Measures the United States and China agreed to last week when President Obama was in China, I remain concerned about Chinese actions and current trendlines on a range of security issues in the Asia-Pacific region: On Japan, China appears to be trying to use its differences with Japan as a wedge between the United States and an important ally, and even with the recent Xi-Abe (She/Ah-bay) meeting remains aggressive in its rhetoric and behavior toward the Senkakus. And in the South China Sea we continue to see provocative Chinese behavior, and seems intent on trying to coerce the nations of the region to force a resolution of these issues in a way favorable to PRC interests.

- ♦ What role should the United States play on these issues? Given China's new assertiveness, is our carefully calibrated balance between "cooperation and competition" still the right approach? Should we be demonstrating in more robust terms our enduring national interests in freedom of navigation, the free flow of commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes consistent with international law?

Answer. The United States is committed to freedom of navigation, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and peace and stability in the South and East China Seas. The United States has also highlighted publicly and privately, most recently by President Obama during his visit to Beijing and at the East Asia summit and the U.S.-ASEAN summit in Burma, our growing concern over provocative unilateral activities undertaken by claimants to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, such as ongoing land reclamation efforts in the South China Sea. The President stated last April that, while we take no position on the

issue of ultimate sovereignty over the Senkakus, we oppose unilateral attempts that would undermine Japanese administration of the Senkakus.

The United States supports regional stability and a rules-based system in the Asia Pacific through our robust diplomatic, military, and economic presence. We are deepening our alliances and security partnerships and have repeatedly made clear to all parties that we are fully committed to the defense of our allies. For example, we have signed a defense cooperation agreement with the Philippines, and, since the end of last year, we have committed additional funding for helping our partners and allies increase their maritime awareness and ability to patrol their waters. In particular, we are deepening cooperation with partners like Vietnam on improving maritime domain awareness and security, both through bilateral programs as well as in coordination with regional partners like Japan. In addition, we are working to support efforts by ASEAN to use regional consultations and institutions to establish and enforce rules of the road and a "freeze" or "moratorium" on provocative actions, as part of ASEAN's efforts to establish a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea.

The United States welcomes the rise of China that is peaceful, prosperous, and stable, and plays a responsible role in the world. In the U.S.-China relationship, we seek to expand our areas of cooperation and constructively manage our differences. I believe this approach serves the best interests of the United States and the region. The recently announced military-to-military confidence-building mechanisms (CBMs) are a step forward in helping to increase transparency and predictability, and to reduce risk of unplanned encounters between our two militaries.

Question. China Cyber.—Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a 31-count indictment against five members of the Chinese PLA for cyber economic espionage and other offenses that targeted five U.S. firms and a labor union for commercial advantage. This was the first time that the Federal Government has initiated such action against state actors. In the wake of this indictment China has withdrawn from the cyber dialogue and there seems to be little progress in seeking to engage China in discussing how to develop a responsible approach to cyberspace.

- What kind of dialogue do we currently have with Chinese on Cyber Theft? What are the next steps on this dialogue? What actions could we take if we discover state-directed theft of corporate or national secrets? Do you think the United States should initiate a case against China in the WTO for its cyber theft of U.S. trade secrets? Will PLA cyber espionage alter our current approach for influencing Chinese cyber behavior?
- As Deputy Secretary of State, and thus the lead U.S. official in the Strategic Security Dialogue at the Strategic and Economic Dialogue, how will you raise these issues with your Chinese counterparts?

Answer. Cyber security is one of the administration's top priorities. The United States remains deeply concerned about Chinese Government-sponsored, cyber-enabled theft of trade secrets and other sensitive business information for commercial gain. Although China suspended its participation in the Cyber Working Group, we continue to underscore with Chinese officials, at the highest levels of our government and through a variety of channels, that China's cyber-enabled theft of trade secrets remains a major irritant in our bilateral relationship. We will again raise our concerns with China during the December 3–4 meeting of the U.S.-China Joint Liaison Group on Law Enforcement Cooperation, which has its own cyber working group that is focused on cyber crimes such as online fraud. When we have evidence of such theft, the U.S. Government considers a range of diplomatic, economic, and law enforcement responses on a case-by-case basis.

Despite our differences with China over what constitutes acceptable behavior in cyberspace, we recognize that this issue does not define the totality of our cyber relationship. We remain committed to expanding our cooperation with China on cyber matters where we have common ground, and to candidly and constructively addressing differences. We use our engagements with China to emphasize U.S. cyber policy objectives, including the applicability of international law to state behavior, the importance of norms of responsible state behavior, concerns about cyber activities that can lead to instability, the role of transparency in domestic cyber policy, and the importance of practical cooperative measures to prevent crises in cyberspace.

If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I intend to raise our cyber concerns with the Chinese at every opportunity, including at the Strategic Security Dialogue. Regular open and frank dialogue is crucial to building trust and developing common rules of the road on this important strategic issue.

Question. Burma.—The three most important issues playing out in Burma today are the plight of the Rohingya, the peace process, and the 2015 general election. In

all three, we see negative developments: the Government of Burma has already begun to implement an action plan that would place self-identifying Rohingya in internment camps indefinitely, while humanitarian organizations still do not have unhindered access to Rohingya; government cease-fire negotiators have backtracked on recent commitments, military officers have taken a front seat at negotiations, and the Tatmadaw is reportedly undertaking new campaigns in several border states; finally, the ruling party is pushing to change the electoral system to give it undue advantage, while one-sided restrictions on candidate eligibility and political campaigning remain in place.

- ♦ Given all of these negative developments, how should the United States recalibrate our policy to send a clear message to the Government of Burma that we do not consider the status quo to be acceptable?

Answer. Burma's reform process remains a work in progress. It is essential for the United States to remain engaged with the Government of Burma and with the people of Burma to help shape and facilitate a successful democratic transition.

Burma is now entering the 4th year of its transition from more than six decades of authoritarian rule. Undoing the legacy of the repressive military regime and building an inclusive and resilient democracy will not be easy, fast, or painless. We are clear-eyed that there is more to be done to ensure Burma's reforms stay on track.

President Obama expressed our deep concern about the situation in Rakhine State, in particular as it relates to the Rohingya population during his recent visit to Burma. In his meeting with Thein Sein just last week, President Obama called this issue Burma's "most urgent matter," noting the world is watching. The President urged a process in Rakhine State that provides humanitarian access for all those in need, particularly the Rohingya; does not hold or settle Rohingya indefinitely in camps; and allows the stateless to become citizens of Burma without having to self-identify as members of a group or nationality to which they do not believe they belong. He also emphasized that if the situation in Rakhine State continues as is or deteriorates further, it threatens to derail Burma's overall reform process.

While we understand that most international NGOs have been able to return to Rakhine State, many are at reduced capacity. We have urged the Burmese Government to allow humanitarian agencies, including Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), unimpeded access to all people in need of humanitarian assistance.

The Government of Burma has been working with ethnic armed groups to achieve a national cease-fire. The success of the peace process is essential to ensuring the success and durability of political and economic reform in Burma. We have encouraged continued dialogue among the government and ethnic armed forces to bring to a close more than six decades of conflict. We stand ready to assist the government and ethnic groups implement and monitor, once signed, a nationwide cease-fire agreement.

The United States urges all sides to commit to a policy of restraint and dialogue as the only path to genuine and lasting peace, stability, and development in Kachin State and in Burma as a whole.

The United States is watching closely the electoral process in Burma. The credibility of Burma's 2015 elections is of utmost importance to the development of Burma's democratic institutions and will serve as a critical marker in Burma's reform process. During the President's visit, Parliament rejected a problematic proposal to shift to a new, proportional representation electoral system.

President Obama strongly encouraged constitutional reform during his trip to Burma last week, consistent with previous U.S. Government statements on the issue. The government and military have repeatedly stated they would follow the "people's will" when considering constitutional amendments and a referendum would be one way to accomplish this. By codifying democratic norms into law, including through constitutional reform, the Government of Burma can demonstrate its commitment to the democratic reform process.

Constitutional reform should reflect the will of the people of Burma, and permit credible, transparent, and inclusive elections that enable the people of the country to pick the leader of their choice; address rights of members of ethnic minorities; and increase civilian control of the military.

If confirmed, I would continue to work with Burma to make progress on the reform process.

Question. North Korea.—Secretary Kerry has previously stated that that the United States should consider diplomatic engagement with North Korea at the "appropriate moment" and under appropriate circumstances. Could you share with us your sense of what might constitute an appropriate moment and the appropriate circumstances?

Answer. The administration has repeatedly offered Pyongyang an opportunity to improve its relationship with the United States, provided North Korea demonstrates a willingness to fulfill its denuclearization commitments. Unfortunately, North Korea has not shown a genuine interest in constructive engagement with the United States. Instead, it continues to mistakenly believe that it can obtain economic assistance and other concessions while pursuing a nuclear program in defiance of its own commitments and obligations and the will of the international community.

North Korea abandoned the six-party talks, has violated its international obligations and commitments, and openly flouts U.N. Security Council resolutions. It is the only country this century to test three nuclear devices and threaten the United States with a nuclear attack. Therefore, North Korea must demonstrate its seriousness of purpose before we would see value in significant diplomatic engagement. We remain open to authentic and credible negotiations to implement the September 2005 Joint Statement and bring North Korea into compliance with all applicable Security Council resolutions. But we are not interested in talks for talks' sake. The onus is on North Korea to take meaningful actions toward verifiable denuclearization and refrain from provocations. We will continue to judge North Korea by its actions, not its words.

As National Security Advisor Rice stated in her November 2013 speech at Georgetown, "we are prepared for negotiations, provided that they are authentic and credible, get at the entirety of the North's nuclear program, and result in concrete and irreversible steps toward denuclearization. Pyongyang's attempts to engage in dialogue while keeping critical elements of its weapons program running are unacceptable." I fully share this view.

Question. U.S. Leadership in International Financial Institutions.—While this is ostensibly an issue for the Treasury Department, I am concerned about the potential loss of U.S. leadership in the international financial institutions, such as the IMF, World Bank, and the regional development banks, which we helped to establish. We've seen time and time again the critical role these institutions play in safeguarding U.S. diplomatic and security interests abroad—most recently promoting economic reforms in Ukraine. Despite the fact that the United States championed the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms, we are now the only major IMF member country that has yet to ratify them. I believe that our failure here weakens U.S. diplomatic influence and has created a space for countries like China to begin crafting new spheres of influence and a new set of institutions that exclude the United States.

- ♦ I want to flag this for you as a source of real concern to me. Please comment on how the failure to move IMF reforms, and to fully support institutions such as the Ex-Im Bank, affect our diplomatic influence in the world.

Answer. I strongly share your concern. The U.S. failure to ratify IMF reform is undermining our leadership on global economic issues, which have been a central instrument of our influence since World War II. An increasing number of countries are now calling for moving forward on the IMF quota and governance reforms agreed in 2010 without the United States.

We are now the only country holding up the approval of the reform that will embed large emerging economies in the international economic system we designed. Our inaction has helped fuel momentum for regional alternatives. The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) nations' New Development Bank excludes the United States. In addition, 21 countries have joined the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB), despite our oft-stated concerns regarding its governance structure and its commitment to adhere to international best practices on lending.

U.S. hesitation on IMF reform diminishes our capacity to influence at the IMF and more generally on economic issues. This reduces our capacity to use the IMF to support vital national security and economic interests. The IMF provides critical support to key partners, including to support Ukraine's financial security, prevent financial crises in the Middle East, and fight Ebola in West Africa. Its financial assistance and advice also helps secure foreign economies as markets for U.S. goods and investments and sources of investment in the United States. Giving important developing economies a greater stake in the IMF will preserve the integrity of the existing international financial infrastructure, without increasing U.S. monetary commitments or endangering the U.S. veto over important IMF decisions. It is critical that Congress move forward with the authorization of the 2010 IMF reforms.

With regard to the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im) specifically, its work in the areas of risk protection, credit, and term financing helps advance our economic diplomacy by ensuring that U.S. companies—large and small—have access to the financing they need to turn export opportunities into sales. Ex-Im and U.S. development

finance institutions such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) are important tools to help U.S. businesses gain footholds in emerging markets, creating U.S. jobs and growth opportunities both at home and abroad. Supporting these institutions not only contributes to U.S. exports and jobs but also helps U.S. products remain competitive internationally, particularly in fast-growing emerging markets.

Question. India.—In September, I met with India's Prime Minister in New York and am glad to see that this important relationship appears to be back on track and has such potential for growth. Past Deputy Secretaries have played pivotal roles in advancing this critical relationship—coming out of Prime Minister Modi's visit to Washington, what are your priorities with respect to India and how will you seek to deepen our engagement with New Delhi?

Answer. During his visit to Washington, Prime Minister Modi emphasized the priority India accords to its partnership with the United States, a principal partner in the realization of India's rise as a responsible, influential world power. Both leaders committed to a new vision for the relationship, reflected in the mantra "Chalein Saath Saath: Forward Together We Go." We are working with India to bring to fruition our mutual vision that our relationship should benefit not just our two countries, but also emerge as a powerful force of good for peace, stability, and prosperity in the world. We look forward to strengthening our ties in ways that increase prosperity and security in both countries through areas of mutual interest including regional security, defense trade, cooperation on climate change, homeland security and counterterrorism, economic growth, space exploration, and sustainable development.

Defense and security cooperation are pillars of the U.S.-India partnership. If confirmed, I will work to further strengthen the cooperation between our security establishments to help meet the evolving security challenges of the 21st century, including deepening our already strong counterterrorism and homeland security cooperation. I will also work to advance our defense partnership and strengthen our economies by promoting expanded opportunities for coproduction and codevelopment of defense articles.

The United States, including our businesses and universities, can play an important role in helping address the challenges India faces and creating opportunities that benefit both countries. Investing in India's youth through our ongoing community college collaboration and Fulbright-Nehru programs for students and administrators will enable India to realize its full potential and further strengthen India's leadership in promoting global economic prosperity and democratic stability. Additionally, the United States seeks to further develop our trade and investment ties through initiatives including the November 2014 U.S.-India Technology summit, Science and Technology Joint Commission Meeting, meetings under the Commercial Dialogue, and the Trade Policy Forum. These dialogues advance market-opening initiatives that foster both bilateral and regional trade and investment linkages, deepening our relationship with New Delhi.

As Deputy National Security Advisor, I worked closely with the Indian Government, including through my own regular conversations with the Indian Ambassador to the United States, to ensure that the visits to Washington by Prime Minister Singh in September 2013 and Prime Minister Modi a year later advanced our strategic partnership. I look forward to taking our bilateral relationship to new heights if confirmed as Deputy Secretary of State.

Question. Central Asia.—The countries of Central Asia are experiencing a wave of renewed Russian assertiveness and unprecedented levels of Chinese economic influence. At the same time, the human rights situation in Central Asia continues to deteriorate.

- ♦ Given the need to reorient our policy in the region as ISAF draws down from Afghanistan, how does the administration plan to leverage our diplomatic, economic, and security resources to promote the development of democratic institutions, human rights, and economic growth in the countries of Central Asia? How can the United States better counter the pervasive influence of Russian media and propaganda in the region?

Answer. The United States will continue to advocate to Central Asian governments the need to protect human rights and civil liberties. During my time as Deputy National Security Advisor I met with the Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan—two of our important partners in the region—and discussed with them the need to improve governance, to protect human rights, and focused on how good governance and respect for human rights are the foundation for long-term economic prosperity, stability, and security. The administration will promote operating space for independent civil society and stress their valuable role in achieving long-term

stability by serving as a hedge against extremism and popular discontent. The U.S. Government will continue to communicate support for the people of the region broadly, with particular emphasis on the rights of women, ethnic and religious minorities, and members of other vulnerable groups.

The State Department will combat human rights abuses by supporting human rights defenders both through quiet diplomacy and publicly, as appropriate. The United States will raise concerns in multilateral fora such as the UNHRC and OSCE, and will consistently integrate human rights messaging into private U.S. diplomatic engagements. The administration will also continue to support the long-term political liberalization of Central Asian societies through sustained programs in rule of law and institutional reform while cultivating relationships with democratically minded actors, both within and outside of governments. Through U.S. efforts to promote regional economic connectivity, the United States is also seeking opportunities for Central Asian countries to find additional economic linkages and markets with international partners, including through membership in the World Trade Organization.

Besides the unwavering support for a democratic, human-rights respecting Central Asia, the most consistent element of U.S. policy and assistance programs in Central Asia for the past 20 years has been to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the five states. That policy will not change, especially with Russia's assertion of a so-called right of protection of Russian-speaking populations and of an "exclusive sphere of influence" in Central Asia. Countering Russian media influence in the region requires a strategy that is sustained and uses multiple lines of activity. The administration will continue to support programs aimed at strengthening independent media in Central Asia to increase the diversity of voices and opinions in the media space. U.S. programs will focus on strengthening journalism capacity and quality in Russian and vernacular languages, so that local broadcasters can attract more audiences and offer citizens alternative, balanced sources of information. The Department of State will also increase people-to-people interactions with Central Asian communities through its public diplomacy and assistance efforts to bolster opinion leaders who understand U.S. policies and values, and amplify our messaging.

Question. As the Hungarian Government continues to openly admire authoritarian regimes like Russia and test repressive methods of control over civil society, what steps will the administration take to strengthen democracy and discourage further backsliding in Hungary?

Answer. We have raised concerns about the state of Hungary's democracy, both publicly and privately.

For example, we have criticized legislation passed since 2010 that has had a negative effect on democratic institutions and media freedom in Hungary. Earlier this year the United States made several statements at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Permanent Council and Human Dimension Implementation Meeting citing the Government of Hungary's intimidation of civil society and the media. In addition, we have applied Presidential Proclamation 7750 (as well as a similar authority, referred to as the FY 2014 Anti-Kleptocracy Provision) to certain Hungarian officials. Presidential Proclamation 7750 provides authority to suspend entry of certain persons, including current or former government officials, engaged in or benefiting from official corruption. In September, the President cited Hungary in his remarks at a Clinton Global Initiative event on civil society, saying "From Hungary to Egypt, endless regulations and overt intimidation increasingly target civil society." We have taken these steps as a friend and ally of Hungary. Many of our concerns are shared by our partners in Europe, by an array of European institutions, as well as by many Hungarians themselves.

If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I will continue this forthright and constructive diplomatic dialogue with the Hungarian Government as well as our efforts to support Hungary's democratic institutions and civil society.

Question. European security also means energy security. Europe must diversify its supply and invest in its energy infrastructure. Greater regional cooperation, such as in the Eastern Mediterranean, can help, but Turkey's provocations in Cyprus' EEZ are creating instability that puts at risk further exploration and the placement of projects that would benefit Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike.

- What actions have you taken and what messages have you sent about Turkey's decision to send its ships into Cyprus' EEZ? What more can and should the administration do to encourage Turkish and Greek Cypriots to resume U.N.-facilitated peace negotiations?

Answer. I share your concern about recent developments and can assure you that the Obama administration remains strongly committed to a just and lasting settlement to reunify the island of Cyprus as a bizonal, bicommunal federation. If confirmed, I will reinforce our diplomatic efforts to achieve such a settlement. We support Cyprus' right to develop its resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and believe that the island's oil and gas resources should be equitably shared between both communities in the context of an overall settlement. Reducing tensions and getting the parties back to the negotiating table as soon as possible are critical to advancing the peace process.

The administration remains fully engaged with all stakeholders to reduce tensions over the EEZ and in support of United Nations Special Advisor Espen Barth Eide's efforts to move past the current impasse and resume negotiations. The Vice President spoke with President Anastasiades on October 31 and underscored our support for the Republic of Cyprus' sovereignty and right to develop resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone, in keeping with customary international law. He also expressed our hope that all states in the region would pursue a mutually beneficial approach to developing energy resources. During the Vice President's November 21–23 visit to Turkey, he discussed with Turkish officials how Ankara can play a constructive role in defusing tensions and getting the talks back on track.

I appreciate your continued support of the settlement process. I assure you of the administration's unwavering commitment to resolving the long-standing division of the island, which we believe will enhance regional stability and prosperity, as well as improve the lives of all Cypriots.

Question. A Europe whole, free, and at peace is no longer something we can take for granted. The administration acknowledged this when it announced the European Reassurance Initiative in June, which will ensure a persistent air, land, and sea presence in the region. We must also work with our European allies to ensure they recommit to NATO and to collective security.

- ♦ Given the difficult economic environment in Europe, how should we work with our NATO and European allies to hold member countries accountable to defense spending increases in line with agreements made at the NATO Wales summit in September?

Answer. We continue to press our NATO allies at the highest levels to honor the Defense Investment Pledge agreed at the NATO Wales summit in September, which includes commitments to halt declines in defense spending, as well as aim to spend 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense within 10 years. Allies also agreed that in order to ensure future capabilities, allies should allocate at least 20 percent of their defense spending to equipment, procurement, and research and development. NATO Defense Ministers will be reviewing progress against these benchmarks on a regular basis.

We recognize the financial pressures that our allies face, but cutting defense is not the answer, particularly in the context of the current security environment in Europe. We will continue urging NATO allies to dedicate the resources necessary to ensure NATO's ability to deter and, if necessary, respond to threats.

Question. At the NATO Wales summit in September, Secretary Kerry met with the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding renewed fighting in July along the Nagorno-Karabakh Line of Contact. Last week's downing of an Armenian helicopter by Azerbaijan that took the lives of three Armenians reinforces the importance of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and ensuring it does not turn into an all-out conflict.

- ♦ What is the administration currently doing to support the OSCE Minsk Group Talks? Has there been progress in the Minsk Group toward reaching a political settlement? What are the chances an all-out conflict will resume?

Answer. The administration remains firmly committed to a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through the OSCE Minsk Group format, and fully supports the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs' efforts to help the sides reach a lasting settlement. The recent meetings of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Sochi, Wales, and Paris were important for revitalizing the most important channel of communication between the sides. At all three summits, the Presidents discussed key elements of a settlement to the conflict, and at Paris, they agreed to continue their dialogue next year under the auspices of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. As a Co-Chair country, the United States is in constant touch with the sides at the highest levels to facilitate a political settlement.

We are very concerned by the November 12 downing of an Armenian military helicopter along the Line of Contact. The administration continues to urge the sides to avoid an escalation of violence and commit themselves to peace.

Question. By any measure, the human rights situation in Azerbaijan has deteriorated over the last year. Freedom House, in its annual Freedom in the World report, determined that freedom declined in 2013, and has stated that the country is in the midst of what some would call the most brutal crackdown on civil society in recent history, citing arrests and attacks against the media, activists, and government critics, as well as travel bans, the freezing of bank accounts, and public smears to silence dissent. According to international NGOs, the Azerbaijani Government currently has over 100 political prisoners. Many in the international community are calling for sanctions against Azerbaijan in response to the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation.

- Would you support U.S. financial sanctions and travel restrictions against the Azerbaijani Government and any officials who have supported, promoted, or perpetrated human rights abuses?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge the Azerbaijani authorities, consistent with Azerbaijan's constitutional and international commitments, to ensure freedoms of assembly, association, and expression; to foster an environment conducive to a vibrant and peaceful civil society; to respect pluralism; and to strengthen judicial independence and due process. I will also urge the Government of Azerbaijan to halt the continuing arrests of peaceful activists, to stop freezing organizations' and individuals' bank accounts, and to release those who have been incarcerated in connection with the exercise of their fundamental freedoms, as previously noted in several U.S. statements to the OSCE Permanent Council and at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. I would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the Senate on these threats to Azerbaijan's long-term stability and security. I look forward to working closely with all partners—domestic and international—to advance respect for fundamental freedoms for all Azerbaijani citizens and ensure that civil society can conduct its work as effectively as possible.

Question. Reform in the Middle East.—In remarks on November 17 at the 3rd Annual Transformation Trends Policy Forum, Secretary Kerry said "Even as we mobilize forces to defeat ISIL, we must also encourage measures to reform governance and create opportunity throughout the MENA region. That will not happen by trying to persuade the local population to turn away from its rich spiritual and cultural traditions. Change must develop from inside. But by reaching out where we can, investing in what we can, the United States can help to furnish the leverage that builders within the region seek."

- If confirmed, what specific policies, programs, and engagements would you recommend to implement this vision for supporting reform? Does the State Department and the broader interagency have appropriate and sufficient authority and funding to move forward in promoting reform? The State Department's FY15 budget request did not include funding for the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund. Why?

Answer. If confirmed, I would be a strong advocate for the Department's commitment to a reform agenda that supports greater political and economic opportunity for people in the MENA region. Our diplomatic engagement and assistance programs can bolster the leadership and technical capacities for country reform agendas. Where there are effective local champions, political will and a commitment to reform, our diplomatic engagement and assistance programs can provide support for the realization of these reforms.

Throughout the region, we will continue to engage civil society, government and nongovernment leadership to support reforms aimed at economic growth, democracy, and good governance. In Tunisia we will target our assistance to the development of security and governance institutions and a vibrant economy. Tunisia serves as an example to 330 million Arabs that democracy and Islam are compatible and that their futures are better served by dialogue and compromise. Our assistance to Jordan has supported progress of a home-grown Jordanian political reform program, that has resulted in, among other things, internationally praised national and local elections, constitutional amendments, and the establishment of a National Integrity Commission, an Independent Election Commission, and an Anti-Corruption Commission. Our assistance to Jordan is and will continue to be premised on promoting political and economic reform. We will continue to work with countries that have made tangible commitments to and progress on reform. Regionwide, we will continue our support for civil society and private sector actors pressing for more inclusive political processes and open economic systems.

The Department is committed to increasing economic opportunity for citizens in the region, particularly youth. Youth unemployment is one of the most critical challenges facing the region and we have been focusing our foreign assistance program-

ming to target this complex issue, alongside other donors. We will continue to invest in areas that promote development of the private sector as an engine for growth and a workforce that responds to evolving economies.

In support of these efforts, for FY 2015, the Department requested over $2 billion specifically to respond to the ongoing opportunities for reform in the region and to respond to the crisis in Syria. These funds would provide humanitarian assistance, support to the moderate Syrian opposition, and economic and governance assistance to countries in the region based on their needs and reform commitments. The administration requested authorities to support reform efforts and respond flexibly to the changing situation on the ground. The Department has also requested budget amendments to address increasing needs in countries bordering Syria and to counter-ISIL. Together, these resource requests reflect a firm commitment to the region and the United States strategic interests there.

Question. Iraq.—Since Iraqi leaders came together to form a new government and agree on a new Prime Minister, the United States has used air power to halt ISIL's advance, advised Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Peshmerga forces in order for them to retake territory and strategic assets, and has recently announced the deployment of 1,500 additional U.S. military advisors to Iraq and requested $1.6 billion to stand up a special Iraqi Train and Equip Fund. Yet, the conditions that led to ISIL's entrenchment in Iraq have not fundamentally shifted: Sunni prisoners still languish in Iraqi prisons, the Iraqi Security Forces remain infiltrated by Shia militias who seemly commit sectarian acts of violence with impunity, and the Iraqi Parliament recently approved a Badr Brigade Member as the new Minister of Interior—this is a group trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards!

- How will you recommend that U.S. advice and assistance be used to influence responsible Iraqi decisionmaking and encourage Iraq's implementation of an inclusive, nonsectarian agenda? Is the United States willing to withhold support, assistance, and funding for Iraq if these long-standing concerns, which are in the interest of all Iraqis' security and stability, are not addressed?

Answer. President Obama this summer made clear that U.S. airstrikes and kinetic action to halt ISIL's advancement into Iraq would not be effective absent forward movement in Iraq's democratic process, aided by the selection of new Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who has committed, through words and actions, to reform the policies of his predecessor and govern in an inclusive manner. U.S. officials, including in my own meetings with the new Abadi government during my visit to Iraq last month, have made clear to the that ISIL cannot be defeated by military action alone; wholesale political reform and inclusive governance are essential to unifying the Iraqi people against the extremist threat and promoting stability in the country.

Already, we have seen significant progress in efforts at reform. One of Prime Minister Abadi's first actions in office was to abolish the Office of the Commander in Chief, an office that had centralized control of the security command structure under former PM Maliki. PM Abadi also successfully completed the formation of his government on October 18, securing the confirmation of security ministers, to include a prominent Sunni Minister of Defense, for the first time in 4 years. The completion of Abadi's government represented the outcome of a political compromise to which all major components of Iraq's polity agreed. The new Minister of Interior, Mohammed Ghabban, is a member of the Badr Corps political party, which performed strongly in the recent parliamentary elections. His selection was indicative of successful political compromise between differing political blocs to choose a candidate that was both popular among Shia factions and acceptable to Sunni blocs in Parliament. Among Minister Ghabban's first acts in office were visits to Qatar and Saudi Arabia to discuss cooperation with those states as well as with Iraq's other predominantly Sunni neighbors.

Though progress remains an uphill battle, within 5 weeks of completing his government, PM Abadi has taken significant and decisive action to enact political and security reforms aimed at uniting the country. On November 12, Abadi continued forward momentum by removing 36 high-level military commanders in an anticorruption drive and appointed 18 new commanders, including Sunnis, to high level positions.

Through concerted engagement, many Sunni tribes have also joined the government in the fight against ISIL and are entering agreements to be incorporated into the ISF. On November 11, the Government of Iraq (GOI) presided over a ceremony marking an agreement to arm and compensate over 3,000 Sunni tribesmen, thereby formalizing their role in the fight against ISIL and affirming the GOI's commitment to include Sunnis in the process. The Abadi government also is committed to creating a National Guard as a mechanism to engage Sunnis in the defense of their own communities, with full support from the state. At the same time we engage to

support Sunni inclusion in security forces, we have also made clear, privately and in public statements, concerns over unregulated Shia militias, the necessity to regulate all armed groups, and the importance of holding individuals accountable for human rights abuses. Senior GOI officials and Iraq's most prominent religious leaders agree and have stressed similar in public statements.

Significant work, however, remains to be done. In every interaction with senior GOI officials, Ambassador Jones, other State Department officials, and I stress the priority of finding political solutions to the ISIL problem, emphasizing that a key element to the success of defeating ISIL in Iraq is the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions that allowed ISIL to foment. This includes additional political reform to address Sunni grievances and additional respect and promotion for human rights. Iraq's inclusive new government has pledged to enact reforms and stamp out corruption that has marginalized Iraqis of all ethnicities and religious sects and has taken initial steps to deliver on its promises.

U.S. security assistance, which comprises the preponderance of our support to Iraq, is targeted to enable Iraq to better combat terrorist groups, including ISIL. This assistance is also important in helping Iraq continue to protect its oil production capabilities, which are vital not only for supporting the Iraqi Government's finances, but also for the health of the global economy.

U.S. assistance also serves U.S. goals; further limiting or conditioning it would reduce our progress toward those goals and undermine our influence in Iraq. Even without the ISIL threat, U.S. security assistance provides an important vehicle for cementing the United States enduring partnership with Iraq. Security cooperation on critical systems provides a basis for a long-term relationship.

I assure you your concerns are being heard, and political reform and respect for human rights remain policy priorities, which are supported through robust assistance programs. However, conditioning our assistance could hinder progress toward our goals in Iraq, reduce our influence, and undermine U.S. national security interests. If confirmed, I would welcome working closely with the committee to make our assistance as effective as possible and to advance the reforms necessary to Iraq's progress and stability.

Question. Syria.—Recent reporting suggests that al-Qaeda's Syria affiliate the Nusra Front is coordinating on the ground in Syria with ISIL. While this may not be a strategic alliance, the decision by these extremist groups to coordinate even tactically on the ground introduces serious complications for the "ISIL first" strategy and a threat to the moderate Syrian fighters we are seeking to empower with the train and equip program. Further, earlier this month Nusra Front ousted U.S.-backed opposition fighters from Idlib province in northern Syria, dealing the moderate opposition a serious blow.

- What are the specific implications of Nusra Front-ISIL cooperation in Syria, and how will this affect our strategy to dismantle and defeat ISIL? Further, the train and equip program is intended for U.S.-backed fighters to defend their communities and fight ISIL. But given recent developments, are there any moderate fighters left in northern Syria for us to train? If reauthorized, the train and equip program for moderate Syrian fighters will not deliver effects on the ground for the better part of a year. What can we do in the interim to empower the moderates in Syria?

Answer. Defeating the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is a complex challenge. We are working closely with other members of the anti-ISIL coalition on multiple lines of effort. This is a multiyear strategy that will need sustained support. Potential cooperation between Nusra and ISIL does not alter our strategy to counter ISIL: as we have said in the past, defeating ISIL will take more than just military might; it will require us to address the issues of foreign fighters, terrorist financing, supporting moderate partners on the ground to provide basic governance and counter extremist ideology. Weakening ISIL in each of these ways will make their areas of operation less hospitable for extremists of all stripes, including Nusra.

We are also increasing our assistance to the moderate opposition in Syria, which is fighting both ISIL and Nusra. As we move forward with the Department of Defense train and equip program for the moderate opposition, we do not anticipate a shortage of moderate recruits. We will tap into an already existing pool of Syrians who have repeatedly expressed a desire to receive assistance to help defend their communities and facilitate a political solution to the crisis. We will also seek to link the military train and equip effort to civilian opposition leadership at both the local and national level and to enable these civilian structures to provide basic governance, including rule of law and essential services, to their communities.

Question. Yemen.—How can U.S. assistance and engagement support the newly formed technocratic government in Yemen to move forward with political reconciliation?

Answer. The United States daily, on-the-ground engagement in Sanaa has been critical to keeping the political transition process on track and continuing to counter the shared threat from Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) despite the current very difficult period. Our continued engagement and assistance programs will help enable the government to better provide basic services and support for its population, nearly half of whom live in poverty, and help it to defend itself from internal and external threats. Our current support to Yemen's health and education sector and our support to its military and security services contribute to this goal. Coordinating closely with others in the region and among the international community, we are supporting the new government's efforts to work broadly with all political constituencies as it seeks to successfully implement the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC Initiative), the National Dialogue Conference outcomes, and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement.

We are working with the Yemeni Government and international partners to ensure that urgent reforms are completed as part of the political transition. Our efforts will better enable support to a strong, capable government that can show all of Yemen's political factions that only through consensus and cooperation will the country be able to overcome its challenges.

Question. What are the implications of the Libyan Supreme Court's ruling that the House of Representatives is unconstitutional? Please describe U.S. policy and engagement to date in Libya, and what specific, additional measures would you recommend to encourage movement toward a political solution?

Answer. Our recognition of the Libyan Government currently headed by Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani remains unchanged as we study the November 6 Supreme Court decision. Libyans themselves have many questions about the Court's decision. Our priority is to seek a political solution that helps the Libyan people build a national government and a national consensus on the path forward. Thus we urge Libyan leaders to participate constructively in U.N. Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Bernardino Leon's work to develop that consensus. Those who engage in or provide support for acts that threaten the peace, stability, or security of Libya may be designated for sanctions under U.N. Security Council Resolution 2174, and those associated with al-Qaeda or its affiliates may be designated for sanctions under U.N. Resolution 2161.

Ambassador Deborah Jones and her staff are engaging with a full range of Libyans from our Embassy in Valletta, Malta, in coordination with other international envoys to build support for SRSG Leon's effort. Similarly, a wide range of senior Washington-based officials are engaging Libyans and other partners to build support for the U.N.'s efforts.

Question. The administration has invested heavily in building an anti-ISIL coalition that includes not only Western governments but also regional governments including many Arab States and Turkey. However, there is tension within the coalition as many regional coalition members as well as Syrian Opposition Coalition President Hadi al-Bahra have criticized the administration's "Iraq first" strategy of confronting ISIL to be addressing a symptom of the violence in and around Syria rather than the cause, which they consider to be the Assad regime and its unrelenting attack on its own people.

♦ If confirmed, how will you work to manage this tension within the coalition?

Answer. Since the President's September 2014 establishment of the global coalition to counter ISIL, the U.S.-led coalition has grown to more than 60 partners. Coalition partners are working together across multiple mutually reinforcing lines of effort including military support, stopping the flow of foreign fighters, countering ISIL's financing and funding, addressing humanitarian crises, and de-legitimizing ISIL's ideology. With a coalition this large and this diverse, of course there will be some differences of opinion on strategy, but the threat that ISIL represents—to Iraq, to Syria, to the broader region, and to the global community—has galvanized coalition focus and solidarity and inspired the coalition to take action to counter ISIL in both Iraq and Syria. We will continue to work to balance the different capacities and concerns of our coalition partners as we move forward on our campaign against ISIL, including through kinetic strikes in both countries and by building the capacity of partners on the ground—the Iraqi Security Forces and Peshmerga in Iraq, and the moderate opposition in Syria.

In all these efforts, we are working hand in hand and consulting closely with coalition partners, and senior U.S. officials have dedicated significant time and energy

to building and sustaining the counter-ISIL coalition and will continue to do so. The President, Vice President, the Secretary, the National Security Advisor, and I have all worked with our coalition counterparts as we advance implementation of our strategy. Special Presidential Envoy to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, John Allen, and his deputy, Brett McGurk, have been traveling through the region almost nonstop for the past few months doing the serious diplomacy that is required to keep this coalition strong and united. This will be a complex, long-term campaign, and we will continue to work closely with all our global coalition partners to listen to their ideas and concerns and to refine our strategy as necessary in our shared efforts to degrade and defeat ISIL.

As for the conflict between the regime and the opposition in Syria, Assad has created the conditions that have allowed ISIL and other extremist groups to flourish, and it is clear that Syria can never be stable under his leadership. As the President has said, Assad lost all legitimacy a long time ago. We continue to call for a negotiated settlement that leads to a political transition and that addresses Syrians' legitimate grievances. Though our efforts in Syria currently are focused on countering ISIL, our support to vetted, moderate elements of the armed opposition will enable it to act as a counterweight to ISIL and the regime and ultimately to help create the conditions to end the civil war in Syria

Question. In May Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson testified before this committee that the unrestricted trafficking of drugs through Venezuela constituted a national security threat to the United States. On top of that, this year, we've seen the Venezuelan Government use its security forces and judiciary to punish political dissent, leading to 43 deaths, more than 50 documented cases of torture, and thousands of unlawful arrests. Additionally, while high profile political prisoners, like Leopoldo Lopez, remain in prison, where he is subjected to cruel and degrading treatment, not one member of the government has been held accountable for their role in systematic human rights violations. Although this committee passed bipartisan legislation requiring enactment of targeted human rights sanctions, administration officials asked us to delay further action.

- ♦ Do you believe that congressional action should still be delayed? (FOLLOW–UP) Will you advocate for more forceful executive action—including asset freezes and visa revocations—against human rights violators in Venezuela?

Answer. The administration has already taken steps such as imposing visa restrictions on government officials who are believed to be responsible for or complicit in human rights abuses. We need to look at all options to find the most effective way to encourage the Venezuelan Government to respect democratic principles and the human rights of its citizens. The most effective efforts are those taken in conjunction with partners. We will continue to work closely with others in the region to support greater political space in Venezuela, and ensure the government lives up to the hemisphere's shared commitment to the promotion of democracy, as articulated in the Inter American Democratic Charter.

As I noted during my hearing, if confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress to build on the administration's actions to date and determine what we can do to go further, including through legislation. We should not take any options off the table. Financial sanctions have proven effective in some situations, and could potentially be a useful tool, if targeted toward specific individuals and entities and used in concert with diplomatic efforts to advance specific U.S. foreign policy goals. We would not oppose moving forward with additional sanctions, and if confirmed, I would review our options under existing authorities and work with Congress to promote alignment between executive and legislative measures aimed at promoting improved human rights conditions in Venezuela.

Question. Turkish President's RecepTayyip Erdogan history of both anti-Semitic remarks and actions are deeply troubling. For example, his recent statements that Israeli actions in Gaza were more barbaric than the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis and accusations of Israel committing genocide in Gaza, were factually wrong and deliberately inflammatory. The State Department rightly condemned them. President Erdogan must understand that such words and deeds not only hinder the cause of peace but also make it difficult for Congress to support further defense sales, training missions, or trade promotion with Turkey.

- ♦ How will you respond should President Erdogan make further anti-Semitic statements?

Answer. We are deeply concerned by anti-Semitic statements made by Turkish leaders and engage directly at all levels to express our disapproval of such statements. As you note in your question, we have publicly and privately condemned President Erdogan's unacceptable remarks claiming Israeli actions in Gaza were

more barbaric than the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis, which were self-evidently wrong, unhelpful, and distracted from efforts to bring an end to the violence. President Obama most recently discussed our concerns over anti-Semitism in Turkey with President Erdogan during their September 5 meeting in Wales and the Vice President raised these same concerns during his visit to Turkey last week. Our Ambassador and Embassy officers also meet regularly with the Jewish community to discuss their concerns over security and religious freedom, and to promote interfaith dialogue. If I am confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I will not hesitate to denounce anti-Semitic statements, from wherever they emanate. We will also continue to engage with Turkish officials and urge them to promote tolerance and avoid anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Question. Tunisia.—Tunisia is the closest thing to a "success story" with regard to democratic nation-building to come out of the events of Arab Spring, especially after the successful parliamentary elections held there a few weeks ago. It is certainly in the U.S. national interest to support Tunisia's path to democracy and an important example to other peoples in the region still struggling to create inclusive, representational governments of their own.

- ♦ What are the U.S. political, economic, and security interests in, and goals for, Tunisia? How does the U.S. strategy for engagement and assistance align with these objectives? What types of U.S. assistance, security and otherwise, have been most effective since 2011 in addressing Tunisia' security challenges and promoting economic and political reform, and an active civil society?

Answer. Tunisia's transition offers hope for genuine democratic change in North Africa and the Middle East. Ensuring Tunisia's stability through economic, security, and governance support is important to U.S. national interest due to its strategic location, and as a counterbalance to ISIL's violent and extremist behavior elsewhere in the region. Increased economic engagement, through supporting private sector investment and economic reforms, will be central to supporting the Tunisian Government's efforts to drive sustained growth and employment and diversify its trade.

In the security sector, $150 million in U.S. security assistance has helped the Tunisian military and other security agencies reorient their focus from one geared toward conventional threats to one capable of addressing asymmetric challenges. Tunisia is also a partner in the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) announced by President Obama at the U.S.-Africa summit in August, which provides a vital avenue to support Tunisian work to strengthen civilian and military security institutions. Overall, the Tunisians have made considerable strides, but need to do more and will look to the United States for expertise and support.

The provision of nearly $1 billion in external financing secured with sovereign loan guarantees, including U.S. assistance, has been an important U.S. support mechanism for Tunisia. The United States has used these loan guarantees as a means to incentivize Tunisia's reform efforts. Encouraging private sector investment is also critical to Tunisia's long-term stability. Foreign assistance programs are geared toward promoting a culture of entrepreneurship and linking youth with private sector employment. Additionally, the U.S. Government is supporting the March 5, 2015, North Africa (PNB–NAPEO) Investment and Entrepreneurship Conference in partnership with the Aspen Institute, which will seek to drive critical private sector investment in Tunisia.

We also believe that intensifying contact between Americans and Tunisians, especially Tunisia's increasing youth population, are extremely important and we have therefore expanded scholarship and exchange programs with Tunisia.

U.S. assistance for democratization and governance initiatives, through support to the Tunisian elections and political party-building, as well as for increasing the participation of marginalized groups in the political process, contributed to the parliamentary elections that Tunisians and the international community have widely seen as credible and legitimate. Staying engaged with Tunisia in building responsive government institutions and promoting the role of civil society will remain critical as Tunisia moves into the next phase of its democratic transition.

RESPONSES OF ANTONY JOHN BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. In your testimony you said: "We liberated the people of Libya from a tyrant; now, we must work with the new government to fill a power vacuum and address that country's turmoil."

- ♦ Does the U.S. Government still recognize the Tobruk-based government and the Libyan House of Representatives to be the sole legitimate governing authorities

in Libya? If so, what steps will the U.S. Government take to isolate their Tripoli-based rivals? If not, what steps will the U.S. Government take to put pressure on all sides in Libya's current political impasse to ensure their commitment to a political solution?

- How does the U.S. Government view the HOR's endorsement of General Khalifa Haftar's military operations?
- Under what circumstances would the United States Government consider taking military action against terrorist targets in Libya? Under what authority? Which groups presently operating in Libya are subject to the 2001 AUMF?

Answer. Our recognition of the Libyan Government currently headed by Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani remains unchanged as we study the November 6 Supreme Court decision. Libyans themselves have many questions about the Court's decision. We remain committed to helping the Libyan people achieve national consensus on the path forward, and continue to urge Libyan leaders to engage productively with U.N. Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Bernardino Leon to develop that consensus. Those on both sides of the conflict who engage in or provide support for acts that threaten the peace, stability, or security of Libya may be designated for sanctions under U.N. Security Council Resolution 2174, and those associated with al-Qaeda or its affiliates may be designated for sanctions under U.N. Resolution 2161.

Libyans and the United States share real and serious concerns about terrorist activities in Libya. Counterterrorism operations should be overseen by a government that draws its authority from a clear and broad popular mandate to have the best chance of success. That is why we support SRSG Leon's effort to create a national political consensus before the violence in Libya grows worse.

We regularly assess terrorist threats to the United States and our interests, in Libya and elsewhere. Before conducting any military action, the United States would ensure that it had sufficient authorities for the operation.

Over the past 2 years, the United States has conducted two operations in Libya that underscore our Nation's commitment to protecting our citizens. In October 2013, U.S. Forces captured Abu Anas al-Libi, a senior al-Qaeda figure, indicted for his alleged role in al-Qaeda's conspiracy to kill U.S. nationals and conduct attacks against U.S. interests worldwide, including the East Africa Embassy bombings in 1998. In June 2014, the U.S. military, in cooperation with law enforcement personnel, captured Ahmed Abu Khattalah, indicted for numerous offenses arising from his alleged participation in the September 2012 terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya, which led to the deaths of four brave Americans.

Question. The administration is seeking $165 million in additional ESF and PKO funding to support the Syrian opposition as part of its anti-ISIL OCO request for FY 2015. How will the proposed uses of these funds differ substantively from previous U.S. support to opposition groups? What has past U.S. support tangibly achieved?

Answer. The $165 million in additional resources for Syria requested in the counter-ISIL FY 2015 OCO budget amendment, combined with the President's FY 2015 budget request, will ensure that sufficient resources are available to build the capacity of moderate partners inside Syria as they seek to counter ISIL, provide local security and governance in their communities, and help foster the conditions that can lead to a political transition. These additional resources would work in parallel with the Department of Defense efforts to train and equip vetted, moderate Syrian opposition fighters, and to ensure that there is an effective, moderate governance structure within which a new military force will operate.

Current U.S. support to the moderate opposition is positively impacting the lives of Syrians on a daily basis. For example:

- *Support to local governance institutions:* The United States provides operational funding to support more than 25 local councils and civil society organizations to enable them to respond to community needs and improve governance in liberated areas.
- *Training and equipment to enhance the capacity and cohesion of local councils and civilian activists:* The United States has trained over 1,400 civilian activists and councilmembers from over 300 opposition councils and organizations. The United States has also trained more than 500 Syrian women running as candidates for local and provincial councils and to play a role in international and community-driven peacebuilding efforts. These initiatives help to mobilize and build the capacity of citizen groups, enhance information-sharing, provide community services, and strengthen local governance.
- *Supporting Civil Defense:* The United States has provided over $12.6 million in civil defense equipment for emergency first responders. This includes the provi-

sion of 155 trucks and vehicles such as ambulances and fire trucks in addition to search and rescues kits and supplies to establish emergency shelters. This life-saving assistance allows civil defense teams in Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, Deir ez-Zor and Raqqah to provide emergency response to attacks on civilians.

- *Technical expertise and immediate repairs to restore water, electricity, and agriculture that benefit more than 100,000 Syrians.* Working closely with Syrian engineers, relief committees, and local councils, the United States has assisted farmers, small businesses, and communities to reinstate economically viable activities through repair of equipment, facilities, provision of spare parts and alternative technology to improve the agricultural based local economies.
- *Support for Civil Society:* The United States supports hundreds of nascent Syrian civil society organizations working on a broad range of issues in support of local governance efforts, including: relief and recovery, education, trauma healing, human rights documentation and promotion, peace-building and reconciliation, and transitional justice.
- *Support for Independent Media:* The United States supports nine FM radio and two satellite TV independent media stations. This support enables Syrian journalists to counter regime and violent extremist narratives, laying the foundation for inclusive tolerant debate.
- *Non-Lethal Support to Moderate Armed Opposition:* The United States is supporting vetted elements of the moderate, armed opposition to enhance their operational capabilities to better protect the Syrian people. For example, we have provided more than 550,000 MREs, more than 4,500 medical kits, vehicles, pickup trucks and buses, armored SUVs and ten-ton trucks to help improve their logistical capabilities.

Question. On October 10, you said that the sanctions imposed on Russia could be eased; however, as you know, easing the sanctions would allow Russia to create a "frozen conflict" in eastern Ukraine without cost, and I believe there must be permanent consequences for the annexation of a neighboring country's territory.

- ♦ What do you think should be the conditions for easing sanctions on Russia both today and in the future?
- ♦ Regardless of the situation in eastern Ukraine, do you believe that most of the sanctions should not be lifted as long as Putin continues to illegally occupy Crimea?

Answer. The President has clearly said we will not accept Russia's occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea or any part of Ukraine. We will continue to work with our allies and partners to impose costs that respond to Russia's actions, including in Crimea.

Any decision on a rollback of sanctions would depend on Russia's actions. We have said that sanctions can begin to be rolled back if Russia fulfills its commitments, including implementing the Minsk agreements, and works to reach a lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict. Implementing the Minsk agreements would require Russia to restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in eastern Ukraine, including by removing all Russian troops and equipment, returning the Ukrainian side of the international border to Kiev's control with an effective border monitoring mechanism, and releasing all hostages. We have been equally clear that if Russia continues its unacceptable and destabilizing actions, the costs for Russia will continue to rise.

Question. Can you please describe how the administration's recently approved Central America strategy will help the region secure sustainable economic growth and how your strategy relates to the Alliance For Prosperity plan announced by the Presidents of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador?

Answer. Over the course of the past 18 months, the U.S. Government has taken a hard look at both our approach and our investments in Central America. We determined that a comprehensive focus on security, prosperity, and governance is critical to changing the region's trajectory. This will involve expanding our current security programs and adding a new emphasis on prosperity and governance, and we are working across the U.S. Government to do so. Our approach is intended to encompass the entire Central America region, not just the countries of the Northern Triangle, because we believe that the region's future lies in its economic integration to create a single market of 43 million people. The leaders of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras appear to have reached similar conclusions for their subregion, as reflected in their own coordinated plan, a historic effort that all three countries agreed on.

On November 14, the Vice President addressed a conference hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank on "Investing In Central America," directly chal-

lenging the three Presidents to take concrete steps to address problems such as corruption, and pledging that if they can demonstrate such political will, the United States will lend its support to help them address the underlying causes of migration through U.S. assistance and by rallying international support for the Central American plan. Secretary of Commerce Pritzker reinforced this message when she addressed business leaders and the Central American Presidents during the same conference, stating that if they would take the necessary actions we could mobilize support for private sector investment in the region.

The U.S. Strategy for Engagement with Central America therefore both aligns with and supports the overall objectives of the Alliance for Prosperity plan. However, our effort is broader because we also realize that all seven Central American nations must act together for the benefit of the region.

The U.S. Strategy for Engagement with Central America prioritizes prosperity, governance, and security. These objectives are interrelated and interdependent, and attention to each objective is necessary for success. Specifically, our prosperity agenda fosters integration of a regional market of 43 million people so that local businesses can become more competitive and the region can be more attractive to international investors. Economic growth should reach everyone, not just the well-connected few. Our efforts will promote better education and vocational training for all citizens, including women and vulnerable ethnic groups, and business environments friendly to entrepreneurs, providing alternatives to the illicit activities that contribute to insecurity and undermine effective governance.

Question. Does the administration currently have a clearly articulated and consistent policy on negotiating 123 Agreements, or is it done on a case-by-case basis?

- What criteria or standards are used to determine the starting and ending point for each agreement?
- Are the same criteria and/or standards applied to each new negotiation? If not, why not?
- How do U.S. national security concerns, including regional assessments of the potential for further nuclear proliferation, affect the administration's approach to negotiating 123 Agreements?

Answer. We use our 123 Agreement negotiations to achieve a broad range of nonproliferation commitments with our partners, and we employ a variety of bilateral and multilateral measures in addition to 123 Agreements to help minimize the spread of enrichment and reprocessing technologies globally. The administration believes that by applying a principled approach to implementing nonproliferation commitments in 123 Agreements, we will maximize our ability to achieve the lowest number of sensitive fuel cycle facilities worldwide while raising global nonproliferation standards. This principled approach allows for flexibility in structuring the legal and political commitments while meeting the requirements of U.S. law and maintaining our principled stance on enrichment and reprocessing (ENR).

Our approach has been effective in convincing states to rely on the international market for nuclear fuel services, rather than develop domestic ENR programs. Regardless of the region or the state in question, if we are not sufficiently convinced that concluding a particular 123 Agreement would meet our policy goals on ENR, we will not conclude the agreement. When negotiating agreements, we take into account all relevant factors, including the state's nonproliferation record, its technical capabilities, and any regional proliferation issues.

Question. Is the administration concerned that the recent nuclear agreement with Iran—in which Iran is permitted to retain enrichment capabilities—undermines our ability to meet U.S. nonproliferation objectives, including in future 123 Agreement negotiations?

- Why should countries, such as United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, be asked to accept a gold standard agreement when the administration has capitulated to the enrichment demands of bad actors like Iran?
- What message does an inconsistent standard for negotiating 123 Agreements by the United States send globally?
- Does one standard exist for the Middle East and a different standard for the Asia-Pacific?

Answer. The United States has a long-standing policy of preventing the spread of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR) technologies; any comprehensive deal with Iran will not change that underlying policy. The United States employs a range of measures, both multilateral and bilateral, to help prevent the spread of ENR technologies around the world. Legally binding commitments added to the peaceful nuclear cooperation (123) agreements are not the only means to combat the pro-

liferation of ENR. In fact, the strong nonproliferation provisions already required in our 123 Agreements have helped to restrain the further spread of ENR for decades.

The key ENR issue when negotiating 123 Agreements is how to prevent states that do not already possess these technologies from acquiring them, and limiting their spread in those countries that do possess them. For countries without an existing enrichment program, we seek to ensure that states make the choice to rely on the international market for nuclear fuel services.

Our approach has been effective in convincing states to rely on the international market for nuclear fuel services, rather than develop domestic ENR programs. Regardless of the region or the state in question, if we are not sufficiently convinced that a particular 123 Agreement would meet our policy goals on ENR, we will not conclude the agreement.

In line with the Obama administration's long-standing policy opposing the spread of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR) technologies, the Joint Plan of Action halts progress on the most worrisome elements of Iran's nuclear program and rolls it back in key respects, including by limiting Iran's enrichment capacity and diluting or converting Iran's stockpile of near-20-percent low enriched uranium.

Iran mastered the fuel cycle and began enriching years ago. We cannot eliminate that knowledge. With respect to the ongoing negotiations, any long-term, comprehensive deal acceptable to the United States must effectively cut off the various pathways Iran could take to obtain fissile material for a nuclear weapon. Other countries are not likely to follow Iran's path, which involved decades of isolation, global sanctions, and, should a comprehensive agreement be reached, would require long-term and unprecedented constraints on its program.

Question. Along the same lines, why does the administration not begin all negotiations at a consistent start point, such as the gold standard?

Answer. We begin all 123 Agreement negotiations with the same objective of minimizing the spread of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR) technologies, and we structure possible legal and political commitments in the agreement to meet the requirements of U.S. law and maintain our principled stance on ENR. We also pursue additional mechanisms to support achieving our objectives. These include, for example, legal or political commitments to rely on the international market for nuclear fuel services rather than acquiring sensitive nuclear technologies, or to participating in bilateral or multilateral nonproliferation activities, such as adherence to the Nuclear Suppliers Group Guidelines, implementation of an IAEA Additional Protocol to a state's safeguards agreement, and support for the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Fuel Bank and other fuel assurance mechanisms.

Question. Given the recent actions of the Russian Federation, including the bomber patrols near U.S. waters and the relentless positioning of nuclear forces, is it still this administration's intention to attempt to negotiate further nuclear force reductions with the Russians rather than work to bolster U.S. defenses?

Answer. The United States remains committed to pursuing a responsible approach to nuclear disarmament in keeping with our Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commitments and supports reductions in all types of nuclear weapons: strategic and nonstrategic, deployed and nondeployed. The United States has made clear our readiness to discuss further nuclear reductions with the Russian Federation, but progress requires a willing, trustworthy partner and a conducive strategic environment. This includes a willingness by Russia to adequately address our concerns about its violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

As we go to lower numbers, we are committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and effective arsenal that ensures effective deterrence and strategic stability. This includes making needed investments to modernize the aging cold-war-era nuclear infrastructure, which is essential to fulfilling the President's goal of reduced reliance on nuclear weapons.

The administration is pursuing an overhaul of the nuclear weapons enterprise, to include development of replacement weapons delivery systems for all elements of the triad, life extension programs (LEPs) and updates of all our existing nuclear warhead types, and modernization of nuclear weapons production facilities. Following the recently completed Defense Nuclear Enterprise Review, the administration is committed to spending several billion dollars over the next 5 years to sustain the enterprise and to ensure personnel serving in the nuclear forces have the resources and support they deserve to conduct their vital deterrence mission.

In the face of growing North Korean missile capabilities, the administration moved in 2013 to strengthen homeland missile defense by announcing plans to deploy 14 additional ground-based interceptors (GBIs) at Fort Greely, AK, by 2017, a

nearly 50-percent increase in our homeland missile defense capability. We are also continuing to test and improve the GBI, particularly the CE–II kill vehicle.

In addition, the administration is pressing ahead with all three phases of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) missile defense system that protects our NATO allies and U.S. Forces in Europe. We have deployed a radar in Turkey, two Aegis BMD-capable ships to Rota, Spain, with plans for two more in 2015, and are currently establishing an Aegis Ashore site in Romania that will be operational in 2015. Plans for the deployment of a second Aegis Ashore site in Poland in 2018 remain on schedule. We are also working with a number of NATO allies, bilaterally and in the NATO framework, to encourage them to acquire their own missile defense capabilities.

Question. In pursuing New START, the administration deflected efforts by Russia to link strategic offensive and defensive systems as they sought binding restrictions on our missile defenses. Does the administration continue to take the position that our missile defense systems are absolutely nonnegotiable? How has this position affected the Russians' interest in pursuing a follow-on treaty? What plans is the administration making to further shore up our Eastern European partners with missile defense technology?

Answer. The administration has consistently informed Russia that the United States will not agree to constrain or limit U.S. ballistic missile defense capabilities.

The United States has made clear our readiness to discuss with the Russian Federation further reductions that cover all types of nuclear weapons. This includes the proposal made by President Obama last year in Berlin to reduce deployed strategic nuclear weapons further, up to one-third from the level established in the New START Treaty. But progress in negotiating such reductions requires a willing, trustworthy partner and a conducive strategic environment.

Regarding plans the administration has for missile defense cooperation with European partners, the United States is committed to implementing all three phases of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). The United States has already deployed a radar to Turkey, two Aegis BMD-capable ships to Rota, Spain with plans for two more in 2015, and is currently establishing an Aegis Ashore site in Romania to be operational in 2015. Plans for the deployment of a second Aegis Ashore site in Poland in 2018 remain on schedule.

We are also working with a number of NATO allies, bilaterally and in the NATO framework, to encourage them to acquire their own missile defense capabilities. Acquiring these capabilities would be in addition to their substantial monetary contributions to the NATO command and control system. In the case of Poland we are actively supporting Raytheon's effort to sell its PATRIOT PAC–3 Air and Missile Defense system to Poland.

Question. There are a number of significant concerns with regards to the Russian track record of compliance with their current arms control obligations. Why should the United States continue to engage in negotiations on yet another arms control agreement or stringently implement other agreements while the Russians are less than sincere about their compliance with current commitments?

Answer. The United States remains committed to pursuing a responsible approach to nuclear disarmament in keeping with our Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commitments and supports reductions in all types of nuclear weapons: strategic and nonstrategic, deployed and nondeployed. The United States has made clear our readiness to discuss further nuclear reductions with the Russian Federation, but progress requires a willing, trustworthy partner and a conducive strategic environment. This includes willingness by Russia to adequately in a verifiable manner address our concerns about its violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

Current tensions with Russia highlight the importance of the predictability and confidence-building provided by arms control treaties and their associated verification regimes. This is especially the case with the continued successful implementation of the New START Treaty and the security and predictability provided by verifiable mutual limits on strategic nuclear weapons.

The New START Treaty enhances our national security and strategic stability with Russia, and both the United States and Russia are successfully implementing the treaty's inspection regime. As certified in the 2014 New START implementation report, Russia is in compliance with the New START Treaty. Similarly, it remains in the interest of the United States and our allies to continue implementing treaties and agreements that contribute to security and confidence building in the Euro-Atlantic region such as the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document. We take questions about compliance with arms control treaties very seriously and are con-

tinuing to monitor Russian compliance with all its arms control obligations. With respect to the INF Treaty, we believe the treaty serves the mutual interest of the United States, our allies, and Russia. We will continue our diplomatic efforts to urge Russia to return to verifiable compliance with the treaty, and we will not cease to raise this matter until it is resolved. We will also continue internal planning and coordination with allies to take into account the impact of this Russian violation on our collective security in the event Russia does not return to compliance and to take appropriate steps to address threats to our security.

RESPONSES OF ANTONY JOHN BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

Question #1. In March 2012, you said: "What's beyond debate is that Iraq today is less violent, more democratic and more prosperous—and the United States more deeply engaged there—than at any time in recent history." You testified in your nomination hearing that, at the time you made this comment, you believed it was true.

- With the benefit of hindsight, do you believe the judgments reflected in that statement, in full or in part, were incorrect?

Answer. I stand by my statement. In March 2012, Iraq was less violent, more democratic and more prosperous than it had been at any time in its recent history.

By 2012, violence in Iraq had been in steady and sustained decline for several years. The core metric used by the United States Government to measure violence—"weekly security incidents" (attacks against civilians, the government, and diplomats)—was down from an average of 1,600 a week at the end of 2007 and early 2008 to 100 a week in 2011–2012. The Shiite militia had stood down; indeed, what had been frequent rocket and mortar attacks against the United States Embassy went to zero. Al Qaeda in Iraq was in retreat—its main leaders had been killed, while suicide bomb attacks had dropped from an average of dozens a month to five a month.

Iraq was increasingly prosperous. Oil production—the lifeblood of Iraq's economy—was up 50 percent from 2005, to almost 3 million barrels per day, providing the revenue that enabled lawmakers to pass a $100 billion budget in February of that year.

Iraq was more democratic. Following the withdrawal of U.S. troops in 2011, the United States maintained an unwavering commitment to the development of Iraq's nascent democratic institutions and continued support for the democratic process, including successful national elections. By 2012, politics had supplanted violence as the dominant means for the country's various factions to settle their disputes and advance their interests. There were repeated political crises—over the election law, the election itself, the de-baathification process, the formation of the government. But instead of leading to renewed sectarian violence, Iraqis, until that point, resolved each of those differences through the political process, with quiet but continuous support from the United States.

Iraq's political leadership and the rise of ISIL in Syria forfeited much of this progress. We repeatedly warned the Iraqi Government that while AQI was down, it was not out and it was imperative to sustain pressure against them. Despite our repeated efforts, the Iraqi Government refused our assistance in the fight against AQI/ISIL until 2013, when the group had become entrenched and suicide bomb attacks jumped from 5 a month to 50 a month. Starting in early 2013, the Iraqis quietly began to accept our help—we established a targeting cell in Baghdad, resumed ISR flights, significantly increased the provision of weapons and provided technical advice. When Prime Minister Maliki visited the White House in November 2013, President Obama told him that the biggest threat Iraq faced was ISIL, that the United States was willing to provide even more counterterrorism support, but that only a comprehensive approach—especially addressing the legitimate grievances of the Sunni community—could be effective. But the Maliki government turned increasingly sectarian, playing to its base in the runup to elections in 2014. ISIL took advantage of the polarization to lay siege to Fallujah and Ramadi and ultimately to take Mosul.

Yet even in the midst of the growing ISIL crisis, on April 30 of this year, over 20 million Iraqis went to the polls to cast their ballot in a democratic election, determined to be fair and free by U.N. and EU elections monitors. Voter turnout was 62.2 percent, outpacing much of the region, despite significant attempts by ISIL to scare citizens away from the polls. The Iraqi determination to participate in the democratic process, in spite of countless obstacles, affirms the resilience of a more democratic Iraq. Following the election, we saw extensive negotiations on govern-

ment formation, the peaceful transfer of power from former PM Maliki to PM Haider al-Abadi, and a Cabinet confirmation process that ensured Sunni, Kurdish, Shia, and minority leaders had a seat at the table. While Iraqi determination sealed the country's commitment to democracy, the United States played no small role in encouraging the elections to be held on time and supporting technical training and development of election monitors, poll workers, and senior officials.

Question #2. Can you provide any examples of judgments that you and your administration colleagues have made in your policy toward Iraq and Syria that you now believe were wrong, and what lessons you have learned from those mistakes?

Answer. Yes. Let me start with some context. By 2012, the Iraqi Security Forces were more numerous and better trained and the Iraqi Government more confident it could maintain security on its own, supported by a robust U.S. security assistance program. As noted in Question #1, violence in Iraq was significantly down, the Shiite militia had stood down and what was then Al Qaeda in Iraq was in retreat. And politics seemed to have supplanted violence as the primary means by which different groups advanced their interests.

Nonetheless, we were deeply concerned that AQI remained a potential threat. Throughout 2012, we tried but did not succeed in focusing the Iraqi Government in sustaining proactive pressure on AQI. From early 2013, the committee that I chair, the Deputies Committee, met more than a dozen times on the question of increasing support to Iraq to deal with AQI and then ISIL. The Principals Committee and the National Security Council met multiple times on the same issue. Slowly and quietly, Iraq began to accept our offers of assistance, as noted above. But by then ISIL had developed significant momentum and Iraqi politics had turned increasingly sectarian, despite repeated warnings from the administration that a failure to address legitimate Sunni grievances would exacerbate the ISIL threat.

In retrospect, while we were focused on the emerging ISIL threat, we underestimated the weakness of the Iraqi Security Forces in their ability to respond during the June ISIL takeover of the city of Mosul and overestimated our ability to convince the Government of Iraq to heed our advice on political and security considerations, which further undermined the effectiveness of the Iraqi Security Forces.

This lesson, amplified by our experience in Libya, informed our current approach to Iraq. As President Obama has said, we and our European partners underestimated the need in Libya to have an answer for the day after Qadafi, including a viable political process and a coherent force to fill the security vacuum, despite repeated efforts to secure Libyan support for a robust training program and/or an international force to help keep the peace. That's why President Obama this summer conditioned launching our comprehensive counter-ISIL campaign in Iraq on seating a new, inclusive government committed to reform. We knew that U.S. airstrikes and kinetic action to halt ISIL's advance into Iraq would not be effective or sustainable absent forward movement in Iraq's democratic process, aided by the selection of new government and Prime Minister committed, through words and actions, to reform the policies of the Maliki administration and govern in an inclusive manner. And we have made clear to the Abadi government that ISIL cannot be defeated by military action alone, that wholesale political reform and inclusive governance are essential to unifying the Iraqi people against the extremist threat and promoting stability in the country. Already, we have seen significant progress in that direction.

Question #3. Are there any circumstances in which you would recommend to the President that he order U.S. troops into a combat role in Iraq or Syria?

Answer. Yes. I can certainly imagine hypothetical circumstances in which our military commanders might advise the President to deploy combat troops to fight in Iraq and I would second that advice. For example, if our Embassy was in imminent danger of falling to ISIL or the group had acquired a weapon of mass destruction and our military advised that U.S. troops in a combat role were necessary to contend with the problem, I would join their recommendation.

In the current campaign against ISIL, U.S. troops in a combat role are neither necessary nor advisable. The Iraqi Security Forces, the Kurdish Peshmerga and Sunni tribes already have demonstrated that they can be effective on the ground, especially when we provide air power, intelligence, training, equipment, advice and assistance. The Iraqi Government has made clear it does not want U.S. troops in a combat role in Iraq. The campaign will be more effective and sustainable if Iraqis are the ones doing the fighting on the ground to secure their own country.

Question #4. To what extent has the collapse of Iraqi forces in June 2014 and resulting security conditions in Iraq prompted the administration to reevaluate its current troop withdrawal plan for Afghanistan?

Answer. It is important to learn from experience, and to be guided by historical lessons. In formulating our policy in Afghanistan, we have looked to lessons learned from Iraq and other conflicts. That said, I don't believe that we can lump Iraq and Afghanistan together. These are different countries, with unique histories, political and economic realities, and regional dynamics. We have to deal with each country with an understanding of what makes it different than others. Getting this balance right is of course a challenge, but one we must face.

The primary lesson of Iraq is the need for political accommodation—it was a failure of the political process that pushed Iraq over the edge and created space for ISIL, and that's what Afghanistan needs to avoid. That is why Secretary Kerry and the administration invested so heavily in forging a post-election compromise between the two leading candidates to govern together and inclusively. It is a point we have been stressing to President Ghani and CEO Abdullah, as we concurrently reassure them of our commitment to sustain our sizeable investments in the ANSF, consistent with the Tokyo commitments. Fortunately, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have made it clear that they fully share this view and are acting on it, including just recently agreeing to a diverse allocation of Cabinet positions.

Our planning for the U.S. role in Afghanistan is based on our long-standing discussions with the Afghan Government, our NATO allies and other international partners. Beyond 2014, the United States will continue two narrow missions in Afghanistan. First, the United States and NATO will transition to a noncombat mission of training, advising, and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Second, the United States will continue to maintain a counterterrorism capability in Afghanistan to target the remnants of al-Qaeda and disrupt other extremists who directly threaten the U.S. homeland, U.S. persons overseas, and allies.

The President's national security team has been defining the operational and legal details required to continue executing those missions in 2015 within the scope of the Bilateral Security Agreement we signed in September with the Government of Afghanistan. These recommendations were recently passed to the President, who approved them.

Question #5. Do you believe that a conditions-based withdrawal would be more effective in securing long-term stability in Afghanistan?

Answer. The United States has pursued a conditions-based drawdown of our forces in Afghanistan, insofar as we have steadily built up and then transferred security responsibilities to the Afghan Government over the past 6 years. The conditions we helped to create were increased Afghan capacity. But a timetable also helped keep the pressure on the Afghans to assume that responsibility, and not take for granted a U.S. presence in perpetuity. It is important that they know in advance what responsibilities they must assume and when they must assume them. Ultimately, we cannot do for Afghans what they must do for themselves.

At the same time, we and our NATO allies agree on the need to continue to support the ANSF, the Afghan Government, and the Afghan people. To that end, the United States has committed to a long-term partnership with Afghanistan based on our Strategic Partnership Agreement and on the recently signed Bilateral Security Agreement. The United States and NATO will transition to a noncombat mission of training, advising, and assisting the ANSF. The United States also will continue to maintain a counterterrorism capability in Afghanistan to target the remnants of al-Qaeda and disrupt other extremists who directly threaten the U.S. homeland, U.S. persons overseas, and allies.

While the U.S. combat mission will end this year, we will continue to support the Government of Afghanistan as it pursues a future of peace, greater prosperity, and an end to conflict. To the extent that Taliban members directly threaten the United States and coalition forces in Afghanistan, provide direct support to al-Qaeda, or pose a strategic threat to Afghan Security Forces, we will take appropriate measures to keep Americans safe and assist the Afghans.

Question #6. In June, President Obama argued that destroying ISIS in Iraq required the removal of then-Prime Minister Maliki and the establishment of an inclusive new government. Why does this not equally apply to Assad in Syria? Does destroying ISIS in Syria not also require the removal of Assad and the establishment of an inclusive government in Syria?

Answer. As Secretary Kerry noted recently, the relationship between Assad and ISIL is symbiotic; they feed off each other. Assad has done little to combat the ISIL threat and has, in fact—through his regime's brutality toward its own people—been a key factor in spurring ISIL's growth. President Obama has said repeatedly that Assad long ago lost all legitimacy and must step aside for Syria to establish an in-

clusive government. But the President and Secretary also have been clear that there is no military solution to the conflict in Syria. Our goal is helping the Syrian people reach a negotiated political transition that fulfills Syrians' aspirations for freedom and dignity—a future without Assad or ISIL.

That's why we have supported the moderate opposition and are in the process of ramping up that aid, together with our partners. The Department of Defense program to train and equip vetted, moderate elements of the Syrian opposition, which Congress has authorized, and which Saudi Arabia and Turkey, among others, have committed to support, will further enable us to bolster the moderate opposition, and put it in a position to defend itself against ISIL and regime forces; stabilize areas under its control; and, by shifting the balance on the ground, help create the conditions for a negotiated transition.

Question #7. Is the administration's "ISIS first" approach in Syria benefiting the Assad regime? If yes, does this not contradict the administration's stated political goal to transition from Assad to an inclusive government?

Answer. The threat that ISIL represents—to Iraq, to Syria, to the broader region, and to the global community—and U.S. leadership have mobilized an international coalition of more than 60 countries to take action to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL in Iraq and Syria. Assad has been at war against the moderate opposition since long before the ISIL campaign. Our increased support to vetted, moderate elements of the armed opposition in Syria through the Train and Equip Program that Congress authorized and other efforts, will enable it to act as a counterweight to ISIL and also more effectively defend itself against the regime and ultimately help create the conditions to end the civil war in Syria.

Question #8. What kind of political transition in Syria is the administration discussing that does not remove Assad from power?

Answer. We are not discussing with any of our international or Syrian partners, or the regime itself, any political transition process that envisages Assad remaining in power. Our objective remains an inclusive, legitimate government for all Syrians; we are supporting those Syrians who share that goal. As President Obama has reiterated, Assad stands in the way of political transition, lacks legitimacy, and needs to step down so that Syrians can achieve a democratic, just, and inclusive government. And as Secretary Kerry noted recently, we will work with Syrians who strive to empower moderates against the extremes of both Asad and ISIL.

Question #9. Do you share the concerns that Secretary Hagel has reportedly expressed—that we may not be able to succeed against ISIS if there is not a clear strategy toward Assad?

Answer. Our strategy toward Assad is clear. We are strengthening our support for the moderate opposition, in part, so that it can advance the conditions for a political transition that ultimately results in Assad's departure. The goal of such a transition would be an inclusive government capable of serving the interests of all the Syrian people.

Defeating ISIL is a complex challenge that requires a multiyear strategy and sustained support. The United States and coalition partners—Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—have conducted more than 450 airstrikes in Syria. We are focused on degrading ISIL, denying it safe haven, and disrupting its ability to project power by taking away its freedom of movement and resupply in ungoverned spaces, particularly in eastern Syria. The degradation or destruction of ISIL targets in Syria limits the terrorist group's ability to lead, amass forces, and conduct operations. We believe that the moderate opposition must be part of the solution to the twin challenges of ISIL and Assad: over time, it can serve as the ground force that, together with coalition airstrikes, can counter ISIL; and it also can act as a counterweight to the Assad regime and help facilitate a negotiated transition.

Question #10. Do you believe the United States can maintain public support among Syrians for the fight against ISIS without doing more to prevent Assad's war against them?

Answer. The Syrian people rose up against Assad in 2011 to demand basic human rights and freedoms. The administration supports these demands, and has backed members of the moderate opposition in pursuing them. It is clear that the moderate opposition has the will to fight ISIL and defend the Syrian people against the regime; they are doing both of these things now. However, they require our assistance in this struggle. We have provided significant nonlethal assistance to date to the political and military opposition, and continue to do so. We will also, through the Department of Defense's Train and Equip Program, provide lethal assistance

and training to vetted, moderate fighters to defend themselves against ISIL and the regime, hold territory, and to empower a subset of fighters to take the fight to ISIL. These efforts will better enable the opposition to defend itself against the regime.

At the same time, no one knows better the brutality and barbarity of ISIL then those people living in areas that they currently control. Beheading, slavery, and rape are commonplace. Throughout Syria and Iraq, local populations who may have initially been supportive of ISIL's presence as a counter to Assad are now seeing this terrorist group for the inhumane butchers that they are.

Question #11. The President and other administration officials have repeatedly condemned the Assad regime's barbaric use of so-called barrel bombs against civilian populations. And yet the attacks not only continue; they are increasing since U.S air strikes in Syria began. Is the administration planning to take any action to stop these attacks? If no, how does the administration expect the 5,000 Syrians who have been trained and equipped to succeed against ISIS without protecting them and their families from Assad's airstrikes and barrel bombs?

Answer. This is something we're working every day with our friends and partners in the region. We have provided extensive support to the moderate opposition and are working with Congress, the Defense Department, and regional partners to significantly expand that support so that moderate fighters will be in a better position to defend populations against ISIL and the regime—including its use of barrel bombs—and to create the conditions for a political settlement.

The United States, through the Department of State and USAID, complement those efforts with continuing nonlethal support to moderates, armed and civilian, to provide governance, rule of law, and basic services.

Question #12. I am sure you are aware of the numerous reports of Sunni tribal forces who have risen up to fight ISIS, but have been slaughtered by the hundreds, in large part because they are not getting the assistance they need to succeed. These Sunni tribal elements were integral to our success against Al Qaeda in Iraq during the war, as you pointed out in your testimony. They are equally important in the fight against ISIS now.

- What programs has the administration put into place to help empower Sunni tribes and other Sunnis that want to end Islamic State control over their communities?

Answer. Support from Sunni tribes in countering ISIL is both critical and necessary. The President has made clear his commitment to supporting greater cooperation between Sunni tribes and the Iraqi Government, and empowering tribal fighters and the Iraqi Security Forces to combat their common enemy ISIL. The President raised this with former Prime Minister Maliki over a year ago when they met in Washington, and the President and Vice President Biden continued to urge the Iraqi Government, including in multiple meetings and phone calls with Prime Minister Abadi, to make Sunni outreach a priority. I did the same during my most recent visit to Iraq in October.

The United States has encouraged the Iraqi Government to not just cooperate with Sunni tribes, but to take concrete steps to integrate tribal fighters into the Iraqi Security Forces. This integration would help address some grievances raised by Sunni communities, including their desires for local security control and salaries and benefits for those fighting to protect them.

A major component of this integration effort is the development of a National Guard. This effort aims to establish a security structure that draws from local recruits and allows them to protect their own communities, while being tethered to Baghdad through the provision of salaries, weapons, and equipment. This effort is also a critical part of security sector reform and seeks to develop a durable security arrangement that will help Sunni communities trust the forces protecting them as well as empower communities and tribes to provide their own security. We are strongly supportive of this initiative and have been working for months to help bolster support for the program among Iraqi leaders. When I visited Iraq in October, there was strong consensus support for this effort from all the leaders with whom I met, and we continue to work with the Iraqis to refine the program and to move forward with the necessary steps, and legislative action in the Council of Representatives, to implement it.

In the meantime, Sunni tribes face an immediate and constant threat from ISIL. The recent massacre of hundreds of members of the Albu Nimr tribe highlights the brutality of ISIL's actions against Sunnis. While the National Guard program is developing, we are urging the Iraqi Government and Sunni tribes to move forward on a bridging mechanism to begin the integration process as soon as possible so that tribal fighters can receive the weapons, equipment, and training they need to

counter ISIL. Earlier this month, Iraqi Government officials traveled to Al Asad Air Base in Anbar province to hold a conference with hundreds of Sunni tribal leaders and representatives to discuss this bridging mechanism. In the weeks since, we have seen the process of integration begin with Iraqi forces starting to integrate hundreds of Sunni fighters, and we will continue to press all sides to continue and increase this effort.

To support our commitment to help build the capacity of Iraqi forces, including Sunni forces, the President has authorized the additional deployment of up to 1,500 military personnel to train, advise, and assist Iraqi forces. This deployment includes personnel to Al Asad Air Base to support Iraqi efforts to develop and execute operations to counter ISIL. This U.S. presence in Anbar province will continue to support the integration of Sunni tribal fighters and to facilitate coordination between the Iraqi Government and Sunni tribes in their common fight against ISIL.

Question #13. Do you believe that Putin's actions in Ukraine constitute an "invasion" of the country?

Answer. As we have said consistently, Russia is blatantly violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and its actions—including repeated armed incursions into Ukraine and its support for the Separatists—have been profoundly destabilizing. There is a fundamental international norm at stake, which is that sovereign states must respect the borders and territorial integrity of other sovereign states. This is enshrined in the U.N. Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. Russia has acted in a way that violates international law and long-standing norms as well as its own commitments to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. That is why the United States has mobilized the international community to impose significant costs on Russia for its actions in Ukraine and will not relent until Russia, through its actions, respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Question #14. Do you believe that the costs that we and our allies are imposing on Russia are sufficient to deter further aggression by Putin against Ukraine?

Answer. A key element of our strategy for dealing with Russia's continuing violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity has been raising the costs on Russia for its actions in order to deter further such actions. The United States has galvanized support from the EU, G7, and other international partners to impose and sustain such costs, including political isolation and economic sanctions. At critical moments, that pressure has created space for Ukraine to hold the most successful elections in its post-Soviet history and to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union, which is what sparked the Maidan movement in the first place.

Sanctions, and the uncertainty they have created in the market, are having a significant impact, directly and indirectly, on Russia's already weak economy. The Kremlin's actions in Ukraine and the international response to them have sparked significant capital flight, had a chilling effect on foreign investment, driven the ruble to its lowest levels ever, sharply constrained the ability of Russian companies to float bonds and raise money, fueled inflation and driven growth to zero. Russian companies face a looming credit crunch—Russian banks and firms have to repay $134 billion in external debt between mid-November and the end of next year, $32 billion of which comes due this December alone. Both the IMF and Russian Ministry of Economy expect capital outflows to reach $100 billion in 2014 and the IMF predicts that outflows will remain elevated in 2015. In October alone, the central bank's reserves declined by over $28 billion as it attempted to cushion the currency's decline in the face of sanctions and lower oil prices; the ruble has lost around a quarter of its value since we imposed our first round of targeted sectoral sanctions in July.

Over time, our carefully coordinated and targeted sectorial sanctions will have even deeper impacts. For example, Russia is no longer able to acquire the cutting edge technology it requires to further develop energy exploration and exploitation.

President Putin has found that Russia's aggression in Ukraine is the subject of every multilateral gathering he attends. There is no doubt in the market of our resolve to follow through on our pledges to impose further costs on Russia if it continues its destabilizing actions in eastern Ukraine. If Russian authorities continue their aggressive actions and violations of international law, the costs will only continue to rise.

Question #15. Do you think the lack of lethal military support for Ukraine encourages further Russian aggression?

Answer. While Russia has continued its destabilizing actions in Ukraine, Putin's aggression has been met by a united front by the United States and our European partners. We have imposed serious costs on him, which over time will reveal the losing hand he is playing. We have prioritized the unity of this effort with Europe,

because the impact is that much greater when the United States and Europe act together. In the long term, this will be the most effective deterrent to Russian aggression. As I indicated in my testimony, we continue to assess the situation and look actively, every day, at other forms of assistance, including defensive lethal assistance.

But I don't think anyone—not the United States, not our closest allies—believe there is a military solution in Ukraine. What we are doing is raising the costs of the conflict on Russia. That includes sanctions, taken in coordination with our partners, and which are having a significant impact on Russia's economy. But beyond that, we are taking steps to support Ukraine and its ability to determine its own future. To ensure that the Ukrainian military is strengthened and modernized, the United States is providing over $118 million in security assistance to the Government of Ukraine. This has included body armor, helmets, vehicles and patrol boats, night and thermal vision devices, heavy engineering equipment, advanced radios, demining equipment, countermortar radars, and other items. We are providing equipment and training to assist Ukraine in monitoring and securing its borders, operating more safely and effectively, and preserving and enforcing its territorial integrity. The U.S. EUCOM-led Joint Commission on Bilateral Reform is leading an effort to assess and prioritize Ukraine's needs for all NATO allies and partners, as well as the United States, to improve Ukraine's capacity to provide for its own defense, identifying near-term priorities while setting the stage for longer term defense cooperation. This effort includes a recently concluded visit by medical and security assistance advisory teams.

We are also taking steps to deter Russia from taking further destabilizing actions on its periphery by increasing our support to our partners and allies. The President has asked Congress for $1 billion to maintain and expand our European reassurance efforts. The European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), which was delivered to the Hill on June 26, proposes increases in U.S. military deployments to Europe. We believe that an expanded and persistent U.S. air, land, and sea presence in Europe, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, is a necessary and appropriate show of support to our NATO allies and partners who are deeply concerned by Russia's aggression in Ukraine. In addition, ERI will provide funding for more extensive bilateral and multilateral exercises and training with allies and partners; improvements to infrastructure that will boost responsiveness, especially in Eastern Europe; and enhanced prepositioning of U.S. equipment. A portion of the funding would also help build partner capacity in some of the newer NATO allies and with non-NATO partners such as Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

Question #16. In your testimony you stated that the administration is looking at providing lethal assistance to Ukraine. In these discussions, what circumstances would the prompt the administration to change its current opposition and provide lethal assistance to Ukraine?

Answer. I don't think anyone—not the United States, not our closest allies—believe that there is a military solution in Ukraine. What we have to do right now is to take the leverage provided by the sanctions the United States led the Europeans to put in place, and actually achieve implementation of the Minsk agreement. Russia is hurting. As discussed in detail in answer to Question #14, the pressure we've exerted through coordinated sanctions is having a significant and growing impact on Russia. We are focused on getting the Minsk process moving, and if it doesn't we have made it very clear to President Putin that the pressure will only grow. And as I indicated in my testimony, we continue to assess the situation and look actively, every day, at other forms of assistance, including defensive lethal assistance. In that regard, one relevant factor would be whether Russia continues to blatantly violate its Minsk commitments by providing the Separatists with tanks.

In the meantime, we are working closely with Ukraine to help them use the tools they already have more effectively. The U.S.-Ukraine Joint Commission on Defense Reform and Bilateral Cooperation has provided targeted recommendations for NATO allies and partners, as well as the United States, on our next steps in security assistance, including in areas such as generating forces, combat lifesaving care, logistics, and joint operations, to name a few. We are providing near-term, tangible capacity-building assistance while at the same time laying the groundwork for longer term reform to build Ukraine's capacity to provide for its own defense and increase its interoperability with NATO and other Western forces. With your support, we plan to use the President's European Reassurance Initiative to provide Ukraine another $45 million in FY 2015 to further support our efforts to build Ukraine's defense capacity, in addition to the over $118 million in training and equipment that we have already committed.

Question #17. The remaining $575.5 million of this year's military aid to Egypt is subject to the Secretary of State certifying that the Egyptian Government "is taking steps to support a democratic transition." What are the metrics by which the administration intends to measure the concrete steps the Egyptian Government must take to certify this condition? At this point in time, does the administration intend to certify that Egypt is taking these steps?

Answer. At this time, the Secretary has not made a decision regarding certification with respect to assistance to Egypt. The administration continues to monitor the situation in Egypt and encourage the Egyptian Government to ensure that it upholds constitutionally guaranteed rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly, and worship for all of its citizens. We continue to have concerns about Egypt's political trajectory, including steps that would effectively alienate or disenfranchise significant segments of the opposition, and we have delivered this message at the highest levels. We will continue to press the government to allow civil society to operate freely—including by amending or repealing the Protest Law and passing an NGO Law that ensures freedom of association—and to release jailed journalists and political activists. We believe that Egypt will be more stable and prosperous when all its citizens are allowed to organize in an open, vibrant civil society and express their political views free from government interference.

RESPONSES OF ANTONY JOHN BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Should the President use his existing authorities to impose financial sanctions on individuals involved in human rights violations in Venezuela?

Answer. We need to look at all options to find the most effective way to encourage the Venezuelan Government to respect democratic principles and the human rights of its citizens. The most effective efforts are those taken in conjunction with partners, and we will continue to work closely with others in the region to support greater political space in Venezuela, and ensure the Venezuelan Government lives up to the hemisphere's shared commitment to the promotion of democracy, as articulated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

With respect to the role of the United States, the administration has already taken steps such as imposing visa restrictions on government officials who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, human rights abuses. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress to build on the administration's actions to date and determine what we can do to go further. We should not take any options off the table. Financial sanctions have proven effective in some situations, and could potentially be a useful tool, if targeted toward specific individuals and entities and used in concert with diplomatic efforts to advance specific U.S. foreign policy goals.

Question. In your assessment, has the President's strategy against ISIS proven to be effective?

Answer. The President's strategy to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL is delivering steady progress. The momentum is shifting in Iraq as the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) increase pressure against ISIL with successful offensive operations. While it is still early in the military campaign, coalition airstrikes coordinated with ISF ground operations have resulted in several successful engagements, including with respect to the Mosul dam, Erbil, Haditha Dam, Rabiya border crossing, and more recently Bayji and Zumar. ISIL is suffering significant losses and has been forced to change its tactics, hurting ISIL's morale and challenging their ongoing propaganda campaigns that fuel foreign fighter recruitment. Military successes, combined with strong leadership by PM Abadi and Defense Minister Obeidi, have reinvigorated the ISF. Through concerted engagement, many Sunni tribes have joined the fight against ISIL and are entering agreements to be incorporated into the ISF, including eventually into a new National Guard. Through our advise and assist and training missions, we will strengthen ISF (including Peshmerga) capabilities to build on initial success and to launch additional offensives to retake ISIL-held territory.

In Syria, the United States and coalition partners Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have conducted more than 400 airstrikes, restricting ISIL's freedom of movement and resupply and ability to project power into Iraq that it has enjoyed inside ungoverned spaces in eastern and northern Syria. Strikes in Kobani, a location where ISIL is concentrating its fighters and materiel, and parts of eastern Syria, particularly Raqqah and Dayr Az-Zour, have degraded ISIL by taking out command and control nodes, finance centers, training camps, and oil refin-

eries that produce gas for its vehicles and a critical source of financing. Targeting in Syria is evolving beyond fixed facilities and now includes more dynamic targeting of a tactical nature, such as vehicles, armored vehicles, and convoys. The destruction and degradation of ISIL targets in Syria further limits the terrorist group's ability to lead, control, amass forces, project power, and conduct operations.

An important part of our strategy in Syria is to continue to build up the moderate opposition, including through the Train and Equip Program authorized by Congress. An effective partner on the ground can fill the space created by coalition air power and ultimately is necessary to deny ISIL safe haven.

Defeating ISIL cannot be achieved through military action alone, however. President Obama's strategy to defeat ISIL also involves comprehensive efforts to dismantle ISIL's financial networks and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters. Working with the coalition, we have degraded ISIL's ability to derive income from illicit oil sales and have cut off ISIL's access to international banking networks. Many countries have enacted or stepped-up enforcement on legislation that criminalizes travel to commit terrorist acts and other activities that support terrorism. We have seen some progress in interdicting the transit of foreign fighters to Syria, but there must be more action. Long-term, we are working with our partners to delegitimize ISIL's ideology and the draw of violent extremism.

A key element to the success of defeating ISIL in Iraq is the improvement of socioeconomic conditions that allowed ISIL to foment. Iraq's inclusive new government has pledged to enact reforms and address corruption that has marginalized Iraqis of all ethnicities and religious sects and, since the completion of government formation, has taken initial steps to deliver on its promises. For example, the Prime Minister disbanded the controversial "Office of the Commander in Chief," fired more than three dozen generals who were incompetent or pursuing sectarian agendas and has reached out to the Sunni tribes and the Kurds.

We are encouraged by initial successes that have blunted ISIL's onslaught, but we are aware that significant challenges remain and that we will have setbacks. However, we are certain of the importance of defeating ISIL and are devoted to our mission. As I saw firsthand during my meetings with the new Iraqi leadership in Iraq last month, we have a credible partner in the Abadi government. And we have a broad and committed international coalition.

Question. Do you agree that the administration is absolutely obligated by law to get congressional approval to lift sanctions as part of a final deal with Iran?

Answer. Terminating legislatively imposed sanctions would require congressional action. However, as we have stated in public testimony and in closed discussions on the Hill, in the first instance we would look to suspend sanctions in order to ensure that we can quickly snap them back into place should Iran fail to meet its commitments. Then, only if and after Iran has upheld its end of the arrangement would we look to lift or terminate sanctions.

Question. In your view, does the lack of American lethal military support for Ukraine encourage or deter further Russian aggression?

Answer. The United States continues to believe that there is no military resolution to the crisis, and our focus is on finding a diplomatic solution. We support the Minsk cease-fire and the peace plan, and call on Russia and the separatists Russia supports to abide by the agreed measures and seek a peaceful resolution. We have provided significant nonlethal security assistance to Ukraine to help address the crisis. We are constantly assessing the situation and have not ruled out any options, including defensive lethal assistance, depending on how conditions on the ground evolve.

In response to the crisis, the United States is providing over $118 million in security assistance to the Government of Ukraine. We are providing equipment and training to assist Ukraine in monitoring and securing its borders, operating more safely and effectively, and preserving and enforcing its territorial integrity. This equipment includes night vision goggles, secure communication, protective vests, vehicles and countermortar radar. The U.S. EUCOM-led Joint Commission on Bilateral Reform is leading an effort to assess and prioritize Ukraine's needs to improve its capacity to provide for its own defense, identifying near-term priorities while setting the stage for longer term defense cooperation. This effort includes assessments by U.S. medical and security assistance advisory teams that were completed earlier this fall.

Question. What steps is the administration taking to help Moldova preserve its territorial integrity and sovereignty?

Answer. I visited Moldova with Vice President Biden in 2011. Helping our European partners like Moldova maintain and guard against threats to their sovereignty

and territorial integrity is a priority for the United States. The United States actively participates in the 5+2 negotiations, which seek a comprehensive settlement to the Transnistrian conflict that guarantees Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States also continues to advocate for the withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova's Transnistria region, replacement of the current Russia-dominated peacekeeping force with a genuinely multinational presence under an international mandate, and full access to the region by the OSCE Mission to Moldova, consistent with its existing mandate.

The United States is helping Moldova create a modern, sustainable military force. Our defense officials are in regular contact with Moldova's Ministry of Defense, including visits by high ranking DOD officials over the last year. In FY 2014, the United States provided $1.25 million for Foreign Military Financing and $750,000 for International Military Education and Training (IMET) for Moldova. The United States is also working to equip the Moldovan Military with Excess Defense Articles (EDA) from U.S. stocks, including a recent delivery of 49 vehicles (HMMVWs, trucks, trailers) via EDA. If approved, the European Reassurance Initiative could provide an additional $10 million in FMF to Moldova in 2015 to help build Moldova's military capacity and improve interoperability with NATO and other Western forces.

The United States is also helping the Moldovan Government secure its borders through a $35 million Defense Threat Reduction Agency Program supporting capacity-building of Moldova's border guards.

Question. As you know, the LIBERTAD Act codified into law specific democratic benchmarks that the Government of Cuba must meet before the President begins to normalize relations. Do you anticipate any efforts to normalize relations with Cuba in the next 2 years absence Cuba meeting the democratic standards specified in the LIBERTAD Act?

Answer. The administration remains committed to policies that support the Cuban people's desire to freely determine their future, reduce their dependence on the Cuban state, and advance U.S. national interests. We will continue to pursue constructive relations between the United States and Cuba, consistent with U.S. law and with our national interests.

The Cuban Government infringes upon universally accepted rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, harasses members of independent civil society, and has kept a U.S. citizen detained for nearly 5 years for trying to bring Internet access to the Jewish community on the island. As President Obama has stated, the administration will continue to think creatively about how to promote positive change in Cuba. We look forward to the day when the Cuban people are able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. Do you have any reservations about U.S. programs that help the Cuban people communicate freely without government censorship? If confirmed, will you fully support such programs?

Answer. There is no question that if I am confirmed as Deputy Secretary I will continue to support efforts to help Cuban citizens communicate more freely with one another and with the outside world.

The Cuban Government continues to unduly limit fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, press, association and peaceful assembly, as well as the free flow of information to, from, and within the island. Although the Cuban Government continues to blame the U.S. embargo for lack of Internet on the island, the Cuban Government limits access to the Internet to a small number of professionals and the party faithful. Cuban restrictions on technologies, monitoring, censorship, and control over who has access to the Internet make Cuba among the least-connected countries in the world.

The President and his administration remain committed to policies that support the Cuban people's desire to freely determine their future, reduce their dependence on the Cuban state, and advance U.S. national interests. As part of our policy, the administration has taken steps to improve conditions for Cuban citizens through initiatives aimed at increasing the free flow of information to, from, and among the Cuban people. U.S. foreign assistance supports this policy.

Question. Secretary Kerry has said that the administration would not consider exchanging development worker, Alan Gross, for three Cuban spies that remain imprisoned in the United States, as there is no equivalency in their cases. Is this still the position of the administration?

Answer. Alan Gross is an international development worker who was sentenced to 15 years and has been unjustly imprisoned by Cuban authorities for nearly 5

years. He deserves to come home to his family. Securing his release remains a top priority for the administration.

Cuban Government interlocutors frequently attempt to compare Mr. Gross' imprisonment to that of the convicted Cuban intelligence agents from the "Wasp Network," three of whom continue to serve sentences in the United States. Mr. Gross was a development worker, and there is no comparison. His situation is fundamentally dissimilar to those of the convicted intelligence agents.

Cuba's continued imprisonment of Mr. Gross for trying to help Cubans gain access to the Internet is indefensible. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, I will use every appropriate diplomatic channel to press for Mr. Gross' release, both publicly and privately.

Question. As you know, the Summit of the Americas is coming up next year in Panama. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Roberta Jacobson, has said that ". . . the summit process is committed to democratic governance and that the governments that are sitting at that table ought to be committed to the summit principles, which include democratic governance."

♦ Does the Cuban regime meet this standard? In your view, should the President attend if Cuban regime officials attend?

Answer. The United States supports the important commitments—especially with respect to democracy and human rights—made at the 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec by all of the democratic states of our region. At that summit, all participating governments agreed, by consensus, that a "strict respect for the democratic system" is an essential condition for participation in the Summit of the Americas process. Cuba remains a clear outlier in the region in terms of democratic values and respect for human rights. As a hemispheric community, we should work to promote positive change, democratic reforms, and increased respect for human rights in Cuba.

If confirmed, I will consult closely with the Assistant Secretaries for the Western Hemisphere and Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, as well as other senior Department of State and National Security Council officials, regarding President Obama's attendance. I will engage with summit planners, organizers, and like-minded governments to advocate that the summit include meaningful engagement between leaders and members of civil society and that the summit reaffirms our region's commitment to democracy and human rights, as expressed through the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

RESPONSES OF ANTONY JOHN BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEFF FLAKE

Question. The President has indicated his willingness to work with Congress on a new authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) to combat ISIL in Iraq and Syria. While the President continues to maintain that there will be no deployment of "combat troops" as part of this fight, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, has testified before Congress that he would not rule out recommending the introduction of combat forces to this fight.

♦ Would you support approval of an AUMF which included a prohibition on the deployment of combat forces in the fight against ISIL?

Answer. As the President has stated, our strategy to work with a coalition of partners "to degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL" includes a number of key elements: a systematic campaign of airstrikes in Iraq and Syria; support to forces fighting ISIL on the ground; the use of our substantial counterterrorism capabilities to prevent ISIL attacks; and the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians who have been displaced by this terrorist organization. The President has also made clear that this effort does not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil.

Although the President has the authority to address the threat from ISIL, he has said that we are strongest as a nation when the executive branch and Congress work together on matters involving the use of U.S. military force. The administration is therefore engaging with the Congress on a new AUMF. The goal of this engagement is to produce an AUMF that specifically addresses the current fight against ISIL and, as the President has said, "reflects what we perceive to be not just our strategy over the next 2 or 3 months, but our strategy going forward."

As I noted during my hearing, the administration will continue to engage with the Congress on the elements of an AUMF to ensure that they are appropriately tailored, while still preserving the authorities the President needs to execute his

counter-ISIL strategy and to respond as might be necessary to defend the United States.

Question. How would the continued absence of an AUMF approved by Congress affect the coalition the administration has put together to fight ISIL?

Answer. The President has been clear that he has the authority to address the threat from ISIL and to build a strong international coalition in support of that effort. The international coalition looks to the United States to continue to provide robust leadership in the fight against ISIL, and we are strongest as a nation—and as the leader of the coalition—when the executive branch and Congress work together on matters involving the use of U.S. military force. We would therefore welcome congressional support for our military efforts to combat ISIL including through a new AUMF. As I noted during my hearing, we want to work actively with Congress to develop one.

RESPONSES OF ANTONY JOHN BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RAND PAUL

Question. Earlier this year, in spite of laws prohibiting U.S. assistance to the terrorist organization Hamas, the Obama administration quietly worked to help Hamas circumvent these clear funding prohibitions and join a U.S.-backed Palestinian unity government.

- Do you believe Hamas is worthy of assistance from U.S. taxpayers?
- Do you believe this U.S.-facilitated arrangement should continue even if Hamas maintains its refusal to renounce violence or to recognize Israel?

Answer. Our position is absolutely clear and unchanged. Hamas remains a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization. The United States does not and will not provide any assistance to Hamas nor maintain any contact with members of Hamas.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) government is comprised of independent technocrats; no members of Hamas are a part of this government and we assess that Hamas does not exert influence over the government. Moreover, the PA government has maintained its commitment to the principles of nonviolence and recognition of the State of Israel. We have made clear to the PA government that it must continue to uphold these principles.

Assistance to the Palestinian people is an essential part of the U.S. commitment to a negotiated two-state solution for Palestinians and Israelis, promoting a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It is in the interest of the United States to ensure these efforts continue as they help to build a more democratic, stable, prosperous, and secure region.

The Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014 enables continued economic assistance to the PA. Our foreign assistance to the PA is provided consistent with this authority.

Question. At the same time that the Palestinian unity government was formed, the State Department indicated that "we will be judging this government by its actions." Since that comment, Hamas has launched thousands of rockets into Israel. In the wake of the November 18 Jerusalem synagogue attack, a senior Hamas official rejected pleas to condemn the violence by reiterating his desire for intifada against Israel.

- How would you then judge the unity government given these kinds of actions and statements?
- How do you judge the political legitimacy of Hamas as a participant in that unity government?

Answer. We have closely followed the actions of the Palestinian Authority (PA) government of national consensus since its formation in June 2014. The PA government is comprised of independent technocrats; no members of Hamas are a part of this government. We assess that Hamas exerts no influence over the PA government. President Abbas' goal in pursuing reconciliation and in forming the PA government of national consensus is to end the period of Hamas rule in Gaza and empower the PA to reassert control there.

The PA government has demonstrated its commitment to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of the State of Israel, and acceptance of previous commitments and obligations. Throughout this difficult period in recent months, President Abbas has directed the PA security services to take all possible measures to prevent terror attacks and dismantle terrorist infrastructure in the West Bank. Security cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli security forces continues. President Abbas and other PA officials have consistently condemned violence, including the horrific

November 18 attack on a synagogue in Jerusalem that resulted in the deaths of three American citizens. As I noted during my hearing, the statement by a senior Hamas official apparently condoning the attack was "a reminder of Hamas' true colors." While we are urging the PA to do more to alleviate tensions on the ground, we recognize that President Abbas remains a key partner for peace.

Hamas has refused to cooperate with the PA consensus government, blocking PA ministers from exercising control over their portfolios in Gaza; preventing PA employees in Gaza from reintegrating into the civil service; and refusing to disarm its military wing and cede control over security and border crossings in Gaza to the PA. We condemned Hamas' deplorable attempts to target Israeli civilians with rockets and mortars this past summer and provided additional missile defense assistance to Israel to help protect millions of Israelis from the threat of rocket fire. Indeed, in the midst of the crisis, Israel's Ambassador to the United States asked to see me urgently late at night at the White House. He conveyed a request from his government for more Iron Dome interceptors. I brought the request to the President the next morning. Within days, the administration made a formal request of Congress for $225 million in additional funding, which was approved.

NOMINATIONS OF PETER McKINLEY; ISOBEL COLEMAN; AND RICHARD VERMA

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Peter Michael McKinley, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Isobel Coleman, of New York, to be Representative to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador; and as an Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform

Richard Rahul Verma, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Republic of India

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez, Shaheen, Murphy, Kaine, Risch, Johnson, and McCain.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. This meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is called to order.

Ranking Member Senator Risch is on his way and will be here presently. Senator Johnson, welcome.

This is an important hearing dealing with three critical nominees. I will make opening statements. If Senator Risch is here, he will then make opening statements. If he is not here, we will move right to witness introductions and witness statements.

I know Senator Reid, the majority leader, will be coming at some point during the hearing as well because he wants to give some introductory comments about the nominee for the India post, Richard Verma. When he arrives, we will offer him the chance to cut in line and make his intro comments because I know he will be moving on to other priorities.

But I want to welcome all to this hearing. And it is good to see, given the importance of these posts, a full committee room.

Given what is occurring in the Nation's current war against ISIL in the Middle East, there can be a danger, as we focus on those challenges, that we lose focus on the importance of other South Asian nations to the United States national interest. Afghanistan and India are very, very different nations with very different situations, but they are critical partners for the United States in the 21st century. This is a region that demands more attention, not less, so that we can meet looming challenges, so we can seize new opportunities, and we can also take advantage of some significant progress that has been obtained through the work that has been done by the United States thus far.

In India, I had the opportunity last month to have an excellent visit with Senator King, Angus King, and we had meetings with governmental, business, and civil society leaders. There is an extraordinary momentum in the relationship, and it is a wonderful time to capitalize on it.

More than a billion and a half people, the world's oldest democracy. The United States linking up with the world's largest democracy is an incredible opportunity. The relationship is unique. It is built on a solid foundation from the bottom up, beginning with shared affection between the populations of the United States and India, people-to-people ties, business and entrepreneurial ties, and shared values.

There is a greater potential, we learned as we visited, for defense and counterterrorism cooperation, trade and economic development. Senator King and I visited the Mazagon shipyards in Mumbai and also spent time at sites in Mumbai that were associated with the horrible terrorist attack on India in November 2008, another sad reality that both of our countries share both in our past but also in our concerns about today and tomorrow.

We were very excited at Prime Minister Modi's visit to the United States a few months ago which was truly amazing. I do not even think Senator Johnson or I could fill Madison Square Garden if we went. And Prime Minister Modi's wonderful reception there and throughout his visit was remarkable. And we are excited that our President has been invited and is planning to go to India in January as a guest of honor for India's Republic Day, which is the first time a United States President is receiving that honor.

Afghanistan I first visited in 2006 as Governor. My most recent visit was also in October. We had a subcommittee hearing here in April where we looked at progress in Afghanistan that is often overlooked, progress that has been the result of many factors but including significant U.S. investments in time, talent, blood, and treasure.

Despite the many challenges—and the challenges continue to exist. And we will certainly ask Ambassador McKinley about them—Afghanistan has undergone a particularly extraordinary transformation. At the turn of the century just 14 years ago, few could have imagined that in today's Afghanistan 3 million Afghan girls are enrolled in school. Two-thirds of Afghans have cell phones. Over 75 television channels commonly accessed. Female life expectancy has increased by 20 years over the last 13 years, and that is 20 extra years of life for more than 15 million women.

The security challenges cannot be underestimated. A recent spike in Taliban attacks especially in Kabul and elsewhere in the country raise concerns. We will talk about those. I very much support the decisions announced recently by the administration to broaden the authorities available to the U.S. military forces that remain in Afghanistan beginning in January 2015. I think that was important and smart. It certainly resonates with what folks in Afghanistan mentioned when we were there.

At the U.N., the U.S. leadership in the United Nations is more critical than ever whether it is our efforts against ISIL, upholding Ukraine's sovereignty, supporting Afghan political transition or continuing the very, very difficult challenge of hopefully finding a negotiated political settlement in the ongoing civil war in Syria. The U.N. plays a very important and critical role in promoting stability across the globe. The U.N. is often incredibly frustrating to us on this committee and incredibly frustrating to Americans of all political parties because of our belief that they can do more and that they should do more. And yet, it is important to remember that the U.N. only exists because of the farsighted wisdom of American leaders, particularly President Roosevelt who, even after the collapse of the League of Nations, knew that international institutions like the United Nations would be needed in the 20th century and beyond. And if the United States had not played a leadership role, we would not have these institutions and the world would be poorer as a result.

The United States is the largest contributor to the U.N., but it also means we should strive to do the utmost to make sure that every dollar of taxpayer money is spent right and that we appropriately leverage the investment we make to try to promote reforms both in the management and operations of the U.N. but also in the seriousness and maturity with which they tackle global problems.

So these are important posts that you are each being nominated for.

Now let me introduce the nominees.

Richard Verma serves as senior counselor to the global law firm of Steptoe & Johnson, as well as to Albright Stonebridge Group in Washington, DC. Mr. Verma has an extensive public service background in the State Department, as a longtime national security advisor to Majority Leader Harry Reid, to other private firms, and he began his public service career as a first lieutenant and captain in the United States Air Force. Mr. Verma, we congratulate you on your nomination and welcome you here today.

Ambassador Michael McKinley assumed his current position as U.S. Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan in September 2013. Previously Ambassador McKinley served as the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia and Peru. He was also Deputy Chief of Mission at the European Union in Brussels and prior to that has served in numerous posts in countries as far flung as Mozambique, Uganda, Belgium, Bolivia, tours in Washington. He joined the Foreign Service in 1982. He has expertise in Latin America, and that is obviously why he has been sent to so many countries not in Latin America. They did not want him to grow stale with his Latin American expertise.

Dr. Isobel Coleman was previously the senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. She directed the CFR Civil Society Markets and Democracy Program, and her areas of expertise included political economy of the Middle East, democratization, civil society, economic development, education reform, and gender issues. She is the author and coauthor of numerous books and articles. Prior to joining the CFR, she was the chief executive officer of a health care services company that partnered with McKinsey and Company in New York. She is a Marshall Scholar and holds degrees from Princeton and Oxford and serves on several nonprofit boards that are relevant to the proposed appointment to the United Nations.

I would like to ask each of the witnesses to offer opening statements, and we will just start with Ambassador McKinley and move right across the table. Let me just see. Senator Risch is not yet here. When Senator Risch comes, I will offer him the chance to offer some opening comments, but I will have you deliver opening statements. Your entire written statements are going to be submitted into the record, so you can summarize if you choose. When Senator Reid comes, we will just pause and let him do the introductory comments that he wants to make about Mr. Verma. But welcome to all of you, and Ambassador McKinley, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. PETER MICHAEL McKINLEY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

Ambassador McKINLEY. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I look forward, if confirmed by the Senate, to working with you to advance America's interests there.

I have spent the past year serving as Deputy Ambassador in Kabul and have had the honor to work with hundreds of remarkable civilian personnel and with our equally remarkable men and women in uniform. They serve as inspiration and a reminder of the immense sacrifices our Nation has made these past 13 years in Afghanistan and of our achievements.

Our national security interest brought us to Afghanistan, and it is our national security interests that keep us there. The United States combat mission in Afghanistan will conclude at the end of this year, but we will maintain counterterrorism capability to prevent an al-Qaeda resurgence. In order to safeguard the progress we have made with our Afghan partners, we, along with our NATO allies and partners will continue to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces.

As Secretary Kerry said today at the NATO ministerial, we will also consult closely with Afghanistan's leaders on security issues, to include a discussion of possible refinements to our plans regarding the mission's duration, and work closely with ISAF Commander General Campbell as he makes his own assessments. Our shared partnership and successes in Afghanistan will help us continue to protect vital American interests in a critical region.

Afghanistan has undergone a major transformation. Millions of boys and girls go to school and university. Afghanistan has among the freest press in the region. The economy has quadrupled. Millions of refugees returned home. Women are no longer in the shadows.

This is the context for 2014, a year that we knew would be one of transition. I want to talk about where that transition stands.

Even as the Afghan Security Forces now provide security for the majority of Afghan people, Afghans recognize the need for continued international support. On September 30, 1 day after his inauguration, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah witnessed the signing of the bilateral security agreement and the NATO status of forces agreement. The Afghan Parliament overwhelmingly ratified both.

The transition is also happening politically. This year saw Afghanistan's first peaceful democratic transfer of power as Ashraf Ghani succeeded Hamid Karzai as President. The election was not easy, and we should not have expected it to be. Yet, millions of Afghans defied Taliban threats and voted. With fraud allegations threatening to undermine the election, the candidates agreed to an unprecedented audit, to abide by its outcome, and to form a unity government. The result is a legitimate and inclusive government.

The new government knows that continued international assistance depends on concrete actions. President Ghani is acting, presenting an austerity budget and reopening the Kabul Bank investigation. He has pledged to address corruption at all levels, to bolster revenue collection, to reform the banking sector, to work with donors on a sustainable long-term strategy, and to protect the gains women have made as USAID launches its largest-ever gender program with Promote. These themes are at the center of the national unity government's presentation at the London Conference which begins tomorrow.

We owe the U.S. taxpayer the strictest accountability and assurances that the resources we provide will be used to good effect. If confirmed, I will work closely with all of our oversight inspection offices to address the shortcomings that are identified in our programming and to chart the most transparent way forward.

The new government is also improving Afghanistan's relations with the international community. Both President Ghani and CEO Abdullah are in Brussels today and will attend the London Conference. President Ghani has reached out to neighbors in the Heart of Asia meeting in Beijing, at the South Asia summit in Nepal, and has visited Pakistan.

The optimism I express reflects the energy of the government of national unity, which took office just over 60 days ago. The terrible acts of terrorism by the Taliban in recent days will not slow this momentum. Afghans are hopeful for their future and want to take control of their destiny. We have a stake in their success not just because of our sacrifices or the partnership we built with the Afghan people, but because Afghanistan's success is in our national interest.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador McKinley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER MICHAEL MCKINLEY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I am honored to have been nominated by the President, and look forward, if confirmed by the Senate, to working closely with you to advance America's interests in Afghanistan.

I have spent the past year serving as Deputy Ambassador in Kabul, and have had the honor to work with hundreds of remarkable civilian personnel from across the U.S. Government and with our equally remarkable men and women in uniform. They serve as inspiration and a daily reminder of the immense sacrifices our Nation has made these past 13 years in Afghanistan, and of the achievements that provide a strong foundation for the next phase of our relationship with the Afghan people.

Our national security interest brought us to Afghanistan 13 years ago, and it is our national security interest that keeps us there. It was in Afghanistan that the attacks of September 11, 2001, were planned. It was in Afghanistan that al-Qaeda had its safest harbor. As the President announced in May, the United States combat mission in Afghanistan will conclude at the end of this year, but we will continue to maintain a counterterrorism capability there to prevent an al-Qaeda resurgence in Afghanistan. And in order to safeguard the progress we have made in building with our Afghan partners a stronger, more stable, and more resilient Afghanistan, we, along with our NATO allies and other international partners, will continue to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Our shared partnership and successes in Afghanistan will help us continue to protect vital American interests in a critical region of the globe.

Thirteen years on, Afghanistan has undergone a major transformation. Millions of boys and girls go to school and university. Afghanistan has among the freest press and political environments in the region. The economy has quadrupled in size. Afghans have participated in four major elections. Millions of refugees have returned home. Women are no longer in the shadows but have a place in Afghanistan's Government and public society. While we continue to help, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have the lead in combat operations and provide security for the majority of the Afghans.

This is the context for 2014, a year that we anticipated would be a critical point of transition. And so it has proved to be. After a difficult period when the future of the U.S. security relationship with Afghanistan was unclear; when it was unclear whether a peaceful political transition could be achieved; and when the economic future of Afghanistan appeared to hang in the balance; the transition is happening, the Bilateral Security Agreement has been ratified, there is a new government in Kabul, and the Afghans can now turn their attention to their economy.

On the security front, as noted, the ANSF have had the lead role in all combat operations since June 2013, and are on track to assume full security responsibility at the end of this year. They secured two rounds of elections earlier this year. The courage of the ANSF in carrying on the fight in spite of heavy casualties is a tribute to their resolve. Now, the ANSF are looking to consolidate the gains of past years, improve respect for human rights, and strengthen their capabilities to counter the Taliban and be a more effective partner to us in countering terrorism.

Afghans have recognized and welcomed the need for continued international support. On September 30, one day after his inauguration, President Ashraf Ghani, with his former rival and now his Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, witnessed the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement. The Afghan Parliament voted overwhelmingly to endorse ratification of both of these agreements, demonstrating the broad popular support for a continued security relationship with the United States and our allies and partners. These agreements give us the basis to work with NATO and partner nations to train, advise, and assist Afghan forces and to continue our counterterrorism mission.

The transition is also happening politically. This year saw the first peaceful, democratic transition of power in Afghanistan's history, as Ashraf Ghani succeeded Hamid Karzai as President. The election was not easy, and we should not have expected it to be. The Taliban made clear their intention to target those who went to the polls. Two years ago, the country did not have the necessary legal framework for national elections. Millions of new voters needed to be registered; and the logistics and security for the elections took months to plan.

Afghans overcame these challenges, passing electoral laws, registering nearly 4 million new voters, more than a third of whom were women, and distributing ballots to every province. Afghan political leaders put together strong, multiethnic tickets, three of which included women as vice-presidential candidates. They conducted

nationwide campaigns, organized hundreds of rallies and held many televised debates. And millions of Afghans defied Taliban threats and voted.

When credible allegations of fraud threatened to undermine these achievements, the two leading candidates agreed to an unprecedented audit, to abide by its outcome, and to form a unity government. The result is a legitimate and inclusive government of national unity with a solid mandate to pursue reforms to increase security, improve governance, strengthen democracy, and build the economy. It is important to emphasize that, while the United States and the international community facilitated this effort, the outcome is an Afghan political agreement that reflects the will of Afghan voters.

The transition is also happening in economic terms and developmental terms, as investors and ordinary Afghans look to the future with greater confidence and the new government outlines important reform objectives.

At the same time, however, it is clear that continued international assistance depends on concrete actions by Afghanistan to address corruption, increase transparency, improve revenue collection, and implement economic policies to lessen its dependence on aid. There are real concerns about the short-term fiscal shortfall the new government inherited and the need for a more sustainable economic model. President Ghani is already implementing an austerity regime, has pledged to reform Afghanistan's budget process, address endemic corruption, bolster revenue collection, reform the banking sector, and work with donors on a sustainable long-term strategy to grow the economy and to create employment. These are critical steps toward making Afghanistan an increasingly self-reliant, sustainable state. These themes are the centerpiece of the national unity government's presentation at the London Conference on Afghanistan which begins tomorrow December 3.

We owe the U.S. taxpayer the strictest accountability and assurances that the resources we provide will be used to achieve our foreign policy goals, strengthening and building on what has been achieved. I will, if confirmed, work closely with all our oversight inspection offices, including SIGAR, to address real shortcomings that are identified in our programming, and to chart the most transparent paths forward to success. This includes reviewing our counternarcotics programs as part of the broader challenge to develop strong Afghan institutions and implement the rule of law.

As I have noted, there have been many gains in the area of women's rights. The new Afghan Government intends to build on these gains. Three weeks ago, Ambassador Cunningham and USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, in partnership with President Ghani, committed to the largest-ever USAID gender program in the world. The goals are to empower women entering leadership positions, expand higher education for girls, and strengthen gender protections. President Ghani has also pledged to nominate women to senior positions in the Cabinet and judiciary.

The optimism I express reflects the energy of the government of national unity, which took office less than 60 days ago and is already transforming promises—to promote national unity, protect human rights, and tackle corruption—into action. President Ghani, with the full support of CEO Abdullah, reopened the Kabul Bank investigation, the largest financial scandal in the nation's history. Money laundering regulations have been improved and issued. Reporters penalized for doing their jobs have been allowed to return to work. Judges complicit in the release of a drug trafficker have been charged. The government of national unity has also signed and effectively lobbied for ratification of the BSA and NATO SOFA and announced agreement on a formula and a timeline for appointing Cabinet members.

The new government acted quickly to improve Afghanistan's relations with the international community. Both President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah are in Brussels today for the NATO ministerial and will attend the London Conference tomorrow. President Ghani recognizes the importance of regional integration and has already reached out to neighbors in the "Heart of Asia" meeting in Beijing, and the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) discussions in Nepal. Energy investments and trade reforms are at the top of the integration agenda. President Ghani also visited Pakistan recently. The two countries are now focused on new opportunities to improve security cooperation and cross-border linkages in transportation, energy, and trade.

Ultimately, there will be the need to address a political solution to the conflict with the insurgency. President Ghani has taken the step of inviting the Taliban to talks. The United States has made clear we support efforts to negotiate an end to conflict inside Afghanistan. This, however, must remain an Afghan-owned, Afghan-led political process.

Afghans are hopeful for their future and want to take control of their destiny. At the same time, we have a stake in their success. Not just because of our sacrifices, or the partnership we built with the Afghan people, but because Afghanistan's suc-

cess will, I repeat, will help protect vital American interests in a critical region of the globe. Our challenge is to consolidate and strengthen the gains of the past 13 years.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee. I look forward to your questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador McKinley.

Dr. Coleman.

STATEMENT OF DR. ISOBEL COLEMAN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR U.N. MANAGEMENT AND REFORM, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR; AND AS AN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS DURING HER TENURE OF SERVICE AS REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR U.N. MANAGEMENT AND REFORM

Dr. COLEMAN. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and other distinguished members, I am truly honored to come before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for their confidence.

And I would also like to briefly acknowledge my family members who are here: my parents, my father and stepmother; my children, my five children; and my niece, Chloe, who are here today. They are a tremendous source of pride for me. So I appreciate their support.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to advance America's interests at the United Nations. At its best, the U.N. can be a powerful partner of the United States, promoting our values and advancing global peace and security at far less cost to American taxpayers than if we act alone. Today, under enormously difficult conditions, U.N. peacekeepers are bolstering fragile states in places such as Liberia, Mali, and Haiti. U.N. experts are on the front lines of the Ebola crisis, working to halt its spread. Each of these critical activities and many others conducted daily by various U.N. agencies around the world are tackling global challenges and humanitarian crises that no one nation can or should have to address on its own.

But as we all know, the U.N. can be more effective. As President Obama has said, the U.N. is indispensable but also imperfect. Too often, there is a significant gap between the promise of the organization and the reality of its shortcomings, such as incidents of sexual exploitation by individual peacekeepers or politically motivated resolutions. As the largest contributor to the United Nations, we have a significant stake in holding wrongdoers accountable and demanding transparency and effectiveness across the entire organization. In recent years, U.S.-led reform efforts have achieved some meaningful results, such as creating a new inspector general for peacekeeping missions and streamlined logistics through the Global Field Support Strategy. Much-needed rationalization, for example, has led to the elimination of nearly 220 redundant positions and the freezing of salary and benefits for U.N. staff while the U.N. undergoes a comprehensive review of its compensation practices.

But let us not lose sight of the fact that the U.N.'s regular budget doubled in size in 10 years. There is clearly room for greater budget discipline. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the U.N. is deploying its resources in the most efficient and effective way, that it is conducting its business in a consistently ethical and transparent fashion, and that it is meeting the highest standards of conduct and integrity. American taxpayers deserve no less.

I have spent much of my professional life bringing reform and accountability to a variety of organizations. For nearly a decade, I was a management consultant at McKinsey, helping some of the biggest multinational corporations streamline complicated business and management operations; implement world-class human resource solutions; improve risk management and cut costs. I also worked in a pro bono capacity with public institutions such as the New York City Department of Education on multiyear efforts to enhance accountability and improve performance. In many of my client situations, I had to work with managers determined to maintain the status quo; legacy systems resistant to modernization; and organizations skeptical of change. Achieving success in these efforts depended on my listening to good ideas from all quarters and finding ways to bring the naysayers on board.

As a small business founder and CEO, I developed a deep intolerance for seeing scarce resources wasted or misused through a business-as-usual mindset. Having to make payroll every week instilled in me an even stronger appreciation for the value of each and every dollar.

For the past 12 years at the Council on Foreign Relations, I have focused my energies on bringing attention to the possibilities of reform in a global context, including economic reform, gender equality, educational reform, and political reform. The constant thread connecting all my work has been a relentless focus on improving outcomes. The opportunity to represent American interests in management and reform efforts at the United Nations in many ways uniquely marries my operational and management experience with my deep engagement on global issues.

If confirmed, I would be honored to join Ambassador Power in her determined efforts to make the U.N. more effective, efficient, and accountable. Working with others in the administration, in Congress, and especially with this committee, I would do my utmost to help the U.N. live up both to its ideals and its potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Coleman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ISOBEL COLEMAN

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members, I am truly honored to come before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for their confidence. I would like briefly to acknowledge my family members—my father and stepmother, my husband Struan, niece Chloe who lives with us, and my five children—who are here today for this hearing. My family is a source of tremendous pride and joy for me and I so appreciate their support.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to advance America's interests at the United Nations. At its best, the U.N. can be a powerful partner of the United States, promoting our values, and advancing global peace and security at far less

cost to American taxpayers than if we act alone. Today, under enormously difficult conditions, U.N. peacekeepers are bolstering fragile states in places such as Liberia, Mali, and Haiti; U.N. experts are on the front lines of the Ebola crisis, working to halt its spread; and in Iraq, U.N. agencies are making their biggest push in a decade to provide emergency shelter and essential vaccinations to the nearly 2 million Iraqis displaced by the current violence in advance of winter. Each of these critical activities, and many others conducted daily by various U.N. agencies around the world, are tackling global challenges and humanitarian crises that no one nation can, or should have to, address on its own. When the U.N. works effectively, Americans are safer, our interests are promoted and burdens are fairly shared across member states.

But as we all know, the U.N. can be more effective. As President Obama has said, the U.N. is "indispensable" but also "imperfect." Too often, there is a significant gap between the promise of the organization, and the reality of its shortcomings, such as incidents of sexual exploitation by individual peacekeepers or politically motivated resolutions. As the largest contributor to the United Nations, we have a significant stake in holding wrongdoers accountable and demanding transparency and effectiveness across the entire organization. In recent years, U.S.-led reform efforts have achieved some meaningful results, such as creating a new inspector general for peacekeeping missions and streamlined logistics through the Global Field Support Strategy. Much-needed rationalization, for example, has led to the elimination of nearly 220 redundant positions and the freezing of salary and benefits for U.N. staff while the U.N. undergoes a comprehensive review of its compensation practices. The result has been the slowing of the long-term growth trend of the regular budget.

But let's not lose sight of the fact that the U.N.'s regular budget doubled in size over 10 years. There is clearly room for greater budget discipline. If confirmed I will work to ensure that the U.N. is deploying its resources in the most efficient and effective way, that it is conducting its business in a consistently ethical and transparent fashion, and that it is meeting the highest standards of conduct and integrity. American taxpayers deserve no less.

To ensure that U.S. funds are spent responsibly, improvements are still needed in audit transparency, whistleblower protections, and oversight. With over 70 percent of the U.N.'s regular budget going to personnel costs, the U.N. must have an effective human resources system that delivers the most capable and dynamic workforce, ensures accountability for performance and results, and also controls growth in compensation costs. Procurement and business processes must also meet international best practices.

I have spent much of my professional life bringing reform and accountability to a variety of organizations. For nearly a decade, I was a management consultant at McKinsey, helping some of the biggest multinational corporations streamline complicated business operations; implement world-class human resource solutions; improve risk management and cut costs. I also worked in a pro bono capacity with public institutions such as the New York City Department of Education on multiyear efforts to enhance accountability and improve performance. In many of my client situations, I had to work with managers determined to maintain the status quo; legacy systems resistant to modernization; and organizations skeptical of change. Achieving success in these efforts depended on my listening to good ideas from all quarters and finding ways to bring the naysayers on board.

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If confirmed, I would be honored to join Ambassador Power in her determined efforts to make the U.N. more effective, efficient, and accountable. Working with others in the administration, in Congress, and especially in this committee, I would do my utmost to help the U.N. live up both to its ideals and its potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Dr. Coleman.

Mr. Verma.

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD RAHUL VERMA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Mr. VERMA. Mr. Chairman and Senator Risch, it is a great honor to appear before you today. I have worked closely with this committee for many years when I worked in the Senate Leader's office and also when I was at the State Department as the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. If confirmed, I am committed to working with this committee closely again in shaping our relationship with India, a country so important that President Obama called it the defining relationship for the United States in the 21st century.

Let me thank Senator Reid in advance, who will be here to do an introduction of me. I also want to thank President Obama for nominating me and Secretary Kerry for offering me the chance to be back in the State Department family once again. It is a high honor and a privilege I do not take lightly.

Let me also thank my family and friends that are here today. There are 11 members of my family here. I will not introduce all of them. But my wife Pinky and my children, Zoe, Lucy, and Dylan—I owe them all a special debt of thanks as they have enthusiastically embraced this new adventure and supported me at every turn. And to my parents, Dr. Kamal Verma, who is here today, and my mother, the late Savitri Verma; they left India, the country they loved, some 50 years ago to build a new life here in America, overcoming odds and working so hard. I cannot thank them enough for their courage, wisdom, and countless sacrifices they made on behalf of their children. And my wife's father, Fred Blackwell, a World War II veteran and former chief counsel of the Senate Labor Committee, is here as well.

There is a no question that this a defining and exciting time in the United States-India relationship. President Obama will make a historic visit to India in January, becoming the first United States head of state to attend India's Republic Day and the only sitting U.S. President to visit India twice. His trip will build on Prime Minister Modi's highly successful visit to the United States this past September. There is little doubt the relationship has been reenergized, with renewed enthusiasm to take our partnership to the next level.

The United States' strategic partnership with India is rooted in our shared democratic values and in our joint vision of a peaceful, just, and prosperous world. From expanding trade and defense relationships, to ensuring maritime security and freedom of navigation, from countering terrorist networks, to promoting clean energy and sustainable development, the United States and India share a wide range of critical national interests. Our partnership is deep. It touches nearly every endeavor of human pursuit, and it has produced important gains for each of our countries.

Two-way trade between our nations has increased fivefold to $100 billion. The President and Prime Minister have talked about increasing it another fivefold, which would create tens of thousands of jobs in both countries.

On the defense front, the United States has become one of India's largest suppliers of defense items, and active discussions continue on identifying projects for coproduction and development, as well as renewing our 10-year defense framework agreement.

Our people-to-people exchanges are flourishing. There are over 100,000 Indian students studying in the United States, and the Indian diaspora in the United States, now estimated to be over 3 million, continues to make deep and lasting contributions to United States society.

On climate, energy, health, infrastructure, human rights, development, and so much more, the United States and Indian potential for collaboration and joint problem-solving is limited only by our imagination.

Beyond our initiatives, we are working hard at increasing regional connectivity. India shares our belief that peace and stability are much more likely to be sustained when the countries of the region are tied together in trade, economic agreements, and through physical infrastructure.

Across Asia, United States and Indian interests are converging. India has been called the lynchpin of our Asia rebalance. With India's Look East policies, our two countries can play a critically important role together in bolstering peace and security and promoting a rules-based, liberal, democratic order in the Indo-Pacific region.

And the ripple effects of our partnership need not be limited to Asia. As Prime Minister Modi noted, the true power and potential in this relationship is that when the oldest and largest democracies come together, the world will benefit.

We will have our differences from time to time. Close friends often do, but when we do have differences, it is imperative that we maintain a healthy dialogue, as we did recently with the Trade Policy Forum and as we will with the Civil-Nuclear Contact Group. We can stand up for our interests while not losing sight of the larger strategic interests that India and the United States share together.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will faithfully discharge my most fundamental responsibility and that is to protect the welfare of American citizens in India. This includes providing a safe and secure work environment for the U.S. Government employees and their families at Embassy New Delhi and our consulates in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai. We value their distinguished service, and I will be their biggest advocate and supporter.

Mr. Chairman, let me say in closing that I am deeply appreciative of all those who have served and worked so hard on cultivating this relationship over the many decades, the diplomats, development experts, security professionals, Members of Congress, and so many more, but also the immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, those who took a chance like my parents who worked hard, who continue to pursue their dreams, and along the way have helped ensure India and the United States have become the closest of friends.

Again, I appreciate the chance to be here today and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Verma follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD R. VERMA

Mr. Chairman and Senator Risch, it is a great honor to appear before you today. I have worked closely with this committee for many years, when I worked in the Senate Leader's office and at the State Department as the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. If confirmed, I am committed to partnering with you again in shaping our relationship to India—a country so important that President Obama called it the defining relationship for the United States in the 21st century.

I would like to thank Senator Reid for his kind introduction, and of course, I would like to thank President Obama for nominating me, and Secretary Kerry for offering me the chance to again be part of the State Department family. It is a high honor and privilege that I don't take lightly. I'm also delighted to be here with Ambassador Mike McKinley, a highly decorated diplomat who represents the best of the Foreign Service, and Isobel Coleman, who brings a breadth of foreign policy experience to a critical position, Representative of the United States to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform.

Let me also thank my family and friends that have helped get me to this place. My wife, Pinky, my children Zoe, Lucy, and Dylan, I owe them all a special debt of thanks, as they have enthusiastically embraced this new adventure and supported me at every turn. And, to my parents, Dr. Kamal Verma, who is here today, and my mother, the late Savitri Verma. They left India—the country they loved—50 years ago to build a new life here in America, overcoming odds and working so hard. I can't thank them enough for their courage, wisdom, and countless sacrifices they made on behalf of their children.

For over two decades, I have had the good fortune of working in the national security and foreign policy arenas, with much of that time focused on South Asia. Whether in the military, working here on Capitol Hill, the State Department or in the private sector, I have seen firsthand how consequential our partnership with India can be.

There is no question that this is a defining and exciting time in the U.S.-India relationship. President Obama will make a historic visit to India in January, becoming the first U.S. head of state to attend India's Republic Day and the only sitting U.S. President to visit India twice. His trip will build on Prime Minister Modi's highly successful visit to the United States this past September. There's little doubt the relationship has been reenergized, with renewed enthusiasm to take our partnership to the next level.

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Two-way trade between our nations has increased fivefold since 2001 to nearly $100 billion. In their recent meetings, President Obama and PM Modi committed to increasing trade another fivefold, which would create tens of thousands of new jobs in both the United States and India.

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On climate, energy, health, infrastructure, human rights, and development and so much more—the U.S. and Indian potential for collaboration and joint problem-solving is limited only by our imagination.

Beyond our initiatives, we are working hard at increasing regional connectivity. India shares our belief that peace and stability are much more likely to be sustained when the countries of the region are tied together in trade, economic agreements, and through physical infrastructure.

Across Asia, U.S. and Indian interests are converging. India has been called the lynchpin of our Asia rebalance. With India's Look East, and now Act East policies, our two countries can play a critically important role together in bolstering peace and security and promoting a rules-based, liberal, democratic order in the Indo-Pacific region.

The ripple effects of our partnership need not be limited to Asia. As Prime Minister Modi noted, the true power and potential in this relationship is that when the oldest and largest democracies come together, the world will benefit.

We will have our differences from time to time—close friends often do—but when we do have differences, it is imperative that we maintain a healthy dialogue. The successful Trade Policy Forum held just last week in New Delhi—the first since 2010—and the recently established Civil-Nuclear Contact Group are examples of our collaborative, dialogue-driven approach when pursuing consensus in key areas. We can stand up for our interests, while not losing sight of the larger strategic interests that India and the United States share together.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will faithfully discharge my most fundamental responsibility: to promote and protect the welfare of American citizens in India. This includes providing a safe and secure work environment for the U.S. Government employees and their families at Embassy New Delhi and our consulates in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai. We value their distinguished service, and I intend to be their biggest advocate and supporter.

Mr. Chairman, let me say in closing that I am deeply appreciative of all those who have worked so hard on cultivating this relationship over many decades—the diplomats, development experts, security professionals, Members of Congress, and so many other dedicated public servants; but also the immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, those who took a chance like my parents, who worked hard, who continue to pursue their dreams, and along the way have helped ensure India and the United States become the closest of friends and partners. I will strive to live up to the high standards they have set.

Mr. Chairman, again, I appreciate the chance to be here today, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Verma.

We will begin questioning now. We will have a round of 7-minute questions. There is some chance that we may get into multiple rounds of questions because these are important nominations and important posts.

And the hearing of this committee will remain open until the close of business today so that any members attending or not who have questions to submit for the record can submit questions by the end of the day. And we would encourage your prompt response should they do so.

To Ambassador McKinley, talk a little bit about what you see as the reason for the recent up-tick of attacks in Kabul but maybe more especially how are the Afghan forces responding to those up-ticks in Taliban attacks?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, there is a cyclical approach to the tactics the insurgency employs inside the country, and we have been here before. There have been up-ticks in urban violence and terrorism targeting civilians at different stages over the last 13 years. Over the last few weeks but certainly throughout this year, there has been emphasis on attacking urban centers. The Taliban sought to thwart the elections which took place this year, and they are also trying to challenge the relationship that Afghanistan will have with the international community going forward.

The fact of the matter is, as you look at not just this year, but the last 2 years of progression in the capabilities of the Afghan Security Forces to deal with security inside their own country, they are having successes. At the moment, there is a very serious review going on on Kabul's security involving the police, the security forces, and obviously the international partners. But the fact of the matter is, as you look at the year as a whole, insurgent activity inside the country looks like it will be at or lower than the levels of 2013 and in the context of the Afghan Security Forces carrying out 99 percent of operations inside the country.

Senator KAINE. Ambassador McKinley, you raised in your opening comments some of the positives that you have seen, that we have seen since the formation of the national unity government, which was significantly aided by the efforts of Secretary Kerry and others in the State Department. The London donor's conference, which starts within a few days—one of the questions I know the donors are going to be pressing is the formation of the Cabinet. I read the news earlier this week that the President, President Ghani, had dismissed the previous Cabinet. Talk about the progress toward the formation of a new Cabinet. I gather that that has been difficult, and I would love to get kind of a status report.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, the government of national unity came about after a prolonged electoral crisis in which there was an audit and then discussion between the two candidates on what the path forward would be, and a government of national unity duly emerged at the end of September.

Over the past 60 days, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have actually been working well together, meeting several times a week, discussing the major policy issues on the table, agreeing to very specific measures to put meat on the bones of the reforms that both promised when they were candidates.

In terms of the division of power inside the Cabinet, these discussions have taken longer than some would have wished, but on Sunday President Ghani, CEO Abdullah, and all of their deputies on national television and radio announced that they had an agreement on the methodology going forward, picking future Cabinet Ministers who would be new to the Cabinet and untainted by the past, and have a formula for how they will divide these Cabinet positions between the two groupings inside the government. The anticipation is that the naming of actual ministers will take place over the next 2 to 4 weeks. So, again, while it is taking longer than some might have desired, the progression is all in the right direction.

And I would note that on Sunday the two teams, so to speak, appearing together was the first time that had been seen since the signing of the BSA and was yet another public and important symbolic exhibition of a national unity government with a sense of purpose going forward.

Senator KAINE. We have had testimony at this committee and before the Armed Services Committee that corruption may pose a more significant existential threat to Afghanistan than terrorism. What can the United States best do to engage in accountability and governance issues with the new unity government?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. We are very fortunate that the unity government, since it has come in, has made fighting corruption a priority. When you look at the documentation and the work that has gone into preparing for the London Conference, in fact the government's presentation in London in 2 days—and I am not really anticipating. It has already been foreshadowed over the past week—will include a very strong component on specific measures to address corruption inside the country. In fact, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have signaled that fighting corruption has to rank in the top two or three priorities of the new government.

In terms of specific measures, we are looking at everything from the reopening of the Kabul Bank investigation, the biggest financial scandal in the country's history where $900 million went missing. We are taking a look at reviewing how customs is administered. The President is speaking about replacing hundreds of corrupt officials and revamping the customs and revenue collection system around the country. There is going to be an effort to revive the strength and efficacy of the judiciary, taking a look at the attorney general's office, taking a look at how the Supreme Court operates. Procurement is going to be taken out of individual government ministries and centralized so that there is greater transparency and less opportunity for fraud in contracting in this government. There are other measures that the President has proposed, and he will be laying out in greater detail in London in the next 2 days. But the fact of the matter is more is being done. More has been done in the last 60 days than we have seen in many years.

Senator KAINE. One more question. Then I would like to have Majority Leader Reid offer introductory comments about Mr. Verma.

A personal opinion. I had been concerned from my first visit to Afghanistan in 2006 that policymakers with a lot of challenges on our plate have in the past turned our eyes away from Afghanistan, and we have let situations in Iraq take our attention in another direction. When I was in Afghanistan in 2006, the then-Ambassador warned that that could happen and he was concerned about it. And I think often that has, in fact, happened. Now we have a significant challenge in Iraq with the war against ISIL that we have to take very seriously. But I do have some concern, as we are tackling that threat, that it could cause us to turn our attention away from Afghanistan.

If you could talk about the fragility of the gains that we have achieved and give us an encouragement to maintain our eye on the need for continued promotion and acceleration of progress in the country.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. If I can start by saying that in the first place, thanks in large part to the support of the members of this committee, but our commitment to Afghanistan over a very difficult period in the last 2 years have been difficult in terms of our bilateral relationship with the country. We have stayed the course. There is a bilateral security agreement on the table which will give us an opportunity to continue a strong security relationship going forward. There is a significant commitment both in terms of what we will do to support the Afghan Security Forces in budgetary terms. The commitment we are making in terms of development assistance, sustaining the pledges that we made in Tokyo in 2012. So the basis for a strong, ongoing relationship with Afghanistan is there.

It depends on the new Afghan Government making good on the many commitments to reform it has already announced and frankly a transformation of the relationship with the United States going into this next stage of our relationship with the country. And we do have a strong basis. We are working very differently on political issues, on security issues, on developmental issues going forward.

Notwithstanding, the fragility is there. The poverty rate in the country is still 36 percent of the population below the poverty line. The Taliban insurgency remains a very serious concern. Afghanistan's democracy has progressed but still needs consolidation, and in fact, one of the objectives of the government of national unity is to strengthen governance and democratic reforms in the coming years. And given those fragilities, I think the importance of sustaining a positive forward-looking relationship with Afghanistan is extraordinarily important, and if I could add, in the context of what is happening more widely in the region, the successes we have in Afghanistan are important to consolidate, and we now have a government and the basis on which to make good on the gains that we have had.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador McKinley.

As I indicated at the top of the hearing, we will now take time for Majority Leader Reid to offer some comments about one of these nominees that he knows very well, Mr. Verma.

Majority Leader Reid.

STATEMENT OF HON. HARRY REID,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEVADA

Senator REID. Thank you very much. Appreciate that. Members of the committee, this is really a pleasure for me to come in here and to see his lovely wife and his little children who I have not seen very much. I cannot imagine how they have grown the way they have. And I have a lot of affection for his wife for a lot of reasons, but one, when I was growing up and until after I got out of high school, I was known as "Pinky." Well, that is her name. So if that does not create affection, I do not know what would. [Laughter.]

Ambassador to India, without being too overzealous here, is an extremely important post and that is a gross understatement. With a population approaching 1.3 billion people, India is the world's largest democracy and indispensable partner to the United States. India's new Prime Minister has committed to strengthen ties between our two nations, as evidenced by his recent trip here to the United States just in September.

Our ties to India transcend global policies. My home State of Nevada and so many other States in this country have a proud and thriving Indian American population that promote the values and interests of India. We share them clearly with India.

Rich Verma is somebody that is uniquely suited to be our Ambassador in India. He is an expert on foreign policy, Southeast Asia. He served as Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Affairs under Secretary Hillary Clinton. He served honorably in the United States Air Force. He worked for me as my national security advisor for more than 4 years. He is a wonderful, wonderful, caring man with a great mind. His ethnic background will be extremely helpful to us in India.

One of my boys, my next-to-youngest boy—his best friend growing up in high school was a Verma whose father was a math professor at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. So many Vermas, a name that I have known for a long, long time.

Rich is very good at building consensus. He works across party lines as well as anyone I have ever seen. His bipartisan approach, coupled with his keen understanding of legislation, helped us pass the United States-India Civil-Nuclear Cooperation Agreement. Frankly, I am not sure it could have been done without him. He was an instructor for me. I was so well educated in pushing this matter forward.

Rich is the son of Indian immigrants. He has an understanding of India.

As I have indicated, I have known him for a long, long time. I repeat. He has a perfect family. And I say without any hyperbole, I say with complete confidence that no better choice could have been made, no more highly qualified candidate for this important post than Rich Verma. So I hope you will give him and the other two nominees before this committee, which I know you will, the utmost consideration as quickly as possible.

Thank you very much.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Majority Leader Reid.

Senator REID. And I am glad you do not have any questions. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. We will ask you what you really think about him later. [Laughter.]

Ranking Member Risch for questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Verma, you certainly come with excellent qualifications when it comes to nuclear matters. And we know that one of the priorities of the Modi government is to do better as far as providing energy to its people. That is particularly true with electrical generation.

My State is the home of the Idaho National Laboratory, as you know. The lab is the lead agency when it comes to dealing with India on the nuclear cooperation agreement. As you probably know, they hold a conference each year, alternately once in India, once in Idaho every other year to work this out. And I can tell you that the people at the lab are anxious to continue that. They are experts in this area. They do an excellent job.

Having said all that, we still in the United States are troubled by the fact that our people who provide nuclear parts, nuclear equipment, nuclear know-how to India are hamstrung because of the laws in India that have stymied really the development of nuclear power. With your background, I am sure you know that nuclear power certainly is one of the important answers for the current administration in India.

Can you give me your thoughts on that a little bit about how you would move the ball forward in that regard and try to make a better climate there for American manufacturers, American companies who want to do business in this area to actually start some work there?

Mr. VERMA. Senator Risch, thank you for the question.

I am aware of the work of the Idaho National Lab. I have seen the public minutes of their work and together with their Indian counterparts, and I know what a critical role they play.

As Senator Reid said, I was also involved with the passage of the Hyde Act. I worked the amendments on the floor. And it was a

great moment for both countries who came together closely like never before.

I also know that there has been great disappointment in the full implementation of the agreement mainly because of the liability issues, although there are another couple of issues that need to be resolved as well.

I am encouraged, however, by the fact that President Obama and Prime Minister Modi came together and discussed this issue in great detail in September. I have no doubt it will come up again. But one of the important developments that came up out of their meetings was the establishment of a contact group to try to press this issue forward and get to a solution. It has to come to a resolution. The Prime Minister himself said he wants to triple the amount of nuclear energy used in India. It is not just an American company concern. It is a concern of European companies and others, including Indian companies. So I am hopeful that we can resolve the liability issue in a way that will live up to the promise of the accord that was reached many years ago here in this body.

Senator RISCH. Well, I appreciate that. And it has been a long time coming. Certainly with your expertise, I have high hopes that you are going to be able to move the ball forward and we can actually get something started. There are knotty problems. No question about it. But it is good to hear your input on that and also, like you, I have seen publicly the statements from the Modi administration where they are going to try to resolve that. And I hope you can urge them to do that.

Mr. McKinley, we all know that probably the two biggest issues that the Afghan people are facing are the corruption issue, which you have already addressed. And of course, secondly is the Taliban. If those two issues were resolved, I think everyone would feel a lot better walking away and feel that the result might be better than what a lot of us think may be going to happen.

Tell us a little bit about the negotiations with the Taliban, both ours and the Afghans themselves. What can you tell us about that?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Over the last 4 to 5 years, there certainly have been efforts and a declared intention of the Afghan Government to try to negotiate with the Taliban. And the conditions which have been set out at various times on that have been related to an acceptance of a constitution and a renouncement of the links with al-Qaeda and participating peacefully in the political process and in the national life. The progress I think, as we all know, has been extremely fitful over the years with the Taliban intent on a violent insurgency and still on a violent overthrow of a government inside Afghanistan.

In terms of our own role in this, we do view reconciliation efforts as something to be handled by the Afghan Government. At the end of the day, if negotiations materialize, it will be an Afghan-to-Afghan process, but we do recognize that a political solution to the insurgency at some point would be a very good thing. So in our own efforts and dialogue with the government, before with President Karzai's government and now with President Ghani, we will support efforts of the Afghan Government in its outreach to explore the possibilities of launching negotiations to bring conflict to an end inside Afghanistan.

Senator RISCH. Well, understanding you cannot predict the future, what is your personal view as to how this plays out?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Across this year—and we have seen the very public evidence of the approach the Taliban has taken to this year of transition. First, there was the focus on trying to thwart the elections, and notwithstanding the threats, we had 7 million and 8 million Afghans coming out to vote in each of the two rounds of elections that were held. In terms of their stated declarations about the continued international presence and what they carried out in terms of an offensive through the spring and the summer and what we are seeing in terms of terrorism in urban centers which target not just international actors but innocent Afghans from all walks of life, to include young boys and men at volleyball games, there is not much to indicate that there is an interest in engaging in talks. That said, insurgencies and conflicts around the world have shown over time that the openings come at the most unexpected of times and they must be taken when they present themselves.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. McKinley. Appreciate your thoughts in that regard.

My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Chairman Menendez.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you, Senator Kaine. Let me thank you and Senator Risch for conducting this hearing toward the end of the session with an important panel of nominees that I hope, assuming that all the questions here go well, could ultimately make it before a business committee meeting and then before the Senate adjourns for this congressional session. These are incredibly important positions. So I want to thank you for holding the hearing.

Mr. Verma, with reference to India, your tenure there, if confirmed, would come at a pretty critical time in our relationship. There is a host of challenges in Asia, as both India and China grow in economic influence and military strength. And I would like to hear from you what is your strategic vision for the U.S. relationship with India, and how does that strategic vision deal with, for example—I have been a strong supporter of the United States-India relationship for years. But their nonalignment movement creates a somewhat insular set of circumstances that concerns me about how do we get them to be the larger player that they should be in strategic questions that we care about. So why do we not start there?

Mr. VERMA. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Chairman, the relationship that we seek with India is really anchored in our values and our interests, the largest democracy and oldest democracy. And I think our impact and our strategic impact can be felt not only in South Asia but also now in East Asia as we do have a convergence of interests. I think we have to articulate a vision, which you and others on this committee have articulated, which is the United States and India upholding liberal democratic rules-based order not only in South Asia but in East Asia and ensuring maritime cooperation, freedom of navigation so that the kinds of cooperation that we engage in—I think we have to think much broader than a transactional relationship, think about the strategic partnership

that we both can have and can achieve. And that is the vision statement. We have to operationalize that, and we can operationalize that through our defense relationship, through economics and trade, through energy and climate. There are a lot of different ways. And the richness of this partnership is really unlimited.

Now, as you rightly point out, Mr. Chairman, we have had also challenges which come from India's history, a very proud history of nonalignment, and sometimes we get frustrated when they do not join us in international campaigns or on international efforts more publicly. But I would say that the trend line in our partnership is very strong and that we have to view it over a period of time and that we have to do the hard work that our bureaucracies are doing. And the fact that the two leaders of both countries came together and articulated a very strong strategic vision statement for both countries I think really bodes well for the relationship. And I do think the time is now to build upon that.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I hope we can get the Prime Minister to engage with us in a more robust way than we have seen so far. I mean, there is a lot of great expectations. And I had an opportunity to meet him when he was in New York. But I hope that this can be taken more than the niceties that have appeared.

There are a lot of substantive questions. One of them that I would like to get your commitment on is the question of intellectual property rights, and while the Trade Representative is largely in charge of this, the messaging that you will send as a U.S. Ambassador is incredibly important. It makes no sense to have trade agreements if, at the end of the day, you cannot have them be enforced, and it makes no sense to produce some of the greatest ingenuity in the world if, at the end of the day, other countries with impunity will take your ingenuity and use it without recognizing the intellectual property rights that created it.

So with India, we have some challenges in this regard. We have a special 301 report from USTR that found India's IPR protections lacking. I think a stronger IPR regime will help India, at the end of the day, attract the international investment in technology that it wants for economic growth.

Will you commit to me that if you are confirmed, you will work on driving this issue with the Indian Government particularly as well with the pharmaceutical industry as one element of the IPR industry that I am concerned about?

Mr. VERMA. Mr. Chairman, I am aware of your leadership on this issue, and you will have my commitment to make this a top tier issue. There was some encouraging progress out of the Intellectual Property Working Group that just met. But you will have my commitment to make this part of the regular engagement with the Indian Government to try to achieve stronger intellectual property policy and framework and also stronger enforcement.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that. You know, the announcement of the Indian commerce minister to look at a new IPR policy is encouraging, but some suggest that that was a prelude to the visit so that it would not be pressed. And I just want to make it very clear we are going to keep pressing this issue. I am a big supporter

of the relationship. I think there is enormous potential in it, but you have got to live up to your agreements.

Ambassador McKinley, first of all, thank you for your service.

I just want to drive on Afghanistan the question of a committee report that we issued in October which scrutinized our assistance to Afghanistan and called for more accountability for the investments made by the American taxpayer.

What lessons do you think the United States has learned from conditioning a portion of our assistance to Afghanistan, and how are these lessons instructive for future plans to condition assistance based on some concrete reforms? We understand we got a new partner here. It looks promising, but we have also seen a lot of investments that have headed in a direction that is less than desirable.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I have read the report, and I think the report encapsulates the challenges but also the achievements we have had to date and points the way towards how we must try to do things better.

The fact of the matter is when we look at the investments we have made over the years, there are many positive results we can point to, but there are also many examples of cases where we could have done better on accountability in terms of project and programmatic management. And we are constantly striving and have over the years to improve the management of United States assistance to Afghanistan both because of our responsibility to the U.S. taxpayer but also because of the strategic importance of getting it right.

The CHAIRMAN. My time is running out here.

Do you see us conditioning as one element of trying to get the success that we want?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Yes, I do. And what we have seen in terms of this incentive fund that was created a couple of years ago to try to elicit more proactive engagement in getting things done inside Afghan Government ministries is one example of that.

But going forward, I think we actually have a new opportunity now, and if confirmed, I would be looking forward to working that opportunity with a new government which is already looking at the conditionalities which the international community is putting forward as the basis for sustaining our assistance in the coming years, to include working on transparent budgets, cutting back on government expenditures that are unnecessary, improving not just revenue collection but the transparency of revenue collection, taking a look at what works in terms of priorities in assistance long term and what we can get done in the shorter term and in a more concrete fashion, something President Ghani is very much focused on. So as we look forward to the meeting in London tomorrow and Thursday, there will be a lot of discussion on how we can actually ensure that the funding we provide the government works in accord with the conditionalities which in other terms are simply the objectives that all of us share.

The CHAIRMAN. If I may, Mr. Chairman. I know the difficulty of trying to keep this clock.

Ms. Coleman, these are important nominees because they are country-specific. Your nomination in my view is a very important

one because as a strong defender of the United Nations, I have to tell you it gets harder and harder when we do not have the type of reform of an institution which we largely fund at the end of the day. And so I would like to hear from you the essence—assuming you are confirmed for this job, what are the specific reforms that you will look to work on and how do you get through the General Assembly part of it, which has been part of our challenge each and every time?

Dr. COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that question.

The U.N. is frustrating. I am the first to admit it, that it is a frustrating organization but also an indispensable organization. And my ideas on reform would revolve around several different areas. One is certainly in the budgeting process. In the Fifth Committee, there are a number of negotiations where I think we can count on likeminded countries to support us in achieving a fair and rational methodology for determining shares of expenditure for countries at the U.N. So pressing the U.S. interests in the Fifth Committee will certainly be one of my priorities, and there are a number of issues coming up in that arena.

Another area would be in peacekeeping. This is not only a source of significant cost at the U.N. but also of performance issues. And I think the time right now is ripe for a review of peacekeeping issues. And the good news is that the Secretary General has called for a review of peacekeeping, and I think one of my priorities would be to really push U.S. interests in seeing the most cost efficient and effective processes in place for peacekeeping missions around the world.

And two other things I would like to mention. Of course, a big source of cost at the U.N. is people costs. It is personnel, and 70 percent of the regular budget is personnel compensation and benefits. And so I would like to look at that area too. I think having a modern, simple, effective compensation system in place at the U.N. is in our interest so that the U.N. can have the best people in place to be pushing its interests forward. And the objectives that we have really depend on that.

And lastly would be procurement. Again, another source of potential efficiency improvements could be in the whole procurement area. Some work has been done there, but we cannot be satisfied with what has been done thus far. We have to keep pushing on the reform agenda.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that. I hope you have sharp elbows. You are going to need them at the U.N.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses and I appreciate their outstanding records of service to our country.

Mr. Verma, I believe that you are assuming a post at a nation that may be the most important relationship between the United States and India certainly in the future. And there are challenges, but I am very optimistic about the new Prime Minister, many of the reforms that are being made. And I know that you will work closely with the new government.

Ambassador McKinley, how would you assess the condition—well, let me put it this way. In 2014, General Dunford testified to the Senator Armed Services Committee that he does not believe the Afghan military will be capable of conducting the kind of operations we are conducting now to put pressure on al-Qaeda and others in the network of extremists threatening security before 2017.

Last week, we had a meeting with the chief of staff of the Indian Army, General Sharif. I asked him. I said if we totally withdraw under the schedule that we are withdrawing, can the Afghan Government survive. His answer was no.

I also am convinced that unless we have a conditions-based withdrawal, that we will see the Iraqi movie again.

Are you at all concerned about the schedule for withdrawal when it is clear that the Taliban attacks have escalated recently? And we are in the wintertime and they are already planning to escalate attacks as soon as the fighting season begins again.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Senator, thank you for the question.

The answer is we do have to be concerned about security changes on the ground inside Afghanistan. And the fact is that looking to the future, we are prepared in discussion and consultation with the Afghan Government, which is carrying out a thorough security review and a review of threats to the country, and in close consultation with General Campbell on the ground who regularly reviews not just what is happening on the ground but also whether adjustments need to be made to the planning that was originally forecast for our presence there. The option will be there to take a look as we go forward and the security situation and strategic situation inside Afghanistan changes.

Senator MCCAIN. I am not sure that message has gotten through to the Taliban or to Members of Congress. Is the President going to announce that we are reviewing the policy and the requirement that by 2017 every American literally will be withdrawn?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. The calendar that was announced was a decision based on close consultation with our military commands.

Senator MCCAIN. Is our present plan still——

Ambassador MCKINLEY. And the present plan is still the one——

Senator MCCAIN. Is that still the plan?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. That is still the plan.

Senator MCCAIN. In your view, should that be the plan?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. I believe that we should continue to look at the situation on the ground and, if necessary, take a look at what necessary adjustments need to be made.

Senator MCCAIN. You see what is disheartening about your statement is that I agree with you, but yet, the message has been that not only are we going to be out, but we are going to celebrate that we are out. And yet, when I talk to General Dunford, I talk to other military leaders who have spent a lot of time on the ground there, all of them say what the Pakistani chief of the army said, that if we do not go to a conditions-based withdrawal, that we cannot succeed. And yet, the message has been sent that we have this schedule of withdrawal. Would it not be nice if the President of the United States said, wait a minute, we are going to gauge our withdrawal as to the conditions on the ground rather than what is now a declared policy of withdrawal by 2017?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Secretary Kerry today at the NATO ministerial stated clearly that we would be in close consultation with the Afghan Government.

Senator MCCAIN. That is a lot different from we need to have a conditions-based withdrawal. That is very different.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. What he did say was that we were prepared to enter discussions with the Afghan Government on alterations to the timetable if they became necessary on the basis of a strategic consultation.

Senator MCCAIN. What is happening now would not drive that. Right now, we are seeing attacks in downtown Kabul. We are seeing foreign facilities inhabited by foreigners being attacked by suicide bombers. We are seeing Helmand in a state of significant disarray if you count the overrunning of a major base that we turned over to the Afghans. And that is, frankly, why I am a little disappointed in your statement because they talk about all the political gains and all of the efforts against fraud. Yet, there is no assessment in here of the situation on the ground.

So maybe you can give us an assessment verbally as to how serious you think this uprising is and the increase in attacks. First of all, you agree that attacks have increased, and how much does that concern you?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, it is a matter of serious concern. When you take a look at the context of the combat operations over the last 2 years and in fact if you take a look at them over the whole period of our engagement inside Afghanistan, we do have to be concerned about the ability of the Taliban to continue to carry out attacks on the civilian population, on the security forces, on the international presence inside the country.

Over the past 2 years, a change that has come into play is a reflection of a 4 to 5 year investment in taking Afghan Security Forces, which in 2009 numbered less than 150,000, did not have the capabilities of carrying out operations, did not have a presence in all of the provinces inside the country, to what we have today, which is a force of 350,000, a presence in 34 provinces, and which in the last 2 years has denied the Taliban the ability to take and hold territory, has protected two major electoral cycles, and is the most respected institution inside the country. That is not to say——

Senator MCCAIN. Look, I appreciate everything you are saying, but again, facts are stubborn things. And the facts are—by the way, no one could be more pleased than you and me at the recent political environment in Afghanistan. It is wonderful. And I think we have got very serious efforts to address many of the problems that existed under the Karzai administration.

But the facts on the ground are that militarily the Taliban is still very strong and capable of mounting serious attacks, including inside the capital. And the message that has been sent is we are going to be out. And as long as that message is received in that way by the Taliban, it is bound to have encouraged them. And that is the problem that I see. I think you and I share the same concern.

I would like to see a statement from the administration that our withdrawal will be conditions-based rather than dictated by a certain calendar. And I hope you will maybe urge the President, not

just the Secretary of State, but the President, who is the Commander in Chief, to make that reality—counter the reality on the ground with a policy which is based on conditions-based. Otherwise, Mr. Ambassador, we will see Iraq over again, and that is of extreme urgency to me since I do not think many Americans would like to see that movie again which, by the way, there was a few of us predicted would happen.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Do you want to respond to that, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Senator, the challenge of the insurgency I think is very real, as you say. The Taliban remain strong and it remains a priority, obviously, inside the country to confront, challenge, contain them. What we have seen over the past 2 years is a change in the way the Afghan Security Forces operate which give a basis for some optimism going forward on how the next fighting season will be dealt with. That does not mean the challenge has gone away. And, in fact, the intensification of Taliban attacks over the past 2 years and the ability of the security forces to contain and respond to those challenges is a positive indicator for the future.

We have also now had a change of government with a President who is prepared to enter into a security discussion with the United States, something his predecessor was not prepared to do. Constraints that have been in place on the Afghan Security Forces in responding to the insurgency have been lifted. In terms of the approach to the future, taking into account very valid points you raise about the situation we are in now, there is a national security review underway in close consultation with us, which is looking to address the very problems you have highlighted. And in the context of what we are seeing of heightened terrorism inside urban centers and in particular the capital, there is a very urgent review underway led by the palace with the security ministries to find a more effective way to respond to the challenge. This includes also what we have seen in Helmand, in Kunduz province in which the Taliban have surged but where the government is mobilizing a strong response.

So rather than sort of focusing on it remains a very serious challenge, I also believe we are at the cusp of an opportunity to respond to some of these challenges in a new way.

Senator MCCAIN. I thank you and thank you for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador McKinley, let me just follow up a little bit on some of the issues that Senator McCain has raised because one of the questions that I am not sure I have heard an answer to is whether we have heard from either President Ghani or CEO Abdullah or the ASF about whether they would like to see American forces extended. You mentioned an ongoing dialogue about national security that is underway. Is this something that we expect to be discussed as part of that dialogue?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Senator, thank you for the question.

Absolutely, yes, we do. And in fact, in terms of the timing for that dialogue, there is an invitation from President Obama to President Ghani to visit Washington early in the new year. And in addition to the panoply of issues related to the bilateral relationship, we do anticipate security issues and the future of our relationship with Afghanistan to be part of that discussion.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

You mentioned in your statement and when we met last month, one of the things we discussed was the potential for agreement between President Ghani and Abdullah on the formation of a new Cabinet. And you suggested that they have come to some agreement around what the guidelines for that new cabinet might be. How soon do we expect some action on that? And is this something that will come up when they are in London tomorrow? Do we expect some assurances, that they will give some assurances in London about how swiftly they will move forward on a new cabinet and forming the rest of their government?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Senator, we do believe we will be given assurances. I mentioned earlier that there is disappointment that the actual naming of Cabinet Ministers has been somewhat delayed. But in the context of everything else the government of national unity has managed to accomplished in just a little over 2 months, this is really part of the process. And just 2 days ago in the Presidential Palace, President Ghani accompanied by CEO Abdullah and by all their deputies made a public announcement to the Afghan people on a timetable for naming ministers, and they were talking about a 2 to 4 week timetable. And we do know that there have been ongoing discussions between both men over the disposition of different Cabinet postings, potential nominees, and general agreement that the persons selected not only should be the best ones for the job but people who have a high degree of integrity and credibility inside Afghanistan so the government's reform program can be carried forward. We, obviously, are going to have to wait a little longer, but this presentation 2 days ago I think gave us hope that this issue is moving towards resolution.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Verma, I have watched, as have so many people around the world, the debate in India since 2012 when there was the gang rape of the young woman from New Delhi and she ultimately died from the violence. Obviously, there still seems to be a fair amount of debate in India about how to address gender-based violence. Can you talk about what you can do, if confirmed, to help promote discussions to improve women's empowerment in India and how to address that kind of sexual violence and what we can do as Americans to support that?

Mr. VERMA. Senator, thank you for the question. This is a really important area, and it is a tragedy unfortunately not limited to India. But it was encouraging to see millions of Indians actually march against this kind of violence. It was encouraging to hear the Prime Minister in one of his opening speeches speak out against this kind of violence. And we have to continue to keep it as a top issue that we speak out against rhetorically.

Then at the programmatic level, I think there is a lot we can do and that we currently do. So USAID and other agencies of our Gov-

ernment in India have a number of programs to promote women's leadership, to promote women's skills training, entrepreneurship, skills development. But on gender-based violence specifically, there are a number of programs, for example, a Safe Cities program using mobile phone technology to ensure that women are able to report instances of violence. I think there is a lot that we can do together. I think we have to continue to focus on it.

In addition, the women's empowerment dialogue led by Ambassador Cathy Russell is also going to be stood up again, and this will be really important for her and her counterparts to continue to keep this as a high priority issue. It is an issue that cuts across law enforcement, societal issues, economics, training, but we have to really stay on top of it with our counterparts in India.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I think all of the women in the Senate certainly stand ready to be as supportive as we can.

Given that we now have new leaders in both India and Pakistan, what is the potential that we might see a breakthrough in their relationship?

Mr. VERMA. I think, Senator, there was promise when the Pakistani Prime Minister came to the inauguration of the Indian Prime Minister, his inauguration back earlier in 2014. And just recently this past weekend, there was a handshake and some discussion between the two leaders at the SARC summit that led to the signing of some agreements on energy and motorways and railcars. And I think what we can do is continue to encourage that kind of dialogue. But ultimately it is for the Indians and the Pakistanis to discuss the security issues. I think where we can help is on the regional connectivity issues and on the economic and people-to-people issues between the two countries. And so this is something I think the three countries have to work at very hard. But again, on the security issues themselves, the pace, the character and the scope of those discussions between Pakistan and India are ultimately up to the two countries.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ms. Coleman, one of the stories that led the news today was the fact that the U.N. had run out of food rationing for Syrian refugees. I wonder if you have any sense of what might have been done differently and what should be done now to address that since we have millions of Syrian refugees who are now facing an even more bleak future.

Dr. COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen, for that question.

It is really a tragedy that is unfolding in that part of the world. The actions of the U.N. there I think underscore the importance of the U.N. and the tremendous work that they are doing in Jordan and in Iraq dealing with refugees from Syria, internally displaced people within Iraq, almost 2 million of them, trying to provide shelter in the advance of winter. I mean, this is a very critical situation. Clearly the urgency is building here, and the U,N, is trying to respond to this crisis in real time. You know, this is an ongoing issue. It is only getting worse, not better. It is not unique what has happened. You can look at the U.N. response to Ebola in West Africa. It has been the same type of crisis management in real time.

And if confirmed, looking at these situations would be something that I would put a lot of priority on to learn from what we did well

in responding to these crisis situations and what we did not do well and what we could do a lot better because one thing we know is that they are not going away. There are going to be other crises that the U.N. will have to respond to in same critical fashion, and certainly we can do things better than we have and that there are learnings to be had from the same, you know, logistics, supply chain, all of these types of things. We should not reinvent the wheel. We should understand what worked, what best practices, and how to implement that in future scenarios.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. My time is up. But I certainly hope that if you are confirmed—and I expect that you will be—I certainly hope that all three of you will be confirmed very expeditiously—that you will look at whatever action we can take to support the Syrian refugees who clearly are facing a very dire future. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

And I think it is important that we always point out that the United States is the largest provider of humanitarian relief to Syrian refugees in the world. I often hear comments at these hearings that the United States does not have a Syria policy as if the fact that we are the largest provider of humanitarian relief is just by accident. It is not by accident. We are doing it because it is an official part of our administration's policy. It is supported by the Senate and by others. But the Syrian refugee challenge is one that at the U.N. the efforts by Russia and China largely to block vigorous humanitarian responses in the Security Council is something we feel very deeply.

Now the favorite time of the hearing. Others have asked their questions and I get to go on ad nauseam without worrying about time limits. So let me jump to Dr. Coleman.

In 2007, the U.S. mission for the U.N. established this U.N. Transparency and Accountability Initiative, which was continued by President Obama. Could you talk a little bit about the results of that initiative and how it has done in tracking the adoption of management reforms by the U.N. funds and programs in the last 7 years?

Dr. COLEMAN. Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I look at it, the basis of reform is transparency. You know, if you do not know what is going on, you cannot fix it. And so having full transparency is critical. And I think the UNTAI measure that you have spoken of is a step in the right direction.

There have been some positive results from that. The requirement of audits and the publishing of audits and those types of things have been important. But can we go further? Yes. I think now it is a matter of consistent implementation and making sure that across the entire organization that they are meeting the highest standards of transparency and following through. So there is more work to be done but I think some good progress has already been made to date.

Senator KAINE. The other debate that often occurs here is whether we tie financial support to the U.N. to progress either on strategic goals or particularly to management reforms. What do you

think about that mechanism for conditioning U.S. taxpayer support for the U.N. on improvements in the management area?

Dr. COLEMAN. Well, as the largest contributor to the U.N., the United States has an obligation to make sure that the money is spent as efficiently, as effectively as possible. And if confirmed, that would be one of my highest priorities, to really ensure value for American taxpayers.

Conditioning our contributions, withholding our contributions is not always the most effective way to move forward. When we do that, we end up without a seat at the table, and our leadership on many of these issues is critically important. Likeminded countries who care about efficiency and effectiveness look to us for leadership on these issues, and when we condition our contributions, when we withhold payment, we lose credibility, our voice is weakened, and our leadership is diminished. And so I think that by engaging, we have shown some progress and we can continue to show progress by using our leverage with a seat at the table to really push for further reforms and increased accountability, transparency, and efficiency.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Dr. Coleman.

Mr. Verma, today by fortune of coincidence, a hearing this morning in Armed Services concerned the nomination of Admiral Harris to be the head of PACOM, which includes the Indian subcontinent and the United States-India military relationship. And I noticed that both he and you used a phrase that I am going to start using in talking about the Pacific region. That is no longer the phrase. It is the Indo-Pacific region." So for purposes of any rebalancing or pivoting to Asia, the notion of the Indo-Pacific region I think actually is a more accurate expression. And I have learned something today as a result.

The United States and India held this trade policy forum last week to discuss a variety of economic issues. Talk a little bit about kind of the action items that have come out of the forum. And in particular, I know there has been significant concern about intellectual property in the WTO process, but there have been some recent advances on that that the United States has helped broker. Could you talk a little bit about the progress on the trade side?

Mr. VERMA. Sure. I think in recent weeks there is a good-news story on the trade side. Ambassador Froman and his team working through the WTO process and with their Indian counterparts were able to separate out and have the trade facilitation agreement move through the WTO, which was important to many developing countries, including India, and able to address India's food security concerns separately through what is called a peace clause in the WTO which again was an important breakthrough and it allows us now to talk about other issues such as copyright protection and patent protection. And we can have robust discussions in these areas.

I think certainly health access and delivery of pharmaceuticals has been a contentious issue over the past few years, and if we can talk about those issues in a way where we can bring our best practices together with some of the needs of India in delivering pharmaceuticals and delivering health and medicine, those are the

kinds of discussions I think that can get us past some of the thorny issues.

The fact that we had an intellectual property working group meet was I also think very significant. As I said to the chairman earlier, this has to remain a top issue because ultimately we want to help India attract investment, help India open markets, and that is what Prime Minister Modi said when he was here. He is looking for renewed investment in India, help economic growth. That will come through opening of markets and effective trade policies. That is not only good for American businesses but good for Indian consumers and Indian citizens across India.

As I said in my opening statement, trade with India has increased five times in the last 10 years. We can do much more if we can work together on some of these market access issues and on some of the trade issues which are vitally important.

Senator KAINE. When I was in India recently and returned, I had a couple of thoughts about areas of cooperation that I would like to focus on in the kind of national security space. Both our countries have been victimized by terrorist attacks on our home soil in recent years. And it was very moving, more moving than I actually thought it would be, to go to the sites associated with the LeT terrorist attack in Mumbai in November 2008. The terrorist attack was a huge atrocity. We had scheduled—Senator King and I—to do a couple of visits in the midst of a full day of events. And I do not know that we really walked in prepared to grapple with the extent of the challenge, and it obviously called up a lot of memories of the U.S. attacks on 9/11. It would seem that counterterrorism cooperation, because of this shared experience, would really be a significant opportunity in our work.

And secondly, we are dealing with cyber threats that grow and multiply in sort of a geometric way every day. Our cultures and educational systems and educational institutions in the United States and India produce significant technical expertise, technical wizardry that would seem to give us some real opportunity to work together on countering cyber threats. I wonder if you can talk a little bit about kind of current status but maybe more especially opportunities in the future for the United States and India to deepen counterterrorism cooperation and cooperation dealing with cybersecurity attacks.

Mr. VERMA. Sure. Senator, I think these are both really important areas, and what you described about your visit to Mumbai I am sure was especially moving. And when we talk about shared values between our two countries, one of those shared values is standing against terrorism, having people being able to live peacefully in society, settling disputes peacefully. And we have built a very robust set of counterterrorism cooperation measures over the years with the Indians, and it is run across multiple agencies, Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, the FBI, and the Justice Department, the Department of Defense. It is fairly widespread. And I think we should look at ways to bolster it and we should continue to look at ways to do joint training, joint law enforcement cooperation, joint intelligence sharing so that we can be sure that citizens of both countries are sharing those values of peace and justice.

And on cyber as well, I think this is a critically important area not only on the technical side but working with India to really be a role model in cyber cooperation in how cyber is handled in a democracy in Asia. I think this can just send a very powerful message not only in South Asia but across Asia.

Senator KAINE. On the issue of counterterrorism, I want to segue into a follow-up on Senator Shaheen who asked you about the India-Pakistan relationship. The attack by the terrorist group LeT—those individuals are deeply connected with Pakistan. You indicated that the relationship between those two countries is obviously for them to figure out. We can be facilitators. We can be helpful. It is not our primary responsibility. But I know one of the security concerns we would have in this region with two nations that have nuclear weapons would be the danger of the escalation of an incident.

Senator King and I were in India and Pakistan at the time of, you know, what is kind of an annual almost set of border skirmishes in disputed border areas in the Kashmir. Most observers thought that the border skirmishes this year were sort of at their most aggressive in about the last 10 years. And I think a huge concern for the United States would be the danger of an escalation. If there would be another terrorist attack by LeT, for example, that could escalate pretty quickly. And in the absence of kind of regular channels of dialogue between the countries—we had hoped that that dialogue would have been more regularized beginning with the investiture of Prime Minister Modi last summer. Some of your comments suggest that we may be getting on track. In the absence of some of these mechanisms of consistent dialogue, I think a significant concern is this escalation effect which you may have seen it or maybe this past fall was a little bit of an aberration.

What do you think you can do in your post to encourage the creation of a more normal dialogue so that the communication does not just have to happen in times of emergency where there is an escalation danger that could get out of hand?

Mr. VERMA. Senator, I think one way that we can do this, as I said, is through increasing regional connectivity so that the people-to-people ties actually increase. I think the trade right now between India and Pakistan stands around $3 billion, which is a very small sum compared to what it could be. To the extent that greater trade, economic infrastructure, energy developments can be made through the countries, that will naturally help increase connectivity outside of the governments.

From the government-to-government level, obviously both capitals both in New Delhi and Islamabad, it is important to call for dialogue, try to encourage dialogue at every turn. We support the healthiest possible relationship between the two countries, and if confirmed, Senator, you can be sure that that is something that I will work on very closely.

Senator KAINE. The Modi government is still relatively new. So they need time to really probably demonstrate this. But can you talk a little bit about under the new government, India's role in Asian kind of regional architecture. There is an organization, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, that I think India has not necessarily been a significant participant in in the past, but

there are some opportunities there. What can you say about the Modi government's attitude toward the regional architecture in the area?

Mr. VERMA. Well, it has been fascinating to watch over the last year when Look East has become Act East because it has not just been about looking or rhetorical kind of flourishes. It has been about actual developments. The prime minister has made, I think, at least two trips to East Asia already, successful visits to Australia, to Japan. They have trade and defense relationships with Vietnam, with Malaysia, with Indonesia. There is joint training that now takes place. The Singapore-India trade relationship is huge. So they really are seeing a lot of their future, both economically and from a security perspective, in East Asia.

And as I had mentioned earlier, Senator, I think that converges with our rebalance to Asia as well, and there really, truly is a convergence of interests where we can work together on issues such as counterterrorism, such as maritime security, ultimately resolving disputes peacefully but preserving this post-World War II liberal democratic rules-based order that has been so important to the global system.

Senator KAINE. That is a very important point. I feel like in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, we have been kind of looking for the new model to how to describe global relations. And I kind of look at it as a competition now between three leadership models, liberal democracies, authoritarian regimes, and sort of sectarian jihad, which is often non-state. And it is so helpful to have great examples of the liberal democracies on each of the continents, and India certainly is and even can be more that example and the world needs that example.

India's relationship with China is a complicated one, just as ours is. Economic cooperation but also strategic rivalry. Premier Ji's visit to Prime Minister Modi after he became Prime Minister coincided with the flare-up of border tensions along the India-China border, and there was a lot of confusion about exactly why that would have been the moment for there to be a flareup of tensions when this head of state visit that was so important was being paid.

What can you say about the current status of that relationship from your observations?

Mr. VERMA. Senator, much like the United States, the India relationship with China has elements of cooperation and elements of competition. But Prime Minister Modi himself has said that he wants a strong and healthy relationship with China. It is very much in our interest to see these two countries have a healthy relationship. There is a dialogue on border issues when they occur. And again, the economic issues are important to both countries. And so anything that we can do to ensure that the dialogue remains open, that trade and connectivity remain strong. There will be disagreements from time to time, but again, to the extent these are resolved peacefully—and thus far, I would say the Prime Minister has set out on a very positive footing on an economic basis raising security concerns when they come up but in a very positive set of outreach to their Chinese neighbors.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Verma.

Ambassador McKinley, just kind of two last points. I wanted to ask you about your perceptions of the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship. That is obviously critically important. As bordering nations, those areas of Afghanistan that border some of the tribal areas and others in Pakistan can be very critical in terms of the security issues. At least in the initial days of the Ghani/Abdullah government, what do you see as the developing relations between this new government in Afghanistan and the Government of Pakistan?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. There is a real change in tone and rhetoric but also substance, and both Prime Minister Sharif and President Ghani have outlined areas where they think they can cooperate that include security, a heavy emphasis on restoring consultations on border issues. There is an emphasis on cross-border trade which is absolutely essential for Afghanistan. And if I can sort of parallel what Rich said about India and Pakistan, obviously the opportunities of opening borders in the subcontinent and Central Asia is a very important objective in terms of creating opportunities and changing the economic dynamic of the region. And so President Ghani, in his visit to Islamabad, made a point of bringing along a business private sector contingent, meeting with Pakistani business, and working with Pakistani ministries to identify literally dozens of steps that can be taken to change the economic relationship between the two countries.

So there has also been communication exchanges, visits by security ministers. General Rahil has visited Kabul. And we have a very different dynamic at work.

Now, obviously the challenges are serious. We have a history of tensions and misunderstandings, but this is a very promising start to addressing some of those longstanding concerns.

Senator KAINE. Ambassador McKinley, last point. And I want to return to the line of questioning that Senator McCain was engaged in. His concern about drawdown of personnel or moves based on the calendar rather than based on conditions on the ground is a concern that is widely felt on this committee and in the Senate. But I was heartened to notice, after our visit and after our return from Afghanistan, the President made some adjustments to the authorities under which the United States military will operate in 2015. He did not change the calendar. He did not change the troop numbers, but facts on the ground, including some of these activities of the Taliban to destabilize Kabul and other parts of the country recently led the White House to make a proposed change in some of the authorities under which the U.S. military will operate during their mission in 2015.

I viewed that as sort of we have a plan, and it is good to have a plan better than no plan. But that plan is going to be determined, whether we just fully follow the plan or make adjustments, by facts on the ground. So I viewed it as a hopeful sign when I read press accounts that there was a slight shift in direction with respect to military authorities. I know you and others were encouraging that based upon what you were seeing on the ground.

Do you view it the same way?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. The President made his decision in May on the troop presence and the timetable, and those subsequent

months were spent both factoring in the changing dynamic inside Afghanistan in political terms and security terms but also the legal and operational requirements for our presence inside the country. And they always envisaged combat enablers in certain situations to continue supporting the ANSF, as well as creating the basis for force protection for our troops that stay inside the country and also to support the counterterrorism objectives that we continue to have in the region and our interests in, frankly, continuing to build the Afghan Security Force capabilities.

So the AUMF continues to be 2001, but in terms of, again, of defining how we would operate going forward, that is what was done over the months subsequent to the announcement on the timetable for the Resolute Support mission. And it is, obviously, going to provide a good and flexible base for us to respond to the challenges ahead.

Senator KAINE. And that process resulted in an outcome that was sensitive to the current facts on the ground as are being reported back to the administration from all of the United States hands that are there in Afghanistan.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. That is correct. And if I can perhaps state a little more clearly where we are. Secretary Kerry did, today at the NATO ministerial, make it clear that we are prepared to consult with the Afghan Government on refinements to our mission's duration. We are consulting, working closely with General Campbell on security assessments on the ground and what adjustments, if necessary, over time must be taken to make our mission more effective. And it is in consonance with this radical national security review being carried out by the Afghans themselves as they look to build on the extremely positive transformation of their security forces since 2009–10 and what they need to do going forward to deal with a threat that we all agree is serious but I would like to put it in the context of a year of offenses in which—I repeat—the Taliban did not retain or gain territory, in which the Afghan Security Forces greatly increased their operational tempo and led all combat operations, and in which their capabilities going forward look like they will only be strengthened.

Senator KAINE. When you think about what would have been the Taliban's motives during calendar year 2014, clearly the destabilization of the first set of civilian elections to peacefully transfer power was their top objective. They could not destabilize the first round of the Presidential elections. They could not destabilize the second round of the Presidential elections. When there was an audit and all of the ballots were gathered in one place for a pretty extensive review of those ballots, that was a real target for destabilization activities. They could not destabilize that. The defense against destabilization was largely carried out by Afghan Security Forces nearly completely. So their strongest motive was to destabilize a process that stretched out over a number of months and they were not able to do it. That gives us some confidence.

However, we are all deeply worried, given the American sacrifice to achieve the gains that I indicated in my opening statement, about any notion that a calendar date would magically suggest that we leave or that we are done because that could encourage other activities that would lose the gains and hurt the Afghan people.

And so we are really counting on—and the comments that you quote from Secretary Kerry today—we are really counting on this administration focusing on continuing gains rather than dates on the calendar. It is important to have a plan, but to the extent that the plan needs to be adjusted so that we can continue to harvest the gains that we have been a part of, we would continue to encourage you and other critical officials in the administration to advocate for that so that the right decisions are made. And I have no doubt that that is exactly what you will do, should you be confirmed.

Thank you all. You each have impressive track records. You each are taking on important responsibilities, and you each will also serve as leaders of organizations with some spectacular people. Everybody who serves in the Foreign Service in this country, even in New York, which to Virginia can seem foreign on occasion—everybody is a dedicated public servant and they are all small A ambassadors for the United States, and you are lucky to work with good teams. And I know you view that as one of the real honors of the responsibilities that you are being entrusted with.

With that, the hearing adjourns. If there are questions that other members want to submit, they can do so by the close of business today, and I would encourage you to respond promptly. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:15 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF RICHARD RAHUL VERMA TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. I believe that we should be expanding educational ties in all sectors—the best and the brightest from both sides should exchange ideas and build on the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit that exists in both countries. Rutgers University, for example, has formed strong relationships with Indian educational and research institutions, and has increased the profile of India with business, community, and nonprofit organizations in New Jersey.

- How will the United States and India increase areas of collaboration, including student and faculty exchange, research cooperation, e-learning, and cooperation between community colleges?
- India's higher education system is increasingly stressed by India's large and growing youth population. In what ways, if any, has the U.S.-India Higher Education Dialogue improved bilateral collaboration in this area?

Answer. Increasing educational collaboration, including student and faculty exchange, research cooperation, e-learning, and cooperation between community colleges, is one of the key focuses of the U.S.-India Higher Education Dialogue. The Fulbright-Nehru program has nearly tripled in size since 2009, with approximately 300 Indian and U.S. students and scholars participating annually. In addition, the United States and India launched the $10 million 21st Century Knowledge Initiative in 2012 to support partnerships between higher education institutions in both countries. These projects strengthen teaching and research in priority fields such as energy, climate change, and public health. In the coming year, the U.S. Government plans to work with the Indian Government to bring more American science and technology professors and researchers to India.

India is home to the world's largest youth population, with more than 50 percent of India's population under 25 years of age, and over two-thirds under age 35. This demographic dividend presents a tremendous opportunity for India to become a global economic leader, and create new and diverse investment opportunities for the world. With U.S. and Indian Government support through the Higher Education Dialogue, U.S. community colleges partner with Indian institutions to enhance eco-

nomic opportunity in India through adoption of American community college and skills development best practices.

At last year's dialogue, the American Association of Community Colleges signed an agreement with the All-India Council on Technical Education to assist as India expands its community college model, with particular focus on building linkages with industry to ensure young Indian graduates can fully participate in the fast-changing workforce. To support the growth of institution-to-institution partnerships, the United States supports exchanges of administrators and education officials responsible for community colleges and vocational education, including through the Fulbright-Nehru International Education Administrators Program this fall and the Community College Administrators Program that will launch next year.

Question. In the early 1990s, approximately 108,000 Lhotshampa, primarily Nepali-speaking Hindus, were forced to leave Bhutan. After living in camps in Nepal for 20 years, nearly 80,000 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled across the United States and constitute one of the largest refugee populations in the country. Thousands have resettled and become United States citizens as they strive to become ever contributing members of our society and economy. More than 25,000 still remain in camps. Bhutan has thus far refused to allow any refugees to return.

- ♦ Given the United States does not have direct diplomatic ties with Bhutan, what can the U.S. Embassy in India do to ensure that resettled Bhutanese Hindus, now Americans, as well as those remaining in the camps in Nepal are given the ability to return to Bhutan should they choose to do so?

Answer. Finding a durable solution to the issue of Bhutanese refugees is a major U.S. priority. Our Embassy in New Delhi and U.N. missions in Geneva and New York regularly engage with the Government of Bhutan—including through visits of U.S. Embassy officials to Bhutan and through close ties with Bhutan's Embassy in New Delhi—to advocate for a lasting solution that takes into account the wishes of the refugees. The United States consistently urges Bhutan to approve voluntary repatriation cases referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and to work together with Nepal and UNHCR to advance a solution for the residual population of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. The U.S. Government is proud that more than 90,000 refugees from Bhutan have been resettled in third countries, including nearly 80,000 to the United States.

Question. On September 5, 1986, Pan Am Flight 73 was hijacked in Pakistan by terrorists acting under the direction of the Libyan Government. By the time the Pakistani military intervened, 20 passengers had died and over 120 had been injured. In 2008, the State Department concluded the U.S.-Libya Claims Settlement Agreement, which led to the permanent termination of all pending lawsuits against Libya and to the creation of a humanitarian settlement fund administered by the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission. Victims of the Pan Am Lockerbie flight and the Berlin LaBelle Disco bombing were compensated regardless of nationality. However, compensation has been denied to Pan Am 73 passengers who were Indian citizens at the time, but have since become naturalized American citizens. These victims have been directed by the U.S. State Department to the Indian Government, which has responded that Pan Am 73 was an American Carrier, targeted because it belonged to America, and that the duty therefore lies upon the United States Government to ensure that everyone on board Pan Am 73 is awarded just compensation.

- ♦ What recourse do these naturalized American citizens have in seeking compensation for their injuries?

Answer. The Department of State strongly condemns all acts of terrorism and deeply regrets the losses sustained by the victims of the Pan Am 73 hijacking.

The Department of State's requirement that a claimant be a continuous U.S. national at the time of the incident—and not after—to be eligible for an award of compensation is a well-established principle of international claims practice. International, domestic, and mixed claims arbitral tribunals have applied the rule of continuous nationality, and it has been the consistent policy and practice of the Department to decline to espouse claims which have not been continuously owned by U.S. nationals from the date of injury. The Libya claims settlement involving the Pan Am Lockerbie flight and the Berlin LaBelle Disco bombing is no different, and the references to claims of U.S. nationals in the Claims Settlement Agreement, and other documents implementing the settlement, are necessarily informed by this principle.

Although the United States is not in a position under international law to espouse the claims of these victims, nothing in our agreements with Libya regarding compensation for U.S. nationals in the Pan Am Lockerbie flight and the Berlin LaBelle

Disco bombing would restrict the ability of the Government of India to take up these distinct Pan Am 73 claims with Libya or for the Pan Am 73 victims themselves to pursue these claims with Libyan authorities.

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. I have had the privilege of working on democracy and human rights issues for over 20 years. From 1993 to 1994, I was the country director for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in Bucharest, Romania, where I led NDI's efforts to help build democratic institutions and improve the capacity of civil society groups. Again in 1999, I went on behalf of NDI to West Africa to the Republic of Niger for 1 month to train new parliamentarians in an effort to rebuild legislative capacity following a military coup. In 2000, NDI sent me to Nepal for several weeks to conduct an assessment and training on anticorruption efforts in Kathmandu, working with legislators and civil society. I continue to serve on the NDI Board of Directors, and provide advice on a wide range of NDI programming in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Asia.

During my service in the U.S. Air Force, I served on the faculty of the Expanded International Military Education and Training program (E–IMET), where we provided extensive training to various countries' militaries on the role of a military in a democracy. Over a 4-year period, I worked with the militaries of Poland, Argentina, and Romania to conduct in-country trainings on human rights, the rule of law, and civilian control of the military, in addition to other related topics.

While working in the Senate Leader's office, I focused a great deal of attention on human rights, antitrafficking, and religious freedom issues around the world, traveling widely on staff and congressional delegations to bring attention to these issues in Africa, the Middle East and Persian Gulf region, South and Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. I continued to work on these issues as Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, and in that role, I also supported Secretary Clinton's efforts to promote women's rights, as a core component of our national- security and foreign-policy agenda globally.

In my private law practice, I have had the good fortune of representing, in a complex political asylum case, a young man from El Salvador who was targeted by Salvadorian gangs because of his sexual orientation. The case was recently successfully brought to conclusion, with asylum and temporary permanent residence awarded to this brave Salvadorian national. I have also been proud to be a member of the Board of Directors of Human Rights First (formerly the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights) for over 3 years, where I have helped advise and speak on matters related to the law of war and the Geneva conventions, refugee issues, and other humanitarian rights issues. If confirmed, I would continue to make democracy and human rights a priority, as it has been for me over the course of my career.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in India? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in India? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Although India has a long tradition of democratic values and a vibrant civil society, we do engage with the Government of India on a number of human-rights concerns, including police and security force abuses and corruption; societal violence, including gender-based violence; labor violations; human trafficking; and violations of religious freedom.

The U.S. Government has worked with successive Indian governments, through the Strategic Dialogue, the Global Issues Forum, the Women's Empowerment Dialogue, and other engagements, to emphasize the importance the United States places on human-rights issues. If confirmed, I will use these mechanisms, bilateral meetings, and quiet consultations to urge the Indian Government to promote tolerance and freedoms for ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities, support space for civil society to operate, combat corruption, respect fundamental labor rights, and combat gender-based violence by promoting equality and rule of law.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in India in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. While no country has a perfect human-rights record, India has a longstanding tradition of pluralism, rule of law, and protection of minority rights. As in many countries, uneven enforcement of existing civil-liberty protections, and in some areas, uneven protections for civilian populations, can fuel impunity among security forces. While India has improved its laws on rape, enforcement remains uneven, and as in the United States, sexual violence is still vastly underreported.

Religious freedom is protected by India's secular constitution; however, differences between state and federal laws can curtail these freedoms. And corruption, lack of political will, and lack of capacity can undermine the enforcement of laws protecting workers from abusive conditions. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of India and courageous members of India's civil society, such as 2014 International Women of Courage Award winner Laxmi and Nobel Peace Prize Winner Kailash Satyarthi to promote our human-rights goals.

If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for human rights and democracy. It's important to note that India's national elections this year—the world's largest organized human activity—saw more than 550 million citizens, about 8 percent of the world's population, turn out to vote. India's elections, and peaceful transition of power, were a reminder for both our nations that democratic principles are a common thread between our peoples. If confirmed, I intend to build on this common foundation of open and inclusive rules-based order to work with India to advance our common democratic interests.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in India?

Answer. You have my commitment that, if confirmed, I will meet with human-rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in India.

As Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall emphasized during her recent visit to India, promoting tolerance freedoms for ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities, supporting space for civil society to operate, fighting gender-based violence, combating corruption, and respecting fundamental labor rights are core U.S. interests and integral elements of our relationship with India. Meeting with civil-society organizations, human-rights organizations, advocates for women's rights, and other NGOs is an important component of advancing our core human-rights interests.

RESPONSES OF PETER MICHAEL MCKINLEY TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What steps can President Ghani and CEO Abdullah take over the next year to improve women's rights in Afghanistan?

Answer. In their campaigns and since taking office, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have repeatedly emphasized their commitment to consolidate and expand the gains women have made in Afghanistan since 2001. The Afghan Government's strategy to achieve this goal is based on three pillars: ending discrimination and violence against women and ensuring the equal treatment of women under the law, improving educational and economic opportunities for women and girls, and implementing gender-neutral policies and women-friendly employment practices throughout the government.

The Afghan Government has committed to implement fully the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This is a critical step to safeguard Afghan women's rights and access to justice, which requires raising greater public awareness among men and women on the law as well as improving implementation of the law within the justice sector.

As outlined in its paper for the December 3–4 London Conference on Afghanistan, the Afghan Government plans to develop a National Economic Empowerment Plan for Women. This plan would address critical issues such as women's inheritance and property ownership, financial literacy and financial inclusion, and affirmative action in government hiring.

Increasing women's participation in government will also be key to ensuring progress on women's rights. President Ghani has expressed his intent to nominate a qualified woman candidate to Afghanistan's Supreme Court, a step the U.S. Government and many Afghan women's groups have applauded. His spokesman has also said the new Cabinet will include four women as ministers, up from three currently. It will be critical that the new government include qualified women at all levels, from ministers to entry-level civil servants—an important issue we have raised with the Afghan Government. Increasing the number of women in the Afghan National Security Forces, with assistance from the United States and other members of the international community, will improve women's security and access to justice.

To facilitate the increased participation of women in government, it will be important for President Ghani to follow through on his plans to make government service

more women-friendly. These plans include the introduction of a sexual harassment policy, the implementation of affirmative action in hiring, and the provision of additional support to women serving in traditionally male fields such as the security forces.

The upcoming Parliamentary and district-level elections will also be an opportunity for the new government to take action early and diligently on ensuring the full participation of women as candidates, voters, election workers as well as addressing security issues to support an enabling environment for women to freely access polling stations as they did in the 2014 elections.

Question. The Special Immigrant Visa Program is an important initiative which helped to ensure the safety of thousands of locally employed staff in Afghanistan. It has also left a void in the Embassy and USAID's capacity to conduct diplomacy and assistance programs and engage with Afghans.

♦ What are your plans to mitigate this loss of capacity and institutional memory?

Answer. The SIV program remains a critical tool to helping brave Afghans who have helped the U.S. mission over the last 13 years and I appreciate the Congress' strong support for this program.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has taken a number of steps to mitigate the resulting departure of local staff. These efforts include increasing our recruiting pipeline and shifting back office functions to locations outside of Afghanistan when possible. Where possible, the Embassy is also looking into relying more heavily on multidonor trust funds to implement development assistance. Another mitigation strategy the Embassy uses is to assign local staff on Temporary Duty (TDY) from other countries to fill critical positions. These staffers often serve more than one tour, function effectively as the institutional memory of the mission, and help build the capacity of Afghan staff. This program has been in existence for several years and continues to be one of our best options for obtaining talented, experienced local staff. Finally, it may be possible to fill a small number of critical need positions with long-term (2–3 year) Third Country Nationals (TCNs).

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. I have worked to support human rights and democracy throughout my career. In Mozambique from 1994–97, as Deputy Chief of Mission and later as Chargé d'Affaires, I worked with the government and the former rebel movement to ensure a smooth outcome to contested elections, leading to the first democratic government in the country. In both Mozambique and Uganda (1997–2000), I helped secure funding for returning refugees and for displaced conflict victims in northern Uganda fleeing atrocities by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In addition, I helped draw attention to the plight of boys and girls rescued from the LRA.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) I was responsible for identifying refugee populations for resettlement in the United States, and shepherding the relaunch of the refugee resettlement program in our country after it was closed down in the aftermath of 9/11; tens of thousands of refugees benefited as a result. As the PRM Bureau's lead point person responsible for Africa, I worked to improve conditions in refugee camps in Darfur and protection for women in these camps.

In Colombia and Peru, as Ambassador, I secured funding for the first rape crisis center in a conflict zone in Colombia and helped launch the second-ever LGBT Chamber of Commerce in Latin America. I personally negotiated labor rights protection clauses in the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia. I publicly highlighted the plight of left-wing activists threatened in Colombia, and lobbied successfully for additional funding for Afro-Colombian minority communities in both Colombia and Peru.

As mentioned, for much of my career I have been active supporting negotiations to end conflict, and save lives. I was proud to be part of the team that negotiated Namibia's independence and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Africa. I also worked on peace negotiations in Uganda and Darfur.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Afghanistan? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Afghanistan? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. As our human rights reports make clear, there are many pressing human rights concerns inside Afghanistan. Perhaps the most urgent is the need to preserve the enormous strides the Afghan people have made in this area over the past 13

years. Taliban views on human rights are made clear by their record when they controlled Kabul, their more recent pronouncements on issues such as the right of ordinary citizens to vote for their leaders, and the countless civilian casualties that are the hallmark of the insurgency they fuel. One of my most important missions, if confirmed, will be fostering a partnership with the Afghan Government based on the shared values enumerated in our Strategic Partnership Agreement.

Also of great importance is the protection of the rights of women and girls. That is why gender has been a policy and programming priority for U.S. Embassy Kabul, and why it will continue to be a priority if I am confirmed. The United States must support and hold the Afghan Government accountable for the implementation of its strategy to advance women's rights. This strategy focuses on ending discrimination and violence against women and ensuring the equal treatment of women under the law, improving educational and economic opportunities for women and girls, and implementing gender-neutral policies and women-friendly employment practices throughout the government. The new government of national unity has also declared its intention to work on gender protection and opportunity, as well as on strengthening the capacity of the judiciary to end impunity before the law.

In a related issue, we are strengthening the funding for Trafficking in Persons (TIP) initiatives, and I hope that this will allow for an expansion of shelters for women and boys in Afghanistan.

Given the Taliban threat mentioned above, an important part of our partnership with the Afghan Government is our cooperation with the Afghan National Security Forces. An essential part of that partnership must be confidence that the Afghan Armed Forces have the highest respect for human rights. President Ghani has made clear that he shares this view, and that he will not tolerate abuses committed by Afghan security forces. Beyond being U.S. law, Leahy vetting is an important and concrete reminder of our beliefs, and, if confirmed, I intend to ensure that we implement this process to the fullest extent of the letter and spirit of the law.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response?

Answer. We have many programs to promote and protect human rights in Afghanistan. However, as our presence in Afghanistan decreases, security restrictions will affect our outreach to some of Afghanistan's most vulnerable populations. To overcome this challenge, we are adopting creative solutions that allow us to continue implementing projects in the field without losing the ability to monitor and evaluate our programming.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in Afghanistan?

Answer. Yes. Throughout my career I have met with and worked with civil society—independent NGOs, universities, women's groups, the media, and human rights organizations. I have every intention of continuing to do so in Afghanistan, where strengthening civil society organizations is absolutely critical to our achieving our objectives, and where they need our visible support.

RESPONSES OF ISOBEL COLEMAN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What steps has the U.S. Government undertaken since 2009 to address abuse and misconduct by U.N. peacekeepers and civilian personnel participating in those operations? What further steps are you pursuing? Please address abuses by peacekeepers in UNMISS, MINUSTAH, and MONUSCO and responses taken.

Answer. The United States has long been a leading advocate for measures to eliminate abuse and misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), by U.N. peacekeepers. We have been a leading advocate for changes to the system. With strong U.S. encouragement, the U.N. has improved its internal oversight process, sped up investigations, improved oversight of field missions, and worked hard to obtain and publish better data. All U.N. peacekeepers—whether military, police, or civilian, seconded or contracted—must abide by the U.N.'s clear code of conduct.

The U.N. has focused on increasing good standards and has instituted enhanced screening procedures for peacekeepers, due in large part to pressure from the United States. For civilians, the U.N. maintains records of any prior misconduct by previous employees, and runs background checks on new hires. Screening for military and police personnel—in part because of the volume and frequent turnover—is more difficult, and currently consists of certification by the contributing govern-

ment that the individual has a clean record. Measures are in place to screen all categories of peacekeeping personnel with the exception of troops, a deficiency that the United States is actively working with other U.N. member states to fix.

In 2009, with strong U.S. encouragement, the U.N. developed a strategy for peacekeeping and humanitarian missions to provide short- and medium-term support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and children born to peacekeepers, even if the allegations have not been substantiated. Victims seek longer term restitution from the alleged perpetrators. The U.N. provides various types of assistance to victims, including counseling, medical treatment, and legal support.

The Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) in the Department of Field Support is responsible for overseeing policy and regulations on misconduct. They have a small but very dedicated staff. We have been able to help them in a couple of ways. First, we worked with Vanderbilt Law School, which funded a four-student team to help CDU clear a backlog of cases. The team also developed a field manual on SEA rules and procedures. Second, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs is funding an entry-level professional position in CDU that is filled by a young American, whose job specifically includes updating and energizing the Victim's Assistance policy. I, as well as CDU, regard keeping this position as a priority.

The CDU has also made progress in expanding the scope of its program to screen peacekeeping personnel before deployment, including the conclusion of an information-sharing agreement with the United Nations Volunteer (UNV) program that authorizes CDU to access information about whether prospective U.N. civilian staff members who previously served as UNVs were subject to any disciplinary measures. Second, there is now an interface between the CDU's Misconduct Tracking System (MTS) and the recruitment systems used by the Police Division and the Office of Military Affairs in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). CDU is now able to screen individual police officers, military observers, and military liaison officers serving in the field.

U.S. training under the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), which includes the Africa Contingency Operations and Assistance (ACOTA), includes instruction on conduct and discipline, including SEA prevention, as part of all peacekeeping training. Such instruction is included in both "train the trainer" programs and training for individual units that will deploy to peacekeeping operations. Trainers are provided a full set of course material and U.N. documents, but tailor the length and specific content of instruction based on the course being offered (for example, infantry, medical, officer, or enlisted), the length of the class, and the individual or unit's previous peacekeeping experience. Topics include the standards of conduct, impact on the local population and the mission, human trafficking, vulnerable groups, reporting, and scenarios.

U.S. training for police officers serving with U.N. missions includes both "train the trainer" programs for partner countries and training U.S. police officers who are deploying to U.N. missions. Both types of training include instruction on SEA regulations and procedures.

Overall, the number of SEA allegations per year has steadily decreased over the last 5 years. This is largely due to the U.N. strengthening its zero tolerance framework through increased and more targeted training, community outreach, and effective leadership. U.N. peacekeeping operations are fostering greater understanding of U.N. SEA and TIP policy, procedures, and reporting mechanism within local communities.

The U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which has consistently had the highest rates of SEA allegations, is experiencing a decline. This is greatly due to training, assessment visits, and outreach efforts both within the mission and with civil society. In addition to new SEA preventative measures, MONUSCO has implemented a policy that refers local MONUSCO staff who commit SEA to local authorities.

The U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has also experienced a marked decrease in SEA allegations, which reflects the success of a multidimensional approach to tackling SEA by U.N. peacekeepers, including "train the trainer" and other courses, nationwide awareness campaigns, and a robust zero tolerance policy. Unfortunately, much of these changes are a result of a series of past public SEA allegations against MINUSTAH peacekeepers. For example, in January 2012, three members of the Pakistani Formed Police Unit (FPU) serving with MINUSTAH were accused of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old Haitian teenage boy. Following an initial investigation by the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Pakistani authorities flew a Pakistani judge to Haiti and conducted an immediate trial. All three personnel were convicted, dishonorably discharged, and flown back to Pakistan in March that year to serve 1-year prison sentences.

The U.N. Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), and its predecessor the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), have consistently been among the missions with the highest allegations of SEA. Unfortunately, UNMISS' Conduct and Discipline Team (CDT) does not currently have the capacity to maintain a presence outside Juba and relies heavily on state offices to handle the case intake. These local officials often are untrained in SEA procedures and have other portfolios rather than working full-time on conduct and discipline. As a consequence, the local population is often unaware of U.N. SEA policies and reporting procedures. Furthermore, the current UNMISS budget does not contain resources to fund awareness campaigns.

To address these problems, I will push the U.N. to increase their followup to allegations of SEA and other peacekeeper misconduct, particularly with victims and the local community, on actions taken against perpetrators. The U.N. does not have the authority to prosecute, so any prosecution when appropriate would be conducted by a national government (either the host government or relevant troop contributing country). However, the U.N. cannot compel member states to report on actions taken.

Additionally, I will also increase efforts with like-minded countries to press troop and police contributing countries to take action when personnel are repatriated. Finally, I will continue to encourage the U.N. to properly fund and staff the CDU and the OIOS, which sends professional investigators, with experience in collecting and evaluating evidence.

Question. In your view, what issues in the broad area of U.N. management and reform should have top priority? What reforms will the U.S. mission emphasize during your tenure?

Answer. The U.S. mission will engage on multiple management and reform priorities during my tenure.

Reform of the Regular Budget Process: The United States will engage with likeminded allies to improve the U.N. regular budget process, which produces budgets of limited strategic value because of "incremental" development (prior budgets are used as baselines without any analytical justification). The Department agrees with a recent U.N. Board of Auditor's report (July 2014) suggesting the U.N. should better align program planning and strategic goals/work plans and more thoroughly link budget information to desired outcomes. Our overall goal, in addition to emphasizing broad reforms in the budget process, is to reduce costs as much as possible and seek absorption within the existing budget.

Another focus of U.N. budget reform during my tenure will be the U.N.'s practice of recosting, where the U.N. revises cost estimates to take into account inflation, exchange rate losses, increased personnel costs resulting from mandatory salary adjustments, and lower-then-planned vacancy rates. A recent U.N. report on the recosting process did not go as far as we would have liked, so we will work with our likeminded allies and others to continue the momentum for recosting reform, establish guidance and mechanisms to alleviate the impact of recosting, and pressure the Secretariat to live within its budget.

U.N. Staff Compensation ("Common System"): Earlier this year, the International Civil Service Commission implemented a landmark multiyear pay freeze affecting 30,000 U.N. staff across 24 organizations in the U.N. common system, and it continues work on a new compensational package. The pay freeze will narrow the 5-year average margin between U.N. staff and U.S. federal civil servants by 2019 and give U.N. common system organizations interim relief from budget growth caused by increases in staff costs. Our primary goal is to preserve the pay freeze decision by the ICSC and ensure that the new compensation package is simple, modern, and cost effective.

Human Resource Management: The United States is working with like-minded allies to pressure the Secretariat to establish a new performance management system that should allow for the effective measurement of performance, rewarding of good performance, and sanctioning for underperformance. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the paramount focus of the U.N. Charter as favoring the most qualified applicant over a more equitable geographic distribution of posts.

Oversight and Transparency: In 2012, the United States successfully advocated for the disclosure of audit reports by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which are available to the public on a trial basis, through December 2014. As evident in a recent report by the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, public disclosure of internal audit reports had a positive impact on the quality of the reports. Based on the overall success of the pilot, I will work with like-minded member states to urge the General Assembly to make publication of internal audit reports permanent.

Procurement: Procurement has become an increasingly prominent issue for the U.N. In 2006, the Secretary General proposed a range of procurement-related reforms including strengthening internal controls, optimizing U.N. acquisition management to reduce costs, and ensuring staff have sufficient training and skillsets to support these efforts. According to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Issues and Joint Inspection Unit, the Procurement Division has improved its operations since 2006. However, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and Board of Auditors note that further improvements are necessary. If confirmed, I will engage the Secretariat to ensure progress with adequate training in contract management, well-defined delegations of authority, implementation of a monitoring framework, application of best value for money, and reductions in delays delivering goods and services.

Question. Some observers and experts, including U.S. policymakers, have argued that OIOS should not rely on funding from the U.N. programs and bodies that it audits in order to avoid a real or perceived conflict of interest. How does this conflict of interest impede their ability to accurately provide oversight and audit the appropriate programs? What steps, if any, is the United States taking to achieve operational independence for OIOS?

Answer. As the U.N.'s internal watchdog, we believe that OIOS should have all the tools it needs to conduct its work as efficiently and effectively as possible. Operational independence and jurisdiction over its budget and personnel decisions are essential for OIOS to perform its oversight functions free from influence by the organizations and officials it oversees. OIOS funding comes from three sources—regular budget, peacekeeping, and extra-budgetary sources. The United States remains concerned that this funding structure limits OIOS' flexibility to utilize resources where needed, restricting its ability to achieve its organizational goals.

The United States will continue to strongly support efforts to revitalize OIOS and further strengthen its core functions of audit, investigation, and evaluation. We worked tirelessly in the General Assembly to establish an Assistant Secretary General position to serve as OIOS deputy to elevate OIOS' role within the U.N. system. The Fifth Committee of the 69th session of the U.N. General Assembly is currently reviewing OIOS' annual report and the resolutions which govern OIOS. The United States is engaged with like-minded member states to use this mandate review as an opportunity to increase OIOS' operational and budgetary independence. The OIOS is also conducting a review of its funding arrangements, including its impact on operational independence. We will work with OIOS and member states to propose improvements to its funding structure and improve its operational independence, and I look forward to consulting with Congress on the results of these discussions, if confirmed.

Question. The implementation of humanitarian reforms within the United Nations since 2005 has focused on strengthening the capacity of response through relief sections; increasing coordination and leadership through the creation of the Humanitarian Coordinator at the country level, and the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to provide a faster U.N. response to humanitarian emergencies.

- Please comment on the implementation of these reforms. What are the strengths and weaknesses in the international humanitarian response system? What further reforms, if any, are necessary? Please discuss with regard to UNMISS and UNMEER.

Answer. There has been significant progress on U.N.-led humanitarian reforms since 2005. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s Transformative Agenda (ITA) is the most recent iteration of these efforts and has focused on strengthening leadership, improving coordination, and enhancing accountability. Today, highly qualified and experienced humanitarians are regularly appointed to lead U.N. efforts in countries where there are major humanitarian crises. Field coordination continues to improve. Most humanitarian organizations engage in and strongly support the "cluster system," the coordination mechanism in place to provide leadership, coordinate needs assessments and gap analyses, and ensure comprehensive engagement by all actors operating under specific humanitarian sectors, including water and sanitation, food and nutrition, and health. Efforts to improve accountability to affected populations lag behind other reforms; however, improvements in humanitarian leadership and coordination have brought greater predictability to international humanitarian response and thus more accountability to the populations served.

The strengths of the system include resource mobilization, the ability of humanitarian staffers to work in difficult and often insecure environments, improved com-

munication and coordination between and among humanitarian actors, greater clarity about organizations' roles and responsibilities, stronger and more effective leadership, and improved information management. There are also important efforts underway to refine and improve the quality of the Strategic Response Plans, which provide overall direction to the response and support important prioritization of needs. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) administered by OCHA has been extremely effective in providing rapid funding to U.N. agencies when crises emerge.

More efforts need to be made to include local and national actors in humanitarian response. More senior U.N. and other humanitarian officials need to be nominated for the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator pools. Stronger partnerships between humanitarian and development actors are required, particularly since most humanitarian crises are protracted and last for several years. More countries need to contribute to the humanitarian appeals. All actors need to coordinate more closely with the U.N.-led response to avoid duplication, waste, and confusion. In terms of additional reforms, we will continue to support the full implementation of the ITA by all humanitarian actors.

Currently in South Sudan there is strong coordination between UNMISS and the U.N. Humanitarian Country Team (UNHCT). Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, Toby Lanzer, is working closely with both the peacekeeping operation and humanitarian actors to ensure strong cooperation and appropriate division of labor. South Sudan remains one of the largest humanitarian operations globally, and there are continued efforts to improve UNMISS and UNHCT operations in the Protection of Civilians (POC) sites in particular.

UNMEER, established to respond to the unprecedented Ebola outbreak, is the first-ever U.N. emergency health mission. UNMEER harnesses the capabilities of a number of U.N. bodies, especially WHO, WFP, UNICEF, and UNDP, through a unified operational structure. Its objective is to ensure a rapid and coherent response to the crisis. Efforts continue to refine UNMEER to improve field coordination and information management and ensure it is able to stop transmission of the virus. Many U.N. organizations have seconded staff to UNMEER and are working closely with UNMEER leadership to provide all necessary support to improve the effectiveness of the U.N. response.

RESPONSES OF RICHARD RAHUL VERMA TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. Over the past decade, the United States and India have pursued several bilateral strategic and economic initiatives yet there has been little demonstrable progress in these potential areas of cooperation. This has led some analysts to suggest that Washington and New Delhi have established unrealistic expectations for the bilateral relationship.

♦ Is it time to recalibrate expectations for the United States-India relationship?

Answer. We have, and should maintain, high expectations for the vibrant and growing partnership between the United States and India. Successive administrations have made the strategic decision that a rising India and a strong bilateral relationship are in the U.S. national interest. President Obama has called our ties with India a defining partnership for the 21st century. Our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific is premised on the consequential role the region's 4.3 billion people will play in global politics, security, and economics this century. A strong India will play a critical role in the coming decades in affirmatively shaping this Asian landscape. Our partnership with India will play an increasingly important role in providing security, prosperity, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. All partnerships face challenges, but given our shared interests, the U.S. Government is confident that our investments in the relationship will yield dividends.

Question. Prime Minister Modi has articulated an ambitious agenda, including a desire to strengthen relations with the United States. If confirmed, how do you intend to work with the Modi government to translate this enthusiasm into tangible areas of progress in the bilateral relationship? What areas do you believe are most ripe for advancing our shared interests?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to India, I will execute the President's vision for the United States-India strategic partnership as outlined in the Joint Statement issued by President Obama and Prime Minister Modi during the Prime Minister's successful visit to Washington this past fall.

Given our increasingly convergent national security interests in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world, I will work with India to promote regional and global security. Additionally, solidifying and renewing our 10-year Defense Framework Agreement will be one of my highest priorities. Another of my top defense priorities will be to conclude codevelopment and coproduction projects under the auspices of the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) between our two governments. On the energy and environment front, I will work to promote both American exports and India's energy security and by helping India to diversify its hydrocarbon-dependent energy needs and by promoting renewable energy sources through our Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE) and Promoting Energy Access through Clean Energy (PEACE) initiatives. I will also assist U.S. companies to participate in India's growing nuclear power sector by fully realizing our civil nuclear deal. I will dedicate a significant portion of my time to expanding two-way trade between our two nations, an effort that will increase employment for U.S. workers. To ensure our companies compete on the most level playing field possible, I will take every opportunity to convince Indian Government and business leaders that adoption of an intellectual property-rights regime based on international norms is the only way for India to attract the level of foreign investment the country needs to achieve its ambitious economic development agenda.

RESPONSES OF ISOBEL COLEMAN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. The U.N. General Assembly's Fifth Committee deals with administrative and budgetary aspects of U.N. Peacekeeping. Allegations of serious misconduct including sexual, exploitation, and abuse (SEA) continue to compromise the success of peacekeeping missions.

- If confirmed, within your responsibilities over management and reforms, what initial actions do you intend to take to implement meaningful reforms to reduce these occurrences?
- More broadly, what are the long-term challenges facing U.S. and U.N. policymakers as they attempt to reduce instances of SEA in peacekeeping operations?
- Describe and detail your plan for addressing in a substantial and meaningful way this chronic problem of peacekeeper abuses?

Answer. The United States has been a leading proponent for measures to prevent misconduct by U.N. peacekeepers, in particular sexual misconduct, for almost a decade, and is a strong supporter of the U.N.'s efforts to fully implement its policy of zero tolerance of sexual misconduct.

The U.N. has made significant progress in strengthening measures against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) over the past few years, largely due to efforts by the administration, which shares your deep concern about this issue. Strengthened measures include enhancing its misconduct tracking system, institution of a screening policy for all categories of personnel, and provisions withholding reimbursement to troop and police contributing countries on account of contingent personnel repatriated for misconduct, including SEA. If confirmed, I intend to push for a review of the recommendations of the 2005 report of the panel headed by Prince Zeid of Jordan, which was the basis for the measures currently in place, and I look forward to staying in close touch with you and your staff about this critically important issue.

Indeed, the U.N. has robust policies and procedures in place for prevention and training, handling allegations received, and investigations (for civilian and police personnel). Further progress, however, depends not on the U.N. alone, but also on the willingness of troop and police contributing countries to fulfill their obligations with regard to misconduct. More progress is needed to ensure that contingent commanders maintain discipline within the units under their command, that troop-contributing countries expeditiously investigate allegations of misconduct by their soldiers and inform the U.N. of the results of those investigations, and that both troop and police contributing countries take the appropriate disciplinary action (including, if relevant, prosecution) against soldiers and/or police found to have engaged in misconduct, including SEA.

To address this problem, I will push the U.N. to increase their followup to allegations of SEA and other peacekeeper misconduct, particularly with victims and the local community, on actions taken against perpetrators. The U.N. does not have the authority to prosecute, so any prosecution when appropriate would be conducted by a national government (either the host government or relevant troop contributing country). However, the U.N. cannot compel member states to report on actions taken. Additionally, I will also increase efforts with like-minded countries to press

troop and police contributing countries to take action when personnel are repatriated.

Additionally, I will continue to encourage the U.N. to properly fund and staff the U.N.'s Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) in the Department of Field Support and the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The CDU is responsible for overseeing policy and regulations on misconduct. They have a small but very dedicated staff. In the case of serious allegations against civilians and police officers, OIOS sends professional investigators, with experience in collecting and evaluating evidence. Preserving evidence, whether interviews or physical evidence, may also pose challenges in post-crisis environments (often poor countries) where contemporary missions are deployed: the situation is chaotic, and the physical facilities and technical expertise may not be available.

Another area on which I intend to engage the U.N. is increasing the number of female peacekeepers in the field. In addition to providing role models for the local population, the presence of female peacekeepers reportedly decreases the incidents of SEA by other peacekeepers.

Question. This year, the U.N.'s Office of Internal Oversight Services found that peacekeeping missions have fallen short in upholding their protection of civilian mandates. Do you agree with the findings of the report? What reforms do you think are needed to ensure that peacekeepers are fully implementing their mandates in this respect?

Answer. I am aware of this report and share your concern, as well as the administration's support of the report's release. It provided empirical evidence proving something that we all suspected: that there is a disconnect between the intention of the U.N. Security Council in mandating peacekeeping operations to protect civilians, and the actions—or lack thereof—of peacekeeping troops on the ground, especially when the use of force is necessary in order to effectively protect civilians. Peacekeepers are authorized to use force to protect themselves—and to protect their mandate. In missions with protection of civilian mandates, peacekeepers are authorized and expected to use force to protect civilians from violence when necessary. The behavior detailed in the report is unacceptable and the U.S. Government is taking concrete steps to remedy this situation.

The administration has underscored its concern about the findings of this report to the most senior officials at the United Nations. The U.S. Government is pressing the United Nations to develop a comprehensive set of reforms—encompassing doctrine, communications, training, monitoring, accountability, coordination and political engagement—to more effectively ensure the protection of civilians in peacekeeping.

The administration recognizes that a key part of the problem is that troops in U.N. peacekeeping operations receive political guidance from their capitals not to take active measures to protect civilians, out of fear that these actions would compromise the peacekeepers impartiality and would place the troops at greater risk. The U.S. Government is therefore also making concerted diplomatic efforts to address this challenge. It is engaging troop contributors at a political level to press them to change their approach. The U.S. Government is also working with like-minded countries. For example, Rwanda plans to host a high-level conference in March on improving the protection of civilians in U.N. peacekeeping Operations.

Question. The U.S. Ambassador for U.N. Management and Reform is tasked with promoting a culture of accountability, integrity and transparency. Protecting legitimate whistleblowers is critical to success in this effort. How effective do you think the U.N.'s whistleblower policy has been in serving the organization? What are the policy's strengths, and which specific weaknesses do you believe need to be addressed?

Answer. The administration remains deeply committed to advancing accountability, integrity, and transparency reforms throughout the U.N. system. Since the U.N. Ethics Office became operational in January 2006, it has significantly improved whistleblower protections for all U.N. Secretariat officials. In December 2007, the Secretary General established an ethics framework for the U.N. Secretariat and the U.N. funds and programs (ST/SGB/2007/11), requiring all U.N. funds and programs to establish independent ethics offices. The U.N. policy is designed to protect U.N. personnel against retaliation and reverse administrative actions deemed to be retaliatory. The ethics framework also established the U.N. Ethics Panel, to unify ethical standards and provide a mechanism for staff to appeal ethics rulings and decisions by their organization.

Through an ongoing dialogue with the U.N. Ethics Director and other senior U.N. officials, I will continue to promote improvements to the culture of accountability

and protections for whistleblowers at the United Nations. At the urging of the United States and other major donors, U.N. member states requested the Secretary General to expedite the development of strengthened protections against whistleblower retaliation. To facilitate that process, the U.N. Ethics Office is currently reviewing the effectiveness of the current policy. The U.N. Ethics Office is expected to report its findings in 2015. To strengthen the culture of accountability, I will continue to advocate for the Ethics Director to have greater authority in order to make binding recommendations. Finally, in addition to providing remedies for victims of retaliation, I believe greater action should be taken to hold perpetrators of misconduct accountable.

Question. The U.N.'s internal justice system was reformed in 2009, and many observers agree that the reforms improved the effectiveness of the system. At the same time, however, some staff members and their attorneys have argued that the reforms did not go far enough.

- ♦ What is your opinion of the reforms made, and are you satisfied with them?
- ♦ Are there aspects of the justice system that concern you still? How might these concerns be addressed?

Answer. The United States was one of the primary architects of the reform of the previous U.N. administration of justice system in 2009. Over the past 5 years, the new United Nations Dispute Tribunal and Appeals Tribunal, along with a number of other innovative reforms, have made a positive impact on the transparency, fairness, efficiency, and accountability of the United Nations personnel system.

The administration is particularly pleased that the caseload of the Tribunals appears to be stabilizing. We applaud efforts to ensure easy access to the jurisprudence of the Tribunals allowing U.N. staff and management, as well as anyone acting as legal representatives, to inform themselves about the latest developments of the jurisprudence, to establish precedent that can guide the assessment of other cases, and to better understand relevant rules and regulations as applied by the Tribunals.

Now that the system is established, it is important to turn a critical eye toward evaluating its effectiveness. There are a number of issues that need to be monitored and addressed. These include ensuring that the Dispute Tribunal and Appeals Tribunal do not exercise powers beyond those conferred under their respective statutes and ensuring that recourse to general principles of law and the Charter, by the Tribunals, takes place within the context of, and consistent with, statutes and relevant General Assembly resolutions, regulations, rules, and administrative issuances. Of course we respect the independence of the Tribunals, but we also believe that these issues must be addressed to prevent judicial overreach.

This administration strongly supported the General Assembly's request last year for the Secretary General to present a proposal for conducting an interim independent assessment of the formal administration of justice, and the United States is currently exploring how the Secretary General can form an independent panel to conduct the assessment in a cost-efficient manner.

Question. Some observers and experts, including U.S. policymakers, have argued that the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) should not rely on funding from the U.N. programs and bodies that it audits in order to avoid a real or perceived conflict of interest.

- ♦ Do you agree with this assessment? Please explain. What steps, if any, is the United States taking to achieve operational independence for OIOS?

Answer. As the U.N.'s internal watchdog, we believe that OIOS should have all the tools it needs to conduct its work as efficiently and effectively as possible. Operational independence and jurisdiction over its budget and personnel decisions are essential for OIOS to perform its oversight functions free from influence by the organizations and officials it oversees. OIOS funding comes from three sources—regular budget, peacekeeping, and extra-budgetary sources. The United States remains concerned that this funding structure limits OIOS' flexibility to utilize resources where needed, restricting its ability to achieve its organizational goals.

The United States will continue to strongly support efforts to revitalize OIOS and further strengthen its core functions of audit, investigation, and evaluation. We worked tirelessly in the General Assembly to establish an Assistant Secretary General position to serve as OIOS deputy to elevate OIOS' role within the U.N. system. The Fifth Committee of the 69th session of the U.N. General Assembly is currently reviewing OIOS' annual report and the resolutions which govern OIOS. The United States is engaged with like-minded member states to use this mandate review as an opportunity to increase OIOS' operational and budgetary independence. The OIOS is also conducting a review of its funding arrangements, including its impact

on operational independence. We will work with OIOS and member states to propose improvements to its funding structure and improve its operational independence, and I look forward to consulting with Congress on the results of these discussions, if confirmed.

RESPONSE OF RICHARD RAHUL VERMA TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. As you know, the United States has made gender equality and efforts to combat gender-based violence a priority within its foreign policy. In India, rape and sexual violence against women have been long-standing challenges that have received increased attention in recent months due to high profile attacks on women and girls.

- How can the United States utilize the tools and actions outlined in the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally to better respond to gender-based violence in India?
- If confirmed, how will you work to demonstrate the United States continued commitment to the basic human rights of Indian women and girls?

Answer. Given the global nature of the issue, gender equality has been, and remains, a top strategic priority for the Obama administration. The administration has been encouraged by steps taken by the new government to address gender-based violence and aim to strengthen our cooperation on women's issues. The United States, consistent with the tools outlined in the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, is seeking to renew its Women's Empowerment Dialogue with the new Indian Government, focusing on four key priority areas: national development planning and women's issues; expanding a national framework to address gender-based violence; promoting secondary education in India; and United States-India economic cooperation and women's economic advancement. Our bilateral Global Issues Forum also provides a platform to address human rights and gender-based violence. The Secretary noted during the last U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue that gender equality is a priority for the administration. As Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall underscored during her recent visit to India, advancing these priorities will help prevent gender inequality and find constructive ways to address the problem of gender-based violence, while improving protections and rights for women and girls and accountability for the perpetrators of such violence.

The USG has worked with successive Indian governments to address human rights issues, sharing our Nation's experience in forming a more perfect union. If confirmed, I will continue this respectful dialogue with the new Indian Government and continue to engage with advocates for women's rights and other civil society organizations.

RESPONSES OF PETER MICHAEL MCKINLEY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. The nation of Afghanistan has made important progress on women's rights in the last decade. Millions of girls are attending school, women have run for, and been elected to, public office, and many more have joined the civil service and the Afghan National Army and Police.

It is important now more than ever that the United States work with the new administration of President Ghani to ensure that the rights of women and girls are protected and that these important gains are not rolled back.

- If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that the United States continues to be a strong advocate for the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan?

Answer. As Secretary Kerry has said, creating opportunities for women and girls is not just the right thing to do, it is a strategic necessity. Societies where women are safe and empowered to exercise their rights and move their communities forward are more prosperous and more stable. Nowhere is the pursuit of that vision more compelling or critical than in Afghanistan. So let there be no doubt that even as the U.S. role in Afghanistan changes during the next few years, we will continue to stand with and work closely with Afghan women and girls. We will be vigilant and disciplined in our support and in our refusal to accept the erosion of women's rights and freedoms.

If I am confirmed, gender will continue to be a policy and programming priority for U.S. Embassy Kabul. The United States must support and hold the Afghan Government accountable for the implementation of its strategy to advance women's

rights. This strategy focuses on: ending discrimination and violence against women and ensuring the equal treatment of women under the law, improving educational and economic opportunities for women and girls, and implementing gender-neutral policies and women-friendly employment practices throughout the government.

We must also continue to press for the full implementation of the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, increased numbers of women in the Afghan National Security Forces, and the implementation of Afghanistan's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.

That is why the United States is investing more in gender programming in Afghanistan than it ever has anywhere in the world. USAID's Promote project, which will be worth at least $216 million over the next 5 years, is an investment in a new generation of Afghan women leaders. Promote is only one of dozens of U.S. Government projects that will invest in Afghan women's development in the Transformation Decade (2015–24). These projects address, among other concerns, women's educational opportunities, economic empowerment, access to justice, health and nutrition, and gender-based violence prevention and victims' assistance.

Question. I was deeply disturbed by a recent report from Oxfam International, which found that Afghan women have been systematically excluded from the Afghan Government's efforts to start peace talks with the Taliban.

As you may know, the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security seeks to ensure that the United States promotes women's meaningful inclusion and participation in mediation and negotiation processes undertaken in order to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.

- ♦ If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that Afghan women are fully and meaningfully represented in any future peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban?

Answer. It is essential that women play a meaningful role in any future peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. This is critical not only because of our commitment to Women, Peace, and Security, but because any attempt at peace made by excluding more than half the population is no peace at all.

Ensuring women have a voice at all levels—national, provincial and local—at the decisionmaking tables and in rebuilding their nation alongside men will help to consolidate security gains. That is why the international community has made clear that the necessary outcomes of any process are that the Taliban and other armed opposition groups end violence, break ties with al-Qaeda, and accept Afghanistan's constitution, including its protections for women and minorities. As Secretary Kerry has said, "there can't be an effective peace, and there won't be, in Afghanistan if we can't hold onto the gains and continue them, continue the progress that is being made with respect to women's participation in Afghan society."

If confirmed, I will do my best to ensure women play a significant role in determining Afghanistan's future. I plan to advocate for meaningful representation of women in any peace negotiations and the timely implementation of Afghanistan's new National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.

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