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S. HRG. 115–413

NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE 115TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

JANUARY 3, 2017 TO JANUARY 3, 2018

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations

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NOMINATION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m. in Room 419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Flake, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Isakson, Portman, Paul, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

Also Present: Senator Graham.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We welcome Mr. David Friedman, who has been nominated to be Ambassador to Israel. We also welcome two very distinguished guests, two Members—a Member and a former Member—that have tremendous respect by all of us up here. We thank you for coming. Ben and I are going to defer our opening comments so you do not have to sit through that, and we will let you go ahead and introduce.

I talked to some of the folks here that from time to time have a tendency to want to interrupt the meeting a little bit. In the past I have asked some people to be removed, and as it turned out, they were arrested. I was able to get them un-arrested—— [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. But I do not have that ability anymore. The protocol is that if you are asked to be removed from a meeting, you are arrested, and I do not have the ability anymore to keep that from happening. So, if you would, please do not put yourself in a position to need to be removed.

We thank everybody for being here. It is part of our democratic process that people participate. We are glad to have everyone here.

And with that, let me turn to a friend of all of us, the great Senator from the State of South Carolina, Senator Lindsey Graham.

STATEMENT OF HON. LINDSEY GRAHAM, U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH CAROLINA

Senator GRAHAM. Well, thank you.

To the protesters, I am a lawyer. I come cheap if you do get arrested. [Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. But you will probably get what you pay for. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, nobody believes he comes cheap. [Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. Speaking of lawyers, Mr. Friedman is described as a deal-making bankruptcy lawyer and also a very good trial lawyer. I cannot think of a better choice to cover the Mid-East than a bankruptcy lawyer except maybe a divorce lawyer. [Laughter.]

So I have not known Mr. Friedman that long personally, but I have known him by reputation as being a very passionate supporter of the State of Israel. Everybody up here I think deserves to be described as pro-Israel. Having said that, that does not mean we cannot disagree as to what that means. I think most of us agree that when the U.N. has 20 resolutions against Israel for their settlement policy and six against the world at large, they have sort of lost their way.

But I think it is okay to tell Israel be careful about settlements. The President said that. And I think a lot of us would agree that Israel is the only democracy in a very troubled region, and they are not beyond criticism. You can be pro-Israel and criticize the Government or the policies of any particular government. I understand that, and that is what makes us a unique friend to Israel. Sometimes you have to tell your friends things they need to hear.

So settlement policy is a contentious issue. We have different views about it, but I think the President struck a good tone yesterday.

The pro-Israel community, the American Jewish community is divided like every other group in America. We have AIPAC, we have J Street, and we have the RJC. All of them believe they are pro-Israel and the other group is a little crazy. [Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. That is why we have so many different views.

Mr. Friedman is very passionate. He has said some things that I do not agree with, but I never doubt that he did it based on what he thought was the right thing to say at the time. And what is encouraging to me that Mr. Friedman has said, "Maybe I need to watch my rhetoric." That is why I believe he is the right guy at the right time. He will be Trump's voice. Trump won the election. Secretary Clinton would not have picked Mr. Friedman. Donald Trump picked him because I believe President Trump understands that Mr. Friedman would be a voice consistent with Trump's view of the U.S.-Israel relationship, that he is qualified, that he has the experience and the passion and the skill set to be America's voice, not just Trump's voice.

To my Democratic colleagues, I know what it is like to be disappointed in an election outcome. I have not voted for a President who has won in 12 years. But I find myself supporting people for jobs that I would not have picked. The one thing I would say about David Friedman, that he loves the United States and Israel with

all of his heart and all of his soul, that he has been effective as a lawyer, that his reputation as a lawyer is beyond reproach.

And what does a good lawyer do? A good lawyer tries to take people with differing views to get to a win-win situation, to represent your client with passion but also to understand that the other side has an interest, too. When you look at his career as a lawyer, those on the other side of Mr. Friedman would say that he is an honest, ethical, capable advocate that you can do business with. I believe he will bring that skill set to the job of U.S. Ambassador to Israel, the only democracy in a region that is falling apart. If Israel ever needed a strong voice in her court, it is now. If Israel ever needed a unified Congress, it is now. Israel can be criticized, but Israel needs to be supported, and Mr. Friedman will get that support. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. And now, Senator, that again is loved on both sides of the aisle and missed, was a strong and great voice for our country's national security and foreign policy issues. We welcome Joe Lieberman. And thank you for being here today.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN, FORMER U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks so very much, Mr. Chairman, for your generous words. I do not know about Lindsey, but I was actually looking forward to the opening statement you and Senator Cardin were going to make but—— [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. You still act like a politician. [Laughter.]

Senator LIEBERMAN [continuing]. You know, as my wife says, I have an incurable disease so—— [Laughter.]

Senator LIEBERMAN [continuing]. Anyway, like all of our spouses.

Chairman Corker and Senator Cardin, members of the committee, former colleagues, friends, I am really delighted to be here this morning to introduce my friend David Friedman, who of course is before the committee as the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador to Israel.

After I left the Senate in 2013, I became senior counsel at the law firm of Kasowitz Benson Torres & Friedman, as in David Friedman. Probably neither David or I thought that we would both be here this morning at that time when I joined the firm, but I have in those four years come to know David first as a legal colleague and I will say, too, that I have learned a lot from him. He has extraordinary professional skills that will serve him well as Ambassador. And I am thinking of really great intelligence, a warm personality that engages and engenders trust, and an impressive ability to advocate a cause but also to know when to compromise and negotiate so that all parties can walk away from a dispute feeling that they have accomplished something.

Now that I say that, I may want to suggest that Congress retain David for mediating purposes. Okay. I could not resist that.

Beyond our association in the law firm, David Friedman and I have become really good personal friends. And if—and what might be called a point of personal privilege, I want to explain how that happened. For three years our youngest daughter Hani, who some of you may remember, lived with her husband and growing family

in Woodmere, New York. At the time they resided in a two-bedroom apartment with one bedroom, Hani, Daniel, and their two boys who then became three boys, thank God.

When Hadassah my wife and I visited, the only place we could sleep was on a sofa bed in the living room. I would say diplomatically it was not comfortable. And now, I confess my own shortcomings. It was I, not my sainted wife, who said we have got to find another place nearby to stay when we are visiting our children and grandchildren.

It happens that David and Tammy Friedman live a 10-minute walk from where our children lived, and they have a great guest suite. That, as they say in the movie, was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

During those three years—incidentally, my children are now in Pikesville, the birthplace and growing place in Baltimore of Senator Cardin. So——

Senator CARDIN. They chose well.

Senator LIEBERMAN [continuing]. They chose well, and they have a much bigger house and we have our own room now. [Laughter.]

Senator LIEBERMAN. I thought you were going to say something, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. No. No.

Senator LIEBERMAN. During these three years, we shared a lot of time and a lot of Sabbaths together with David and Tammy Friedman, and we got to know them very well. They are genuinely devoted to each other and their family. They have the best of values and live by them. Tammy is a bright, compassionate, very likeable person who will be, I believe, as great a partner in diplomacy if David is confirmed as Ambassador as she has been a partner to him in life.

During those weekends with the Friedmans, David and I had a lot of time to talk about things. And I reached some conclusions about him that I think are relevant to his nomination to be Ambassador that I want to share in just a few sentences.

First, he is a patriotic, proud, and grateful America, grateful for the opportunities America has given his family and him. Second, he knows a lot about Israel and cares deeply about its relationship with the United States. I am confident that he will bring his considerable personal skills to bear to strengthen this very important bilateral relationship.

As I suggested earlier, I do not think David ever dreamed that he would be nominated to be America's Ambassador to Israel, but then again, he probably never dreamed that one of his clients, who became his friend, would end up as President of the United States either. The fact that he has such a close personal relationship with the President, a trusting relationship, I think will help him be an extraordinary Ambassador and enable him to strengthen the already-strong bridges between the United States and Israel at a difficult time for Israel but also for the United States.

Until a few months ago, David Friedman's life has basically been private. No more. I must say that the David Friedman I have seen described sometimes in the media in the last several weeks is not the thoughtful, capable, personable, and even funny David Friedman I know. Has David ever said or written anything that he wish-

es now he had phrased differently or even not said at all? I believe he has. He does. Who has not? I certainly have said something things I wish I could rephrase or not say at all.

So I ask you to listen to what he has to say today with an open mind. If he has said something in the past that bothers you, ask him about it, but please put it in the larger context of his life, his character, his capability, and his deep desire to serve our country.

From many long conversations we have had over the years, I can tell you that David Friedman does not only pray for peace between Israel and its neighbors every day, he yearns for it. And if you confirm him, he will, as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, do everything anyone could do to achieve peace between Israel and its neighbors.

In short, I believe David Friedman deserves the support of this committee and the full Senate.

And if I may, Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, I do want to say that I hope that support will be bipartisan because it would be a shame to have this committee and the Senate divide along party lines on a matter so central to America's relationship with Israel, which has historically and importantly been a safe zone of nonpartisanship even when just about everything else was divided along party lines.

I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity, and I am very proud to introduce David Friedman to you and the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much. We appreciate both of you being here and your comments. You are welcome to leave. We do not consider that impolite. I will say if you stay, it is likely you will be interrogated, so I would leave.

With that, let me make a brief opening comment. I know that Senator Cardin does. I know we have a vote at 10:30 that will drag on for a while. Hopefully, we can get through Mr. Friedman's opening comments, take a break for a moment, and then come back and return for questioning.

I want to welcome Mr. David Friedman to the committee today to discuss his nomination to be our Ambassador to Israel. Over the last 70 years, the United States and Israel have enjoyed a close and meaningful relationship. This alliance has been a pillar of America and Israeli foreign policy and greatly beneficial to both nations.

Israel serves as the greatest model for democracy in the Middle East and is our most important ally in the region. American support for Israel is a widespread bipartisan effort, and it should remain so. Congress has repeatedly pushed for increased military aid and security cooperation between our two countries, and I believe that we have taken necessary steps to ensure that Israel will have every tool and resource needed to defend itself in an increasingly destabilized region.

Yet even as we in Congress have done the things needed to strengthen our bond with Israel, we have to acknowledge that the relationship between our two great nations has been strained in recent years. It is clear that action taken by the U.N. Security Council in December was counterproductive to reaching a long-term peace between Israel and the Palestinian people. A durable peace agreement will only come from direct negotiations. Any third-party efforts to supersede those negotiations only serve as impediments

to peace. In a neighborhood torn apart by terrorism and civil war, the disproportionate focus on Israel by the U.N. runs counter to the organization's stated goals.

So with these challenges in mind and the onset of a new administration, now more than ever we must recommit ourselves to the vital, long-term support of Israel.

Mr. Friedman, we are here to consider your nomination to be the U.S. Ambassador to Israel and to be the President's chief representative to that country. I look forward to hearing more today about how you will promote increased cooperation between our two nations, your views on the two-state solution and other avenues towards peace and how you will be an effective instrument for achieving the policy goals of the United States.

We thank you for being here, and I will turn to my friend and ranking member, Senator Cardin.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Chairman Corker. And, Mr. Friedman, welcome. We welcome your family. It is good to have everyone here. We thank you for your willingness to serve the public in this critically important position as the United States Ambassador to Israel.

The U.S.-Israel relationship is a strategic anchor for the United States in the Middle East. Indeed, it is one of the most important relationships of any country. It is a deep and genuine friendship that extends across our governments and enriches by intense, deep, people-to-people ties. Your nomination comes at a critical point for Israel and for the U.S.-Israel relationship.

As I know my colleagues on the committee appreciate, Israel finds itself in a sea of instability, confronted with threats on every border. To the south, ISIS in the Sinai continues to be a serious security threat despite much-improved cooperation with Egypt. As recently as last week, ISIS militants launched a barrage of rockets into Eilat. To the west, Hamas maintains a stronghold in Gaza and is diverting materials intended for civilians to rebuild its rocket arsenal and construct terror tunnels into Israel. To the north, Hezbollah is gaining battlefield experience in Syria that will inevitably be focused on Israel when the terror group's fighters return to Lebanon.

To the east, the war in Syria is a magnet for violent extremists, and Iran, with Russia's acquiescence, maintains a strategic corridor with a willing Assad in Damascus to its proxy force Hezbollah in Lebanon. And across the region, Iranian regimes continue to spew anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric, sponsoring terror groups that pose a direct threat to Israel's security.

In contrast to its neighbors and at a time when forces of authoritarianism, xenophobia, and illiberalism are on the rise in all too many places, Israel is and remains a vibrant democracy. It is home to a lively civil society and energetic, opinionated political discourse. Its vibrant and diverse economy offers tremendous opportunities for its high-tech sector and a startup culture to its achievements in agriculture and alternative energy. Our defense sector has collaborated to produce Iron Dome, a lifesaving missile

defense system. Israel's innovative green and renewable energy sector, one of the leaders in the world, puts Israel in a position to be an energy provider to the region.

The U.S. Ambassador to Israel plays a key role in engaging all communities within Israel, all sectors of its economy, and representing our government and the American people to Israel's Government, Parliament, and people. The U.S. Ambassador also plays a vital role in opening up U.S. Embassy doors to all groups, regardless of their politics or views. The Ambassador will help chart the U.S. response to countering Israel's isolation international organizations, as Senator Graham pointed out, and effectively counter the BDS movement, which threatens the legitimacy of Israel and fosters anti-Semitism.

Given the breadth, depth, and complexity of the issues included in the portfolio of the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Friedman, I have questions about your preparedness for this important post. I am uncertain of how you will represent all Americans to all Israelis and whether you are committed to a longstanding U.S. policy for a two-state solution.

Of the last 10 Ambassadors to Israel across Republican and Democratic administrations, all 10 had prior U.S. Government experience, nine had prior professional experience in the Middle East, and eight had already served at least once as a U.S. Ambassador to other countries. I do not question that your background as a bankruptcy lawyer has enabled you to develop skills navigating complex multilateral negotiations, but serving as the top diplomat to one of the most important allies in the region that is beset by violent conflict, armed militant and terrorist groups, an unstable autocrat which requires a distinct set of skills and a distinct temperament.

Frankly, the language you have regularly used against those who disagree with your views has me concerned about your preparedness to enter the world of diplomacy. So I will follow Senator Lieberman's advice and ask directly that you respond to these types of concerns.

For the record, it is important to note the examples: reviving Holocaust terms to equate J Street supporters with Nazi collaborators or questioning their commitment and love for Israel; calling the Antidefamation league "morons"; stating that liberal Jews suffer from "constant disconnect in identifying good and evil." And, Mr. Friedman, I could mention your specific comments about President Obama or your specific comments about Members of the United States Senate, including the Democratic leader. And I would ask that you respond to that. These are written comments, cases where you had the opportunity to consider what you were saying, to make judicious edits if you so desired. You chose otherwise.

I hope you will also offer a clear and unequivocal rejection of these inflammatory accusations as part of your testimony here today and also reassure us that you are capable of acting with the discipline, tact, wisdom, and diplomacy that serving as a U.S. Ambassador requires.

I am also concerned that your views on the two-state solution constitutes an unprecedented break with longstanding U.S. policy.

Republican and Democratic administrations alike have promoted two states living side by side in peace and security: a democratic Israel Jewish state and a demilitarized Palestinian state.

Written excerpts from your writings on this topic include your August 2, 2016, piece in the Israeli publication entitled "End the Two-State Narrative," where you go on to call it a "damaging anachronism" and "illusory solution in search of a nonexistent problem." In that same piece you state that the Palestinians recognize "the advantages of integration into Israeli society."

I do not see how Israel can remain democratic and Jewish in a one-state solution. Demographics are unambiguous in this regard. I still have not heard one realistic solution to what happens to Hamas in Gaza in a one-state solution. I hope you will be crystal clear on what your views are in regards to a realistic, sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Finally, your record of financial and rhetoric support for the settlements far outside the blocs—presumed to join Israel with mutually agreed land swaps as part of a two-state solution—are troubling. The web page for the gala dinner last year in New York in support of the Beit El settlement explicitly states that it is "creating facts on the ground" and notes a new initiative to "train students with the tools to successfully delegitimizing the notion of a two-state solution."

In an August 2015 piece you wrote, "Some 10 years ago, the State of Israel went through an extraordinary internal angst in compelling the evacuation of 8,000 brave Jewish souls in the relatively remote Gaza Strip. Does anyone really think that Israel has the political will to do the same to many hundreds of thousands of residents of Judea and Samaria? These are not people who live on the fringes of Israeli society. They are completely integrated into Israeli's commerce and culture and serve in the most elite units of the Israeli Army. They will never be forced to leave their beautiful homes."

Even President Trump last week said in an interview to an Israeli newspaper, "Settlements do not help the process. There is so much land left, and every time you take land for settlements, there is less land left."

So again, Mr. Friedman, I hope you will clarify your views on settlements, on the two-state solution, and on the comments that you have made about my colleagues and others during the course of this hearing.

My commitment to Israel is unyielding. I believe that it is a critical relationship for the United States, and I have worked in many decades in public service to assure that there is strong, stable, and mutually beneficial relationship between our countries. Likewise, I am confident of the commitment and support of my colleagues on the committee, even though we may have the—different views and conflicting views as to how best carry out that commitment.

So in that spirit, Mr. Friedman, I look forward to your testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Friedman. We thank you for your willingness to serve. Without objection, your written testimony will be entered into the record. If you would consider summarizing your views in about five minutes or so, we look forward to robust questioning. Again, thank you for being here. And by the

way, you are welcome to introduce your wonderful family who happens to be with you today. I hope you will, as a matter of fact. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF DAVID FRIEDMAN OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO ISRAEL

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I appreciate very much the opportunity to appear before you today. It is a great privilege to address this committee, which has done so much to advance America's interests around the world—[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. Continue.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. It is a great privilege to address this committee, which has done so much to advance America's interests around the world and which, together with the entire United States Congress, has for generations maintained unwavering support on a bipartisan basis for the State of Israel.

I am grateful to the President of the United States for nominating me to the post of Ambassador to Israel, and I am humbled by the trust and the confidence that he has placed in me to strengthen the unbreakable bond between our country and Israel and to advance the cause of peace within the region.

I would like to thank Senator Graham and Senator Lieberman for their kind words of introduction and for their leadership on so many critical matters that affect our nation.

I would like to introduce my family members who are here today and thank them for their support and encouragement. My beautiful bride of 36 years, Tammy, and my children Daniel, Aliza, and her husband Eli, and Talia. Watching at home are Daniel's wife Jana, my son Jacob and his wife Danielle who just had a baby boy, our daughter Katie and our seven beautiful grandchildren. Whatever success I have achieved in life would have been unthinkable without their love and support, especially that of my dear wife. I would also like to wish good luck to my youngest child Katie who is litigating her first mock trial today in her high school trial advocacy program.

I could not continue without reflecting upon my father, Rabbi Morris Friedman, who passed away some 12 years ago. He was my mentor, my hero, and my closest friend. The child of poor immigrants, my father was a great patriot who felt an enormous debt of gratitude to our beloved country for its essential goodness in giving his parents and so many others the enormous opportunities embedded in United States citizenship.

In 1948, my father and my mother sat nervously at their radio listening to the session of the United Nations that was then held in Queens, New York, and they rejoiced as the United States became the first nation to recognize the nascent State of Israel. My father cared deeply for Americans of all religious and political stripes. He marched in the civil rights movement, he convened prayer vigils to mourn the assassination of President Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, and in the '70s he handcuffed himself on

numerous occasions to the Soviet mission to protest the Kremlin's refusal to allow Soviet Jews to emigrate.

In October 1984 my——

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Mr. FRIEDMAN [continuing]. In October 1984 my father had the privilege to host President Ronald Reagan for lunch in our home in Long Island with my mother doing the cooking and to later introduce him as he addressed our synagogue. Those were dark days at the United Nations for the State of Israel. It operated under the cloud of a General Assembly resolution that equated Zionism with racism.

President Reagan, in his remarks to my father's congregation, was unambiguous. He said, and I quote, "If Israel is ever forced to walk out of the United Nations, America and Israel will walk out together." It was an unforgettable moment and a watershed in U.S. relations.

Seven years later, with the overwhelming bipartisan support from this body, America led the effort to repeal the infamous U.N. resolution. I would like to thank Senator Cardin, who was serving in the House at that time, for his leadership in advocating for that effort. And to think that my father played a small role in setting that whole process in motion is of great pride to my family.

My father's values are my values. I could never replicate the contributions he made. I have certainly never been forced or asked to sacrifice in the same manner of that great generation. But I have sought meaning and fulfillment in life through my faith, my incredible family, and through various philanthropic endeavors.

As you know, our nation's support for Israel is longstanding, steadfast, and strongly in our national interests. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed by the Senate, I will dedicate my mission to two things: advancing the national interest of the United States in strengthening its relationship with Israel and working tirelessly to bring peace and stability to the region. I will bring to this mission a deep understanding of Israel's history, culture, geography and commerce, developed over a lifetime of study and more than 50 visits to the State of Israel.

I will bring to this mission a close relationship with the President and a demonstrated ability to carry out his directions and strategies. And finally, I will bring a negotiating skill developed over many years to resolve multilateral disputes, often extraordinarily contentious. I will bring an unshakeable commitment to this country, an ability to positively engage with the Israelis, and a working command of the Hebrew language. I approach this with unbridled optimism and excitement.

Some of the language that I used during the highly charged presidential campaign that ended last November has come in for criticism, and rightfully so. While I maintain profound differences of opinion with some of my critics, I regret the use of such language. I want to assure you that I understand the critical difference between the partisan rhetoric of a political contest and a diplomatic mission. Partisan rhetoric is not appropriate in achieving diplomatic progress, especially in a sensitive and strife-torn region like the Middle East. From my perspective, the inflammatory rhetoric that accompanied the presidential campaign is entirely over and, if

I am confirmed, you should expect my comments to be respectful and measured.

If confirmed, I will also faithfully observe——

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Mr. FRIEDMAN [continuing]. If confirmed by the Senate, I also intend to faithfully observe the directions given me by the President and the Secretary of State, without regard to my personal opinions.

I would like to thank this committee for permitting me to appear today. I look forward to answering all of your questions and, if I am confirmed, I look forward to working with each and every one of you to enhance our relationship with the State of Israel. Thank you.

[The Mr. Friedman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID M. FRIEDMAN

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. It is a great privilege to address this committee, which has done so much to advance America's interests around the world and which, together with the entire United States Congress, has, for generations, maintained unwavering support, on a bipartisan basis, for the State of Israel.

I am grateful to the President of the United States for nominating me to the post of Ambassador to Israel, and I am humbled by the trust and confidence that he has placed in me to strengthen the unbreakable bond between our country and Israel and to advance the cause of peace within the region.

I would like to thank Senator Graham and Senator Lieberman for their kind words of introduction and for their leadership on so many critical matters affecting our nation.

I would also like to introduce my family members who are here today and thank them for their support and encouragement: My beautiful bride of 36 years, Tammy, and my children Daniel, Aliza and her husband Eli, and Talia. Watching at home are Daniel's wife, Jana, my son Jacob and his wife Danielle (who just had a baby boy), our daughter Katie and our 7 beautiful grandchildren. Whatever success I have achieved in life would have been unthinkable without their love and support, especially that of my dear wife. I would also like to wish good luck to our youngest child, Katie, who is litigating her first "mock trial" today in her high school trial advocacy program.

I could not continue without reflecting upon my father, Rabbi Morris Friedman, who passed away some 12 years ago. He was my mentor, my hero and my closest friend. The child of poor immigrants, my father was a great patriot who felt an enormous debt of gratitude to our beloved country for its essential goodness in giving his parents and so many others the enormous opportunities embedded in American citizenship.

In 1948, my father and mother sat nervously by their radio listening to a session of the United Nations, then headquartered in Queens, NY, and rejoiced as the United States became the first nation to recognize the nascent State of Israel. From that day forward my father dedicated much of his professional life to fostering the extraordinary relationship between the United States and Israel. My father cared deeply for Americans of all religious and political stripes—he marched in the civil rights movement, convened prayer vigils to mourn the assassinations of President Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, and, in the 1970's, often handcuffed himself to the Soviet mission to protest the Kremlin's refusal to allow Soviet Jews to emigrate. My father led a congregation of 1,000 families, as well as the New York Board of Rabbis, at that time the largest cross-denominational rabbinic organization of its kind.

In October, 1984, my father had the privilege to host President Ronald Reagan for lunch in our home in Long Island (my mother actually did the cooking) and to later introduce him as he addressed our synagogue. I was fortunate enough to have been able to participate in that incredible event.

Those were dark days for Israel at the United Nations. It was operating under the cloud of a General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism. President Reagan, in his remarks to my father's congregation, was unambiguous. He said, "If

Israel is ever forced to walk out of the United Nations, America and Israel will walk out together." It was an unforgettable moment, and a watershed in U.S.-Israeli relations. Seven years later, with the overwhelming bipartisan support from Members of this body, America led the effort to repeal the infamous UN resolution. I want to thank Senator Cardin, who was serving in the House at the time, for his leadership in advocating for that effort. To think that my father played a role in setting that whole process in motion is of great pride to me and my family

My father's values are my values. I could never replicate the contribution that he made to his community and country—he was certainly of the greatest generation. I have never been called upon to sacrifice in the same manner as so many of that generation, and I have been blessed beyond measure by the vast opportunities that America has bestowed upon me. But I have sought meaning and fulfillment in life through my faith, my incredible family, and through various philanthropic endeavors. Let me describe one of those endeavors now.

I was an early supporter of United Hatzala, an Israeli organization of volunteer first responders that uses advanced technology and "ambucycles" to weave through traffic to provide emergency services and save lives. Here's what makes Hatzala so special: It is comprised of volunteers from the entire spectrum of the Israeli population—Jews, Muslims and Christians, religious and secular, right wing and left wing. They all operate under a single credo: treat patients in the order of the severity of their affliction and never let any other considerations—political, religious or otherwise—influence your commitment to saving lives. Hatzala represents the best of the Israeli people—all the Israeli people—and gives me a strong sense of optimism that peace will one day come to this region of conflict.

As you know, our nation's support for Israel is longstanding, steadfast and strongly in our national interest. Israel provides critical intelligence support to the United States, cooperates extensively with the United States in military initiatives, and acts as an "incubator" for many cutting edge strategic projects. Most importantly, Israel shares America's values and is of enormous religious and cultural importance to tens of millions of Jews, Christians and Muslims. Because Israel is surrounded by hostile enemies and has no friend in the world like us, I share the President's view that, notwithstanding the inevitable disagreements that may arise between our two countries, there should never be any "daylight" between the United States and Israel.

If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed by the Senate, I will dedicate my mission to two things: 1) advancing the national interest of the United States in strengthening its relationship with Israel, and 2) working tirelessly to bring peace and stability to the region. I will bring to this mission a deep understanding of Israel's history, culture, geography, commerce and politics, developed over a lifetime of study and at least 50 visits to this extraordinary country. I will bring to this mission a close relationship with the President and a demonstrated ability to carry out his directives and strategies. Finally, I will bring a negotiating skill-set developed over 35 years of resolving multi-lateral disputes involving complex transactions, an unshakeable commitment to advance our national interests, an ability to positively engage with the people of Israel and a working command of the Hebrew language. I approach the prospect of this engagement with unbridled excitement and optimism.

Some of the language that I used during the highly charged presidential campaign that ended last November has come in for criticism—and rightfully so. While I maintain profound differences of opinion with some of my critics, I regret the use of such language and I want to assure you that I understand the important difference between a political contest and a diplomatic mission. Partisan rhetoric is rarely if ever appropriate in achieving diplomatic progress, especially in a sensitive and strife-torn region like the Middle East. From my perspective, the inflammatory rhetoric that accompanied the presidential campaign is entirely over, and, if I am confirmed, you should expect that my comments will be respectful and measured. If confirmed by the Senate, I also intend to faithfully observe the directions given me by the President and the Secretary of State, without regard to any personal opinion I may hold.

Again, I would like to thank this committee for permitting me to appear today. I look forward to answering your questions and, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I look forward to working with you to enhance our relationship with the State of Israel.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for those comments. For the state of play, the vote has not yet gone off, and we will just continue with questions——

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. So we will begin questioning with Senator Cardin, and if Senator Barrasso comes back, he is next. If not, it will be Senator Risch.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Friedman, you and I have something very much in common. Our parents were proud Zionists, worked everything they could in order to strengthen the support for the State of Israel and the values that it stood for and stands for.

But my parents also taught me that words have consequences. My father, who, a blessed memory, was a circuit court judge, served as president of our synagogue, which he told me was the toughest position he ever held, and taught me how to just respect different views and to do that in an effective way.

So I am having difficulty understanding the language that you have used. You have sort of justified that in your comments here that it was part of a campaign. These were written statements. But in some cases they go back before the campaign. I am specifically referring to your comments about the Democratic leader in the Senate and his motivation in regards to the Iran nuclear agreement and how he came about his decision-making during that very difficult time.

As a person who struggled with that decision, I know the deliberations that Senator Schumer went through. I know the deliberations that I went through and all Members went through. It was a tough decision.

So I am having difficulty understanding your use of that—of those descriptions and whether you can be a diplomat because a diplomat has to choose every word that he or she uses. So why should I believe that these were just emotional expressions and that you now understand the difference between that role and that as a diplomat?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, Senator, I provided some context for my remarks, but that was not in the nature of an excuse. There is no excuse. I will—if you want me to rationalize it or justify it, I cannot. These were hurtful words and I deeply regret them. They are not reflective of my nature or my character. And I will tell you that for many, many years I have been involved in some of the most difficult, contentious, highly personal disputes that one can imagine, albeit in a commercial context, and I have dealt with judges and government officials, and over a lengthy period, no one has ever found me to be unable to control my temperament or my rhetoric.

The Iran deal was something I felt passionately about. I was concerned that the United States was embarking upon a deal that presented an existential risk to Israel and potentially a significant risk to our great country as well. I do not—I did not have access to all the classified information that the members of the Senate have, but from my perspective as a private citizen, I felt it was important to speak out. And I did so, again, in a private manner. Those are my private opinions. They will be left in New York if I am privileged enough to travel to the State of Israel for this mission.

Senator CARDIN. So just to put this in context and then I am going to move on to the second issue I want to talk about, you are accusing the Democratic leader of "validating the worst appease-

ments of terrorism since Munich." Those words just are beyond hurtful. They are—Senator Schumer is one of the champions on these causes. Anyway, let me move on to the two-state solution.

We had a chance to talk in my office. We know the demographics. We also understand the geographical area of a viable Palestinian state. We know—we do not know exactly where those lines will be but we have an idea. We both agree that that must be negotiated directly between the Palestinians and Israelis. No third party can dictate those terms. We are in total agreement that that will be a decision made by the Israelis and the Palestinians.

But we also know the geographical areas that are likely to be part of those discussions, and settlements in areas that are outside of that generally accepted area has been perceived by America as being less than helpful in the debate. You of course have been involved in supporting settlements and in conversations that seem to imply that the two-state solution is no longer a viable option. What do you mean by that?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, if the Israelis and the Palestinians were able, through direct negotiations, to achieve a two-state solution along parameters agreeable to them—and the Prime Minister of Israel yesterday outlined some of them—I would be delighted. I would be delighted to see peace come to this region where people have suffered on both sides for so long.

I have expressed my skepticism about the two-state solution solely on the basis of what I have perceived as an unwillingness on the part of the Palestinians to renounce terror and accept Israel as a Jewish state. I think that, in my view, is a foundational problem, but I think it can be remedied, and I hope it is.

Senator CARDIN. I do not think anyone would disagree with that statement. The prerequisite of a two-state solution is that there is a Jewish state that is recognized by its neighbor and no longer can there be the cry that it is not legitimate. I mean, I think that is—I think we all agree on that. I am not sure that is responsive to the concerns that I have.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, again, I would be delighted if a two-state solution could be achieved. The two-state solution, as you know, began to take form in 1993 with the Oslo Accords. One of the primary commitments of those accords was Chairman Arafat's commitment to end incitement and to begin to educate his people to stop hatred. And we have not made progress since then. And in the aftermath of Oslo, terrorism has increased fourfold since before Oslo.

I do not think you and I disagree. I think that we both support Israel, we both love this country, and we both want peace. And I—frankly, I think that there is more that we have in common than divides us. I do want to see peace in the region, and I do believe that a two-state solution, if it could be achieved, would bring tremendous benefits to both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I think because of the type of hearing I see this developing into, we will have seven minutes on the clock for a round. And I know you just took seven, so I will let you——

Senator CARDIN. I would have taken nine if——

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Bertie, if you would—I understand that so that is why I waited. But put seven minutes on the clock if you will.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you very much.

Mr. Friedman, thank you for your willingness to take on what is obviously going to be a difficult struggle, as it always has been in recent years.

Let me try to drill down a little bit in one of the concerns that I have. All of us sit and think about how if there is indeed a solution, if a solution is even possible, how do you get there? And the problem I see or one of the many, many problems that I see is kind of foundational to the whole thing, and that is who you are negotiating with. I mean, it seems to me that Palestinian Authority and Hamas are deeply divided and deeply polarized. And how do you accomplish that when you are supposed to be dealing with a single entity that can make a deal that everybody is willing to live with? Because the deal is not going to work unless the majority, the vast majority of the people on each side are in agreement and committed to make it work. So how—what are your thoughts on that? I understand it is getting a little bit in the weeds, but to me it is really foundational to how you get to the end.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, I think you have identified the gating problem, and it is an extraordinary challenge. And if—I think if we did not have that problem, this would have been settled already. Hamas is a terrorist organization. They seek the destruction of the State of Israel, the entire State of Israel. Their issues are not settlements; their issues are the existence of Israel. They control the Gaza Strip, and I do not know who would control the West Bank if there were elections tomorrow.

I think that from—I do not have a good answer to making peace with an entity controlled by Hamas. I do believe that the future needs to begin with greater efforts to empower and to some extent to create a Palestinian middle class. Gaza is ungovernable. It has a 30 percent or higher unemployment rate. Until that changes, I do not think we will be able to uproot Hamas from the Gaza Strip. And so I am—my approach has been and if asked by the President, it is—I am not here to make policy, but if asked by the President, I would recommend deepening the efforts, along with our allies in the Gulf and Israel's neighbors to work harder on empowering the economic opportunities for the Palestinian people, who I believe are being held hostage by a ruthless regime.

Senator RISCH. You know, I appreciate that. And that observation seems to be very legitimate in that the Gaza Strip and the West Bank seem like worlds apart as far as economic opportunity and for that matter as far as just culture. And, again, I do not know how you get those—how you bring those together to get where you need to be, but I wish you well in that. And I think we will all be watching to see how that works out. But it is—and those—that may very well be out of everyone's control except the Palestinians themselves.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I think what we will do is instead of having a roving—I know people want to hear the answers to

these questions. We are going to recess. We have a vote, and unfortunately, there is a 10-minute debate period in between and then another vote. If everybody would just come back promptly after the second vote, so you may want to come back into the back, Mr. Friedman, or do whatever, but we are going to recess until that time. Thank you. [Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. First of all, we are back in session. And in order to move on with it, Senator Udall, if you would—since you are ready, we will move on to you and thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much. And I appreciate the hearing.

And, first of all, I would like to just put in the record the letter from the five Ambassadors if it has not already been put in the record, bipartisan group of Ambassadors that say that Mr. Friedman is unfit to be Ambassador. So I would——

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Senator UDALL [continuing]. I would do that.

[The information referred to is located in the Additional Material Submitted for the Record section of this transcript, beginning on page 61.]

Senator UDALL. And I am going to agree with much of what they said. I am strongly opposed to this nominee. I believe Secretary Tillerson and President Trump should recognize that Mr. Friedman is completely unfit for this or any other diplomatic office and withdraw him immediately.

If not, I strongly recommend that this committee not recommend him for confirmation. Mr. Friedman does not represent American values in the region. That is evident from his past statements, and they are not random off-the-cuff remarks. Much of his offensive, inflammatory, and insulting rhetoric has been reported in the newspapers and repeated over and over. He has called for an arbitrary ban on many Muslims entering the country. Mr. Friedman has stated that Muslims should submit internet and telecommunications activity for inspection, and he has said, and I quote, "No need to worry about the First Amendment." And he has also said the "the rights of free speech do not apply" to Muslims attempting to enter our country.

Mr. Chairman and colleagues, just last week, the Republican majority chose to censure a colleague under Senate Rule 19 for imputing bad conduct to a Senator. Well, if we truly care whether Senators are maligned, we should look at Mr. Friedman's words, which I think have been mentioned earlier by Mr. Cardin, and I agree with him in his opening talking about him rejecting these comments.

But he has insulted and denigrated members of the Senate, including Senator Schumer and Senator Franken. Mr. Friedman said, and I quote, "No matter how we ultimately vote—no matter how he ultimately votes, by making his decision such a close call, which it plainly should not be, Schumer is violating the worst—is validating the worst appeasement of terrorism since Munich," end quote.

When the Anti-Defamation League and Senator Franken criticized the Trump campaign ad as being anti-Semitic, he said, and

I quote, "I do not see how anybody can take the Anti-Defamation League seriously going forward. This is what happens when people take these insane arguments to their logical extension. They lose all credibility, and frankly, they sound like morons," end quote.

He has slandered President Obama and his administration. And I quote, "The blatant anti-Semitism emanating from our President and his sycophantic minions is palpable and very disturbing."

He has denigrated Secretary Clinton's personal views on Israel. And I quote, "I do not think she particularly likes Israel."

Responded—responding to President Obama and Secretary Kerry's condemnations of violence in Israel, he said, and I quote, engaging in "blatant anti-Semitism," end quote.

I think we can all detect a pattern here. Anyone who disagrees with his extreme views or approach to Israel is an anti-Semite. For the record, Mr. Friedman has also said that liberal Jews, and I quote, "suffer a cognitive disconnect in identifying good and evil," end quote. By these words, he disrespects many in the Jewish community, including my home State of New Mexico, which I have had many calls from New Mexico urging that we reject this nomination.

Such divisive and hateful comments against any who disagree with him on—are—is unbecoming of an ambassador to any country. It is clear that Mr. Friedman's appointment would represent a profound break with decades of U.S. foreign policy supporting a two-state solution and resisting illegal settlements that make such a solution more remote. President Reagan said that settlement activity was, and I quote, "no way necessary for the security of Israel and only diminishes the confidence of Arabs that a final outcome can be freely and fairly negotiated," end quote. I wonder, were President Reagan here today, would Mr. Friedman label him anti-Semitic?

Mr. Friedman is profoundly unfit to lead members of the State Department. He accuses many of them of being, quote, "over 100 years of anti-Semitism," end quote. I say this as a friend of Israel, who has always supported military aid to defend her borders. If we confirm him, we are running a dangerous risk that Mr. Friedman will inflame a volatile situation and inflame other foreign governments in the region. We need a steady hand in the Middle East, not a bomb-thrower in a position of high power and responsibility.

One final note: Sometimes Mr. Friedman does not stop at merely name-calling those who disagree with him as anti-Semitic. He wrote in an article in 2015, and I quote here, "J Street supporters are far worse than kapos, Jews who turned in their fellow Jews in the Nazi death camps. They are just smug advocates of Israeli—Israel's destruction delivered from the comfort of their secure American sofas. It is hard to imagine anyone worse," end quote. That statement—in a written article, not in off-the-cuff remarks—demonstrates his complete and total unfitness for this extremely important office.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter all the source documents for all of these quotes into the official hearing record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to is located in the Additional Material Submitted for the Record section of this transcript, beginning on page 63.]

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

If the majority wants to jam through all of the President's—President Trump's diplomatic nominees, they probably can. But I urge them to caucus in private and talk to the President's team to see if we can move in a different direction.

Mr. Friedman, have you ever issued a public apology for any of your insulting comments regarding other's views on Israel and Middle Eastern issues? And will you today reject those comments here?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I reject the——

Senator UDALL. Could you turn on your microphone, please, sir?

Mr. FRIEDMAN [continuing]. Yes, Senator. I have and will continue to reject the inflammatory comments. I have reached out over the last several months to a number of people who have been hurt by the things I have said or have communicated to me that they would like to speak with me. It includes the head of the Union of American Reform Rabbis. It includes members of the New York Board of Rabbis. It includes a personal meeting with Senator Franken. It includes a telephone called followed up by emails with Jonathan Greenblatt of the Anti-Defamation League. In at least the latter two cases the apologies were fully accepted, and I expect ongoing—on an ongoing basis those relationships and others will be inclusive and respectful.

Senator UDALL. Now, I also would like to ask—I know my time is out and I will submit questions for the record. But you have invested massively in the settlement movement, and so I would like you for the record to answer in writing whether you have separated your financial interests from that of Beit El and all other settlements you have an interest in and have done so. And I appreciate very much the chairman's courtesies in allowing me to run over a little bit. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Absolutely. I do not know if that is a yes or no answer, so I do not know if you want to.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I will be happy to submit answers to all of your questions, Senator.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

[The information referred to is located in the Additional Material Submitted for the Record section of this transcript, beginning on page 53.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Portman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I appreciate the opportunity to hear you respond to some of those allegations. And you use the word reject. I think you regret perhaps also some of those comments it sounds like, not to put words in your mouth but that is——

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I do. I do, Senator.

Senator PORTMAN [continuing]. That is what I sense from today, including your prepared remarks. You could have no better advocate than Joe Lieberman, and he does have enormous respect on both sides of the aisle and he knows you as a friend and as a colleague. And so you are smart to have brought him with you today. [Laughter.]

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you.

Senator PORTMAN. Graham I will not talk about. [Laughter.]

Senator PORTMAN. Just kidding. He is fine, too. [Laughter.]

Senator PORTMAN. But I do have concerns. You know, this is not a typical ambassadorship. I mean, it is—having been to Israel a number of times and met with our Ambassador there, let us be frank. In a lot of countries of the world it does not matter that much who the Ambassador is. The State Department has taken a bigger and bigger role over the last several decades in foreign policy and even the White House, you know, plays a big role in certain countries. But this is a really important one, and that person on the ground, developing those relationships I think is critical for two reasons. One, we do have a lot of divergent points of view here, as you can see. We all are very supportive of Israel I think it is fair to say. I hope that is true.

But there are different approaches to the policy issue, so an ambassador has to be able to bring all these different points of view together and provide counsel to our President and to our Secretary of State and others, National Security Advisor. You will get a lot of visitors, assuming you are confirmed, from this body but also from around the world, and so it is a very important role in terms of taking all these different points of view.

And so one of my questions for you is do you think you are capable of doing that, you know, listening to all points of view and being in some respects a broker, you know, of those points of view to describe to our administration as to the best approach forward?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, thank you. And yes, I do think I can do that. I think that bipartisanship has always been the hallmark of America's support for Israel. And—I am sorry. As I have commented occasionally to several of the Senators I have had the privilege to meet, I want to do everything I can to work with the Members of Congress to build upon what is, I think, much more that unites us than divides us on the State of Israel. There are obviously divergent views, and I think all those views need to be considered. And I think they are all made in good faith. And if I am confirmed, it will be a high priority of mine to synthesize and to the extent possible harmonize the views of the Congress and also to do the same in Israel because, as divided as the United States is, the State of Israel is just as divided. And their governing system is very challenging.

Senator PORTMAN. Mr. Friedman, let me continue. The second role that I was going to mention is the one that you are sort of suggesting now, which is—my sense is the Ambassador to Israel typically has been someone who has a personal relationship with the leadership there and not just the Prime Minister but also members of the cabinet and members of the opposition parties because, as you say, it is pretty diverse and sometimes a little chaotic in their Parliament, but you have to have those relationships. And so my question to you is do you think you can be effective there? And, specifically, how would you go about representing the United States of America? Would you be interested in more public comments? Some Ambassadors have taken that route. Or would this be more private conversations? And do you feel as though you have relationships in the country beyond the coalition government, beyond

the existing parties that are in power to be able to perform that role?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, Senator, on the issue of public comments or private, I happen to believe that with regard to the State of Israel discretion is incredibly important. And I think public comments can be self-defeating. The—as you saw yesterday, people hang on every word that is issued on this subject, whether or not the speaker intended that or not. I think you have to be careful. I think the—if there is progress to be made in the Middle East in the peace process, it is through private diplomacy, through forging agreements and coalitions and common interests behind the scenes. And I think that is important.

I do understand well the center, the left, and the right of the Israeli Knesset. They are all good people. Many of them have sacrificed—I think they have all sacrificed for their country. Many of them have paid the ultimate sacrifice through the loss of loved ones for their country. You know, people on the left who have lost their families continue to maintain positions on the left with—and they are entitled to do so and they should do so.

So it is hard to bring that together, but ultimately, this is a Rubik's Cube, and there is a lot of pieces that have to come together. And I do think I know the issues, I know the players, and I do think I have worked in an albeit much less complicated capacity, but I have worked to develop the skill set that I think will be complementary to that task.

Senator PORTMAN. In your law practice?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes.

Senator PORTMAN. Yes. One specific issue that I want to raise is BDS, boycotts, divestments, and sanctions. And I think the Ambassador to Israel will have to be someone who is a spokesperson for the U.S. point of view on this and will have the ability, I hope, to be able to communicate to the rest of the world what it means, for instance, to have sanctions or boycotts with regard to the West Bank. What would that mean in terms of Israel? What does it mean in terms of the Palestinians?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Sure.

Senator PORTMAN. Golan is the other issue that has now, as you know, become part of BDS in some forms. So what are your views on BDS? Ben Cardin and I got legislation passed. We are looking at additional legislation. The Congress is on record now on this issue. We want to do more. But just talk to us a little how you think as an ambassador to Israel you can be an effective communicator on the BDS issue and pushing back, combatting this what is, I think, a global effort now that needs strong support from the United States to combat it.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, I will be a fierce advocate against the BDS movement, as I understand, Ambassador Haley has committed to do as well. I look at the example of SodaStream. I do not know if you are familiar with that company, but SodaStream was a—is—was an extraordinarily successful company that employed hundreds of Palestinians and hundreds of Israelis and paid them all the same wages and gave them the same benefits and it was a paradigm of Israelis and Palestinians working together. And because SodaStream happened to be on the wrong side of the green line,

they were boycotted throughout the world and had to move, so they moved to the Negev and the Palestinians lost their jobs. This is an entirely self-defeating prospect not only for Israel but for the Palestinians as well.

Senator PORTMAN. My time is expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Friedman, and welcome.

I just want to talk about one thing, and that was the press conference yesterday between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Trump. U.S. policy since resolution 181 in 1947 has been to support—and this is in the words of the resolution itself—"a partition of the area previously known as Palestine into two states, a Jewish state and an Arab state." And the idea of the two states has been the cornerstone of American foreign policy and reaffirmed often by the U.S., Palestinians, and Israel since the Oslo Accords in 1993 and 1995.

Yesterday, President Trump signaled potentially a new direction, and I just want to quote him. And I am just going to—I really want to talk to you about exactly what he said, not editorializing about it, just what he said. Quote, "I am looking at two-state and one-state formulations. I like the one that both parties like. I am very happy with the one both parties like. I can live with either one." As I read that, I assumed that "both parties" mean Israel and Palestine or Israelis and Palestinians more broadly. Is that how you understood that comment?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes, and I watched that from my iPhone with keen interest. I was not involved in the meeting with the Prime Minister or the leadup to it or the follow-up, so I am relying upon what I saw as well as you. But, yes, I heard it that way. It was whatever the Palestinians and the Israelis agree upon.

Senator KAINE. And I think this is something that would get near unanimous view up here. U.S. policy should be to support a resolution that both parties like, but if either or both parties do not accept it, then the U.S. should not support that policy. Is that fair?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, I could not speculate on the policy that might not gain, you know, bilateral support. Certainly, it has been the policy of this country for generations to foster direct negotiations and to help bring those to a conclusion.

Senator KAINE. But would you agree with the general thrust of the President's statement that "I like the one that both parties like"?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Certainly.

Senator KAINE. Regarding a two-state solution, Israel would not like—would not accept any formulation where a neighboring Palestine refused to recognize it as the Jewish state contemplated by resolution 181. Is that fair to say?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think so.

Senator KAINE. And Israel would not like any formulation where a neighboring Palestine refused to treat it peacefully and live with it as a peaceful neighbor. Do you agree with that?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes.

Senator KAINE. So based on the President's statement, if Israel did not like a two-state proposal for one of those two reasons, then the U.S. could not support it based on this "I support something that both sides like"?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Again, that—the U.S. could not support—I think I would have to know more about what exactly the U.S. was being presented with.

Senator KAINE. But you would not expect the U.S. to support a two-state deal where there was not a pledge to recognize Israel's right to exist or Israel's security?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No, Israel is one of our strongest allies, and I think we owe it no less.

Senator KAINE. So let me now switch over to the one-state formulation. Palestinians would not like any one-state solution where they would be evacuated or forced to lose their land, would they?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I would not think so.

Senator KAINE. And Palestinians would not like any one-state solution unless they had full and equal legal rights in such a state, correct?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I do not think anyone would ever support a state where different classes of citizens had separate rights.

Senator KAINE. And I think you and I agree on that. In fact, we talked in my office yesterday. Not only would the U.S. not be able to accept a situation where people were consigned to a second-class status, but from my, you know, somewhat limited experience in Israel and your dramatically greater experience, the Israelis I know—I do not believe the majority of them would accept a one-state solution where Palestinians were consigned to a second-class legal status.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I do not know Israelis even on the right who—even on the far right who would support that. It is an untenable and immoral construct.

Senator KAINE. So based on the President's formulation yesterday, one-state solution would only be acceptable if Palestinians accepted it, and Palestinians are not going to accept it if they are treated as second-class citizens in that one-state formulation.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I agree.

Senator KAINE. So now just let me summarize. Based on the President's theory and his words, that we cannot support any formulation—we can support any formulation that makes both sides happy. The U.S. could never accept—talking about U.S. policy now, not Israeli or Palestinian policy. The U.S. could never support a two-state solution if it did not require full recognition of Israel as the Jewish state contemplated by the resolution in 1947 and a commitment to live in peace with Israel. We could never support such a policy, correct?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Correct.

Senator KAINE. And the U.S. could never support a one-state solution or indeed any solution where Palestinians are deprived of full and equal legal rights that are accorded to any other citizen, correct?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think so.

Senator KAINE. I do not have any other questions, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Sir.

Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Friedman, thank you for your willingness to serve.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Having done an awful lot of negotiating myself, you have to sit down at a negotiating table with people and negotiate in good faith. And I can think the fundamental problem here is that you have the other side, Palestinians, just refusing to acknowledge Israel's right to exist. Is that not basically the fundamental problem here?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. It has been the problem for a generation.

Senator JOHNSON. I want to talk a little bit about—you had mentioned in your testimony that Palestinians are being held hostage. In their education system for decades they have been teaching pretty vile things about Israelis and Jews, correct?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes, they have.

Senator JOHNSON. In Palestinian law they actually are rewarding terrorists, correct? And it is an increasing incentive based on the number of people terrorists have murdered, is that not correct?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Exactly true.

Senator JOHNSON. So is it really true that a majority of Palestinians are being held hostage and would really like a peaceful coexistence with the Israeli State?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I believe the majority of Palestinians would like peaceful coexistence.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. I hope that is true.

To what extent should America continue to provide foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority when they are teaching their young children the vile things they teach, when they are incentivizing Palestinian terrorists to continue to murder Jews?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think it is an important question for Congress to consider. We cannot continue to incentivize this behavior. It is entirely self-defeating to the Palestinians, to Israel, to the entire world. And I understand Congress is looking at this, and I certainly applaud that effort.

Senator JOHNSON. Do you know what the new administration's position is going to be on that? Are we going to continue to provide that foreign aid unless—or are we going to condition foreign aid on certainly their not teaching these things, not providing those types of incentives?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I do not know if the administration has formed a specific position on it, but I would be delighted to find out and get back to you, Senator.

Senator JOHNSON. In 1981 in the Golan Heights I think Israel recognized that it just was not working to have different rules of law apply, kind of to Senator Kaine's question here. There—for those Syrian citizens at Golan Heights they needed some certainty, so Israel decided to take the measure to apply Israeli law in the Golan Heights. Can you speak a little bit to what happened there and what the effect has been?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, I think the Golan Heights is an incredibly important strategic area for Israel. One can only imagine what Israel would be—how Israel would be suffering now if it did not

have the Golan Heights and the Golan Heights were occupied by ISIS. The Golan Heights is not an area of conflict. I mean, I am not saying there may not—there may be some conflicts, but my experience I think it worked out quite well.

Senator JOHNSON. I do not want to speak for Syrians living in the Golan Heights, but I think if I were a Syrian, I would rather be living in the Golan Heights right now than, let us say, Aleppo.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I am sure that is true.

Senator JOHNSON. One of the questions I have asked some European representatives is if they had to move their family to the Middle East, could choose any country in the Middle East, where would they choose to locate their family? I can tell you my answer on that. I choose Israel. That is my final question. Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, for holding this important confirmation hearing. And thank you, Mr. Friedman——

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator COONS [continuing]. For your willingness to serve the U.S. Government and the America people.

We had a constructive—pointed but constructive, I thought, conversation yesterday, and I am going to make an opening statement and then ask a few questions.

You are well-known to the Delaware bar, and I will stipulate for the record at the outset that your legal skills are widely and well-respected. And as many of my colleagues have asked questions around this, that is really not the central concern raised by former Ambassadors, raised in this hearing. It is not whether you are skilled at reaching complex legal resolutions but whether your intemperate previous statements should suggest to us that in a unique circumstance with a President unskilled in diplomacy and inclined towards inflammatory tweets, that your temperament is appropriate for this critically important post. So that is sort of, I think, our central question today.

Let me first say that one of my core concerns, as we discussed, is that the vital alliance between the United States and Israel should not be sacrificed on the altar of partisan politics. And as a strong supporter of Israel, I have long believed that bipartisanship in support of Israel advances our nation's interest, Israel's interests, and is the best path towards peace in the world.

But I am gravely concerned that political forces in the United States and in Israel are pulling officials away from a sensible middle ground and towards increasingly extreme positions on the left and right. And at a time of real division in both our nations, I think it is important that this Congress act in a way that reaffirms our bipartisan commitment to Israel.

We share a lot of interests. We have a great deal at stake. Iran continues to threaten Israel and American interests, continues to destabilize the broader Middle East, terrorist groups like ISIS, Hamas, and Hezbollah jeopardize the safety and security of too many Americans, Israelis, and Arabs. And on these and many other issues Israel is a vital partner for the United States. Much of the media coverage surround our relationship focuses on shared challenges, but recent successes should not go unnoticed.

We discussed the 10-year MOU and the $38 billion of support that is the largest U.S. aid package ever and something for which I think President Obama deserves real credit. Israel officials with whom I meet regularly, including most recently Defense Minister Lieberman, say that our security cooperation intelligence-sharing has never been stronger. But I worry that with so much to gain by further cooperation, we are allowing actions and rhetoric by hardliners, both hardliners in Israel and extremist Palestinians and statements by American politicians are driving us further apart.

So I think it is critical for there to be progress towards the long-hoped-for two-state solution for Palestinians to give an unequivocal recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and to stop incitement and to direct their efforts towards sorting out their leadership in a plan for peace, but both sides have to consider the extent to which their words and actions contribute to these dangerous divisions that exist and continue to grow. And I am concerned that both sides need to listen to each other and will have to make real sacrifices to come together for a lasting peace.

As we discussed, demographic challenges facing Israel in my view are real and inevitable and put real pressures on the possibility of a Jewish democratic state in the long run, but that is not our only challenge.

I was concerned and disappointed that President Trump did not explicitly support a two-state solution in his remarks yesterday, something that for decades has been a fundamental pillar of bipartisan support for Israel. And as Senator Kaine's questioning and your responses a few minutes ago suggested it is very difficult to articulate a rational plan or a framework in which Palestinians would accept the sort of status required for a one-state solution to have any viability.

Tomorrow, I will be meeting with a wide range of representatives of the Jewish community in my home State, and many of them have expressed concern, given previous statements you have made that were intemperate or even insulting about whether as Ambassador they would be welcome, valued in the U.S. Embassy in Israel. And I am concerned that successful diplomacy means considering the consequences of our rhetoric and our behavior.

So, Mr. Friedman, my central question really is do you believe that in the role of Ambassador if confirmed that you can act in a way that welcomes and celebrates and validates the entire American pro-Israel and Jewish community in a way that really advances and sustains bipartisan support for Israel and in a way that steers the Trump administration and its agenda in the Middle East towards peace and away from division and partisanship?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you, Senator, for that question. The answer—the short answer is yes. I think it is extraordinarily important, as we discussed yesterday, to cause the issue of Israel to not be a political football. It never has been in the past. I am—I am not—I am certainly not immune from criticism. I deserve the criticism and I have probably contributed to the problem, but many people in the Jewish community and the pro-Israel community have become more partisan, more separated when, at the end of the day, as I said earlier, they all support Israel, they all love this

country, and they all want peace. And I think on those common footings it is important to reunite the pro-Israel community. And I will pledge to you that I will do everything I can to do that, and I will be inclusive and respectful of different views. And if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I will solicit and very seriously consider all the views of people who in good faith want to strengthen the bond of the United States and Israel.

Senator COONS. I appreciate that. I cannot remember a previous confirmation hearing for an ambassador that was interrupted repeatedly by protests. Clearly the campaign, the rhetoric of the campaign, the explosive environment in the Middle East, the longstanding deep divisions within Israel and in the region between Israelis and Palestinians and the regional adversaries excites very intense passions. And your statements have been intemperate and in many cases inappropriate and insulting, and that has been a subject of great back-and-forth today.

Let me ask, if I might, just two simple and concrete questions. Do you support or will you advocate for Israeli annexation of the West Bank or of land in the West Bank?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I will not.

Senator COONS. And do you believe a two-state solution is the most ideal path towards peace?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think it is the most ideal. I think it is the path that has received the most thought and effort and consideration. Obviously, it has been tried for a long, long time and we continue to wrestle with it. Smarter—much smarter people than me have tried to make progress and have failed but it still remains, I believe, the best possibility for peace in the region.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Friedman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Friedman, I enjoyed our time together in the office. We spent roughly an hour talking about a full range of topics pertaining to U.S.-Israel relationship and more broadly the lack of stability in the Middle East, our national security, and so on. I think I shared with you that I was a Marine Corps intelligence officer in a prior life, and my role was to serve with a unit that flew around drones, which were jointly developed with the State of Israel. I came to appreciate through that experience the importance of information-sharing between our two countries and also technology development. And during my recent years as a Member of Congress, I have also come to appreciate the importance of military aid in arms sales.

Israel and the U.S., we both understand, confront common threats and we have shared ideals. And our military cooperation benefits both countries. So I just need public reassurance here that, if confirmed as Ambassador to Israel, would you do all you can to strengthen and deepen, even further these military-to-military efforts of cooperation between our countries?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, I would do all I could to strengthen that. Whether on a strategic, technological, military basis, it has been a—it has been one of the great success stories of the relationship and I think very much benefiting both countries, and I will do ev-

erything I can to continue to improve and strengthen that level of cooperation.

Senator YOUNG. Sure. Well, that is encouraging. Closer to home, we have been doing our part in the State of Indiana. The Indiana National Guard has a longstanding relationship with the Israel Defense Forces since at least 2010, our Guard has joined counterparts from Israel in conducting combined training exercises. Our guardsmen have regularly traveled Israel from training. We have had training occur in Jerusalem, my home town of Bloomington, Indiana, various other sites, the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, which I know the IDF has found particularly helpful in preparing for their own defense.

In 2016, 65 Indiana National Guard soldiers participated in an operation known as United Front. It was a small unit exchange in Israel and conducted—they were search-and-rescue operations that were conducted there.

So I just urge you to continue to seek more of these opportunities should you be confirmed as Ambassador, as I think is highly probable.

I would like to turn briefly to the issue of the prospect of peace between the Palestinians and Israel. Do you believe an acceptable agreement can be reached between the Israeli Government and the Palestinians with Mahmoud Abbas at the helm?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I would hope so, Senator, but I think the challenges are daunting. I would point out that President Abbas refuses to accept Israel as a Jewish state. He has made that position quite clear. And obviously, as Senator Johnson noted, the Palestinian Authority, while undoubtedly preferable to Hamas and to their credit they have engaged with Israel very productively in security matters, but I still think they have positions that are inconsistent with lasting peace.

Senator YOUNG. So you have spoken to the challenges. Do you see a successor with whom we might be able to do business in a much easier fashion? And maybe you could speak to what is perceived by some to be a chaotic succession crisis occurring among Palestinian leaders?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, there is—there appears to be a crisis almost by definition when you have a President who has exceeded his elected term by I think it is seven or eight years now past his electoral mandate. I think—I hope that there are—that there is a new generation of Palestinians that wants the same thing that everybody wants, which is a better life, better opportunity for their children, and to live in peace. I would be—it would just seem obvious to me that they are out there, and I know some Palestinians who are just like everybody else. And I would venture that the vast majority just want what everybody in the world wants. And we have to do what we can to help foster both economically and politically the development of that political class and an accompanying middle class to try to draw out that type of leadership.

Senator YOUNG. Yesterday, as has been mentioned, Prime Minister Netanyahu laid out his two prerequisites for peace: recognition of a Jewish state and Israeli security control over the entire area west of the Jordan River. What is meant by security control over the entire area west of the Jordan River?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes, this has been I think the Prime Minister's position since 2009. It is really the analog to the naval control with regard to Hamas. There is an extraordinary risk of weapons transfers in that area. If the Israelis did not block the flow into Gaza, there would be even more horrific weapons than there are now. And I think the Prime Minister is concerned of a comparable flow of weapons out of Jordan into a Palestinian state. And I think that, as has been explained to me, an Israeli red line in terms of their own security. I am not a security expert but I understand that is very important to the Prime Minister.

Senator YOUNG. This would likely require a perpetual presence of military forces on the ground in that area, though.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think it would—I do not know how control would be achieved. Again, I am not an expert in that. But it would require some military control of the border, yes.

Senator YOUNG. Can you conceive of Palestinian leaders who would be amenable to this sort of situation?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Not today. I think that, ultimately, it would be in their interests as well to stop the flow of arms into a state that ideally should be demilitarized. So, again, if calmer voices prevail, it should not be a deal-breaker, but at this point, I think the answer is no.

Senator YOUNG. And lastly, what role might the Saudis and Emiratis play in moving forward, helping to advance a potential agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think the Saudis, the Emiratis, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, perhaps others, as we heard yesterday in the Prime Minister's speech, seem to be far more amenable to productive discussions than in the past. Israel does not seem to be the third rail that it once was with regard to these countries, and from what I heard at the press conference yesterday, just based upon what I heard, it would seem to me that that is a very productive avenue for future discussions.

The CHAIRMAN. Before turning to Senator Booker, I think the Prime Minister has been really clear that when he talks about security in the West Bank, he is talking about ad infinitum, perpetual, forever military presence. So I do not think he has been equivocal on that. Do you agree with that?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you, first of all, for coming to my office yesterday. I really appreciated the respect you showed me, and I appreciated our conversation, especially to see the depth of your love for the State of Israel, something that I admire.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you.

Senator BOOKER. I want to zone in, though, on some of the things that have already been said and discussed, but I have grave concerns about the volume and breadth of your past statements, as we discussed a bit in my office. You stated in your testimony that you regret some of this particular hurtful language that you used against not only President Obama but also Secretary Clinton, someone who spent her entire professional career in service, two people who have sent a considerable amount of their careers in

service. You talked about President Obama as engaging in "blatant anti-Semitism" and other words. You do not believe President Obama is an anti-Semite, do you?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Not at all, Senator. I do not believe that for a second. My only comment was I thought the language that the President used in—with regard to the Iran deal when he accused wealthy donors of making common cause with the Mullahs I thought that was—at least I perceived it to be something which was a historically anti-Jewish canard that——

Senator BOOKER. Well, the comments you have about the—about President Obama were not just about that incident. You said it is "blatant anti-Semitism," "sycophantic missions." But let us move on to Senator Kaine, who you just heard give a very thoughtful discussion about the State of Israel. You call him an Israel-basher. You do not believe Senator Kaine is an Israel-basher, do you?

Mr. FRIEDMAN [continuing]. No. I had a great meeting yesterday with Senator Kaine and learned a lot that I did not know about him, and I completely retract that statement. It was absolutely wrong.

Senator BOOKER. And the comments go on about sitting Members of the United States Senate that you have made in the past. Secretary Clinton, former Senator Clinton, you talked about her having anti-Semitic sentiments, harboring anti-Semitic sentiments. Senator Schumer, as has been discussed before, one of the—again, someone who shares your depth of love for the State of Israel, it has been read already but you said "No matter how he ultimately votes, by making the decision—such a close call, which is plainly it should not be"—and these words are very dramatic—"Senator Schumer is violating the worst appeasement of terrorism since Munich." That obviously to me I try to find other Ambassadors for posts such as this as Israel who said such things that—you would agree that we are not just policy disagreements or not just the heat of a politician. Those are comments that actually demean the character of another human being. Would you agree that they were demeaning to the character of those individuals?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I tried to criticize the words rather than the person, but I can certainly understand how it extended to the character. It was not intentional, but I certainly understand that.

Senator BOOKER. Sir, you and I both, from our family histories, know a lot about people demeaning folks. We know a lot about hate speech and hate words.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. We do.

Senator BOOKER. And we know that when people dismiss things as just words or, hey, it was just politics, that they are belittling actually the harm and the damage that can do to individuals and entire communities. You would agree with that?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I would.

Senator BOOKER. You also attacked the State Department with a hundred-year history—you said, "The State Department, with a hundred-year history of anti-Semitism, promotes the payoffs of corrupt Palestinians in exchange for their completely duplicitous agreements to support a two-state solution." You also said after—four months ago about—you gave a speech in which you referred

to the State Department as "The State Department has been anti-Semitic and anti-Israel for the past 70 years."

The Ambassadors, Republican and Democrat, who wrote a letter that has already been entered in the record, but they really took issue with someone who is now going to be working with the State Department to cast such a broad net over the incredible professionals that work there who often put themselves in harm's way for this country, who make sacrifices for the family of resources. They write in one paragraph, "Mr. Friedman has accused President Obama"—as we have already discussed—"and the entire State Department of anti-Semitism. He has propagated the false conspiracy theory that Hillary Clinton's advisor, Huma Abedin, has well-established ties to the Muslim Brother hood. He has referred to the Anti-Defamation League as morons. He has characterized supporters of J Street, a liberal Jewish organization, as kapos, the Jews who cooperated with the Nazis during the Holocaust." They say that "These are extreme radical positions."

Words like kapos resonate with me in particular because they reflect words, again, that you and I both know personally from our family histories. How cruel, mean-spirited that kind of language is, you understand that, right?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I understand it, Senator, and in addition to understanding it, in the course of thousands of emails I received in response to those comments, I received an email from—I mean, some of those comments were unrepeatable, some were frightening, but a few of them were extraordinarily touching, one from a Holocaust survivor who wrote me and said that he survived the Holocaust, he loves Israel with all his heart. He disagreed with me on the best tactics to support Israel, but he felt that I had invalidated the good faith of his positions. And I can tell you, the last person in the world I would want to offend would be someone like that, and it has—it is something that I deeply regret.

Senator BOOKER. So your past comments to me—and I understand that you are apologizing, but you and I both know the difference between apology and atonement, correct?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think an apology might be the first step to atonement.

Senator BOOKER. Yes, sir. You are looking to be in a position as a diplomat right now at a time where you are entering an area of the globe that is delicate to say the least in which there is tremendous passion and heart invested, in which my love and your love of the State of Israel often, as you said earlier in your testimony, a measured word the wrong way can have great ramifications.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes.

Senator BOOKER. I have deep concerns with that history you have of uttering words, writing them, thoughtful ones and not understanding the ramifications even in the American context that those could have. I just want to ask and turn to another just simple question I asked you about the USAID programs going on in the West Bank. Do you have intention to visit the West Bank—should you be confirmed as Ambassador?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. If the State Department rules are changed and I am permitted to do so.

Senator BOOKER. I appreciate you recognizing that. Do you have intention of visiting the Temple Mount?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No, I never have visited. I have been to Israel countless times. I have never visited the Temple Mount.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for your allowance of going over my time. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Friedman, for being here, for your willingness to serve.

Let me begin by saying that I find this whole process to be unreal. I mean, this sort of ordeal you are being put through to account for all these words, in particular given some of the groups that are ratcheting all this up. This group J Street that, for example, a few years ago invited the chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat to address their conference, a person who has justified the murder of Jews as self-defense, as a person they invited to speak at their conference. This is a group who has routinely attacked people who hold my views with content that I find to be a smear and, quite frankly, a mischaracterization of our positions.

The second thing I think you are confronting—not in this hearing per se but writ large—is what I believe is the sort of existent orthodoxy among many of the people in the State Department and among the so-called smart people in American foreign policy that somehow the United States needs to be a fair and balanced arbiter in this situation that we are facing in the Middle East. I do not understand that view. I really do not. First of all, my view is that Israel is our strongest ally in the region. My view is that, in addition to a moral obligation that we have to protect the right of the Jewish people to a homeland, especially one founded in the aftermath of the Holocaust, they also happen to be the only pro-American, free-enterprise democracy in the region. That alone is reason enough to be strongly aligned to them.

The second point I would make is that I find it startling is all these so-called professionals in the State Department and, again, among the foreign policy elite, are out there all the time—I very rarely hear them stand up and speak vociferously on the sorts of activities that are being conducted by some in the Palestinian leadership, yet they are never, never reluctant to step forward and lead the efforts to condemn Israel time and again. And this is what you are going to confront when you are confirmed in terms of some in the State Department.

There is also this misconception that continues to be spread around in the letters and all this whole dialogue that is around this that you somehow have issued a wholesale rejection of the so-called two-state solution. I think you have already testified here today and you have said before, and others have said as well, that in a perfect and ideal world you would have two independent states, a Jewish state and a Palestinian state, peacefully side by side living with one another.

The problem is there are significant impediments to that, perhaps the least of which is the existence of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria. For example, I would say that one of the big-

gest obstacles to that would be efforts by the previous administration to pressure Israel and to impose upon them a negotiated settlement outside the bounds of what the Jewish people and Israel support and what is in the interest of the nation of Israel.

I would say a bigger impediment is the unwillingness of the leadership of the Palestinian Authority to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. And that is the key phrase, not just Israel's right to exist, but as the homeland for the Jewish people. That is a big impediment to a deal because how are you going to negotiate a peaceful coexistence with a neighbor who does not recognize your right to exist? What are you negotiating? The terms of your destruction? I think that is a much bigger impediment.

Or how about the wholesale, systematic indoctrination of young Palestinians into a doctrine of hatred and justification for the killing and the murdering of Jews that begins sadly, tragically, and outrageously at a very young age? I think that is a pretty big impediment.

You know what else is a big impediment? These international efforts to impose on Israel a negotiated solution along the terms that other countries think are appropriate. I think that is a bigger impediment.

You know what else is a bigger impediment? The incitement of violence by leaders of the Palestinian Authority. And that is not widely reported because often—that does not make it into their English press releases, but when they go around justifying these attacks, when they dedicate monuments to so-called martyrs who are nothing but terrorists, when they spread ridiculous rumors about what the Israel Government is going to do on the Temple Mount or the Dome of the Rock, these things that incite violence.

And so I view these things as bigger impediments than all the other things, and I think it is accurate to say that your position, it is not that you are opposed to this ideal outcome in which there would be two states but that you recognize that at this moment, given the circumstances that exist in the world today and in that region in particular, it is not likely to have that outcome.

And hopefully, that will change. Hopefully, the Palestinians will have better leadership. Hopefully, they will be more prosperous. Hopefully, they will have an opportunity to grow their economy and their security, and maybe in 20 years, 15 years, 5 years, sooner rather than later we all hope, there will be the opportunity for this to occur. But right now, those conditions are perhaps not in place, and the worst thing we can try to do is to go in there and impose on our most loyal and important ally in the region a deal that is bad for their security and bad for their future.

Is that an accurate characterization of your feelings with regards to the two-state solution?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think it is, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. Let me just say, Mr. Chairman, I do want to enter into the record a letter from the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to is located in the Additional Material Submitted for the Record section of this transcript, beginning on page 59.]

Senator RUBIO. One last point that—as an ambassador, at the end of the day your role will be to represent, advocate for, and implement the policy of the President, is that correct?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. One hundred percent correct.

Senator RUBIO. And so on any issue, whether it is the location of the Embassy, whether it is our position on any given matter, it is your job ultimately to be an advocate for the decisions made from the Oval Office and by this administration, not your personal views?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Sir, I will be an advocate for the President in the same way that I would be an advocate for clients. My personal views are completely subordinated to the views of the President and the Secretary of State.

Senator RUBIO. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Friedman, for taking time to come and meet with me yesterday.

I am not going to relitigate the concerns that people have raised about some of your statements with respect to Senators and the former President, though I share those concerns. But I am concerned about an article that you wrote in November of 2015 talking about Russia's intervention in Syria where you held up that intervention as a model and predicted that they would succeed in defeating ISIS. And the title of the article is "Learn a Lesson from Russia." And I would ask, Mr. Chairman, that it be entered into the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to is located in the Additional Material Submitted for the Record section of this transcript, beginning on page 69.]

Senator SHAHEEN. I think at that time we had already seen news reports about Russia's failure in fact to go after ISIS and their motives to hold up the Assad regime. And we have seen since then their indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Aleppo, their blowing up of aid workers, their bombing of hospitals. So I would just ask, do you still believe that in the last year the Russian military has done more to defeat ISIS than the United States?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No. And my—I was not intending to in any way praise Russia. My point there was simply that Russia had—Russia used ISIS as a platform, an excuse if you will, to enter the region to prop up the Assad regime. It was I thought a deplorable act. My—the point of my article was simply that I lamented that the United States had not acted as it had threatened to do when the President set the red line to—and left the area open to a vacuum. But much has changed since then, and the United States has certainly since that time done much more to defeat ISIS than Russia.

Senator SHAHEEN. I appreciate that, though you did in that article characterize the situation as, and I quote, "American leaders forced their stellar military commanders to fight with two hands and a leg tied behind their backs. Vladimir Putin gets it. He may be a thug, as he was recently described, but he knows how to iden-

tify a national objective, execute a military plan, and ultimately prevail."

In the article you also refer to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL as, I quote, "a coalition of cowards, freeloaders, and hypocrites led from behind by the American President." Do you think that kind of rhetoric is conducive to securing partners in this fight against ISIL?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No, I do not. I think that was a view I raised as a private person without that objective.

Senator SHAHEEN. So I appreciate the comments that you made about ensuring that Israeli Arabs are treated fairly. I appreciated that comment when you met with me yesterday. I have heard troubling stories from Arab Americans who say they have experienced discrimination by Israeli authorities at the Israeli border for no other reason than because they have Arab last names. And as someone who has an Arab last name—as you can probably tell, it is not me; it is my husband who is of Lebanese descent—but how would you, as Ambassador, address that concern that you hear—should you hear that from Arab Americans who feel like they have not been treated fairly?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, I would obviously be the Ambassador for the benefit of Arab Americans, as well as any other Americans, and it is inexcusable for any country to discriminate on the basis of one's nationality, religion, or otherwise. I would want to engage with the Israelis and understand the process that they were using for their immigration and encourage them obviously to have their own national security issues, which I think we all respect, but that is not a basis to engage especially against the American population in any process that would be discriminatory. So I would certainly oppose that and work to make sure that it did not proceed.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. You have written that Israel's policy of schizophrenia of criticizing disloyal Arab citizens while simultaneously bestowing upon them the benefits of citizenship simply is not working. Can you clarify if there are any circumstances under which citizens of Israel should be stripped of their benefits and what benefits you think could reasonably be removed?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think this was in the context of criminal activity, not on the basis of any—not on the basis of their nationality certainly. Just to be clear, I do not support any activity in Israel, this country, or anywhere else that would be based upon one's nation of origin.

Senator SHAHEEN. So how do you feel about the President's Executive order on immigration?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. It was—I accept the President's representation that it was a temporary ban to keep the country safe.

Senator SHAHEEN. Even though we had not had any incidents from terrorist from any of those seven countries that we could point to?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, I do not know. I was not involved in that order, and I do not have access to the classified information, so I just do not know. I am sorry.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I want to just end by reading you excerpts from a letter that I received from a constituent from Concord, New Hampshire. She says in this letter, "As a Jewish con-

stituent of yours whose great-uncle survived the Holocaust, I am appalled by David Friedman's likening of liberal Jews to Nazi collaborators. My great-uncle Leon Messer was born in 1920 in Poland. He was interns in the notorious Auschwitz concentration camp. He lost both his mother and his sister during the Holocaust. He was only able to survive due to his talent for fixing watches."

She goes on to say, "It is such a shame that someone who survived the brutality of the Nazi regime and who lost so many loved ones in the Holocaust would be disparaged today by the Israeli Ambassador nominee, David Friedman, as a kapo or Nazi collaborator simply for standing up for what he believes is right."

Mr. Friedman, what do I tell Alicia, my constituent, about why she should feel differently that you could in fact represent her and that you are not disparaging people who have her views?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. If you—I will be happy to give you—give to you my number and I would apologize to her personally. I am sorry she feels that way, and I respect her feelings and I would like to make amends.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Before turning to Senator Flake, I did not use any of my time for questioning. It is just an observation.

First of all, thank you for being here and I know we had a very good meeting.

You are here today having to recant every single strongly held belief that you have expressed almost. And I am just curious about this job and its importance to you to be willing to recant every single strongly held belief that you had. I just wondered if you would share that with us because it is interesting to listen and, you know, you have done a lot of that and I appreciate that. And sometimes when people run for public office, they say things and they have to massage them to a degree. But this is fairly extraordinary, and I wonder if you would share with us why you are willing to do that to serve in this capacity.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. The opportunity to serve my country as Ambassador to Israel would be really the fulfillment of a life's dream, of a life's work, of a life of study of the people, the culture, the politics of Israeli society. One of the great things I love about this country is the fact that it was the first country to recognize Israel and has stood with Israel steadfastly through thick and thin over very, very many challenging circumstances.

I believe that, based upon my relationship with the country and its people, I can be helpful; I can do good. I believe that, based upon my relationship with the President, I can help him get to the right place and, as he said colloquially, to make a deal, to bring peace to the region.

My views are my views. Some of them I recant certainly the rhetoric and the inflammation that I have caused, the hurt that I have caused. I need to do a much better job going forward and I intend to and I will with regard to a diplomatic mission. It is very different obviously than being a private citizen and writing articles.

But this is something I really want to do because I think I can do it well. And there is not more important to me than strengthening the bonds between the United States and Israel.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Friedman.

Let us kind of continue on that theme for a minute. How important is it—Congress has really been the bulwark of support for Israel over the years, as we mentioned—you mentioned in my office. It is Congress that is the enduring institution that has supported Israel. And it has always been marked by bipartisanship, that support. Can you talk about the importance of that?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I can, Senator. I think it has been the exception rather than the rule that the Congress has divided over an issue like Israel. Israel really is not a political issue. For the United States it is very much a moral issue. The United States stands with Israel obviously because Israel and the United States have common interests militarily, economically, technologically, but first and foremost, the relationship is on the basis of shared values. And shared values are not political. Shared values are that direct connection that the two countries have, a commitment to democracy, to human rights, to biblical values.

And to me it would be greatly disappointing if I could not help de-partisanize—if that is a word—the relationship—the United States' relationship with Israel.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. Let me just address for a second the comments yesterday with the Prime Minister's visit, some of the comments that made some people report that we are no longer committed in this country to a two-state solution. I know that has been addressed at length here but just one aspect of it. Do you see—for one, I do not see that break. I think the framework that is most likely to product lasting peace is a two-state solution. But is there any likelihood at all that our fundamental principles is that the parties themselves, through direct negotiations, arrive at a solution? Is there any likelihood that the parties would adopt anything other than a two-state solution? I would just like your thoughts on that?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I have seen no evidence of an appetite by the Palestinians to a one-state solution. But I guess I would say if it happens, we will notice it, but I have not seen it yet.

Senator FLAKE. Right. But the bedrock principle is still direct negotiations between the parties——

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes.

Senator FLAKE [continuing]. And not have a solution imposed by outside organizations, be it the General Assembly or Security Council or any other outside body——

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Correct.

Senator FLAKE [continuing]. Including the United States?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. That is correct, Senator.

Senator FLAKE. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy.

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

Thank you for being here today and for your willingness to serve.

I think building off of the opening question from Senator Flake, the reason many of us are asking you these detailed questions about statements that you have made in the past about those who

have sometimes been supportive of diplomatic engagements in the region have not always been supportive of the positions that Netanyahu has taken is that we are very worried that support for Israel is just becoming another political football in this place. It used to be something that united Democrats and Republicans. We had differences, but what was most important was keeping our support for Israel out of the political playing field. And today, that is not the case.

In the very short time that I have been in public service Israel has gone from an issue that united us to an issue that is now used in political campaigns in order to try to divide us.

And so I think you are being asked these questions because we are very worried about what the future holds, and your nomination is one of the strongest partisans on the issue of Israel. Being willing to call Democrats all sorts of terrible names suggests that we are just in for another really rough stretch when it comes to trying to heal those divisions.

And I appreciate what you said, that you want your tenure to be one of healing partisan divisions, but if that was really the intent of this administration, there are frankly a lot of other people who would have been better suited to play that role.

And so I do want to just ask some questions here. I think Senator Corker is right to ask about, you know, these—this exceptional level of recantations and reversals. And I guess it is something different to me to regret words that you said than it is to actually change your underlying opinion. So let me just make sure that, on probably your most controversial statement, that I have this right.

When you said that J Street and supporters of J Street are worse than kapos, I hear that you say that you regret those words, but have you changed your opinion on that matter?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I have profound differences of opinion with the J Street organization. I do not think that will change. My regret is that I did not express those views respectfully, recognizing that they are every much as entitled as I am to have a different view. My regrets are as to the language and the rhetoric. I am not withdrawing my personal views as to the organization.

Senator MURPHY. But is your—but is your personal view still that J Street and its supporters are worse than the kapos of the World War II era?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No.

Senator MURPHY. Okay.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. That is not my view.

Senator MURPHY. Okay. Let me ask about the word anti-Semite. You have thrown it around fairly liberally to describe actions of the Obama administration. And you draw a distinction between calling actions anti-Semitic versus calling individuals anti-Semitic. The pushback on that is that that phrase is a description of motivations. It is a description about what lies in someone's heart, right, the idea that someone hates Jews and thus carries out actions based upon that belief. So can you—I just want to make sure that you believe that in calling my words or my actions anti-Semitic that you are calling me anti-Semitic.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I do not agree with that, Senator.

Senator MURPHY. Why?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Because I think someone could inadvertently or unintentionally say something that is perceived by someone with a long history of being exposed to anti-Semitism as being anti-Semitic while the speaker himself would have done it completely unintentionally or with even good intentions. Sometimes words are uttered by one and perceived by the other, and it—you know, the speaker and the recipient——

Senator MURPHY. But——

Mr. FRIEDMAN [continuing]. Are just on different pages.

Senator MURPHY. But perception is in the eye of the beholder, so you are saying that the phrase anti-Semitic is owned by the person who hears the words? It is not about the motivation of the individual? So my motivations have nothing to do with whether my actions or my words can be described legitimately as anti-Semitic?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, as I said, words could be legitimately perceived as anti-Semitic even though the speaker would harbor no anti-Semitic feelings.

Senator MURPHY. And you would call—and you have no problem calling my actions anti-Semitic even if you believe that in my heart I have no desire to discriminate against Jews?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I can see challenging the words without challenging the motivations of the speaker.

Senator MURPHY. Another one of your more controversial statements was your hope that Donald Trump would fire individuals in the State Department who have opposed policies that you and he have espoused to, such as moving the Embassy. President Trump, through his press secretary, has said that those in the Department of State that do not agree with the President's viewpoints should get on board or get out and has suggested that the typical means of expressing dissent within the Department of State are no longer legitimate; you either agree with the President or you have no place in the administration, which would topple decades of precedent within the Department. Your statement suggests you agree with that, that the President should fire individuals who do not agree with positioning.

Can you—is that also a statement that you recant and have reversed? Would you try to seek the ouster of individuals working for the Embassy that do not agree with your viewpoints?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No, Senator. I think any executive has a right to have people that support his—who are willing to execute his views, however they feel. Obviously, within the State Department it—there are tens of thousands of people who are entitled to their opinions and have differing views. At certain levels, the President is entitled to have people report to him who are prepared to execute his directives on foreign policy. He is the Commander in Chief, the Chief Executive, and I think he has that right.

Senator MURPHY. Well, given that you will be running an Embassy, last question, what level is that? You are going to be—you are going to have a lot of civil servants who have served the country very well. They will be in important positions like political military officers, people liaising with the Israeli Government. What level of individual has to believe in their heart in the same direction as you in order to maintain their position?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think in my case none because I am not making any policies. I am simply observing the directives of the President. So whether people agree with me or not in the Embassy is, I think, completely irrelevant.

Senator MURPHY. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Friedman, for your willingness to serve, and welcome to your family and for your patience through this endurance test of a hearing. I really appreciate the chance to get to know you a little bit better and talk about the leadership opportunities we have with the United States, with Israel, and our great opportunities between the two both from a security standpoint and economic standpoint.

I had the last—chance the last time I was in Israel to visit with Senator Cardin, Senator Markey, Senator Merkley just about a year ago, perhaps—I think it was March if that is correct, Senator Cardin. And the first time I had the opportunity to visit Israel was I think August of 2011 with a few other Members of Congress. And we went to IDF headquarters and we visited with a general. I believe at the time he was the head of Israel—Israeli planning division, General Eshel I think if I recall correctly was his name. And one of the—one of my colleagues asked a very simple question—I thought was simple—to General Eshel at the time and it was, you know, what is your view of U.S. foreign policy in the region? And after about 45 seconds or a minute of hemming and hawing and the trying to avoid the question, my colleague said please just give us the answer; you are not going to offend us.

General Eshel then spent several minutes frightening us and talking about his answer. And his answer was simply this: They did not know where the United States foreign policy was. They did not know where the United States would be tomorrow because they did not understand what we were doing in the region, who our friends were and who our friends would be. That was 2011. There was a lot happening around that time frame.

Sometime later, I had the opportunity to go back to Israel and visit with General Eshel again. Now, General Eshel had no reason to remember me, but General Eshel made—I asked—was able to ask him the same question: What is your view of U.S. foreign policy in the region? And I was startled with the same answer.

Today, Mr. Friedman, what would you say Israel views the U.S. foreign policy as and what do you believe can be accomplished under your leadership as Ambassador to Israel that they would walk away with understanding the firm commitment the United States has to our great ally, friend, Israel?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think the most important thing in the relationship between our two countries is something that I picked up this morning or late last night in the read-out from the meeting between the Prime Minister of Israel and the President, which is that there be no daylight between the two countries. It does not mean that there should be no disagreements, but Israel has no other friends like the United States. Sometimes they do not have any friends at all other than the United States. And when the rest of

the world sees that the United States and Israel are not aligned, they—there is a risk that they will become more aggressive against Israel.

So I think that loyalty and respect and no daylight is the—I think everything else is sort of details and can get worked out. And it is what I think Israel needs from us, and I think that is where the President is now.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Friedman. The strategic outlook for Israel in the region, where are we going with Iran right now? I do not know if you have had an opportunity to address the Iran deal, what is happening in Jordan, the stability of Jordan obviously key to security in Israel. And could you talk a little bit about the strategic outlook for the region?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think the Gulf States, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, and the Israelis are all united—perhaps inadvertently so—but they are all united in a common concern about Iran. Iran is a state-sponsor of terrorism. I think that without relitigating the Iran deal—obviously, it is no secret that I was very much against the Iran deal—but sitting here today, Iran just recently tested ballistic missiles. I am not sure why anyone would have a ballistic missile except to deliver a nuclear warhead. They continue to provoke the United States. They—as the Prime Minister of Israel said yesterday, they write in Hebrew on their missiles "destroy Israel." Now, Israel does not have the distance between itself and Iran that we have, and we all know how nervous they are about it. And I think all the other Sunni states are nervous as well.

I do not think this is something that I will be engaged on, but I certainly support the President's view that we need to reinstitute leverage on Iran to hold them to the very first page of the JCPOA, which says that Iran will not develop or acquire a nuclear weapon. I am not sure what the other pages are. Given that first page, I am not sure I would need another 90, but that page is the page that we ought to be focusing on and enforcing as hard as we can.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Friedman.

Mr. Chairman, I had—when we were in Israel with Senator Cardin's delegation, we were there over Purim I believe it was, and we visited Iron Dome missile battery—rocket battery right outside of Ashkelon I think if I remember correctly. And as the celebration was taking place in Ashkelon, you could hear the voices participating in that holiday right by the Iron Dome facility. And so I think the mention of daylight between our two nations is important and that we have to spend time, the United States and Israel, assuring and restating the fact that there is no daylight between our two nations. And I look forward to working with you to make that happen.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Friedman, congratulations on the nomination and welcome to your family.

You are a lawyer, and as a lawyer, you have obligations to clients. Could you describe succinctly what is your obligation to any given client?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Zealous advocacy, loyalty, confidentiality.

Senator MENENDEZ. Faith and fidelity?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No question.

Senator MENENDEZ. So who is your client if you ultimately achieve, confirm your position?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, I would pledge to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, and I interpret that as having, in the broadest sense, an obligation to the entire country.

Senator MENENDEZ. And in that context it is the national interest and security of the United States that one would pledge fidelity to, is that not correct?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. And in that context, you know, you have presented yourself here and in our very long private conversation as someone who is smart and measured and temperate, yet I get a sense that your love for the State of Israel overwhelmed your language, which was not necessarily temperate at the end of the day. And so the question is we cannot have an ambassador who ultimately will be moved, as much as they may be passionate about the country that they are being sent to or by the Prime Minister of that country, as much as we may have the greatest of relationships, that will not bend their will to that but will bend their will to what is in the national interest and security of the United States. Can you tell the members of this committee that that is in fact where your loyalty and commitment is?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. That will be 100 percent my loyalty and commitment and to no one else.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now, you have rejected many of the past comments that have been made; I will not go through them again. In some cases I have actually heard you use the word you have apologized to individuals. I take your rejection of some of what you said as intemperate remarks, also an apology to those who may be affronted by them. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now, let me ask you this. When you came to see me, I was quite interested in hearing from you unsolicitedly—I asked you many questions, but unsolicitedly you spoke about promoting economic development in the West Bank and helping to build a strong Palestinian middle class. We have not heard a lot about that today. Can you talk to me a little bit about that?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. There are—there is business activity in the West Bank. There are people—there are businessmen in the West Bank who are building industries. The unemployment rate in the West Bank is too high. The only way I can think of to bring it down is to foster that type of industry.

I would like to work with Israel to make the commercial environment in the West Bank less burdensome. There are issues of water, there are issues of electricity, there are issues of the movement of goods and services. There is also obviously security considerations that overwhelm everything else. But technologies are improving. Security can be less intrusive now than it has been in the past. I think Israel could probably do better, and I—without a specific instance, I think they could do better. And I think we could in—as

part of the effort within the region, the Gulf States, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, to try to improve the Palestinian economy. I think we could look to some of those—certainly some of the wealthier nations to help.

Senator MENENDEZ. So some of the ultimate efforts, the underpinnings necessary to achieve the peace that we all desire, it would be fair to say that in one context building the economic livelihood and abilities of Palestinians to realize their hopes and dreams and aspirations is an important one. Is that not fair to say?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think it might be the most important one.

Senator MENENDEZ. And you share in that—to the extent that the administration and the Congress are seeking to pursue those goals, you share those goals as well, I would assume?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I do.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now, you left out of your statement when—I guess for purposes of time something that I found interesting. You supported an entity called United Hatzalah. I do not know if my pronunciation is right, but "an Israeli organization of volunteer first responders that uses advanced technology to weave through traffic to provide emergency services and save lives." What makes Hatzalah so special is that "It is comprised of volunteers from the entire spectrum of the Israeli population—Jews, Muslims, and Christians, religious and secular, right and left wing. They all operate under a single credo: treat patients in the order of the severity of their affliction and never let any other considerations—political, religious, or otherwise—influence your commitment to saving lives." And you go on to say, "Hatzalah represents the best of the Israeli people."

Does Hatzalah capture the essence of your feelings towards both Palestinians and Israelis?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. It does, Senator. And in fact I was in Israel this past summer at a session of the Knesset when an eight-year-old boy gave an award to a Muslim volunteer at United Hatzalah. The Muslim volunteer had pulled his mother out of a burning car a year-and-a-half earlier, saved her life, and the boy gave an award to this—a Jewish boy gave this award to a Muslim volunteer for saving his mother's life. I do not think there was a dry eye in the house, and it—again, this organization, because of the way it operates, represents the very best of all the Israeli people. It gives me great hope and optimism for the future.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you believe that the life of a Palestinian child is of the same value as the life of a Jewish child?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you believe the dignity of a Palestinian woman is the same as the dignity of a Jewish woman?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I sure do.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you believe that Palestinians ultimately have a right in some form and fashion to self-governing themselves?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I do.

Senator MENENDEZ. You know, in addition to pursuing the national interest and security of the United States, I assume that whatever personal interests that you may have in Israel that you

will wall those off in such a way that that will not be a question as well?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I have agreed to sell my business interests in Israel.

Senator MENENDEZ. And finally, some might think that this is a nomination conversion versus a true process towards atonement for some of the things that may have been said in an ideological war and in an political context and environment and that they are just for the purposes of achieving the goal of getting your nomination through. What would you say to that, to those who are thinking that as they sit here?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, I am sitting here under oath, taking that oath seriously. My views are entirely heartfelt.

Senator MENENDEZ. And so what you have told me in response to my questions is what you have in your heart, what you have in your mind, and what you will do if in fact you are confirmed by the Senate?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Paul.

Senator PAUL. Welcome, Mr. Friedman. Congratulations on your nomination.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you.

Senator PAUL. I think sometimes there is a presumption that America knows best, is in charge of everything, and that we are going to tell everybody the way things are going to be, and I think it sort of ignores the sovereignty of other nations and the opinions of other nations frankly, particularly in the peace process, that we have decided what the peace process is since 1947, and it does not look like there is peace yet so maybe there ought to be some other thoughts.

I am not here to say what the best peace process is, but I would say that maybe sometimes we need to take a step back and realize that any kind of peace process is going to have to take agreement from both sides and that what both sides of the conflict think is probably more important than us. It does not mean we should not have any role, but I do not think we should be so presumptuous as that we are going to dictate the role.

The same would apply somewhat to settlements. So we can all have our own opinion, and I know you have your opinion on settlements. But it is also not our country, and we do not live there. And it is not saying it is not problem. I am just saying that I am not so sure the United States should dictate this.

That being said, I think that we ought to be aware of the ramifications of policy, and we can voice our—you know, our opinions on these. And I think yours have been very strong that—you know, in favor of settlement.

My question is is that—you know, and this has come up recently with the press conference. President Trump has actually sort of voice, you know, some hesitancy to the 5,400 new units in the West Bank. And while I am not here to say what my opinion is or what the Government should tell Israel what to do, I would say that we ought to account for and think about what 5,400 new settlements in the West Bank do to the possibility of peace.

Are you open to thinking about what the ramifications are and that there is another side to the settlement issue other than just saying, hey, we should build everywhere all the time?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes, I am.

Senator PAUL. Okay. I think that is the open-mindedness that people want to hear and want to know is are you open-minded enough to know there is another position and that there are ramifications and that you will listen.

I think sometimes, particularly in our country, we think everybody thinks alike in Israel. We have no idea what goes on. If anything, they have more diversity of opinion and thought than we do on issues of Israel I would say, and we need to understand that. And your job as Ambassador is to understand, you know, that maybe a third of the population of Israel, maybe 40 percent—I do not know the number—but a significant number do not want new settlements in the West Bank either, but I think your job will be to report that to the President and to let him know the different viewpoints within Israel, what are the ramifications of new settlement even if we do not get a say.

Now, the capital is a little bit different. Israel gets to decide the capital of their country, but as you and I discussed, I think while we have talked about moving it to Jerusalem, no one else has an Embassy there, right?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Correct.

Senator PAUL. There will be ramifications if we move it. What I want to know is are you a thoughtful individual? Will you think about the ramifications? Will we think to ourselves long and hard that if we do move our Embassy there and a thousand Israeli soldiers die because of it or somehow Americans are caught up in it, that will be—will it have been something that was worth our while if we do it for the symbolism of it if people die because of it? And will you think through the ramifications of that and advise the President that there is more than one side to the issue?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes, Senator. The decision obviously will be made by the President, and I am confident he will—and I would support him considering all of the political security and other ramifications associated.

Senator PAUL. I do not put myself out as an expert or someone who has an answer to Middle East peace. I wish I did. But having traveled there once, I have an opinion like everyone else. And my opinion basically is it is illusive, and I think I am fairly justified in that. But I would say that I came back from Israel thinking that our best hope is incremental change. And I think it is an equation where Israel does hold most of the cards and most of the power. They have an unparalleled military, and I do not think things are going to change militarily. That just—these are the facts on the ground.

So I would say that there is chance for improvement, but it is going to be incremental. And one of the things—I met with Palestinian businessmen, some of the ones you referred to in general; I do not know if any specific—recently, and they mentioned to me Area C in West Bank. And when you look at the dots and which areas are controlled by people, Area C is like 80 percent of the West Bank and they feel like they do not have access to it, that

they are forbidden from, you know, drilling for water, drilling for minerals, trying to set up enterprises where they make more money.

And my advice would be to meet with Palestinian businessmen, listen—and women, listen to them and say, gosh, if this is a way that we can lessen tension and hostility between the groups, why do we not see if there is a way that Palestinians can make more money, that trade can be enhanced.

There is all kinds of things that are not the ultimate, you know, and final agreement, which is illusive, that we could do. And I want to know that you are open-minded to saying, you know what, we are less likely to have war the more we trade, the more we have interaction. Are you open-minded enough to hear the other side from the Palestinians on what we could do to enhance and lessen hostility?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, I would be excited to have those discussions.

Senator PAUL. Okay. And I think some of that could be done here. I do not know. There is some of that here, you know, between the different parties. Some of that can be done over there. But I think it is important that you project to them that you are open-minded on these things because you have had—and I am not—I have strong opinions, too, so I mean the thing is having strong opinions is not always a fault, but I would say that you have to show people that you are open-minded enough to be a diplomat, which means hearing from, talking to both parties, and understanding the complexity and the ramifications of every little policy that happens over there.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I will, Senator. Thank you.

Senator PAUL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator Markey.

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

Mr. Friedman, in our office we talked about a two-state solution. We talked about what may be possible. You said it was the gold standard. But in our conversation, and perhaps you could help me to kind of flesh this out a little bit further. You mentioned a scenario under which the West Bank could be incorporated into Israel and that the country would still maintain its Jewish and democratic identity. Could you go through that scenario and how you look at those numbers and how you would view that as an alternative?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Senator, I do not view it as an alternative. I think—at least to me the discussion was more in the hypothetical. But I think that the—I think there is a general conventional wisdom that Israel can either be Jewish or democratic but not both under that type of a scenario.

I do not know the demographics of the West Bank well enough. There are multiple studies that have been done. I think demographics of the West Bank are a very important part of working forward. And I think we ought to all have the same data because the swings of population assumptions go from a million-and-a-half Arabs to three million, and at a million-and-a-half Arabs it is one scenario; at three million it could be another. And I do not know

which is true or if some number in the middle is true. I am not sure it matters. I was speaking really in the hypothetical. But because demographics matters to any future discussion, we ought to have good data, and I would certainly encourage the Israelis on a nonpartisan basis to try to get better data on those demographics.

Senator MARKEY. But ultimately, do you think the Palestinians would accept a solution that had the West Bank incorporated into Israel, and then if the demographics were such that then they remained in the minority and that Gaza was excluded from a final agreement? Do you think there is a scenario under which the Palestinians could accept a deal that created that new entity and kept the Palestinians in a permanent minority in—within that greater Israel that would have been created?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I cannot imagine that either Israel or the Palestinians would accept a scenario where there were different rights for different citizens in terms of whether the Palestinians were in the majority or the minority. I could not speak for them. I would only point out that Israel itself has a very good track record of providing good education, health care, commercial opportunities, human rights, rights to the LGBTQ community, support of women's rights. I think Israel is very good to its Palestinian citizens, and so that might be a—something that the Palestinians in the West Bank might be attracted to, but I would never speak for them.

Senator MARKEY. So you do not personally support Israeli annexation of the West Bank?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No, I do not.

Senator MARKEY. You do not? You are saying that that would have to be part of an agreement?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. As the President said, all of this, all of this has to be agreed to by the parties or else it will not proceed.

Senator MARKEY. Yes, because I—it is hard for me to envision a situation where the Palestinians would allow a division of the question where the West Bank was a part of the agreement, then Gaza in its resonance did not have rights that were vested with the citizens of that part of the Palestinian population.

What are—if you could, you talked about the two-state solution as the best possibility of—can you give us another possibility in your mind that you think could unfold in terms of an agreement that could be reached between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Sitting here today, I do not have a better option.

Senator MARKEY. You do not have a better option?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. No, I do not.

Senator MARKEY. No. And I know that this terrain has already been traveled in the hearing, but if I could, I would like to go out and just talk a little bit about the Beit El settlement——

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator MARKEY [continuing]. And some of the comments from people who are out there. Beit El is training students, for example, to, quote, "successfully delegitimize the notion of a two-state solution and creating facts on the ground in the face of the international community's desire to uproot us." Can you talk about comments like that coming out of the Beit El community in Ramallah

and your views on those comments in terms of its implication for reaching a two-state solution?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think they are a challenge among many to achieving a two-state solution. I should point out that my affiliation with Beit El is as the president of the American Friends of Beit El Yeshiva Center. We support a Talmudical Academy and a boys' high school and a girls' high school, and it primarily derives from my commitment to Jewish education. The quality of those schools are excellent, and everything that we have given money to has been in the nature of gymnasiums, dormitories, dining rooms, classrooms, things like that. So my philanthropic activity there has not been connected to their political activity, which I really had no part in.

Senator MARKEY. If the land in Beit El was included in a two-state solution and that land had to be returned to the Palestinians, would you support the return of that land to the Palestinians?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. In the context of a consensual fully-agreed-to two-state solution?

Senator MARKEY. That is correct.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes.

Senator MARKEY. You would?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Yes.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I have some questions. I have refrained from asking until the end, but I know Senator Cardin has some questions. I will let him finish.

Senator CARDIN. If I could. And I—with no disrespect to the chairman, I have a commitment that—so after I ask these one or two questions I am going to thank Mr. Friedman for your patience and thank you very much again for your willingness to serve and for your passion for the relationship between Israel and the United States. It is—it comes across very clearly from your testimony and I just want to underscore that.

The White House issued a statement on February 2 saying, "We do not believe the existence of settlements is an impediment to peace. The construction of new settlements or the expansion of the existing settlements beyond their current borders may not be helpful to achieving that goal." What is your view in regards to expansion of settlements or new settlements?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think the expansion of settlements into new territories that are beyond borders—I agree with the President. They may not be helpful, and I think it makes sense to tread very carefully in that area.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. And the last point I think I will—maybe I will ask this for the record. We have been talking a lot about the West Bank but very little about Gaza. Gaza is much more difficult than the West Bank. And I would—we had a chance in my office to talk a little bit about Gaza, but just let me put that on the record and I might ask you a couple questions for the record because it is a complicated situation on how you deal with Gaza if you do not have a viable two-state process moving forward.

[The information referred to is located in the Additional Material Submitted for the Record section of this transcript, beginning on page 50.]

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I saw the headline you had written about the two-state solution being somewhat of an illusion, and yesterday, I, with others, had a meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu who we all respect greatly. And I listened to him say—I am not going to say what he said in a private meeting, but it was very much along the same lines that he constantly has said publicly, which in past comments has referred to the fact that until the Palestinians are willing to accept Israel's right to exist, it is very difficult to have a two-state solution.

And then he refers, rightly so, to the fact that one of his great responsibilities is the security of the people of Israel, and there is not a time that you can see in the future ever where there is not military presence by the Israelis in the West Bank. And we keep talking about the West Bank because it is the place that is most likely for something good to happen, and Gaza obviously is way beyond that.

I do wonder, especially after yesterday, but also seeing all of the many efforts that have been put in place around the two-state solution—I know Tony Blair—I do not know how many times he has been to the area. I think he told me once—I heard him speak—he had been there 160 times, and his wife made the joke, you know, Tony, it is not the number—it is not the amount of effort; it is the result. And of course there has been none.

Are we helping the situation by continually talking about a two-state solution when having a military presence in the West Bank ad infinitum, forever by Israel is really something different than a two-state solution. It is a serious question, and I am beginning to wonder whether we are actually verbalizing this in the appropriate manner. It is not a gotcha question. It is an honest question. I know you have expressed very strong feelings. I sometimes think that we here in the public arena talk about things and keep holding something out regarding many conflicts around the world that maybe is not achievable based on the facts on the ground. And I am just wondering what your observation would be regarding that.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, Senator, Yitzhak Rabin, who is I think regarded universally as the architect of the two-state solution and who gave his life in pursuit of the two-state solution, he himself said that his vision was for—I think it was either—I think he used the term "state-minus" or something like that. I think the challenges here are Israel's security and the Palestinians' quality of life. I do not know if the Palestinian people at this juncture care more about the flag over their heads, who is leading them, as they care about reducing the unemployment rate down from an ungovernable level to a manageable level.

I have heard Palestinians decry their leadership and they are no friends of Israel either. I suspect that the key to the region is economic empowerment, not political debates, and that is why I guess until I am proven wrong, which could be soon——

The CHAIRMAN. What will——

Mr. FRIEDMAN [continuing]. I would work to try to improve the economic levels.

The CHAIRMAN. I absolutely think that is something that needs to occur. And in my last trip there in speaking with the Prime Minister in Ramallah, that certainly was the focus.

I will say the flip side of that is when you know you have got settlements out here and you have got to have security around those settlements, it is very difficult to do commerce in between. I mean, it is—let us face it; it is more than burdensome. I am not criticizing. I am just observing that it is very difficult to do commerce when you are dealing with that.

So, again, what would be a better way of describing the vision there? Because a state that has ad infinitum, forever sort of military—for realistic security measures has a military of another country in it, what would we call that? I mean, state-minus is not a particularly good description. But I think that we talk about this, we use rhetoric that I am beginning to believe is unrealistic rhetoric, and I do not know that it is useful in getting to a solution when you are describing something that to me is becoming more and more unrealistic for many, many reasons. I am not casting blame.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. And I do not—Senator, candidly, I do not have a good answer to your question, and I certainly do not have a good word for—to articulate a vision. It is an enormous challenge. It is a very big Rubik's Cube that we all try to wrestle with every day. And I take the medical approach—even though I am not a doctor—to this which is let us not make it worse, let us do no harm, and then let us try to make it better. And I think that is the only advice I have right now.

The CHAIRMAN. And I think your response on the settlements indicates that.

Let me ask you this: Prime Minister Netanyahu has been very clear on this for many years. You know Israel well. Do you think the vision of military presence in the West Bank forever is the general view of the—sort of the mainstream of Knesset there?

Mr. FRIEDMAN. I think the control of the Jordan Valley is something which people on the left and the right agree upon. I think that is the single most important feature of any Palestinian state. It does not mean that has to be military embedded within the communities or even the towns, but at the perimeter I do believe that on the left and the right there is unanimity that there must be control of the perimeter.

The CHAIRMAN. It just seems to me that if that is the case—and I agree with you; I think that is the case—it just seems to me that we are at a point in time where we ought to be discussing the future, at least the future for the next 20 or 30 years anyway, in a different way. And I do not know exactly how to describe that either, but it just seems to me that in addition to having a partner that is not a real partner on the Palestinian side, that there is a vision on the Israeli side that is not fully compatible with what we would normally describe as a two-state solution. Again, it is just an observation. And it seems to me that we would be better off as a world community to talk about it in terms that are different than we are talking about it right now.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Well, Senator, you heard the President yesterday use the term "a larger canvas," and I have not had a chance to speak with him about that and flesh out those concepts, but I think certainly an open mind, a commitment to peace above all else to improve qualities of life is a step in the right direction.

The CHAIRMAN. Listen, you have acquitted yourself well today. You have been here for many hours, as has your family. We thank you for your willingness to serve.

There will be additional questions coming from folks, and we would like to keep the record open until the close of business Friday. My sense is you will want to answer those questions fairly promptly.

And with that, without further questions or comments, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

Mr. FRIEDMAN. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 1:17 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DAVID FRIEDMAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As a student, I was actively involved in the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry ("SSSJ") a grass roots organization dedicated to publicizing the plight of Soviet Jews and advocating for their right to emigrate to Israel and the United States. Once my law practice began, my efforts to advance human rights and democracy were more philanthropic in nature, and extended to numerous organizations, including United Hatzala which I referred to in my testimony. I hope that my efforts have advanced the cause of these extremely important goals.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Israel? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Israel? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most significant human rights issues in Israel include terrorist attacks targeting civilians and politically and religiously motivated societal violence and discrimination.

If confirmed, I would offer U.S. support in countering terrorism, strongly condemn terrorist attacks, and support Israel's right to defend its citizens. I would also urge the Government of Israel to take affirmative steps to protect shared values that are core to both our societies.

Question 3. 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 Israel in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Israel is a vibrant democracy that respects human rights and has a thriving civil society. However, when tensions rise between Israel and the Palestinians, it can lead to renewed violence against civilians and sometimes intolerance by both sides, posing a challenge to advancing these issues.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Israel? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. I believe that a free and functioning civil society is an essential element of a healthy democracy and that governments must protect free expression and peaceful dissent and create an atmosphere where all voices can be heard. If con-

firmed, I will commit to meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations.

I will pro-actively support the continued implementation of the Leahy Law and similar efforts to ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities continue to reinforce human rights by working to ensure that the United States does not furnish assistance to any foreign security force unit if the Department of State has credible information that the receiving unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.

Question 5. If confirmed, will you and your embassy team actively engage with Israel to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the Israeli Government?

Answer. I believe all individuals should be treated humanely and have their human rights respected and upheld, including prisoners. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Israel to address cases, if any, of persons who have been unjustly targeted by the Israeli Government.

Question 6. If confirmed, will you engage with Israel on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. I believe all individuals should be treated humanely and have their human rights respected and upheld. If confirmed, I will engage with Israel on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance. I believe that the United States and Israel are more than just allies—our countries have a friendship based on our mutual appreciation and goals, on our common values of democracy and freedom, and on our conviction that giving a voice to minority and even dissenting views only strengthens our societies.

Question 7. According to the World Bank, in 2016 the unemployment rate in the West Bank has reached 27 percent and in Gaza, unemployment is at 42 percent, with youth unemployment at 58 percent, among the highest in the world:

- What programs would you support to stimulate Palestinian job growth?

Answer. I support a focused approach to stimulating Palestinian job growth which includes programs that directly engage the private sector to boost productivity and works with the Government of Israel to find ways to address restrictions impacting the Palestinian economy. I understand ongoing USAID programs which have taken this approach have been effective in creating long term employment prospects for the Palestinians. As Ambassador, I would encourage USAID to look at ways to further scale these programs and create new ones, as well as look at interventions in areas such as education that address other obstacles to economic development.

Question 8. What recommendations do you have for improving U.S. programs to address unemployment?

Answer. Key enablers of Palestinian job growth include the easing of restrictions on movement and access which will allow Palestinians to increase trade and will increase Palestinians' access to land and raw materials. I support the Department of State's and USAID's ongoing efforts to engage the Government of Israel to find ways to ease such restrictions. Should I be confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to explore these and other options to enable Palestinian economic development.

Question 9. hat specific recommendations do you have for addressing chronic unemployment in Gaza?

Answer. The unemployment rate in Gaza—the highest recorded unemployment rate in the world—is both an economic and a security issue. To begin addressing it, Hamas needs to renounce terrorism and commit itself to working with the Palestinian Authority and others to better the quality of life of the people living in Gaza. I believe that we need to explore ways to reduce the restrictions on movement and access while respecting Israel's security needs and concerns. We should also be looking at ways to expand service delivery, particularly in Gaza, where lack of access to water and electricity has a hugely negative effect on economic growth and the population as a whole.

Question 10. During your testimony, you stated that "the two-state solution is the best possibility" for lasting peace. You commented extensively on demographics and aspirations of Palestinians in the West Bank. A critical consideration that we did not have time to discuss is Gaza:

As the two-state solution is still the best possibility for peace, what specific recommendations will you make to the President to address the crisis in Gaza and create conditions for peace?

Answer. It is difficult for me to identify the "specific" recommendations that I would make to the President without first having access to certain classified information and more detailed discussions with the President, the Secretary of State and other State Department employees. Generally, in order to create conditions for peace, we must make it clear that peaceful negotiations, not terrorism, are the only possible path forward. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Israel to find ways to empower all Palestinian moderates to be involved and ensure security coordination with the Palestinian Authority remains robust.

As I also said during my confirmation hearing, part of moving towards peace includes finding ways to grow the Palestinian economy and especially the middle class, including in Gaza. This could include reducing restrictions on movement and access, as well as encouraging the Palestinian Authority to take up their responsibilities in Gaza.

Question 11. Please explain your perspective on how Gaza may be treated differently from the West Bank in a negotiated settlement?

Answer. I believe Gaza should be a part of any future negotiations. That said, Hamas is a violent terrorist organization that continues to reject the very basic principles needed for peace, including, among other things, recognition of Israel as a Jewish State, acceptance of previous agreements, and renunciation of violence. The Department of State designated Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997. For any negotiated settlement involving Gaza to be successful, there will need to be a significant change in Gaza's leadership.

Question 12. With respect to economic development in Gaza, what do you see as the main barriers in Gaza and how should the United States engage to address these barriers and improve conditions for economic growth?

Answer. Hamas' illegal 2007 seizure of Gaza disrupted previous agreements on movement and access by displacing the Palestinian Authority. Subsequent restrictions on movement and access—put in place to address Israeli security concerns—are also a factor slowing economic growth in Gaza. As I previously stated, we need to do more to explore ways to reduce restrictions on movement and access that also respect Israeli security concerns. We should also work with the donor community, the Government of Israel, and the Palestinian Authority to find ways to increase electricity and water delivery in Gaza.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID FRIEDMAN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question 1. Mr. Friedman, you've previously expressed your view of Israeli settlement construction as follows: "As a general rule, we should expand a community in Judea and Samaria where the land is legally available and a residential or commercial need is present—just like in any other neighborhood anywhere in the world." You have also raised millions of dollars for a yeshiva located in the Israeli West Bank settlement of Bet El, which lies well outside the security barrier, not far from the Palestinian city of Ramallah.

- Do you think the construction of new Israeli settlements or the expansion of existing settlements beyond the security barrier impedes efforts to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- Do you think that Israel should refrain from such construction? Please explain your position.
- Do you support the "Regularization Law" that the Israeli Knesset passed earlier this month that retroactively legalizes Israeli settlements built on privately-owned Palestinian lands? What impact would this law have on construction at the Bet El settlement?

Answer. I agree with the statement of the President that settlements are not an obstacle to peace, although new settlements and expansion of existing settlements beyond existing borders may not be helpful to the cause of peace.

I believe that settlement issues should be addressed through direct negotiations between the parties in the same manner as other issues in the peace process.

I am not an expert in Israeli law and thus not able to express an opinion on the "regularization law." I do not know how the law would affect construction in Bet El.

Bet El Institutions Fundraising and Activity

Question 2. If confirmed, will you commit to ceasing all fundraising for and personal contributions to the American Friends of the Bet El Yeshiva Center and any other settlement-related causes that you support?

Answer. I so commit for as long as I am Ambassador to Israel.

Bet El Institutions Fundraising and Activity

Question 3. The Israeli daily Haaretz recently reported that a building in the Bet El settlement that was funded by the American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva, the organization you head, and that prominently bears your name is built outside the Israeli-sanctioned boundaries of the settlement on privately-owned Palestinian agricultural land. According to the news report, the Friedman Faculty House at the Raaya Girls High School is situated in a neighborhood of Bet El that was partially demolished by order of the Israeli High Court of Justice five years ago because the land had been seized illegally. According to the Defense Ministry's Civil Administration, which supervises construction in the settlements, the demolition order is still on the books, although it has been ignored.

- Were you aware that the building bearing your name and which your organization funded is located outside of the legally sanctioned boundaries of the Bet El settlement?
- Would you support the demolition of this building if the Israeli authorities decided to carry out the existing demolition order due to its location?

Answer. I was not aware and do not know the source or accuracy of the article. I would have no position since I do not believe that as an ambassador any statements should be made or would be appropriate.

Support for Israeli Political Candidates or Parties

Question 4. Have you ever contributed to the campaigns of Israeli political leaders or political parties? If so, could you specify which leaders and which parties and how much you gave them?

Answer. No.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID FRIEDMAN BY SENATOR TOM UDALL

Question 1. How much money have you raised and how much have you personally donated to organizations that support settlement expansion in the West Bank? Have you made any political donations to a candidate for Israeli office or an Israeli political party?

Answer. Zero. I do not raise any funds from third parties. I have personally donated approximately $300,000 to American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva Center, a 501(c)3, over the past six years and lesser amounts to other charities in Israel. To my knowledge, all donations are used for religious and educational purposes and not for political purposes or settlement expansion.Additionally, I have made no political donations to a candidate for Israeli office or an Israeli political party.

Question 2. Have you separated your financial interests from that of Bet El and any other Israeli settlements you may have an interest in and, if so, how have you done so?

Answer. I have no financial interests in Bet El or any other Israeli settlement. If confirmed, consistent with my obligations to the Office of Government Ethics (OGE), I will resign my position at American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva Center and will not accept any position at that or any other Israeli institution for the duration of my ambassadorship.

Question 3. Do you have any real estate or interests in any land in Israel or in the West Bank? If so, please list all interests in either region. Do you or your immediate family members own any property over the 1949 Armistice Line (aka the Green Line)?

Answer. My wife and I own an apartment in Jerusalem. It is located within the Green Line. Additionally, neither I nor my immediate family members own property over the Green Line.

Question 4. In your letter on Ethics Undertakings to the State Department's Office of the Legal Advisor, you committed to resigning your positions with a number of entities, including businesses and the American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva Center,

but that you would "not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know that entity is a party or represents a party" for a period of one-year. Given your long-standing interests in this organization, will you extend your non-participation commitment to your full term in this office?

Answer. I intend to fully comply with my ethical obligations as agreed to with OGE. If confirmed, I will not hold any position at this entity for the duration of my ambassadorship.Q02

Question 5. During the hearing with now U.N. Ambassador Haley, we discussed that it has been the longstanding position since President Johnson that Israeli settlement activity in territories occupied in 1967 undermines Israel's security, harms the viability of a negotiated two-state outcome, and erodes prospects for peace and stability in the region. Yet you have actively funded settlements in opposition to U.S. policy. How will you ensure that you represent U.S. policy rather than your personal views on the issue of settlements if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. I have not funded any settlements in violation of U.S. policy. I will act strictly in accordance with the directives of the President and the Secretary of State without regard to any personal opinions which I may hold.

Question 6. You wrote that Israel, using the term "we" QUOTE "We should expand a community in Judea and Samaria [*Biblical names used in Israel for the West Bank] where land is legally available and a residential or commercial need is present—just like any other neighborhood in the world." UNQUOTE If you are confirmed as Ambassador will you continue to advocate for settlement growth which will continue to divide any potential future Palestinian state, publicly or in internal administration deliberations?

Answer. Consistent with the stated position of the President, I will advocate for settlement issues to be resolved by direct negotiations between the parties.

Question 7. You wrote that liberal Jews, QUOTE "suffer a cognitive disconnect in identifying good and evil." UNQUOTE. This is disrespectful to many members of the Jewish community, including in my home state of New Mexico. Do you now disavow and apologize for this statement?

Answer. Yes.

Question 8. If confirmed, you will in essence join the State Department and will lead State Department employees at our Embassy in Israel. You have said the State Department has a "Hundred year history of anti-Semitism." This disparages and calls into question the character of many American patriots who have served in the State Department. Who have actively worked to promote the interests of the United States. Do you now disavow and apologize for this statement?

Answer. The State Department has led the world in advancing the cause of peace and acting with moral clarity. There have been, unfortunately, isolated occurrences of anti-Semitic behavior over the history of this organization (see, E.G. letter of Henry Morgenthau to President Roosevelt of January 16, 1944). I have great confidence and respect for the current State Department.

Question 9. Do you support the MOU signed between the United States and Israel and will you work to ensure that the terms of the MOU are carried out?

Answer. Yes, I support the MOU and, if confirmed, would confer with the President, the Secretary of State, the Congress and the Israelis to ensure as robust a support for Israel's security as possible. The ten–year MOU provides predictability past FY 2018, which is critical to Israel being able to finance and procure critical weapons systems such as the F–35.

It is my understanding that Foreign Military Financing helps to support Israel's continued defense modernization; provides for the acquisition of U.S.-origin defense equipment and training; and is conditioned on having appropriate export control and technology security safeguards in place to prevent transfers of controlled technology or know-how to potential adversaries and unauthorized recipients. It also strengthens interoperability and the capability of Israel to participate in coalition operations and exercises.

U.S. assistance helps ensure that Israel maintains a qualitative military edge over potential regional threats, preventing a shift in the security balance of the region and safeguarding U.S. interests.

Question 10. In a piece your wrote in August of 2015 you advocated in favor of Israeli bombing of populations centers using "entirely disproportionate force" in a fictional letter, stating in response to the approval of the JCPOA that:

> Rather, we are respectfully informing the leadership of the United States, our greatest friend, as well as all of our enemies, that any further attacks

> on Israel, whether by rocket, by tunnel, by incursion or otherwise, will be met with entirely disproportionate force—the type of force every other nation has used and will use under comparable circumstances—designed to immediately end the battle and discourage and deter further misconduct. You have left us with no other choice.
>
> Winston Churchill is considered by many to be the greatest leader of his generation. To defeat the Nazis, Churchill, in coordination with American forces, bombed population centers in Dresden, Germany and elsewhere in early 1945. Civilian life was lost but the war quickly ended, Nazism was defeated and Churchill was regaled as a hero. No one holds life to be more precious than the People of Israel and we will never target civilians. But we will no longer permit human shields to limit our self-defense and we will send a clear message to deter the terrorist attacks that we know are coming. We will not be held to a different standard than the United States, we will not bow to the world's hypocrisy and we will defeat Islamic terrorism by any and all means necessary.
>
> I hope this clarifies our position in response to the JCPOA's approval.

Do you still support such violations of basic human rights and warfare? Do you agree that the targeting of civilian populations is illegal and a U.S. Ambassador should not encourage such behavior? Do you have an explanation for why you advocated for Prime Minister Netanyahu to target civilian populations?

Answer. First, as stated above, this is a "fictional" letter and does not advocate anything to the Prime Minister of Israel. Second, civilian populations should never be used as shields or targeted in a war. Launching rocket attacks from civilian populations is reckless and inhumane. Israel must be able to defend its citizens and should do so in a manner which minimizes collateral damage to civilians. Everyone should condemn anyone who fires rockets from within civilian populated areas.

Question 11. You wrote about a proposed compromise where the United States would ban "assault rifles" in exchange for a variation on a Muslim ban. For the record you wrote:

> So let's talk about banning all assault rifles and putting in some hard penalties. How about a mandatory ten years in prison for possession? This will take these weapons off the street in no time and perhaps give law enforcement the ability to apprehend terrorists before they can do any damage.
>
> Now, in exchange for this ban, let's also make sure that law enforcement is given the resources to ban all Muslims whose words or deeds present the slightest risk of terrorist activity. There's no need to worry about the First Amendment—the rights of free speech and privacy do not apply to immigrants applying for entry to the United States.

In two paragraphs you made recommendations that would limit both the First and Second Amendments to the Constitution. Do you still support a ban on assault style rifles in exchange for a modified Muslim ban where Muslim First Amendment rights would no longer be protected?

Answer. No.

Question 12. In your hearing, you expressed "regret," "deep regret" and—in some cases—apologized about some of the offensive comments you made against individuals and groups with whom you disagree. However, you did not apologize for some of these offensive comments in the hearing.

- Will you specifically apologize for your comments regarding President Obama?
- Will you specifically apologize for your comments regarding J Street?
- Will you specifically apologize for your comments regarding the Anti-Defamation League?

Answer. I do not believe, and did not say, that President Obama is an anti-Semite. I do believe that certain comments he made were anti-Semitic, although I assume this was unintentional. If anyone believes that I called President Obama an anti-Semite, I apologize.

I have already apologized to members of J Street for my hurtful language.

Further, I have apologized to Jonathan Greenblatt who has publicly accepted my apology and stated that his organization, Anti-Defamation League, looks forward to working with me.

Question 13. Do you commit to meeting—to the extent you schedule permits—with delegations organized by or comprised of pro-Israel advocates that you have criticized or with whom you may disagree, including J Street?

Answer. Schedule permitting, I would like to meet with various and diverse groups to hear and understand their views.

Question 14. The Rosh Yeshiva of Bet El, which you have financially supported, has written a book in which he instructed Israeli soldiers to "disobey orders to evacuate Jewish settlements in Israel." This book was subsequently banned by the Israeli military.

- Do you agree with this statement—that it is forbidden to uproot Jews from any part of Greater Israel?
- Would you support insubordination if members of the Israeli Defense Forces were ordered to dismantle an outpost that was deemed illegal by Israeli law?
- Would you support settler violence against Israeli soldiers in order to prevent the dismantlement of an outpost that was deemed illegal by Israeli law?
- If you do not support the political statements of the leaders of Bet El, particularly the head of its Yeshiva, which you have supported, why did you choose Bet El to support, out of all of the causes in Israel?

Answer. As stated above, I have personally contributed to the American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva Center, a 501 (c) 3 that supports education. I am unfamiliar with this book and do not agree with this statement.

I do not support insubordination if members of the Israeli Defense Forces were ordered to dismantle an outpost that was deemed illegal by Israeli law

I do not support settler violence against Israeli soldiers in order to prevent the dismantlement of an outpost that was deemed illegal by Israeli law?

As stated above, I am unfamiliar with this book or the statements. I support Jewish education and Bet El has excellent schools. Bet El is situated on a site that has biblical and historical significance, being mentioned multiple times in the Old Testament.

Question 15. It has been reported that a settlement building that was funded by the organization you head and which prominently bears your name is built outside the Israeli-sanctioned boundaries of the settlement on privately-owned Palestinian agricultural land. What is the legal status of this building?

Answer. I am not an expert in Israeli law and cannot opine on the legal status.

Question 16. Given 50 years of US bipartisan opposition to settlement activity, it has been our country's practice for decades that US Ambassadors to Israel do not visit the settlements. Given your considerable support and enabling of the settlement enterprise, do you plan to break with this longstanding, bipartisan tradition and visit the settlements if you become Ambassador?

Answer. I will observe the practices directed of me by the President and the Secretary of State.

Question 17. In response to Sen. Booker's question regarding whether you would go up to the Temple Mount as Ambassador, you replied that you have never been to the site. Will you commit to not going up the Temple Mount as Ambassador if you are confirmed?

Answer. I have no intention to visit the Temple Mount, and will observe such practices directed of me by the President and the Secretary of State.

Question 18. You stated there was "No need to worry about the First Amendment" when you defended your proposal to screen Muslims entering this country. It is also notable, that similar proposals resulting in increased scrutiny on Muslim Americans have emerged in Israel.

There are concerns that Israel treats Arab Americans at the Israeli border differently than other Americans, despite their American passports. Reportedly, Arab Americans have routinely been detained, interrogated in intrusive manners for hours, and in some cases denied entry to Israel and deported for no apparent reason other than they are of Arab heritage.

If confirmed as Ambassador will you work to ensure that all Americans are treated equally by Israel, and that all American passports are honored?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID FRIEDMAN BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER MURPHY

Question 1. The U.S. Ambassador to Israel often meets with delegations of pro-Israel Senators, Members of Congress and pro-Israel advocates that travel to Israel, sometimes on missions organized by groups that you have criticized or with whom

you may disagree. Do you commit to meeting—to the extent you schedule permits—with delegations organized by or comprised of pro-Israel advocates that you have criticized or with whom you may disagree, including J Street?

Answer. I value the work of civil society; I also value the freedom of expression, even in cases where I do not agree with the political views espoused. I recognize that giving voice to minority and even dissenting views only strengthens our societies and that a free and functioning civil society in which all peaceful voices are allowed to be heard is an essential element of a healthy democracy. Schedule permitting, I would like to meet with various and diverse groups to hear and understand their views.

Question 2. In your letter on Ethics Undertakings to the State Department's Office of the Legal Advisor, you committed to resigning your positions with a number of entities, including businesses and the American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva Center, but that you would "not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know that entity is a party or represents a party" for a period of only on year. Why did you limit this non-participation commitment to only one year?

Answer. The language stated above is the standard language mandated by the Office of Government Ethics (OGE). I intend to fully comply with my ethical obligations as agreed to by OGE. If confirmed, I will not hold any position at this entity for the duration of my Ambassadorship.

Question 3. Given 50 years of U.S. bipartisan opposition to settlement activity, it has been our country's practice for decades that U.S, Ambassadors to Israel do not set foot inside the settlements. Given your considerable support and enabling of the settlement enterprise, do you plan to break with this longstanding, bipartisan tradition and visit the settlements if you become ambassador?

Answer. I will govern myself strictly in accordance with the practices imposed by the President and the Secretary of State.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DAVID FRIEDMAN BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question 1. Do you believe it would be helpful for Prime Minister Netanyahu to express a willingness to engage with Arab Governments on the Arab Peace Initiative? If confirmed, is this an approach that you would encourage the Israeli Government to pursue?

Answer. As President Trump made clear, it is very important to him personally to work towards achieving peace throughout the Middle East region, including a comprehensive agreement that would end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On matters of policy, I will take direction from the President and the Secretary of State.

Question 2. Do you think it will be more challenging to explore the opportunities between Israel and the Arab world if Israel continues on its current path of settlement expansion and demolition of Palestinian structures and homes in Jerusalem and the West Bank?

Answer. President Trump is committed to achieving peace throughout the Middle East, including an agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians, and has stated that existing settlements are not an impediment to peace.µ I have not been in contact with the leaders in the Arab world and would not want to speculate on their views of settlement expansion and demolition of Palestinian structures, especially in isolation. As stated above, I will take direction from the President and the Secretary of State.

Question 3. Would a hasty decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem help or harm Israel's relationships with Jordan and Egypt, and Israel's ability to make progress in a broader approach with the Arab world?

Answer. A hasty decision would not be advisable.

Question 4. Do you believe the United States should encourage Israel to restrict or limit settlement activity? And if so, what specific restrictions would you advocate for as ambassador?

Answer. I believe, as the President has said, that settlement expansion beyond existing borders, as well as new settlements, may not be helpful to the cause of peace. I could not advise on any specific restrictions in isolation without a full appreciation of the parties' positions on all relevant issues and detailed discussions with the President and the Secretary of State.

Question 5. Do you plan to be involved in activities and fundraising for the Bet El settlement while serving as U.S, Ambassador?

Answer. I intend to resign from my position as President of the American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva Center, a 501(c) 3, if I am confirmed by the Senate, and I do not intend to resume that position, or any other position at this entity, for so long as I am Ambassador to the State of Israel.

Question 6. Do you agree that people-to-people programs can play a valuable role in promoting mutual respect and helping to create an environment more conducive to achieving peace?

Answer. Yes.

Question 7. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador, will you use your role to help champion people-to-people programs and encourage engagement across Israeli and Palestinian societies?

Answer. Yes, subject to the direction of the State Department.

Letters Submitted in Support of and in Opposition to David Friedman's Nomination to be Ambassador to Israel

UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA

MARK (MOISHE) BANE
President

ALLEN FAGIN
Executive Vice President

JERRY WOLASKY
Chairman, Advocacy

NATHAN J. DIAMENT
Executive Director

MAURY LITWACK
Director of State
Political Affairs

HOWARD FRIEDMAN
Chairman, Board of Directors

February 14, 2017

Hon. Bob Corker, Chairman
Hon. Ben Cardin, Ranking Member
Members of the U.S. Senate Committee
on Foreign Relations
Washington, DC

Dear Senators,

We write to you on behalf of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America ("Orthodox Union") with regard to the United States Senate's consideration of David Friedman to be the U.S. Ambassador to Israel.

The Orthodox Union is the nation's largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization representing nearly 1,000 congregations nationwide. As a nonpartisan religious organization, it is our practice not to endorse or oppose a president's nominees before the Senate for confirmation. However, we wish to express our view to the Senate with regard to several issues that have arisen in connection with Mr. Friedman's nomination.

A campaign has been launched to portray Mr. Friedman's skeptical views toward the "two state solution" - as the means of resolving the Israeli - Palestinian conflict -- as extreme and even beyond the pale of mainstream thought. This campaign has been launched by several liberal activist organizations, editorial columnists and even a few Members of Congress. We would not deny that these organizations represent the views of many American Jews and others who indeed believe in the "peace process" and "two state solution" as the preferred means of resolving the conflict. But there is also no denying that many American Jews -- certainly in the Orthodox Union's constituency -- and other pro-Israel Americans share Mr. Friedman's deep skepticism toward this decades-old approach which has been tried and tested and failed repeatedly to deliver security and peace to the people of Israel, the Palestinians and the region.

Indeed, we are compelled to note that in its eight year tenure, the Obama Administration tried aggressively to pursue a "two state solution" to no avail. It is the view of millions of pro-Israel Americans - including most of the Orthodox Union's constituents -- that this result is primarily due to the Palestinians' persistent rejectionism. The Palestinians repeatedly, and through their official organs,

OU Advocacy is the non-partisan public policy and advocacy arm of the Orthodox Union, the nation's largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization founded in 1898.

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deny the historic connection of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and their refusal to recognize the legitimacy of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people.

In light of this recent history, many pro-Israel Americans, who share the ultimate goal of achieving security and peace for all in the Mideast, view the model of the peace process pursued by past administrations as stale and illusory. These Americans support a new approach to how the United States will engage with this important aspect of American foreign policy.

No doubt, reasonable and well-meaning people can debate these points and rightly claim they are representing many constituents who subscribe to one side of the debate. But it is wrong to assert, in this context, that the other side's views are extreme and beyond the pale.

We urge you to take our perspective into account as you consider Mr. Friedman's nomination.

Sincerely,

Mark Bahe
President

Jerry Wolasky
Chairman

Nathan J. Diament
Executive Director

February 15, 2017

Senator Tom Udall
Member
United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
VIA: matthew_padilla@tomudall.senate.gov

Dear Senator Udall,

We have served as United States ambassadors to Israel under presidents of both parties, from Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama. We have worked with Israeli leaders of different political stripes, and have sought to advance U.S. interests and strengthen the US-Israel relationship in times of war and peace. We care deeply about Israel: an American ally, a stronghold of democracy in the Middle East, and a homeland for the Jewish people.

The American ambassador must be dedicated to advancing our country's longstanding bipartisan goals in the region: strengthening the security of the United States and our ally Israel, and advancing the prospects for peace between Israel and its neighbors, in particular the Palestinians. If Israel is to carry on as a democratic, Jewish nation, respected internationally, we see no alternative to a two-state solution. This has been the bipartisan goal of U.S. foreign policy for decades.

We are concerned that Mr. David Friedman, nominated to serve as U.S. ambassador to Israel, strongly disagrees. He has argued that two states for two peoples is "an illusory solution in search of a non-existent problem". Mr. Friedman has been active in supporting and financing the settler movement. He has said that he does not believe it would be illegal for Israel to annex the occupied West Bank. We urge the Committee to address the question of whether Mr. Friedman, as ambassador, would defend the established American view that annexation of West Bank territory, outside the context of an international resolution, would be counterproductive and a violation of international law.

Mr. Friedman has accused President Obama and the entire State Department of anti-Semitism. He propagated the false conspiracy theory that Hillary Clinton's advisor Huma Abedin "has well-established ties to the Muslim Brotherhood"; he has referred to the Anti-Defamation League as "morons". He has characterized supporters of J Street, a liberal Jewish organization, as "kapos", the Jews who cooperated with Nazis during the Holocaust. These are extreme, radical positions, and we believe the Committee should satisfy itself that Mr. Friedman has the balance and the temperament required to represent the United States as ambassador to Israel.

We note that President Trump recently stated that construction of new settlements may not be helpful in achieving peace. In line with the policy of previous Administrations, he has voiced his desire "to make the ultimate deal between Israelis and Palestinians". We hope that the Committee will satisfy itself that Mr. Friedman, if confirmed, could effectively support that national objective. We believe him to be unqualified for the position.

Respectfully,

Thomas R. Pickering
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William C. Harrop
1991 to 1993
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<< signature to come >>

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James B. Cunningham
2008 to 2011

SOURCE MATERIAL FOR CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DAVID FRIEDMAN

Americans for Peace Now

Ambassador-Nominee David Friedman: In His Own Words

Published December 19, 2016 | Updated January 25, 2017

Much has been written about the views of David Friedman, President-elect Donald Trump's nominee as the next U.S. Ambassador to Israel. We have compiled this collection of quotes from his articles and speeches, so people can better understand and judge Mr. Friedman, based entirely on his own words.

Rejecting U.S. policy in support of peace efforts/two-state solution

Unequivocally opposing the two-state solution, Friedman wrote:

> "**There has never been a 'two-state solution'** – only a 'two-state narrative.' He also referred to it as "**this non-existent 'solution,'**" a "**scam**," a "**damaging anachronism**," and "**an illusory solution in search of a non-existent problem**." He described it as "**an illusion** that serves the worst intentions of both the United States and the **Palestinian Arabs**. It has never been a solution, only a narrative. But even the narrative itself now needs to end." [Note: The term "Palestinian Arabs" is used by those who reject recognition of the Palestinians as a people with a legitimate national identity]. (February 2016)[i]

Suggesting that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today has nothing to do with land or Israeli policies, Friedman stated:

> "**This is not about battle about land. It's an ideological battle about whether there will be a Jewish state**, and it's a battle between a radical jihadism and the rest of the Muslim world." (August 2016)[ii]

Suggesting that the demand to remove settlers from the West Bank as part of a peace agreement is racist and similar to a Nazi policy, Friedman stated:

> "The Palestinians want Israel to absorb countless 'refugees' - people who never lived in Israel and whose ancestors were never forced to leave Israel [not accurate] - while their so-called 'state' is required to be, **as the Nazis said, Judenrein** (devoid of Jews). . . **It is an entirely racist and anti-Semitic** position. . . the Prime Minister of Israel correctly observes that the Palestinian demand to remove all Jews from their ancestral homeland in Judea and Samaria is nothing short of an attempt at **ethnic cleansing**." (September 2016)[iii]

Opposing the removal of settlers, Friedman wrote:

> "**It is inconceivable there could be a mass evacuation on that magnitude [speaking of the removal of settlers]**, in the unlikely event that there was an otherwise comprehensive peace agreement. . . It makes no sense for Judea and Samaria to be 'Judenrein [void of Jews],' any more than it makes sense for Israel to be 'Arabrein [void of Arabs].' It's not fair." (November 2016)[iv]

Making the case for permanent Israeli control over West Bank, he said [explicitly from the perspective of someone identifying with the settlers and Israeli right - note the use of the word "we"]:

> ". . . under most calculations, if you took **the entire state of Israel, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea**. . . if you annexed all of Judea and Samaria into Israel, the Jewish population would still be about 65%. . . If you study the numbers you'll see that the whole idea that **we** have to jettison Judea and Samaria to retain the Jewish characteristics of Israel is just not true." (September 2016)[v]

Advocating the obstructionist position of Prime Minister Netanyahu, Friedman wrote:

> "The critical thing is to recognize that there is not going to be any progress on a Palestinian state until the Palestinians renounce violence and accept Israel as a Jewish state. Until that happens, **there is really nothing to talk about in terms of a political process**. . ." (November 2016)[vi]

In contrast to this November 2016 assertion, Friedman previously wrote candidly about his view that Palestinian actions/policies are irrelevant to what Israel should do vis-à-vis settlements - a view predicated on the belief that there is no occupation and the entire West Bank belongs to Israel. He wrote [explicitly from the perspective of someone identifying with the settlers and Israeli right - note the use of the word "we"]:

> "If, say, next month the Palestinians renounce violence, are **we** really prepared to cede to them Gush Etzion, Maale Adumim, Bet El, Ariel, etc.? **Of course not**. Separate and apart from the threshold issue of trust, Judea and Samaria historically have deep Jewish roots and were validly captured 48 years ago in a defensive war – far more legitimately than through the atrocious acts that today dictate the borders of most countries. And, insofar as they were captured from the Kingdom of Jordan, which almost immediately abandoned any interest in the region, **they are not occupied territory**." (October 2015)[vii]

Supporting the continuous expansion of settlements [in an entire article written explicitly from the perspective someone who identifies with the settlers, using the words "we," "us," and "our" throughout], Friedman wrote:

> "**As a general rule, we should expand a community in Judea and Samaria** where the land is legally available and a residential or commercial need is present **– just like in any other neighborhood anywhere in the world**. Until that becomes the primary consideration for development, how can we expect to be taken seriously that this is **our** land?" And: "Peace will come if and when Palestinians learn to stop hating **us** and to embrace life rather than worship death. **We** should try to help them in that effort, **but in all cases let's continue to build!**" (October 2015)[viii]

Suggesting that if elected and traveling to Israel, President Trump should not necessarily meet with the Palestinian Authority, Friedman stated:

> "I personally think putting the Israeli leadership on a common level with Abbas is a mistake. In one case you have a sovereign nation that is democratic, and in the other case you have a leader who is hanging on by a thread, who does not have an actual mandate and who funds stipends to pay to families of terrorists while they are in jail. These are difference [sic] types of governments—**if you even want to call the Palestinian leadership a government**. (August 2016)[ix]

Suggesting that a Trump Administration would clear out civil servants who argue against shifting policy on Israel-Palestine, Friedman stated in a speech:

> "When Donald Trump has his first meeting with the lifers in the state Department and they say, 'Mr. Trump, with all due respect, you have only been president for a couple of days, we've been living here for the last 20 years, we don't do it that way, we do it this way – we don't move the embassy, that's been State department policy for 20 years, the reaction from Donald Trump is going to be, '**You know what guys, you're all FIRED!**'" (October 2016)[x]

Suggesting that the State Department's two-state policy is grounded in anti-Semitism, Friedman wrote:

> "The U.S. State Department – with **a hundred-year history of anti-Semitism** – promotes the payoff of corrupt Palestinians in exchange for their completely duplicitous agreement to support a two-state solution." (February 2016)[xi]

Attacking liberal U.S. Jews (as kapos, etc)

In July 2015[xii], Friedman wrote an article attacking liberal American Jews, stating,

> "Unfortunately, **hearkening back to the days of the Kapos during the Nazi regime and well before that, there is a history of a minority of Jews betraying their own**. I don't think all liberal Jews are 'self-hating,' as some of my colleagues like to describe them. But I do think that, like most liberals, they suffer a cognitive disconnect in identifying good and evil."
>
> And: "People like Jeremy Ben-ami of 'J Street' who cut his teeth on the **virulently anti-Israel (notwithstanding its name) New Israel Fund**, and who today leads an organization – **a proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing** – that purports to be pro-Israel but advocates just the opposite."

In May 2016[xiii], Friedman went further, writing:

> "Are **J Street** supporters really as bad as kapos? The answer, actually, is no. **They are far worse than kapos – Jews who turned in their fellow Jews in the Nazi death camps**. The kapos faced extraordinary cruelty and who knows what any of us would have done under those circumstances to save a loved one? But J Street? **They are just smug advocates of Israel's destruction** delivered from the comfort of their secure American sofas – **it's hard to imagine anyone worse**."

In December 2016[xiv], The Atlantic's Jeffrey Goldberg asked him about his comments comparing liberal Jews to kapos. Friedman doubled down

> ". . . Mr. [Jeffrey] Goldberg then raised the kapos comparison and asked if he stood by it. Mr. Friedman did not back away. '**They're not Jewish, and they're not pro-Israel**,' he said, according to the people in the room."

In August 2015[xv], Friedman attacked Democratic (and Jewish) Senator Chuck Schumer, of New York over the Iran nuclear deal, writing:

> "No matter how he ultimately votes, by making his decision such a close call – which it plainly should not be – **Schumer is validating the worst appeasement of terrorism since Munich**.

In November 2016[xvi], Friedman attacked the Anti-Defamation League and Senator Al Franken, who is Jewish, for calling an ad released by the Trump campaign anti-Semitic (an ad openly celebrated by anti-Semites as an attack on Jews):

> "This is an absolute abuse of the accusation of anti-Semitism...The Anti-Defamation League, which was founded on the notion of rooting out anti-Semitism, has completely destroyed and perverted their own mandate by going after this type of criticism. I don't see how anybody can take the Anti-Defamation League seriously going forward...This is what happens when people take these insane arguments to their logical extension. They lose all credibility, and frankly, they sound like morons."

Accusing President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry of anti-Semitism

"Asked to comment on the unspeakable tragedy of innocent Jewish civilians being murdered by knife-wielding Islamic radicals, **Obama and Kerry** do little more than condemn the proverbial 'cycle of violence.' I'm sorry, but this is pure and outright murder and any public figure who finds it difficult to condemn it as such without diluting the message with geo-political drivel is engaging in 'blatant anti-Semitism.'" (May 2016)[xvii]

"As the Dreyfus affair ran its course, the Parisian streets were taken over by angry mobs shouting 'kill Dreyfus, kill the Jews.' Thankfully, we have not descended to that level, but **the blatant anti-Semitism emanating from our President and his sycophantic minions is palpable and very disturbing**. (August 2015)[xviii]

"**So how has our great uniting President responded?** In the same manner as his spiritual leader, Jeremiah Wright – **by appealing to the vilest anti-Semitic biases of the population**. This is the worst type of Chicago-style politics and no other president in my lifetime has descended to such despicable behavior." (August 2015)[xix]

"I have little to add to the disgust already expressed by the experts with regard to the horrific agreement reached between the P5+1 and Iran – **undoubtedly the worst international accord since Neville Chamberlain conceded Eastern Europe to Hitler**." (July 2015)[xx]

Attacking Hillary Clinton & Bill Clinton

Attacking Hillary Clinton as anti-Israel, Friedman wrote:

"Forcing a deal against Israel's will (and against the interests of justice, fairness and international law) would be the culmination of her lengthy career of anti-Israel advocacy and policy. . . If you are an American Jew who is thinking of voting for Hillary Clinton, I have the following suggestion: Spend a week in France, a country which has all but succumbed to uncontrolled Muslim immigration and failed left-wing policies. Speak with representatives of the Jewish community of that country, and develop an understanding of their fears and insecurities living in their host nation. BECAUSE IF HILLARY CLINTON IS ELECTED, THE PRO-ISRAEL AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY IS GOING TO START TO FEEL A LOT LIKE THE JEWS OF FRANCE. [capital letters in the original]" (October 2016)[xxi]

Attacking Hillary Clinton by accusing one of her top aides of having connections to Muslim Brotherhood & Al Qaida, Friedman told a crowd:

"Who does Hillary Clinton get her advice from? . . . What about Huma Abedin? Grew up in Saudi Arabia, **close connections to the Muslim Brotherhood** [voice in crowd says, "and al Qaida"], **and al Qaida, right**." [He later tried to suggest that "and al Qaida, right" was not an endorsement of that accusation – see video]. (October 2016)[xxii]

Attacking Hillary Clinton's personal views on Israel, Friedman said:

"I'm not aware of anything she did that is particularly good. I can name off the top of my head things that were nasty, like ripping up the letter from George Bush to Ariel Sharon, which I think was

the only thing Israel got from evacuating Gaza. **I don't think she particularly likes Israel**. I think she likes the kind of elite left among the Jewish people of Israel and in America like the Max Blumenthals, the Sidney Blumenthals and the people of that ilk who would like to turn Israel into a sort of Singapore. **I think she's terrible for Israel**." (August 2016)[xxiii]

Attacking Hillary Clinton by accusing one of her top aides of having connections to Muslim Brotherhood & Al Qaida, Friedman told a crowd:

"Who does Hillary Clinton get her advice from? ···What about Huma Abedin? Grew up in Saudi Arabia, **close connections to the Muslim Brotherhood** [voice in crowd says, "and al Qaida"], **and al Qaida, right." [He later tried to suggest that "and al Qaida, right" was not an endorsement of that accusation – see video]**. (October 2016)[xxiv]

Attacking President Bill Clinton for his Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts:

"Despite his good intentions, however, **Clinton was more dangerous to the interests of Israel than any president since Eisenhower**." (March 2016)[xxv]

Other positions of note

Suggesting that U.S. pressure of any kind is a threat to Israel, Friedman stated:

"A strong Israel un-tethered to American pressure is essential to Israel's ongoing survival." (August 2016)[xxvi]

Calling for curbs in US on criticism/activism related to Israel, Friedman wrote,

"Colleges are generally being far too lenient in allowing the pro-Palestinian community to deprive those in the pro-Israel camp of their First Amendment right to free speech. . . This is a serious constitutional deprivation, so it is something that must be looked at." (November 2016)[xxvii]

Arguing for a new U.S.-Israel relationship grounded in the fight against "Islamic terrorism," Friedman wrote:

". . . contrary to what we've seen in the past, Israel is no longer a client state to be directed what to do and not to do. Israel is a **full partner with the United States in the global war of the 21st century**: The global war against Islamic terrorism." (October 2016)[xxviii]

Attacking the New York Times (and implying it is anti-Semitic), Friedman wrote:

"**If only the Times had reported on the Nazi death camps with the same fervor as its failed last-minute attempt to conjure up alleged victims of Donald Trump**, imagine how many lives could have been saved. But the Times has never been committed to the unvarnished truth and its **priorities have never included causes important to Israel or the Jewish people**. I focus on the Times not because of my disgust for this publication nor because it threatens the very core of American democracy. . . " (October 2016)[xxix]

Attacking Israel's Arab citizens for "disloyalty", Friedman wrote:

"Israel's enemies are on its doorstep and it is threatened from all directions and from within. **Its policy of schizophrenia – of criticizing disloyal Arab citizens while simultaneously bestowing upon them the benefits of citizenship, simply isn't working**." (November 2015)[xxx]

Praising Putin & Netanyahu in the same breath [and supporting Assad regime]

> "**Vladimir Putin gets it**. He may be a 'thug,' as he was recently described by Senator Rubio, but he knows how to identify a national objective, execute a military plan, and ultimately prevail. And **Bibi Netanyahu gets it as well**. That's why the coordination between the Russian and Israeli armies, and in particular their respective air forces, is at unprecedented levels. Bibi knows that with Russia in the game, when the dust settles Bashar Assad will retain power **– a manageable result for Israel insofar as the Assads have kept their border with Israel largely quiet for some 42 years**." (November 2015)[xxxi]

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[i] http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/18368
[ii] http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4837669,00.html
[iii] http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.741515
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Learn a lesson from Russia

.Vladimir Putin gets it. So does Netanyahu. Forget the rest of the world's leaders

David Friedman, ט"ז בכסלו תשע"ו, 11/28/2015

photo montage

Russia is going to defeat ISIS. Not with a "coalition" of cowards, freeloaders and hypocrites led from behind by the American president, but all by itself. It will bomb ISIS strongholds, train and arm Syrian soldiers and destroy ISIS resistance until the Islamic State surrenders (unlikely) or ceases to exist (let's hope).

And, when Russia defeats ISIS, it will have accomplished something that the United States hasn't done since 1945 nor Israel since 1973: win a war.

Governor Mike Huckabee had one of the most memorable quotes of a very memorable series of Republican primary debates. He referred to war as "killing people and breaking things," that continues until the loser gives up or is destroyed. For thousands of years, that's what war has been about. Almost every national boundary in both hemispheres has been .formed as a result of a battle followed by a surrender

But no more, at least not under the current Democratic regime. The United States has the largest and most powerful military in the world. Under the Obama Doctrine, however, it is no longer in the business of fighting to win. Indeed, the Obama Doctrine has been reduced to the following: if you are a terrorist, you may embed yourself among "civilians" and maintain your despicable enterprise until we convince you and your followers of the wisdom of our values. As a result of this nonsense, our enemies are stronger and America is no longer .capable of exporting its values and influencing global safety and security

Obama and Kerry only want to fight Republicans, not terrorists. They are in a unique position in a singular moment in time to unite Arabs and Israelis, Jews and Gentiles, Shiites and Sunnis, in a successful campaign to eradicate a common and reviled enemy – ISIS. As part of that campaign, the United States could reasonably make demands, exert influence and seek behavioral modifications to truly make the Middle East a safer place. Instead

American leaders force their stellar military commanders to fight with two hands and a leg tied behind their backs. Rather than suppress our enemies they suppress our generals, and make sure that they keep their mouths shut and don't complain. Fortunately, those formerly in command who have left the military are voicing their criticisms and their revelations are .devastating

Vladimir Putin gets it. He may be a "thug," as he was recently described by Senator Rubio, but he knows how to identify a national objective, execute a military plan, and ultimately prevail. And Bibi Netanyahu gets it as well. That's why the coordination between the Russian and Israeli armies, and in particular their respective air forces, is at unprecedented levels. Bibi knows that with Russia in the game, when the dust settles Bashar Assad will retain power – a manageable result for Israel insofar as the Assads have kept their border .with Israel largely quiet for some 42 years

Bibi's goal is to keep Russia from strengthening Hezbollah, and as the leader of the strongest military in the region, he is negotiating with Putin from a position of strength – .something Putin understands and respects. Let's hope and pray that Bibi succeeds

Meanwhile, the United States is nowhere in this most critical and incendiary locale. Having referred to ISIS as "contained" just a day before the deadliest terrorist attack in French history and two weeks after ISIS downed a Russian plan, his credentials as commander-in-chief are in tatters. He has therefore cleverly changed the conversation to the wisdom of accepting 10,000 refugees – an unpopular position but one which nevertheless bolsters his .standing among the liberal elite and detracts attention from his failed leadership

There are lots of good reasons to vote Republican in the next American presidential election. But for those of us who still believe that the United States must take the lead in world affairs and aggressively root out evil that threatens us and our allies, for those of us who believe that Israel must finally be given the green light to defeat its intractable foes, and for those of us who believe that it is a crime to put soldiers in harms way without .affording them a clear path to victory, there is no greater national imperative

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NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:32 p.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake presiding.

Present: Senators Flake [presiding], Barrasso, and Booker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF FLAKE, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

Senator FLAKE. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today, the committee will consider the nominations of two experienced career Foreign Service Officers to be the U.S. Ambassadors to the Republic of the Congo, and Senegal and Guinea Bissau, respectively. I was pleased to meet with each of today's nominees in my office several weeks ago and to learn more about them and about their potential postings.

Thank you for coming by.

Senegal remains stable in a region often plagued with instability around, but it is one of the few countries in Africa to have never experienced a coup d'etat. We cooperated well with Senegal on counterterrorism and with other issues.

Our relationship with Guinea-Bissau has been strained on account of a near-constant stream of political crises, and the previous administration took some steps to try to make that relationship more positive.

The Republic of the Congo continues to present challenges for the United States with trade and investment ties. Trade and investment ties with Congo center on the country's energy resources, and for the region in which it is all too common for heads of state to try to alter or bypass congressional term limits so they can just hang on to power.

I thank both of you for your time and for sharing your expertise with us. I want to pass along our thanks to your family members. I am sure you will make some introductions. We appreciate the sacrifices that they make, and for all the good work that you do.

With that, I will recognize Senator Booker.

STATEMENT OF HON. CORY BOOKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator BOOKER. I appreciate that. I want to echo my chairman's words today. This is a tremendous moment to be able to sit here

with the two of you, who have a very long, esteemed careers in the State Department and Foreign Service.

I have been in the Senate for a short time, a few years, and have been on this committee for short weeks, but I am very familiar with the important role you play for our country. I just want to thank you both for the service that you have rendered.

I want to say it clear, and I know that I speak for all the Senators on this dais, that your work, your safety, and your success is a priority for me and for us.

The countries to which you have been nominated to serve in have very important U.S. policy interests. Frankly, I think they have interests that are important to all of humanity.

Senegal was discussed by the chairman. They have their stability. They are a strong civil society with a relatively free press. It is a beacon of hope for Muslim-majority countries.

And for Guinea-Bissau and the Republic of the Congo, they continue to have grave concerns, concerns of poor governance, political conflict, and humanitarian challenges. I really do believe that all of us as Americans should be deeply concerned about the success of the people of those countries, and our role in that is critical.

It is a testimony to the two of you, this is something that is really exciting to me that we have President Obama and President Trump showing their accord. This is the vast territory on which they obviously agree on things. And that is really a testimony to the qualifications of the two individuals that sit before us.

So thank you very much. I look forward to your testimony. And I do want to say, as I said to you in the backroom, we are very, unfortunately, crunched for time, having to go see the President in regard to North Korea.

So we look forward to having a good hearing, cogent hearing, even if it is relatively brief compared to others.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Our first nominee Tulinabo Mushingi, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service who currently serves as U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso, a position he has held since 2013. This is the second time I have had the pleasure of being present for one of his confirmation hearings.

Mr. Ambassador, welcome back.

Our second nominee is Todd Haskell, who serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs. Prior to that, he was the Africa Bureau's director of public diplomacy and public affairs. Mr. Haskell joined the Foreign Service in 1985 and served in the Dominican Republic, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Israel, Egypt, and Mexico. I am trying to figure some nexus in all of that, but I have failed.

Senator BOOKER. They are all on planet Earth.

Senator FLAKE. They are.

So we have before us two very experienced diplomats. We appreciate you being here.

And, Mr. Mushingi, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF HON. TULINABO SALAMA MUSHINGI OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA–BISSAU

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you once again as President Trump's nominee for United States Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. I very much appreciate the confidence and trust that the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. I am equally grateful to receive this distinguished committee's consideration.

Allow me to thank my wife of 35 years, Rebecca, and our daughter, who have supported me through my career.

My work and travels across Africa, including as Ambassador to Burkina Faso, have provided me with the experience needed to foster strong ties between the United States, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau.

Senegal is one of our most reliable partners in Africa in our efforts to boost economic growth, promote good governance, fight terrorism, as well as counter the drivers of terrorism. For example, to strengthen our defense capabilities, in 2016, our two countries signed a defense cooperation agreement that gives the United States the ability to respond quickly to emergency situations in the region. Senegal also hosts one of the largest Peace Corps programs in Africa.

Turning now to Guinea-Bissau, its longstanding political impasse and weak governance not only threaten the country's own development, they also set a dangerous example for the region. If confirmed, I will strengthen our efforts to promote economic development, step up civilian governance to increase democracy, and counter drug trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea.

Mr. Chairman, I have been fortunate to work in public service, in particular on African issues, for over 27 years. If confirmed, I will work hard with our U.S. mission teams to advance U.S. national security interests, to reflect American values, to protect American citizens and interests, and to maximize the effectiveness of our cooperation in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Thank you very much for inviting me today. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[Ambassador Mushingi's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TULINABO MUSHINGI

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. I appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. I am equally grateful to receive the distinguished committee's consideration.

Today, it is my privilege to present my wife, Rebecca, who honorably served our country working for the U.S. Peace Corps, and my daughter, Furaha. Both have supported me throughout my career in the Foreign Service.

My work and travels across Africa, including as Ambassador to Burkina Faso, have provided me with the experience needed to foster strong ties between the United States and Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Members of this committee and their staffs to promote and protect U.S. interests in both countries.

Allow me to first turn to our relations with Senegal, where a shared commitment to democratic values, security, and economic growth forms the bedrock of our partnership. Senegal's success in these areas sets a strong example for the region, advancing our core interests of reducing regional threats and promoting greater trade.

Through their democratic traditions, the people of Senegal have shown over and over again that they can and will hold their leaders to account by casting votes in democratically-held elections and exercising their right to free speech. Senegal's leaders have also shown that they respect the democratic rights and will of the people.

The United States supports the Government of Senegal's efforts to resolve the 34-year, low-intensity, separatist conflict in the southern Casamance region. A de facto cease fire has been in place there since 2013, I believe due in no small part to the success of our economic development and diplomatic efforts. This regular and sustained engagement with all parties to the conflict, has contributed to real change on the ground and the possibility of a lasting peace. If confirmed, I will make sure our effort to support the Casamance peace process remains a priority.

Senegal stands as one of our most reliable partners in Africa in the effort to promote good governance, fight terrorism, and counter the drivers of terrorism. Senegal is a member Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) and of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) programs and is a leading voice for using regional approaches to CT challenges. Senegal consistently ranks among the top ten troop and police contributors to UN peacekeeping missions. To truly understand Senegal's importance, one need, look no further than the instrumental role Senegal played in helping ensure the peaceful transition to power of a democratically elected president after 22 years of dictatorship in The Gambia, and the role it continues to play in supporting the Economic Community of West African States Military Intervention in The Gambia (ECOMIG).

In 2016, Senegal and the United States signed a defense cooperation agreement. This agreement gives us the ability to respond quickly to emergency situations in the region, while also supporting Senegal's capacity to fight terrorism. If confirmed, I will work with Senegal to continue to strengthen our common effort to fight terrorism in West Africa and beyond.

Senegal aims to be an attractive destination for investment—by its own citizens and by foreign investors. American entrepreneurs are finding new opportunities to do business in Senegal, and U.S. development assistance has already made critical contributions to the infrastructure the country must have for sustained economic growth.

In September 2015, Senegal completed a $540 million MCC Compact focused on developing transportation and irrigation infrastructure in northern and southern Senegal, dramatically improving agricultural productivity and market access for farmers. In December 2015, the MCC Board selected Senegal as a candidate for development of a second five-year compact. The Government of Senegal is working closely with MCC to identify ways to alleviate the high cost of energy.

Lastly, our people-to-people relations have never been stronger thanks to robust public diplomacy exchanges and over 275 American Peace Corps volunteers placed in communities across Senegal, working on projects in agriculture, agroforestry, health, and community economic development. If confirmed, I will work to deepen the bilateral partnership through programs like these, which are aimed at helping Senegal become an even stronger partner for the United States.

Turning now to Guinea-Bissau, our efforts remain focused on promoting stable civilian governance to increase democracy, economic development, and counter drug trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea Guinea-Bissau has seen five different governments in the last 15 months. This reflects deep divisions, driven in large part by personal grievances, which have hindered efforts by the United Nations and ECOWAS to bring about a resolution to Guinea-Bissau's long-standing political impasse.

Instability and weak governance not only threaten the country's own development; they set a dangerous example in a region where trans-national crime already thrives on porous, undefended borders and unpatrolled seas. Democracy and rule of law will flourish only if the President, the Government of Guinea-Bissau, the Na-

tional Assembly, and leaders of the main political forces work together to establish an inclusive, responsive, and an accountable government that serves all citizens.

In FY 2016, Guinea-Bissau received limited assistance in International Military Education and Training to support the professionalization of its military forces and more constructive and stable civil-military relations. The country also received aid to promote Rule of Law and support counter-narcotics projects. If confirmed, I will work with international organizations, such as the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and regional bodies such as ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, to support security and constitutional rule and to bolster economic growth.

Mr. Chairman, I have been fortunate to work in public service and particularly on African issues for many years. I am very familiar with the culture and peoples of West Africa and U.S. interests in the region. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our truly extraordinary U.S. Mission team in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, and, as Chief of Mission, working to ensure the safety, security, and of all U.S. citizens as we work together to advance U.S. interests in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Mushingi.

Ambassador Haskell?

STATEMENT OF TODD PHILIP HASKELL OF FLORIDA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Mr. HASKELL. If confirmed. [Laughter.]

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and with interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests and U.S. values in the Congo, and to help all Congolese achieve the bright future they deserve.

Accompanying me here today is my wife, Jennifer, who has traveled to be with us all the way from South Africa, where she serves as the management counselor at our Embassy in Pretoria, and two of my children, Michael and Jonah, who have come from Texas and New York, respectively. My third son is actually currently teaching English in China and cannot be with us.

Senator FLAKE. Raise your hand, will you?

Good. Thank you.

Mr. HASKELL. The Republic of the Congo, with a population of about 4.5 million people, sits in a strategically important position on the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. It is the fourth largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 500 U.S. citizens live in the Republic of the Congo, and U.S. businesses are active in the petroleum sector and other industries.

President Denis Sassou N'Guesso has played a valuable role as a mediator in regional crises. Under his leadership, Congo has deployed peacekeepers to the Central African Republic for more than a decade now, and is hosting approximately 35,000 refugees from that country.

Congolese troops deploying to the Central African Republic receive U.S. Government-sponsored training, and the Congo military also participates in the international military education and training program.

U.S. policy seeks to promote the development of democratic institutions and the long-term stability of Congo.

President Sassou has been in power for 33 of the last 38 years. He overcame constitutional term limits through a referendum in October 2015, and he was reelected President in March 2016. Our public statements at that time criticized the flawed electoral process and the arrests of opposition leaders following the vote, while praising the people of Congo for their active participation in the election.

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the need for good governance and effective institutions that serve the citizens of Congo.

The United States is one of many countries addressing a broad range of health issues in Congo, such as poor child nutrition, HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. And U.S. assistance in the health sector also focuses on identifying emerging infectious diseases such as Ebola.

Embassy Brazzaville coordinates with several U.S. Government agencies to assist Congo on natural resources management and the protection of Congo's flora and fauna, including lowland gorillas and forest elephants.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the collective experience of my 32 or so years in the Foreign Service to advance U.S. interests, to ensure the safety and welfare of all Americans and U.S. Government employees, and to strengthen bilateral relations with and promote the long-term stability of the Republic of the Congo.

I am looking forward to working with this committee in furtherance of these goals, and I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Thank you.

[Mr. Haskell's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TODD P. HASKELL

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Congo (ROC). If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests and values in the Congo, and to help all Congolese achieve the bright future they deserve.

Accompanying me here today is my wife Jennifer, who has traveled to be with us today from South Africa where she serves as Management Counselor at our Embassy in Pretoria, and two of my three children, Michael and Jonah, who have come from Texas and New York respectively. My third son Seth is currently teaching English in Chengdu China.

The Republic of Congo, with a population of about 4.5 million people, sits in a strategically important position on the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. It is the fourth largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 500 U.S. citizens live in the Republic of Congo, and U.S. businesses are active in the petroleum business and other industries.

President Denis Sassou N'Guesso has played a valuable role as mediator in regional crises. Under his leadership, Congo has sent peacekeepers to the Central African Republic for more than a decade now, and is hosting approximately 35,000 refugees from that country. Congolese troops deploying to the Central African Republic receive U.S. Government-sponsored training, and the Congo military also participates in the International Military Education and Training program.

U.S. policy seeks to promote the development of democratic institutions and the long-term stability of the Congo. President Sassou has been in power for 33 of the last 38 years. He overcame constitutional term limits through a referendum in October 2015, and was reelected president in March 2016. Our public statements criticized the flawed electoral process and the arrests of opposition leaders following the vote, while praising the people of Congo for their active participation in the election.

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the need for good governance and effective institutions that serve the citizens of Congo.

The United States is one of many countries addressing a broad range of health issues in ROC, such as poor child nutrition, HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. U.S. assistance in the health sector also focuses on identifying emerging infectious diseases such as Ebola. Embassy Brazzaville also coordinates with several U.S. Government agencies to assist the Congo on natural resource management and the protection of the Congo's forest and fauna, including lowland gorillas and forest elephants.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the collective experiences of my 31years in the Foreign Service to advance U.S. interests, to ensure the safety and welfare of all Americans and U.S. Government employees, and to strengthen bilateral relations with and promote long-term stability in the Republic of Congo. I look forward to working with the committee in furtherance of these goals, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Thank you both.

Mr. Mushingi, with regard to Senegal, when we spoke in our office, we talked about U.S. business opportunities there. What can we do more to encourage U.S. businesses to locate and employ those in Senegal?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question. In fact, economic growth and economic development is one of our priorities in Senegal. If confirmed, of course, I will continue in that same vein.

For Senegal, as we discussed, we are happy to see the interest by American businesses, American companies that are now, that have been for a while, and continue to be interested in Senegal.

And Senegal has proven to be a welcoming nation. In fact, the hospitality they are known for called teranga is obvious when these companies start knocking on the door.

The list of companies currently in Senegal is actually impressive, more than 20, the last time I checked, including companies like Citibank. The latest, which is the NBA, it just started an academy in Senegal for the whole continent of Africa. We have Kosmos that is interested in oil and gas.

So now we have really an opportunity to increase this range of companies interested in Senegal, and we will work hard to continue advocating for American companies that are interested to come to Senegal.

Senator FLAKE. There has been a rift lately between Senegal and Israel. I have sponsorship of the resolution with regard to settlement activity, and it has caused Israel to actually take some measures with regard to economic aid that was promised. That might also affect our relationship.

What do you see as your role there?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. If confirmed, my role, Senator, will be to continue the dialogue that my predecessors have had with the Government of Senegal about our values and about our relations with all our friends, including Israel.

One thing, if I can make just a couple points on that resolution, it is good for us to note what the vote was, but also, we need to remember that Senegal as a member of the OIC, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, is one of the few that has maintained for a long time diplomatic relations with Israel despite pressure.

The second point I just want to make on that resolution is that it was a unanimous resolution. The United States will have ab-

stained, but it was 14 votes, all the countries on the committee voted for that resolution.

The final point I would make is that, as we speak today, the Embassy of Israel is still open in Senegal.

And, just to conclude, saying that really the discussion and the conversation continues between the two countries. And as outsiders, as partners, as friends, we can only continue to work with the Government of Senegal in making sure they know where American values stand and what our stand is in relation to the other friends.

Senator FLAKE. Just quickly on Guinea-Bissau, there are allegations that some of the military have been involved in drug trafficking. What cooperation can we have or do we have with the Government to ensure that that does not continue?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Guinea-Bissau, as we said earlier, is really going through this political impasse. But we have to note also that the current democratically elected government is trying to work with their equivalent of the national assembly.

On drug trafficking especially, I had my briefing, my consultation with a colleague from the Drug Enforcement Agency. I have had my meeting with the USAID, my meeting with DOD. All of us are working with the people of Guinea-Bissau, the Government of Guinea-Bissau, to make sure that they keep their attention focused on this issue of drug trafficking.

The U.S. Coast Guard was looking at their port security because most of the trafficking comes through the port. And with the professionalization of the military, we are trying to get a military, a Guinea-Bissau military, that is aware of these issues and try to counter this drug trafficking problem.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. We have agreed to try to do this in one round, so I will continue to go over my time limit, if that is okay.

Mr. Haskell, how many outside of your immediate family and the State Department know there is a Republic of the Congo and not just the DRC? [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. You do not have to answer that, but go ahead.

Mr. HASKELL. I am trying to think of something clever to say.

No, it is true. I think there is a bit of Congo confusion, but I think the relationship with the Republic of the Congo is very important in its own right.

Senator FLAKE. It is. I am grateful that we have put the importance on it.

Part of the problem that we have had in terms of a business environment in the Republic of the Congo has been the Government's unwillingness to settle its debt to contractors and individuals who have done work there in the past.

What role will you have, if confirmed, in trying to get them to address that issue?

Mr. HASKELL. Thank you for that question.

I think that if one just looked at Congo-Brazzaville neutrally or objectively, you would think that it would be a tremendous investment destination for U.S. investment. There is really significant

natural resources, the petroleum sector and mining and forestry. And yet we really do not see that.

We do see some U.S. companies that have invested there. Chevron is active in the petroleum sector. Seaboard, which is a Kansas-based food processing company, operates there. But not the kind of level that you would expect, given the resources that they do have.

That really has to do with a doing-business environment that is extremely difficult. On the World Bank's ranking of doing business in countries, I believe the Republic of the Congo ranks 177 worldwide out of some 190 or so nations, which is poor not just by worldwide standards but, frankly, poor even in terms of the neighborhood, which has not always been a great place to do business.

So I think it is really important to work with the Government to identify those issues. I think at a time of low oil prices, there is real interest in the Government in looking at diversifying the economy, about moving into entrepreneurship, about looking at other things. That is the kind of assistance and help that we can provide.

I also think that one thing, that one case we have to make, and we have made it over time but we need to continue to make it, is when you do have the kind of disputes that you referred to in your question, it is so important that the Republic of the Congo try to resolve these disputes in a transparent manner with the folks, with the businesses that they have disputes with, because that sends a signal to other investors about the possibility of going there.

So, if confirmed, I can assure you that I will be an advocate for U.S. businesses when they did get into conflicts, such as the one you described.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. You touched on, in your opening statement, but one of the important parts of our relationship is the preservation of wildlife, some that are only found in large numbers in the Republic of the Congo, lowland gorillas, forest elephants.

How important is our relationship there? And what are the biggest threats that we can help with?

Mr. HASKELL. I think our relationship is very important.

The Congo Forest River basin is the second largest tropical rain forest in the world. It is, as I noted, as you also noted, home to species which have really no other home or is particularly hospitable.

We have had actually reasonably good success working with the Government of the Republic of the Congo in training their rangers and in working in efforts to protect their natural parks. I think those are important efforts. They are not expensive efforts. They are efforts that there are other international partners with whom we can work in the region. We will continue down that line.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. I am grateful, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mushingi, thank you very much for being here. Again, grateful.

Your wife, I think she smiled. There she is. It is nice to have your family with you. That is tremendous.

I just want to ask you a little bit about Senegal stability. Obviously, it is seen as one of the more stable countries, but they still

seem to be working on reforms, and there were some reforms in 2016.

Can you just evaluate those reforms for me and let me know what you think about its sort of democratic trajectory overall?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Senegal really has proven in that region to have a commitment, strong commitment, to democratic values. It is one of the few countries where, in that region, where they have had a peaceful transfer of power between different administrations, from the opposition to the majority party. And that tradition has existed since independence, and it still goes on.

Now the one thing that, if confirmed, that we will have to continue working on is to see how we can strengthen the principles that have already been acquired, that they already have, and that they are doing in Senegal. I was discussing this with a colleague, and one thing that we have to do and we have to continue working on are three areas that we can focus on.

One, trying to strengthen the role of the civil societies, because they play an important role of kind of watchdog as far as the executive and the assembly, what they are doing. They have been vocal, they have proven their role in the society.

The second one is really the youth bulge that we observe all around Africa, how we can get the young people that make up the majority of the population, whether in Senegal, whether in many other African countries, to encourage their participation in the democratic process.

Nowadays, like we talk about the millennials, in some of those countries, we are talking about a generation of democracy. So that new generation, how we can get them to continue working in, participating in the democratic process.

The last one is the involvement of women, and women and their role in the democratic process, and also their participation in all aspects of running the Government.

So for Senegal, again, the basic principles of democracy, we share the same commitment for basic democratic rules, democratic principles. We just have to continue working on that.

Senator BOOKER. If I can, two quick follow-ups on that.

First of all, we just had a very fascinating hearing on Libya. We think of the role of U.S. strength often in terms of the military, but the people who were testifying were talking about the importance of the efforts we were doing to strengthen civil society.

So I worry about the U.S. investments, especially with some of the budget proposals that have already come out, about that being the important role that we can be playing in stabilizing or even strengthening a democracy.

Do you have any thoughts or advice, as an Article 1 branch of the U.S. Government that focuses on funding the State Department, about investing in those aspects of the State Department that focus on building civil society?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator.

Once again, what we are doing, what I did, for example, in Burkina Faso, was to make priorities with the resources we have. The budget is voted. We were given resources. We work within those resources.

So if confirmed for Senegal, again, to make those priorities clear.

Senator BOOKER. I am going to interrupt you. I appreciate it. I get your point, and you are being very good by not giving me your opinion on overall funding levels. I guess that means the chairman and I are going to have to do our work without your input there.

Let me ask you this last question on Senegal. Are there any concrete lessons that we can apply from Senegal in terms of other nations around, in terms of building a stable democracy?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator.

The concrete lessons that we can apply are that, like we observed during the last elections, one lesson was that, indeed, the participation of all members of the society, all the citizens, is important during an election to give legitimacy to the people elected.

So using civil societies, working with civil societies, including giving space to all the political parties, and also respecting the constitution of the country, all those were principles that were clear when Senegal was going through the last elections.

Senator BOOKER. I am going to press for maybe one more question, and then we have two other Senators who have arrived, and I want to give them ample opportunity.

But, Mr. Haskell, you have had a tremendous experience, especially I want to thank you. You have done incredible work as a Deputy Secretary over all of Africa, and I guess specific countries about the area in which you are going to be, God willing, the Ambassador.

I do just have the overall concern about—the chairman made an insightful use of sarcasm about the confusion of two Congos. I have an overall concern with just America's attention and focus on the subcontinent as a whole, especially with the economic opportunities that are there, especially with the challenges that we have, everything from terrorism to how they are playing a role in other global dynamics. We have heard already about Israel and the like.

I just wonder, for a guy who is new at this, you have been doing this for decades and focused at least on the subcontinent for some time now, do you have any wisdom that you would want to impart to myself and my colleagues here about ways to leverage U.S. influence in Africa for the good of humanity as well as American interests?

Mr. HASKELL. Thank you for that question. It is a great opportunity to talk about this.

I will note, and I think sometimes something that gets lost a little bit in the headlines when we look at what is going on around Africa, is the extent to which Africa has dramatically transformed in a positive way over the last several decades.

It was not that long ago where it was difficult to look at the continent and find too many democratic governments, or it was difficult to find economies that were thriving, to find places where innovation was occurring. Now we see it not everywhere on the continent but in a great many places where you have elections, where you have alteration of power between two different parties based on the results of elections, where you have economies, you have tech hubs in some places on the continent.

I do think that the picture of the continent as a whole is sometimes much brighter than taking a quick glance at the headlines

as they hit the paper. I suppose another good sign is the fact that occasionally Africa does make headlines in newspapers in a way that it really does not.

I will echo what Ambassador Mushingi said. I spent most of my career as a public diplomacy officer. That means I have been working a great deal with civil society. I have done the traditional diplomacy and the rest of it. But I have worked with young people. I have worked with women's groups. I have worked with disadvantaged groups. I have worked with civil society, certainly.

And I think that there is a lot to be said there for the advances that are occurring there, and we have made a tremendous difference. The United States has a role to play. And I think working with civil society, working with other international partners, working with like-minded governments, I think we can achieve even more moving forward.

So I guess the one thing that I think is sort of not understood as well as it should be about Africa is the extent as to how far it has come and, frankly, how bright its future is.

Senator BOOKER. Sir, thank you very much. And I look forward to continuing this conversation. I am concluding with my questions, but just yes or no question really quick. I think this is really important to Senator Flake and I.

Did you bring your two sons to support you or to try to intimidate Senator Flake and I? Because they are big guys, so I just need to know what their role here is. [Laughter.]

Mr. HASKELL. I kind of knew you would be nice to me if they were here. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Senator Barrasso?

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Haskell, you keep using the words "civil society." I want to ask you, because I appreciate the Congo's willingness to assist in promoting regional stability. I have concerns about the human rights abuses that have been committed by the troops.

I was there with a number of Senators a couple years ago, including Cindy McCain, Senator John McCain's wife, who is really a ferocious advocate. I will tell you that the Republic of the Congo sent peacekeepers to the Central African Republic to serve in the African Union peacekeeping mission and in the United Nations peacekeeping mission. And the United Nations received allegations, as you know, of sexual exploitation and abuse against these Republic of the Congo peacekeepers in 2016.

So in addition, as you know, a mass grave was discovered linking the Congolese peacekeepers to torture and murder of civilians in 2016. The Republic of the Congo troops killed at least 18 people that we know of, including women and children, between December 2013 and June 2015.

On June 8 of last year, the Minister of Justice stated that the soldiers in question would face justice by the end of the year, and I want to ask you about that.

Unfortunately, I understand the investigation into the killings as well as the sexual exploitation and abuses were still pending at the end of 2016.

I think everyone in this room thinks it is unacceptable, it is outrageous, that the United Nations peacekeepers are inflicting such atrocities against the very people that they are sent to protect.

So as the largest contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping missions, the United States, I believe, must take action to prevent future exploitation of these vulnerable populations in conflict zones and to ensure individuals are held accountable for these crimes.

Under United Nations rules, the Government of the Congo is responsible for investigating and prosecuting the troops and the police that they contribute to the peace mission.

So can you bring us up-to-date, If you would know, on the actions that the Government of the Republic of the Congo has taken to prosecute the criminal conduct of these troops and if these soldiers have been brought to justice?

Mr. HASKELL. Thank you for that question. I think it is a very important issue.

I share your description of the things that have happened as outrageous and as unacceptable. It also has been a sentiment that has been echoed by our Embassy in Brazzaville over the years.

As you noted, the Republic of the Congo has had peacekeepers in the Central African Republic for more than a decade now. There have been incidents over that period of time, more than one, several, that are at an unacceptable level.

Since 2014, the U.S. has been providing training for troops before they go, through our ACOTA program. That training is filled with a human rights component. The effort is to make sure that soldiers understand these issues and the importance of them in moving forward.

Nevertheless, and I say with great concern, since the time that training began, we still have had another series of incidents that occurred. So this is of deep concern to us. We have raised it with the Government of the Republic of the Congo repeatedly. The Government has condemned these incidents when they have occurred. They have withdrawn the soldiers back from the Central African Republic and brought them back to Congo. And they have moved to have charges pressed against them.

But the truth is that action has not been taken. There can be several reasons for that.

One is that the Government of Congo does not have a military justice system, so cases are funneled into the normal civilian court system. Frankly, the normal civilian court system lacks the capacity to function effectively and does not function well.

But the second, frankly, and I have not been on the ground yet, but we have to wonder about the will in order to prosecute these cases. I can assure you that, if I am confirmed, this will be something very important to us. It is very difficult for us to continue to support peacekeeping operations to the extent that there is not any action taken on cases like this.

So let me echo your concerns, and I do, indeed, share them.

Senator BARRASSO. I appreciate it, because it leads to the next question. If you are confirmed, and I am encouraging that, as the U.S. Ambassador, then what steps, when you are on the ground, could you take to ensure their government—their government—

takes the crimes as seriously as we all do and holds the troops accountable?

Mr. HASKELL. Thank you, sir. I will say that, over the years, I have worked on a number of human rights issues. I find that different strategies work in different ways. I think it is important to get on the ground and figure out what is the most important approach.

But I assure you that this will be a top priority for me, if confirmed.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Ambassador, if I can visit with you for second about al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and related groups, they have threatened to attack Senegal. You are well-aware of the threats that are out there.

In February 2016, the chief of staff of Senegal's armed forces stated, "Terrorism can hit anywhere, and so we must protect ourselves."

So how would you characterize, currently, the Government's ability to respond and confront terrorist threats, which we know exist?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

That falls directly into what our priorities are in Senegal. In addition to economic growth that we are pursuing and private investment, one piece that we are involved in, we are continuing to invest in it, is peace and security, working with our DOD colleagues, especially AFRICOM.

And as I said in my statement, in 2016, December 2016, we signed the defense cooperation agreement that gives us access to the law enforcement of Senegal, the security forces of Senegal, to work together and see how we can prevent, if not prevent, deter, if we do not deter, how we can respond, if it happens. So we are working in all those areas and strengthening the capabilities of the local security forces to respond to such acts.

Of course, I was in Burkina Faso when we had the terrorist attack in January 2016. A few months later, I was in Cote d'Ivoire. So the talk was that next will be Senegal. So because of that, everybody, the locals and us, the partners, we are mobilized to do everything we can to be ready, if it happens.

Of course, terrorism now is a global issue, and Senegal is aware, and we are aware of that as well.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

And thank you all. Again, we apologize for the shortened hearing. We just came under the time that we had for the Gorsuch hearings, I think, close to that. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. But we appreciate your service and the answers that you gave.

One thing that is heartening, as Senator Booker will learn on this committee, we are able to travel as well to Africa and run into people in other capacities in our Embassies that are then nominated for an ambassadorship or move from ambassador from one country to another, like Ambassador Mushingi. I just have learned to appreciate the expertise and the professionalism that our diplomatic corps, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, has.

It is wonderful on this committee to deal mostly with career Foreign Service Officers that really know their stuff. That certainly is the case here.

Again, thank you, and thank you to your family for the sacrifices that your families make for our country. Thank you.

The hearing record will remain open until Friday. We ask the witnesses to respond promptly, if there are questions submitted, so that they can be part of the hearing record.

Senator FLAKE. With the thanks of the committee, we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:12 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO AMBASSADOR TULINABO MUSHINGI BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights has been a central theme throughout my 27 year career at the Department of State. Most recently as the U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso, I witnessed the country transition from a dictatorship to a democratically-elected government. During my tenure as Ambassador in Burkina Faso, despite risks to my personal and professional life, I became the consistent lone and loud voice to publicly advise against a proposed constitutional amendment to presidential term limits, designed to extend the time in office of an already long-sitting president. Additionally, I pushed the Government of Transition of Burkina Faso for timely elections during a sensitive time when some voices were considering a delay. Finally, following the free and transparent presidential election, Burkina Faso and its people witnessed the first-ever peaceful transition of power from one civilian government to another.

As the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ethiopia from 2009—2011, I encouraged the Ethiopian Government to allow civil society and opposition political parties to operate freely. Our Embassy efforts helped provide a path for opposition parties in Ethiopia to discuss their platforms, thus allowing a broader range of Ethiopian citizens to have a voice in their government, resulting in an increase in voter registration and participation. As the Management Counselor in Tanzania from 2006–2009, I participated in debates with Tanzanians, in which I promoted the rights of minorities, especially albinos. The debates were an important part of the Embassy's efforts to raise awareness of these vulnerable populations, which encouraged the Tanzanian Government to engage on minority rights issues. In Mozambique as the General Service Officer from 1994—1996, I participated as an international observer in the country's first-ever democratic elections and worked closely with the rest of the Embassy team to empower the Mozambican people as they freely elected their leaders for the first time.

Based on my support for the democratic transition in Burkina Faso, I was honored to receive several awards from the people and the Government of Burkina Faso. Additionally, based on my dedication to promoting and supporting human rights and democracy during my career, I am honored to have been selected for the American Foreign Service Association's Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy in 2017. This award is given to members of the Foreign Service, by their peers, for the promotion of U.S. policies focused on advancing democracy, freedom and governance through bold, exemplary, imaginative and effective efforts during one or more assignments.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Senegal generally has a strong record on protecting human rights and the trend is encouraging. However, as the Department of State has highlighted in

its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, human rights issues still exist, including harsh prison conditions, lengthy pretrial detention, discrimination and violence against women, the forced begging of young boys, and widespread discrimination against LGBTI individuals. The United States has programs in place to promote human rights in Senegal, and our Embassy in Dakar remains engaged on these important issues. If confirmed, I will strengthen efforts already in place and will look for any additional opportunities to promote human rights and tolerance in Senegal.

Guinea-Bissau's human rights situation is adversely affected by the country's struggles with poverty and political instability. While the country does largely enjoy freedom of assembly, speech, and religion, many problems persist. Impunity and corruption, poor prison conditions, and violence, sexual exploitation, and discrimination against women and girls continue—as does the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). If confirmed, I will focus on strengthening Guinea-Bissau's democratic institutions and respect for human rights. I will continue our work with the Government of Guinea-Bissau and other partners on security sector reform and will press the Government of Guinea-Bissau to undertake necessary political and economic reforms.

I am optimistic that, by working closely with government and civil society in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to advance human rights and democracy, the United States can make a meaningful impact and improve the lives of millions of people in the region.

Question 3. 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 Senegal and Guinea-Bissau in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Senegal deserves praise for its longstanding tradition of democratic governance, including two peaceful transfers of power from the ruling party to the opposition since 2000. The country is home to a vibrant civil society that continues to operate freely.

The Government of Senegal continues to take significant steps to advance human rights, but more work remains to be done, in particular on protecting the human rights of vulnerable populations, including prisoners, women, children, and LGBTI individuals. Challenges arise from weak institutional capacity and limited resources. Additionally, cultural practices or beliefs sometimes encourage discrimination against LGBTI individuals and society often ignores harsh conditions faced by many young boys forced to beg on the street. Civil society groups in Senegal work tirelessly to combat these cultural practices and beliefs, and a number of NGOs, both national and international, monitor human rights issues in Senegal. Our Embassy in Dakar works with many of these NGOs and civil society groups. If confirmed, I will continue this cooperation and, where possible, expand our engagement with our Senegalese partners to address human rights issues.

In Guinea-Bissau, obstacles include corruption, lack of resources, training, and weak institutional capacity within the Government and the security forces. The prerequisite for improving the country's human rights situation is political stability and a shift in the culture of corruption and impunity that currently prevails. The United States and other donor nations support programs in place to assist in overcoming these impediments.

Finally, I believe that education plays a key role in promoting tolerance and improving human rights conditions, and, if confirmed, will work with the team at our Embassy in Dakar on effective public diplomacy strategies to engage with wide audiences in both Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to inform and generate debate about human rights conditions.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau? If confirmed, what steps will you take to proactively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my most important goals will be improving respect for human rights in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, so that all Senegalese and Bissau-Guineans have the opportunity to exercise their fundamental freedoms and live their lives without fear. My efforts in Senegal will focus on improving prison conditions, reducing lengthy pretrial detention, and combating discrimination and violence against women, including rape and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), supporting the Senegalese Government's attempts to combat forced begging by children, and encouraging equal treatment under the law for all Senegalese, including LGBTI individuals. In Guinea-Bissau, I will focus on addressing issues of corruption

and impunity in the Government, improving prison conditions and combating violence against women and girls, including rape, sexual exploitation and FGM/C. Human rights organizations and other NGOs are critical to this work, and, if confirmed, I look forward to engaging with them in both Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

The Department of State vets all assistance to security forces in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau in accordance with the Leahy Law, without exception. If confirmed, I will ensure that our vetting continues to be comprehensive, thorough, and in full compliance with the Leahy laws, and that those who violate human rights are restricted from receiving any U.S. training or other assistance until the responsible actors are brought to justice. Furthermore, I will strongly urge the Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean Governments to hold any violators accountable for their actions.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Senegal and Guinea-Bissau?

Answer. If confirmed, and if necessary, my staff and I will raise our concerns about political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the Governments of Senegal or Guinea-Bissau. Thankfully, there are no political prisoners in either Senegal or Guinea-Bissau at this time, but the respective oppositions in both countries allege that certain individuals have been unjustly targeted for prosecution by their government. Our Embassy in Dakar continues to monitor these cases. If confirmed, I and my team will actively engage with the Government, opposition, and civil society regarding any cases in which individuals are unjustly targeted.

Question 6. Will you engage with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Promoting human rights, civil rights and good governance is a task that I take extremely seriously and, if confirmed, I will engage with the respective governments of Senegal and Guinea-Bissau on these matters.

Question 7. According to the Country Report for Human Rights Practices for this year, "Police are mandated to fight corruption but were ineffective and received minimal external assistance or support."

- What specific steps will you take to help police, and the Government more broadly to address corruption if confirmed as Ambassador? How will your actions to help combat bolster our efforts to address narcotics trafficking?

Answer. Weak governance and corruption in Guinea-Bissau have threatened U.S. interests through the facilitation of the illegal drug trade from South America to Europe. Supporting the Government of Guinea-Bissau's efforts to combat drug trafficking is one of our main policy objectives. We work closely with the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau and have provided $780,000 to support a Bissau-Guinean interagency unit (the Trans-National Crime Unit), led by the Judicial Police, to investigate and combat drug trafficking and other organized crime, and to professionalize criminal justice services. The Drug Enforcement Administration has sent several Judicial Police officers for regional training at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Ghana.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the effectiveness of such programs in strengthening Bissau-Guinean institutions to address corruption and combat drug trafficking and organized crime.

Question 8. According to the World Bank, "A successful transition towards a less fragile and more prosperous future will depend on the Government's ability to regain popular legitimacy by restoring basic state functions and providing key public services, and creating the basic conditions for shared economic growth."

- What steps has the United States taken to help in those areas since the restoration of democratic rule? What specific steps will you take if confirmed as Ambassador to further those goals?

Answer. The United States provides a modest amount of assistance to Guinea-Bissau. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) arrived in 2014 when Ebola was present next door in Guinea. CDC has made a multi-year commitment of up to $5 million to build the capabilities of the country's health sector to fight infectious diseases. USAID also made a multi-year commitment of $3 million to strengthen and build the country's capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats. The Department of State also provides security assistance through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) account, funded at approximately $150,000 per year that includes a focus on civil-military relations. The United States, through its assessed contributions to the United Nations, also supports the efforts of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to find a way to political stability and oversee a broad array of programs to support the Bissau-Guinean people.

If confirmed, I intend to make the best use of U.S. taxpayer dollars in Guinea-Bissau by prioritizing resources that best advance America's interests, maximizing the effectiveness of our cooperation, and liaising with partner governments and the United Nations to ensure our assistance is well-coordinated.

Question 9. How would you assess Senegal's commitment to anti-corruption efforts? What explains the pardon of Karim Wade, son of Senegal's former president Abdoulaye Wade, who was serving a six-year sentence for the illegal accumulation of approximately $200 million? Are there steps you will take if confirmed as Ambassador to enhance U.S. support for anti-corruption efforts?

Answer. Senegal has made progress in the fight against corruption. In 2012, when President Sall took office, he initiated several steps to improve Senegal's anti-corruption efforts. Among these, he approved the creation of an independent anti-corruption agency known by its French acronym as OFNAC (Office National de la Lutte contre la Fraude et la Corruption).

OFNAC has its own budget and seeks to promote transparency in government (by compiling and reviewing asset declarations of government officials), raise public awareness to report corruption, and initiate criminal investigations. Under the current head of OFNAC, who assumed her post last August, the anti-corruption body is focused on ensuring that the law is followed and that Senegal's anti-corruption efforts are durable, with an aim to prevent rather than react to corruption in Senegal.

Senegal has not only created this anti-corruption body but also has laws that require banks to report suspicious transactions, and has a capable financial intelligence unit which conducts follow up analysis of these suspicious transactions.

With regard to Karim Wade, former Minister of State and son of former President Abdoulaye Wade, as you noted, President Sall officially pardoned him on June 24, 2016. In total, he served half of his six year sentence. Immediately after Karim Wade's release, President Sall's office released a Communique confirming that Sall had pardoned Wade along with two co-conspirators—Alioune Samba Diasse and Ibrahim Aboukhalil (aka "Bibo Bourgi"). According to the Communique, the pardon released them from the remainder of their prison sentence but did not have any impact on the millions of dollars' worth of Wade's assets that had been seized or frozen, and which would not be returned. Observers generally agree the pardon was an attempt on the part of President Sall to soothe divisions within the Senegalese body politic.

If confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to promote the fight against corruption in Senegal and will leverage our bilateral relationship and assistance to press for enhanced transparency in government, increased public awareness of reporting mechanisms for corruption, and robust efforts to investigate and prosecute corruption.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO AMBASSADOR TULINABO MUSHINGI BY SENATOR JOHNNY ISAKSON

Question 1. There have been numerous reports about budget cuts and reorganization at the State Department and USAID. This week, a budget document dated April 6 shows that the administration is considering reducing foreign assistance to Senegal by $57 million, which is a 50.5 percent reduction. The leaked plans include the elimination of Senegal's funding for development assistance and PEPFAR, and a reduction in USAID's Global Health Programs funding for Senegal. However, it does show that the administration is considering a $20M increase to Senegal's Economic Support Fund account.

- What impact would such a proposal for funding have on the effectiveness of the U.S. Mission to Senegal? Does our progress in advancing U.S. strategic interests in Senegal merit a 50.5 percent reduction in our assistance there? Please explain why or why not.

Answer. The State Department and USAID support the President's goal of making government more efficient and accountable to U.S. taxpayers. If confirmed, I intend to make the best use of U.S. taxpayer dollars in Senegal by prioritizing resources that best advance America's interests, maximizing the effectiveness of our cooperation, and maintaining a robust diplomatic presence. We remain committed to a U.S. foreign policy in Senegal that advances the security and prosperity of the American people, as well as our most critical diplomatic and development objectives.

As for the FY 2018 request, I cannot speak to unconfirmed numbers in the press. The FY 2018 Budget blueprint that was released in March included the overall

funding level to be requested for the State Department and USAID programs. Beyond what is included in the Budget blueprint, we do not have additional details on what programs will be reduced as part of the FY 2018 request.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO TODD P. HASKELL BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy has been a key part of my work on Africa, both in the field and in the Department. During my first tour in Africa, as a Public Affairs Officer in Burkina Faso, I identified key leaders in civil society and the human rights community, selecting them for exchange trips to the United States and organizing joint programs with them. Many of these leaders went on to play an important role in promoting democracy in that country. As a Public Affairs Officer in South Africa, I partnered with civil society leaders in programming that focused attention on human rights issues affecting marginalized communities, such as victims of gender violence.

Here in Washington, as the Office Director on Public Diplomacy, I emphasized exchanges on human rights and governance issues, bringing young Africans active in this sector to the United States. As Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs, I co-chaired an extensive human rights dialogue with the Angolan Government, and later helped moderate a discussion of human rights in Angola with both a human rights activist and an Angolan Government representative. In Lesotho, I coordinated a strategy that has gone a long way toward re-asserting civilian control over the military. In Zimbabwe, I have supported efforts to support the human rights community.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Republic of Congo? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Republic of Congo? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most significant human rights problems include arbitrary arrests and the detention of political opponents and their supporters; and unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, and other degrading treatment of detainees by police. The welfare of internally displaced persons uprooted by the ongoing violence in the Pool region is also of serious concern.

If confirmed, I will continue the work of our Embassy in Brazzaville which closely monitors and documents human rights issues in the Republic of Congo, and which regularly attends events organized by NGOs focusing on human rights to show public support for their efforts. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will also make human rights advocacy a top priority, and will regularly engage with the Congolese Government to urge adherence to fundamental principles guaranteed by their constitution of 2015, which include freedom of speech and assembly, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention. We look to see the Congolese Government adhere to the protections enshrined in their constitution and to respect human rights.

Question 3. 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 Republic of Congo in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The biggest potential obstacle to addressing human rights concerns is the climate of fear and the culture of official impunity perpetuated by the Government that intimidates civil society actors, political challengers, and independent media voices. The Government seldom takes steps to prosecute or punish officials who have committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the Government.

While the 2015 Constitution guarantees the basic rights of free speech and assembly, in practice these guarantees are ignored. The legislative and judicial branches of the Government and other nominally independent institutions, such as the electoral commission, are heavily politicized and do not play a counter-balancing role.

These factors make advancement of human rights in the Congo difficult, but I intend to advocate as a priority for an improved human rights record.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights

NGOs in Republic of Congo? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. I intend to ensure the Embassy will continue to advocate for the protection and defense of human rights, in concert with our local and international partners, and call for the Congolese Government to investigate and address credible allegations of abuse.

As Ambassador, I would make certain the Embassy continues to implement Leahy vetting to ensure that all U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training to Congolese peacekeepers (PKO) in the Central African Republic (CAR) under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, ensures that troops receive specific human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in CAR. I will do the same for civilian-military training with junior leaders of the Armed Forces and members of civil society.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Republic of Congo to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Republic of Congo?

Answer. In the ROC, several opposition leaders, including former presidential candidates and scores of their supporters, are currently imprisoned on serious charges that appear to be fabricated.

Generally speaking, respect for prisoners' rights, especially for those affiliated with opposition political parties, has been inconsistent with Congolese law. Prison conditions are harsh. Trials, if and when they are eventually held, can be subject to political influence.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue our advocacy for the respect of fundamental human rights to include the freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, as well as freedom from arbitrary disappearance and protracted detention. I will strongly advocate that any person detained be afforded their full constitutional rights regardless of political affiliation.

Question 6. Will you engage with Republic of Congo on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. I consider human rights advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job as Ambassador, if confirmed, and will certainly make human rights, civil rights, and good governance key elements of my engagement with the Congolese Government.

Question 7. This year's Country Report for Human Rights Practices references a joint U.N.-Congolese Government report which "cited indications that sexual violence toward women and teenage girls corresponded to the timing of security operations in the southern Pool region." The Country Report also says that "Human rights NGOs reported multiple instances of rape and sexual abuse by police."

- What specific steps can you take if confirmed as Ambassador to support accountability for security force abuses? What specific steps if confirmed as Ambassador can you take to more broadly to support efforts to combat gender based violence in Republic of Congo?

Answer. The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by police and security forces in the Republic of Congo is one that greatly concerns us all.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will impress upon the Congolese Government the need to condemn sexual violence, whether perpetrated by security or police forces, or generally by Congolese individuals, and to promptly investigate and prosecute alleged perpetrators. I intend to ensure the Embassy also acts proactively by continuing to support the increased professionalism of the security sector through training and exchanges with Congolese military and law enforcement forces. This engagement should ultimately lead to improved professionalism, respect for the rule of law, respect for human rights, including gender rights, and civilian security. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will also advocate steps Congo can take to strengthen the capacity of civilian courts to hold accountable those who commit acts of gender based violence.

Question 8. According to the Country Report for Human Rights Practices, while "the law provides for criminal penalties for corruption by officials; however, the Government did not implement the law effectively, and many officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity, despite the president's call for an end to corruption in his inauguration speech.

- What steps can you take if confirmed as Ambassador to encourage effective implementation of the law? Are there other steps you can take to support anticorruption efforts? What are they?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will ensure that the Embassy continues to support efforts to address the widespread corruption and lack of transparency that surrounds government financial practices and to encourage effective implementation of Congolese laws against corruption. I will continue the Embassy's work with existing Congolese anticorruption institutions to address, report and bring to justice those found guilty of corruption. These institutions include the National Agency for Financial Investigation, an anti-corruption unit that was initiated in 2008 under the auspices of the Central Africa Monetary Union, and the National Commission for the Fight against Corruption. I will consider appropriate ways we can help build the capacity of these institutions and the capacity of the judiciary through training and other opportunities.

Transparency can be an important deterrent to corruption. The constitution mandates that senior elected or appointed officials disclose their financial interests and holdings both before taking office and upon leaving office. The constitution and law also provide for public access to government information for citizens, noncitizens, and the foreign media; however, authorities did not effectively implement the law. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will advocate with the Government for the enforcement of these important protections.

NOMINATION

TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Rubio, Flake, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Portman, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We are honored to have so many people here today. I do wonder what is happening back in Iowa with the Governor, two Senators, and so many distinguished individuals here. And we are glad to have all of you here in support of our nominee.

Out of deep respect for Senator Grassley and Senator Ernst, the ranking member and I both will defer our opening comments so that you do not have to sit through those. I know that you would like to say wonderful and glowing things about our nominee, and we know that you have other business that you need to attend to. So what we will do is ask you to please go first. We will then begin the business in the normal way and move to testimony by Governor Branstad.

But if you would begin, the most Honorable Senator Grassley, we would appreciate it. We thank you for honoring us with your presence here today, and we thank you for your service in so many ways. With that, we would love to hear your comments.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES GRASSLEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin and members of the Foreign Relations Committee. It is a privilege for me to be here to introduce the Governor of Iowa, the next ambassador to China.

And I would say that this gentleman has been an ambassador all of his life for Iowa and will make a good ambassador to China. He has been an ambassador for Iowa within the United States of America as he has told other Americans about Iowa, a great place to create jobs, a great place to do business. And he has been an

ambassador for Iowa around the world many, many times with many, many different countries, but especially with China being an ambassador for Iowa's exports.

It is an honor to appear here with Senator Ernst, and it is even a greater privilege to introduce a person that I call a good friend way back when, Terry Branstad, at least to his first years in the Iowa legislature, 1973.

As many of you know, Governor Branstad is the longest serving Governor in U.S. history. He is a lifelong Iowan who has devoted his life to public service, and even when he was not in public service as president of a university, he was still an ambassador for Iowa.

After more than 22 years as my home State chief executive, I am proud to support Governor Branstad's nomination to serve our country as the next U.S. Ambassador to China. His nomination should come as no surprise to the people of Iowa. We have long known and benefited from the relationship Governor Branstad has with the people of China. A sister state relationship going way back to 1983 has grown into a successful trade partnership that has benefited Iowa farmers and businesses.

Perhaps most notably, Governor Branstad enjoys a 30-year friendship with President Xi. Their first meeting took place in 1985 when Xi was then a local provincial official who led an agricultural delegation to Iowa. President Xi visited Iowa again in 2012 when Governor Branstad was back at the helm for a fifth term as Governor of Iowa. Their relationship reflects a genuine good will and mutual respect.

Governor Branstad has never stopped working to expand Iowa's trade, investment, and economic partnerships on the world stage most importantly, including China. He will bring Midwestern humility and level-headed leadership to this very important job representing the people of the United States and the President there in Beijing. He is a workhorse who is unafraid to get in the trenches to get the job done.

If he is confirmed, I am confident that Governor Branstad will bring to bear his tireless commitment to solving problems and always move the ball forward. Although his heart will always be in Iowa and I know he will return to Iowa, I know that Governor Branstad will throw himself into this job of being an ambassador wholeheartedly.

Governor Branstad is uniquely qualified to help strengthen the trade, economic, and cultural, as well as the geopolitical relationships between our two countries. I am pleased that he has now been called to serve as the ambassador. I am very confident that he will represent the United States well and excel just as he has throughout his lifelong career of public service, as well as his public sector leadership.

Without reservations, I support this nomination. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for that.

And to Senator Ernst, who has brought her unique and distinctive background to the Senate and certainly has made a major impact already, we welcome you and look forward to your comments.

STATEMENT OF HON. JONI ERNST,
U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin and the members of the committee.

It is my privilege to be here today, along with our longtime senior Senator, Senator Grassley, to introduce my Governor, my friend, and the longest serving Governor in U.S. history, Terry Branstad.

A native Iowan, Governor Branstad served in the Iowa legislature before serving our State as Governor from 1983 to 1999 and again from 2011 until what I hope will be his swift confirmation as U.S. Ambassador to China.

Having worked alongside the Governor for many years, I know he will exemplify the same leadership, thoughtfulness, and dedication in his role as Ambassador to China on behalf of the United States as he did for the people of Iowa.

Importantly, Governor Branstad also knows China and its leaders well. He first met President Xi Jinping while he was visiting Iowa on an agricultural research trip in 1985. They have kept in touch over the years, and Governor Branstad has since visited China a number of times on behalf of the State of Iowa.

Iowa's extensive trade relationship with China has given Governor Branstad a front seat view of the complexities of our country's broader trade and economic relationship with China and will provide him with the foundation to effectively advocate for U.S. interests.

While our bilateral economic relationship with China is certainly important, I do not have to tell you that our list of bilateral issues with China is long and expands beyond trade and investment, to include issues like North Korea, the South China Sea, human rights, and more. Accordingly, the position of U.S. Ambassador to China is one of the most important ambassadorial positions in the world, and I am confident that President Trump has made an excellent choice in nominating Iowa Governor Terry Branstad for this role. I look forward to him being confirmed by the Senate and bringing the Iowa way to Beijing.

I also want to extend my thanks to the support that has been given to Governor Branstad by his wonderful family, and I know he will introduce Chris and the rest of his family soon. They are truly an asset to Iowa. I know that they are going to be a greater asset for the United States of America.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both. I know our ranking member would love to thank you for your comments.

Senator CARDIN. Yes.

Governor Branstad, let me just point out that your two Senators are very much respected in this institution and having both of them here to speak on your behalf is impressive. And we thank both of our colleagues for sharing their comments about you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both very much.

We will now return to our opening comments. Governor Branstad, it is a pleasure to welcome you here today as our nominee to be the next Ambassador to China. I am glad to see members

of your family here today as well. I wish you all the best as you embark on this exciting new venture.

Beijing is not Des Moines. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. But I know that your relationship with President Xi spans decades, and I am confident that you fully understand the breadth and depth of the challenges awaiting you in China.

When we met in my office, I appreciated your honesty and candor about managing the complexities and relations with China, and I look forward to expanding on that conversation here today.

As I have said previously, the U.S.-China is one of the most consequential relationships for U.S. national interests. The nature of relations between Washington and Beijing will have a profound impact on the security, prosperity, and stability in the region for the coming years. You will have a unique opportunity to help shape that relationship and move it in a direction that is beneficial for both countries.

But it certainly will be a difficult task as U.S. relations with China have been trending in the wrong direction for several years. China's militarization of the South China Sea, cyber theft of intellectual property, which again—I was at a meeting last night on this very topic. It is just outright theft—outright theft. And it is something that has to end. The discriminatory trade and investment practices in addition are just a few of the areas of rising tension in the relationship between the United States and them.

We can no longer afford to simply manage our differences with China as Beijing continues to challenge U.S. power and disregard international norms. However, we should always seek cooperation in areas where we can work together, including reducing the threat posed by North Korea.

I also believe that we must be clear-eyed about China's long-term goals, which are not necessarily aligned with U.S. national interests. Short-term gains should not come at the expense of long-term U.S. national interests, values, rule of law, international norms, and our alliance commitments, of which we have many in the region.

We must be direct and willing to use our leverage when China challenges U.S. political, security, and economic interests.

Governor Branstad, I look forward to hearing from you about your vision for relations with China and plans to serve as an effective advocate for U.S. national interests.

Again, thank you for being here. I look forward to our ranking member's comments and then your testimony. We appreciate you and your family all being here.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Governor Branstad, once again welcome to our committee, and thank you very much for your career of public service and your willingness to continue to serve our country in a very important position as Ambassador to China.

I also want to share thanks to your family because this is a family sacrifice, and we appreciate the willingness of your family to allow your service to our country.

You have a very distinguished background, a very impressive background. A confirmation hearing gives us an opportunity not only to look at your qualifications but also to review the scope and trajectory of the U.S. relationship with the country that you have been nominated to represent the United States, China. Indeed, as we contemplate how to address the situation in North Korea, we recognize that China plays a critical role in that regard. So as we look at so many of the circumstances around the world, China comes up in our view.

30 years ago, we were debating whether or not China would be a major power. That debate is now settled. But the question of what sort of power China will be remains. Will China help to support peace and stability in Asia or seek to overturn the regular order? Will China become a trade partner committed to the enforcement of international laws, or will we continue to see the flouting of international norms, as Chairman Corker has mentioned? Will China open space for its citizens to express their own views and ideas, or will it continue to brutally repress its own people?

These are questions that you will confront, if confirmed, and while we may not yet know all the answers, I am concerned by some of what we are seeing. For example, we have seen an increasing provocative China in the maritime domains, coercing and intimidating neighbors in the East China Sea and South China Sea and attempting to use the threat of military force to address territorial and regional disputes. And as you and I discussed when we sat together recently in my office, I am deeply concerned by the deterioration of human rights in China and the environment for civil society and independent voices in that country.

When I joined the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, President Xi became the President of China. At that time, many of us hoped that China was on the verge of a more progressive or reformist era and that along with growing interaction with the outside world and significant economic development, human rights would, indeed, improve. Yet, the opposite has proven true. President Xi's administration has adopted a slew of laws that violate the most basic human rights of the Chinese people and that presents challenges to U.S. interests and values as well. The community of civil activists in China that thrived in the 1990s and 2000s, partly as a result of the U.S. engagement both diplomatically and economically, have come under assault as never before. When I joined the subcommittee, it was unthinkable that people in the United States or EU would be detained by Chinese authorities inside and outside mainland China. Yet, that is the current reality.

And all the while, we still do not know if the Dalai Lama will be allowed to return to Tibet. We do not know the whereabouts of Panchen Lama. We do not know whether authorities will release the Nobel Laureate, Liu Xiaobo, in 2020, and we do not know if the people of Hong Kong will be able to continue to exercise genuine autonomy. But we do know that President Xi is set to remain in power for at least the next 5 years.

So I am very interested in hearing your thoughts on how, if confirmed, you will stand with civil society and with the Chinese people, including when it comes to labor rights where I must say your

record as Governor in Iowa has raised some concerns, and assure that human rights and universal values are at the heart of U.S. policy with China.

I am also interested in your thoughts as to what we may see by way of cooperation with China on North Korea going forward. I understand what the President has asked of China, but I remain concerned that we have seen this movie before and we really have not seen any change in China's position as it relates to North Korea. Many of us are concerned that they will only go so far, but they are concerned about the stability of the current regime will prevent them from taking the necessary steps to change the equation for North Korea. We welcome your thoughts on that matter.

So let me lastly mention one additional issue. You will take, if confirmed, the oath of office to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Before President Trump took the oath of office, many of us urged him to take steps to avoid a constitutional conflict with the Emolument Clause. And he is the only President that has not divested or set up blind trusts for his financial institutions. That is not your doing. Your doing is to represent our country, if confirmed, in China and must take steps to make sure that our Constitution is not violated, that is, that the Trump enterprises are not given favors by the China regime that would violate the Emolument Clause. So we are interested in learning how you intend to make sure that you defend the Constitution and protect against that particular challenge.

So I look forward to your thoughts on how you can elevate the current state of play between the United States and China, your thoughts on how to move the relationship forward especially on human rights, and what you hope to achieve, if confirmed, as our Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

With that, your entire written testimony, without objection, will be entered into the record. So do not feel that you have to go through all of it. If you could summarize some comments in about 5 minutes, that would be great. We welcome you here. We thank you for your willingness to serve in this capacity and look forward to your comments.

STATEMENT OF HON. TERRY BRANSTAD OF IOWA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Governor BRANSTAD. Thank you. I would like to begin by thanking Iowa's two outstanding Senators, Senator Grassley and Senator Ernst. They are very conscientious, hardworking, and outstanding public servants, and I am proud to have them as friends. And I appreciate their support.

And, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, it is indeed an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that a farm boy from a small town of Leland, Iowa would one day have the opportunity to become, with your consent, the ambassador to one of the world's most influential countries and

one of America's leading trading partners. I am thankful to President Trump for his confidence and his trust in me to take this important diplomatic role.

I would not be where I am today if it were not for the people sitting right behind me. My wife of almost 45 years Chris is my constant support and the most understanding person that I know. Thank you, honey. Also, I want to introduce my sons, Eric and Marcus, who have joined me today. I know that my daughter Allison, who is a third grade teacher, and my children's spouses, Adrienne, Jerry, and Nicole, and our seven grandchildren are watching from afar. They have already wished me good luck this morning. Pursuing this opportunity was a family decision, and I am very thankful for their guidance, encouragement, and support especially over the last several months.

If confirmed as ambassador, I will work every day to represent American values to the leadership of China and the Chinese people at large, values that include upholding human rights for all and a free and open market, a rules-based order in the oceans surrounding China, and the importance of a free press.

I look forward to joining the impressive and committed team of public servants and their families from the U.S. State Department and many other U.S. agencies at our embassy in Beijing and the consulates across China. Leading this team of dedicated professionals, who are working as we speak to promote America's interests in China, would be a great honor and responsibility that I would not take lightly.

My relationship with the President of China, Xi Jinping, goes way back, as you have heard, to 1985. As a first-term Governor, I had the opportunity to welcome an agriculture delegation from the Hebei Province of China, Iowa's sister state, to the State of Iowa. Leading that delegation was a young man whose business card read Xi Jinping, Feed Association of Shijiazhuang. During the trip, our sister state director Luca Baroni took our one Chinese visitors on tours of farms and factories and to receptions and dinners with our sister state volunteers. They attended a birthday party, a Mississippi River cruise, and we showed them true Iowa life and hospitality. I even hosted the delegation in the Governor's formal office. A connection was made and a friendship was founded. To this day, President Xi still speaks fondly of Iowa and the hospitality he enjoyed there so many years ago.

If confirmed, I hope to use my unique position as an old friend of President Xi and a trusted confidant of President Trump to positively influence the U.S.-China relationship. As the Governor of Iowa, I saw firsthand the importance of a positive and healthy trade relationship between our two countries. Nearly one out of every two rows of Iowa soybeans last year were sent to China, as well as $33.5 million worth of pork in 2016. The importance of trade extends beyond agriculture as well. Aviation products, manufactured goods, chemicals, electronics, and many other products and services are exported to China daily and help support and sustain the American economy.

As ambassador, I will continue the work that I have started as Governor to open up the Chinese markets to American businesses of all sorts. This will be good for the American people as it will cre-

ate more jobs and good for the Chinese people as they will have more access to the best-made products that the world has to offer. In keeping with President Trump's mission, I am committed to making sure that the trade relationship between the United States and China puts the American worker first.

Our relationship with China is multifaceted, not solely focused on trade. And I am aware of the critical national security issues that our two countries must work together on as well. As President Trump made clear when he met with President Xi at Mar-a-Largo a few weeks ago, China could play a critical role in convincing North Korea to dismantle its nuclear and missile programs, a strategic policy that would boost the security of America, China, and the entire world.

As Governor, I had the opportunity to visit Taiwan as well. As ambassador, I will be committed to communicating the United States' continued support for our One China policy expressed in the three joint communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. We remain committed to our goal to see that this cross-strait issue is peacefully resolved in a manner that is acceptable to both sides of the strait.

I saw firsthand many of the cybersecurity concerns that the United States has in regard to China during my time as Governor when I received a monthly security briefing. The protection of intellectual property and technology security is of utmost importance to our country, and I will continue to make that clear in frank discussions with the Chinese Government.

On the South China Sea, China cannot be allowed to use its artificial islands to coerce its neighbors or limit freedom of navigation or overflight. The United States will uphold freedom of navigation and overflight by continuing to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows.

As Governor, I had the opportunity to travel to all of Iowa's 99 counties every year, a feat that is affectionately named for your esteemed colleague as "the full Grassley." As ambassador, I hope to continue this tradition by visiting every province in China. With a country as large and expansive as China, I know there is much life and activity outside of Beijing. I look forward to connecting with the Chinese people and continuing a vibrant exchange of culture and ideas that we began back in 1983 when I signed the sister state proclamation with Governor Jon Xu Wang.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to represent America and her citizens to the best of my ability. I will champion American interests in China with as much fervor and dedication as I have championed Iowa's interests during my more than 22 years as Governor. I am humbled to be considered for this position.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your comments, questions, and continued dialogue. Thank you.

[Governor Branstad's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TERRY E. BRANSTAD

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United

States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that a boy from a small farm in Leland, Iowa, would one day have the opportunity to become, with your consent, the ambassador to one of the world's most influential countries and one of America's largest trading partners. I am thankful to President Trump for his confidence and trust in me to take on this important diplomatic role.

I would not be where I am today if it were not for the people sitting right behind me. My wife of almost 45 years, Chris, is my constant support and the most understanding person I know. I would also like to introduce you to my two sons, Eric and Marcus, who have joined me today. I know my daughter Allison and my children's spouses, Adrienne, Jerry, and Nicole, and our seven grandchildren, are watching from afar. Pursuing this opportunity was a family decision, and I am thankful for their guidance, encouragement, and support, especially over the past few months.

If confirmed, as ambassador, I will work every day to represent American values to the leadership of China and the Chinese people at large; values that include upholding human rights for all, a free and open market, a rules-based order in the oceans surrounding China, and the importance of a free press.

I look forward to joining the impressive and committed team of public servants and their families from the U.S. State Department and many other U.S. Government agencies at our embassy in Beijing and consulates across China. Leading this team of dedicated professionals, who are working as we speak to promote America's interests in China, would be a great honor and a responsibility that I would not take lightly.

My relationship with the President of China, Xi Jinping, goes all of the way back to 1985. As a first term Governor, I had the opportunity to welcome an agriculture delegation from the Hebei Province of China, Iowa's sister state, to Iowa. Leading that delegation was a young man whose business card read Xi Jinping, Feed Association of Shijiazhuang. During the trip, our sister state director Luca Baroni took our new Chinese visitors on tours of farms and factories, and to receptions and dinners with the sister state volunteers. They attended a birthday party, a Mississippi River cruise, and we showed them a true taste of Iowa life. I even hosted the delegation in the Governor's office. A connection was made and a friendship was founded. To this day, President Xi still speaks fondly of Iowa and the hospitality he enjoyed there so many years ago.

If confirmed, I hope to use my unique position as an "old friend" of President Xi and a trusted confidant of President Trump to positively influence the U.S.-China relationship. As the Governor of Iowa, I saw first-hand the importance of a positive and healthy trade relationship between our two countries. Nearly, one out of every two rows of Iowa soybeans is sent to China, as well as $33.5 million in pork in 2016. The importance of trade extends well beyond agriculture too. Aviation products, manufactured goods, chemicals, electronics, and many other products and services are exported to China daily and help support and sustain the American economy.

As ambassador, I will continue the work I started while Governor to open up the Chinese markets to American businesses of all sorts. This will be good for the American people as it will create more jobs, and good for the Chinese people as they will have more access to the best-made products this world has to offer. In keeping with the President's mission, I am also committed to making sure that the trade relationship between the United States and China puts the American worker first.

Our relationship with China is multi-faceted and not solely focused on trade. I am well aware of the critical national security issues our two countries must work together on as well. As President Trump made clear when he met with President Xi at Mar-a-Lago a few weeks ago, China could play a critical role in convincing North Korea to dismantle its nuclear and missile programs, a strategic policy that boosts the security of America, China, and the entire world.

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If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to represent America and Her citizens to the best of my ability. I will champion American interests in China with as much fervor and dedication as I have championed Iowa's interests during my more than 22 years as Governor. I am humbled to be considered for this position.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your comments, questions, and continued dialogue.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

I will defer my questions to the ranking member and reserve my time. Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Well, Governor, let me compliment you on your opening statement. In a very few minutes, you have covered most of the important issues between the U.S.-China relations. And I must tell you the way that you have expressed it I believe expresses what I would hope to hear from our Ambassador-to-be to China. And I think you will find there is strong bipartisan support for the way that you have expressed U.S. interests in these areas.

I particularly appreciate that in the opening part of your statement, you mentioned that you would represent American values and that would include upholding human rights for all. You and I have talked about that. I have made it a practice to ask all nominees for ambassadors representing the United States questions related to their commitment to human rights. But for China, it is particularly important.

We have found that China is moving in the wrong direction, and you pointed that out in some of your comments and in our private discussions. How you conduct your affairs, where you travel, who you allow access to in our embassies, your reaching out to NGOs that have been declared by China to be unwelcome is a real statement about not only our values but universal values.

So can you drill down a little bit more for me how you intend to advance our values on human rights, if confirmed as ambassador?

Governor BRANSTAD. Senator Cardin, thank you very much.

Human rights is very important. It is a bedrock of America's value system. As Governor, I have always tried to go not only everywhere in the State of Iowa but throughout the world. I went to the old Soviet Union 6 weeks after Chernobyl. I was one of the early Governors to go to China. And yet, I have always tried to recognize my responsibility as an American to represent our values and to espouse those. And it would be my intention as ambassador to bring in and to bring up these difficult issues that the Chinese leadership may not particularly want to talk about but are important.

Consequently, I am not afraid to do that. I have done that throughout my career. I recognize as ambassador it is an even bigger responsibility because I will be representing the whole United States of America, and when Americans or anyone else in the world is not treated fairly, I think I as ambassador need to bring that issue up to the people in power in Beijing.

Senator CARDIN. So if I understand, you would be welcoming to our embassy those who may disagree with the Government of China on their policies on human rights——

Governor BRANSTAD. Yes.

Senator CARDIN [continuing]. Or their political dissent?

Governor BRANSTAD. I would not only be willing to welcome people of all backgrounds to the embassy, but also to travel to other parts of the country to meet with them as well.

So I think it is important. I learned this as Governor, and that is you do not want to just be surrounded by your staff. You want to get out and see the real people in your State and in the country. And as ambassador, I want to get out and see the people in China. I want to learn from those people that do not feel they are being treated fairly as well.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Rubio and I sent a letter to Secretary Tillerson requesting that he place a high priority on human rights in our bilateral relationship with China, mentioning the problems of religious minorities, including the people of Tibet. Would you be willing to take advice from Members of Congress on individual cases and championing them and work with us as we try to raise these issues?

Governor BRANSTAD. Yes, Senator. In fact, as I have gone around and met individually with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a number of those have been brought to my attention. And it would be my intent to work with all the members of this committee and others in the Senate on these issues. I believe that is part of the responsibility of the ambassador is to be there on the ground in China and to be an advocate for our interests.

Senator CARDIN. And my last request would be that I have asked staff to keep in touch with our embassies. I appreciate the fact that you mentioned in your opening statement the professionalism of the people that serve in the mission that are critically important. They take direction from the ambassador. I would ask that you respond to our staff, both staffs, as to steps being taken to advance the human rights agenda so that we can work together in regards to elevating the importance of that part of our relationship.

Governor BRANSTAD. I certainly intend to do that. And I do understand that we have a very dedicated professional staff, both the State Department and other agencies, and it is a very large staff that is available at the embassy and the consulates. I intend to work with them. I want to learn from them as much as I can, but I also want to work directly with you and other Members of the United States Senate and your staff.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Governor, thanks so much for your willingness to serve. I thank your family for their years of service as well to the State of Iowa. We are fortunate to have someone who has a personal relationship with the President of China who has put themselves forward as well.

I enjoyed our visit together. One of the things we talked about was North Korea. And you have also touched on this very impor-

tant topic in your prepared statement indicating that China could play a critical role in convincing North Korea to dismantle its nuclear missile programs.

What more specifically do you think that China could or should do to push North Korea to take the necessary steps with respect to its missile and nuclear programs?

Governor BRANSTAD. China, as you know, is a neighbor of North Korea. They are a major trading partner with North Korea. They have recently put some restrictions on importing coal from North Korea. I think there are other things they can do diplomatically and economically to send a clear signal that they, as well as the United States and other countries in the world, do not tolerate the expansion of nuclear technology and missiles by the North Korean leadership. It is a threat to all of humankind, and I think it is critically important that we look at all opportunities to work together. I know that this has been discussed by President Trump and President Xi. I would want to do all I can to serve as a key go-between as we explore how we can work together with other nations also in Asia to address this critical situation.

Senator YOUNG. So I am curious whether there is a menu of particular economic or diplomatic things we can do to heighten the pressure as this pressure campaign continues. Perhaps from a process standpoint, you can speak to how you might try and collaborate regionally with the regional bureau there.

Our Secretary of State said publicly within the last couple of days that he does not think that our State Department is doing a good job connecting its State level objectives and initiatives to the broader regional concerns. As ambassador to China, could you speak to that as you talk to some specifics on North Korea, please?

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, I think we need to always look at how we can do better and how we can improve, recognizing that the world is facing a very critical threat from North Korea at this time. And I want to make sure that we are not leaving any stone unturned in trying to look at all the different avenues that are available, both working with China and working with other nations especially in that part of the world.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I will look forward to working with you. If you see a lack of coordination, of course, you would be communicating that, I presume, to the Secretary of State. Hopefully you know you have individuals on this committee which would like to work with you to improve that level of coordination.

Governor BRANSTAD. I recently met with Secretary Tillerson. We had a very constructive meeting. And I intend to work very closely with him and with the other State Department personnel, of which there are some very experienced and capable people at the embassy in Beijing right now.

Senator YOUNG. I will pivot very quickly to the protection of intellectual property. In your prepared statement, you indicated it is of the utmost importance to our country. I think all of us here agree with that. The U.S. leads the world in biomedical research and discovery. However, weak IP protections and a growing array of localization barriers abroad are threatening innovative medicine exports and the many jobs they support here at home, including in my home State of Indiana.

China, in particular, is a serious offender. Beijing has not lived up to the intellectual property commitments that it made to the U.S. and others through the World Trade Organization.

If confirmed, in order to protect America's innovation and jobs, what will you do to push the Chinese to respect IP protections, including in the area of biomedical research?

Governor BRANSTAD. The point you raise is very critical. And we have had some experience with that with regard to plant breeding, and we actually even had Chinese that were stealing knowledge from American companies. And I think a few years ago, we saw a criminal prosecution of that, and it occurred in my State. But I recognize, especially because of our world leadership in medical technology, that is a critical area. But I have heard from many other manufacturers and other businesses about the stealing of intellectual property. That is why we have patents, and that is why we go so far to protect intellectual property rights. In the meetings I have had with business people, not only in my State but as we have done trade missions, this is a critical issue.

And I think as the Chinese have advanced, hopefully they are going to see that there is a danger to them as well in having their intellectual property stolen by other countries. So I think it is critically important that they abide by and support intellectual property rights and that it is not only right for America and protecting our businesses, but it is right for them as well. And I hope that I can convince them that they need to change their policies and they need to be more vigilant and serious about protecting intellectual property rights.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Corker.

I will simply follow up on what Senator Young and Chairman Corker both said previously.

When we had a chance to meet in my office, Governor, I was clear with you that intellectual property is also a significant concern of mine. I am from a State that has a long and proud history of invention and innovation. I was just at the Hagley Museum yesterday, which has the records of the DuPont Company and all of its early inventions. They have a remarkable collection of patent models, which they are actually exploring sharing with the Chinese people across a dozen sites in China.

I would be interested in hearing just some more insight into how you will use your important and long and trusting friendship with President Xi and what I expect will be your growing knowledge of China as you visit every province to really make intellectual property and stopping the theft of America's inventions a key priority in your role as Governor, if confirmed.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, Senator Coons, the incident that I was mentioned a few minutes ago actually involved DuPont Pioneer. As you know, we share DuPont Pioneer. They have been a wonderful American company, and we think it is critically important that the rights—and I am aware of the fact that they are doing some important business in China.

We also have the World Food Prize in Iowa. And one of the recipients of the World Food Prize is a Chinese gentleman that was involved in rice. And there is an opportunity for DuPont Pioneer—

and they are also going through a potential merger right now. There are opportunities for them to work together for the benefit of not only these great American companies but also Chinese businesses as well.

And I want to do what I can from the background and experience I have had working especially in the agricultural area. And as you have heard, Xi Jinping's first visit to America was an ag delegation, and they were there during spring planting time. They visited the farm of the President of the Iowa Corn Growers, and they visited a turkey farm and they visited others and the Sukup Manufacturing Company that makes bins, grain bins.

But I hope, because of that background and experience and because of the very good way that we treated Xi Jinping and his delegation, hopefully to convince him that we need his collaboration and cooperation in dealing with some of these critical issues where China has not adequately addressed the protection of these important intellectual property rights.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Governor.

I have two other quick questions for you, if I might.

Let me offer that I look forward to working with you and with the Senators from Iowa, as well as my senior Senator from Delaware, to strengthen some of these ties between China and the United States with the goal of relentlessly pressing the importance of a shared commitment to protecting patents and trade secrets and other IP.

You grow a great deal of corn and soybeans. We do too. And we feed them to our chickens, and we would like our chickens to go to China. [Laughter.]

Governor BRANSTAD. And Senator Perdue told me that he may be from Georgia, but he also raises corn and soybeans. So I was encouraged to hear that as well.

Senator COONS. And as long as those corn and soybeans go to chickens and the chickens go to China, we are all going to be happy. [Laughter.]

Senator COONS. I will tell you that we filed a complaint against China in the WTO I think successfully asserting that China is unfairly restricting U.S. chicken imports. More than 10 percent of all chicken grown in the United States is exported. We have not been sustainably successfully able to access one of the most promising markets in the world, which is China. If they are going to join the world community through things like the WTO, they need to play by the rules. And I hope that you will prioritize opening the Chinese market for poultry, whether it is from Georgia, Iowa, or Delaware.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, first of all, I agree with you wholeheartedly that we need to have a fair and open market for these products just as they have an opportunity to market a lot of products in our country. Poultry is really important. We do sell them a lot of pork, but beef is presently restricted as well. I have also visited with Tom Vilsack who, as you know, has gone now from being Secretary of Agriculture, former Governor of Iowa, to working with the Dairy Export Council. And I think there is opportunity to get more opportunity for dairy there as well.

This is an area, especially when it comes to agriculture products, that I have had a lot of experience in, and I hope that because Xi Jinping has some experience and that background too, that it is an area maybe we can make some connection. I have also had some very frank discussions with Minister Han, who is their ag minister, on these issues.

Senator COONS. I agree. I hope you make great progress on that.

In closing, I will just reference the last topic we discussed, which is Africa. China has become the dominant investor and player in Africa, eclipsing even the United States. And I urge you to compliment them on their significant leadership and pledging to shut down their illegal ivory markets, but also to find ways that we can explore cooperation on the continent of Africa before we completely lose our foothold as a main player, and that you will continue to advocate for our values in China and in how we both engage in Africa.

Governor BRANSTAD. I appreciate your bringing that issue up, and I think they have made a commitment now to stop this illegal trade in ivory. And I think that is critically important.

Before I came back as Governor, I was president of a medical school. And I actually went to Africa. We have a number of doctors and medical people that volunteer and even our medial students from Des Moines University to provide health care in Africa. I think it is critically important that we work together. I will be glad to compliment them on what they are doing in Africa. I think we need to look at opportunities to collaborate wherever we can.

I am appreciative of the Americans that donate their services and time to help improve drinking water and to help improve conditions for people in Africa.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much for your testimony, Governor. I look forward to supporting your nomination.

Governor BRANSTAD. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Governor, I expected you to be able to talk fluently about pork and chicken and soybeans. I did not know our city fellow from Delaware could do that. So I have learned a lot today. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Governor, for your time today. And while Chris counts his chickens, I would like to end China's beef on U.S. beef. [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Governor BRANSTAD. I am with you.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you for that. I think we are close, but we obviously need a little bit more help to make sure that this market is open freely and fairly to U.S. agriculture, particularly beef producers.

You and I had great conversations about North Korea. I know with Mr. Young and Mr. Cardin and others, you have talked about North Korea and the role that China plays, the particularly important role that China plays as it relates to North Korea's nuclear behavior.

This Congress worked to change the doctrine of strategic patience which had allowed the North Korean regime to proliferate,

to launch a number of missiles, to test a number of nuclear weapons. And I think it is important that we look at the North Korea Sanctions Act that this Congress passed unanimously as a way forward to make sure that we are deterring aggression and, indeed, inducing behavior with North Korea and others around the region to put more pressure on the Kim Jong-un regime to denuclearize peacefully the North Korean Government and North Korean regime.

In those conversations, though, I think one thing that we have to consider is whether or not China is going to, in full faith, carry out its commitment under United Nations resolutions 2270 and 2321. While right now we see them taking actions that they have not taken in recent years. Will that continue or will they slip back into what China does and that is a policy of its own doctrine of patience as it relates to North Korea?

What do you plan to do if China fails to uphold either the United Nations resolutions or indeed to fails to use its influence over North Korea's regime?

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, Senator Gardner, as you have pointed out, they have not abided by these United Nations resolutions. And I think what is happening right now with North Korea is an example of why that needs to change. This is a very serious situation, and I do not think China wants to have a flood of refugees from North Korea going into their country. I also think that they recognize, as other nations in Asia recognize, that this nuclear obsession that the leadership of North Korea has with guided missiles and everything is a very serious threat to humankind and that we need to all look at ways we can work together. I hope that my longtime relationship with the leader of China—and I can convey to him that we sincerely want to work with them and we want to work with other nations as well because this is one of the most important and serious threats facing us all at this time.

Senator GARDNER. Do you believe there is a role for U.S. secondary sanctions on Chinese entities should China fail to live up to its commitments?

Governor BRANSTAD. I think there may well be. Obviously, that decision will be made by the administration and by the leadership here in Washington, D.C. But I think just as recently I think the Secretary of Commerce—they recently levied a big fine on some Chinese entities that illegally provided national security information to rogue nations. And that was I think the largest penalty of that sort that has happened to date. So I am hopeful that is an indication that we are taking these threats real seriously and that we intend to hold companies, whether they are government-owned or controlled entities or otherwise, accountable.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

And I think even when it comes to cybersecurity issues and cyber attacks against the United States, many of the North Korean efforts against U.S.-based companies have gone through China or traveled through China. And so we have a number of cyber sanctions at our disposal as well, and I would encourage the usage of those sanctions as necessary.

When it comes to cybersecurity, I appreciate your statement when you talked about the protection of intellectual property

rights. There is a company in Colorado who did business with China, sold a particular type of pump to a company in China. Months later, the company from China wrote back to this company in Colorado with an email asking some questions about the engineering schematics of the pump, but the new name of the company in China was exactly the same name as the company in Colorado.

So in those conversations you are having with the Chinese Government, some experts believe that over 10 percent of China's GDP can be attributed to the theft of intellectual property. How will you assert both cybersecurity issues, as well as intellectual property rights, and make sure that they are living up to their obligations?

Governor BRANSTAD. The example you cite of the Colorado company—I have heard that from Iowa companies as well of where they have worked in cooperation with a Chinese company and then they see their product being exactly copied. And this is a clear violation of intellectual property rights. And this is the kind of thing that I think we have to very vigorously object to and do everything we can to stop. And we also need to convince the Chinese that with their economy, frankly this theft of property will also come back to bite them as well and that the sooner that they get serious about this, the better it is going to be not just for improving the relationship with the United States and other countries, but also for them in protecting their own intellectual property rights in the future.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Governor. And I know my time has expired, but we will continue our conversations on important issues like the South China Sea as well and Taiwan and the important relationship with our ally Taiwan.

But I just want to end with this. I hope that this position, upon your confirmation—you will use it to really work with Congress in a way that I think has been neglected over the past several years, that you will have a relationship with members of this committee and the Congress in a way that really builds upon this critically important relationship with China and the United States. And I think there is an opportunity here to do things as ambassador that truly do need to be done between one of the most consequential relationships that the world has to offer. Thank you.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, thank you. I intend to do that. As Governor, I had been co-chair at the Governors Council.

The CHAIRMAN. We know you are going to work with us.

Governor BRANSTAD. Okay. Thank you. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Markey?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Governor.

You and I had a good conversation about fentanyl in my office. If people were dying from fentanyl across the country at the same rate that they are in the United States—in the State of Massachusetts, 75,000 people would have died from a fentanyl overdose in 2016. 75,000 people.

The precursor chemicals for fentanyl come from China, and they come from China into Mexico for the most part and then they are transported up into the United States.

So this is still relatively early in this epidemic because people are dying at a very small fraction right now in the country as they are

in Massachusetts and New Hampshire and other States. But it is coming. It is a preview of coming attractions.

So could you talk a little bit about your commitment to raise the profile of this issue at the very highest level to make sure that the Chinese Government understands that we expect them to crack down hard on these fentanyl exporters?

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, Senator Markey, for the last 2 years, the National Governors Association has been actively discussing these issues. And I agree with you. This is a dangerous poison. Basically it is a less costly narcotic than heroin, and it is becoming a huge problem in many States, not just in your State but I think in Ohio, as well in other States in New England. It is going our direction as well. So we are concerned about it.

If we can stop it at its source in China, we need to do that. And that is an issue that I intend to pursue very aggressively because it is human lives that are being lost needlessly, and this is a poison that needs to be prevented from going onto the world marketplace.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. And again, this has to be elevated to the same level as nuclear nonproliferation, copyright, trade. It has to be the same exact level because people are dying at the same level.

Governor BRANSTAD. There has not been enough public attention about this yet.

Senator MARKEY. This is just absolutely a crisis in our country. We would be losing two Korean War levels of Americans every single year to fentanyl. Two Korean War levels. So we cannot allow that to happen. We have to put the protections in place. And the Chinese can be key in the same way that the Chinese are the key in any negotiations with North Korea.

The President says if China is not going to solve North Korea, we will. Well, we have very few options beyond preemptive military strikes without China. And so it is going to require China to play a big role.

But over the last year from the first quarter of 2016 to the first quarter of 2017, there has been a 37 percent increase in trade between North Korea and China, notwithstanding U.N. resolutions and their commitments to have tougher sanctions.

So can you talk about what you believe has to be the conversation that goes on between the United States and China for them to drastically increase the implementations of the enforcement of the sanctions which would bring the North Koreans to the table? The Chinese have wanted us to have direct talks with the North Koreans for years. I agree with that. But it has to be partnered with crippling economic sanctions by China on the North Koreans, and that is not happening. So can you talk about your view of that?

Governor BRANSTAD. I would hope that recent events have convinced China that they need to take this much more seriously. It happens to be that the leader of North Korea's half brother was living in China when he was brutally murdered at the airport in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. So if nothing else is a signal, that sure ought to be.

The other thing is, obviously, the threatening actions, and I think recently the China Daily kind of sent a message to the North Koreans that this nuclear mission and missiles that they are shoot-

ing off is counterproductive. And I hope that they will use that as a reason to tighten down on sanctions and get serious about working with us and other countries in dealing with this. This is a very important and critical time to deal with that in light of the actions of just the last few months.

Senator MARKEY. Yes. We do not need a second Korean War for sure.

Governor BRANSTAD. No, we do not. We need their help. And I do not think they want a world with this either. They do not want a bunch of refugees from North Korea pouring into China. I have been to Harbin, which is north of North Korea. It is an agriculture region of China. And we need their cooperation. We need their assistance in peacefully dealing with this and changing this dangerous direction of North Korea at this time.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Governor.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Portman?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Governor, good to see you. Thanks for coming by to visit. 24 years as Governor——

Governor BRANSTAD. I probably will not serve out the full 24 years if you confirm me. [Laughter.]

Governor BRANSTAD. Twenty-three sessions.

Senator PORTMAN. You are doing a great job, and you have shown today that you have got a grasp of what is going on over in China and I appreciate that. It is a tough job. You know, I knew Sandy Rand pretty well and was over there with him a number of times, and he was kind of a China expert. I know you are going into this with your eyes wide open.

But despite your relationship with President Xi going back to his days as head of a livestock association, they are tough negotiators. When I was U.S. Trade Representative, I had the opportunity to negotiate with them quite a bit. We do have a better relationship now at the presidential level I believe than we have had in a long time. But we have got so many issues.

I was over there on a congressional delegation a couple weeks ago and had the opportunity to meet with Premier Li, as well as Chairman of the National People's Congress Jong, and talked about the issues that have been raised today, including North Korea, including the South China Sea, including a level playing field on trade, IP, intellectual property issues, as well as their overcapacity and their dumping in the United States.

We also talked about an issue that my colleague from Massachusetts, Ed Markey, just raised which is fentanyl. And one point I made to them is there is information that fentanyl is also leaking into their society. In other words, it is not just a question of stopping the laboratories in China where some evil scientist is creating poison that is coming into our communities.

And by the way, the new push is directly fentanyl, 90 percent pure, being mailed to America to Des Moines and to Cincinnati and to Columbus, and it comes by the mail and people are ordering it over the Web.

It is killing more people this year by far than it killed last year. So this is getting worse, not better. And Massachusetts has been hit hard. So has Ohio. But I really believe from talking to experts around the country this is the new wave. It is a synthetic form of heroin, as you know. But it is 30 to 50 times more powerful than heroin. And not only are there more overdoses, but there are more deaths as a percent of every overdose because it is so deadly.

So they have a responsibility to work with us on this. We need to do more here obviously on the demand side, and we need to do more in terms of stopping it through the mail, which many members of this committee are on our legislation called the STOP Act. But I would like today to hear from you on this just to assure us that you are going to press on this issue.

They have 170,000 chemical plants in China, and these are legitimate plants. I understand that. But they got a lot of pharmaceutical and chemical plants that are illegitimate. And with their control over their economy, I believe they can do much more to be able to stop this poison from coming into our country. And again, as you said with regard to intellectual property—and this relates to some of the other issues, including Korea—they should have an interest in this.

So could you just confirm to us today that you will press on this issue and specifically talk to them about not just shutting down some of these plants, which they have to do, but actually make sure they schedule more of these precursors so that they become illegal and that they do more to shut down the fentanyl production in China?

Governor BRANSTAD. Senator, I want to do everything I can to work with you and Senator Markey and others that are very concerned about this issue. I think it is really a life and death issue. I also think, in addition to shutting down the plants, they need to punish the people that are doing this. And I want to press that because it is such an important thing to saving human lives and preventing this poison from—and as you say, it is a danger in their country as well. We know it is a very severe, growing danger here, but it is something that has no place. And I want to do everything I can. I will be looking for advice and counsel on what can be the most effective way.

But I am not bashful about bringing up tough issues in negotiations. You have had great experience in negotiating trade deals, and I, at a much lower level, have worked on that for decades. But this is an issue that really comes to protecting human life. And it is something that we have got to take very seriously, and I intend to raise this as a top issue, along with the others that we have talked about here today.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, thanks for that commitment.

By the way, most of it is coming from China according to the experts. So this is obviously that they can be much more responsible about.

With regard to trade, there are so many issues. Let me just touch on one quickly. Back in 2000, Chinese production of steel was roughly the same as the United States, and that is 100 million tons a year. Since 2000, they have gone to 1.2 billion tons per year of steel production. So a net importer of steel became the biggest ex-

porter of steel in the world. And in that process through this overcapacity that they have developed, they have been selling steel below its cost in the United States of America. It is one of the reasons we have lost over 12,000 steel jobs here in this country during that time period. 12,000. And I raised it with them, of course, when I was over there.

More importantly, I think we need to have an ambassador who understands this issue and will be sure that with regard to their dumping or their subsidization, which is also going on, they understand that we are not going to put up with it anymore. There is an absolute necessity to have trade that is level. And as you said, I have negotiated with them in the past on trade. You know, this is one of their responsibilities as a member of the WTO and a responsible, mature trading partner now, obviously.

So any thoughts quickly on steel and the dumping of steel and your commitment to press on that issue?

Governor BRANSTAD. Back in 1993, I helped to track a steel company to Iowa called IPSCO Steel from Canada. And they have been sold to SSAB. And I have been working with SSAB. I have been active among the Governors on pressing for action on dealing with the dumping issue and the unfair competition in steel. So this is a critical issue, one that I am familiar with because we have got a company SSAB in Montpelier, Iowa between Davenport and Muscatine that has been negatively affected by this. So I want to do everything I can to make sure that we stop the unfair and illegal activities that we have seen from China in the steel industry.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Governor.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I do want to highlight that I doubt there is any country in the world with which we have so many issues. It is most important for our two countries to manage the relationship properly. But I am uplifted by the fact that you have had so many personal experiences with many of these issues as a Governor, and you know how important they are to rural people. All of us have had family or friends who have died, I am sure, from fentanyl. We know of the job losses that have taken place. We know of the outright theft. I mean, it is just like going and robbing a bank directly with what they do with intellectual property. And I do hope with the relationship you have, you will be a constant force for dealing with the multiple violations of international norms that take place with China.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, Senator, I appreciate your counsel on this important issue. This is one thing about being the chief executive, being the Governor. The buck stops with you. I was Governor during the farm crisis in the 1980s. I have gone on trade missions all over the world. I have dealt with a lot of issues. And I think that background and experience is going to be helpful to me in this role. I know I have a lot to learn about foreign policy on a lot of these issues, and I have been trying to get up to speed as best I can.

But I am not bashful about bringing these issues up. And just the fact that the leader of China calls us an old friend does not mean that I am going to be at all reluctant or bashful about bring-

ing up issues where we think they have not been fair and where Americans or anybody has been treated unfairly, be it human rights or intellectual property rights.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Governor, thank you for your service and congratulations on your nomination.

Governor BRANSTAD. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. China is probably one of the most complex posts that anybody could ever be offered.

So I am still in the process of trying to understand the President's world view and understand how he determines alliances and partnerships. So since obviously you have had some discussion with him about this role, do you believe China is an adversary or an ally of the United States?

Governor BRANSTAD. That is a tough question. I think both are potential. But I think we need to do everything we can to try to make them an ally, and we need to look at ways that we can work together.

I know from the food perspective, the Chinese are very concerned about food security, and they have had some real issues on food security. And I have been in China and talked to them about how we—our country—that are blessed with a safe, secure food supply—and it is not only great quality, but it is among the cheapest in the world. —

Senator MENENDEZ. So our aspiration is for them to be an ally. But if you were to describe our relationship with them now, what would you say that is?

Governor BRANSTAD. It is mixed. I think that there are a lot of areas of—but I think we have got to always strive to try to break the barriers. I was one of the first Governors to go there after they began to open up and move to a more market-driven economy. And I think what I want to do is try to stress on them because of the change that has taken place over the last 30-some years, they have benefited greatly. But they also have an obligation as a growing power now to also play by the rules and do the things that are expected of countries that are world leaders.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that.

Now, for months, before taking office, the President excoriated China for manipulating its currency to the detriment of American workers, insisting that he would put American workers and the labor force first. But things seem to have changed. Can you clarify for me? Do you believe that China manipulated its currency in the past?

Governor BRANSTAD. I think they have. I think that has changed somewhat in recent months or in the last year or so. But I think that is obviously a great concern because if they are able to manipulate their currency and make their goods cheaper to export and ours more expensive to import, that is one of the challenges that we are facing. So, yes, that is an issue that we need to continue to monitor, and that is one of many things that I think we need to continue to be vigilant in terms of reviewing the situation and seeing if indeed that has changed or not.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I appreciate your directness on that because I too believe they have been a currency manipulator. They are not right now. And the question is how do we avoid them—get them to understand that that is not a good proposition for China or certainly for the United States and workers. So I hope that you will spend some time and attention to that as you unfold your issues there.

I am concerned, as is the President, about North Korea, and some of my colleagues have talked about that. But despite some strong rhetoric from China because of its deep economic ties and its border, China from my perspective continues to enable North Korea's leaders to pursue destabilizing nuclear weapons.

So the question is we seem to have a lot of hope in President Xi as it relates to helping us with North Korea, and I do hope that that unfolds. But the question is, if it does not, should we not consider giving China greater consequences so that they understand their calculus is wrong? For example, the sanctions that Senator Gardner and I authored would permit sanctions against Chinese banks for which North Korea operates a great deal. Should we not consider that as a possibility if we cannot get China to do diplomatically what we hope for them to do in North Korea to change their calculus?

Governor BRANSTAD. I think we should keep all these options open. Obviously, as ambassador, I will not be decision-maker on them.

Senator MENENDEZ. You will be a key adviser to the President.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, that is right. And I will not hesitate to give my advice and what I am able to learn on the ground over there. And I do think all options should be open and that we ought to do everything we can to convince them to be much more aggressive in dealing with the threats from North Korea. If that does not happen, then I think we need to look at what can we do to try to apply more pressure to convince them that it is in their interests, and there will be consequences if they do not.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that.

Finally, as the co-chair of the Taiwan Caucus with Senator Inhofe, I do hope that we will continue to promote the Taiwan Relations Act as the law of the land, as the essence of our relationship with Taiwan. I understand the One China policy, but Taiwan is also very important to us, and I hope that you will keep the perspective of the Taiwan Relations Act as a focus in your engagement with China as it relates to Taiwan.

Governor BRANSTAD. Senator Menendez, I want to assure you I will. I also have been to Taiwan. The State of Iowa does have a sister state with Taiwan. And I recognize the importance of both the One China policy but of also supporting and enforcing the Taiwan Relations Act.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you. I appreciate your directness.

Governor BRANSTAD. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso?

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

Governor, congratulations on the nomination. Thanks for coming to visit with me in my office. I saw you right before the break, and

I was heading to China and wanted to just tell you that people are looking forward to you as our ambassador.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, the Chinese people have been very nice to me and have taken a lot of pictures of me for what that is worth. [Laughter.]

Governor BRANSTAD. But I would be interested in finding out how your trip went. And I think you were intending to go to Tibet as well?

Senator BARRASSO. As well, yes. It was very productive, very fruitful, talked about some of the issues that have just been raised but also issues of trade. Senator Portman, who is our former U.S. Trade Rep, brought up a number of issues. I brought up a number as well.

One was on soda ash. Many U.S. industries experience a wide variety of concerns surrounding China's trade policies and practices. As we have discussed in this committee, soda ash continues to face unfair trade practices from China, from other countries. The United States is the most competitive supplier of soda ash in the world due to the abundance of a raw material called trona in the United States. And Wyoming, specifically the Green River Basin, is the world's largest area for naturally occurring trona. So soda ash is a key manufacturing component of glass, detergents, soaps, chemicals. China is seeking to capture the global market share from the United States soda ash producers, and they do it through unfair trade practices. China has given its own synthetic soda ash producers a significant rebate on the China's value-added tax.

So if confirmed, will you continue to work to highlight and eliminate market distorting subsidies like the value-added tax rebate on soda ash exports that harm U.S. workers and U.S. producers?

Governor BRANSTAD. The answer is yes. I look at this very much like the steel issue where they are being unfair and where they are providing unfair subsidies. This is the kind of thing that we have to strenuously object to and do everything we can to try to correct.

Senator BARRASSO. I appreciate it. And we did raise it with the Premier when we were there in Beijing.

And then with regard to beef—and I know Senator Gardner asked a bit about that—the United States produces the highest quality beef in the world. While China lifted its ban on U.S. beef last September, some technical barriers have prevented the U.S. beef from actually gaining access to the Chinese market.

In April, I signed a letter on this critical issue to President Trump, along with 38 other Senators, including members of this committee, bipartisan members of this committee. Senator Kaine signed it, as well as Senators Risch and Gardner and Young and Paul and Portman. The letter urged the administration to discuss opening the Chinese market to U.S. beef with the President of China during his visit to the United States. And it is vital that we work to ensure that U.S. beef is traded fairly and trade barriers are eliminated there as well.

Governor BRANSTAD. I agree wholeheartedly. I want to be able to serve beef, American beef, specifically Iowa premium beef—[Laughter.]

Governor Branstad:—at the embassy and at the ambassador's residence. I do not think it is fair that right now we have to serve Australian beef or Argentinean beef.

And this issue goes back to mad cow disease 13 years ago. And as you have said, they have announced they are going to do it, but it has still not been done. And that is one of the areas that I feel very strongly about. In fact, the trade mission I went on in November to both China and Japan, we did have a great press conference and beef tasting in Tokyo. I was on the early stages of opening that Japanese market many years ago to American beef. And that now is really flourishing, and we need the same access in China. Mad cow disease has not been in this country for, I think, 13 years. And besides that, the mad cow came from Canada.

Senator BARRASSO. One final question and it has to do with human rights and economic issues, Governor. China is the United States' largest trading partner, in terms of great potential economic opportunities for businesses in the United States, but China continues to engage in what I believe are serious human rights abuses, including political and religious repression. So as Ambassador to China, can you just spend a little bit of time discussing how you are going to balance engaging China on the economic front while also demonstrating our Nation's concerns about China's human rights violations?

Governor BRANSTAD. We are a Nation that has always stood for human rights for all people in the world, and I think it is critically important the Ambassador for the United States of America make that point and make that along with the other issues that we deal with in China. I am Catholic. I want to go to a Catholic church in China. I respect other people's religions as well, and I do not think religious people should be persecuted. So I think it is very important that we protect all human rights, including freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Governor.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I reserved some time on the front end. I did not ask any questions.

I was just thinking about all the myriad of questions you have been asked about China that affect all of our lives on a daily basis. But between human rights violations, non-freedom of press, what they do with U.S. journalists and others, the monopoly laws they have there which are intended to hurt U.S. companies—and they do—the national security laws that do the same, the cyber theft that we have hit on several times, violation of international norms in the South China Sea, redrawing thousands of years of history there, their knowingly not complying with the U.N. Security Council resolutions on North Korea, allowing companies to violate that and doing so themselves, the dumping that takes place with China's manufactured goods, the subsidizing that takes place, if that is not occurring, and just what we talked about with fentanyl and other kinds of things—can you share with us some things that give you hope about the Premier's sincerity, if you will, in really wanting to reform the country so that it comes into more universal and international norms? I mean, what are the things that give you

hope of China's willingness to actually do so? And additionally, in Africa and in other places, they basically cause countries there to be debt-laden by doing things with all Chinese workers that solely benefit China, please give me some optimism based on your relationship.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, my relationship goes way back to 1983 and 1984. Here is the thing. China, as you know, is a very closed communist system. It started when Henry Kissinger and then President Nixon went there and it began to open up. My predecessor, Robert Ray, went to China and kind of laid the groundwork. I signed the sister state. I went there in 1984. I have seen a big change. And we were hopeful that when they adopted these economic reforms, it would lead to more political reforms.

I think our disappointment in recent years is—and frankly my disappointment since President Xi became the leader of China—and he has done some things to crack down on corruption and to try to clean up some of the bad practices of some of the members of his party. But he has not done what I had hoped would happen and that is become more open and more willing to accept freedom of press and stop the repression of minorities. Those are the kind of issues that I hope to bring up with him.

We go back a long ways. We are considered old friends. But I think he has got to recognize that some of the things that are being done in China today are very much against what I think is the right policies for a world leader. And I think he aspires to be a great leader for his country, but I want to—as an old friend, I would tell him where I think they are falling short and the kind of things that need to be addressed, including these human rights, intellectual property rights, and other things. So I hope that I can be an effective spokesman for America and for challenging some of the policies that we think are really going in the wrong direction.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was a good question. I have been wondering the same thing.

And I appreciate, Governor Branstad, your service, and I am very happy to support you in this position. As we described, I have got good Democratic friends in Iowa that give you high marks, at least as high as they are going to give somebody on the other side of the aisle.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, they keep reelecting me.

Senator KAINE. And I am struck by that too. You know, I come from the only State where they just give you one term. I am the only State where they call the Governor Your Excellency." So they talk about you nice, but they want you to leave pretty quickly. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. So 22 years is remarkable.

And you have had a pretty amazing track record. As I think about Iowa from having visited my friends, there are many things that I think about, but the thing I think about the most—ag and forestry is the number one part of the Virginia economy, and you guys lead with that.

What you have done over the years of your tenure with others to improve the lot of family farms through the creation of alter-

native energy options for farmers so that together with farming for food, they could grow corn and use it to produce ethanol or have a wind tower that they could use to supplement income, I mean, I would just love to hear from 1983 to today, that has just been revolutionary.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, thank you for bringing that up because I am very proud of where we have come from. In 1983, we were almost totally dependent on imported energy, fuel, oil that came from the Middle East, and most of our electricity was generated by coal. Today Iowa leads the Nation. And my very first year as Governor, we signed a renewable electric portfolio law that has been copied, I think, by 23 other States, and we now produce 35.8 percent of our electricity by wind. We have two big projects that have been announced. Mid-American Energy is investing another $3.6 billion in wind turbines, and Alliant—those are our two big utilities—another billion dollars. We will be over 40 percent—the first State to do that—by the year 2020.

And, of course, we lead the Nation in ethanol. We produce more ethanol than we consume in gasoline. We are moving from E10 to E15. We also have a number of E85 pumps in the State. We also lead the Nation in biodiesel.

Senator KAINE. But not corn-based biodiesel.

Governor BRANSTAD. Soybean-based biodiesel. It is almost all from soybeans. Some of it comes from animal fat. But it is either animal fat or soybeans.

Senator KAINE. If there is one place in the United States that demonstrates that fighting greenhouse gas emissions and promoting economic growth are not inconsistent goals, it is Iowa.

Governor BRANSTAD. And it has created a lot of jobs, and it has also created income, as you mentioned, for farmers. So this is another alternative to farmers. If you have a wind turbine on your farm, that generates income. It also generates property tax for that local government.

Senator KAINE. I was looking at the website for the Iowa Corn Growers Association, and they talk about the four E's. They talk about economy, environment, energy security, without sacrificing engine performance.

Governor BRANSTAD. The new high performance engines—they should use 30 or 40 percent ethanol. And we can clearly produce enough corn to do that and still keep the price of food relatively low.

Senator KAINE. Then here is an area of hope that I see, kind of to follow up on Senator Corker's question. And the United States and China are the largest emitters of greenhouse gas in the world, and they were the first two nations to sign the Paris Climate Accord. And as Governor of Iowa, you go there with a story. They are dealing with major environmental challenges. You go there with a story which is we can battle greenhouse gas and do it in a way that does not hobble the economy. If we are smart, if we are careful, if we are strategic about it, we can do it in a way that is good for the environment and good for the economy.

The one thing I would just ask—and this is kind of in line with some of your earlier testimony. This is not your decision to make, but it would be your advice to give. I think it would be a massive

mistake for the United States to pull out of the Paris Climate Accord. The U.S. and China were first in, and they are setting leadership for the rest of the world. And if the U.S. were to pull out of it, the effect on the world, the effect on what China might do I think could be significant. And you are the best person in the United States with a story to tell about how you can battle greenhouse gas emissions and also promote the environment at the same time.

The Iowa Corn Growers Association website lists how ethanol was so much better with respect to both greenhouse gas emissions and use of water than production of gasoline. You are an ambassador of the United States to China, but I also think you can be an ambassador for the clean energy economy of tomorrow to the Nation and the world that most needs that advice right now.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, Senator Kaine, thank you for your advice. My oldest son Eric actually chaired the bipartisan Renewable Energy Coalition that worked with all the candidates of both parties before the Iowa caucuses to educate them on renewable energy. In fact, he brought then candidate Trump to one of the ethanol plants at Gowrie, Iowa. And we got tremendous response from both parties and I think did a lot to educate the presidential candidates on the importance of renewable energy.

So I think we still have more work to do especially on wind energy. When candidate Trump came to the Iowa State Fair, I pointed out we have a wind turbine right there at the Iowa State Fair. Also, Secretary Perry, who is the former Governor of Texas—they are also a big wind energy State.

Senator KAINE. Absolutely. They had the renewable energy portfolio early.

Governor BRANSTAD. That is right.

Senator KAINE. When President Bush was Governor.

Governor BRANSTAD. They followed our lead. They are one of the, I think, 23 States that copied basically a law I signed in 1983. So I agree with you.

Also, I would say there is a company called HZ. It is a Chinese company that has a couple of wind turbines near Nevada, Iowa. They are a subsidiary of Chem China. I have called on them, and frankly we think there is, as you pointed out, opportunity for collaboration on this in a way that can benefit air quality and the whole world.

Senator KAINE. Excellent. I look forward to working with you. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Rubio?

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Thank you, Governor. Congratulations.

As you know, I spent some time in Iowa over the last year and a half, and we too went to the fair and my kids enjoyed it very much. They wanted to know why we did not go this year. [Laughter.]

Governor BRANSTAD. You are always welcome. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. Well, I asked them what did you learn at the fair, and the one thing that one of my kids said is we learned that you can fry anything. [Laughter.]

Governor BRANSTAD. Even butter. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. So anyway, I appreciate it.

And I appreciate your acknowledgement today that an economic opening towards a totalitarian state in and of itself will not guarantee a political opening. It will allow them to control the pace and the scope of that opening for economic purposes, but it does not translate to political opening. I think China is a perfect example of it.

As I shared with you, I think this is the most—you know, when they write the book about the 21st century, there will be a chapter in there about Russia. There will be a chapter or two there about Islamic terrorism. But I think that book is going to be dominated by chapter after chapter documenting the relationship between the United States and China. And how that relationship goes in very many ways is going to determine the direction of the 21st century.

There is a sense I think among the Chinese people and many in their government that our goal is to contain them or to keep them down. And that certainly is not the case. On the contrary, I think we would love to have a partner on the global stage of their scope and magnitude to confront some of these challenges that we face. What we are not going to do, I believe—and it is important to communicate this—is we are not going to accept some sort of sphere of influence where they dominate the region at the expense of our allies and alliances in the region.

And we are also going to continue to raise the human rights issue because it does play out, as we have seen in international forums. China is a consistent vetoer of anything at the Security Council that takes on the issue of human rights. And I think that reflects the way that government operates at home. And it is always important to have a distinction between the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people. They are not the same thing.

One of the things that we have talked about—what is very important both in their culture and in their politics—is the ability to save face, in essence, to not be publicly embarrassed on a topic. And therefore, as you have expressed and others, the best way to raise issues with the Russian leadership is in a private forum.

And I would ask, given your time and interaction with the current President of China, can you tell us of any instance where you raised a difficult issue or pressed him on something, on an issue that perhaps was not aligned with the interests of the Chinese Communist Party. Is there such an instance that you know where you raised an issue?

Governor BRANSTAD. That is a good question. And I think your observation is absolutely right on about how we need to try to find ways to partner with them.

Obviously, my role as Governor is different than my role is going to be as ambassador. As Governor, I was not as aggressive at bringing up the human rights issues and things like that because I felt——

Senator RUBIO. You were dealing with economic issues.

Governor BRANSTAD [continuing]. Yes. It was economic issues.

But certainly we made great progress over the years in opening China for things like soybeans. I mean, we are at the point where last year—when my staff told me it was 48 percent of our soybeans

went to China—it had been one-third that had gone to China, and now it is up to 48 percent last year. But there are also things that have gone the other way. DDGs, which is a byproduct from ethanol—they have now put a tariff on that that has really dramatically reduced our exports of that. So I have seen areas where we have made progress. I have also seen areas where we have lost ground.

I think I just have to be vigilant in going after those things where we think they are being unfair.

I think there have been some good things that Xi Jinping has done to crack down on corruption within his own party and his own government. Some people say, well, part of that is just about getting rid of his enemies. But I think some of it has really been about addressing the severe problem they do have with corruption.

Senator RUBIO. And, Governor, I guess my point, because my time is about to expire, is there is no shortage of human rights abuses. You mentioned your Catholic faith as I have as well. Bishop Su, an 85-year-old Catholic bishop who has disappeared and we presume imprisoned by the Government there.

What I hope to acquire from you today is a commitment that on these cases, whether it is publicly or privately, that these are issues that you will raise with the Government of China, whether it is an American or some other case, because this is really important for the human rights community to feel like their Ambassador to China is someone who is going to raise these issues even if it makes our host, in this case the Chinese Communist Party, uncomfortable.

And in light of that, to meet with them in China when they are willing to meet with you, the willingness to meet with some of their exiles that are here in the United States to hear their concerns, this is a very important commitment. It is a very important part of this job, and I think it is really important for those interested in human rights globally and in China to know that they are going to have an ambassador willing to raise these issues both in those private forums and meet with them publicly as opposed to allow them to be marginalized.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, I will do that. Just to assure you, my first trip to the old Soviet Union was in 1986. It was just shortly after Chernobyl. And I actually smuggled Natan Sharansky's book in to the American embassy to give to his mother.

My wife and I met with a group of refuseniks. I am sure that the woman that they had as our escort, the Soviet person, was a KGB agent. We slipped out of her presence, and we met with a group of refuseniks to find out what was really happening in what was called Leningrad at the time, now St. Petersburg.

So I am not bashful about meeting with dissidents or people that feel they are being discriminated or treated unfairly. I have a history of being willing to do that in my previous role. As ambassador, I think it is even more important because of our country's commitment to human rights. And I look forward to working with you and ideas that you and others have about people that are not being treated fairly and being able to at least bring those issues up in a private setting because, as you said, saving face is important in their culture. But it is also I think important that we confront

them with those areas where we feel that they are not abiding by basic human dignity.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Well, Governor, first I want to applaud your participation here today. You have done very well in giving us the confidence of your knowledge of the areas and the way that you go about trying to reach strategic decisions as to how to advance U.S. interests. So I thank you for that.

I want to put a dose of reality on North Korea for one moment because I am concerned with some of the exchanges not necessarily your response but the realities of the circumstances in North Korea as it relates to American values and as it relates to North Korea's continued desire to violate international commitments on nuclear proliferation and missile proliferation.

The challenge is that there really is not a military option for a first strike by the United States. Unlike the circumstances we found in Iran with their nuclear proliferation, a military option would have been terrible but it was doable. In North Korea, a military option would involve the risks of millions of lives. That is the reality. So we really are faced with changing the calculation in North Korea so that they take action to eliminate this threat, which requires China.

So that then brings us to the point that China and the United States have some common interests. China does not want to see this blow up as you point out. They do not want all those immigrants or migrants coming in from North Korea. That is absolutely correct. But they also do not want to see a democratic country on their border. North Korea looks at nuclear weapons as their ability for maintaining their regime because it would be difficult for us to take them out.

So how do you deal with China that is not interested in bringing down the North Korean regime, wants to maintain a communist country on their border? How do we work with them and the fear that they have that America's interest is to try to bring down the North Korean regime? How do you balance all that and get North Korea to understand that they can maintain their regime security without nuclear weapons?

Governor BRANSTAD. That is a very perceptive question that you have asked, Senator Cardin. And that is right. There is no way that China is going to want to see a regime change that has a democratic united Korea under South Korean rule on their border.

By the same token, I think we also recognize that Seoul is very close. I mean, I have been to Seoul several times, South Korea. I have been to the DMZ. There is, I think, 20 million people in Seoul whose lives are in jeopardy if we were to try to attack North Korea. That is certainly not something we want to put those people's lives in jeopardy.

So that is why working with the Chinese and convincing the Chinese that they are the ones that have the potential to really influence the regime in North Korea more than anyone else and that the change that needs to take place there does not need to be a threat to the system, but needs to stop this nuclear proliferation and the building of a guidance system for missiles to attack the United States and Japan and other countries in the world.

It is probably the most pressing issue that we have right now. And I want to do whatever I can to try to be a go-between between our two countries that can help convince the leadership in China that it is in their interest and our interest to work together to stop this dangerous direction that is coming out of North Korea. Their leadership is critically important to doing that, and it needs to be done in a way that they do not feel it threatens them but also that it will provide security to the other nations in that part of the world.

Senator CARDIN. We want to give you the strongest possible hand in making that case. So please feel comfortable to give us advice as to how the Congress can weigh in to make your case the strongest possible for China to help us in changing the calculations in North Korea.

Governor BRANSTAD. I want to do anything and everything that I can. I am open to listening to suggestions or ideas that any member of this committee or any Member of the Senate has. I want to work closely with the administration and everybody else. But I see this as probably the biggest challenge that I have ever had in my entire life, and I want to do anything and everything that I can to try to find an acceptable solution for the benefit of the entire human race.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Just to follow up before we close out, I think most people believe that no amount of economic pressure—no amount of economic pressure—will keep North Korea from developing a deliverable nuclear weapon to the United States. Kim Jong-un views that as his ticket to die as an old man in his bed down the road, his ticket to not being taken out. So it is a strategy that most people believe has problems because of a strong desire to have the weapon.

But at the same time, China's lack of willingness to play the role that has to be played has got to change. At least we have to attempt as a world community to put severe economic pressures on his country to stop it. I do hope that China is willing to step up to that. I think they do a lot of head fakes and act as if they are going to do things and then never follow through. But I do think something severe is going to happen in the region if they do not. And I think it is totally dependent upon them.

We would love to work with you. You know, the administration is trying to do what they can to bring the world community in to help bear pressure to raise the level of concern and awareness. But I do hope that you will work with us in whatever way you deem appropriate to help bring pressure to bear. I do hope that the pendulum has swung and that China now views North Korea as a liability and not an asset. I hope that you are going to do everything you can to ensure that that is the case.

But I do believe that from the standpoint of global encounters that can get out of control and millions of people be ravaged in the process, this is the one that is most evident to us today. So I hope none of that happens. I hope as a world community, we will come together. But I do think that in many ways is your most important responsibility as you take on this post.

You have had an outstanding hearing. I think your on-the-ground experiences with China will serve our Nation well. I think your understanding of what drives the thinking within China will serve our Nation well. I thank you for your willingness to give up a very comfortable place—apparently issues of reelection are not a problem. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. And go to a post that is much more temporary and yet in many ways far more meaningful from the standpoint of our security and the world's security. So thank you.

We will leave the record open until the close of business Thursday. I am sure you will want to answer those questions promptly and will.

Governor BRANSTAD. Will do.

Senator CARDIN. I thank your family for their willingness for you to be so far away for so many years.

And we look forward to your confirmation and working with you. Thank you so much.

Governor BRANSTAD. Well, thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, all the members of your committee. It has been an honor and a privilege to get the benefit of your counsel and advice, and I look forward to continuing to work with you, if I get the confirmation and the opportunity to serve our country as the Ambassador to China. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. TERRY BRANSTAD BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. Will you commit to periodically appearing at hearings of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China? Will you commit to encouraging administration officials who serve as executive branch commissioners to attend CECC hearings?

Answer. The Congressional-Executive Commission on China serves as a valuable platform for experts, activists, and civil society leaders to provide unfiltered information on China's human rights environment. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with the CECC, and invite its members to travel to China to investigate conditions on the ground.

Question 2. Will you commit to urging all visiting Cabinet members and Members of Congress to raise individual human rights cases or issues in China-with specific and meaningful asks-with their Chinese counterparts?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed as ambassador, I will work tirelessly to press the Chinese Government on human rights cases and will encourage others to do so as well.

Question 3. Will you commit to meeting monthly or quarterly with civil society groups in China to show support for their work? Will you also push back on the Chinese Government's efforts to limit U.S. Government contact with these civil society groups and will you challenge senior Chinese leaders and parts of the security apparatus, particularly China's Public Security Bureau (PSB), on the harassment or denied registration of U.S.-based NGOs?

Answer. As I said during my hearing I hope not only to meet with civil society while in Beijing, but also as I travel throughout China.

Question 4. Will you commit to meeting in the United States with exiled dissidents and exiled critics of the Chinese Government who cannot travel to China to ensure you have fullest possible perspective on both the human rights situation

in China, and on what the U.S. Government can do to effect positive change? If confirmed, will you commit to having the first of such meetings prior to departing for post?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting and meeting with civil society organizations and rights activists both in the United States and China.

Question 5. Will you commit to using existing authority in the International Religious Freedom Act to communicate to U.S. State Department the names of Chinese Government officials who are involved and complicit in egregious violations of religious freedom, and who should also be denied entry to the U.S. given that China has been designated a Country of Particular Concern since 1999?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to raising our serious concerns over China's repression of religious freedom. I will remain in close contact with relevant bureaus in the State Department on this important issue and I appreciate Congress having provided the tools in the International Religious Freedom Act to use, as appropriate, in order to promote religious freedom for all in China.

Question 6. Will you commit to robust engagement on implementation of the Global Magnitsky Act? Specifically, if confirmed, would you dedicate embassy staff resources to compiling names and information regarding Chinese Government officials who should be denied visas under the Global Magnitsky Act as a result of their involvement in grave human rights violations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that embassy and consular staff devote adequate resources and take appropriate action to implement the Act.

Question 7. Will you commit to visibly marking the Tiananmen anniversary each year, using the occasion to assess the human rights situation in China and reminding the authorities of the need for accountability for abuses committed in 1989?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure we do not fail to commemorate the Tiananmen anniversary.

Question 8. Earlier this year, I met the wives of Jiang Tianyong and Tang Jingling, two human rights lawyers who were disbarred for their work to defend human rights, and who are now being unjustly held by Chinese authorities. In the case of Mr. Jiang, his exact whereabouts remain unknown. The wives of Mr. Jiang and Mr. Tang have asked U.S. officials to raise the cases of their husbands with the Chinese Government the cases of their husbands in the hopes that they can see them again. I've publicly urged Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to advocate on their behalf. Would you be willing to meet with the wives of these two men? Do you commit to raising their cases at the highest levels of the Chinese Government?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to raising human rights cases and issues regularly with senior Chinese officials. I also commit to meeting with the family members of activists. I am troubled by the human rights environment in China, including the crackdown on lawyers such as Jiang Tianyong and Tang Jingling, and the harassment of their family members.

Question 9. What do you believe is America's role in ensuring that Beijing honors the promises it made at the time of the handover and what do you intend to do to limit mainland interference in Hong Kong especially as we approach the 20th anniversary of the handover?

- Would you support visa bans on Chinese or Hong Kong officials found to be involved in the recent and future abductions, disappearances, and detentions of booksellers or other Hong Kong residents?

Answer. If confirmed, I will firmly support the principle of "one country, two systems," as well as the goal of achieving universal suffrage in Hong Kong in accordance with the Basic Law and the aspirations of the Hong Kong people. I will seek to support Hong Kong's highly developed rule of law, independent judiciary, and respect for individual rights, which have been keys to its continued success, stability, and global competitiveness.

If confirmed, I also will speak out on the value of Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy in my engagements with the Chinese Government, and support reinforcing that autonomy through government-to-government cooperation that treats Hong Kong as a special and distinct entity.The disappearances and detentions of booksellers and other Hong Kong residents raise serious questions about China's commitment to "one country, two systems" and its respect for the protection of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will raise this issue with the Chinese Government.

Question 10. Global health, international aviation security, and transnational crime are all matters of global importance that requires cooperation from stakeholders from all around the world. Congress has passed bills requiring the State De-

partment to support Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

- If confirmed as Ambassador to China, would you support Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations? How so?
- How do you see the Trump administration's approach to the one-China policy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support Taiwan's membership in international organizations that do not require statehood. In organizations that require statehood for membership, I will support Taiwan's meaningful participation. This includes ICAO, INTERPOL, WHO, and the more than 60 international organizations in which Taiwan participates.

I am committed to supporting Taiwan as it seeks to expand its already significant contributions to addressing global challenges.I believe the United States has a deep and abiding interest in cross-Strait peace and stability. The benefits that stable cross-Strait ties have brought to China and Taiwan, the United States, and the region have been important. China and Taiwan should understand the value of stable cross-Strait ties and work to establish a basis for continued peace and stability.

Question 11. 11: Will you commit to explaining to Chinese authorities that the United States will recognize and freely interact with the person chosen independently by Tibetans to succeed the current Dalai Lama, as a way of showing now that the U.S. will not accept a Chinese Government-controlled selection process, and of encouraging Tibetans to pursue reincarnation in accordance with traditional practices?

- It has long been the policy of the U.S. Government, provided by the Tibetan Policy Act, to promote a dialogue between the envoys of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government toward a solution on the Tibet issue that guarantees the respect of the "distinct identity" of the Tibetan people, who continue to suffer under China's oppressive rule. The dialogue is now at a standstill and, as we have seen, the lack of substantive progress toward a genuine resolution continues to be a thorny issue in U.S.-China relations. Would you personally commit to pressing the Chinese leadership for a resolution of the Tibetan issue through a speedy resumption of dialogue with the Tibetan side, without preconditions?
- China requires American visitors to get a special permit to visit much of Tibet. American diplomats, journalists and NGOs have a difficult time visiting the region as do Tibetan Americans. Will you commit to ensuring that the Chinese authorities provide access to Tibet for American officials, journalists and citizens, just as Chinese citizens get access to the United States? Will you commit to pressing the Chinese authorities to allow for the opening of a U.S. consulate in Lhasa?

Answer. I share your concerns about the lack of respect for human rights and rule of law in Tibet. If confirmed, I will urge Chinese authorities to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama and his representatives without preconditions to lower tensions and resolve differences. I will also call on China to provide meaningful autonomy for Tibetans and cease restrictions on Tibetan religious, linguistic, and cultural practices. I will engage the Chinese Government regarding interference in Tibetan religious matters, particularly the selection and education of the reincarnate lamas who lead the faith.

If confirmed, I will continue to raise concerns about the lack of regular access to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) for Mission China personnel, journalists, academics, and others. China's refusal to grant regular consular access to Americans in the Tibetan Autonomous Region represents a failure by the Chinese Government to live up to their international obligations. If confirmed, I will also continue to press the Chinese Government to allow for the option to open a U.S. Consulate in Lhasa.

Question 12. Human rights groups have raised concerns that China's Counterterrorism Law, adopted in December 2015, has further empowered Chinese officials to punish peaceful activities and target ethnic minorities, including Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim. Chinese authorities have long conflated Uyghurs' ordinary religious activities as extremism and terrorism. In addition, rights advocates have raised concerns that new Xinjiang Party chief Chen Quanguo is applying repressive security mechanisms in the region that he previously used in Tibet.

- How will you seek to reiterate the United States' commitment to preventing restrictions on peaceful religious activities and other fundamental freedoms in the name of counterterrorism? What are your thoughts U.S. cooperation with Chi-

nese law enforcement on counterterrorism given that many of these same entities routinely engage in grave human rights standards?

Answer. I am concerned by the human rights situation in Xinjiang, in particular the systematic human rights abuses committed against Uyghurs there and the imposition of conditions akin to martial law. If confirmed, I will engage the Chinese Government regarding universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom and the rights of individuals who belong to ethnic minority groups to maintain their indigenous languages, customs, and religious traditions.

I fully support the U.S. efforts to increase coordination with other countries in the common fight against international terrorism. However, we must be careful to focus on true terrorist threats. The United States should not support human rights abuses in any event, including when conducted in the name of "internal security." If confirmed, I will press China to understand the differences between human rights abuses and countering terrorism.

Question 13. Reports from media and rights advocates in recent years have documented the Chinese state's use of threats against family members of Uyghur-American citizens and residents to prevent them from raising awareness about Uyghur rights issues. Chinese security personnel often treat China-based relatives of vocal Uyghur-Americans as hostages who may be jailed or released depending on how willing Uyghur-Americans are to stop speaking out. This has been true of Rebiya Kadeer. It is also true of the parents of Nury Turkel, who are eligible to come to the U.S. but are reportedly being held under house arrest, harassed, denied essential medical access, and denied the ability to leave China.

- Will you prioritize their immediate departure, including if necessary traveling to Xinjiang to escort them to Guangzhou, where they can acquire their U.S paperwork, and on to a plane to ensure their safe departure? What steps would you take to urge China to adhere to Article 12 of the ICCPR, which protects the right to liberty of movement, which China has signed but not ratified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will press China to cease harassment of Chinese human rights defenders' family members. I will also push for the prompt lifting of the travel ban in effect for Nury Turkel's parents and the relatives of Rebiya Kadeer. If confirmed, I will also encourage China to honor its international human rights obligations and commitments.

Question 14. Will you also raise the case of Falun Gong practitioner Deng Cuiping (the mother of a Florida constituent) who in February was sentenced to six years in prisoner after having been charged with "organizing and using a cult to undermine the implementation of the law?"

Answer. Yes. I am concerned about growing restrictions on the exercise of religious freedom in China and the targeted harassment of religious practitioners, including those that practice Falun Gong. If confirmed, I commit to raising these and other cases with senior Chinese officials.

Question 15. Would you consider seeking revisions to the U.S.-China Consular Convention to clarify that Americans detained in China should be allowed to meet with a lawyer and discuss details of their case with U.S. consular officials?

Answer. If confirmed, I will press the Chinese to adhere to their international obligations under the Vienna Convention for Consular Relations and the 1980 U.S.-China Consular Convention. These agreements represent the foundation of consular engagement and outline protections for U.S. citizens overseas. I will fully support the efforts of the Bureau of Consular Affairs and their work to protect our citizens in China.

Question 16. Will you consistently raise with the Chinese Government its obligation to protect North Korean asylum seekers crossing its borders, allow the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to assist them, and stop forcibly repatriating them to North Korea?

Answer. Yes. In light of the documented mistreatment that refouled refugees face at the hands of the North Korean authorities, if confirmed, I will urge Chinese authorities to cease the practice of deportation. I will also urge authorities to accept that China's deportation practices are inconsistent with its obligations under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture and China's obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

Question 17. Job creators in America's innovation economy have ongoing concerns about the Chinese Government's consideration and adoption of cybersecurity and technology policies that are counterproductive to U.S. security and economic interests. As China moves toward implementation of its Cybersecurity Law, will you

commit to soliciting input from industry stakeholders on harmful effects that need to be corrected? Will you support a delay in the law's implementation?

Answer. The prosperity and cybersecurity of the United States depend on the ability of our businesses and innovators to develop pioneering products that are interoperable while protecting the legitimate security and privacy needs of consumers.

I share your concerns that China's Cybersecurity Law and other technology-related policies are making it difficult for companies to provide secure, globally competitive products and services to their clients in China.

If confirmed, I will work closely with other U.S. agencies, consult with industry stakeholders, to press China to retract or mitigate any laws and regulations that adversely affect the ability of U.S. business to enter and operate in China and U.S. national security and economic interests.

Question 18. Some have called China's Internet Firewall the Berlin Wall of the 21st Century. What priority would you place on Internet freedom programs in a country like China? In your view did the Obama administration give this issue sufficient attention given its geopolitical implications?

Answer. An open and interoperable internet fosters free expression and innovation. The Chinese Government's censorship of Internet content, including social media and online news, and restrictive regulation of network providers hinders the use of the Internet as an open platform where individuals are free to share information and express their beliefs. This essential character of the Internet is central to driving innovation and supporting modern economies around the world that provide tremendous benefits for their people. If confirmed, I will promote the free flow of information online in China and advocate for a free and open Internet in China. I will urge China to respect its international obligations and commitments regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms, including to the freedoms of expression, association, and assembly, both on and offline.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. TERY BRANSTAD BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. The hallmark of American leadership in the world has been our vigilant advocacy for human rights and democracy. As governor of Iowa, my role internationally was not focused on the direction or implementation of foreign policy around democratic norms or human rights. However, I have always tried to recognize my responsibility as an American representing our values. In the 1980s, shortly after the Chernobyl incident, I visited the Soviet Union. While there, my wife and I met with Refuseniks in what was then Leningrad, now known as St. Petersburg. These people were seeking democracy. I was not bashful about meeting with dissidents then and I am not hesitant now to meet with people who feel they are being discriminated against or are being treated unfairly.

Over the course of my six terms as governor, I have always valued upholding human rights for all. Treating all people with respect and dignity has been a guiding principle for me throughout time in public service. Our Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations sets out the right to freedom of religion. In Iowa, I have long worked to promote and uphold all freedoms guaranteed to Iowans and especially the freedom of religion in our state.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in China? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in China? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. As I said in my testimony, as an old friend, I think I can tell President Xi where they are falling short and the kinds of things that need to be addressed, including human rights. I'm Catholic. I want to go to a Catholic church in China. I want to welcome people of all backgrounds to the U.S. Embassy. I want to travel to other parts of China to meet with them as well. I will represent American values—including human rights—every day of my service.

Question 3. 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 China in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. China's growing restrictions on media and access to information make it difficult for Chinese citizens to exercise their rights to freedom of expression. I will uphold the U.S. commitment to be firm in representing our core democratic values and advocating for the human rights of all people.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in China?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to continuing to support those organizations and rights activists in China, and look forward to meeting with them both in the U.S. and China.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with China to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by China?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to raising individual cases with senior Chinese officials. I will also work with like-minded countries to deliver a consistent message to China on human rights issues of mutual concern.

Question 6. Will you engage with China on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed I will consistently raise our serious concerns about China's human rights record with senior Chinese officials.

Question 7. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that a human rights case or issue is raised in every senior meeting, particularly by visiting Cabinet members, during your tenure?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to regularly raising human rights cases and issues with Chinese authorities. I will not shy away from raising these issues, and will encourage visitors to do so as well.

Question 8. Will you discourage closer cooperation on counterterrorism or law enforcement with China until Beijing's policies and practices are in conformity with international human rights standards?

Answer. The U.S. cooperates with China, including in the area of law enforcement and counterterrorism, only in strict accordance with our laws and values. Our engagement with China's law enforcement agencies provides a venue for us to raise our human rights concern while we still advance cooperation on common interests. However, we have serious differences with the Chinese on many aspects of their law enforcement and counterterrorism policies and if confirmed I will raise these differences with senior Chinese leadership as well.

Emoluments

Question 9. The American people have a right to know whether decision-making is being conducted in the public interest or in President Trump's private financial interest. As I have raised publicly, the decision by China to grant the Trump Organization valuable trademarks just after the president's election is hard to view as anything other than an effort to provide a valuable gift to the president—consistent with the sort of corruption we see throughout the Communist Party in China.

If confirmed, please rest assured that we will be watching closely whether the U.S. Ambassador is put in the position of giving favorable treatment to the Trump Organization or members of the Trump family, or lobbying the Chinese Government on their behalf.

- Given the president's decision not to divest himself or to fully disclose his financial interests, how do you plan, if confirmed as ambassador, to assure that you do not unwittingly support the president in violating the Constitution's Emoluments clause?

Answer. If confirmed, I pledge, as do all U.S. officials, to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. I will comply with and seek to uphold all U.S. laws.

Question 10. Do you commit to providing the Congress with information you become aware of that may relate to violations of the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution?

Answer. Yes.

Question 11. As you know, shortly after President Trump won election, China granted the Trump Organization a number of valuable trademarks that they had been seeking for years. More recently, China granted three trademarks to Ivanka Trump, on the very day that President Xi met with the President.

- What is your understanding of the role of the political leadership of China in influencing bureaucratic decision-making?

Answer. As a private U.S. citizen, I am unable to judge accurately the portion of Chinese decisions that are subject to political considerations rather than merit.

Question 12. Given what we know about how the Chinese Government functions, can it credibly be argued that the timing of these trademark grants was mere coincidence?

Answer. As a private U.S. citizen, I have no direct knowledge of the decision-making process the Chinese Government followed in this instance. I cannot accurately speculate on the motivations of the Chinese Government in this instance.

Question 13. As ambassador, how will you assure that American trademark filers are treated fairly and with integrity, and their applications judged by Chinese officials properly and on the merits?

Answer. If confirmed as ambassador, I will seek a fair and equitable treatment of Americans seeking intellectual-property protections from the Chinese Government and for the general protection and respect of U.S. intellectual property. I will seek for relevant applications by U.S. citizens and organizations be judged on their legal merits.

North Korea

Question 14. China has always been concerned that strong economic pressure on North Korea over its nuclear and missile activities could destabilize Pyongyang and potentially unleash refugee and migrant flows into China or even lead to the collapse of the regime. Yet central to President Trump's approach to North Korea is additional Chinese pressure on Pyongyang.

- What additional steps do you believe China should be taking to put pressure on North Korea?

Answer. As a neighbor of North Korea, China is a major trading partner and they have recently placed some restrictions on coal imports. If confirmed, I will work with the Trump administration to pursue various other diplomatically and economically acceptable avenues to send a clear signal that the world does not tolerate this expansion of nuclear technology and missiles. It is a threat to all mankind and we must look at all opportunities to work together.

Question 15. What are the metrics that the U.S. should use to judge whether China is doing enough?

Answer. If confirmed, I will convey to the Chinese that the United States expects them to use their leverage to compel North Korea to return to serious talks. I am hopeful that China is starting to do more to exercise its leverage on the North Korean regime. For a start, the Chinese Government announced this past February that it will impose an absolute ban on North Korean coal imports through the end of the year. The real test, however, will be implementation.

On April 28, the Secretary asked all UN member nations, including China, to increase North Korea's isolation—through sanctions severing trade relationships that fund weapons programs including coal, and by suspending the flow of North Korean guest workers. If confirmed I will press China to respond positively to these requests.

Question 16. Should we be sanctioning Chinese companies that do business with North Korea?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with my interagency team at the Embassy and in our Consulates, as well as with colleagues back in Washington, to utilize all tools at our disposal to choke off resources that fund the DPRK's proscribed nuclear and missile programs, including sanctioning Chinese entities if appropriate.

Question 17. Should we press China to cut off energy and food aid to North Korea?

Answer. While the North Korean people have legitimate humanitarian needs, I understand that a significant portion of China's purported aid to North Korea is funneled to support the North Korean's ballistic missile and nuclear weapon development program. If confirmed, I will address this problem with China directly to ensure that any assistance that China and our international partners provide for humanitarian purposes is directed to the North Korean people.

Question 18. The President has suggested that he'd be willing to pull his punches on issues like trade and currency concerns if China helped us on North Korea. Do you agree these issues should be linked?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Tillerson and other U.S. agencies to support his commitment to expand economic opportunities for American businesses by candidly addressing areas of economic friction between our two countries. China shares our goal of a denuclearized Korean peninsula and has been working with the U.S. on UN sanctions and other diplomatic actions to realize this goal.

Question 19. There is a growing concern among our allies that our recent statements on North Korea reify that "all roads lead to and through Beijing." Are you concerned that by elevating China's role in the North Korea situation you are, perhaps inadvertently, sending a message that East Asia is China's sphere of influence?

Answer. China holds significant influence over North Korea,We need to convince the leadership in China that it is in their best interest and our interest to work together to stop this dangerous direction that is coming out of North Korea. That said, if China is not willing or is unable to achieve that goal, then the United States can and will handle this matter on our own with the backing of our strong regional allies in Northeast Asia.

Question 20. "The Trump administration's policy on China appears to be highly "transactional." Making policy via twitter and one-liners, the President has hinted at being willing to trade the One China Policy for a trade deal with China, or that we wouldn't press them so hard on trade if they performed on North Korea, and even that the US-Taiwan relationship might be subject to bargain with Beijing."

- Would you agree with this characterization?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support the administration's reaffirmation to China that the United States remains committed to our One China policy based on the Three Joint Communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act.

China has a unique role to play in our efforts to push the DPRK to denuclearize, and this administration has made coordination on the DPRK a key aspect of its engagement with China. If confirmed, I would support the administration's efforts to correct long-standing imbalances in our trade relationship with China, so that the peoples of both our countries can benefit from that trade.

The U.S. has many interests with China and we will pursue all of them.

Question 21. What should be the underlying interests that guide the U.S.-China relationship and how do you plan on prioritize them?

Answer. The last several decades of political and economic reforms have brought monumental changes to the way in which China interacts with the outside world. Rather than opposing China's rise, if confirmed, I would echo the administration's overarching goal of bringing China's behavior in line with internationally accepted rules and order.

If confirmed, I would work to improve the relationship the United States has with China, seeking to make positive progress in areas such as economics and trade, law enforcement, and counterterrorism, while at the same time promoting and safeguarding American interests and values.

Question 22. What are the elements of the Trump administration's affirmative agenda for China? Would you agree with the characterization of the U.S.-China policy that Secretary Tillerson presented during his visit to Beijing, namely that ours is a "very positive relationship built on non-confrontation, no conflict, mutual respect, and always searching for win-win solutions?"

Answer. The Trump administration wishes to have a constructive, results-oriented relationship with China. As part of that, the Trump administration wishes to put America first by ensuring that American interests are safeguarded in all aspects of our relationship with China.

If confirmed, I would seek to make progress with China in areas where such progress is possible, while engaging frankly and constructively on areas of disagreement.

Question 23. What do you believe should be the U.S. position on President Xi's proposal that the United States and China should seek to build a "new model of major country relations" based on the principles of "non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation? "

Answer. The United States wishes to have a constructive, results-oriented relationship with China, but will continue to defend U.S. interests and raise areas of concern with China where appropriate. If confirmed, I would support these efforts.

South China Sea

Question 24. China claims all the islands, reefs, and rocks in the South China Sea. So does Taiwan. Vietnam claims the Spratlys. Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei claim some features.

- What should be the U.S. policy toward the South China Sea? Should we get involved in recognition or adjudication of claims?

Answer. The United States has a national interest in freedom of navigation and overflight, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea.

Should I be confirmed, I would uphold the United States' position that competing sovereignty claims should be resolved peacefully without coercion.

Should I be confirmed, I would support the position that maritime claims should be made and pursued in accordance with international law. All maritime claims in the South China Sea should be derived from land features.

Question 25. What should be the US response to China's militarization of the South China Sea? What can the US do to deter further Chinese militarization?

Answer. China's construction of military facilities, coupled with its efforts to enforce sweeping and unlawful maritime claims, raises legitimate concerns about its intentions in the South China Sea.

I support the position that all claimants, including China, must refrain from new construction on, and militarization of, disputed features, and to commit to managing and resolving disputes peacefully.

Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with the administration to look closely at all of the tools at our disposal to shape China's troubling behavior in the South China Sea.

Should I be confirmed, I would communicate that the United States will continue to demonstrate that it will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, including in the South China Sea.

Question 26. In the past, U.S.-Chinese cooperation on climate change has been a bright spot in the trans-Pacific relationship between two global powers. What is your understanding of how China's domestic and global economic plan for clean energy development and how do you intend to maintain or build the constructive U.S.-China dialogue on these issues?

Answer. China has pledged to generate 20 percent of its total energy from non-fossil sources by 2030. China will need to add around 900 GW of non-fossil capacity between 2015 and 2030, an amount nearly as large as the current total electricity generation capacity in the United States. To meet these goals, China will need to invest heavily in non-fossil fuel energy sources such as renewable and nuclear energy, and they have set wind, solar, nuclear, and hydro installed capacity targets.

American businesses have some of the best advanced energy and energy efficiency technology and can help China achieve their goals. American businesses are at the forefront of innovation in the clean energy and energy efficiency technologies, and American workers are the best trained in the world. If confirmed, I will support collaboration with China on clean energy and traditional energy projects, including areas like biofuels and carbon capture and sequestration, that promotes U.S. business interests and opportunities.

Question 27. Do you believe climate change is real?

Answer. The risk of climate change does exist. Responses to climate change will require action from everyone, including both the United States and China.

Question 28 Can you explain how you intend to continue a build the credibility of U.S. energy and climate change diplomacy with China, in light of the President's action to eliminate all federal regulation on climate change and to eliminate all U.S. assistance that has nexus whatsoever to climate change or clean energy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will act to protect and advance U.S. national interests in all matters, including climate change and clean energy.

Question 29. How do you intend to project and demonstrate leadership in an area that China wants to work with the U.S. but is also poised to usurp total control and dominance from the U.S?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to act to protect and advance U.S. national interests in all matters, including climate change and clean energy, regardless of the actions of other nations, including China.

America, as a leader in global energy, is a critical force in advancing energy efficiency and clean energy efforts around the world. American businesses are at the forefront of innovation in the clean energy and energy efficiency technologies, and American workers are the best trained in the world. If confirmed, I will support col-

laboration with China on clean energy and traditional energy projects, including areas like biofuels and carbon capture and sequestration, that promotes U.S. business interests and opportunities.

Question 30. What is your understanding of the link between Chinese foreign investment in energy resources and development and Chinese projection of their vision of global governance and diplomatic influence?

Answer. Should I be confirmed, I plan to stress the importance of China adhering to existing internationally-accepted best practices in infrastructure development and financing, and to adopting an open and inclusive approach to its overseas infrastructure projects.

Taiwan

Question 31. The United States supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations. Recognizing Taiwan's capacity and willingness to contribute to important global issues, Congress has passed legislation requiring the State Department to support Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

- If confirmed, are you committed to implementing this policy? If the Chinese Government tries to block Taiwan's international participation, how do you plan to engage Beijing on this issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support Taiwan's membership in international organizations that do not require statehood. In organizations that require statehood for membership, I will support Taiwan's meaningful participation. This includes ICAO, INTERPOL, WHO, and the more than 60 international organizations in which Taiwan participates.

I am committed to supporting Taiwan as it seeks to expand its already significant contributions to addressing global challenges.

I believe the United States has a deep and abiding interest in cross-Strait peace and stability. The benefits that stable cross-Strait ties have brought to China and Taiwan, the United States, and the region have been important. China and Taiwan should understand the value of stable cross-Strait ties and work to establish a basis for continued peace and stability.

Labor

Question 32. When the State Department assesses the human rights records of countries each year, it uses seven key measurements, one of which is labor rights. Over the past 3 years, there have been over 5,000 labor strikes in China and China has correctly been criticized for deplorable working conditions.

One way we press other nations on human rights is to set an example. On labor rights, you have not set a good example. As Governor of Iowa, you recently signed legislation that essentially denies public workers in your state collective bargaining rights that they have enjoyed for 45 years.

- What are your views about the role of labor in achieving more democracy? Do you think that you can hold China accountable for its workers' rights record when your own record with respect to collective bargaining is poor? If and when you engage with Chinese officials around their lack of free and independent unions, low wages due to lack of collective bargaining, unsafe working conditions, and failure to meet international labor standards, how will you address their questions around your work to weaken unions in Iowa?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue pushing China to adopt robust, common sense protections for its workers. I will engage with China on ending practices such as forced labor and labor trafficking, and on updating its laws to conform to international obligations and best practices in labor standards and workplace safety.

Question 33. Are you aware of any organization group or individual supporting the changes to the public sector labor law (Iowa Chapter 20), who has committed or implied financial or political support to Iowa legislators or the Governor? If so, which individual, group or organization pledged or implied such support? What was the nature of the pledged or implied support?

Answer. No.

Question 34. Why was a representative of Americans for Prosperity, a conservative political group that is funded by the billionaire Koch and DeVos families, the only member of the public who joined you for the signing of the bill that undermined public employee bargaining rights?

Answer. In February, I signed House File 291 into law during a bill signing ceremony with members of the Iowa Legislature, staff, and the public.

Trade

Question 35. I hear from U.S. companies across sectors about problems regarding doing business in China. And it's not just American companies that have reported access issues—it's companies around the world. A 2016 European Union Chamber of Commerce in China business confidence survey stated that the business environment in China was becoming "increasingly hostile" and "perpetually tilted in favor of domestic enterprises." These biased policies not only make it hard for our companies to compete within China. They also have the potential to put American workers and companies at a disadvantage to Chinese firms that receive unfair domestic support or subsidies. We need to level this playing field for our workers and our businesses.

- If confirmed, how would you work with your counterparts, including other ambassadors based in Beijing, to address these issues?

Answer. U.S. and other foreign companies continue to report an increasing number of challenges they encounter when doing business in China. If confirmed, I will support efforts by the administration to seek freer and fairer trade with our trading partners, particularly with those such as China with which we have trade deficits. If confirmed, I will also support the administration's desire to see China remove the discriminatory restrictions that it places on U.S. firms already operating in China or seeking access to the Chinese market.

If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts, including other ambassadors based in Beijing, to support efforts to ensure fairness and balance in the business environment in China.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. TERRY BRANSTAD BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

South and East China Seas

Question 1. It is a longstanding US policy to not recognize Chinese claims of sovereignty over the South or East China Sea and or any islands therein. Yet we see the country taking aggressive steps to expand its influence and control, even to the point of militarizing the islands and outrageously seizing a U.S. Navy vessel in international waters.

- Would you support a targeted sanctions regime against firms and individuals that facilitate certain investments in the South China Sea or East China Sea, including land reclamation, island-making, construction, supply facilities or civil infrastructure projects in any land that is currently disputed territory between any other nations?

Answer. The United States has a national interest in freedom of navigation and overflight, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea.

If confirmed, I will encourage the administration to look closely at all of the tools at its disposal to shape China's troubling behavior in the South China Sea.

Question 2. Likewise, would you work to build support to prohibit official recognition of the South China Sea or East China Sea as part of China, and to limit certain kinds of assistance to countries that recognize Chinese sovereignty over either Sea?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work to make clear to China that we believe that maritime claims should be made and pursued in accordance with the international law of the sea, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. In accordance with international law, all maritime claims in the South China Sea must be derived from land features.

If confirmed, I would urge China to refrain from new construction on, and militarization of, disputed features, to avoid other actions that would complicate or escalate the disputes, and to commit to managing and resolving disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law.

Question 3. How will you convey these views to your interlocutors in the Chinese Government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make use of the full array of communications channels available to the ambassador to ensure that the U.S. views reach different levels of the Chinese Government.

North Korea

Question 4. I recognize that some analysts are skeptical about the effect of sanctions on a corrupt country like North Korea. However, as the leading sponsor of legislation that was overwhelmingly passed to impose and tighten sanctions on North Korea, I believe they can have a meaningful impact if rigorously enforced.

• Do you believe China is in fact in compliance with UNSC resolutions?

Answer. The Chinese Government announced this past February that it will impose an absolute ban on North Korean coal imports through the end of the year. The real test, however, will be implementation. If confirmed, I will encourage China to fulfill its obligations under successive U.N. Security Council resolutions. I will reiterate to the Chinese leadership that their willingness to work with us to solve the Asia-Pacific's most acute threat to peace and security will be a benchmark of their commitment to pursue a constructive results-oriented relationship with the United States.

Question 5. What measures can we take to enlist greater PRC support of the existing sanctions regime?

Answer. We need to convince the Chinese that they are the ones that have the potential to really influence the regime, more than anyone else. The change that needs to take place does not need to be a threat to the system, but needs to stop nuclear proliferation. We need to convince the leadership in China that it is in their interest to work with us to stop this dangerous direction that is coming out of North Korea.

Question 6. Will you work to get Chinese support should the UNSC consider imposing additional sanctions on DPRK if needed?

Answer. On April 28, the Secretary asked all U.N. member nations, including China, to increase North Korea's financial isolation-including through new sanctions, severing trade relationships, suspending the flow of guest workers, and banning imports from North Korea, including coal. If confirmed, I will press China to respond positively to these requests.

If confirmed, I will work with my interagency team at the Embassy and in our Consulates, as well as colleagues back in Washington, to utilize all tools at our disposal to choke off revenues that fund the DPRK's proscribed nuclear and missile programs, including sanctioning Chinese entities if appropriate.

Question 7. In the past, then President-elect Trump suggested that the United States would no longer be bound by the One China policy—a policy that is in our national security interests. Moreover, Taiwan's successful democratic experiment is a significant accomplishment for American foreign policy; the country remains a strategic partner of the U.S.

• Are you committed to maintaining the One China policy?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to maintain support for our One China Policy, which is based on the three joint communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. I remain committed to our desire to see this cross-Strait issue peacefully resolved.

Question 8. Where does Taiwan stand in your calculus?

Answer. I believe that our long-standing friendship with the people of Taiwan remains a key element of our Asia policy. Our enduring relationship under the Taiwan Relations Act represents a unique asset for the United States and is an important multiplier of our influence in the region. This friendship is grounded in history, shared values, and our common commitment to democracy, free markets, rule of law, and human rights. As one of Taiwan's strongest partners, I support working side-by-side to increase our mutual economic prosperity, tackle global challenges and ensure effective security to support continued stability and dynamism for Taiwan and the region.

I believe that the United States has a deep and abiding interest in cross-Strait peace and stability. It is important that China and Taiwan understand the importance of these benefits and work to establish a basis for continued peace and stability. The benefits that stable cross-Strait ties have brought to China and Taiwan, the United States, and the region have been enormous.

Question 9 Are you committed to an alliance and partnership we maintained with Taiwan since 1949?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to maintain support for our One China Policy, which is based on the three joint communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. The Taiwan Relations Act spells out that it is the policy of the United States, among other things: to preserve and promote extensive, close, and friendly commer-

cial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people of Taiwan, as well as the people on the China mainland and all other peoples of the Western Pacific area; and to declare that peace and stability in the area are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States, and are matters of international concern.

Our long-standing friendship with the people of Taiwan remains a key element of our Asia policy. Our enduring relationship under the Taiwan Relations Act represents a unique asset for the United States and is an important multiplier of our influence in the region. This friendship is grounded in history, shared values, and our common commitment to democracy, free markets, rule of law, and human rights. As one of Taiwan's strongest partners, I support the United States working side-by-side to increase our mutual economic prosperity, tackle global challenges and ensure effective security to support continued stability and dynamism for Taiwan and the region.

Question 10. I was extremely disappointed by the decision of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) not to issue an invitation to Taiwan to attend the 2016 ICAO Assembly that was held in Montreal, Canada. A similar situation continues with regards to sensible Taiwanese participation in INTERPOL. The vagaries of cross-strait relations should not be allowed to prevent the prudent participation of Taiwan in international bodies, assemblies, and agencies, even if only as an observer.

- What will you do to actively discourage imprudent Chinese efforts to isolate Taiwan even when common sense, international security and safety imperatives argues for Taiwanese engagement?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support Taiwan's membership in international organizations that do not require statehood. In organizations that require statehood for membership, I will support Taiwan's meaningful participation. This includes ICAO, INTERPOL, WHO, and the more than 60 international organizations in which Taiwan participates.

I am committed to supporting Taiwan as it seeks to expand its already significant contributions to addressing global challenges.

I believe the United States has a deep and abiding interest in cross-Strait peace and stability. The benefits that stable cross-Strait ties have brought to China and Taiwan, the United States, and the region have been important. China and Taiwan should understand the value of stable cross-Strait ties and work to establish a basis for continued peace and stability.

Question 11. What can you do to put pressure on the Chinese to reconsider their opposition to Taiwanese participation in future such gatherings and to demonstrate leadership, fairness, and courage by allowing the needful participation of Taiwan in such conferences?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support Taiwan's membership in international organizations that do not require statehood. In organizations that require statehood for membership, I will support Taiwan's meaningful participation. We remain committed to supporting Taiwan as it seeks to expand its already significant contributions to addressing global challenges.

I believe the United States has a deep and abiding interest in cross-Strait peace and stability. The benefits that stable cross-Strait ties have brought to China and Taiwan, the United States, and the region have been important. China and Taiwan should understand the value of stable cross-Strait ties and work to establish a basis for continued peace and stability. If confirmed, I will encourage authorities in Beijing and Taipei to engage in constructive dialogue that seeks a peaceful resolution of differences acceptable to the people of China and Taiwan.

Question 12. I'm the co-chair of the Taiwan Caucus. In that capacity, I've years of experience following the cross-strait relations between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan; this past April marked the 38th anniversary of the enactment of Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), a pivotal event in our shared history and emblematic of our strong bilateral relations. Unfortunately, China is increasingly taking an aggressive approach with its neighbors, including Taiwan. Given these geopolitical developments, it would make sense to ensure that Taiwan can adequately defend itself and possess the means to resist new and increased military threats, from where ever source.

Would you be supportive of being an advocate within the Trump administration to return to a process of regular and normalized arms sales for Taiwan as opposed to the ″package″ approach that the past couple of administrations have taken?

Answer. I am fully committed to fulfilling our responsibilities under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). In accordance with the TRA, we will continue to make avail-

able to Taiwan such defense articles and services in such quantity as may be necessary for Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

Question 13. During the U.S.-China Summit held on April 6–7, President Trump did not publicly raise the question of the lack of respect for human rights and the rule of law in China and in Tibet. Since 1997, all U.S. Presidents have publicly challenged the sitting Chinese President to negotiate with the Dalai Lama or his representative to find a lasting solution to the Tibetan issue.

- If appointed would you commit to publicly raising with Chinese leaders the grievances of the Tibetan people and the need for them to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama?
- Do you plan to raise the issue of human rights in Tibet?

Answer. Yes. I remain deeply concerned about the lack of respect for human rights and rule of law in Tibet. If confirmed, I will urge Chinese authorities to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama and his representatives to lower tensions and resolve differences. I will also call on China to provide meaningful autonomy for Tibetans and cease restrictions on Tibetan religious, linguistic, and cultural practices. I will engage the Chinese Government regarding interference in Tibetan religious matters, particularly the selection and education of the reincarnate lamas who lead the faith.

Question 14. How can China contribute more effectively to building international consensus that will hold Russian officials accountable for gross human rights abuses and for violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge China to condemn Russia's violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, specifically, Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and its aggression in eastern Ukraine.

Question 15. What steps will you take to encourage China's positive engagement on the Syrian conflict?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with China to coordinate greater cooperation with the United States and the international community towards the defeat of ISIS. If confirmed, I will also continue to urge China to take meaningful steps at the U.N. Security Council and through its bilateral channels to Damascus to facilitate a political process to resolve Syria's future, which will ultimately lead to a resolution of Assad's departure. Last year, China pledged a commitment of $300 million in new humanitarian assistance—including via the U.N., Red Cross, and other international organizations—to mitigate the humanitarian suffering emanating from Syria and other countries. If confirmed, I will continue to urge China to follow through on that commitment and to continue to increase its support through coordinated, transparent, and multilateral channels in the future.

Question 16. Many foreign countries do not see the U.S. as a leader on climate change and are concerned about the Trump administration's commitment to climate change mitigation. President Xi has appeared to be eager to step into this leadership vacuum. Do you believe the United States risks ceding to China this important mantle?

Answer. Responses to climate change will require action from everyone, including the United States and China.

Question 17. Would you advocate within the administration for renewed commitment to demonstrating American leadership in this area and the need confront the issue of climate change with determination and clearheaded global effort?

Answer. The U.S. international climate change policy is currently under review, including bilateral climate and energy cooperation with countries like China.

Question 18. In the previous administration the United States and China entered into a joint agreement that would see China halt increases in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, with a stated goal of peaking earlier than that. However, the Trump administration is taking a different approach. China appears to wish to take a global leadership role on climate change. Do you think that it is in the U.S. interest to see Canada and China uphold their sides of these agreements?

Answer. The U.S. international climate change policy is currently under review, including bilateral climate and energy cooperation with countries like China and Canada. Responses to climate change will require action from everyone, including the United States, Canada, and China.

Question 19. If meeting their obligations is contingent upon us meeting our own commitments, is it in our interest to uphold our side of the agreements?

Answer. The U.S. international climate change policy is currently under review, including bilateral climate and energy cooperation with other countries. Responses to climate change will require action from everyone, including the United States.

The use of the veto power by Russia at the United Nations Security Council has contributed to the UNSC's ineffectual responses to some serious humanitarian and security challenges, Syria and South Sudan come to mind.

Question 20. Do you see China taking a more helpful role in these matters?

Answer. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China has an important role to play in maintaining international peace and security. If confirmed, I will continue to urge China to take meaningful steps at the U.N. Security Council to facilitate a political process to resolve Syria's future which will ultimately lead to the resolution of Assad's departure.

With respect to South Sudan, China and the United States share an interest in political stability and prosperity in that country, and the two countries have engaged in regular diplomatic dialogue for several years. If confirmed, I will continue to engage China constructively on South Sudan to encourage all parties in South Sudan to cease hostilities and engage in a credible, inclusive political process.

Question 21. What will you do to encourage China to contribute more to the mitigation of serious global humanitarian challenges?

Answer. Last year, China pledged a commitment of $300 million in new humanitarian assistance—including via the U.N., Red Cross, and other international organizations—to mitigate the humanitarian suffering emanating from global hot spots. This is a positive development. If confirmed, I will urge China to follow through on that commitment and to continue to increase its support through coordinated, transparent, and multilateral channels in the future.

Question 22. Counterfeit imports are increasingly threatening the viability of New Jersey and other businesses around the country. Globally, this is a half-trillion dollar problem, and the OECD notes that the United States is world's biggest victim of counterfeit and pirated goods—precisely because our country is the world leader in innovation and branding—the very sources of value that counterfeiters exploit. I sought to draw Customs and Border Protection's attention to this growing issue, recognizing that the agency needs to better screen small packages sent from international business to U.S. consumers, often illegally marked as ″gifts″ to evade customs duties and detection. As you might imagine, China is the overwhelming source of these counterfeit goods.

- Will you commit to raising this issue with the Chinese Government?

Answer. One of the top trade priorities for the Trump administration is to use all possible sources of leverage to encourage other countries to open their markets to U.S. exports of goods and services, and provide adequate and effective protection and enforcement of U.S. intellectual property (IP) rights. Toward this end, if I am confirmed a key objective for the administration's trade policy will be ensuring that U.S. owners of IP have a full and fair opportunity to use and profit from their IP around the globe.

The Special 301 report issued on April 28 reaffirmed China's place on the Priority Watch List due to widespread infringing activity, including trade secret theft, rampant online piracy, and high volume exports of counterfeit goods to markets around the globe.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the entire U.S. Government, including the U.S. Trade Representative, Departments of Commerce, Treasury, and Homeland Security as well as with international partners to use our available tools to curb illegal IPR-infringing actions in and coming from China protect American jobs, innovation, and U.S. economic prosperity.

Question 23. Weak intellectual property protections and a growing array of localization barriers abroad are threatening innovative exports and the many jobs they support here at home. China in particular is a serious offender, and it has never lived up to many of the intellectual property commitments it made to the United States and other WTO members 15 years ago. IP is a competitiveness and jobs issue for America, and it should be for China if it wants to be a world-class innovator.

- If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that American innovations and jobs receive a level playing field with the Chinese?

Answer. The United States has been a leader in promoting the rule of law, including in the area of intellectual property, which is vital to promoting competition and innovation and benefits all of us as consumers.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. Trade Representative, Departments of Commerce, Treasury, and Homeland Security as well as with international part-

ners to press China to stop using legal proceedings to disadvantage American companies or gain access to their intellectual property.

Question 24. How we can develop a more comprehensive and results oriented trade strategy, as opposed to lurching forward with a meeting by meeting strategy that only provides limited results?

Answer. As President Trump highlighted in his Trade Policy Agenda earlier this year, the overarching purpose of our trade policy will be to expand trade in a way that is freer and fairer for all Americans. At Mar-A-Lago, Presidents Trump and Xi agreed to create a Comprehensive Economic Dialogue that will provide high-level engagement on economic issue between our two countries.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the co-leads of this dialogue, Secretaries of Commerce and Treasury, as well as with the Secretary of State and USTR, and with other economic departments and agencies on the U.S.-China 100-day economic plan and beyond to correct the imbalances in our economic relationship.

Question 25. Should we be looking at additional areas where the USG can self-initiate investigations, particularly on IP, where China is already found to be a leading infringer?

Answer. The United States continues to engage China on a comprehensive set of IP infringement concerns catalogued in the Special 301 Report.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. Trade Representative, Departments of Commerce, Treasury, and Homeland Security as well as with international partners to use our available tools to curb illegal IPR-infringing actions in and coming from China actions in order to protect American jobs, innovation, and U.S. economic prosperity

Question 26. In 2016, China was placed on Tier 2 Watch List in the State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report for the third consecutive year. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act requires a country that is ranked Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years to be downgraded to Tier 3 in the third year, unless the President waives the downgrade based on credible evidence the country has a plan that, if implemented, would constitute making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking

- This year's TIP Report is due in June. What factors will you be looking at when making your recommendation on a ranking to the Secretary?
- How do you think the Report should be used with respect to China in order to encourage them to take human trafficking more seriously, and clamp down on exports made with forced labor, some of which come to the U.S. market?

Answer. The State Department is currently assessing China's efforts over the previous reporting period (April 2016—March 2017) to combat trafficking in persons for the 2017 TIP Report. China received a waiver in 2016 from an otherwise required downgrade to Tier 3 because China devoted sufficient resources to a written plan that, if implemented, would constitute significant efforts to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The United States continues to work with China to encourage improvements in their efforts to combat trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts.

The 2016 TIP report identified several priority areas that China should focus on to be upgraded. The first is increasing efforts to address forced labor, both by ending the use of forced labor in government facilities, such as drug rehabilitation facilities or detention centers. Second, China needs vigorously to investigate and prosecute human traffickers, including officials complicit in trafficking crimes. Third, China should update its legal definition of trafficking so that it is consistent with international law. Fourth, China needs to institute formal procedures systematically to identify and to expand victim protection services. Again, if confirmed, I will encourage China to make progress on all four areas.

Question 27. Some press reports state that China has lent Venezuela over $60 billion over the past several years, most of it in exchange for future oil production. If Venezuela defaults on its international debts and a new regime takes power and seeks assistance from institutions that serve to help countries rebuild their economies—such as the IMF, World Bank, or Inter-American Development Bank—China, as a major creditor, would have to be part of any solution that would put Venezuela back on a path to economic growth. As you know, the Venezuelan economy is already collapsing, and further deterioration risks sparking even greater flows of refugees toward the United States and could also present a humanitarian crisis.

- What role do you think you will play in serving as an interlocutor with the Chinese to address the looming crisis in Venezuela, a crisis which could have profound security and economic implications for the United States and the entire Western Hemisphere?

Answer. China has significant economic ties with Venezuela, and has lent Venezuela tens of billions of dollars under an oil-for-loans arrangement since 2007. Both countries are important to one other, for oil, financial, and commercial reasons. The United States and China should share an interest in a stable and prosperous Venezuela. If confirmed, I will urge Beijing to apply its substantial economic leverage to work with all parties to achieve the political and economic reforms necessary to bring about a more stable outcome in accordance with the Venezuelan constitution.

Question 28. President Trump promised to fight for American workers in the face of China's unfair trade advantages, including its deplorable record on labor standards. The ambassador to China should be someone who will advocate for the American worker and endeavor to lift labor standards worldwide. As Governor you recently signed two bills, one that sharply curtailed collective bargaining rights and another that reversed the ability of counties to implement minimum wage and paid family leave requirements. Some groups have therefore argued that you cannot be an effective advocate for worker rights in China when you have supported legislation to strip worker rights at home.

- How do you plan to present yourself as a credible advocate for worker rights given your record of supporting efforts to curtail workers' rights to collectively bargain?

Answer. Protections for workers are an integral part of a society based on the rule of law. The United States has repeatedly engaged with China on ending practices such as forced labor and labor trafficking, and on updating Chinese laws to conform to international obligations and best practices in labor standards and workplace safety. If confirmed, I will continue pushing China to adopt robust, common sense protections for its workers.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. TERRY BRANSTAD BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER A. COONS

Question 1. As you know, your fellow Iowan—Tom Vilsack—established the Strategic Agricultural Innovation Dialogue (SAID) as a bilateral forum to resolve China's trade barriers to U.S. biotech traits. He worked hard to secure China's approval of U.S. biotech applications, and he thought he had secured a commitment from China to reform its regulatory system. Unfortunately, China didn't follow through. Last November, I signed a Senate letter—along with 36 of my colleagues, including Senators Portman, Gardner, and Isakson—to President Obama asking him to prioritize biotech approvals in the December meeting of the Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT). Once again, these efforts proved fruitless.

- Will you make approval of these overdue applications a priority in the new 100-day plan the administration is negotiating with China?

Answer. I have a keen understanding of the important role biotech plays to our farmers.

If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Perdue as well as other U.S. agencies to press China to expeditiously approve long-standing permits for U.S. biotechnology products. I will also continue to push China for shorter and more efficient timelines for scientific review and approval of biotech products. Biotech approvals are a priority for me, and one I will press hard to resolve, including through mechanisms like the 100-day plan.

Question 2. What will you do to make sure China finally follows through on its commitments? In particular, China has sat on a few U.S. biotech applications, and approval of those applications is long overdue.

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Perdue as well as other U.S. agencies to press China to expeditiously approve these long-standing permits for U.S. biotechnology products. I will push China for shorter and more efficient timelines for scientific review and approval of biotech products. Through the Comprehensive Economic Dialogue, multilateral engagement, and my own meetings, I will make it my priority to engage intensively with China at the highest levels on this and other pressing economic issues.

Question 3. The former Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack worked tirelessly to press China on commitments it made two years ago on approving new biotechnology traits for import. He expressed disappointment at the lack of progress last November, after the US-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT) meeting, when there was still no real commitment to approving any of the nine traits then

awaiting approval or to improving their general biotechnology trait import approval process.

- Will you and your colleagues in the new administration pick up where Secretary Vilsack and President Obama left off on this important trade issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Perdue as well as other U.S. agencies to press China to expeditiously approve these long-standing permits for U.S. biotechnology products. If confirmed, I will push China for shorter and more efficient timelines for scientific review and approval of biotech products. Through the Comprehensive Economic Dialogue, multilateral engagement, and my own meetings, I will make it my priority to engage intensively with China at the highest levels to approve all the pending applications and adopt a transparent and predictable approval process for biotechnology imports.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON TERRY BRANSTAD BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

China in Africa

Question 1. As you know, China has become a major economic player in Africa over the past two decades. Sino-African trade has grown exponentially, and China has become a key provider of contracted services in Africa, notably in the construction and infrastructure sectors. Chinese firms are also directly investing in African firms, property, and other assets, and view Africa as an emergent consumer market with high growth potential.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has conditioned aid on governance or economic reform and human rights performance. How would you compare the approaches of the United States and China to addressing these issues areas and challenges in Africa?

- To what degree do you view China and the United States as rivals in Africa, or as playing complementary, and potentially collaborative roles in Africa?

Answer. China is increasing its engagement in Africa reflecting its growing economic interests. U.S. companies and U.S. corporate culture have a good story to tell in Africa, and when given the choice, African countries prefer American companies because of the values we bring. A number of U.S. initiatives in Africa, such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Power Africa, and peacekeeping training programs provide critical assistance to the region while enhancing U.S. soft power.

That said, engagement in the region is not a zero-sum game and there is a place for multiple players as long as they are promoting sustainable economic development and political stability. U.S. cooperation with China helps protect the interests of our African partners. The United States and China, for example, supported African Union efforts to establish the Africa Center for Disease Control to strengthen health systems across the continent and address health crises like the 2014 West Africa Ebola crisis.

Question 2. What, if any, scope is there for U.S.-Chinese-African trilateral cooperation with respect to security challenges, socio-economic development, and business and trade in Africa? Should the United States view—and potentially respond to—China's extensive trade and comparatively more limited assistance efforts in Africa, as well as its political outreach efforts in the region?

Answer. There are abundant economic and infrastructure needs in Africa, and China can play a constructive role. If confirmed, I will work to encourage China to engage on the basis of internationally accepted standards and time-tested safeguards for infrastructure investment. The United States and China have enjoyed limited cooperation in areas including promoting peace and security, enhancing African peacekeeping, strengthening health systems, encouraging improved regulatory and investment climates, and combatting wildlife trafficking. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for U.S.-China cooperation in Africa.

President's Personal Business Interests in China

Question 3. As you know, shortly after President Trump won election China granted the Trump Organization a number of valuable trademarks that they had been seeking for years. More recently, China granted three trademarks to Ivanka Trump, on the very day that President Xi met with the President.

- What is your understanding of the role of the political leadership of China in influencing bureaucratic decision-making?

Answer. As a private U.S. citizen, I am unable to judge accurately the portion of Chinese decisions that are subject to political considerations rather than merit.

Question 4. Given that Chinese courts and bureaucracy serve the will of the ruling Communist Party, can it credibly be argued that the timing of these trademark grants was mere coincidence?

Answer. As a private U.S. citizen, I have no direct knowledge of the decision-making process the Chinese Government followed in this instance. I cannot accurately speculate on the motivations of the Chinese Government in this instance.

Question 5. As ambassador, how will you assure that American trademark filers are treated fairly and with integrity, and their applications judged by Chinese officials properly and on the merits?

Answer. If confirmed as ambassador, I will seek a fair and equitable treatment of Americans seeking intellectual-property protections from the Chinese Government and for the general protection and respect of U.S. intellectual property. I will seek for relevant applications by U.S. citizens and organizations be judged on their legal merits.

Question 6. President Trump has signed an executive order to dismantle President Obama's climate change regulations, potentially undermining the ability of the U.S. to meet its commitments under the Paris climate change agreement.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Foreign Ministry recently renewed China's commitment to the Paris deal, saying it was a landmark agreement that became reality through the hard work of the international community and that no matter how other countries' climate policies change, China's resolve to deal with climate change will not change.

I believe that we risk losing our leadership position in the international community if the Trump administration continues moving in the wrong direction on climate policy and defaulting on our promises under the Paris Agreement.

- Will you use your position as ambassador to advocate for working with China to aggressively reduce carbon emissions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will act to protect and advance U.S. national interests in all matters, including climate change, in China.

Question 7. As ambassador to China, will you commit to pushing Chinese leadership to address these serious issues with their international fishing fleet, including by cracking down on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by Chinese vessels and by lowering government subsidies to the fishing industry that are driving unsustainable fishing practices?

Answer. I recognize that combatting illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is an enormous challenge, and one the United States remains committed to addressing. Should I be confirmed, I will work to strengthen cooperation on measures to combat IUU fishing under bilateral frameworks and in regional fisheries management organizations and relevant international organizations.

The United States and China hold regular bilateral consultations on fisheries management issues, and plan to do so again this year. The United States and China also have a longstanding shiprider agreement under the auspices of the U.S. Coast Guard for IUU patrols in the North Pacific Ocean. These are two examples of effective cooperation between our two countries, and should I be confirmed as ambassador, I would work to assist and accelerate Chinese efforts to combat IUU fishing both domestically and abroad.

The United States and China are working with several other fishing nations to complete negotiation of a legally binding measure to prevent unregulated commercial fishing in the high seas portion of the central Arctic Ocean, and I will continue to push for this important agreement.

NOMINATION

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Flake, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Paul, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

Also Present: Senator Sullivan.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for appearing before the committee today, Mr. Sullivan, and your willingness to serve our country once again.

The confirmation of a Deputy Secretary of State is one of the most important appointments this committee will consider. The person who occupies this position will serve as the chief adviser to Secretary Tillerson, as Secretary in his absence, and as a principal officer for management of personnel and resources at the State Department.

Given recent management, budgetary, and information technology challenges, this is no small task. Fortunately, the President has nominated someone who has an extensive background in Federal service. Having served at the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, and as Deputy Secretary of Commerce, I believe Mr. Sullivan has the knowledge base necessary to understand the inner workings of a large Federal bureaucracy and the capacity to manage multiple priorities at the deputy level. Mr. Sullivan also has developed a reputation in the legal field as an authority on trade and national security issues.

If confirmed, Mr. Sullivan will be reentering government service at a highly precarious time in world history. From Europe to the Middle East to East Asia, we are witnessing a number of major threats to global security and stability.

These events give rise to a common question: What will America's role be? We are at a crucial point where we can decide to lead from the front with bold action or simply observe what happens from the sidelines and hope for the best.

It is my hope that we will choose to appropriately engage on the hard problems, that we will restore U.S. credibility, and that we will provide strong pragmatic leadership on the world stage.

It is also mandatory that the person who fills this position understands not only the importance of this office to the day-to-day operations of the department, but also the responsibility of keeping this committee fully informed of the department's operations, plans, and policy objectives as we exercise our oversight authority.

I have spoken with Mr. Sullivan in private about the need for us to have candid responses to our questions, both today and in the future, if he is confirmed by the Senate.

We are here today to examine Mr. Sullivan's nomination, and I look forward to hearing from him about this exceptionally important position.

Typically, we would allow visiting Senators to go ahead and speak, but do you want to go ahead?

Senator CARDIN. I am more than willing to yield, if it is all right with you, Senator Sullivan? It is a little confusing there, with the Sullivans. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. They are not related, I understand.

Senator CARDIN. I am willing to yield to Senator Sullivan.

The CHAIRMAN. So we are honored to have Senator Sullivan who has served, I think, in the past with Secretary Sullivan. Thank you for being here and spending a few moments. Go ahead. As a courtesy, we will let you start right now.

STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee. It is an honor for me to come before the Foreign Relations Committee on behalf of my friend, a former colleague, a great American, Mr. John Sullivan.

And despite what his last name would suggest, we are not related, although, as I mentioned to Senator Markey, probably somewhere back in the history of Ireland, maybe we were all related.

Senator MARKEY. My mother is a Sullivan, too. [Laughter.]

Senator SULLIVAN. That is why he is the biggest supporter.

I met John when we first served in the administration of George W. Bush, myself as an Assistant Secretary of State working on economic, energy, trade, finance issues, and John as the Deputy Secretary of Commerce, and we worked on a number of foreign policy issues, particularly in the economic realm, together.

You have all had an opportunity to see his resume, but I just wanted to highlight a few elements of his personal background and experience.

John started out in public service as a law clerk for Judge John Wisdom on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and then later as a law clerk for Justice Souter on the U.S. Supreme Court. In 2004, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld appointed John as deputy general counsel at the Department of Defense. He then moved to the Department of Commerce, where he served as general counsel, and then as Deputy Secretary.

In the private sector, John currently co-chairs Mayer Brown's national security practice and serves as chairman of the United

States-Iraq Business Dialogue. I mention these positions because I think we can all agree that American foreign policy is not just formed in the halls of Foggy Bottom but in the Departments of Defense, Energy, Commerce, Treasury, Justice, and many other agencies throughout Washington.

It is in this vein that I believe John's substantial and diverse experience in the Federal Government will serve as an important complement to Secretary Tillerson's background in the private sector. John's experience also speaks to a greater understanding of what it takes to develop and execute U.S. foreign policy. He understands the importance of a robust interagency cooperation and coordination element of our government. He understands that our Nation's foreign policy is most effective when we combine all instruments of American power—diplomatic, military, energy, trade, private sector. He understands the critical importance of working with our allies around the world. And he understands what it means to honorably serve our Nation and has a career of doing so.

And with a name like Sullivan, I am confident that John will also bring an Irishman's wit, charm, gift of gab, and pugnaciousness to the job, all important qualities of a diplomat.

He is a man of integrity. I know he will serve Secretary Tillerson, the men and women of the Foreign Service and civil service, and this Nation well, and I urge you to support his nomination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for coming and for your support. You can return to your other duties. Thank you so much, sir.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you.

[Whereupon, the hearing paused for a business meeting vote.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, first of all, let me thank Mr. Sullivan for his willingness to serve our country again. He seems to always want to come back to public service, and we very much appreciate that, a very talented person who has a distinguished record.

And we thank your family for being willing to share you with our Nation, because in the position that you have been nominated for, it will take 110 percent of your time and effort.

The challenges are great. And as Chairman Corker pointed out, so much goes through the Deputy Secretary. It is the person who really makes sure that that personnel systems are working, that the different regional areas are held accountable. It is a critically important position.

I am going to use my time and my opening statement to share some of the comments that we talked about in our private meeting, because I think it is important at this nomination hearing to review a couple areas of concern that we have on the Trump administration and get your views as, if confirmed, a critical person in developing the foreign policy of our country.

The first is what I led with in our private discussion, to talk about American values, American strength.

I just came from an ADL meeting where we were talking about what makes America the strong Nation that it is. Yes, we have a strong military, and you helped to develop our strong military. That is important.

We have a strong economy, and Senator Sullivan was involved in helping to develop that strong economy.

But America's strength is in our ideals, our values, speaking up for democracy, speaking up for human rights, anticorruption, and embracing diversity.

So I want to start with that because I want to have a dialogue, I hope today during this nomination hearing, as to how you value the importance of what America stands for. It is in context to Secretary Tillerson's statement last week that gives me grave concern, where he said that our foreign policy is out of balance, that our policies and values are not the same, and that if we condition our national security efforts on someone adopting our values, we probably cannot achieve our national security goals or our national security interests.

That did not just concern a Democratic Senator from Maryland, but Senator McCain, who is well-respected globally for his commitment to American values, said, let me quote from Senator McCain's op-ed this week, "In the real world, as lived and experienced by real people, the demand for human rights and dignity, the longing for liberty and justice and opportunity, the hatred of oppression and corruption and cruelty is reality. By denying this experience, we deny the aspirations of billions of people and invite their enduring resentment."

Senator McCain went on to state, "Our values are our strength and our greatest treasure. We are distinguished from other countries because we are not made from a land or tribe, or a particular race or creed, but from an ideal that liberty is the inalienable right of mankind and in accord with nature and nature's Creator.

"To view foreign policy as simply transactional is more dangerous than its proponents realize. Depriving the oppressed of a beacon of hope could lose us the world we have built and thrived in. It could cost us our reputation in history as the Nation distinct from all others in our achievements, our identity, and our enduring influence on mankind. Our values are central to all three."

So I hope that we will have a chance to talk about this. This is not a hypothetical discussion. The Russian Federation has made a strategic decision to try to undermine our values as an effort to spread their influence in countries that currently have democratic values. So this is a current issue that is of grave concern.

The second point I want to mention is our respect for involvement internationally. I say that in context to the fact that I led a 10–Senator delegation to COP21 to bolster U.S. leadership and provide calm and confidence in the United States' commitment to the global efforts to fight the existential threat of climate change.

Now, we may disagree as to what the solution should be. I happen to side where science tells me the solution is, but we may have some different views on that. But I would hope that we would all agree that the United States must be at the table during these discussions and that we need to remain a part of the international

family as we talk about these issues because without U.S. leadership, there will be other countries that will try to fill it.

But we will be on the side of very few countries—I think Nicaragua and Syria are the only two countries that did not join COP21, and that is certainly not the neighbors that we want to associate ourselves with.

So I hope we will hear your view for the importance of America's engagement globally, and that it would be wrong for us to sit on the sidelines as the international community discusses major issues.

In that vein, we will talk to you about the President's skinny budget of a 36 percent cut in the State Department. We understand that Congress will draft its own budget, and I fully respect that, and I know the commitment of many members of this committee on both sides of the aisle to make sure that we have adequate resources to deal with our international commitments. But we want to hear your view as to America's engagement.

Over and over again, we are involved in Afghanistan and Iraq. And they are talking about more of the soft power so that we can avoid military engagements in these countries. We know that in Africa, we need to do more in spreading democracy. We know about the famines and the challenges that we have to deal with there.

So I would be interested in hearing your view as to how resources can be more efficiently spent and allocated, but that America's role will be one of increased influence, not reduced influence, in using what is under the State Department to provide stable neighbors for us to work with.

And the last point, with what the chairman has said, in our private discussions, you made it clear that you would respond to requests by members of this committee. I would ask that that also be reaffirmed at today's hearing.

Welcome. We look forward to your hearing, and we look forward to the continued partnership between this committee and the State Department.

[Whereupon, the hearing paused for a business meeting vote.]

The CHAIRMAN. We look forward to your opening comments. We hope you will welcome and introduce your wonderful family, who is with you today. We found that generally tones down committee members when you do that.

And I do hope that you will affirm the fact that, if we have any questions, that you will promptly come before us in hearings in the future.

With that, we look forward to your comments.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN J. SULLIVAN, OF MARYLAND, NOMINATED TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of State.

I am joined by members of my family, my wife for almost 29 years, Grace Rodriguez, the love of my life who has been my biggest supporter and best friend. We are also joined by two of our three children, Jack and Katie Sullivan. Our youngest, Teddy, is in

the midst of final exams at college, and he is not able to join us today.

But I am immensely proud of all of them. I hope there is a future for them in government service. I tell people that they are CIA, Cuban-Irish-Americans.

Also, with us are my mother-in-law, Graciela Rodriguez, and my sister-in-law, Susan Rodriguez.

It was an honor to be introduced by Senator Sullivan of Alaska, my dear friend and former colleague from the Bush administration. I am very thankful for his kind words.

I want to express my enormous gratitude to President Trump and to Secretary Tillerson for the trust and confidence they have reposed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to devote all that I have to be worthy of that trust and confidence.

By way of personal introduction, I am the grandson of Irish immigrants who arrived in South Boston in the 1880s. My parents, born in the 1920s, endured the Great Depression and, with millions of their generation, fought and won the Second World War. My father served in the U.S. Navy submarine service in the Pacific theater. My mother was a USO volunteer. We would now call them members of the Greatest Generation, but they never thought of themselves that way. They rarely spoke of their experiences during the war.

One thing they did to make clear and instilled in me was a profound love of our country and respect for the high calling of public service. In the 32 years since my law school graduation, those values have animated my career.

As Senator Sullivan mentioned, I have had the privilege of serving in a variety of positions in the U.S. Government. During that public service, I have learned a great deal about our country, its role in the world, and the functioning of the executive branch.

But the most important lessons I have learned were humility and respect. As deputy general counsel of DOD, I saw firsthand the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, and I learned to walk humbly through the halls of the Pentagon.

I also learned respect for the career civil servants who rarely get the praise they deserve. The executive branch functions because of these men and women, many with decades of experience.

A small number of public servants are accepted into the Foreign Service, which I know well. My uncle Bill Sullivan was a Foreign Service Officer for 32 years. He was the last U.S. Ambassador to Iran in the 1970s. It was his staff in Tehran that was taken hostage on November 4, 1979, a few months after the President had recalled him.

It is an earlier date from 1979, however, that sticks in my mind, February 14, Valentine's Day. The U.S. Embassy in Tehran was overrun by a mob, and my uncle and his staff were seized. After a few hours, the Americans were released and the Embassy reopened. My uncle appeared in a picture on the cover of the next issue of Newsweek. He was surrounded by Iranians carrying assault weapons, one of whom was brandishing a bayonet in his face.

That day in 1979 is significant not merely because of the drama in Iran but also because of a tragedy in Afghanistan. Our Ambassador Spike Dubs was kidnapped and assassinated in Kabul. Like

my uncle, Ambassador Dubs was a U.S. Navy World War II veteran and a career Foreign Service Officer.

The assassination of Ambassador Dubs and the seizure of our Embassy in Tehran on February 14, 1979, made a huge impression on me. I was a college student at the time. I have remained in awe of our Foreign Service Officers who venture into such dangerous places on our behalf. If confirmed, it would be my highest honor to work with the Foreign Service, the civil service, and the department's locally employed staff in the conduct of American diplomacy.

In a world in which we face significant and enduring threats, these challenging times require leadership from the United States. As Secretary Tillerson said when he came before this committee, to achieve the stability that is foundational to peace and security in the 21st century, American leadership must not only be renewed, it must be asserted.

And we will be aided in the assertion of that leadership by two of our abiding strengths, our allies and our values. We have relationships with allies in this hemisphere and across the globe that extend back many decades and have been the cornerstone of our national security in the post-war era.

But our greatest asset is our commitment to the fundamental values expressed at the founding of our Nation, the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These basic human rights are the bedrock of our republic and at the heart of American leadership in the world.

Should I be confirmed, I commit to work with the members of this committee as the administration implements an American foreign policy that is worthy of our ideals as a people, ideals that have been handed down by the many generations that preceded us.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

[Mr. Sullivan's prepared statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF JOHN J. SULLIVAN

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of State.

I am joined by members of my family: my wife for almost 29 years Grace Rodriguez, the love of my life, who has always been my biggest supporter and best friend. We are joined by our children, Jack, Katie, and Teddy Sullivan, of whom I am immensely proud. Also with us are my mother-in-law Graciela Rodriguez and my sister-in-law Susan Rodriguez.

It was an honor to be introduced by Senator Sullivan of Alaska, my former colleague from the Bush administration. I am thankful for his kind words.

I want to express my enormous gratitude to President Trump and to Secretary Tillerson for the trust and confidence they have reposed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to devote all that I have to be worthy of that trust and confidence.

By way of personal introduction, I am the grandson of Irish immigrants who arrived in South Boston in the 1880s. My parents, born in the 1920s, endured the Great Depression and, with millions of their generation, fought and won the Second World War. My father served in the U.S. Navy's Submarine Service in the Pacific Theater. My mother was a USO volunteer. We would now call them members of the Greatest Generation, but they never thought of themselves that way. They rarely spoke of their experiences during the War.

But one thing they did make clear, and instilled in me, was a profound love of our country and respect for the high calling of public service. In the 32 years since my law school graduation, those values have animated my career. In addition to stints in private law practice, I have had the privilege of serving in the U.S. Government: as a law clerk for Judge John Wisdom and for Justice David Souter, followed by senior positions at the Justice, Defense, and Commerce Departments.

During my public service, I have learned a great deal about our country and its role in the world. Most significantly, my experiences have prepared me to serve in the position for which I recently have been nominated: Deputy Secretary of State. In both legal and policy positions, I learned the operations of the national security bureaucracy. As Deputy Secretary of Commerce, I was chief operating officer of a cabinet department and participated in the budgeting process with OMB. I also worked closely with the Department of State while leading trade missions and government delegations on trips to China, Pakistan, Germany, Iraq, Israel and the West Bank, Jordan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Japan, and the UAE.

But the most important lessons I learned were humility and respect. As Deputy General Counsel of DoD, I saw firsthand the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform. I learned to walk humbly through the halls of the Pentagon. I also learned respect for the career public servants who rarely get the praise they deserve. The executive branch functions because of these men and women, many with decades of experience.

A small number of public servants are accepted into the Foreign Service, which I know well. My uncle Bill Sullivan was a Foreign Service Officer for 32 years. He was the last U.S. Ambassador to Iran in the late 1970s. It was his staff in Tehran that was taken hostage on November 4, 1979—a few months after the President had recalled him.

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The assassination of Ambassador Dubs and the seizure of our embassy in Tehran on February 14, 1979, made a huge impression on me. I have remained in awe of our Foreign Service Officers who venture into such dangerous places on our behalf.

If confirmed, it would be my highest honor to work with the Foreign Service, the Civil Service, and the Department's locally employed staff in the conduct of American diplomacy. In a world in which we face significant and enduring threats, these challenging times require leadership from the United States. As Secretary Tillerson said when he came before this committee, "to achieve the stability that is foundational to peace and security in the 21st century, American leadership must not only be renewed, it must be asserted."

And we will be aided in the assertion of our leadership by two of our abiding strengths: our allies and our values. We have relationships with allies in this hemisphere and across the globe that extend back many decades and that have been the cornerstone of our national security in the post-war era. We have maintained and enhanced the relationships with our allies on the basis of our shared interests. But in many cases, we also share a commitment to the fundamental values expressed at the founding of our nation: the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These basic human rights are the bedrock of our republic and at the heart of American leadership.

Should I be confirmed, I commit to work with the members of this committee as the administration implements an American foreign policy that is worthy of our ideals as a people—ideals that have been handed down by the many generations that preceded us.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Just one question from me. Do you commit to appear and testify upon request from this committee?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I do, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, I am going to reserve my time for interjections, and turn to our distinguished ranking member, Ben Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Sullivan, first of all, thank you for the testimony today, because you make it very clear at the end your commitment to American values. I appreciate that. I want to drill down a little bit on that, as I told you I would in our private meeting.

I quoted from Senator McCain in my opening statement. I thought part of his experience and the way that he related to the fact that, as a prisoner of war, where he was trying to be broken by the enemy, it was the belief in our values that kept him strong, and that he felt that if America was transactional, that is how we do business rather than our values, then why shouldn't prisoners of war be transactional also and give up our country in order to achieve more comfort for themselves? They did not do that. Our soldiers do not do that, and our diplomats shouldn't do that.

So I want to hear from you your commitment that, as we deal with Russia, as we deal with China, as we deal with countries around the world that we need to deal with that do not share our commitment to universal values, how America's foreign policy will always be framed in the values that have made us the great Nation we are.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Senator, our values, as I said in my opening statement, are the bedrock of our republic. Before we became a world power, before we had the world-class military that you mentioned, before we became the economic juggernaut that we are today, we had our values.

We achieved those successes because all of that was based on our values as Americans expressed in the Declaration of Independence and in our Constitution.

Senator CARDIN. So I am going to tell you some specific examples. You will have a chance to visit a lot of countries, if you are confirmed, visiting with the opposition, visiting with NGOs that are not particularly liked by the Government, visiting with people who have been persecuted by the Government is a clear sign that America stands on the side of universal human rights. Are you prepared to make those types of visual commitments so that our leadership is maintained?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Not only am I prepared to make that commitment going forward, but I have made that commitment in my prior service in government.

I am a Roman Catholic. When I travel, I always go to mass and meet with Catholics in the country in which I travel. That includes countries where the Catholic Church is, for lack of a better word, oppressed—in particular, China.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Congress is taking steps to try to give the administration greater tools. In one case, the Magnitsky global human rights bill that was championed by Senator McCain and myself is now available globally, and it is a congressional initiative. It allows the State Department to promote names of individuals who have violated basic human rights for sanctions here in the United States.

Our leadership has been recognized globally, and other countries are following suit, doing the exact same thing that America has done, but it requires a robust administration. Are you prepared to use that tool to advance American human rights and values?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, I am, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. There is legislation that we are working on in Congress to deal with corruption. We have a model dealing with trafficking, and I applaud many members of this committee that were deeply involved, including our chairman, who is passionate

about stopping modern-day slavery. The TIP Report is a very valuable tool in advancing our goals on fighting trafficking in humans. We want to use a similar model to fight corruption.

Corruption is growing, unfortunately, in too many places in the world. No country is immune from corruption. No country is immune from trafficking. There are countries that are taking steps to protect their country against trafficking, and there are countries that are taking steps to protect their country against corruption. Having guides in how we conduct our foreign policy because corruption is a cancer in a country that leads to instability, are you prepared to work with members of this committee on legislation that would give greater tools for evaluating how well we are doing in fighting corruption globally?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, I am, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Rubio?

Senator RUBIO. Thank you very much.

Thank you, for your willingness to serve once again in government. I want to continue on the theme of human rights. I think it is an essential part of our foreign policy.

I think you know this from your time in government and outside of it that so many of the groups around the world who are fighting for the principles that we as a Nation stand for—democracy, free press, freedom of religion, freedom of expression—they look to America for inspiration.

I have been touched deeply by examples of that just in the last 3 months. Sometimes you give these speeches on the Senate floor. We do not think anyone hears them, and then you get to interact with someone that was recently released from a prison, and they tell you that what we did in a resolution or in a hearing or on the Senate floor was impactful and ran counter to the oppressor's message to them that they do not matter to anybody, that nobody cares about you.

And while I think it is important that we here in the Senate continue to stand for these principles, I also think it is important that we have a State Department that is structured in a way that shows that this is a priority of the United States. There is no shortage of these, obviously.

In Iran, we know about their grotesque human rights record. In Syria, we have seen the horrifying crimes committed against innocent civilians.

We also have challenges with some allies in the region. I think that is perhaps some of the messaging that the Secretary was pointing to. Egypt is an ally. It is also a human rights violator, and it is important for us as their ally to tell them that that is an unsustainable position moving forward. Saudi Arabia is a country we work with very closely, and yet it is not a human rights star, to say the least.

In Asia, we obviously talk a lot about the North Korean nuclear weapon. We do not talk nearly enough about the forced labor camps that exist there, a horrifying reality. Of course, in China, we could have days and days of testimony about the thousands of political prisoners.

In Europe, obviously, we are aware of Russia's horrifying human rights record. We have seen recently in the pro-Russian areas of Chechnya how LGBT gay men have been rounded up and put in jail, again, another horrifying instance.

But in our own hemisphere, even as we stand now, we see horrifying human rights violations in Venezuela, dozens of people that have been in jail, some upwards of 3 years' total, ignoring the constitution of that country, the security forces firing on protesters in the street.

And of course, one that I know is near to you and to me, the issue of Cuba, where we still, despite all the celebratory language about an opening, there are people in jail in Cuba, there are people being rounded up in Cuba, there are people being oppressed systematically in Cuba.

I believe the Cuban people are deserving of freedom and democracy just like the people in the Dominican Republic have, just like the people in Haiti just had an election, just like the people in Colombia, just like the people—why are the Cubans any less worthy of those basic freedoms?

And what I would ask you to share with the committee is what you shared with me on the issue of human rights, in particular with Cuba but broader. This is not just an issue that is of academic interest.

In your own family, through marriage, you actually have a gentleman who experienced a horrifying violation of human rights, who experienced being jailed by an oppressive regime, who is a Floridian. You shared that story with me.

To me, that is very important, because it tells me that we have someone here before us who understands human rights and oppression not because he read about it in a book, because he knows and loves someone who himself has been a victim of the denial of freedom. I would just invite you to share with the committee for a moment the story of this incredible man and the impact that he has had on your thinking with regard to all this.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator. You are referring to my wife and my mother-in-law's uncle, Jose Pujols, who was a political prisoner in Cuba for 27 years, over 27 years. He was one of the so-called plantados in Castro's prisons.

Senator RUBIO. Explain plantados.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Plantados were those prisoners who refused to cooperate, refused to wear prison uniforms. They were planted in their cells. He was in solitary confinement for 7 years. He was sustained by his religious faith, his Catholic faith, his wife who, despite the fact that she had the opportunity to leave Cuba and come to the United States, stayed on the island so that she, in those few opportunities when she could, meet with him.

He was released from prison a week after my wife and I got married in 1988, and he is still alive today. He is 92, almost 93 years old. And he is a great inspiration to our family and an inspiration to me and someone that my experience with, in talking to him, inspires me to serve in the United States Government to ensure that our government provides the leadership that is necessary to protect human rights around the world, to protect men like Jose Pujols.

Senator RUBIO. I would just close by saying, as proof that there is justice in the universe, Jose is alive and his oppressor is dead.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Amen.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Sullivan, for your willingness to return to government service and for your strong assertion of your commitment to our basic values and for your willingness to take up this work on behalf of the American people. I am encouraged by your statement in your opening that you have remained in awe of our Foreign Service Officers who venture into dangerous places on our behalf, and I am encouraged by the stories you shared with me and that you just shared in response to Senator Rubio's questioning.

So I look forward to working with you and to finding ways that we can together continue to speak up about human rights, about democracy, to meet with and to advocate for the Foreign Service Officers around the world who today are a little anxious about their place in the State Department and are looking for clarity about support for their service and their mission.

Just three quick questions, if I might. We talked a little bit about your service in the Commerce Department.

How do you view the Power Africa initiative? I think it has been a successful public-private partnership that helps bring private sector ingenuity and effort into the basic development challenge of infrastructure on the continent. Is that something that you think the Trump administration might well embrace and continue to move forward?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, Senator. I agree, and we discussed that yesterday in our meeting.

I would also add that we discussed sub-Saharan Africa as a place that we cannot lose sight of, of the opportunities that are there, both for the sake of promoting human development, economic development in those many countries, but also as protection of U.S. interests, both national security and economic prosperity. So I look forward to working with you on that, Senator.

Senator COONS. Thank you. One of the things I am concerned about is that, in the absence of Russia paying some price for its interference in our 2016 election, arguably in France's election just this past week, and potentially in the election in Germany that is upcoming, that they will simply continue and become more aggressive and more robustly engaged.

How do you think we could best deter Russia from future cyberattacks and efforts to subvert democracy throughout our Western European allies and here in the United States?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Well, Senator, it is a persistent threat that we face, most recently from Russia in our election, and, as you mentioned, in the elections in Europe and France and the Netherlands, and upcoming elections in Germany and Italy next year or maybe later this year.

As the Secretary has said—Secretary Tillerson has met with Foreign Minister Lavrov, with President Putin, raised these issues directly with the Russians. I believe we have to be robust in our response to this intrusion into our democracy when we talk about basic human rights. Our republic is premised on a representative

democracy. Interference with our political processes is simply unacceptable. It is a profound threat to our way of life, and we need to respond as robustly as we can, using all of the means that we have at our disposal.

Senator COONS. I am encouraged to hear you say that, because I have heard expressions of concern from representatives of some of our European allies, particularly those closest to Russia geographically, who say that if we are not going to stand up and defend our democracy, how can they count on us to defend theirs, and that sense of uncertainty about our future actions I think makes all of us weaker.

Last, what do you think we should be doing to restrain Iran's destabilizing actions in the Middle East and throughout the region? I think they continue to engage in destabilizing actions throughout the region, in Yemen, in Syria, in Iraq, and elsewhere. And coming up with a sustained, bipartisan approach to Iran is I think one of our major foreign policy challenges.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I agree, Senator. Iran policy is currently under review in the administration. I would say that Iran has been a persistent threat to U.S. national interests, national security interests in many areas, including those that you mentioned.

The Secretary has sent a letter to this committee regarding Iranian compliance with the JCPOA. I thought Secretary Mattis best characterized the JCPOA in his testimony before the Armed Services Committee, in which he described it as an imperfect arms control agreement, not a treaty of friendship.

We have a lot of other problems that we need to address with Iran beyond the JCPOA and their nuclear program. We need to make sure that they comply with the terms of that agreement, but we have a number of other problems that we need to address with them, whether it is their sponsorship of terrorism, human rights in their own country, ballistic missile programs, the list goes on.

Senator COONS. I agree, and I look forward to having you testify before this committee in the future and to hearing that you visit with Foreign Service Officers as well as with the political opposition, human rights activists, and NGOs in your travels around the world. Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Flake?

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and also to hear your testimony here, your willingness to serve.

I enjoyed the discussion that Senator Rubio had with regard to Cuba. Many of us feel strongly about ways that we can hasten change in Cuba and move toward democracy. I happen to think that some of the measures taken by the last administration with regard to allowing Cuban-American travel, allowing increase in remittances, have allowed a lot of Cubans—I think we have gone from virtually very little Cuban employment outside of the Government sector to today about one in four Cubans employed in the so-called private sector in Cuba, running bed-and-breakfasts or private restaurants or beauty shops, auto repair facilities, and have some modicum of independence from the Government, more than

they had before. I think that is a good development. There are obviously still human rights abuses that take place.

The question is, how do we best ensure that freedom is hastened and we move forward? I know that those policies are being reviewed, and I hope that we will look at the whole picture there and see where we are as opposed to where we were a few years ago. We have had policies in place for 50 years that have not moved the needle very far until now.

With regard to the State Department and some of the things that you will be involved with, there was a report recently noting that there are 67 special envoy, special representative and special coordinator positions at the department, most of them outside of the regular bureaus and a handful of them, only a handful of them, approximately 20, have been authorized by Congress.

From a managerial perspective, how do we deal with this? Is there going to be an effort to wind down some of these special envoy positions?

Just as a matter of note, they seem pretty duplicative. For example, we have a special envoy and coordinator for international energy affairs, as well as the special envoy for climate change and the special representative for environmental and water resources. This is over and above any other positions that we have at State.

Then we have a special envoy for North Korean human rights issues and a special envoy for the Six Party talks and a special representative for North Korea policy. Again, this is all in addition to regular State Department positions.

From a managerial perspective, how are we dealing with these special envoy positions?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Flake.

This is all part of Secretary Tillerson's review of the mission of the department with the intent of basically bringing the department into the 21st century to address the challenges we have now. He has reached out to all employees of the department, having listening sessions with employees of the department to discuss the best ways to define and accomplish our missions.

With respect to these special envoy positions you have mentioned, Senator Flake, my concern, without addressing any particular office, is that when an office like that is created outside of the chain of command in the bureaucracy, it removes some level of accountability for those individuals who have been nominated by the President, reviewed by this committee, and confirmed, whether they serve at the Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary level. We then appoint a special envoy for a particular issue who is outside that chain of command. This committee has not reviewed that person's qualifications.

And it, in many ways, will undermine the leadership and authority of those individuals who have been put in positions of substantial authority because there is somebody outside that chain of authority who has responsibility for that narrow issue.

Senator FLAKE. That is my concern as well. I hope that we can move forward and make some changes here. My colleague just mentioned maybe we need a special envoy for special envoys. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. But absent that, we have to get a handle on this. With only 20 of the 67 even authorized by Congress, and so many very duplicative, it would seem that a fully functioning, right functioning State Department would seek to get some of its power and authority back.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I would point out, it is not just the envoys but, in many cases, very, very large staffs that support them.

We had testimony in a prior hearing from Republican and Democrat witnesses who had served at the State Department that, in many cases, these envoys were put in place to work around folks that otherwise could not perform in those roles. So I do hope you will look closely at that, and I appreciate the top-to-bottom review that is taking place.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Congratulations on your nomination. I look forward to continuing the conversation we started last week.

Along with many others on this committee, I am deeply concerned about the lack of senior management positions that have yet to be filled at the State Department, and we welcome the opportunity to move forward with many more nominees, because I believe leaving senior positions that require Senate-confirmed, empowered individuals vacant undermines the ability of the department to carry out its mission, which ultimately compromises our foreign policy and our national security objectives.

So this is a department, for those of us who care deeply about foreign policy and the men and women who dedicate their lives to serving this country overseas, it is critically important that we see senior leadership who also value the mission of the State Department, will fight for its employees, its proper place in the national security apparatus, and its budget.

So my question is, are you that person?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. You are committed to those goals?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am committed to making the State Department the preeminent force to protect American values and promote American values in the world.

Senator MENENDEZ. So given your experience at the Commerce Department and in the private sector, you come with some degree of a greater business orientation toward foreign policy. One of the things that I found in my 25 years in Congress is that sanctions can be a powerful tool in terms of a peaceful diplomacy arsenal. I know that you have experience advising clients on sanctions compliance in Russia and Cuba, just to mention a couple.

Do you believe sanctions are an effective tool for foreign policy?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you believe that the network of sanctions that we have in place on adversarial countries like Russia and Iran should be kept in place at this time?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I believe they should be reviewed to make sure they are adequate, kept in place and potentially ratcheted up as necessary.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Now I want to echo the remarks of the ranking member. One of the hallmarks of my career has been human rights and democracy globally. Most of us who pay attention to foreign policy recognize that leading with our values, including prioritizing human rights in our diplomacy, is a critical part of promoting our national security.

So I am really concerned about Secretary Tillerson's comments. I am also concerned that, notwithstanding his comments, I have not seen so far in the first 4 or 5 months human rights and democracy raised very often.

There is no question that there are times that there may be an immediate national security goal that must take precedence. But history has proven unequivocally that countries who share our values of human rights, democratic governance, fundamental freedoms, make more stable countries. They make more prosperous countries. They are less likely to create war on their neighbors or potentially against us.

Now we have somehow forgotten that history at times. We have engaged with dictators and tyrants. And in the short term, it may have served us. But in the long term, boy, are we paying huge consequences for it—huge consequences for it. And I could rattle off a series of countries in which we did that.

If you are sitting in Combinado del Este in Cuba, believe me, you want someone speaking about human rights and democracy. If you are being human trafficked by some slave trafficker, whether for sex or labor, you want somebody speaking out about human rights and democracy. If you are struggling inside of your country in Southeast Asia to change the essence of your life under a government that is totalitarian, you want somebody to speak out about human rights and democracy.

So I hope that what I heard you say to Senator Rubio, your comments to me, and others that have said for the record, I cannot emphasize it enough, because we need someone who has the moral clarity that Nikki Haley has. I voted for her even though I did not think she had a lot of foreign policy experience, or any. I am not sure I would have hired her for my senior foreign policy person, but I think she is outstanding. But she is moral clarity. That moral clarity can ultimately drive us in the right direction, and I hope that you have that moral clarity as the number two person at State Department.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Just on that note, we had some issues, and we have had to continuing discussions on the TIP Report. I think most of us felt like political interference took place to accommodate the TPP as it relates to certain countries on the TIP Report itself. As a matter of fact, I am pretty certain that that did occur.

Since that time, we have had a much different relationship with the State Department under two administrations as it relates to that. I just wish and hope you will confirm the fact that you will do everything in your power to assure us that the TIP Report will be done with the utmost integrity, and, when you meet with foreign officials, it will be an issue that you bring up when that is necessary.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I will, Senator. I know that Secretary Tillerson feels that way as well, as he said to this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Sullivan, I enjoyed our visit together in the office. Thank you again for your interest in serving.

There is a matter that has come to my attention since our meeting that I would like to bring up in this hearing. On April 21st this year, the Ethiopian Government issued an order to suspend indefinitely international adoptions from their country. According to our State Department, this has left dozens of U.S. families in the late stages of the adoption process unable to obtain the necessary paperwork to bring home their legally adopted children.

This includes the Oren family from my home State of Indiana. They have successfully adopted their son under Ethiopian law but are unable to bring that son home to Indiana because of the Ethiopian Government, which is unwilling to issue the paperwork necessary to receive an exit visa.

As a father of four young children, I take this especially seriously, as all Americans should. In an email this morning, Mrs. Oren, wrote the following, "We met, interacted with, and began the attachment process with our son while we were in Ethiopia. He is almost 4 years old. He knows we are his parents and that he was supposed to come home with us on our trip. He was upset and confused when we had to say goodbye, leaving him in an orphanage while we had to return to the United States without him."

Now I had an opportunity yesterday to speak with the Ethiopian ambassador about this issue. My hope is that it can be resolved quickly.

So, Mr. Sullivan, if it is not resolved quickly, once confirmed, will you work with my office to not only elevate this issue but to make clear to the Ethiopian Government at the highest level that this is important, that we need to resolve this issue, and we need their assistance, especially for families like the Orens who have already legally adopted their children when this order was issued?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Senator Young, if confirmed, I would be honored to do so.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Mr. Sullivan, I am a strong supporter of the international affairs budget. I have made that really clear, as have so many of my colleagues on this committee. As of yesterday, the Government Accountability Office lists 132 recommendations, including 22 priority recommendations, for the Department of State that have not been implemented or fully implemented.

Some of these open recommendations go back to 2011. Among other issues, these recommendations relate to important topics such as international food assistance, human trafficking, fraud oversight, management challenges, diplomatic security, North Korean sanctions, and terrorism. In order to maintain strong support for international affairs among the American people, they are going to insist upon proper and responsible stewardship of every single dollar we spend on that account.

So, Mr. Sullivan, as a nominee to serve as Deputy Secretary of State, which at least historically has played a very important role

with respect to some of these management and budgetary challenges, do you agree that this is important for this committee to have full visibility on the status of these open recommendations?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, I do, Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. That is why I, along with Senators Menendez, Rubio, and Coons, introduced legislation, S. 418, the Department of State and United States Agency for International Development Accountability Act of 2017.

Mr. Sullivan, once confirmed, do you commit to providing, as this legislation asks that we do, providing to this committee and to my office without delay detailed written unclassified updates regarding the status of all open GAO recommendations for the Department of State?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Senator Young, if confirmed, yes, I do.

I took GAO reports, IG reports, very seriously when I was Deputy Secretary at Commerce, and I will do so as Deputy Secretary of State, if confirmed.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. And further, for any recommendations State has decided to adopt, will you provide a timeline for implementation and an explanation for any delay?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Of course, Senator. I will consider that part of our interaction with you and members of this committee.

Senator YOUNG. And for those recommendations State has decided not to implement or fully implement, will you provide a detailed justification, sir?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Certainly.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

I have a bit of remaining time here. In your prepared statement, you mentioned the 1979 seizure of our Embassy in Tehran and the assassination of Ambassador Spike Dubs in Afghanistan. On March 9, the IG for the Department of State Steve Linick testified before the State and Foreign Ops Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. In his written testimony, the IG cited systemic issues in the department related to physical security measures. The IG cited a lack of coordination and an inability to track and prioritize physical security needs.

More than 4.5 years after the terrorist attack in Benghazi at our diplomatic facility, and with the events of 1979 in mind, would you agree that the Department of State can and must do better when it comes to physical security and emergency action plans at our posts overseas?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Senator, I would have no higher priority, if confirmed as Deputy Secretary of State, then to protect our men and women that we send abroad on our behalf.

Senator YOUNG. Have you reviewed this IG testimony, sir?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I have not, but will make that a priority, if confirmed.

Senator YOUNG. That was my follow-up. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. You agreed to a lot a couple questions back. Let me just ask you, do you have any sense of the contours of the top-to-bottom review that is taking place and any sense of what type of realignments might take place within the State Department?

Mr. SULLIVAN. In my discussions with the Secretary, he has made clear that he has no preconceived ideas on what the outcome should be. He has started this interaction with all the employees of the department to get their feedback and their input. I look forward to working with him on that.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any sense of when that will be complete?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I have not spoken to the Secretary about that, but my goal would be to have it completed as quickly as humanly possible.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that having any impact, from what you can tell, on appointing Assistant Secretaries and other positions there?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am not involved in the selection process now. My perception as an outsider is that any slowness in making appointments is not related to the review of the department's mission and its structure that is ongoing.

I commit, if I am confirmed, to making sure that those personnel appointments are moved forward as quickly as possible.

The CHAIRMAN. My sense is they have actually selected most of those positions prior to you being there. That is my sense, and they are going to be forthcoming soon.

But you do not have any sense of when the top-to-bottom review will be complete and you will have a layout as to how the new State Department, if you will, is going to function?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I have not spoken to the Secretary about the timing of what he thinks the timing should be. We have talked about the mechanics and the process that he is going through. I have not had that conversation with him yet, but I look forward to it and to also working with you and members of this committee on making sure that that review is done as expeditiously as possible.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to pick up on that line of questioning.

First, thank you for your willingness to serve. I really enjoyed our meeting together. Your resume is impressive, your willingness to come back into government to serve the country that you love.

To be honest, your resume is maybe not the one that we had expected to receive for this position. We have a President who has no diplomatic experience, a Secretary of State who has no diplomatic experience. While you have extensive experience running the operations of government, you do not have direct diplomatic experience either. So these questions about the reorganization of the department, which I assume you will be riding herd over, are really critical given the fact that, I think as you have acknowledged, you are unlikely to be sent out around the world as a frontline diplomat, given that your responsibilities will largely be in helping to run the operations of a very large department.

So you took this job understanding that there was a reorganization that was going to be undertaken. I think you have done a good job articulating what you think the core mission of the State Department is. But this reorganization is done under the principle that the State Department has departed from the core mission. That is what the Secretary of State has said, and his belief is that we need to get back to the core mission.

So explain to me your view of how the State Department has departed from its core mission, thus necessitating this reorganization.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I would characterize it, Senator Murphy—first of all, thank you for our discussion yesterday. I very much enjoyed it.

I think the world has changed in the 21st century, and our State Department and the way it is organized has not changed. The Defense Department has, in my experience in government, has reorganized several times in the same time frame in which the State Department has not.

Let me give you an example of an area where I think we need to focus on management issues, and that is the intersection of our regional bureaus, which we need to have, obviously, and the functional bureaus that have been created and multiplied over time as issues have arisen. I think the interconnection between those two, and to make sure that they are united in promoting our common interests on national security and economic prosperity, is an area where we really need to focus.

So it is not so much that—I think the world has changed. We have added functional bureaus, for example, as issues have arisen, but we have not integrated our approach to this new world with new technologies, new means of communication, new threats, transnational threats that are much different from the world that existed, say, in the mid-1990s.

Senator MURPHY. So I agree. I think that is exactly the problem. The world has changed, and while we have seen some of our adversaries beef up their military capacity, what has really changed is the panoply of nonmilitary threats or at least threats that are not conventional military threats that are presented to the United States—disease, epidemics, famines, online terrorist organizations recruiting lone-wolf attackers, global warming, creeping corruption.

And yet what worries me is that, given the fact that the world has changed and all of these nonmilitary threats have multiplied, this reorganization essentially has been predetermined by a President who has called for a 30 percent reduction in the capacity of the State Department while calling for a $50 billion investment in the Department of Defense.

So given the fact that the world has changed, and I think you would agree that the number of nonmilitary threats presented to the United States has multiplied, how can you take on a job of reorganization, which you have said is not prejudged in its outcome, given the fact that the United President of the United States, your boss and Secretary Tillerson's boss, is commanding you to conduct that reorganization through a means that results in thousands of layoffs and dramatic cuts to the department? How is the outcome here not predetermined that the reorganization is essentially just an excuse to slash and burn the department?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Well, Senator, I would repeat that the outcome from the Secretary's perspective is not preordained.

For example, on job cuts that you mentioned, I know from speaking to the Secretary, there is no decision made on, despite what has been reported in the press on particular numbers of job cuts and so forth, what the Secretary has undertaken is a review of the mission of the department to make sure that the workflow, the work product of that department, meets those missions and we are orga-

nized in a way to accomplish those missions in the most efficient and accountable way possible, and that is my commitment to you, Senator.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much. Again, I really appreciate your willingness to serve. This is a very tough job, but your willingness to continue to talk to us gives me confidence that we can build on the conversations we have had.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could, personally, I think having top-to-bottom reviews are good things for everyone. I will say the reason that the State Department is being cut by 30 percent in this initial budget is that the real drivers of our deficits are unwilling to be looked at. So the administration, appears to me, is looking at a department that many people around America believe does not spend its money well. For some reason, Americans think we spent 25 percent of our money on aid and other diplomacy efforts when we spend 1 percent.

I think we have done a pretty good job recently causing people to understand the importance of this, and fortunately, our military generals have done the same. However, I do think it is incumbent on all of us to not just make sure we are spending the dollars well, and certainly food aid and reform and those kinds of things should be undertaken, but I think as a committee to point out that, to the extent that we do not carry out these activities, our men and women in uniform that we respect and admire are more likely going to be in harm's way. I think we have done a pretty good job of that recently.

But let's face it, the skinny budget came out because this administration, nor Congress, is willing to deal with the major drivers of deficits. It was a way of looking as if we were addressing deficits when we are really not. That is what is happening here, and I think it is incumbent on us to understand that is what is happening.

Senator Paul?

Senator PAUL. Congratulations on your nomination, and welcome.

There has been some discussion of sort of whether or not diplomacy or our country's policies—and the spreading of human rights and somehow the vanquishing of human rights abusers around the world is our policy, or whether it should be more realistic. There have been many voices saying it really needs to be the preeminent part of our foreign policy to vanquish those human rights abusers.

But I guess while we are all for that, and while we are all for the notion that we wish there were not these human rights abuses around the world, sometimes I think that that policy leads to unintended consequences.

So, for example, was Colonel Qaddafi a human rights abuser? I do not probably think there is any question he probably was. Would we wish there would be someone better involved in running Libya? Yes. But after his negotiating away his nuclear weapons, there are some ramifications that we are still living with. The West toppled him anyway.

The message that sent to North Korea and the message that sent to Iran was, you know what? If you get rid of your nuclear weapons, you may well be toppled by the West.

So I guess my question to you is, in balancing sort of the realism of how the world is and how we see it with human rights, would you say that there were unintended consequences of toppling Qaddafi in Libya?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Absolutely, Senator. I think we are seeing them on a daily basis.

Senator PAUL. The same would go with regard to Iraq. Hussein was accused of gassing the Kurds, using chemical weapons. We have had another incident of that now. So everybody would say Hussein was a terrible person we should get rid of. The problem is it also led to unintended consequences.

I think now the same people who wanted to get rid of Hussein now want to get rid of the Government of Iran, and Iran is emboldened because of the counterbalance of Iraq being gone.

So to every action there is a reaction, an unintended one. I think that it is important that we have people involved in the State Department who understand that your job, as I see it, is diplomacy not war. That does not say we do not have military might and that we do not have the expression of that and the potential threat of that. But we have plenty of voices for that.

My hope is that yours will be a voice for diplomacy and that you recognize that is your role or the job description or part of it, other than the management of the State Department, is that the State Department, in general, is supposed to be about diplomacy.

If you could comment on sort of the role of the State Department and diplomacy in general terms, I would appreciate it.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Certainly. Thank you, Senator Paul.

Yes, I think that is emphatically the mission of the State Department. I think our Secretary of Defense, Secretary Mattis, would agree with that.

I was originally nominated to work for Secretary Mattis at the Defense Department. I have a fundamentally different job at the State Department, fundamentally different mission, which I am committed to.

With respect to our most recent discussions, I think that concerns about the use of military force in forcing regime change, for example, are very serious concerns. Use of military force should only be as a last resort when our national interests, our vital national interests, are at stake. But there is no diminution of our commitment to our fundamental values as Americans on which our foreign policy, our diplomacy that you and I agree should be at the heart of what we do, is based.

Senator PAUL. He and I agree. I think that is the point in the discussion of realism versus human rights. We should never shy away from saying and representing and being the symbol of freedom and liberty around the world, and justice. But at the same time, if we as our foreign policy say we are going to topple every regime that has human rights abuse, we will be at war with about 50 countries right now, and the unintended consequences, one of bankrupting the country, but two of getting us involved in wars for

which we have no answer and there is no end, would be interminable.

So I think the overall debate on realism, and many have tried to sort of cast aspersions on Tillerson's comments, but I think he was recognizing that there is a balance. We never give up on what we stand for and that we are this shining right as a free nation, but we also do not need to be naive enough that we think that we are somehow the descendants of Wilsonian "let's make the world safe for democracy." If we are unwilling to look at the ramifications of our involvement around the world and particularly getting involved in another war in Yemen, whether it will be better or worse for us. I have cautioned that, in Yemen, I have a fear that we get involved in a war that both sides are beaten down and Al Qaeda shows up the way same way that ISIS showed up in Syria, ready to pick up the pieces of the chaos there. And if we do not think that through in advance and do not think that there has to be a diplomatic arm to our government, that we are making a big mistake.

But I wish you well, and I hope you will be one of the same voices for diplomacy.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Merkley?

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for placing yourself forward for this responsibility.

I wanted to ask you about the Paris Agreement that is under discussion right now. A tremendously high percentage of the world's governments have joined up for voluntary commitments to try to address the issue of carbon pollution and its impact on a warming planet.

The question is, should we be in or out? A thousand companies have weighed in with the State Department to say we should be in, including oil companies ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips. What do you think? Should we be in the Paris Agreement? Should we stay in or otherwise?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator Merkley.

I understand that there is an ongoing discussion within the administration and within the interagency on continued participation in the Paris Agreement. There are complex issues, as you know better than I, including legal issues with respect to Article 4.11 and so forth.

I have not been involved in those discussions, but what I would say to you, Senator, is my view as a general matter is that the United States is best served and its interests protected when it has a seat at the table, as a general matter.

Not with respect to the Paris Agreement, I have not been involved in the discussions. I know that they are ongoing, but that is my general approach, Senator.

Senator MERKLEY. That is the point that the Secretary of State has made, the point that he is arguing, that we should keep a seat at the table. In keeping a seat at the table, since the agreements are nonbinding, we can either seek to uphold the pledges that we made or we can ignore those. If we do stay at the table, should we seek to honor the pledges we made for reducing our carbon dioxide production?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I understand that there is both a policy and a legal component to that question, Senator. I have not been involved in the discussions on that and have not studied those issues in sufficient detail to provide you with a definitive answer today. I would be happy, if confirmed, to focus and to participate in that discussion with you personally, if confirmed.

Senator MERKLEY. Let me turn to North Korea. We have had statements coming out of the administration from different individuals, some arguing that primarily military pressure is going to make the difference, and we have the carrier strike group positioned off North Korea. We have others saying that the pressure from China is going to make the difference. We have others saying that we are laying the ground for negotiations.

All of this creates a wide space for potential miscommunication, which could lead to events spiraling out of control. Should it be the State Department that is taking the lead in creating a clear, consolidated message to avoid misunderstandings?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, Senator. I think that is the primary function of the State Department, the Secretary of State, is to be the President's principal foreign policy adviser and spokesperson on U.S. foreign policy.

Having said that, I think the Secretary's approach to North Korea, and he has been very clear about this, is that our goal is to have a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. That is our objective, and we are going to use all the means at our disposal, our national power, to accomplish that, in working with allies, partners, and others, and in using and having as an option the use of other means at our disposal at the Defense Department.

Senator MERKLEY. The administration has been very complimentary of China, and China is applying pressure. That pressure has been directed more, however, to stop what they refer to as provocative acts, that is missile tests and nuclear tests, than denuclearization.

Is China on board with the vision that America has of denuclearizing North Korea?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I have not been involved in those discussions, Senator. I really know only what I read in the news media. But my understanding is that there has been positive feedback from the Chinese giving us hope that, as the Secretary has described it, leaning in on the Chinese and really trying to convince them how important it is for us and for them that the Korean Peninsula be denuclearized, it gives us some basis for, I will not say optimism, but at least for going forward with this policy.

Senator MERKLEY. Daniel Runde was before the committee and he was noting—he is from the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He had a lot of concerns about USAID being merged with the State Department because USAID's vision for assistance is a longer term vision while often diplomatic circumstances require a vision of 6 months to 2 years versus a 10- to 20-year vision.

Should USAID be brought under the more direct influence of the short-term diplomatic mission?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I know that that is a question that will be considered in the review that the Secretary has undertaken. I would say,

Senator Merkley, that I have met with virtually every former Deputy Secretary of State to discuss this and other issues. I understand both the cultural and policy differences between AID and the Foreign Service. In some ways, it reminds me of the differences when I was at Commerce between our scientists at NOAA who do climate science, which is longer term, and the weather scientists who are focused on short-term weather. I understand that difference in the AID, State foreign policy context.

So I would look forward to working with you and members of the committee as we consider the best way forward to implement our foreign aid policy in a way that promotes U.S. objectives, protects our interests, and does so in an efficient way, understanding the unique role of AID, the culture of the agency, and the important role that its employees provide.

Senator MERKLEY. I will take that as at least a point that you understand the argument and the concern about diluting the vision and work of AID.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could give an editorial comment, I get the sense there is no beginning point that says they should be combined. That is not where people are starting. That may be where they finish, but just for what it is worth, I do not think that is where they are beginning.

Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Sullivan, thank you very much for your willingness to serve, and thank you to your family for your willingness to serve alongside as well. So thank you for being here.

Mr. Sullivan, do you believe in sustained and consistent American engagement around the globe?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, I do, Senator.

Senator GARDNER. What does that mean to you? What does "consistent and sustained engagement" mean to you?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Well, from the State Department's perspective, it means that we have a cadre of Foreign Service Officers, junior to senior, around the world representing U.S. interests, both on the national security sphere, political sphere, economics sphere, and we also have at our embassies foreign commercial service officers, whom I know well, who are employees of the Commerce Department, and when I was Deputy Secretary of Commerce worked very closely with them in promoting U.S. business interests abroad, protecting our U.S. companies doing business abroad.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you for that. I think the questions that Senator Murphy and Senator Young brought up about restructuring are important. Of course, when we talk about different bureaus, the East Asian Pacific Bureau, one of the most important bureaus around the globe that is dealing with a population that will soon be 50 percent of global population, the regional economy, which will soon be 50 percent of world GDP. Yet we have a bureau that is perhaps the lowest funded of all the bureaus around the globe.

So I hope we can pay additional attention, as we restructure the State Department to reflect priorities, I hope that we will increase our priorities on Asia and the regions represented, because, again,

it is where our treaty alliances reside, it is where the world's largest standing armies will reside, and it is where our trade is certainly growing and opportunities reside.

I want to talk a little bit about North Korea as well. If you look at China right now with North Korea, it was recently announced that China's trade with North Korea grew in the first quarter of this year by nearly 40 percent. Iron exports to China from North Korea grew by 270 percent. Imports in China from North Korea grew.

I met with Chinese officials, met with government officials. While there may be some positive signs over the past couple weeks that China is willing to implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions to a degree that they had not before, I was disheartened though in some of these meetings with Chinese officials that, when you have a long conversation about North Korea, their opinion seems to basically slide back into what it has been, and that is basically to allow North Korea to continue to develop a nuclear program with little pressure from China.

China controls 90 percent of North Korea's economy. It is responsible for 90 percent of North Korea's economy. If China is serious about holding bad actors responsible for those bad actions, we cannot, as the United States, allow China to backslide into a posture that does not hold Kim Jong Un responsible for his bad actions.

So I would hope that the State Department, Secretary Tillerson and yourself, would continue our pressure, abandonment of the failed strategic patience doctrine, and continue to apply pressure on the North Korean regime as well as China and other actors who are enabling the proliferation of North Korea's nuclear program.

Do I have your commitment that you will continue to push for pressure on China?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator GARDNER. And I hope that that includes fully utilizing, following through with the laws that this Congress has passed under the North Korea sanctions act last year, unanimous last Congress, unanimous approval, bipartisan support, for a bill that says, if somebody is violating our actions, there is the mandatory investigation and mandatory placement of sanctions on that entity, be it in China, be it in North Korea or anywhere around the globe.

Do I have your commitment that you will work with us to make sure that those laws are fully executed?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Certainly, Senator. The Secretary has made clear that we will use all of the legal and policy authorities that we have to, as he put it, turn the dial on the pressure on China to make sure that we are leaning in, I think was the Secretary's expression, on China, leaning on China more than we ever have to make clear how important this is to the United States.

Senator GARDNER. I hope that in your interactions with Chinese officials, that you will make North Korea the highest priority possible because this concern that China will continue to slide back into its own doctrine of patience with North Korea.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, Senator.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

And if you could report back to the committee, that would be truly critical.

Again, what I do not want to see is any kind of a softening of our approach toward our allies or other nations around the globe to try to make China happy because we think they are going to take action against North Korea. Until they show that sustained commitment to pressuring North Korea, we should not be avoiding—news reports today cite that we may be forgoing a sale of arms to Taiwan. I do not know if that is true. I do not know if Taiwan has asked for that sale to be carried through or followed through. But I do not think that we should be forgoing that kind of a sale of defense equipment to Taiwan because we think China is going to suddenly change their behavior on North Korea, because they have not proven that it is going to be a sustained and consistent commitment to North Korea denuclearization.

If you could talk a little bit about cybersecurity and where you think the cybersecurity priority will be within the State Department, I would appreciate it.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Cybersecurity, we were talking about this earlier. The Russian hack of our election is an example of failed cybersecurity by the United States and the United States Government. Cybersecurity has to be one of our highest priorities at the Department of State and as an entire government.

My experience in government when I was at the Commerce Department was, because of our lack of cybersecurity—now, this was 12 years ago—all our systems were open to a number of different foreign governments, such that we had to create our own internal operating system to communicate among ourselves and prepare documents for the Secretary to send to the White House because we had so little confidence that our system we were using was not penetrated.

So cybersecurity is, for me, a very high priority.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Sullivan, for your willingness to take on this responsibility.

I just want to follow up a little bit on Senator Gardner's point about China. We had a hearing before the Armed Services Committee where experts testified that there are really only two things that the Chinese are going to respond to from the United States' perspective. One was whether we sanctioned their financial system in a way that meant doing business with North Korea would be a challenge for them. The other was that if they believed, truly believed, that there was the danger of war on the Korean Peninsula because of the statements from President Trump. So while I appreciate Secretary Tillerson's reassurances, there does not seem to be unanimous agreement on what is going to make China respond.

I want to go, however, to questions about reorganization at the State Department. I serve as ranking member on the subcommittee that is tasked with oversight of the State Department and USAID, along with Senator Isakson.

The department has not shared any information with me or with my colleague about what changes they are contemplating to the

State Department and to USAID. Do you think it would be helpful for Congress to have a role or to at least have an understanding of what the State Department is contemplating in terms of a reorganization?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, I do, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Would you then commit to sharing with this committee the plans once they are—I do not want to say finalized, because I think it would be helpful to engage this committee in understanding what you are thinking about, because there are years of experience on this committee that might be helpful in looking at some of the analysis that the department comes up with.

Mr. SULLIVAN. My experience in government, Senator, at the Justice, Defense, and Commerce Departments has been we have always been best served in the executive branch when we have consulted and coordinated with Members of Congress. In fact, as I was speaking to members of the minority staff yesterday, there have been occasions in my career in government when I have met with staff or members or Senators and had very productive conversations, gone back to my department and had people question, what were you thinking, going up to talk with those people?

And my experience has been that collaboration, coordination, it is a way to anticipate problems, eliminate issues before they become problems. Now, we have to protect executive privilege, as I understand it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Sure.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Look, there are legal issues and so forth, but as a general matter, Senator Shaheen, my view is the U.S. Government is at its strongest when there is cooperation and coordination between the branches of government, particularly those in Article One and Article Two.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I appreciate that, because, again, I know you have suggested that the reports are not correct that point to 2,300 people who are going to be let go at the department, and that USAID is going to be folded into State. But the lack of transparency, the lack of engaging people who are concerned about these issues is what leads to these kinds of reports, these kinds of concerns that you are hearing expressed today. So I would certainly hope that your point about engagement is one that you will follow.

Not only have we been a leader around the world because of our values, but we have also as a country been a leader in promoting the rights and empowerment of women and girls around the world. That has been a good investment because what we know is that women tend to give back 90 percent of what they earn to their families, to their communities, and, ultimately, to their countries. Men only give back 35 percent. So it has been a good investment.

I want to hear from you what steps you will take to ensure that we continue to support these global women's programs that I think have been so important, everything from child marriage to gender-based violence, to peace and security.

And one of the other rumors about restructuring at the State Department is that the Office of Global Women's Issues will be eliminated. Can you tell me what you know about that and what your commitment is to ensuring that these programs continue?

Mr. SULLIVAN. What I know about that, Senator Shaheen, is only what I see in the press. I am confident that no decisions have been made about whether that office or any particular office would be reorganized, eliminated, or anything done to it.

With respect to women's issues and women empowerment, Senator Cardin is smiling at me, and I feel as though I should put a paper bag over my head as I am sitting in front of all the women in my family behind me. But it is an extremely important issue to me, but it is important to Secretary Tillerson as well who has been quite forceful in his statements about the very points you have raised, Senator, about the investment in women, women's health, women's education, women's empowerment, pay dividends many times over than other ordinary programs.

So you have my commitment that that is something that will remain a priority of the department and, more importantly, the Secretary's commitment.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I appreciated the Secretary's talking about that and what he had seen in the private sector at his hearing. Then the next thing I saw was the report that the office was going to be eliminated.

So, again, a little transparency and engagement I think would go a long way in reassuring people about what the intent is of the restructuring at the State Department.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could follow up, is it transparency or lack of progress? Has anything actually occurred relative to the streamlining, based on what you know?

Mr. SULLIVAN. No decisions to my knowledge.

The CHAIRMAN. I am not talking about decisions.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Progress——

The CHAIRMAN. Has it even begun?

Mr. SULLIVAN [continuing]. Well, the Secretary's process of soliciting feedback from the employees has begun. His own staff's planning on these issues to tee up issues for his decisions, I believe, is underway. I have not participated in that, so I really do not have more definitive information for you.

The CHAIRMAN. I think it would be good for the committee to know where the process is right now. Mary Waters behind you is your sherpa. And I know, with your confirmation hearing, it is not the time for you to commit to what you—I do not think you really know what is underway. I think they probably have not talked to you much about it so you cannot answer these questions.

But, Mary, if you would, if you would get back with us this afternoon and share with us where you think that is? I know we have a committee meeting tomorrow afternoon at 5 with McMaster, and we could share it at that time. But I think, obviously, people would like to know.

Senator CARDIN. If I could just interject here just for one moment, this is what I wanted to come back to.

Several members have asked you that we be engaged in how the State Department handles reorganization, and you have been very forthcoming about the value of that type of working relationship between Members of Congress, this committee, and the State De-

partment. But I think the key point is that before decisions are made, it is important that that input be received.

There are members of this committee who are prepared to support decisions that could be perceived to be pretty controversial. But if we read about it being done, you are liable to develop a political backlash that will make it impossible for you to achieve what you are seeking to do.

So I would just urge you, at the earliest possible moment, to share information. It can be in an informal setting. We do not have to have formal hearings. But for us to understand your thinking and for you to get the benefit of our thinking as you are going through a reorganization at the State Department, to me, that is going to be critically important for the success of a reorganization.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witness. I enjoyed our visit.

Mr. Chair, I want to raise a concern at the start. We have a rule in this committee and I think generally that nominees should not presume confirmation, and it seems to go way beyond presuming confirmation to have a sign that says "Senator Sullivan" sitting there on the desk right next to this witness. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. I hope he does not live in Virginia.

Okay, now we will be serious. I did enjoy our visit.

One of the things that you said, Mr. Sullivan, when we were chatting was that you spent some time meeting with former State Department Deputy Secretaries as you kind of scope out what you might do. Share some takeaways from those meetings that you have learned from them that would be helpful to you, should you be confirmed.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Well, my immediate reaction to that question, Senator Kaine, is the passion that every one of those men and women, Republican, Democrat, have for the department and its employees, its Foreign Service Officers, its AID professionals, its civil servants. Everybody has enormous respect for the employees of the department.

I know this from my own personal experience, but it is gratifying to talk to people and to hear them tell me about what a treasure we have in the men and women at the Department of State. And the fact that I am going to be able to go there and work with them has energized me and is my biggest takeaway.

There have been a number of common concerns that have been brought up in my discussions. We talked about one of them today with respect to AID, concerns about morale issues at the department.

And in talking with Secretary Tillerson, what I have said to these former senior State Department officials, he has been quite emphatic in our discussions about how much he respects the men and women in the department and how helpful they have been to him.

So the universal theme is our biggest strength at the department is our people, and we have to utilize them and lead them in the best way possible.

Senator KAINE. Talk a little bit about, since you have had multiple management experiences in both the Federal public service and the private sector, I am really interested in this morale question. A huge number of our State Department professionals live in Virginia or have homes in Virginia when they are abroad. I meet them all over the world.

I think I told you, when I travel, I tend to meet with first and second tour FSO officers, and I always ask them the question, "Congratulations, you achieved something pretty major by getting this job. What will make you decide to make it a career versus so frustrated that you leave?" Then I just do not say anything else and I listen for an hour and a half.

I am worried about some of the morale issues. The budget proposals could raise additional morale issues. I know a lot of colleagues have already asked you about that. But in your role, how would you approach the management challenge of trying to assure people and create a high morale organization, which is ultimately going to be a higher productivity organization.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Senator, these are men and women who have dedicated their lives to public service and public service in dangerous places on our behalf. They are not in it for the money. They want to make a difference for the United States, for the world.

What they are looking for is leadership and leaders who engage with them, explain what we are about, what this reconceptualizing the department is about, as the Secretary has said, making their jobs worthwhile for them personally. It is not about paying them more money, although everybody would like more money. They are in it because they want to do right by the United States and they want to do right by their own moral compass and their work to help people around the world.

So providing that leadership, that they are involved in an enterprise that is doing good, that is protecting our interests and our values, that is the most important thing, and communicating that to them, not just letting them read about it in the paper but communicating it to them personally.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I will just ask about one kind of regional area that I like to focus on a lot, and that is the Americas. I think the U.S. in the last few years, the diplomacy involved with the Cuba deal, which was controversial but in my view has been a positive, the U.S. decision to diplomatically aid the peace negotiations in Colombia which have led to a ceasefire, the U.S. has played some important roles in diplomacy.

I think that we often spend a lot of our State Department time flying east-west around the globe and not enough time in State or Defense or other areas focusing north-south. To the extent that you have had conversations either with the Secretary or the administration, what could you tell us about areas of potential focus in the Americas at the State Department?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Senator. We spoke about this when we visited earlier. The principals always have their time chewed up with whatever the hot topic is today—another missile test in North Korea, some atrocity in Syria, problems in Eastern Ukraine. My concern, and I have discussed this with the Secretary—I discussed it with Secretary Mattis when I was under consideration to be the

general counsel of the Department of Defense—the United States needs to be able to walk and chew gum, for lack of a better term.

As we discussed, the Roosevelt administration was able to fight wars in the Atlantic and the Pacific, and you quickly pointed out, and build the United Nations all at the same time. We have to be able to address these crises but also keep our eye on important areas, whether it is Latin America or sub-Saharan Africa, so where just a little bit of effort by the United States can pay huge dividends. Meanwhile, we certainly have to keep our eyes on the high-profile national security priorities that are in the paper every day.

So my commitment to you is, as Deputy Secretary, I will make sure to do my best to make sure that those areas of the world where we have very important interests are not neglected while everybody is being spun up over today's headline.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. The record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday. There will be numbers of written questions, and I know that you will be ready to answer those promptly.

The CHAIRMAN. Short of something unusual happening, I have to tell you I look forward to very strongly supporting your nomination. I think you have acquitted yourself exceptionally well today. It is evident that, in your private meetings with members on both sides of the aisle, you have done the same there.

I really do believe that the experiences you have had in other departments and the professionalism that you have as an individual have equipped you to be an exceptional Deputy Secretary.

So we thank you for your willingness to serve, for your family's willingness to allow you to do something that we know is going to be a 7-day-a-week job, at least in the beginning, and probably all the way through.

With that, the meeting is over.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN SULLIVAN BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question 1. In recent years the cost of building new embassies and consulates has risen while the pace of completion has slowed significantly when compared to just a decade ago.

- Will you commit to streamlining our embassy construction process, evaluating the cost implications of using custom instead of standard designs, and investigate the management problems in the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations?

Answer. Yes. The Department of State's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations has a critical mandate to provide and maintain secure facilities for Department staff and other federal agencies serving overseas under chief of mission authority.

I am committed to ensuring that the Department's planning, design, and construction efforts will accomplish this critical mission. I am further committed to ensuring that we execute these projects efficiently and in accordance with industry best practices. We will provide the best value for the American taxpayer while constructing diplomatic facilities that prioritize security.

I am aware that the Department has faced management challenges, including in implementing our overseas buildings program. If confirmed, I am committed to working across the Department on this issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN SULLIVAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. If confirmed, will you commit to making sure the Department responds promptly to letters and other requests for information from members of the Foreign Relations Committee?

Answer. Yes.

Question 1. Will you commit to providing information to this committee if you become aware of emoluments from foreign governments or government-owned companies being directed to the President, his immediate family, or anyone else in the executive branch?

Answer. Yes.

Question 3. As Deputy Secretary, what concrete actions do you envision taking to stop the closing of space for civil society abroad?

Answer. The effects of closing civic space are felt across sectors, with humanitarian assistance providers, development practitioners, journalists, environmentalists, public interest lawyers, religious leaders, and others civic actors increasingly operating under threat.

In the United States, we have achieved economic success because of, not despite, our values. Our values expressed in the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution are the bedrock of our republic.

Should I be confirmed, I will work aggressively to advance human rights for everyone.

Question 4. How should the United States deal with a situation in a foreign country, as in Turkey, where there is concern on the part of credible independent bodies that there were irregularities in the vote on the referendum to hand the President broad powers, and in which the President did everything possible to silence the voices of those who attempted to question a "yes" vote?

Answer. For the United States, our values are the bedrock of our republic, and our greatest asset is our commitment to the fundamental values expressed at the founding of our nation. Therefore, we must ensure a foreign policy that is worthy of our ideals as a people, even when that means having honest but difficult conversations with allies, like Turkey, when there is a problem. The OSCE monitors, investigates, and reports on campaigns and elections in foreign countries, including Turkey, and will provide a report on problems and irregularities. This undertaking is very important, and I strongly support the difficult work of the OSCE election monitors. The United States looks to Turkey, a NATO ally and critical member of the international coalition to defeat ISIS, to protect the rights and freedoms of all citizens as guaranteed by the Turkish constitution and in accordance with Turkey's international commitments.

Question 5. Describe your view of the United Nations' role in the world, and of America's place in and partnership with the United Nations in reducing instability and reinforcing international norms.

Answer. The United Nations, created 71 years ago after the Second World War, is far from perfect. However, it remains important to U.S. national security interests. Even though the United States is the most powerful country in the world, we are more effective when we work multilaterally. Engagement in the U.N. multiplies our effectiveness and spreads the costs of international action.

We must continue to partner closely with the United Nations. But we also need to work simultaneously to reform the organization in a serious and meaningful way that brings it up to 21st century standards. As you know, the Trump administration is very focused on U.N. reform, particularly on U.N. peacekeeping, but also on U.N. budget, management, and development issues and on ending the disturbing anti-Israel bias that permeates much of the U.N. system.

Question 6. If confirmed, would you prioritize the promotion and protection of human rights and, if so, how?

Answer. As I told Senator Rubio, my wife and my mother-in-law's uncle, Jose Pujals, was a political prisoner in Cuba for over 27 years, so human rights are a personal issue for me. I made a commitment to you at the hearing that I will work

with civil society to promote and protect human rights. Among other things, the administration will use the Global Magnitsky Act. I am committed to making the State Department the preeminent force to protect American values and promote American values in the world. I will use a range of tools to work aggressively to advance human rights for everyone.

Question 7. Are you willing to use State's role in approving arms sales as leverage to achieve such progress?

Answer. If confirmed, I am willing to exercise State's authority to ensure arms sales are consistent with the foreign policy interests and values of the United States. As a part of every case-by-case review, and in accordance with law and policy, the decision to approve arms sales will take human rights into account.

Question 8. There is a growing body of evidence that poor governance—marked by high corruption and lack of government transparency—is a key driver of fragility and political instability in many parts of the world today.

- Can you tell this committee what concrete steps you will take, if confirmed, to promote good governance, anti-corruption and transparency efforts around the world?

Answer. Around the world, corruption saps economic growth, hinders development, harms American business competitiveness, destabilizes governments, and provides openings for dangerous groups to operate.

If confirmed, I will prioritize the importance of combatting corruption and promoting good governance and transparency through a variety of means, including private diplomacy, public statements, targeted visa bans and financial sanctions, and pressure in multilateral forums.

Question 9. Will you come before this committee for full, public hearings on the restructuring of State and USAID if major changes are proposed, prior to making such changes? What is your view on the proposed cuts to the State Department and foreign assistance budgets?

Answer. If confirmed, I will come before this committee for full, public hearings on the restructuring of State and USAID if major changes are proposed, prior to making such changes.

As Secretary Tillerson told the Department's workforce in a written letter, the State Department's budget request addresses the challenges to American leadership abroad and the importance of defending American interests and the American people. It acknowledges that U.S. engagement must be more efficient, that our aid must be more effective, and that advocating the national interests of our country must always be our primary mission. Additionally, the budget is an acknowledgment that development needs are a global challenge to be met not just by contributions from the United States, but through greater partnership with and contributions from our allies and others. The Secretary has initiated a process to draw a new budget blueprint that will allow us to shape a Department ready to meet the challenges that we will face in the coming decades. We will do this by reviewing and selecting our priorities, using the available resources, and putting our people in a position to succeed.

Question 10. What is your view on the current number of vacancies in critical State Department leadership positions? How soon can we expect to see nominees for Assistant Secretary positions?

Answer. As discussed during my confirmation hearing, I have not been involved in the selection process for nominees at the Department. However, my perception as an outsider is that any slowness in nominating individuals for positions is not related to the review of the Department's mission and structure that remains ongoing. Additionally, I committed in the hearing and recommit in writing, that if confirmed I will make sure that personnel vacancies are filled and nominations are moved forward as quickly as possible.

Question 11. What do you believe is the purpose and mission for U.S. international Development Assistance and how valuable do you believe U.S. development assistance is to the U.S. foreign policy and maintaining U.S. leadership in the world?

Answer. Development assistance plays a vital role in protecting U.S. national security by fostering stability, resolving conflict, responding to humanitarian crises, and ending infectious diseases. Our development assistance upholds America's moral leadership and advances our nation's ability to influence and shape world events consistent with U.S. interests and is an invaluable tool in our foreign policy toolkit. Our global engagement abroad depends on the day-to-day engagement and expertise of our development professionals at USAID, who promote resilient, demo-

cratic societies around the world through programs supporting agriculture, education, economic growth, and the rule of law.

Question 12. Do you believe that U.S. interests are better served by prioritizing Foreign Assistance to serve political and strategic ends as opposed to address real world needs?

Answer. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary of State, my foremost responsibility will be to implement the President's foreign policy vision under the guidance of the Secretary of State. In fulfilling the President's vision, it is clear that promoting U.S. national security objectives to protect the American people, fostering economic opportunities for the American people, and ensuring the Department's effectiveness and accountability to the U.S. taxpayer must be our primary considerations in our foreign policy and in prioritizing our limited resources. However, as Secretary Tillerson has clearly stated, putting "America first" does not mean that it comes at the expense of others—in fact, addressing "real world" needs and promoting U.S. interests are inextricably linked.

Question 13. Is hard power more effective than soft power in demonstrating and promoting U.S. values like respect for human rights including the rights of women and girls, democracy, good governance, and rule of law, and supporting free societies? How valuable is the promotion of these values to U.S. foreign policy and international engagement?

Answer. Our soft powers of development and diplomacy are critical in demonstrating and promoting U.S. values abroad. There has long been a tradition of U.S. engagement and assistance in support of democracy, human rights, good governance, the rights of women and girls, supporting free societies, and more. Our investment in these core values and principles safeguard our national security and foster global prosperity. These values are critical to our U.S. foreign policy and international engagement.

Question 14. Will you commit to maintaining USAID's independence and function?

Answer. This question will be considered in the review that the Secretary has undertaken. I have met with virtually every former Deputy Secretary of State to discuss this and other issues, and I understand the differences in both the culture and operational capacity between USAID and the State Department, as well as the distinct role they play in protecting our national security. If confirmed, I look forward to working with members of the committee and other partners as we consider the best way forward to implement our foreign assistance in a way that promotes U.S. objectives, protects our interests and does so in an efficient way, understanding the unique role of USAID, the culture of the agency, and the important role that its employees provide.

Question 15. What will you do to engage and draw on the Foreign and Civil servants in an effective way?

Answer. One of the most important components in leadership is listening to those whom you lead. If confirmed, I plan to meet with as many employees of the Department as I can on a regular basis, as I did when I was Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

As I mentioned to Senator Kaine in my confirmation hearing, Secretary Tillerson and all of the former Deputy Secretaries with whom I have met have told me of the tremendous resource we have in the women and men of the State Department. The best engagement with them will be for me to listen to them and communicate with them so that they feel invested in their work. The employees of the State Department, many of whom have decades of experience, have much to share and much to offer to the Department and to our great country.

Question 16. How will you ensure that you are developing the intellectual capital and policy ideas you need to shape and implement your foreign policy, and represent the Department in the interagency?

Answer. The best way to shape and implement our policies is to provide leadership to and receive input from our career Foreign Service, civil service and other employees, who the keepers of our most valuable intellectual capital. We should encourage robust policy discussions, which will support our mutual efforts to represent the State Department's perspective in interagency discussions.

Question 17. What are your ideas on how to ensure high morale among these dedicated public servants?

Answer. The men and women of the State Department are the most valuable component of the organization. Their desire to do what is right for the United States, and what is right by their own moral compass, is part of what makes them so special. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary to provide them

leadership and leaders who will engage with them, explain the mission and direction in which the organization is going, and, as the Secretary has said, make their jobs rewarding.

Additionally, I want to make sure that the men and women of the Department know that they are involved in an enterprise that is doing right by the American people and that is protecting our American interests and our American values. It is my goal to make sure these public servants continue to enjoy remarkable careers in service to their country.

Question 18. The Department of State has the difficult job of balancing foreign policy priorities and must have a voice in the provision of military assistance to foreign countries. We've seen a sustained effort over the last decade to reproduce and transfer State's security assistance responsibilities to the Department of Defense.

Will you reverse this indifference, and personally work in the interagency to defend the State Department's central role is the provision of US security assistance?

Answer. The Department has a crucial role in the provision of military assistance. Security assistance is a powerful tool that the United States can use to strengthen our alliances and partnerships around the world and mitigate threats that require a collective response—terrorism, organized crime, restraints on the freedom of navigation, and much more. But the United States must use security assistance in conjunction with the other pillar of foreign policy: diplomacy. It is the Department's job to ensure that our security assistance aligns with and advances U.S. goals in light of the broader diplomatic and defense relationship.

State must work hard to ensure that all security sector assistance—whether it be providing major munitions to Iraq, border security programs in Eastern Europe, maritime capacity building in Vietnam, or military justice programs in Mexico—strategically targets and advances our foreign policy objectives in the country we are working with and accounts for the broader regional and global context. The Department must work to ensure that any investments we make in foreign security forces advance both political and security purposes; that they account for the political balance between civil and military institutions in the recipient country; that they are based on mutual, enduring interests between our countries; and that they do not cause long-term unintended effects in the country or region.

At Secretary Tillerson and Secretary Mattis' direction, State and DoD are working closely together to optimize the full range of security sector assistance resources and achieve the best possible outcomes for U.S. national security and the American taxpayer. Strong State-DoD joint planning and program implementation is crucial in this regard. With your support, State will maintain a legislated and appropriated role in all U.S. foreign assistance, including that managed by other agencies. I also will personally defend the Department's central role in the provision of U.S. security assistance, including by ensuring that that the Department and DoD work closely and collaboratively on our respective foreign assistance programs.

Question 19. You stated during your confirmation hearing that the Russian Government poses a persistent and profound threat to representative democracy here at home and around the world, especially in Europe. What do you believe are the Russian Government's motivations and strategic objectives in interfering in the political processes of the United States and our allies and partners? What do you think can change their decision-making calculus and aggressive behavior?

Answer. Russia does not accept the post-Cold War settlement in Europe and is pushing back against it.

Our response is, and should continue to be, twofold. We must be clear-eyed about Russia's transgressions, frank in our dialogue with Russia, and resolute in raising the costs of their behavior, including the use of defense, diplomatic, and law-enforcement tools. We must also continue to build the resilience of the countries on Russia's periphery with a whole-of-government approach that includes working with allies, partners, and institutions such as NATO and the EU.

Question 20. You also stated during your confirmation hearing that the United States should "be robust in our response to this intrusion into our democracy." In a classified or unclassified form, please describe the specific steps that the State Department is currently taking to address the threat posed by the Russian Government. Specifically, what is the State Department's strategy for countering Russian malign-influence operations around the world?

Answer. I understand that the U.S. strategy is to work with the host governments of targeted countries to identify such operations and respond appropriately, largely through non-military means such as intelligence cooperation and law-enforcement, coordinated through the interagency.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the members of this committee on this extremely important issue and to providing more information once I have become fully engaged.

Question 21. Please describe how State Department personnel working to counter the Russian Government's malign influence operations coordinate their work both within the department (across offices and bureaus) and throughout the interagency. Do you believe that the current level of coordination is sufficient and, if not, what can be done to improve coordination?

Answer. I understand that the State Department personnel working on this issue coordinate their work across geographic and functional offices, and through standing interagency working groups at the deputy assistant secretary level and above. My understanding is that they rely on reporting from our embassies in the region and incorporate them into the process, also ensuring that their reporting is shared across the Government.

Because I am not in the Department yet, I simply do not have enough information to know how best to enhance the coordination that is already occurring. However, in the broader context, I know the Secretary is looking at all of the State Department's operations to identify ways to improve their effectiveness. If confirmed, I will assist in this endeavor.

Question 22. Please describe how State Department personnel working to counter the Russian Government's malign influence operations coordinate their work with allied and partner governments, especially in Europe, that are the targets of these operations. Do you believe that the current level of coordination is sufficient and, if not, what can be done to improve coordination?

Answer. I understand that there has been increasing interest by allies and other partners in Russia's new challenge to the post-Cold War order generally and in Russian malign influence operations in particular. I understand they believe this coordination has increased the effectiveness of the State Department's approach.

Because I am not in the Department yet, I simply do not have enough information to know how best to enhance the coordination that is already occurring. However, in the broader context, I know the Secretary is looking at all of the State Department's operations to identify ways to improve their effectiveness. If confirmed, I will assist in this endeavor.

Question 23. In addition to our military power, what tools does the US have at its disposal to pursue our interests in Afghanistan?

Answer. The United States has a broad set of civilian assistance programs and resources to foster stability and ensure Afghanistan is a reliable and resilient partner, and that directly contribute to the achievement of our national security objectives. Civilian assistance programs have improved health and education, facilitated private sector development, boosted government capacity, improved Afghanistan's strategic communications to counter violent extremism, and challenged the corrosive effects of corruption and the narcotics trade. Afghanistan remains one of the largest recipients of U.S. civilian foreign aid. This investment has had an impact and has leveraged additional resources from other donors on a roughly two-to-one basis.

The United States also has a robust public diplomacy program to support Afghan efforts to combat extremist messaging that has helped build the capacity of Afghanistan's independent media—an essential pillar of representative and accountable government.

Finally, the United States has been active diplomatically, helping Afghanistan build its political institutions over the last 15 years, helping to promote political stability and development, and working with Afghan leaders to build international and regional support for stability in Afghanistan and for a negotiated settlement to the conflict with the Taliban.

All of these activities have contributed to the stability of the Afghan Government, a government that stands with us in fighting terrorism and violent extremism.

Question 24. What are your plans to leverage U.S. status in institutions like NATO, the OSCE, and Council of Europe to pursue U.S. national interests?

Answer. I understand the United States can use its membership in NATO and the OSCE to create a force multiplier effect to support our security policy in Europe. At NATO, this would include leveraging the deployment of one U.S battalion as part of NATO's enhanced forward presence to generate the deployment of three Allied battalions to the Baltic States. The United States can work with Allies to maintain NATO's policy of deterrence and dialogue towards Russia. At the OSCE, we will continue to support the monitoring mission in Ukraine, seek the implementation of the Minsk accords, and in the OSCE's tradition of a broad approach to security, push for progress on a range of human rights issues. The United State can cooperate with

the Council of Europe, where we are an observer state, and where the stated aim is to uphold human rights, democracy and rule of law.

Question 25. Past Deputy Secretaries, notably your immediate predecessor, took a particular interest in forging and implementing US policy in the Asia-Pacific region, and the US-China relationship in particular. What is your vision for the future US-China relationship?

Answer. The last several decades of political and economic reforms have brought monumental changes to the way in which China interacts with the outside world. Rather than opposing China's rise, if confirmed, I would echo the administration's overarching goal of bringing China's behavior in line with internationally accepted rules and order.

The Trump administration also wishes to have a positive, results-oriented, mutually beneficial relationship with China. As part of that, the Trump administration wishes to put America first by ensuring that American interests are safeguarded in all aspects of our relationship with China.

If confirmed, I would work to improve the relationship the United States has with China, seeking to make positive progress in areas such as economics and trade, law enforcement, and counterterrorism, while at the same time promoting American values like human rights. If confirmed, I will engage frankly and constructively on areas of disagreement.

Question 26. In your view, are there any options for a genuine and lasting peace that do not include a two-state solution?

Answer. President Trump has made it clear that it is a top priority for him to work towards achieving peace throughout the Middle East, including a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement that would end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Any peace settlement ultimately has to be the product of direct negotiations between the parties, and both sides must agree. We can help, and support progress towards a peace deal—and the President is determined to do so—but we can't impose a solution on the Israelis and Palestinians. Nor can one side impose an agreement on the other.

Question 27. Is U.S. policy the pursuit of a two-state solution?

Answer. President Trump has made it clear that he supports whatever solution the parties, both the Israelis and Palestinians, can live with. The administration is not casting aside the two-state solution. It still remains a possibility if both parties agree that a two-state solution is their preferred approach, and in such an event the President will strongly support them in moving towards that goal. This is not our choice to make, it is theirs to make together.

Question 28. On April 18th the Trump administration certified that Iran is in compliance with its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, but raised concerns about Iran's role as a state sponsor of terrorism. Secretary Tillerson announced that the administration is undergoing an interagency review of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that will evaluate whether suspension of sanctions related to Iran pursuant to the JCPOA is vital to the national security interests of the United States.

- In your assessment of current U.S, efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, are there options other than the JCPOA which can maintain international commitment and pressure on Iran?

Answer. The President has ordered a review of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which is part of a broader review of Iran policy and U.S. strategy in the Middle East. While this review is underway, it is my understanding that the administration is insisting on strict implementation by Iran of the terms of the JCPOA. At the same time, the United States will continue to fulfill its JCPOA commitments. I understand the review is comprehensive and covers all aspects of the JCPOA. Furthermore, even as the review continues, the United States will keep working closely with Israel, our Gulf allies, and other partners to combat Iranian support for terrorism and counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region. The United States will also continue to use authorities outside the scope of the JCPOA, including authorities available to designate entities and individuals involved in Iran's ballistic missile program, its support for terrorism, and human rights abuses. This includes the February 3 designations of 25 individuals and entities involved in Iran's destabilizing activities, including persons and entities connected to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), as well as persons and entities involved in Iran's ballistic missile program. On March 17, the Trump administration also designated two individuals for terrorism-related activities. This was followed by sanctions on 11 individuals and entities under nonproliferation authorities on March 21 for their support for Iran's ballistic missile program. Finally, on April 13, the ad-

ministration designated an individual and entity involved in Iran's abuses of human rights.

Question 29. On April 18th the Trump administration certified that Iran is in compliance with its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, but raised concerns that Iran's role as a state sponsor of terrorism. Secretary Tillerson announced that the administration is undergoing an interagency review of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that will evaluate whether suspension of sanctions related to Iran pursuant to the JCPOA is vital to the national security interests of the United States.

Is U.S. compliance with its obligations pursuant to the JCPOA in the U.S. national security interest?

Answer. The President has ordered a review of the JCPOA, which is part of a broader review of Iran policy and U.S. strategy in the Middle East. While this review is underway, I understand the administration will insist on strict implementation by Iran of the terms of the JCPOA. At the same time, the administration has been clear it will continue to fulfill JCPOA commitments.

Question 30. For the last six years, the United States has sought to bring an end to the conflict in Syria. The House of Representatives is considering legislation to encourage prosecution of war crimes in Syria and to sanction foreign entities that support the Government of Syria's slaughter of the Syrian people.

- What are your views on the efficacy of new sanctions in this context?

Answer. De-escalating the conflict in Syria is a top priority for this administration. I understand the administration is committed to working toward a credible political resolution to this conflict. Accountability is an integral part of any lasting political resolution as defined by the 2012 Geneva Communique and U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254. As a result of the recent actions of the regime, notably the April 4 sarin attack, the United States designated 271 employees of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Center, the organization responsible for the Assad regime's chemical weapons program. These designations send a strong message that the United States holdsthe entire Assad regime accountable for the barbaric use of chemical weapons in Syria, a blatant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and U.N. Security Council Resolution 2118.

The United States has also targeted sanctions on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its Ministry of Intelligence and Security for their support to the Assad regime. This was a coordinated effort with the international community toward ways to limit Iran's efforts to resupply the Assad regime with the means to perpetuate its brutality against the Syrian people. I cannot speculate about future potential designations, though broadly, the administration will continue to apply pressure to the Assad regime by targeting the Government, its ability to generate revenue, its attempts to advance its chemical weapons programs, as well as its human rights abuses.

Although the latest round of U.S. sanctions are designed to discourage the Assad regime from using chemical weapons, the regime continues to target civilian and medical facilities since the April 4 sarin attack, and is unlikely to deviate from its use of indiscriminate bombardment absent increased pressure from Russia.

I understand the administration appreciates the authorities Congress has granted to sanction both the Assad regime and individual officials. The United States intends to press the regime to the full extent allowed under those authorities, which have provided the tools necessary to stand against Assad's atrocities.

Question 31. What pressure do you think the State Department could use to get the parties to be more serious about ending the violence?

Answer. I've learned the United States recently attended the May 3–4 Astana Conference as an observer. At this meeting, the ceasefire guarantors—Iran, Russia, and Turkey—agreed to work together to create de-escalation zones. The United States hopes this arrangement can contribute to a de-escalation of violence in Syria, ensure unhindered humanitarian access, and set the stage for a political settlement of the conflict. In light of the failures of past arrangements, there is reason to be cautious. Russia in particular can be pressed to act as genuine ceasefire guarantor and to persuade Iran to do the same.

In Geneva, U.N.-led political negotiations are slated to resume May 16. Foreign parties, including the United States, are not formal participants; but will stay in close contact with the U.N. and the Syrian opposition as they take part in the talks. The United States has urged the opposition to take a strategic and constructive approach to both these processes. De-escalation and an inclusive political process to resolve Syria's future is the only path forward to ending this conflict and supporters

of the belligerents have a unique responsibility to incentivize the belligerents to de-escalate the violence.

Question 32. Do you believe that Assad has a place in Syria's future?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson has maintained a consistent position on the fate of Assad. The Secretary believes that a lasting peace in Syria ultimately means a Syria without Assad. The United States remains committed to a political resolution which can bring about a more representative and peaceful Syria. The United States believes there is a need to de-escalate the violence in Syria and to have an inclusive political process through which Syrians will decide their own political future and al-Assad's role, consistent with the principles enshrined in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254 and the Geneva Communique. The United States believes that once Syrians are afforded the chance to decide for themselves without coercion and with full participation, it is very likely they will chart a course for their country's future with new, credible leadership. It is my understanding that the administration has never said that we believe Bashar al-Assad is an appropriate or credible leader for Syria, or that the country will see peace as long as he is in power. Assad's regime has perpetrated war crimes and grievous violations of human rights over the past six years. It is not possible to imagine a peaceful, stable Syria led by Bashar al-Assad.

Question 33. The May 2nd readout of President Trump's phone call with Russian President Putin noted that their conversation included "discussion of safe, or de-escalation, zones to achieve a lasting peace for humanitarian and many other reasons." Then on May 4th in Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkey signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of four "zones of de-escalation" in Syria.

- Will the Turkey-Russia agreement inform U.S.-Russian discussions on safe zones in Syria?

Answer. Russia, Iran, and Turkey, the Astana guarantors, agreed May 4 to work together to create four "de-escalation zones" in greater Idlib, northern Homs, Eastern Ghouta, and "certain parts of southern Syria." The arrangement has not yet been approved by the Syrian Government and armed opposition groups. Secretary Tillerson has stated publicly the goal is to foster interim areas of stability in Syria and, separately, to stabilize areas liberated from ISIS. When ISIS is cleared from particular areas, these regions can stabilize, so that displaced families may return to their homes. This means supporting critical projects like de-mining and ensuring these communities have water and basic necessities.

The May 4 proposal that Russia drafted, and that the Astana guarantors—Russia, Turkey, and Iran—accepted, calls for the establishment of four de-escalation zones in areas controlled by the Syrian opposition. While there are problematic elements of the Astana agreements, the United States nevertheless support any effort that can genuinely de-escalate the violence in Syria, ensure unhindered humanitarian access, focus energies on the defeat of ISIS and other terrorists, and create the conditions for a credible political resolution of the conflict.

Question 34. What are the other reasons' for establishing safe zones, as noted in the May 2 White House read out?

Answer. If ceasefires hold and areas of Syria become more stable, there may be a better environment for serious political negotiations. That is something we all want, so the United States calls on Russia and all parties to fulfill their ceasefire commitments through the Astana process. The regime systemically blocks aid to people in need in areas of Syria where opposition control. The United States supports the language in the Astana de-escalation agreement that calls for unhindered access to humanitarian assistance to people in need. The United Nations should determine the needs of distressed and besieged communities, and that all parties should cooperate fully to grant the U.N. unhindered access to such areas. The Astana guarantors should press the regime to abandon its tactic of obstructing access to food and humanitarian assistance as a weapon of war.

Question 35. Will you commit to provide Congress with a briefing on the funding, authorities, personnel requirements, and objectives of establishing safe zones in Syria?

Answer. The administration continues to explore how to best support the de-escalation of the Syrian civil war and if confirmed I will commit to providing appropriate congressional committees with a briefing. It is my understanding that the administration avoids the use of the term "safe zones" or "no fly zones" or "zones," as these terms suggest a militarily-enforced no-fly zone. Rather than trying to create such a zone, which would pull resources from the D-ISIS campaign, the United States is trying to capitalize on stabilized conflict lines to de-escalate the conflict in various parts of the country—effectively cementing ceasefires and, lowering the level of violence, so that humanitarian assistance can reach civilians in need. When the fight-

ing has stopped and civilians receive humanitarian relief and basic services in areas throughout Syria, there will be a better environment for a serious discussion of Syria's political future.

Question 36. It is my understanding that U.S. and Iraqi officials are currently discussing a follow-on mission for U.S. forces in Iraq, after the defeat of ISIS. However, I am concerned that Iraq will remain perpetually unstable and susceptible to ISIS' successor if Iraq's leaders do not come together in a national program of inclusive governance and reconciliation.

- What conditions should the U.S. insist on if we are going to shoulder the cost and risk of keeping forces in Iraq?

Answer. Defeating ISIS and ensuring that it cannot reconstitute is a core national security priority of the United States. The ISF, including Kurdish Peshmerga, are bravely leading this fight, taking the vast majority of the casualties, and slowly but surely pushing ISIS out of Iraq. More than 63 percent of the territory ISIS once held is now back under Iraqi control and not a single liberated community has fallen back under ISIS control. At the invitation of the Government of Iraq, the United States has played a supporting, but critical, role in helping the ISF achieve a nearly two-year run of unbroken victories in Tikrit, Ramadi, Sinjar, Fallujah, Hit, Bayji, Rutbah, Qayarrah, and soon Mosul. Nevertheless, ISIS remains a brutal foe that is a threat to the United States and our partners in the region and Europe; it is clearly in the interest of the United States to defeat ISIS and to remain engaged with our partners to ensure the group cannot reemerge.

President Trump and Prime Minister Abadi made it clear during Abadi's March visit to Washington that they looks forward to building a post-ISIS security and economic partnership in Iraq. Continued U.S. security partnership will help Iraq to develop the forces needed to prevent threats to Iraqi sovereignty and a resurgence of terrorist activity, helping to ensure our gains against ISIS are lasting. It is in the interests of both the United States and Iraq to develop this post-ISIS partnership. I share your concerns about instability in Iraq and the potential for continued terrorism, even after ISIS no longer controls territory. This is all the more reason why the United States should remain engaged with our Iraqi partners—we, and they, must not fight the same war again. The administration agrees that Iraqi leaders need to do more to improve governance and address unresolved issues to better meet the needs of the Iraqi people. The decentralization program, which helps bring responsibility for government services closer to local communities, is one example of these efforts. The United States will continue to work with a wide range of Iraqis across the political spectrum and civil society to advance this agenda. As a starting point, the United States considers stabilizing areas liberated from ISIS a key component in ensuring that displaced communities, primarily Sunnis and ethnic minorities, are able to return home in dignity and with greater autonomy from the central government to manage their affairs. These grassroots efforts to promote reconciliation complement and enforce the Government of Iraq's efforts at broader national reconciliation.

Iraq will hold national elections in the spring of 2018 and the Iraqi people will be able to hold their leaders accountable for their performance in office. The United States will continue to work with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to ensure that these elections occur on time, are transparent, and reflect the will of the Iraqi people. The focus remains on supporting the constitutional system and strengthening democratic institutions that transcend the interests of individuals, political parties, or sectarian components of Iraqi society.

Question 37. Is it in the U.S. national security interest to increase our military involvement—either directly or through enhanced support to the Saudi coalition?

Answer. Ending the conflict in Yemen is a priority for this administration. The conflict has not only created a humanitarian crisis, it threatens Saudi Arabia's security, allows AQAP to expand, allows ISIS to gain a foothold, and allows Iran to exploit the political and security vacuum.

The United States is currently providing limited support to the Saudi-led coalition, which is responding to the Yemeni Government's request for assistance in countering aggressive Houthi military actions. It is unacceptable for an armed militia to threaten Saudi Arabia's southern border. Iran, which is supporting the Houthis with military equipment, funding, and training, cannot be allowed to establish a foothold in the Arabian Peninsula. It is in our national security interest to help the Government of Yemen restore stability and counter terrorism, and also to help Saudi Arabia protect its border, which is why the United States is providing logistical and intelligence support to the coalition. At the same time, the United States continues to press the coalition at the highest levels to take appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of the conflict on the civilian population.

Ultimately, a political solution is the only way to end the conflict, and Saudi Arabia understands the imperative of ending this conflict quickly. The United States continues to support U.N. efforts to restart negotiations aimed at reaching a comprehensive peace agreement.

Question 38. Is there any solution other than a negotiated settlement?

Answer. There is no decisive military solution available to either side to end the conflict—an enduring solution will come through a comprehensive political agreement which will require compromise from all sides. The United States fully supports the ongoing efforts of the U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, to bring about an end to the fighting and to bring the parties to the conflict back to negotiations as soon as possible.

The United States also does not believe a split between north and south would be sustainable or in the U.S. national interest, and the administration continues to support a unified Yemen. Neither the north nor the south has the resources or political cohesion to endure independently from one another. This would lead to a fracturing of the Yemeni state, worsening the political and security vacuum for AQAP and ISIL to exploit.

Question 39. Before the Obama administration used force against ISIS in Surt last fall, it waited for the Government of National Accord to request U.S. military support and ensured that it had identified committed local forces to work on the ground. As ISIS continues to lose ground in Iraq and Syria, the organization will turn to other locations including Libya. In remarks before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 9, General Waldhauser—Commander of U.S. Africa Command—stated that in Libya, "we must carefully choose where and with whom we work in order to counter ISIS and not shift the balance between factions and risk sparking greater conflict in Libya."

- What actions might the United States take that could spark greater conflict? In other words, what must we avoid doing?

Answer. The United States should avoid any actions or statements that might prejudice—or appear to prejudice—the outcomes of Libya's national reconciliation process. The roles of individual Libyans must be determined by the Libyans themselves. The United States is concerned about the risk of armed civil conflict in Libya and has urged all parties to exercise restraint. Libyan forces have made progress against ISIS in Sirte and eastern Libya. Renewed fighting between Libyans will distract from the fight against terrorism and create space that ISIS and other violent extremists can exploit. The United States must try to ensure that the political process remains open and inclusive, so that all parties can participate in national reconciliation rather than resorting to violence.

Question 40. Does the State Department have a role in ending the conflict in Libya?

Answer. It is my understanding that the State Department works closely with Libyan leaders and with regional and international partners to support efforts to broker a political compromise among Libyans and bolster the Libyan Political Agreement as the basis of negotiations and a path to national elections.

Ending the civil conflict in Libya, keeping the Libyans engaged in a political dialogue, and finding a negotiated political solution are essential to building the stability Libya needs to defeat ISIS and other terrorists, address transnational flows of irregular migrants and weapons, rebuild Libya's economy, and meet the humanitarian needs of the Libyan people. There is no military solution.

Question 41. Are there any alternatives to the Government of National Accord that could bring long-term stability to Libya?

Answer. I understand most Libyans believe the Libyan Political Agreement must remain the framework for a political solution. There is also growing consensus on the need for negotiated amendments to the Political Agreement.

The United States supports efforts to broker discussions between Prime Minister al-Sarraj's Government of National Accord (GNA) and eastern Libyan leaders to overcome the impasse. The only way to bring lasting stability is through a Libyan-driven effort to build an inclusive, effective national government and unify national security forces under governmental authority.

Question 42. The civil war in South Sudan shows no signs of abating, precipitating a humanitarian disaster. 40 percent of the population currently faces life-threatening hunger; 100,000 face famine. As much as one-third of the population is displaced. The number of refugees fleeing to neighboring countries has more than doubled since July 2016. Uganda hosts almost 900,000 refugees at what has become the largest camp in the world. The only hope I see for turning the tide is a political

solution. I've advocated for a Special Envoy to lead U.S. efforts to help find peace in South Sudan. What role do you see for the U.S. in helping bring peace to this troubled country?

Answer. The United States has played and will continue to play a central role in the effort to bring peace to South Sudan, as the world's youngest country endures its fourth year of civil war. With the eruption of violence in Juba in July 2016, South Sudan's conflict entered a more complex and destructive phase, with Riek Machar's exile to South Africa, the fracturing of the opposition, and the emergence of new armed groups. The urgency of the situation and its attendant humanitarian crisis demand that the United States continue to play its historic leadership role in seeking peace. However, the complexity of the situation means that the United States must redouble coordination and cooperation with key partners, notably the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Troika (Norway and the United Kingdom), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations.

Question 43. The civil war in South Sudan shows no signs of abating, precipitating a humanitarian disaster. 40 percent of the population currently faces life-threatening hunger; 100,000 face famine. As much as one-third of the population is displaced. The number of refugees fleeing to neighboring countries has more than doubled since July 2016. Uganda hosts almost 900,000 refugees at what has become the largest camp in the world. The only hope I see for turning the tide is a political solution. I've advocated for a Special Envoy to lead U.S. efforts to help find peace in South Sudan. If confirmed, will you support the appointment of a Special Envoy?

Answer. There are many complex issues at stake in South Sudan—devastating conflict, mass atrocities, famine and widespread food insecurity, counterterrorism, and regional destabilization due to mass population movements—which constitute a threat to peace and stability in east and central Africa. They require a tightly focused policy engagement at a senior level.

The United States is heavily involved in supporting peace efforts and providing assistance to refugees and displaced populations in Sudan and South Sudan and the region.

Given these complex issues, if confirmed, I will explore how we can do better, including consulting with Secretary Tillerson about any proposed future structure to address all issues related to Sudan and South Sudan, and will also take into consideration the results of our internal State Department organizational review.

Question 44. Aside from provision of equipment, what steps could the United States take to help improve the Nigerian military's effectiveness in the north east?

Answer. The United States is actively supporting efforts by Nigeria to fight and defeat Boko Haram and its offshoot ISIS-West Africa. In addition to equipment, the United States provides the Nigerian military with advisors. advisors deployed to Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State and the heart of the Boko Haram and ISIS-WA insurgency, continue to play an important role in advising the Nigerian Army Theater Command Headquarters, which is located there.

I understand the United States also has a robust program of intelligence sharing with the Nigerian military, both in Maiduguri and at the Fusion Cell in Abuja. We are working with Nigerian partners to make our intelligence sharing more timely and even more effective in bolstering Nigerian military operations. Additionally, and in full accordance with the human rights requirements of the Leahy Law, the United States continues to train the Nigerian military on a number of issues, including counterterrorism and human rights. This training has tangibly augmented the effectiveness of the Nigerian Army in its operations, and we look forward to continuing and expanding these training programs.

Question 45. What will you do, if confirmed, to ensure that we remain steadfast in encouraging the Nigerian Government to hold those in the military responsible for human rights abuses, including the Zaria massacre of 2015, accountable?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure we continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to hold accountable those in the military responsible for human rights abuses. Through high-level diplomatic engagement, we will continue to underscore how human rights abuses by the security forces, as well as impunity for those violations, undermine Nigeria's security goals, tarnish its international reputation, and impede efforts to defeat Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. We will also continue to ensure that no assistance is provided to any Nigerian security force unit responsible for human rights abuses, in accordance with the law.

We will continue to press the Nigerian Government on accountability for the Rann bombing. As the investigation is finalized, we will continue to seek full access to the information on the Nigerian investigations and for further corrective actions related to its findings.

Question 46. Do you agree with Freedom House's characterization of the state of democracy in Africa? If so, do you believe America has a role to play in working to promote democracy and good governance on the continent?

Answer. Strong, accountable, and democratic institutions, sustained by a deep commitment to the rule of law, generate greater prosperity and stability, and meet with greater success in mitigating conflict and ensuring security. While the African continent has made important gains in democracy and institution building, those gains are fragile. U.S. Government engagement in the region spans a wide range of country situations, from autocracies to post?conflict states to consolidating democracies. Although elections have become a regular occurrence across the continent, there are still too many countries where the transition to democracy is uneven and slow, and too many leaders who resist relinquishing power. In many countries, corruption is endemic and state institutions remain weak, leading to greater regional instability.

Performance varies widely across the Continent. West Africa, for example, has undergone a significant democratic transition, and the period from 2015 through 2017 saw a host of West African nations peacefully going to the polls, with some, like Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, experiencing their first peaceful elections or transfers of power in decades. Most notably, in Nigeria, Ghana, Cabo Verde, and Benin opposition candidates were able to win elections and were sworn in as heads of state. This increased democratization has even changed how the region views attempts to cling to power. Proof of this came with the departure into exile of the long-time leader of The Gambia in January 2017 following his defeat at the ballot box. After the former president attempted to ignore the results and cling to power, the Economic Community of West African States sent democratically elected heads of state to demand he step down, threatening diplomatic isolation, sanctions, and even military intervention if he failed to do so. Faced with this unified opposition, the former president agreed to go into exile.

Elections alone do not define a democracy, particularly as some incumbents in Africa and elsewhere narrow or close altogether the space for competition, participation, and a free press long before an election is held. A healthy democracy requires checks and balances, including a strong judiciary and legislature, competitive political parties, a free press, and an engaged civil society.

Recognizing the foundational importance of democracy, human rights, and governance to Africa's future and U.S. foreign policy objectives on the continent, strengthening democratic institutions remains a priority. The United States seeks to advance democracy in Africa by promoting the rule of law, respect for human and civil rights, credible and legitimate elections, a politically active civil society, and accountable and participatory governance. Working in partnership with African Governments and civil society, United States support aims to strengthen governance institutions and to protect the democratic and development gains that have been made across the continent and to prevent democratic backsliding.

Question 47. What steps will you take to advance multilateral diplomacy in response to Venezuela's political crisis and coordinate a regional approach to growing humanitarian challenges?

Answer. It is my understanding the United States is working with its international partners to build consensus for a peaceful solution and to see the re-establishment of democratic norms in Venezuela. On April 26, the United States joined a majority of countries in the hemisphere in adopting an OAS resolution calling for an emergency meeting of foreign ministers to discuss the worsening situation in Venezuela, including the humanitarian situation. This follows a U.S.-supported resolution condemning recent actions taken by the Venezuelan Supreme Court to undermine the separation of powers and urging the Government of Venezuela to restore full constitutional authority to the National Assembly.

The United States should continue to call for the release of all political prisoners, the publication and implementation of an electoral calendar to achieve a political resolution to this crisis, as well as respect for the National Assembly.

Question 48. How can the U.S. best use targeted sanctions and other tools to hold accountable those Venezuelan officials that are engaged in corruption, drug trafficking, and actions that are destabilizing democratic governance and the rule of law?

Answer. The U.S. Government evaluates, on an ongoing basis, the range of foreign policy tools at its disposal to best achieve its foreign policy objectives and enhance the nation's security. These include sanctions under the Narcotics Kingpin Act, as well as under Executive Order 13692, which implements the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act.

Sanctions under that Executive Order target specific persons, including those involved in human rights abuses or violations, undermining democratic processes or institutions, and public corruption, among other things. U.S. sanctions do not target the Venezuelan people or economy as a whole.

I believe the U.S. Government should, of course, encourage Department of Justice investigations of criminal conduct under U.S. law, particularly as it relates to public corruption and drug trafficking.

Question 49. Will the United States meet its New START treaty commitments? Does the United States believe Russia in February 2018 will meet its New START Treaty commitments?

Answer. It is my understanding that the United States and Russia will meet the New START Treaty central limits in accordance with the stipulated deadline of February 5, 2018. Senior Russian officials have reaffirmed their commitment to meeting these limits.

The United States continues to monitor Russia's strategic nuclear modernization and implementation of the New START Treaty through the Treaty's verification regime. Without the New START Treaty in force, the United States would lack critical knowledge about the composition and size of Russia's strategic forces and the insights the Treaty provides into Russia's modernization program for its strategic systems.

Question 50. Is the Trump administration planning to withdraw from the New START Treaty or to modify it before the treaty expires in 2021?

Answer. It is my understanding the administration is reviewing Russia policy, including the approach to enforcing compliance with arms control treaty obligations. Currently, the administration is focused on reaching the New START Treaty's central limits by February 2018, and will not assess next steps in strategic arms control until after that point.

Question 51. Does the Trump administration believe Russia's deployment of a ground based cruise missile is a "material breach" of the INF Treaty?

Answer. The international legal doctrine of material breach allows one party to terminate a treaty or suspend its operation in whole or in part based on, inter alia, another party's violation of a provision essential to the accomplishment of the object and purpose of the treaty. It is my understanding that the administration has not made a determination of material breach at this time. The administration is undertaking an extensive review of Russia's violation of the INF Treaty in order to assess the viability of the Treaty, the potential national security implications for the United States of the violation, and possible responses aimed at imposing costs and denying Russia any advantage from its violation.

Question 52. Will you commit to maintaining a separate bureau in the State Department (currently the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation) exclusively devoted to preventing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and related materials?

Answer. I am committed to preventing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and related materials. Nonproliferation of WMD has been a pillar of U.S. foreign policy over many decades and it remains in our vital national security interest to prevent and deter the proliferation and use of WMD. If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Tillerson on how best to organize the State Department to address proliferation.

Question 53. Will you commit to fully funding critical non-proliferation intergovernmental organizations such as the IAEA, OPCW, and CTBT Preparatory Organization at FY 2016 levels?

Answer. I understand that the Department is in the process of determining how to implement the funding reductions called for by the President's FY18 budget request. The Department appreciates Congressional support for funding necessary to meet U.S. commitments, responsibilities, and interests in areas such as this.

Question 54. What is your interpretation of Section 4.11 of the Paris Agreement and the flexibility it provides parties to adjust their nationally determined contributions as they see fit? What significance does the word "may" in this section have to the U.S., or any party's ability to adjust their contributions in whatever way they see fit? Do you agree that the presence of the term "may" in this section makes this provision non-binding? If you believe this provision is legally binding please explain your argument.

Answer. This question involves a degree of specificity and technicality with respect to treaty interpretation in the context of the Paris Agreement that would require me to consult with State Department lawyers before providing a response.

Question 55. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, you will be the primary person for State in overseeing and coordinating U.S. security cooperation and assistance to foreign countries, including military exercises and exchanges. Will you devote particular personal attention to this responsibility to fulfill the Secretary's role to oversee all assistance to foreign assistance, including oversight and participation in the formulation of the Department of Defense security assistance projects as allowed by law?

Answer. Yes. State's role in the provision of security assistance is critical to ensuring that all such assistance directly advances a common set of foreign policy goals and accounts for broader U.S. interests in the country, region, and world. At Secretary Tillerson and Secretary Mattis' direction, the Department and DoD are working closely together to optimize the full range of security sector assistance resources and thereby achieve the best possible outcomes for U.S. national security and the American taxpayer. To further this effort, if confirmed, I will devote personal attention to building collaborative relationships between the Department and DoD at all levels, such that all of our assistance efforts are integrated and synchronized in a manner that is strategic, efficient, and reflects our agencies' respective strengths and missions. Where the Department has a legislated role in the planning or approval of DoD assistance programs, I will ensure that the Department has the resources and direction necessary to fulfill that role in a meaningful way, such that all assistance—regardless of the agency managing it—advances a single set of foreign policy objectives and is subject to the same level of rigorous foreign policy oversight.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN SULLIVAN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question 1. Do you support completing the Export Control Reform Initiative?

Answer. I support the modernization of the U.S. export control system and look forward to being briefed by the Department's experts on the status of the Export Control Reform Initiative. As a general matter, I believe it is important that we provide all American industries with a level playing field.

Question 2. What is the status of the proposed rule to transfer to Commerce the export licensing responsibility for commercial and sporting products currently on the USML categories I, II, and III?

Answer. I understand the Department is finalizing the rule for three remaining categories of controls, and plans to obtain guidance to publish them. It intends to solicit public comment, as it did for the other 18 categories. This process was requested by U.S. industry members, including the firearms and ammunition industry, to help ensure the rules are clear and implementable.

Question 3. Please provide the timeline for when the State Department will publish its proposed rule to transfer export licensing of commercial and sporting firearms and ammunition products currently on the USML categories I, II, and III to the Commerce Department's CCL?

Answer. I understand the Department is in the process of obtaining guidance for publication and to have the rule included in an upcoming issue of the Federal Register. The Department does not have an exact timeline for publication at this time because revisions to the U.S. Munitions List (USML) require contemporaneous publication of a companion rule by the Department of Commerce, and because of required interagency and intra-Executive approvals for publication in conjunction with an ongoing review of regulatory activities. If confirmed, I look forward to working towards an expeditious publication.

Question 4. Do you support continuing the QDDR process at the State Department?

Answer. The previous administration implemented a Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review (QDDR). The QDDR process is an exercise to assess how we can be more efficient, effective, and accountable. As discussed in my confirmation hearing, the world has changed in the 21st century and the way the Department is organized has not kept pace. I look forward to supporting the Secretary's review of the current structure of the State Department to see how we can better meet these challenges.

Question 5. As you know, the Department of Defense issues the QDDR as part of a series of documents produced used to help inform a Planning, Programming, Budgeting process. If you keep the QDDR process, will you also take the additional

steps of drafting similar long-term strategic budget and other planning and programming documents?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID are mandated by the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 to produce an agency-level strategic plan. The strategic plan is a long-term, multi-year strategy that outlines our goals and objectives, and which provides direction and guidance in the formulation of our budget and other planning and programming processes. I understand the State Department is in the development stages of this strategic plan. This process has already guided formulation of our FY 2018 budget and will provide key inputs to our FY 2019 budget, as well as the concurrent reorganization. I look forward to working with the Secretary to ensure the Department's management priorities are strategically aligned with policy guidance and direction to meet our core mission across our global organization.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN SULLIVAN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. What role do you see the United States playing in Venezuela?

Answer. The Venezuelan people aspire to a free, democratic, and prosperous country, and the United States should continue to strongly support those aspirations. The U.S. Government should remain engaged with a broad range of Venezuelan society and our international partners to insist that the Venezuelan Government respect its democratic institutions.

The U.S. Government should call on the Government of Venezuela to fulfill its obligations to promptly hold elections, respect the rightful authority of the National Assembly, provide for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, and tend to the humanitarian needs of the Venezuelan people. The United States, in concert with a majority of other countries in the hemisphere, adopted an OAS resolution calling for an emergency meeting of foreign ministers to review the situation in Venezuela and offer humanitarian assistance to the Venezuelan people.

Question 2. How can we leverage the OAS and our regional alliance to address this crisis?

Answer. The United States is working with its international partners to build consensus for a peaceful solution and to see the re-establishment of democratic norms in Venezuela. The United States joined a majority of countries in the hemisphere on April 26 in adopting an OAS resolution calling for an emergency meeting of foreign ministers to discuss the worsening situation in Venezuela. This follows a U.S.-supported resolution condemning a series of Venezuelan Supreme Court actions to undermine the separation of powers and urging the Venezuelan Government to restore full constitutional authority to the National Assembly.

he United States should continue to call for the release of all political prisoners, the publication and implementation of an electoral calendar to achieve a political resolution to this crisis, and respect for the National Assembly.

Question 3. We have an opportunity to achieve a peaceful resolution of the long festering and untenable situation in Cyprus. Positive Turkish engagement and support of this process is vital, as is that of International Organizations and the U.S.

- How do you view the current, ongoing Cyprus settlement talks held under UN auspices?

Answer. The United States continues to fully support the Cypriot-led, UN-facilitated process under UN Special Adviser Espen Barth Eide. We support efforts by the parties to reach a settlement to reunify Cyprus as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, which would benefit all Cypriots as well as the wider region. Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci have made considerable progress in their negotiations over the last two years toward achieving a settlement. These negotiations are the best chance in decades to achieve a lasting and comprehensive solution.

Question 4. We have an opportunity to achieve a peaceful resolution of the long festering and untenable situation in Cyprus. Positive Turkish engagement and support of this process is vital, as is that of International Organizations and the U.S.

- Do you support a reunified Cyprus with a single sovereignty, single international personality and single citizenship; and with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded as described in the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions?

Answer. In their February 2014 Joint Declaration, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders agreed to negotiate a settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation rooted in political equality. They also agreed that a reunified Cyprus, as a member of the United Nations and of the European Union, would maintain a single international legal personality, a single sovereignty, and a single united Cyprus citizenship. The United States continues to support Cypriot-led, UN-facilitated efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement based on these principles and those established through relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and other high-level agreements.

Question 5. We have an opportunity to achieve a peaceful resolution of the long festering and untenable situation in Cyprus. Positive Turkish engagement and support of this process is vital, as is that of International Organizations and the U.S.

- Will you maintain U.S. high-level engagement on this issue?

Answer. Yes. The United States supports the reunification of Cyprus as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation consistent with UN Security Council Resolutions. If confirmed, my role would be to advance the longstanding U.S. policy of supporting reunification efforts. The administration has continued high-level U.S. engagement in support of current settlement talks: Secretary Tillerson telephoned Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci early in his tenure, and in March Under Secretary for Political Affairs Tom Shannon hosted UN Special Advisor Espen Barth Eide for consultations in Washington and later met with Republic of Cyprus Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides. As a friend to all Cypriots, the United States engages with all parties, and I would continue to encourage all relevant stakeholders—including Greece and Turkey—to negotiate constructively to reach a just and lasting settlement.

Question 6. While Turkey remains a critical NATO ally, Turkish President Erdogan recently consolidated his power through a referendum the OSCE assessed suffered from a lack of transparency among other concerns. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Turkey was the top jailer of journalists worldwide. What steps do you think the United States should take to directly address these human rights concerns in Turkey?

Answer. The United States remains committed to a strong bilateral relationship with Turkey. It is in the U.S. national interest for Turkey to be a stable, prosperous, and reliable ally. The United States has long supported Turkey's democratic development. Respect for the rule of law, freedom of the press, and transparency are pillars of a successful democracy and provide Turkey with the potential for expanding its partnership with the United States. If confirmed, I will raise these important points directly with senior Turkish officials.

Question 7. In its 2016 National Drug Threat Assessment, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) identified Mexican transnational criminal organizations as the "greatest criminal drug threat" to the United States. As you know, the State Department plays a central role in coordinating U.S. counternarcotics assistance and Mexican criminal organizations continue to illegally traffic South American cocaine and a growing volume of Mexican-produced heroin and Mexican- and Chinese-produced fentanyl into the U.S.—which is fueling opioid addiction and an alarming number of overdoses across the U.S.

- As we cannot resolve this challenge alone, if confirmed, what strategies will you employ to work with the Government of Mexico to combat these criminal organizations and the illegal drug trade?

Answer. Building on prior security collaboration and under Secretary Tillerson's leadership, it is my understanding the State Department is working with the Government of Mexico to identify new opportunities to combat transnational criminal organizations, including by focusing on disrupting their business model. This includes exploring new ways to strengthen criminal investigations of money laundering, build Mexico's capacity to criminally prosecute and sanction financial crimes, and work jointly on detecting and interdicting bulk cash shipments from the United States into Mexico.

The United States and Mexico are working together with Canada through the North American Dialogue on Drug Policy to develop a greater understanding of drug flows and drug threats within North America and are working more closely to address them. For example there is agreement to improve cooperation by: (1) sharing results of research and analysis of heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamine, and precursor chemicals; (2) exploring ways to better track cross-border financial transfers; and (3) coordinating our messaging to countries outside of North America that impact the illicit opioid threat in our continent.

Question 8. Violence in Mexico, particularly the homicide rate has increased dramatically over the past year. Alarmingly, Mexico has seen an increase of targeted attacks against journalists and media outlets. Mexican courts have failed to successfully prosecute and convict 99 percent of cases that involve journalists being killed. A free press and the freedom of speech form the bedrock of any democratic society. We have a number of programs through the State Department aimed at both supporting free press in Mexico and strengthening the rule of law.

• Do you believe these programs are effective?

Answer. Yes, but they can be improved. U.S. programs have been effective, and if confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State continues to work with Mexico to improve them. We should remain committed to working with Mexico on supporting a free press and strengthening the rule of law. USAID and the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor have played a key role in supporting the Government of Mexico in standing up its Protection Mechanism that provides protection measures to more than 600 human rights defenders and journalists. If confirmed, I will advocate for increased protection and apply lessons learned from international best practices in protecting freedom of expression. I support USAID's engagement with civil society groups that advocate for threatened human rights defenders and journalists.

In addition to these programs, I will consistently raise the issue of press freedom and rule of law with Mexican officials and in public messaging.

As Mexico has embarked on an essential set of reforms to its justice sector, the United States, through the Merida Initiative, has provided essential support by targeting every facet of the criminal justice system, including: law enforcement professionalization, strengthening judicial institutions, training prosecutors and judges, and improving the corrections system.

Question 9. Do you believe that the United States should commit resources and attention to strengthening institutions in Mexico including a strong, independent judiciary?

Answer. Yes. Through the Merida Initiative, the United States and Mexico have forged a multi-faceted partnership to combat organized crime and drug trafficking and to support Mexico's efforts to strengthen its security institutions, enhance rule of law, improve border security, and promote respect for human rights. A transparent, efficient, and effective criminal justice system in Mexicao is essential to the administration's goal of dismantling transnational criminal organizations. It also strengthens the rule of law by protecting due process, promoting assistance to crime victims, and strengthening human rights. As Mexico has embarked on this essential set of reforms, the United States has provided essential support by targeting every facet of the criminal justice system, including: law enforcement professionalization, strengthening judicial institutions, training prosecutors and judges, and improving the corrections system. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State continues to work with Mexico in these important areas.

Question 10. How do you plan to engage with the Government of Nicaragua?

Answer. The Department of State has repeatedly expressed concerns about the state of democracy in Nicaragua. Previous U.S. Government statements have consistently criticized the flawed electoral process, which precluded the possibility of free and fair elections. If confirmed, I would ensure the Department of State continues to press the Nicaraguan Government to uphold democratic practices, including press freedom and respect for universal human rights, consistent with its commitments under the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

At the same time, the U.S. Government should continue to advance U.S. national security and economic interests in Nicaragua through engagement with the Nicaraguan Government, civil society, and private sector on issues such as countering illegal migration, countering narco-trafficking, and ensuring a favorable climate for U.S. businesses.

Despite being the second poorest country in the hemisphere, Nicaragua enjoys a robust trade relationship with the United States. Since the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement entered into force in 2006, U.S. exports to Nicaragua have increased over 100 percent from $625 million in 2005 to $1.47 billion in 2016, supporting almost 9,000 jobs in the United States.

If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen the U.S. partnership with the Nicaraguan people and work on their behalf to achieve a more prosperous, secure, and democratic Nicaragua.

Question 11. Do you believe we should do more to empower civil society in Nicaragua?

Answer. Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) are critical to strengthening institutions and building a vibrant and functioning democracy. Nicaragua's democracy and human rights CSOs struggle to remain operational in a country that has restricted political space.

USAID supports media programs that mentor young journalists and increase citizen advocacy for independent media, the right to freedom of expression, and access to public information. USAID programs also teach cybersecurity techniques to help protect CSO members and their organizations.

Department of State programs that support civil society seek to: improve citizen security through community engagement, prevent drug abuse and violence among at-risk youth, prevent trafficking in persons through education and raising awareness, increase advocacy of the rule of law, and prevent domestic violence and improve services for victims.

Question 12. The US and Taiwan have maintained a strong and mutually beneficial relationship based on the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96–8) and Six Assurances. Recognizing Taiwan's capacity and willingness to contribute to important global issues, Congress has passed legislation requiring the State Department to support Taiwan's participation in international organization such as the World Health Organization (WHO). After Taiwan first woman president Tsai Ing-Wen took office last year, Taiwan has experienced increasing pressure from Beijing constricting its participation in international organizations. How do you and the administration plan to support Taiwan's international participation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support Taiwan's membership in international organizations that do not require statehood. In organizations that require statehood for membership, I will support Taiwan's meaningful participation, and this includes ICAO, INTERPOL, WHO, and the more than 60 international organizations in which Taiwan participates. I am committed to supporting Taiwan as it seeks to expand its already significant contributions to addressing global challenges.

I believe the United States has a deep and abiding interest in cross-Strait peace and stability. The benefits that stable cross-Strait ties have brought to both sides of the Taiwan Strait, the United States, and the region have been important. Both sides of the Taiwan Strait should understand the value of stable cross-Strait ties and work to establish a basis for continued peace and stability. If confirmed, I will encourage authorities in Beijing and Taipei to engage in constructive dialogue that seeks a peaceful resolution of differences acceptable to the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Question 13. How do you plan to engage with the relatively new Haitian Government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to understand the top priorities of the new Haitian administration. Ongoing U.S. support for job creation initiatives that create opportunities beyond the capital of Port-au-Prince can help improve political and economic conditions in Haiti.

The scheduled termination of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in mid-October and transition to a successor mission focusing on the rule of law, police development, and human rights is an important opportunity for Haiti to increasingly take responsibility for maintaining a stable security environment with UN Police support.May 9, 2017

Question 14. What changes do you think can be made in our diplomatic and development efforts to best utilize American resources and personnel in Haiti?

Answer. With a new, democratically-elected government in Haiti and a Haitian President who is keenly familiar with the role that the private sector and foreign direct investment can play in building sustainable economic growth, there is a window of opportunity to lessen Haiti's dependence on foreign aid.

If confirmed, I would urge Haiti to pursue its development and growth priorities. That means taking steps to attract and increase domestic and foreign investment, which will in turn fuel economic opportunity and growth and, ultimately, generate revenue for the Haitian state.

In the near-to-medium term, however, Haiti will continue to need the support of its international partners, including the United States, to address the economic, social, and security challenges facing the country. U.S. assistance plays an important role in addressing these goals.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN SULLIVAN BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. What role should universal values, including human rights, the right to religious freedom, and the promotion of representative democracy and freedom of the press, play in U.S. foreign policy and determining the U.S. national security interest?

Answer. As I said in my testimony before the committee, I believe our greatest national asset is our commitment to the fundamental values expressed at the founding of our nation: the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These basic human rights are the bedrock of our republic and at the heart of American leadership in the world.

Question 2. Do you commit to supporting U.S. sanctions against the Maduro Government in Venezuela? Would you support expanding U.S. sanctions against the Maduro Government?

Answer. I am committed to evaluating on an ongoing basis the range of foreign policy tools at our disposal that can best achieve our objectives, enhance our national security, and improve the dire situation in Venezuela. These include sanctions under Executive Order 13692, which implements the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act. Sanctions under that Executive Order target specific persons, including those involved in human rights abuses or violations, undermining democratic processes or institutions, and public corruption, among other things. Such U.S. sanctions do not target the Venezuelan people or economy as a whole.

Question 3. Do you commit to working with regional partners, as well as with regional bodies such as the Organization of American States (OAS), to restore democracy in Venezuela?

Answer. Yes. The United States is working with its international partners to build consensus for a peaceful solution and to see the re-establishment of democratic norms in Venezuela. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize these efforts. On April 26, the United States joined a majority of countries in the hemisphere in adopting an OAS resolution calling for an emergency meeting of foreign ministers to discuss the worsening situation in Venezuela, including the humanitarian situation. This follows a U.S.-supported resolution condemning recent actions taken by the Venezuelan Supreme Court to undermine the separation of powers and urging the Government of Venezuela to restore full constitutional authority to the National Assembly.

The U.S. Government should continue to call for the release of all political prisoners, the publication and implementation of an electoral calendar to achieve a political resolution to this crisis, as well as respect for the National Assembly.

Question 4. If and when Venezuela enters a post-Maduro era and also returns to the path of democracy, do you commit to supporting foreign assistance funding to hasten the country's return to self-determination, representative democracy, and a free-market economy?

Answer. Yes. The U.S. Government wants the Venezuelan people to thrive under representative democracy. The FY 2017 appropriation provides support for democracy in Venezuela, consistent with current USAID programs.

Question 5. Do you support current U.S. sanctions against Russia? Do you believe that U.S. sanctions should remain in place until Crimea is rightfully returned to Ukraine and Russia stops supporting separatists in eastern Ukraine?

Answer. I understand United States sanctions are carefully coordinated with those of our European partners to impose costs on Russia for its aggression in Ukraine and its occupation of Crimea. These sanctions have helped discourage Russia and the separatists it supports from attempting to seize more Ukrainian territory and helped keep Russia at the table to negotiate a peaceful resolution under the Minsk Agreements.

Question 6. Will you pledge to implement fully the Sergei Magnitsky Act and support the designation of additional Russian officials for their roles in human rights abuses as the U.S. Government obtains new evidence of such abuses?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will support the Department's implementation of the Sergei Magnitsky Act, continuing the work the Department has done since 2013 to list anyone who meets the criteria set forth in the Act. The Department believes the Act is a valuable tool to help combat impunity for gross violations of human rights in Russia. The Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports transparency and accountability, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution.

Question 7. Would you commit to supporting the continuation of the State Department's efforts to empower civil society organizations in Russia and other authoritarian countries around the world?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue the Department of State's efforts to empower civil society in Russia. The Department continues to raise in public statements and private discussions our serious concerns about the human rights situation in Russia. Although the space for civil society and free media in Russia has become increasingly restricted, Russian organizations and individuals continue to express a desire to engage with the United States. As long as this continues to be the case, the United States will support opportunities for direct interactions between Russians and Americans, including through peer-to-peer, educational, cultural, and other regional programs that provide exchanges of best practices and ideas on themes of mutual interest.

The Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution. The United States continues to call on the Government of Russia to uphold its international obligations and commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to cease restrictions on the work of civil society organizations in Russia.

Question 8. If Congress passes a bill that imposes visa bans and asset freezes on those responsible for the commission of serious human rights abuses in any territory, forcibly occupied or otherwise controlled by Russia, would you advise the President to sign it?

Answer. The Secretary has been clear that our foreign policy will continue to be guided by our values, including the defense of human rights. Subject to the need to review the precise terms of any legislation before making a recommendation, if confirmed I am committed to doing all we can as a nation to promote and protect human rights in the areas described.

Question 9. The United States has long served as a global leader in advancing women's equality and empowerment. Central to this is the work of the Office of Global Women's Issues in the State Department. Can you assure us that this administration will maintain the Office of Global Women's Issues and the critical programming, policy and diplomatic work that it does?

Answer. The integration of gender into the State Department's foreign policy efforts has never been more critical. The United States has put gender equality and the advancement of women and girls at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy, and the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues has played a central role in ensuring the Department has the know-how and the appropriate processes to strategically incorporate gender into policies and programs. As I stated at my confirmation hearing, you have my commitment that women's issues will remain a priority of the Department.

Question 10. Will you support ensuring that women's issues, such as ending child marriage and promoting access of girls to education, are included in larger foreign policy discussions, where appropriate?

Answer. Yes. The incorporation of gender considerations into foreign policy planning and execution is strategic and imperative. It is a fundamental tenet of our foreign policy that when women are able to participate politically and economically to the same degree as men, societies are more prosperous, stable and secure. As I told Senator Shaheen, "women's health, women's education, women's empowerment, pay dividends many times over." You have my commitment that these issues will remain a priority of the Department.

Question 11. Will it be your policy and intention to honor the pledges, commitments, and obligations made by your predecessors at the U.S. Department of State with respect to American participation in international fairs and expositions abroad occurring prior to September 30, 2017?

Answer. I am not familiar with any pledges, commitments, or obligations made by previous State Department officials with respect to American participation in international fairs and exhibitions. If confirmed, I will be happy to work with you and you staff to learn more about your concerns and what resolutions are permissible under current law.

Question 12. Enacted in 1979, the Taiwan Relations Act remains cornerstone of relations between the United States and Taiwan. For decades, both parties have benefited from a strong security and economic relationship. However, this relationship has not benefited from sufficient high-level communication due to the self-im-

posed restrictions that the United States maintains on high-level visits with Taiwan. Will you commit to encouraging exchanges between the United States and Taiwan at all levels? How will you push this forward?

Answer. I understand that many U.S. officials, including Cabinet-level officials, have visited Taiwan when they have had substantive business to conduct in order to further U.S.-Taiwan relations as stipulated by the Taiwan Relations Act. These visits are consistent with the U.S. Government's one-China policy.

Also, consistent with longstanding practice, the United States allows transits by Taiwan leaders to provide for the safety, security, comfort, and dignity of the traveler. Senior Taiwan leaders occasionally travel through North America to and from destinations in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

If confirmed, I will continue to encourage exchanges between the United States and Taiwan to advance substantive cooperation across all areas of our relationship.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN SULLIVAN BY SENATOR RON JOHNSON

Question 1. It is my understanding that there are currently around 75,500 employees at the Department of State, made up of around 11,000 Civil Service employees, 14,000 Foreign Service employees and 50,500 locally employed staff. How has the total number of State Department employees, as well as the subcategories of Civil Service, Foreign Service and locally employed, changed over time? Can you provide year-by-year State Department employment numbers as far back as possible for total number of employees as well as for the three aforementioned subcategories?

Answer. Attached are year-by-year State Department employment numbers showing the total number of employees as well as Civil Service, Foreign Service, and locally employed staff.

Department of State Employment Counts

Year	Civil Service Full-Time Permanent	Foreign Service Full-Time Permanent	Total Full-Time Permanent	Locally Employed (LE) Staff
FY1961*	5,315	8,712	14,027	9717
FY1962*	4,865	8,809	13,674	9969
FY1963*	5,103	9,127	14,230	9997
FY1964*	4,934	9,154	14,088	10135
FY1965*	5,061	9,493	14,554	9574
FY1966*	4,077	10,904	14,981	10340
FY1967*	3,717	11,351	15,068	12312
FY1968*	3,717	10,272	13,989	11334
FY1969	3,749	9,735	13,484	10967
FY1970	3,746	8,932	12,678	10702
FY1971	3,698	8,994	12,692	10618
FY1972	3,523	8,588	12,111	10491
FY1973	3,646	8,313	11,959	10486
FY1974	3,611	8,526	12,137	10538
FY1975	3,588	8,719	12,307	10091
FY1976	3,440	8,969	12,409	10158
FY1977	3,462	8,993	12,455	10164
FY1978	3,290	9,207	12,497	10183
FY1979	3,347	9,065	12,412	9718
FY1980	3,438	9,236	12,674	9374
FY1981	3,634	9,378	13,012	9283
FY1982	3,764	9,406	13,170	9244
FY1983	3,952	9,395	13,347	9240
FY1984	4,314	9,153	13,467	9399
FY1985	4,500	9,441	13,941	9605
FY1986	4,448	9,637	14,085	9637
FY1987	4,579	9,490	14,069	9490
FY1988	4,677	9,232	13,909	9455
FY1989	4,933	8,918	13,851	9165
FY1990	5,197	8,814	14,011	8933
FY1991	5,181	8,830	14,011	9379

Department of State Employment Counts—Continued

Year	Civil Service Full-Time Permanent	Foreign Service Full-Time Permanent	Total Full-Time Permanent	Locally Employed (LE) Staff
FY1992	5,318	8,896	14,214	9412
FY1993	5,622	8,792	14,414	9412
FY1994	5,436	8,512	13,948	8512
FY1995	5,208	8,207	13,415	8207
FY1996	5,247	7,936	13,183	9555
FY1997	5,225	7,724	12,949	9508
FY1998	5,165	7,769	12,934	9510
FY1999	5,498	8,169	13,667	7192
FY2000	7,200	9,283	16,483	N/A
FY2001	7,193	9,326	16,519	N/A
FY2002	7,368	10,089	17,457	N/A
FY2003	7,731	10,579	18,310	N/A
FY2004	7,831	10,988	18,819	N/A
FY2005**	8,092	11,238	19,330	37924
FY2006**	8,270	11,397	19,667	37092
FY2007**	8,784	11,467	20,251	37089
FY2008**	9,328	11,656	20,984	37089
FY2009**	9,614	12,257	21,871	41658
FY2010**	10,039	13,008	23,047	43632
FY2011**	10,645	13,518	24,163	44491
FY2012**	10,760	13,774	24,534	45475
FY2013**	10,960	13,833	24,793	45970
FY2014**	10,874	13,984	24,858	46648
FY2015**	10,921	13,941	24,862	48033
FY2016**	11,147	13,980	25,127	49736
3/31/ 2017	10,978	14,029	25,007	49736

*''Full-time'' employees were reported between 1961 and 1968

**LE Staff counts included both Direct Hires and Personal Service Agreement (PSAs) contractors after 2005

***FY 2000 reflects integration of U.S. Information Agency (USIA) and Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) into State

Question 2. Can you provide year-by-year statistics going as far back as possible on the number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests submitted to the State Department and to the federal government as a whole?µ Can you also provide the annual number of backlogged FIOA requests for the State Department and the federal government as a whole for as far back as possible?µ

Answer. Attached are current and historical data on FOIA requests submitted to the Department of State and to the federal government as a whole. I understand that the Department has taken a series of concerted actions to improve the program and reduce the backlog. The Department and other executive branch agencies publish a number of annual reports regarding their FOIA processing efforts. The Government-wide information can be found at https://www.justice.gov/oip/reports-1. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to continue to improve the Department's FOIA responsiveness.

Department of State FOIA Data

May 12, 2017

Fiscal Year	Number of FOIA Requests Received (Section V.A of FOIA Annual Report)		FOIA Backlog (Section XII.D.(2) of FOIA Annual Report, when available)*	
	State	Federal Government	State	Federal Government
2017	**15,209	***-	**16,921	***-
2016	27,961	788,769	22,664	115,080
2015	24,837	713,168	20,626	102,828
2014	19,696	714,231	10,045	159,741
2013	18,753	704,394	8,669	95,564
2012	18,521	651,254	10,464	71,790
2011	14,298	644,165	8,078	83,490
2010	30,206	597,415	20,519	69,526
2009	10,717	557,825	8,784	77,377
2008	5,909	****605,491	4,327	133,295
2007	5,078	21,758,651	3,430	217,237
2006	4,937	21,412,571	3,218	251,314
2005	4,602	19,950,683	2,728	220,097
2004	3,951	-	1,996	-
2003	3,438	-	3,008	-
2002	3,134	-	5,343	-
2001	3,761	-	6,214	-
2000	3,611	-	5,782	-
1999	3,716	-	5,241	-
1998	3,355	-	5,349	-

*The FOIA Annual Report format has changed over time; the section mentioned is from the current report.
**As of May 12, 2017.
*** Data not yet available for entire government reporting.
****Government-wide reporting requirements changed this year to focus solely on FOIA requests, not all information access requests such as Privacy Act requests.

The data provided above is from the Department of State FOIA Annual Reports (https://foia.state.gov/Learn/Reports.aspx) and Department of Justice Office of Information Policy Website (https://www.justice.gov/oip/reports-1) with the exception of the 2017 data.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN SULLIVAN BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question 1. If confirmed, will you support the elimination of all U.S. funding for the United Nations' Green Climate Fund?

Answer. The administration's FY 2018 budget does not include funding for the Green Climate Fund (GCF). In general, the United States should ensure that all assistance to foreign countries and international organizations advances U.S. interests.

Question 2. If confirmed, will you support the elimination of all U.S. funding for the Global Climate Change Initiative?

Answer. The FY 2018 request does not include funding for the Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI). In general, the United States should ensure that all as-

sistance to foreign countries and international organizations advances U.S. interests.

Question 3. Would you recommend that the United States stay in any agreement that would strengthen foreign economies at the expense of American workers and line the pockets of developing nations with billions of American taxpayer dollars?

Answer. The United States should prioritize U.S. interests in all of its interactions with foreign countries and should evaluate possible participation in international agreements on that basis.

Question 4. Do you support the administration submitting the international climate change agreement developed in Paris to the Senate for its advice and consent?

Answer. I understand the United States submitted an instrument of acceptance to the Paris Agreement in September 2016. The Agreement entered into force in November 2016. I have not studied closely the legal issues related to the United States' acceptance of the Paris Agreement and would want the opportunity to consult with the State Department's lawyers before offering a considered opinion.

Question 5. In your legal opinion, is the Paris climate agreement a treaty? Why or why not?

Answer. I have not studied closely the legal issues related to the United States' acceptance of the Paris Agreement and would want the opportunity to consult with the State Department's lawyers before offering a considered opinion.

Question 6. Do you think it serves the interests of this country to establish a precedent that international commitments are made in a manner designed to thwart the constitutionally derived oversight role of the U.S. Senate?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the respective roles of the Executive and Legislative Branches in assessing the appropriate course for concluding any international agreement.

Question 7. Do you believe staying in an agreement that was specifically constructed to thwart the United States Senate's constitutional role of advice and consent would make it more or less likely for similar actions to happen again in the future?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the respective roles of the Executive and Legislative Branches in assessing the appropriate course for concluding any international agreement.

Question 8. As Deputy Secretary of State, would you ensure that the State Department is promoting all forms of energy projects across the globe, including oil, gas, and coal?

Answer. The State Department will use its diplomatic tools to promote energy projects internationally, including oil, gas, and coal. The State Department will work to make sure that U.S. investors and industry from all segments of the energy sector compete on a level playing field with foreign competition in emerging markets.

Question 9. If confirmed, are you committed to opposing all recognition of a Palestinian state in international bodies and organizations, outside of a peace agreement with Israel?

Answer. Yes. The United States position is that the only way for the Palestinians to achieve real statehood is through a mutually acceptable peace agreement with Israel. If confirmed, I would recommend that the President continue to oppose Palestinian membership in international bodies and organizations in the absence of a mutually acceptable peace agreement with Israel.

Question 10. How will you hold the Palestinians accountable for their efforts to use the United Nations, its agencies, and affiliated organizations to bypass the peace process?

Answer. The U.S. Government's approach to managing issues related to Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts in multilateral fora is guided by several priorities: supporting Israel's affirmative efforts to normalize its role in the international community; preserving space for a mutually acceptable peace agreement between the two parties; combatting anti-Israel bias and efforts to delegitimize Israel in the UN system; protecting the United States' ability to fund and participate in international organizations; and countering efforts to expand the scope of actions against Israel.

If confirmed, I would continue to vigorously pursue this approach, oppose Palestinian membership in UN organizations prior to a mutually acceptable peace agreement with Israel, and support the enforcement of laws prohibiting funding to international organizations that do so.

Question 11. Do you support multilateral institutions providing financing for all energy resources especially the most affordable, reliable and abundant forms of energy?

Answer. The Department of the Treasury has the jurisdiction for the formulation and implementation of the U.S. stance on lending policies at multilateral financial and development institutions. The Department of State provides foreign policy guidance and technical expertise during this process. The Department supports an all-of-the-above energy strategy, which will inform our interaction within the interagency on multilateral institutions' financing energy projects.

Question 12. Will you commit to ensuring that multilateral institutions allow public financing of high efficiency power stations fueled by coal?

Answer. The Department of the Treasury has the jurisdiction for the formulation and implementation of the U.S. stance on lending policies at multilateral financial and development institutions. As the administration works to address multilateral institutions' policies affecting financing for energy projects, the Department of State will engage in the interagency to underscore the importance of considering all types of energy.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN SULLIVAN BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. Do you agree with Secretary Tillerson that the best way to resolve the North Korean nuclear threat is through direct negotiations? Or do you share Vice President Pence's belief that North Korea must agree to denuclearize before any negotiations occur?

Answer. Our objective remains a denuclearized Korean peninsula. We remain committed to directly addressing the threat North Korea's UN-proscribed ballistic missile and nuclear programs pose to peace and security. The United States remains open to credible talks on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula; however conditions must change before there is any scope for talks to resume.

As Secretary Tillerson said in New York, "We will not negotiate our way back to the negotiating table with North Korea. We will not reward their violations of past resolutions. We will not reward their bad behavior with talks. We will only engage in talks with North Korea when they exhibit a good-faith commitment to abiding by the Security Council resolutions and their past promises to end their nuclear programs."

It is important that the leaders of North Korea realize that their current pathway of nuclear weapons and escalating threats will not lead to their objective of security and economic development. That pathway can only be achieved by denuclearizing and abandoning their weapons of mass destruction.

Question 2. Do you think the United States should stay in the Paris agreement?Do you think climate change should remain a priority for U.S. international engagement?

Answer. I understand that there is an ongoing discussion within the administration concerning continued participation in the Paris Agreement. As a general matter, the United States is best served and its interests protected when it has a seat at the table.

Climate change is a global problem that requires a global response. No one country is going to solve it alone. The President and the Secretary have stated that they want a foreign policy that reflects American interests and that works for America. Global leadership should not come at the expense of U.S. competitiveness or our national security.

Question 3. What value do you believe America's global climate leadership has in terms of national security and economic competitiveness?

Answer. Climate change is a global problem that requires a global response. No one country is going to solve it alone. The President and the Secretary have stated that they want a foreign policy that reflects American interests and that works for America. Global leadership should not come at the expense of U.S. competitiveness or our national security.

Question 4. What diplomatic costs and risks do you foresee if the United States were to withdraw from the Paris Agreement?

Answer. More than 190 countries signed the Paris Agreement, indicating their intention to join, and 145 countries have already joined. An analysis should include the impact on U.S. relations with those countries.

Question 5. Do you believe the United States should continue to provide technical assistance to developing nations to ensure they monitor their greenhouse gas emissions according to the highest standards possible to help ensure that we know whether they are meeting their commitments under the Paris Agreement?

Answer. I understand that the administration is reviewing U.S. international climate change policy, including climate-related assistance and this question will be looked at in that context. In general, the United States should ensure that all assistance to foreign countries advances U.S. interests.

Question 6. If confirmed what will you do to ensure robust U.S. diplomatic engagement with all the parties to preserve peace and stability in Northern Ireland?

Answer. The United States remains firmly committed to the Northern Ireland Peace Process, including the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements. I believe we should continue to engage all parties and communities to work together to build a better, shared future. Our Consulate in Belfast promotes reconciliation, two-way trade and investment, and cultural exchanges.

Question 7. Do you agree that the United States must take the lead to protect members of the LGBT community from discrimination and abuse worldwide?

Answer. Yes. As is made clear in the founding documents of the United States, all people should be protected from discrimination and violence, and must be free to exercise their universal rights, including their fundamental freedoms of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and religion. Discrimination and violence against members of any community or group hampers economic development, public health, and social cohesion.

Protecting universal human rights is a central element of U.S. foreign policy and national security interests, and if confirmed I will work to advance human rights for all persons.

Question 8. What steps do you think the State Department should take to strengthen that leadership?

Answer. I know that the State Department is already working to combat discrimination and violence against members of the LGBT community globally, as an integral component of the Department's human rights and democracy strategy. This includes efforts aimed to respond to discriminatory legislation through bilateral diplomacy, empowering human rights defenders to address these challenges, building consensus with like-minded government partners, and elevating the voices of the most at risk in partnership with a broad coalition of allies, including in the private sector.

Question 9. Do you believe that it serves U.S. national interest to cut the State Department's budget by nearly a third?

Answer. As Secretary Tillerson told the Department workforce in a written letter, the State Department's budget request addresses the challenges to American leadership abroad and the importance of defending American interests and the American people. It acknowledges that U.S. engagement must be more efficient, that our aid must be more effective, and that advocating the national interests of our country must always be our primary mission. Additionally, the budget is an acknowledgment that development needs are a global challenge to be met not just by contributions from the United States, but through greater partnership with and contributions from our allies and others. The Secretary has initiated a process to draw a new budget blueprint that will allow us to shape a Department ready to meet the challenges that we will face in the coming decades. We will do this by reviewing and selecting our priorities, using the available resources, and putting our people in a position to succeed.

Question 10. Many of the President's proposed cuts target foreign aid programs. While many people mistaken assume that foreign aid takes up a large proportion of the overall federal budget, it actually accounts for less than one percent. And while the United States gives more in foreign aid than any other country in absolute terms, we give less than other countries as a percentage of our economy.

When I visited West Africa last year, I saw the crucial work that brave Americans working for the U.S. Agency for International Development were doing. As you said when we met, seeing crates being unpacked with the words, "from the American people" written on them has a powerful impact. So it is important to remember that this is not just charity—foreign aid expands our influence without shedding a drop of blood. Doing good makes us great and keeps us safe.

- Do you believe that foreign aid and the U.S. Agency for International Development play important roles in preserving U.S. global influence and serving U.S. national interests?

Answer. The State Department and USAID work on behalf of the American people to further our national security objectives while promoting our values around the world. As Secretary Tillerson said when he came before this committee, to achieve the stability that is foundational to peace and security in the 21st century, American leadership must not only be renewed, it must be asserted. Our foreign assistance is a critical component of this and it keeps us safe while promoting American leadership and values and supports a more prosperous and healthy global community. As the primary implementer of development assistance, USAID has a model of partnering with host countries, NGOs, the private sector, and other international and multilateral donors, which enhances our leadership in the world and our national security. I am committed to making the State Department and USAID the preeminent force to protect and promote American values in the world, and to utilizing foreign assistance to preserve U.S. global influence.

Question 11. Do you agree with Secretary Tillerson that we should deemphasize our values when dealing with regimes that do not share them?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson affirmed at his nomination hearing that the U.S. must continue to display a commitment to personal liberty, human dignity, and principled action in foreign policy. He assured the committee that under his leadership the Department will work aggressively to advance human rights for everyone. I certainly agree. Our commitment to American values does not waver, no matter what regime we are dealing with.

Question 12. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, what will you do to ensure that the State Department continues to advance democracy, human rights, and the rule of law?

Answer. As I pledged during my confirmation hearing, I am committed to making the State Department the preeminent force to protect American values and promote American values in the world. And will seek to do so using all of the assets available to the Department.

Question 13. Will you maintain women's rights as a priority for the Department, and ensure that women's andgirls' issues are considered in every project undertaken by the State Department?

Answer. The State Department remains committed to continuing the important work of advancing the status of women and girls globally through diplomatic and programmatic activities. As I stated in my testimony, you have my commitment that women's health, women's education, women's empowerment, will remain a priority of the Department.

Question 14. Will you pledge to support the law fully and help ensure that women, including those raped by ISIS terrorists, and who depend on U.S. foreign assistance, will have access to safe abortion services if they wish to terminate their pregnancies?

Answer. If confirmed, I will faithfully execute the law, including as it relates to abortion. I understand the Department of State and USAID are continually working to ensure maximum effectiveness in combating poverty and improving the health and status of women and girls, including the survivors of sexual violence. If confirmed, I will insure that the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development continue to take this issue very seriously.

Question 15. Will you pledge to ensure that women who depend on U.S. foreign assistance who face a life-threatening pregnancy and will die without a safe termination procedure will have access to it?

Answer. If confirmed, I will faithfully execute the law as it relates to abortion. I understand the Department of State and USAID are continually working to ensure maximum effectiveness in improving the health and status of women and girls.

Foreign Service

Question 16. Your written testimony movingly described your personal connection to the Foreign Service and of the sacrifices and dangers many of these brave Americans and their families have faced in many parts of the world. Your uncle, Ambassador William Sullivan, had an extremely distinguished career as an American diplomat. I share your admiration for the men and women of the U.S. Foreign Service.

In visiting countries around the world, I am always impressed with the knowledge, judgement, and dedication of Foreign Service personnel. And I have seen that these patriotic Americans do their job with skill and professionalism regardless of

whether they are serving a Democratic or a Republican president. The Foreign Service Dissent Channel is designed to ensure that a wide range of views are considered in making policy. Use of the Dissent Channel does not indicate disloyalty to the president or an attempt to undermine his policies.

- As Deputy Secretary, will you ensure that Foreign Service personnel and their families receive the support they need to do their jobs?

Answer. Yes, that will be an extremely high priority for me. As I said in my confirmation hearing, I look forward to participating in Secretary Tillerson's review of the mission of the Department of State with the intent of bringing the Department into the 21st century to address the challenges we face today. If confirmed, my goal will be to ensure the Department, including the Foreign Service, is organized and has the tools to carry out U.S. foreign policy. That review must consider the important sacrifices and essential roles played by Foreign Service families in the careers of our diplomatic personnel.

Question 17. Your written testimony movingly described your personal connection to the Foreign Service and of the sacrifices and dangers many of these brave Americans and their families have faced in many parts of the world. Your uncle, Ambassador William Sullivan, had an extremely distinguished career as an American diplomat. I share your admiration for the men and women of the U.S. Foreign Service.

In visiting countries around the world, I am always impressed with the knowledge, judgement, and dedication of Foreign Service personnel. And I have seen that these patriotic Americans do their job with skill and professionalism regardless of whether they are serving a Democratic or a Republican president. The Foreign Service Dissent Channel is designed to ensure that a wide range of views are considered in making policy. Use of the Dissent Channel does not indicate disloyalty to the president or an attempt to undermine his policies.

- Will you listen to the views and recommendations of the State Department's career personnel as you formulate your own views on key positions and represent the Department in interagency deliberations?

Answer. Yes.

Question 18. Your written testimony movingly described your personal connection to the Foreign Service and of the sacrifices and dangers many of these brave Americans and their families have faced in many parts of the world. Your uncle, Ambassador William Sullivan, had an extremely distinguished career as an American diplomat. I share your admiration for the men and women of the U.S. Foreign Service.

In visiting countries around the world, I am always impressed with the knowledge, judgement, and dedication of Foreign Service personnel. And I have seen that these patriotic Americans do their job with skill and professionalism regardless of whether they are serving a Democratic or a Republican president. The Foreign Service Dissent Channel is designed to ensure that a wide range of views are considered in making policy. Use of the Dissent Channel does not indicate disloyalty to the president or an attempt to undermine his policies.

- Will you ensure that career State Department employees do not suffer from political retribution for expressing their views through the Dissent Channel and similar mechanisms?

Answer. Yes, I am fully committed to the Dissent Channel, which is established in the Department's Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM). For over forty years, the Dissent Channel has served as a vehicle for the State Department's U.S. citizen employees to express dissenting or alternative views on substantive issues of policy to the Department's most senior leadership without fear of penalty. It exists because the State Department has a strong interest in facilitating open, creative, and uncensored dialogue on substantive foreign policy issues within the professional foreign affairs community and a responsibility to foster an atmosphere supportive of such dialogue. Pursuant to the FAM, Dissent Channel messages, including the identity of the authors, are a most sensitive element in the internal deliberative process and are to be protected accordingly.

Appointments

Question 19 The Trump administration has been unusually slow to nominate qualified individuals to serve in government. According to the Washington Post, out of 556 key positions requiring Senate Confirmation, 465, or 83 percent, do not even have a formal nominee.

The situation is even worse at the State Department, where there have only been 10 nominations for 119 positions requiring Senate confirmation. That's 91 percent of positions that do not even have a formal nominee. Many of these are crucial am-

bassadorships, including to many of our closest allies, such as France, Germany, and South Korea.

The unfilled positions also include five of six under secretaries and all but two one of the Department's 23 regional and functional assistant secretaries. They include the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, who ensures the safety of our diplomats and their families. And the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, who negotiates nuclear treaties and ensures that other countries comply with them.

This unprecedented lack of personnel makes it hard for foreign governments to talk to the United States, and it breeds strategic incoherence, since we lack the key people responsible for formulating and executing our foreign policy.

- If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, one of your key roles will be management of the Department. How you plan to address this critical failure to fill the Department's vital posts?

Answer. As I said during my confirmation hearing, I commit, if I am confirmed, to making sure that personnel appointments and nominations are moved forward as quickly as possible. In the meantime, the State Department is fortunate to have a deep bench of career professionals ably filling posts across the Department.

NOMINATION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:03 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Cory Gardner, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Gardner [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Young, Isakson, Portman, Shaheen, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, and Merkley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORY GARDNER, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator GARDNER. This hearing will come to order.

Let me welcome you all to this full committee hearing on nominations.

Welcome to the committee, Senator Brown.

Senator Collins, without further ado, we will turn to you to have the privilege of introducing our sole witness today, the Honorable Scott Brown, to serve as Ambassador to New Zealand and concurrently to the Independent State of Samoa. Senator Collins?

STATEMENT OF HON. SUSAN COLLINS, U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey.

It is my pleasure to introduce the President's nominee to be our next Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, Senator Scott Brown, a leader who has spent much of his life in service to our Nation.

Senator Brown and I worked together as colleagues in the United States Senate, and I also consider him to be a valued and trusted friend.

I am proud to introduce him this afternoon and to recommend him to serve our next Ambassador to New Zealand.

In many ways, Senator Brown is an ideal Ambassador for the United States as his life's story is a testament to the American dream. Scott overcame poverty and violence in his childhood. He graduated from college and law school. And he has spent more than 3 decades in public service that spans all levels of government, as well as serving in uniform and in elected office.

It was at Tufts University where Senator Brown graduated cum laude that he first answered the call to serve. He enlisted in Mas-

sachusetts National Guard in 1979 and later was commissioned as an infantry officer through the ROTC program at Northeastern University.

After earning his law degree from Boston College, he continued to serve as a member of the JAG Corps.

During his years in the military, Senator Brown won many awards and held numerous leadership positions. Recently he retired as a colonel after 35 years of dedicated service in both the Massachusetts and Maryland National Guard. His last assignment was at the Pentagon where he served as the Deputy to the Chief Counsel to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

Scott began his long career in public service as an assessor and selectman in the Town of Wrentham, Massachusetts. He then served in the Commonwealth's legislature serving both as a representative and later as a State senator.

In 2010, Scott Brown won a special U.S. Senate election. During his time in the Senate, he was a model of bipartisanship and a devoted advocate for our veterans and our small business owners.

In addition, he ably served on the Senate Armed Services Committee, which equipped him with the policy expertise to appreciate fully our longstanding defense, diplomatic, and intelligence cooperation with New Zealand.

Throughout his time in the Senate, Scott Brown demonstrated leadership in building consensus to achieve common sense solutions, and he did so in a very diplomatic way.

So I believe that those are essential skills for a U.S. Ambassador.

In short, Senator Scott Brown's experiences have prepared him so well to represent our Nation as U.S. Ambassador in Wellington. I am confident that he will continue to strengthen our vital partnerships with New Zealand and Samoa, and I urge this committee to support this important nomination.

Again, it is a great honor to be here before you today to support my former colleague and my friend, Scott Brown. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Collins, for those kind words of introduction. I know you have a busy schedule, so we appreciate your time to be here with you today and look forward to the rest of the confirmation hearing.

And I noticed the Chairman of the full committee.

So please, feel free to attend to the rest of your business, if you would like.

The Chairman of the full committee, Senator Corker, has joined us as well. If you would like to provide a counter to those glowing words—— [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER [continuing]. Chairman Corker, please join us at the dais.

The CHAIRMAN. If I am ever nominated for anything, I want her to introduce me. [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Chairman Corker.

Thank you, Senator Collins, for that introduction.

And though we have had our share in the past of disagreements, New Zealand is one of our oldest and staunchest allies, a historical ally, around the globe. Our nations founded the Australian, New Zealand, United States, or ANZUS, alliance in 1951. Our soldiers

have fought and died side by side in many global conflicts. Many Americans are well familiar with the exceptional bravery shown by Kiwi soldiers at historic battles like Gallipoli and beyond. The 2010 Wellington Declaration and the 2012 Wellington Declaration on Defense Cooperation have elevated our relations to a new level.

Our nations have a robust trade relationship. Major U.S. exports to New Zealand include civilian aircraft, refined petroleum, autos, and auto parts. And I firmly believe that our ties are critical to regional peace and stability, and I look forward to hearing Senator Brown's testimony on how to grow this vital relationship.

With that, I will turn to the ranking member, Senator Markey of Massachusetts.

STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

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

And many thanks to our colleague from Maine, Senator Collins, for joining us to introduce Senator Brown.

Senator Brown, you are a true son of New England, born in Maine, now living in New Hampshire and, during the decades in between, serving the people of Massachusetts at every level of government. Your distinguished career has included stops at Wrentham town hall, the Massachusetts statehouse, the halls of the United States Senate, and the National Guard.

Your success in overcoming hardships early in life and then reaching the upper echelons of public service is an inspiration not only to the children of Massachusetts and our country but to the children everywhere that you will be now representing our country.

And I know that you are enormously qualified for this position, having been educated at Wakefield High School, Tufts University, and Boston College Law School. Like me, your education is not tainted by any values or lessons learned outside the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. [Laughter.]

Senator MARKEY. So we thank you for your service, and we thank Gail and your family. They have our heartfelt thanks for all of their service to our Commonwealth and to the nation. And we congratulate you on your nomination as our Ambassador to New Zealand and to Samoa and appreciation for your willingness, once again, to serve our country in this new role.

The United States has closely collaborated with New Zealand since World War II as partners promoting security, stability, peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific and throughout the world. Our relationship with New Zealand is absolutely central to the security and prosperity of the United States and the rest of the Asia-Pacific, a region that enjoys enormous opportunities but also faces looming threats to both our national security and the peace and stability of the entire world. From North Korea's nuclear and missile programs to sovereignty disputes in the East and South China Seas to the risk of nuclear proliferation, American leadership is essential for the Asia-Pacific nations to resolve differences through diplomacy and international law rather than through threats and intimidation.

That is why I am glad that you have been willing to accept this nomination from the President because I think you are just the perfect person at the perfect time to have this job. So thank you.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Markey. And I too want to echo the comments. Welcome to the family. Thank you for your commitment and service. This is a family effort. It truly is. And we appreciate it greatly.

Senator Portman, Senator Barrasso, Senator Shaheen, I do not know if you have any comments before we turn to Senator Brown's opening statements.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROB PORTMAN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OHIO

Senator PORTMAN. Just quickly, if I could, Mr. Chairman, to echo the comments that you and Senator Markey both made about Scott Brown's qualifications for this job. It is a big job because he will be, if confirmed—and I feel confident that he will—the only U.S. Ambassador really in the region and certainly the only one in the New Zealand-Australia area, which is an incredibly important role for us. We now have a more dangerous and volatile world, and those are two of our best allies and have been with us, literally standing with us, in conflicts from Afghanistan to Iraq and beyond. So I think it is important we have somebody there and someone who has the stature of Senator Brown and the relationships, frankly, both here in the Senate and throughout the Washington community.

So I am delighted he is willing to step forward. I have had the opportunity meet with Senator Brown and talk at some length about some of the issues with New Zealand, including trade issues, including issues with regard to our military relationship, which is much improved I think over the last several years that he wants to continue to build on. He has actually served in Afghanistan, as I understand it, at the time when New Zealand also had a contingent there and understands the importance of working cooperatively with us. Senator Brown has some interesting ideas with regard to the relationship between New Zealand and China and how the United States needs to play a more central role in that region.

So I think he is going to be the right guy, and it is really important for us to have somebody and have a U.S. presence in that region. And I am delighted he is willing to serve.

And I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to say a few comments.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Portman.

Senator Shaheen or Senator Barrasso?

Without any further hesitation, to Senator Brown for your opening statements.

STATEMENT OF SCOTT P. BROWN, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO NEW ZEALAND, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Markey, members of the committee. It is a great honor to be here before the committee, and I want to just say thank you for those kind words. Obviously, big shoes to fill with the prior Ambassador and obviously to fulfill your expectations as well.

I want to thank President Trump for giving me the opportunity to represent the interests of the United States of America in these two wonderful countries.

In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for supporting this appointment, and I very much look forward to working with him and his team to achieve our foreign policy goals in the months and years to come.

Finally, I am thankful for the opportunity to appear before this honorable committee. As a former member of this body, I want to say thank you to my Republican colleagues who have previously voiced their support, and I also want to thank Senator Shaheen, Senator Markey, Senator Warren, and Senator Hassan for their early indication of support. It means a tremendous amount to me and my family.

Before I begin, I would like to express the thanks of me and my family for the patience, mentoring, and guidance that Senator Collins provided me when I was here. As you know of her work ethic, I understand I may be off over the last couple of days, but 6,357 consecutive votes, which is the record in the United States Senate, and it is something that I know she is proud of and I am proud of as a citizen of this country to know that she has so much dedication to this job. And it is going to be an exceedingly difficult record to break I venture to guess.

I joined the military 35 years ago when I was 19 years old, and during that time in the military starting as an enlisted man and working my way up the ranks as an infantry officer, a quartermaster officer, JAG officer. Retired recently in the rank of colonel, as was referenced by the Senator. The last 4 years, while being a Senator, I also worked in the Pentagon as Deputy to the Chief Counsel for one of the Joint Chiefs. And it was one of the most enjoyable, uplifting experiences of my military career to be there in the hub of the action to basically be there and work hand in hand with one of the Joint Chiefs and his team.

My responsibility, one of the things I am most proud of, during that time period is that me and my team were able to rewrite the sexual assault regulations in the National Guard, which are in fact in place. Teams are investigating and they are doing incredible work. And I know Senator Shaheen is very concerned about that, as others should be. And I can tell you firsthand that it is working very, very well.

An attorney in private practice since 1985, I know that those skills that have been given me in that practice have allowed me to

hone in on the ability to solve problems. And I tried to use that as a United States Senator and also will hopefully use it, if confirmed, in my role as the new Ambassador of the United States for those two great countries.

As was referenced earlier, I have over 30 years of public service, starting as an assessor, selectman, State rep, State senator, the United States Senate. I served on the Committee on Armed Services, ranking member of Airland; Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs where I was the ranking member on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security; Veterans Affairs, as well as Small Business and Entrepreneurship; four great committees where I enjoyed working with many of you on solving many of our country's problems.

Some of the highlights and things that I am most proud of is working with Senator Gillibrand on the Stock Act to prohibit members of the executive branch and Congress from using insider information to benefit themselves, working with Senator Carper on good government initiatives. As you all know, that is his thing, and we just went after every wasteful dollar to try to make it better for the American taxpayer. And then, obviously, with Senator McCaskill working on the Arlington Cemetery bill to make sure our veterans were buried with dignity and honor.

I could go on and on. I was very proud of being the lead Republican sponsor on the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and also working to deal with our Hire Hero Veterans bill to give our veterans a chance to be re-employed.

For someone like me whose mom and dad were married and divorced four times each and who lived in 17 houses by the time I was 18, as Senator Markey is aware of being from Massachusetts and being my former Congressman and somebody I always have looked up to—a lot of violence in the family. There were a lot of tough choices. I had to grow up pretty quickly. And to think that, you know, Mom was on welfare for a period of time. And I remember her working two or three jobs to keep a roof over our heads and keep my sister and me safe.

And it is those life experiences—if you said, boy, you are going to be a United States Senator some day, it was very unlikely. But I was blessed and I am still blessed to have an opportunity to serve this great country. Being a United States Senator was one of the greatest honors of my life.

And my wife and family are looking forward to serving not only the President and his team but you as Members of the Senate. You know how I am and you know that if there is an issue, you just need to pick up the phone and call if you have any specific concerns about what is happening in that area. And I will be, quite frankly, looking back for your guidance and help in those areas as well.

Throughout my life, no matter what job I have had, no matter what experiences I have had, there is one experience that trumps all others and that is being married to my partner and friend Gail for over 30 years and father to my two great children. Why do you always get emotional when you talk about your family? I am sorry. Ayla is here. She came in from Nashville. She is a successful music singer in Nashville. And she is here with her friend Rob. I appre-

ciate them coming. Arianna is here somewhere. Arianna is in her fourth year at Cornell Vet School. She took time off from her surgical rotations to come down. And her husband Jimmy is here. He works for the Justice Department for 4 years, and he is going to be in the new class of the FBI academy. So we are very proud of each and every one of our family members.

Mr. Chairman, when the President asked me to serve in this post in New Zealand and Samoa, I want you to know that it was my first choice. It was my choice. I wanted to go to an area that, quite frankly, plays an integral and key role in the Pacific region, a real leader, an independent, thoughtful leader in New Zealand when it comes to addressing that region's very serious needs and concerns, especially with regard to China and its expansionism, changing the law of the sea and the law of the air, and building islands and militarizing them that really just changed international law as we have all known them.

And in addition to that, North Korea, you know, the belligerence and the constant testing of missiles. New Zealand plays a very key role as a member of the Five Eyes intelligence network to not only share information with our other partners but also in the war on terror, leading up to not only side by side helping us in the war against terror but also dealing in humanitarian efforts to make other people's lives better and more fulfilling.

New Zealand has always been an unwavering friend and partner to the United States, as evidenced by the fact that they have men and women who have served and have lost life and limb in the battle against terror. Right now, they are our tenth partner when it comes to dealing with ISIS and that battle that really needs to be taken on on a worldwide basis.

Their efforts to help reconstruct and train in Iraq the police and military forces is amazing, and they need to be commended. And I want to thank the citizens of New Zealand and the men and women who have served in that effort.

I have had the opportunity to visit China, Taiwan, and Japan. And visiting those places, as well as my cumulative experience not only in this body but in other bodies, has given me a solid understanding of the region. And we talked about the expansionism of China, the belligerence of North Korea and what they are doing. These are important areas in which we need to really stay focused and work with our friends in that region. And certainly New Zealand is one of those friends.

And just as there are challenges in the Pacific region, there are amazing opportunities. I believe notwithstanding what is happening with TPP, that there are amazing opportunities to increase trade, to increase security operations, work in training exercises with our military, work on cybersecurity, Senator, which I know you are very concerned about in that region as evidenced by what happened recently. So I look at what is happening right now in that part of the world as one of the most active, vibrant, necessary areas where we need to play a key role. So I am honored to have that opportunity, if confirmed, to participate in that process.

Are there opportunities for bilateral trade with New Zealand? That is up to the U.S. Trade Representative. If confirmed, I look forward to playing a role to trying to bring the countries together

to maximize any and all trading opportunities that we have with New Zealand and Samoa.

I feel honored to be nominated by President Trump to represent the United States as Ambassador to two such culturally and economically diverse countries. And if confirmed, within the first month and a half to 2 months of service, I plan to, obviously, go to the embassy in Samoa to make sure that we can establish and continue to nurture those amazing relations because if you remember from our conversations, we actually have a maritime border, American Samoa, with the Independent State of Samoa. And there are some very real drug trafficking, illegal fishing, safety and security, natural disaster opportunities that we can really do well to expand upon. And we have a large Samoan population in the United States, and there is a symbiotic relationship there. And they need to be treated with dignity and respect as well. So I look forward to that opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I would like to say to you and the committee that I have had a blessed life, notwithstanding those challenges, Senator, that you referenced. And being nominated to this position has been truly a humbling process. I have shard the training and other things that we have gone through as a family to get to this point in time. And I pledge to you all and to the President and the American people that I will work tirelessly and professionally to faithfully represent American interests in this ambassadorial position and in whatever capacity I am called to serve.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear, and I am certainly eager to take any and all questions that the committee may have.

[Mr. Brown's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SCOTT P. BROWN

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to New Zealand and the Independent State of Samoa. I want to thank President Trump for his trust and for giving me the opportunity to represent the interests of the United States of America in these two wonderful countries.

In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for supporting this appointment, and I very much look forward to working with him and his team to achieve our foreign policy goals in the months and years to come.

Finally, I am thankful for the opportunity to appear before this honorable committee. As a former member of this body, I want to say thank you to Senator Warren, Senator Markey, Senator Shaheen and Senator Hassan, among others, for their early indication of support for my candidacy.

Before I begin, I would like to express the thanks of me and my family for the patience, mentoring, guidance and friendship that Senator Collins has shown me over the years. Not only is she my sister Robin's U.S. Senator in Maine, but she has been someone that I have had a great amount of love and respect for over the years. I want to thank her for her dedication to public service and commend her for her 6357th consecutive vote in the US Senate. It is a record that will not only increase, but will be exceedingly difficult to break. Thank you Senator Collins.

For well over 30 years, I have served my town, state and country in many different appointed and elected capacities. I served in the military for almost 35 years, joining the Army National Guard at the age of 19 after the big blizzard of 1978. After that tragic storm, I saw how our Massachusetts National Guardsmen saved the lives of our citizens, inspiring me to emulate their call to service. Soon thereafter, I raised my hand and took the oath to serve, and joined as an enlisted man. During my time in the military, I was branch qualified as an Infantry Officer, Quartermaster Officer, and a Judge Advocate General. Two years ago I retired at

the rank of colonel, with my last four years of service being at the Pentagon as the Deputy to the Chief Legal Counsel for the Joint Chief of the National Guard

Bureau. During that time at the Pentagon, my team and I wrote the sexual assault regulations and set up the investigation teams that are being used today in the National Guard with great effectiveness and results.

In addition, I have been an attorney in private practice since 1985, and I am confident that, if confirmed, I can bring the interpersonal skills and problem solving ability that I have honed in that role to my new role as Ambassador.

In public service, I was honored to serve as a town Assessor, Selectman, Massachusetts State Representative and State Senator. From 2010–2013, I served with most of you as a United States Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. During my time in the U.S. Senate, I served on the Committee on Armed Services, as the Ranking Member on Airland, on the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and as the Ranking Member on Federal Financial Management, Government Information and International Security, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

I was proud to have been recognized as one of the most bipartisan Senators during my years here. Among the accomplishments I am proud of, I worked with Senator Gillibrand to pass the Stock Act—which stops insider trading for members of Congress—Senator Carper on good government and fraud, waste and abuse issues, Senator McCaskill to pass the Arlington Cemetery Bill, and many other Senators on the Hire A Hero Veteran's Bill, the elimination of the 3 percent withholding, no contracting with the enemy, and re-authorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and more.

For someone like me, whose mom and dad were married four times each, living in 17 homes by the time I was 18, being an abuse survivor and my family being periodic welfare recipients, I remember my mom having to work two to three jobs to keep a roof over our heads to keep my sister and me safe. For me, becoming a U.S. Senator was not only unlikely, but without a doubt was one of the greatest honors of my life. Being asked to serve again as an ambassador to two great countries is another great honor.

However, no matter what jobs I have had throughout my life, or political or civilian capacities for which I served, there is one experience that trumps all other accomplishments. That is being married to my partner and wife of 30 years, Gail and being the father to our two children Ayla, a country music star living in Nashville, and Arianna, a third year Veterinary Student at Cornell University. With the Chairman's permission, I would like to introduce those members of my immediate family who are with me: Gail, Ayla, Arianna, Jimmy, mom.

Mr. Chairman, when the President asked me where I would like to serve, the posting in New Zealand and Samoa was my first choice.

I am honored to be considered for the posts in New Zealand and Samoa and excited for the opportunity to serve in Asia-Pacific because of the region's incredible importance to the world's security, economic prosperity, and innovation opportunities. There is great potential for us to improve and strengthen our ties in all of those areas.

If I am confirmed as Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, I will do all I can to grow our ties with New Zealand and Samoa and ensure stability, security, and prosperity for our three countries. With the help of our diplomatic and national security professionals at the State Department and in all other parts of our government, I will advance American interests and support these two longstanding partners.

New Zealand has historically been an unwavering friend of the United States. That long and remarkable history has had its challenges, but hard work and strong communication efforts have made our ties even stronger. The U.S.-New Zealand relationship has also been strengthened due to New Zealand's commitment to our shared war against terror as well as reconstruction and stability efforts in the Middle East. I would like to publically thank the citizens of New Zealand and especially the men and women of its armed forces. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will help to deepen our security relationship.

I have had the opportunity to visit China, Taiwan, and Japan. Visiting those places, as well as my cumulative experience in government and military service, has given me a firsthand understanding of the region. Chinese military and economic expansion, as well as the North Korean nuclear threat, pose a challenge to American interests in the Asia-Pacific region and the world. There are many important areas in which we need to work with our partners in New Zealand, to properly deter potential conflicts in this region.

Just as there are challenges in the Pacific region, there are also opportunities. The United States is one of New Zealand's top trading partners. If confirmed, I hope to dramatically assist in the promotion of even greater economic, scientific, and cultural exchanges between the United States and New Zealand, including strength-

ening Pacific cooperation. With regard to investments, I will focus on both New Zealand's investment in the United States, and American investment in New Zealand.

I am also committed to assisting in increasing bilateral trade and commerce opportunities, assisting with the illegal fishing concerns, and recognizing and helping to solve environmental issues. In addition, I look forward to working on cyber security issues, and ensuring strong intellectual property protection and enforcement as we address our mutual priority intellectual property issues. Above all, my greatest responsibility will be to assist and protect the interests of U.S. citizens who are either living in or visiting New Zealand and Samoa.

I feel truly honored to be nominated by President Trump to represent the United States as Ambassador to two such culturally and economically diverse countries. If confirmed, within the first two months of service, I plan to visit the independent State of Samoa, which shares a maritime border with the United States. The Independent State of Samoa and parts of American Samoa have experienced serious environmental disasters, including a devastating tsunami that destroyed many parts of the islands. Being an island state presents many different challenges and opportunities. If confirmed, I plan to learn and try to understand how the United States can assist Samoa and strengthen our relationship. That relationship was enhanced in 2012 when both countries signed a Mutual Law Enforcement Agreement, which allows Samoan maritime officials to utilize U.S. Coast Guard and Navy Vessels in policing Samoan waters. We will continue to work in cooperation on maritime issues, including putting a stop to the trafficking of drugs and human beings and halting illegal fishing. For over 50 years, the Peace Corps has maintained a vibrant and necessary assistance program in the country and I look forward to learning more about how we can assist even more.

As you are aware, American Samoa has a strong cultural and geographic bond with not only the Independent State of Samoa, but also has a strong bond with Samoan communities in the United States. It will be important to cooperate closely with the American Samoan delegation to the U.S. Congress to see how we can improve trade and promote tourism and democracy.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I would like to say to you and the committee, that I have had a blessed life. Being nominated to this position has been a humbling process. I pledge to you, our President and the American people that I will work tirelessly and professionally to faithfully represent American interests in this Ambassadorial position, and in whatever capacity I am called to do so.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today, and I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you very much for that testimony.

And we will begin with questions, and I will just start with this. You talked about the role that New Zealand plays in the Pacific. Obviously, New Zealand plays a very important role in terms of political stability and economic stability and security as well.

What role as Ambassador would you play to help further New Zealand's role in the region?

Mr. BROWN. Thank you for the question, Senator.

If confirmed, I would obviously seek immediately the appropriate briefings dealing with commerce, with security, and any opportunities that this President, this administration, and you as Senators want to put forth. My understanding, with all the research that I have done and speaking and listening and learning during training, is that there are some really wonderful opportunities. We have about $11.5 billion to $12 billion of trade going back and forth, a slight trade deficit, but we have a surplus when it comes to services. The areas in particular where we provide planes, cars, replacement parts, high tech, biotech opportunities—also, there is a relationship now with NASA and trying to expand job opportunities in that field. We also have, on the other hand, beef, lamb, wine. So there is a pretty active and vibrant trading between the two countries right now.

And I am hopeful that if confirmed, I will have an opportunity to work with the Commerce Department and the U.S. Trade Rep-

resentative to find other niches where not only U.S. citizens can invest in New Zealand to create jobs but also, more importantly, the other way around, have New Zealand, which they are already the number two investment in the United States for that country, try to increase those opportunities.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Brown.

I want to make sure that we get to the other Senators who have attended the hearing this morning. So I will turn right now to Senator Markey and then come back for questions.

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

In my office, we spoke about the fishing industry and the involuntary servitude issues that New Zealand has. Could you expand upon that, explain to the committee what your views are in terms of what the American position should be in dealing with those issues?

Mr. BROWN. Well, Senator, first of all, if confirmed, I look forward to really doing a deep dive into those very important issues. From the research and other information I have gathered, Senator Shaheen and you, Senator Markey, and former Congressman Barney Frank, we worked tirelessly on fishing issues. It is something that is very personal to me and hopefully, if confirmed, I will be able to bring that expertise or maybe suggestions or new ideas to the people of New Zealand and Samoa.

That being said, with regard to, if I may expand upon it a little bit, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and involuntary servitude, New Zealand is a tier 1 country. They have done amazing work in addressing those very real concerns because there is a flow from China, Indonesia, and other parts of that region in or through New Zealand and/or through Samoa. The Government of New Zealand has recognized it. They have passed legislation not only for those issues, but in addition, for the victims who have been affected by that.

With regard to your specific question, something that really kind of stuck out when I was doing my research and doing that deep dive to the limit that I can was the fact that, obviously, fishing is huge. It is an island nation. And there are folks who will sign onto a fishing vessel and, you know, they will say, hey, come on board. You will be the first mate and you will get paid X. Then they get on board and it is not quite what it seems to be. And New Zealand has recognized that, and they have passed legislation to address that type of thing where they now have mechanisms in place to not only do spot boarding, spot checking, they keep excellent records of boats and vessels that have a history of that. And they have passed legislation, maritime legislation, in dealing with that type of arrangement.

Quite frankly, I had no idea it was actually something that happened. It is not only that. It is in other industries potentially, tourism, agriculture, and the like. And I look forward, if confirmed, to really learning more about it and trying to offer any suggestions based on our experiences.

Senator MARKEY. There was a lull in the relationship between the United States and New Zealand in defense cooperation in the 1980s, and that relationship has been rebuilt. How does your expe-

rience in the National Guard inform this relationship in terms of what you think might be possible in the years ahead?

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Senator.

As the chairman referenced earlier, we have had a historic and wonderful partnership with New Zealand and Australia through the ANZUS Treaty. There was a point when New Zealand changed its position on nuclear proliferation, the use of nuclear weapons and the like, and the United States did not agree with that. Obviously, if confirmed, I am going to do a deeper diver and get the appropriate briefings.

But that seems to have warmed somewhat in that to celebrate the country's 75th anniversary, the New Zealand Royal Navy asked if we would send a representative. And the USS Sampson was able to go there. There has always been a—recently since that change, the Government of New Zealand prohibits any type of nuclear militarized or powered vessels from coming into their ports. That is their choice. We went in and were asked to come in. We were approved at the highest levels by the New Zealand Government. And it was really a wonderful first step in rehabilitating that relationship.

Sadly or ironically, while the Sampson was there, the country of New Zealand had a 7.8 on the Richter scale earthquake that really did some very serious damage to that country. And the Sampson was asked to stay for relief, humanitarian and other disaster relief. And I am understanding only from what I have read and researched—and obviously, if confirmed, I want to do the deeper dive—that the people of New Zealand were very, appreciative of that humanitarian effort. And it showed I think the United States and New Zealand—we are really brothers when it comes to these issues. We are people of the world. I believe we are one of the most philanthropic countries in the world and the most helpful people in the world, and I believe New Zealanders are very similar. And it just created a great opportunity.

So, Senator, to answer your question about my military experience, I look forward to getting the appropriate briefings, if confirmed, and meeting with their minister of defense and see if there are opportunities to do more in terms of cooperation in that region.

Senator MARKEY. And, Mr. Chairman, I was able to talk for about 45 minutes with Senator Brown in my office, and I felt that he had a real grasp of all the key issues that confront our relationship with New Zealand. I would just like to put that on the record as well.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Markey.

Senator Portman?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate, Senator Brown, you talking about the USS Sampson experience and what a change that they not only permitted us to be there but then looked to us for help and we responded in kind. And that is consistent with the broader relationship. So I think your being there will help to cement that relationship in so many ways, but one is the military cooperation and the ability to be of assistance in something like a natural disaster that you talked to me about in my office.

I want to ask you something that you may not be able to talk about to the extent that you have classified information that is not appropriate. But it is about the special relationship we have with New Zealand as a partner in the Five Eyes intelligence group. What do you think the value of that is to the United States, to the extent you can address it? And how does that work so folks who are not knowledgeable about the importance of that can better understand it?

Mr. BROWN. Well, Senator, thank you for your question.

And I have not been briefed yet. If confirmed, I will get those appropriate briefings before I head out to post. But from what I understand, there has been a very positive relationship, obviously, between the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand to gather and share information for security purposes to understand what is happening throughout the world.

I know that we value very, very much New Zealand's contributions and, quite frankly, guidance in a whole host of issues in that region because that is their turf. And the fact that they are there—and they are in an interesting position in which they do a tremendous amount of trade. China is their number one trading partner.

And the thing that has really kind of stuck out with me is the fact that even though there is that business relationship, that trade relationship, they are not afraid to stand up and say, excuse me, China, by the way, the fact that you are building islands and militarizing them and changing the law of the air and the law of sea and international law as has been in place forever, we do not like that. And I think that says a lot about not only the leadership in New Zealand but the fact that they are not afraid to stand up and be counted.

So I look forward, Senator, once confirmed, to learn more about that and be our country's representative in assisting in that area.

Senator PORTMAN. Yes. They are fiercely independent, kind of like some New Englanders I know.

Senator PORTMAN. You know, it is interesting you say that, Senator. They are fiercely independent. And you cannot tell them what you want. You have to ask them. And one of the things that my family and I—my wife and I look forward to in particular is getting a fair go by the people of New Zealand. What that means is a fair shot. Going down there, we are a clean slate. We want to be there. We are eager to go. We want to serve. We want to listen and learn and then bring that back to our citizens and to you as Senators.

Senator PORTMAN. You mentioned China. New Zealand and China signed a free trade agreement back in 2008. And since that time, the trade between the two has grown significantly. Now they are negotiating an upgrade to their FTA, their free trade agreement, and exploring how New Zealand can fit into China's One Belt, One Road initiative, sort of recreating the Silk Road.

In your view, might this developing trade relationship with China be a problem for us? And what should the United States do in response to it? And how can we perhaps deepen our economic ties with New Zealand at this time?

Mr. BROWN. Well, as you referenced, Senator, they are renegotiating the free trade agreement, and if confirmed, I will learn more about that, obviously. But from all my research, we are in fact the

number three trading partner. I would like to be number two and potentially number one. Can that happen? I am not sure, but I know that if there is an opportunity for a business in New Zealand to come into the United States and I am notified of it, I am going to notify the Commerce Department and the U.S. Trade Representative and make sure that we can make that happen. If there are opportunities and niches that we as businesses in the United States can actually do business in New Zealand like we do with planes and cars and now with NASA working on the weather balloon experimentation, I want to seek those opportunities out. I think that is part of a role of an ambassador is to work with the business leaders and civilian leadership to try to enhance those great relationships. I think there is a great opportunity, subject obviously to many factors, to work in that regard and improve that relationship.

Senator PORTMAN. Just one final question and give you a chance to talk about Samoa for a second because I know this is an ambassadorship actually to New Zealand and Samoa, as explained to me.

Mr. BROWN. Correct.

Senator PORTMAN. I did not know that previously.

And then, of course, the special relationship with Australia in that region. As I said, you are going to be the first Ambassador confirmed and maybe the first one for a while in that region.

But in terms of Samoa, what are your objectives there? What would be your hopes to be able to achieve with regard to our relationship with Samoa?

Mr. BROWN. As I said in my original testimony, Samoa—we share a border. They are 3,000 miles away from New Zealand by the way. So it is not like I am just going to hop on a plane and I will be there in an hour. It is going to be something that we are going to have to plan for a good week away.

That being said, it is going to be very exciting to work with an island country that we actually share a border with and the fact that they have actually been subjected to a tsunami and had joint needs and we were able to come in and help with those needs.

The Independent State of Samoa is just that. It is an independent state. It has a very strong and stable government, wonderful people who are looking forward to living and growing and taking care of their families like everybody else in the world. And they deserve the representation that they are going to get, just like New Zealand does, regardless of its size. So I anticipate going there and working with the consul general there. We have an embassy but there is one American representative, and we have a larger staff, obviously—if confirmed, going and listening and learning to what his needs are and then moving forward in trying to develop those relationships. I am excited to have two countries.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, we are excited that you are interested in serving, and we look forward to getting the confirmation process going here in this committee and then helping you on the floor and then seeing you serve our great country in that important region of the world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Portman.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And congratulations, Senator Brown. I certainly very much appreciate your willingness to continue to serve the country. And welcome to your family, to Gail. I know that when we you serve, Gail serves too. So we very much appreciate that joint effort.

And thank you for taking some time to sit down with me and talk about how you view this position. I very much appreciated your insights into New Zealand. And as we said, you are going to a beautiful country that has been a very good friend of the United States for a very long time.

And I want to follow up a little bit on Senator Portman's question about China and the trade relationship because, as you know, New Zealand was a founding member of the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership, which was really the foundation for TPP. And without that, as you pointed out, there is a question about how New Zealand will continue to go forward with China.

So I know you have talked about the potential trade opportunities between the United States and New Zealand. So can you talk a little bit about where you think some of those opportunities lie?

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

As we discussed and as you just referenced, we have pulled out, it appears, from TPP. New Zealand has moved forward in that regard. I learned today that they are moving forward with Japan as well.

So subject obviously to confirmation and getting the details of that particular relationship and what the opportunities are, through the research that I have actually been doing, I think there is a great opportunity actually to continue to work on the high tech, biotech areas that we really have expertise in. In addition, there is a wonderful opportunity I think to help them with their fishing and some of the illegal fishing that is happening there, to give them some guidance on what we have done in our region to protect fishing stocks and protect that livelihood. There are some potential opportunities dealing with climate. It is something that is very real and serious there. And I look forward to going and listening and learning and understanding what their challenges are, then conveying it back to you and the administration to see where we can find common ground.

Without having been given the appropriate economic briefings yet, I can only guess and I think that would be inappropriate. But if there are opportunities, Senator, if there are opportunities in New Hampshire, for example, please note that you have my word that I will work very closely with you to make sure we create jobs in New Hampshire and make sure we can create an opportunity to grow and expand jobs in our State.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I appreciate that. And I know Senator Markey talked about your history in Massachusetts, but I would point out that you are currently a resident of New Hampshire. So I especially appreciate that.

And you mentioned climate change. And I know that you have supported alternative energies, solar and wind and nuclear power, as a way to reduce our U.S. dependence on foreign oil. Can you talk

about other potential areas of cooperation with New Zealand as we look at our alternative energy future and what we need to do?

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Senator.

Yes. I am an all-of-the-above approach: wind, solar, nuclear, hydro, geothermal, siting, permitting. I think it is really an entire and total package. And if confirmed, I look forward to learning more about what New Zealand's needs are, but I know they have done a tremendous amount to try to reduce their use of fossil fuels and dealing with the issues that dramatically affect that region by using wind and solar.

If there are opportunities, once again, in our country to bring those goods to New Zealand, I am all ears, and I will work with you and work with anybody in this building, to include the Commerce Department and the Trade Representative, to say, hey, by the way, we have a better way of doing it. Can we bring the people over to talk to you? And that is, I think, one of the most important jobs that an ambassador has is that facilitator to try to create economic opportunity.

Senator SHAHEEN. Absolutely.

Mr. BROWN. So, Senator, I am all ears. If you have suggestions, when I find out, I am happy to personally brief you and see if there are any joint things that we can work on.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

And finally, you referenced this in your opening statement and some of your responses, but that is the important role that the New Zealand has in the South China Sea or in terms of what is happening in the South China Sea and what China is doing. How important is our relationship with New Zealand as we look at trying to continue to deter some of the expansionist tendencies of China and the concern that our other allies in the Pacific region have about what China is doing?

Mr. BROWN. I think the concern about China is real as I have said publicly when I was a U.S. Senator. We took action in dealing with the manipulation of China's currency. You were there. You voted on it. It passed 100 to nothing, if my memory serves me.

Once again, if confirmed, I am going to immediately get the appropriate briefings as to the extent of what is really happening, but based on what I have seen and read, there is no real reason to be building islands and militarizing and changing the law of the air and law of the sea and changing potential trade and travel routes in that part of the world just because.

And the thing that I love about what New Zealand has done, even though they have a very strong trading relationship with them, they were the first ones—one of the first countries to actually stand up and be counted and be noticed and point out their objections to those actions.

In addition, when North Korea, as it is still lobbing missiles around the region—they were one of the first ones to say this is completely unacceptable. And I love the independent spirit of the New Zealand people based on what I have learned and heard, and I have been asking a thousand questions every day.

So rest assured, they are a critical friend and partner when it comes to helping us understand what is going on in that region. And without Australia and New Zealand and our other partners in

that part of the world, I think we would be at a tactical disadvantage. So I am excited to try to enhance and improve that relationship.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much. And again, thank you for your willingness to serve. I look forward to working with you when you are confirmed.

Mr. BROWN. Same here, Senator. Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

And, Senator Brown, I want to reiterate some of the comments that have been made as we look at the interests of the United States as it rests with the rest of the region, how we make sure that we are working with New Zealand in our interests and helping further their interests because they do overlap many times and making sure that we can coordinate that work together. Many of us on the committee are pursuing efforts in Asia that would help provide reassurance to the entire region and then, of course, New Zealand, Australia—the work that they can do in China and trade opportunities with our Asia partners to make sure that we are furthering interest in trade, furthering interest in security, furthering interest in economic opportunities. I look forward to the leadership that you are going to provide when this committee gives you that fair go for your nomination.

And so I want to thank you for attending today's hearing, to everyone here, to Senator Brown for providing us with your testimony and responses.

For the information of the committee members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Friday, including for members to submit questions for the record.

I want to thank your family and to certainly kindly ask you to make sure that he gets his homework done on those questions for the record as soon as possible. Those responses will be made part of the record.

And with that, thank you all. The committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:48 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO SCOTT BROWN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy is something that I have taken seriously throughout my career and I am proud of my record on these critical issues. I am very proud to say that I helped rewrite the sexual assault regulations for the National Guard, while performing my National Guard service at the Pentagon. These regulations were implemented and are being used today with great success.

Additionally, as a Member of the U.S. Senate, I was involved in supporting legislation and working with advocates to prohibit child and human trafficking. I am grateful to have been part of that legislation, and if confirmed, will continue to work to combat this battle as Ambassador.

Finally, as someone who has endured hardships myself, I understand the need to make every effort to combat sexual abuse and protect the rights of victims. I have worked on these issues for a very long time and have been fortunate to be recog-

nized and receive awards for my efforts. Should I be confirmed as Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, I would continue to prioritize this work.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in New Zealand and Samoa? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in New Zealand and Samoa? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. As I said in my hearing, New Zealand is a Tier 1 country with respect to trafficking in persons, and they have done great work so far to address this issue through legislation and stepped up law enforcement. In just this past year New Zealand has taken a number of additional measures to increase awareness, crack down on traffickers, and engage civil society. Samoa, as an island nation, faces similar challenges with respect to trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I look forward to working with New Zealand and Samoan officials to continue addressing these issues and share best practices between our two governments.

Question 3. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response?

Answer. New Zealand takes the issue of trafficking in persons seriously and I look forward to partnering with their authorities to find better ways to address it, as well as other human rights issues. Thanks to our close bilateral relationship and New Zealand's commitment to human rights, they are natural partners for addressing human rights issues not only in New Zealand, but in the wider Pacific region and beyond. I look forward to working with them to advance these issues.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in New Zealand and Samoa?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and non-governmental organizations in New Zealand and Samoa.

Question 5. Will you engage with New Zealand and Samoa on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with New Zealand and Samoa authorities to engage on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance. I will also seek to exchange best practices between our governments.

Question 6. Will you commit to providing information to this committee if you become aware of emoluments from foreign governments or government-owned companies being directed to the President, his immediate family, or anyone else in the executive branch?

Answer. Yes.

Question 7. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What will you do at the Mission to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign and Civil Service? What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with all members of the embassy community to promote and foster an inclusive and diverse embassy team. Encouraging this type of community will foster creativity and productivity for our whole workforce.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO SCOTT BROWN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. The environment in New Zealand continues to be challenging for U.S. innovative biopharmaceutical companies looking to invest and compete successfully. Specifically, significant challenges exist regarding intellectual property protections and transparency in decisions made by the Government. How will you work with New Zealand to improve the business environment to ensure that innovative industries, such as the biopharmaceutical industry, have the protections and security necessary to succeed?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to increasing bilateral trade and commerce opportunities for all U.S. companies in New Zealand. As I said in my hearing, I look forward to working to ensure New Zealand has strong intellectual property protection and enforcement as we address our mutual priority intellectual property issues. The United States is an important trading partner for New Zealand, and I will work with USTR and other government agencies to ensure U.S. companies have all the support they need to succeed and thrive in the New Zealand market.

NOMINATION

THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Risch, Flake, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Portman, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, and Merkley.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

The ranking member and I will defer on our opening comments out of our tremendous respect for Lamar Alexander, senior Senator from Tennessee, our great friend. We appreciate him being here. Senator Alexander, please take your time in welcoming our distinguished guest today and our friend. When you are finished, you can certainly go about doing your other duties. You do not have to stay.

STATEMENT OF HON. LAMAR ALEXANDER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

Senator ALEXANDER. Thank you, Senator Corker, Senator Cardin. It is kind of intimidating to be down here in the witness chair. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Well, you have done it before.

Senator ALEXANDER. I have done it before, and I am sure this confirmation hearing will go better than mine did 25 years ago. [Laughter.]

Senator ALEXANDER. I am here today to strongly recommend and respectfully recommend to the committee that it approve the President's nomination of Bill Hagerty as Ambassador to Japan.

In 2013, when Bill Hagerty was the Commissioner of Economic Development for Tennessee, he gave a speech entirely in Japanese at the American embassy in Tokyo. Now, I have looked it up. There have been 16 United States Ambassadors to Tokyo, a very distinguished group, since World War II: A five-star general, two former Senate Majority Leaders, a former Vice President of the United States, and a former Speaker of the House, the daughter of the former President. And so far as I know, none of them were able to do what Bill Hagerty did in 2013 when he made a speech entirely in Japanese at the American embassy in Tokyo. That is just one

reason why I think Bill Hagerty is one of President Trump's best appointments.

He was born in Tennessee, graduated from Vanderbilt University. He was associate editor of the Law Review. He worked as a consultant for the Boston Consulting Group. During his final 3 years, he lived in Tokyo and he served as senior executive managing their clients around Asia. He was selected by President George H.W. Bush to be on his staff. There he worked on trade, commerce, defense and telecommunications issues. He was a White House fellow. He was founder and chairman of a company in private life that became the third largest medical research company. He founded his own private equity and investment firm.

From 2011 to 2015, he was the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development for Tennessee. And in that role, working with Governor Haslam, secured $15 billion in capital investment and 90,000 jobs for our State. Two of those years, Tennessee was the number one State for economic development and number one State for job creation through foreign direct investment.

He is a distinguished Eagle Scout. He was head of a capital campaign for the scouts. He served on the board of the Far East Council of the scouts, encouraging the growth of Boy Scouts throughout Asia. One way he intends to continue that mission is that his two sons, who are here today, will join their respective troops in Japan following his confirmation. And his wife Chrissy would want me to quickly add that there are two aspiring Girl Scouts in their family who will have their time to do that too.

It is not only one of the best important, one of the most important. There is a reason why we have had such a distinguished list of Ambassadors since World War II, including our former Majority Leader Howard Baker from Tennessee. Mike Mansfield, another former Majority Leader who was Ambassador, used to say in every speech he made that the Japanese-American alliance is the most important two-country relationship in the world, bar none. Ambassador Mansfield said that so often that Americans in Tokyo used to refer to our embassy as the Bar None Ranch.

If you will permit a little parochialism, Mr. Hagerty comes from a State, Tennessee, that has the most important relationship with Japan of any State, bar none. That began about 40 years ago. I remember President Carter saying to me as a new Governor and to the other Governors go to Japan, persuade them to make here what they sell here. Off we all went. During my first 24 months as Governor, I spent 3 weeks in Japan and 8 weeks on Japan-American relations. I explained to Tennesseans that I thought I could do more good for our State in Japan than I could in Washington, D.C. That turned out to be true. Nissan, Bridgestone, Komatsu, other companies came. By the mid-1980s, we had about 10 percent of all the Japanese capital investment in the United States. This has continued. Nissan and Bridgestone have their largest plants—or North America's largest auto plants and tire plants in Tennessee. And with Mr. Hagerty's help, Bridgestone, as well as Nissan, has decided to locate its North American headquarters in our State.

So Bill Hagerty, if approved by the committee, would go to Japan not only able to speak the language but having lived and worked

there and understanding how close ties between Japan and the United States can create bigger paychecks for Americans, as well as for the Japanese.

So my hope is that the committee will promptly approve his nomination and that he will soon be on his job and his children will be in their respective scout troop in Japan.

Thank you very much for allowing me to come this morning.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much for being here. That was an outstanding introduction. And certainly I know you know him well.

I think that Lamar has done an outstanding job of laying out these outstanding credentials, and I agree that you are one of the most outstanding appointments that President Trump has made.

The relationship between our two countries speaks for itself. And having Abe here as one of the first visitors I think speaks to how the Trump administration and our country feel about Japan. I do want to say that the Ambassador, Ambassador Sasae is here with us, a friend, someone that we work with constantly. We welcome him here to this hearing.

To my friends here, I will speak on a little different level about this nominee. I have seen him in business and the outstanding things that he has done there. I have seen him represent our State and cause it to be the most important and most heralded State relative to job creation in our country.

I have seen him come into an administration that had some really tough issues and cleanup that needed to be done on some economic issues. And I have seen him negotiate those in an appropriate and steadfast manner while at the same time bringing people together.

I know his family. I know Lamar mentioned the Boy Scout issues. I was with Bill recently when he was at a weekend Boy Scout event, and it rained the entire weekend and he looked pretty haggard, a little different than he does today. But he is an outstanding family person. He and his wife Chrissy actually met in Japan, so they are coming back to the country in which they met and where he will be heralded much in the way Howard Baker was when he went to Japan.

I visited Japan when Senator Baker was our Ambassador there, and I saw the tremendous ties between our countries. And the fact is that Tennessee is a place that has a very warm spot in Japanese hearts. It really does. And as good a job as Senator Baker did—and we were all so proud of his service—I have a feeling that Bill Hagerty is going to raise the bar. So I am really, really proud of this nomination and so glad that I believe he will be ascending to this position quickly. And I know he will represent the very best of our country.

Senator Cardin.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Hagerty, welcome.

Your two Senators are very well respected in this institution, and it is usually an obligation to introduce a person from the State. But we could tell by the way that Senator Alexander and Senator Corker have spoken about you that it comes from their heart and

the deep respect that they have for you, which carries you a long way in this committee and the United States Senate.

So welcome. It is wonderful to have you here. And we welcome your family because this is a family commitment—your public service. So we thank your entire family for being willing to join your venture on behalf of our country.

You have heard the previous Ambassadors to Japan. And it is a very distinguished list. Mike Mansfield, one of the giants in American history, as well as Howard Baker from your own State, leaders in the United States Senate; Speaker Tom Foley; the Vice President, Walter Mondale; and Caroline Kennedy. So it is a distinguished group. So it is a distinguished group. I could go on.

The reason is, as pointed out by Senator Alexander, the relationship between the United States and Japan is critically important to the United States. In the Obama administration, we had the rebalance to Asia because we recognized that the Asia region has always been important to the United States, but it is emerging as one of the most important strategic developments during this time as to America's role globally as to how well we deal with the Asia region. So you are going to play a very, very important role in that regard.

The United States and Japan, the first and third largest economies. We have common values of democracy, human rights. We are going to be calling upon that relationship as we try to expand our influence in that region on labor issues, on environmental issues, on good governance, on human rights. All those matters will very much depend upon on how well the U.S.-Japan relations develop, as its influence in Asia and its global areas.

You will have challenges. You know the challenges of North Korea and what recently has transpired, which has been building up for a long time. Your role as our Ambassador to Japan will play an important role as we try to deal with that challenge.

The rise of China will very much be on your agenda.

How Japan deals with South Korea, which has been a challenge over time. It has gotten better of late, but still not the close relationship we would like to see between two of our close strategic partners in that region in the world.

Maritime security issues are very much dominant, and Japan is right in the middle.

And of course, our security alliance and what we do with Okinawa and Guam are issues that we really need to focus on.

So we welcome you to the committee and we look forward to a discussion as to how we can work together to strengthen America's national security interests.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, any written testimony you have will be entered into the record. If you would summarize your comments in about 5 minutes, that would be great. And then we look forward to questions. Again, thank you for your willingness to serve in this capacity and for being here today.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM FRANCIS HAGERTY IV, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO JAPAN

Mr. HAGERTY. Thank you, Senator. It is very humbling. I appreciate the hospitality.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, distinguished committee members, it is an honor to be with you today as President Trump's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Japan. I am humbled that the President has entrusted me with this opportunity to lead our engagement with such an important ally. Few nominees are fortunate to testify before their own Senator, and I am privileged to be here today before fellow Tennesseans and good friends, Chairman Corker and Senator Alexander.

Knowing that I have not journeyed here alone, I would like to express my love and my gratitude to my family: my wife Chrissy and my children, William Hagerty, Stephen Hagerty, Tara Hagerty, and Christine Hagerty. In addition, I would like to acknowledge Chrissy's mother Terry, my mother Ruth, and our siblings who are watching from home today. Importantly, I would also like to share my gratitude to our fathers, Chrissy's father Bill Locke-Paddon; my father, Bill Hagerty, who are both with us in spirit here today in this room.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Sasae and the many other friends in the audience today who joined and show their support.

The Trump administration has made clear in words and actions the high priority it places on our alliance, partnership, and friendship with Japan. The President hosted Prime Minister Abe just 3 weeks after his inauguration. The Vice President visited Japan last month. Secretaries Tillerson, Mattis, and Ross traveled to Japan early in their tenures. This rapid, senior-level engagement underscores the strength and importance of our security alliance and overall bilateral relationship.

Mission Japan is staffed by over 700 dedicated men and women working diligently to advance U.S. interests in Japan and throughout Asia. They support some of our Nation's most important partnerships, and I could not be more excited about the opportunity to lead this team, if confirmed. I also look forward to working with the leadership of our distinguished U.S. forces in Japan in managing our all-important alliance. Moreover, our bilateral relationship is supported by many men and women right here in Washington, whether it be our Japan desk at the State Department or the many departments and agencies that work with their counterparts at Mission Japan every day.

This committee and other legislators and their staffs play an active and vital role in guiding this critical relationship, and I would like to underscore my deep appreciation for the leadership and engagement that go into making our relationship with Japan among the strongest any two countries might hope to achieve.

I have seen firsthand the importance of this relationship with my own eyes. These personal connections began when I worked in Tokyo for 3 years in the 1980s and 1990s with the Boston Consulting Group. That time in Tokyo brought home to me our two countries' shared economic interests and security priorities, while

affording me lasting friendships and a deep appreciation of Japanese culture.

Years later, as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, I managed a number of offices overseas, including one in Japan, with a focus on attracting foreign direct investment, jobs and promoting exports. Our success there was unprecedented. Tennessee became the first State to be ranked number one in economic development 2 years in a row in 2013 and 2014. We were also the top State for job creation from foreign direct investment during my tenure. 60 percent of that foreign direct investment was sourced in Japan.

I hope to bring my experience to bear on a robust economic relationship with Japan. In particular, I intend to promote job-generating Japanese investment in the United States. I would also aim to support new trade opportunities and enhanced access for U.S. firms in the Japanese market to narrow the overall deficit with Japan.

If confirmed, I would seek as well to advance the economic dialogue recently launched by Vice President Pence as a vehicle to strengthen the overall bilateral framework of our economic relations.

While such trade and investment has been a professional focus of mine, I know that the anchor of the overall U.S.-Japan bilateral relationship consists of more than mutual economic benefits.

Foremost in our relationship is the U.S.-Japan Alliance, the cornerstone of regional peace and security, as well as a platform for global cooperation. The deployment of our best military personnel and their best technology to Japan reflects the ironclad commitment of the United States to the alliance and to the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region. This commitment is more critical than ever in the face of fast-emerging security challenges, including North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, as well as China's assertive behavior in the East and South China Seas.

Just as we value the Japanese Government's support for the alliance, so too we must thank the localities that host U.S. forces, particularly in Okinawa. As Ambassador, I will continue to build strong relations with host communities while ensuring our continued capability to fulfill security commitments.

The U.S.-Japan partnership enjoys strong bipartisan support in the Congress and in the Japanese Diet. Through exchange programs, cultural activities, and reconciliation efforts, the United States and Japan have developed a close understanding between our two peoples as an enduring foundation for a strong bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I would aim to strengthen our people-to-people ties even further.

In closing, the U.S. partnership and alliance with Japan is a central pillar in our role in Asia and beyond. Drawing on the strength of the entire U.S. Government, including our outstanding military personnel, the dedicated officers of the U.S. Foreign Service, and the many talented men and women from multiple federal agencies that serve in Japan, I would, as Ambassador, endeavor to deepen our partnership and alliance with Japan so we may respond more effectively to regional and global challenges.

I am honored to be considered for this critical post, and I will focus all my strength on improving the lives and security of my fellow Americans through engagement with our strongest ally in Asia.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Hagerty's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM F. HAGERTY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, Distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to be with you today as President Trump's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Japan. I am humbled that the President has entrusted me with this opportunity to work with the White House, Secretary Tillerson, and our talented and dedicated officers at the State Department and Mission Japan to lead our engagement with such an important ally. Few nominees are fortunate to testify before their own senators, and I am privileged to be here before fellow Tennesseans and good friends, Chairman Corker and Senator Alexander. Knowing that I have not journeyed here alone, I would like to take a moment to express my love and gratitude to my family who are with me today: my wife, Chrissy, and my children, William Hagerty, Stephen Hagerty, Tara Hagerty, and Christine Hagerty. Though they are not with me today, I would like to acknowledge Chrissy's mother, Terry; my mother, Ruth and our siblings who are watching from home. And importantly I would like to acknowledge our fathers Bill Locke-Paddon and Bill Hagerty who are with us in spirit today.

The Trump administration has made clear in words and actions the high priority it places on our alliance, partnership, and friendship with Japan. The President hosted Prime Minister Abe just three weeks after his inauguration. The Vice President visited Japan last month. Secretaries Tillerson, Mattis, and Ross traveled to Japan early in their tenures. This rapid, senior-level engagement underscores the strength and importance of our security alliance and overall bilateral relationship.

Mission Japan is staffed by over 700 dedicated men and women working diligently to advance US interests in Japan and throughout Asia. They support one of our nation's most important partnerships, and I could not be more excited about the opportunity to lead this team, if confirmed. I also look forward to working with the leadership of our distinguished U.S. forces in Japan in managing our all-important Alliance. Moreover, our bilateral relationship is supported by many men and women right here in Washington, whether it be our Japan desk at the State Department or the many departments and agencies that work with their counterparts at Mission Japan every day. This committee and other legislators and their staffs play and active and vital role in guiding this critical relationship and I would like to underscore my deep appreciation for the leadership and engagement that go into making our relationship with Japan among the strongest any two countries might hope to achieve.

I strongly support the administration's approach, having seen firsthand the importance of this relationship through my own experiences with Japan. These personal connections began when I worked in Tokyo for three years in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the Boston Consulting Group. That time in Tokyo brought home to me our two countries' shared economic interests and security priorities, while affording me lasting friendships and a deep appreciation of Japanese culture.

Years later, as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, I managed a number of offices overseas, including one in Japan, with a focus on attracting foreign investment and jobs to our state and promoting the export of Tennessee goods abroad. Our success was unprecedented. Tennessee became the first state to be ranked number one in economic development two years in a row, in 2013 and 2014. According to IBM's Global Location Trends report, Tennessee was also the top state in the nation for job creation resulting from foreign direct investment for two of the years that I served in the Governor's Cabinet.

We were particularly effective in regard to Japan, as 40,000 Tennesseans are now directly employed by Japanese firms. In fact, Japan accounted for 60 percent of the billions of dollars in total foreign direct investment we brought to our state, outpacing the investment of all other countries combined.

Japanese firms invest in the United States because they see a strong workforce and long-term earnings potential. Likewise, American companies invest in Japan's large domestic markets. In certain sectors, like financial services, American firms generate a significant net surplus. I would also aim to support new trade opportunities and enhanced access for U.S. firms in the Japanese market to narrow the overall deficit with Japan.

As a fellow champion of the rule of law and market principles, Japan has shown its willingness to work with the United States to ensure free, fair, and balanced trade that is governed by high standards. In 2016, the United States exported $45 billion in goods and $63.3 billion in services to Japan, our fifth largest export market. The Department of Commerce estimates that these exports supported over 600,000 American jobs at U.S. companies.

I believe we can do even better. If confirmed, I will support U.S. efforts to tap export opportunities in agriculture, defense, manufacturing, traded services, and what I see as a major emerging opportunity in the energy sector. During his recent visit to Japan, Vice President Pence launched a new Economic Dialogue as a vehicle to strengthen the bilateral framework for trade and investment. If confirmed, I look forward to contributing to this endeavor, particularly as a way to address our large trade deficit with Japan in goods. I would also strive to leverage my Tennessee experience to encourage more Japanese investment in the United States, with a view to generating even more jobs, particularly in high-skill sectors. Japanese companies has indicated a strong desire to invest in U.S. manufacturing and infrastructure. Our new Economic Dialogue under the leadership of Vice President Pence and Vice Prime Minister Aso should provide the critical groundwork to advance our joint success.

While trade and investment have been a professional focus of mine, I know that the anchor of the overall U.S.-Japan bilateral relationship consists of more than mutual economic pursuits. This relationship is anchored by a shared commitment to the vision of democratic values. On any given day, you will find the United States and Japan cooperating closely on global priorities, as seen in our joint efforts with policing in Afghanistan, anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, and humanitarian assistance in the Middle East. The U.S.Japan partnership enjoys strong bipartisan support in the Congress and in the Japanese Diet, making our bilateral ties even more deeply rooted.

Foremost in our relationship is the U.S.-Japan Alliance, the cornerstone of regional peace and security, as well as a platform for global cooperation. The United States has more than 50,000 U.S. military personnel and some of our most advanced defense assets stationed in Japan. The deployment of our best people and our best technology to Japan reflects the ironclad commitment of the United States to the Alliance—and to the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region. This commitment is more critical than ever in the face of fast-emerging security challenges, both in the region and beyond. Most notably, North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs represent the region's most acute threat. We should continue to coordinate closely with Japan and trilaterally with the Republic of Korea in pressuring the Kim Jong-Un regime to abandon its unlawful nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs. We remain prepared to defend ourselves and our allies, including Japan. The U.S. commitment to defend Japan through the full range of U.S. military capabilities is unwavering.

Japan has also worked closely with the United States to uphold freedom of navigation, overflight, and commerce. The evolving situations in the East and South China Seas represent a source of concern. Japan's commitment to assume larger roles and responsibilities in the Alliance and to play a more active role in international security activities is integral to the U.S. security posture. Japan's desire to do more is in keeping with the imperative to adapt our Alliance to changing times and threats.

Just as we value the Japanese Government's support for the Alliance, so too we must thank the localities that host U.S. forces, particularly in Okinawa. For decades, communities across Japan have offered their friendship to our U.S. service personnel and their families, who aim to reciprocate by being the best neighbors possible. We have pursued measures to reduce the footprint of our military presence in Japan. Aviation training relocation, the transfer of assets to bases outside Okinawa, and the return of base properties are all indicative of this aim. As Ambassador, I would continue to build strong relations with host communities while ensuring our continued capability to fulfill our Security Treaty commitments.

Through exchange programs, cultural activities, and reconciliation efforts, the United States and Japan have developed a close understanding between our two peoples as an enduring foundation for a strong bilateral relationship. As President Trump noted during Prime Minister Abe's visit in February, "the bond between our two nations, and the friendship between our two peoples, runs very, very deep." If confirmed, I would aim to strengthen our people-to-people ties even further. In particular, I envision a revitalization of student exchanges, which have dropped almost 60 percent in the past two decades.

In sum, the U.S. partnership and alliance with Japan is a central pillar of our role in Asia and beyond. Drawing on the strength of the entire U.S. Government,

particularly our U.S. military personnel, the devoted officers of our U.S. Foreign Service and the many talented individuals representing multiple agencies of our federal government while serving as part of our Mission in Japan, I would, if confirmed as Ambassador, endeavor to deepen our partnership and alliance with Japan so as to respond effectively to regional and global challenges. I am honored to be considered for this critical post, and I will focus all my strength on improving the lives and security of my fellow Americans through engagement with our strongest ally in Asia.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

As is the norm, I will defer to our ranking member and save my time for interjections. I am going to step upstairs for a hearing just for a few minutes at about 9:58 and come back. But to our distinguished ranking member and my friend, Ben Cardin.

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

Mr. Hagerty, you have a very strong background, and you have been nominated to be Ambassador to a country that the United States has a very strong tie and relationship. So that makes this hearing a little bit more challenging for us. But we always find ways to try to inject some important discussions during these hearings.

And as I mentioned in my opening comments, the United States and Japan working together can advance values that we have in common. So when we talk about trade, we can promote labor standards by working together. We can promote intellectual property protections. We can deal with currency manipulation, those issues where Japan and the United States should be able to advance causes together, including good governance and respect for human rights.

So I just really want to mention two areas of concern on human rights. I try to focus on human rights wherever I can because I do think it is one of the real important values that America brings to the global community.

We have had challenges between the relationship with Japan and South Korea in dealing with World War II issues. And I think advancements have been made by both countries, and I congratulate the leaders of both countries. Prime Minister Abe has made great advancements in dealing with South Korea, and I think that was encouraged by the United States and we need to continue those advancements.

But in December 2013, Prime Minister Abe visited a controversial shrine to World War II, which included several class A war criminals. Our embassy spoke out against that visit as being insensitive. And I underscore that because that is a close friend, and yet what we do in our embassy, what our Ambassador does in Japan is an important message about where we need to make sure that we advance our values, even with a friend when we think they are doing something that is inappropriate.

I would just like to get your views as to your role, if confirmed as our Ambassador, to be willing to advance our values even if at times we disagree with the Government of Japan, your willingness to speak out.

Mr. HAGERTY. Senator, I appreciate the challenge that you raise. My job will be to create a sense of trust and fair dealing with the Japanese Government and with the citizens, but also to be a steadfast supporter of our values as Americans and advance American

interests. And I would have no problem speaking to the Japanese and conferring with them on issues that are contrary to our values at the appropriate time and at the appropriate conditions.

Senator CARDIN. Well, sometimes we can advance the agenda, but sometimes the agenda is advanced by the circumstances and requires us to be prepared to speak out even though it may not have been the time that we wanted to because of circumstances.

I am going to be asking you, if confirmed as our Ambassador, to take on those challenges and to work with this committee. This has never been a partisan issue in this committee, our concern about human rights globally. And we will be looking to you to not only help us in regards to Japan, but in regards to the region since Japan is one of our closest allies and shares our values in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. HAGERTY. Indeed, Senator, I look forward to working with you and the rest of the members of the committee on that.

Senator CARDIN. I appreciate that.

I want to talk a little bit about Okinawa and Guam and the challenges we have had. Our committee has a direct interest. The Armed Services Committee has a direct interest in this. This is an area that requires diplomacy. The challenges here have grown over time. The base has been there for a long time. The problems have gotten more severe politically particularly for the Japanese politics.

Mr. HAGERTY. Indeed.

Senator CARDIN. But we also have had American politics as to how we deal with where our base should be, what is in the best interests of regional security.

So can you just share with us how you intend to advance that issue if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Mr. HAGERTY. Senator, I spoke with Admiral Harris just yesterday on this topic. It is a slow advancing topic but one that is making progress in terms of our relocation of the Fatenma operation there. Things are moving slowly, but they have begun construction now out near Camp Schwab and I see progress moving in that direction.

The challenge is significant, though. Okinawa has grown up around our base there, and it is now a heavily populated area where we see many military operations happening in a fairly densely populated area there in Okinawa. There are tensions between the Okinawa Government and central government in Japan that we have to be mindful of, but I intend to put my attention to that and work closely with our military forces there to try to continue to advance the cause.

Senator CARDIN. And you are prepared to give your personal time meeting with the community as well as meeting with our military so that we can have seamless communications between the U.S. presence and the local political leadership.

Mr. HAGERTY. Indeed.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso.

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

Congratulations, Mr. Hagerty. Welcome to your family as well.

I want to talk about trade, something that we mentioned when we visited with you in my office. The United States is the most competitive supplier of soda ash in the world because of the abundance of raw material, trona, in our country. U.S. natural soda ash is refined from the mineral trona. The Green River Basin in Wyoming has the world's largest known deposits of this naturally occurring trona. It is a key component of glass, detergents, soaps, chemicals. It is also used in many other industrial processes.

American soda ash has long been regarded as the standard of quality, purity, and energy efficiency and production. But currently Japan, as we have discussed, has a 3.3 percent tariff on natural soda ash imports. Eliminating the tariff on naturally sourced soda ash would benefit Japanese manufacturers, as well as U.S. producers.

So will you commit to me to work on eliminating Japan's tariff on U.S. natural soda ash and help make eliminating trade barriers and increasing exports to Japan for all U.S. industries a priority?

Mr. HAGERTY. I will certainly make that a priority, Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. And next is Wyoming beef. Expanded trade is critical for the economic growth and competitiveness of our businesses, workers, farmers, ranchers.

In December of 2003, Japan closed its market to U.S. beef imports after a Canadian-born dairy cow in Washington State tested positive for something called BSE. At the time, Japan was the largest export market for U.S. beef. It was valued at over $1.4 billion a year for the United States.

In 2006, Japan partially reopened their market to U.S. beef that is aged 20 months or younger. They further erased restrictions—or eased restrictions in 2013 by increasing that age barrier to 30 months and younger. But despite the actions, American farmers and ranchers still operate at a competitive disadvantage in the Japanese markets.

So again, American farmers and ranchers produce the highest quality beef in the world. They have clear, consistent standards. We do here at home for animal health, for food safety.

So do you believe it is important to secure strong market access for U.S. beef and other important American commodities in Japan?

Mr. HAGERTY. Indeed, I do, Senator Barrasso. As a boy, I raised cattle myself, and I appreciate the industry and the needs of the industry. When I lived in Japan, I appreciate the quality of American beef, and I would love to have the access to it. The tariff structure is complicated, and I would be delighted to work toward improving that situation.

Senator BARRASSO. And then the final question has to do with energy security. You know, after Fukushima, all of Japan's nuclear reactors were shut down. Since that time, Japan has been working to create a strategic energy mix. The country currently relies on imported coal, oil, liquefied natural gas for more than 80 percent of its energy supply. And as we talked, I was just there a couple of weeks ago talking about energy in Japan. Strategically Japan seeks to ensure its energy security by maintaining as diverse an energy portfolio as possible in terms of both fuels, as well as suppliers.

So do you support the United States increasing our energy exports to Japan? And if confirmed, will you assist U.S. businesses and industries to gain greater access to Japanese markets?

Mr. HAGERTY. I will. And I see that both as an economic and a strategic opportunity, Mr. Senator.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH [presiding]. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Hagerty, and your family. Thank you for your willingness to take your considerable talents and experience and apply them to representing the United States in sustaining and expanding our relationship with this absolutely vital ally that shares a lot of our values, a commitment to rule of law, to a market economy, to democracy in a part of the world where we have a lot of other competing and challenging interests and concerns.

As I mentioned when we met before, I want to briefly touch on three different areas. You have just had to answer searching questions about American beef, and my State is very concerned about American poultry. So we want to make sure that chicken is on the menu at the same time that beef is.

Mr. HAGERTY. Understood, Mr. Senator.

Senator COONS. And as we discussed, in trying to reach a fair trade relationship with Japan we have often struggled to get full market access for American poultry.

Is that something you will make a priority in your service as Ambassador?

Mr. HAGERTY. Indeed, I will, Mr. Senator. I look forward to doing that.

Senator COONS. Any thoughts in particular about how we might address some of the non-tariff barriers faced by American poultry and other agricultural exports?

Mr. HAGERTY. Non-tariff barriers have been prevalent in Japan since I lived there more than 20 years ago. I spent a good deal of time then when I was on the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan working on those issues. I think they are still issues that impede the competitiveness of Japan industry, frankly, as well as impede our ability to export into that market. I look forward to continuing to work on multilayered distributions that are complex—overly complex, I should say—regulations and regulatory frameworks that are not harmonized. And there are many opportunities I think, a lot of low-hanging fruit, frankly, where we can make some advancements.

Senator COONS. One area where China has made sort of striking recent decisions is in banning the trade in ivory. I worked across the aisle with Senator Flake to pass a bill that was signed into law in the last Congress, the End Wildlife Trafficking Act. Japan remains one of the world's largest markets for legal ivory. And I was hoping that you might spend some time on the international traffic in illegal wildlife products because in a number of hearings on this committee in the last two Congresses we have concluded that that helps finance terrorism and international criminal gangs. I just want to draw your attention to my concerns and others' concerns about illegal ivory traffic.

Last, intellectual property is an area where there has been some disagreements between the United States and Japan over the years. Seeking their partnership in strengthening the global intellectual property system is a way both for us to partner as the world's largest and third largest economy and frankly a way for us to put pressure on other countries in the region that really do not respect intellectual property at all.

How would you imagine our working in partnership with Japan to strengthen intellectual property protections? And how do you see our withdrawal from the TPP, especially when it was so far along in terms of ratification and conclusion, affecting our ability to be a successful advocate for protections like intellectual property protections with Japan and in the region?

Mr. HAGERTY. On intellectual property, I would say being from Tennessee, particularly the music producing industry that is so strong in our State, I am very sensitive to the issues surrounding intellectual property. And I think our interests with Japan are aligned. Japan exports more to China than any other country. They have very real concerns about intellectual property protections in that country, as do we. So I would look to continue to find areas of alignment with Japan and continue to push forward in international fora to advance intellectual property rights.

On the TPP, I am well aware of the issues raised by our withdrawal. But I also am well aware of the progress that was made through the course of those negotiations. I would look to find areas of common ground that have already been established and try to build on those that make the most sense for America and for our joint relationship and continue in a bilateral framework to try to advance our Nation's interests.

Senator COONS. I will take my last minute and ask what role you think Japan should play in helping our shared challenge in confronting North Korea's aggressive nuclear weapons program.

Mr. HAGERTY. Japan is a very important bilateral partner here, and there is an important trilateral relationship as well with South Korea. I think Japan is fully aligned, as we discussed privately in your offices. I do not see any daylight between our position and the Japanese position. They are obviously in closer proximity to the threat of North Korea and very concerned about it. But I think that we are completely aligned.

As I mentioned a minute ago, I spoke with Admiral Harris yesterday, and this is one of the issues we spent a good deal of time talking about. And my sense from him as well is that there is great alignment there.

Senator COONS. Good.

Well, I look forward to supporting your service as our next Ambassador and appreciate that we are sending someone with your background and skill and expertise.

Mr. HAGERTY. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator RISCH. Senator Portman, you are up.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And first, Mr. Hagerty, thanks for your willingness to serve. And I want to commend you for your statements you have made today about the importance of the relationship and how you intend to focus your efforts, should you be confirmed. I believe you will.

Mostly, though, I want to commend William, Stephen, Tara, and Christine for their patience and their decorum this morning. They are going to be great in Japan as ambassadors for you. So you guys must be really proud of your dad.

I was just in Japan on a congressional delegation trip. We had an opportunity to visit with a number of officials, including our military leadership there, including General Martinez. I also got a chance to meet with the trade minister who I have gotten to know a little bit over the years, Minister Seko, and also we met with the Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga who you probably know who is in an incredibly important position right now with relationship to the ongoing discussion between Vice President Pence and Foreign Minister Aso and the administration trying to rekindle some of these trade talks we talked about.

I appreciate what you said about TPP. You know, one of our concerns about TPP, from those of us in auto-producing States, including Tennessee where you also have American manufacturers, is this notion of what the rules of origin would be, in other words, cars produced in other countries affect because of the number of parts that would come into Japan would be considered Japanese cars and would get the benefit of the TPP. So I hope you will focus on that issue if we continue negotiations with Japan, which I hope we will, on a bilateral relationship.

Another one is just the frustration that we feel about Japan not opening their market to U.S. automobiles. This is something that I hope you will focus on in your new role. Let me give you some numbers about this. Japan is one of the largest auto markets in the world. In fact, it is the third biggest I am told, 5 million annual sales. It is the second only behind the United States and China, which is consistent with the size of their economy. Imports from the United States, Europe, and the rest of the world account for 6.7 percent—6.7 percent of the cars in Japan. And by the way, the U.S. does not export as many cars as the Europeans do to Japan. So it is 6.7 percent, a paltry amount, but if you go to the U.S. market, it is even smaller. Japan domestic automakers export about half the vehicles that they build, and this includes 1.6 million vehicles to the United States in 2015.

So there is no other developed country in the world that has such a small share of import penetration. The U.S. is about 45 percent imported automobiles. That is roughly equivalent to the other OECD countries.

So, one, why do you think that penetration of U.S. vehicles is so low? Why are we not able to break through that market and have great automobiles produced in States like my home State of Ohio being driven in Japan? And what are you willing to do about it in what, again, I think will be an opportunity you will have both as Ambassador and as someone who has good relationships with the Government and has a business background to be able to be effective? What will you do?

Mr. HAGERTY. Well, Senator, it is a very complicated question you raise, and I appreciate the issue.

I think it goes back to some of the structural barriers that we were discussing earlier. When I lived in Japan a number of years ago, the automotive market has a very complex distribution system

there. There is also the harmonization of standards. That is an issue. Again, I think this is an area where we can find common ground.

I am fortunate to have Nissan headquartered in our home State, their North American operations, and a very close relationship with their team not only in the U.S. but in Japan. And their president is the head of Japan Auto Association. I look forward to getting to work with that group there as well on harmonization issues and finding opportunities where we might be able to ease some of these structural impediments that exist. But I think it is not just tariff, but it is structural barriers.

Senator PORTMAN. You mentioned harmonization of standards. In their free trade discussions with the Europeans, my understanding is they have already agreed to accept the European safety standards as an example. We have the best safety standards in the world here in the United States of America. And yet, the Japanese will not accept our safety standards, which is a non-tariff barrier. And it makes it much more expensive for us to sell a car in Japan because it has to conform to different safety standards that we do not believe are based on good science.

So that is an example where we would expect you to stand up for us and to open up that market more in the context of a bilateral trade negotiation certainly. But even in the absence of that, to be sure with one of our greatest allies in the world that we have access to their market as they have access to ours.

Mr. HAGERTY. Understood, Senator. Thank you.

Senator PORTMAN. Just briefly with regard to security relationship, again, incredibly important right now. And as you indicated, they are a force multiplier for us. And we have about 40,000 to 45,000 troops, I understand, in Japan today.

One of the concerns that I have, having been there recently, is the degree to which we are able to protect our own troops. There are certain restrictions with regard to what we are able to do offensively, as an example, if we perceive a threat. Have you thought about that issue and do you have any suggestions as to how we can ensure that on all of our bases in Japan, we have the ability to help protect the Japanese people from potential threats from North Korea today, which has been a focus obviously, but also to ensure that we can protect our own troops from the possibility of conventional or even nuclear missiles?

Mr. HAGERTY. Well, Senator, if I am fortunate to be confirmed as Ambassador, my top priority is going to be safety and security of Americans on Japanese soil. And I was fortunate to speak with Admiral Harris yesterday about this, particularly about what might happen further if the deterioration and the situation in North Korea gets worse, how we might think about movement of Americans in that situation and the threat that exists. It is something that I need to study a good deal more to give you a definitive answer, but it is something that I will put my foremost attention to.

Senator PORTMAN. I was struck in my recent visit—I think you probably will be too—that we have an incredible military presence there of brave men and women in uniform who are there in part to defend Japan, and Japan is starting to step up more, which we

want to see more of, to be able to protect themselves. But we also got to be sure that our own troops have adequate protection.

And I thank you again for your willingness to serve and look forward to continuing the conversation in your new role as Ambassador to Japan.

Mr. HAGERTY. Thank you very much, Senator.

The Chairman [presiding]: Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Congratulations on your nomination. I appreciated your visit with me in my office.

Japan is, as I said to you then, one of the most important strategic and economic partners that the United States has in the world. It is the fourth largest trading partner. It is the number one hold of U.S. treasuries. Always important. And obviously, particularly in the region, incredibly important to us.

And since the end of World War II, the United States and Japan have built an important relationship that serves both of our strategic interests. And I am impressed with your background, certainly your knowledge of the language, and all of the commercial and trade issues that you have led there. But I want to explore with you a little bit of the non-commercial trade issues because those are equally important in this bilateral relationship.

And as a prelude to that, I wonder if you can share with me when the President was a candidate, his assessment of Japan is that Japan has, quote, not taken care of us properly. Have you spoken with the President about his view of our relationship with Japan? And has that position changed since his taking office?

Mr. HAGERTY. I have spoken with the President about his views. Most of our conversations have focused on trade. The discussion that you raise I think has to do with our security and with the contributions and the relative contributions of American investment in that region, as well as the Japanese investment in the area.

What I am heartened by is that the President, since making those comments that you reference, has spent a good deal of time with Prime Minister Abe. Vice President Pence has traveled over. We have had three cabinet members in country in Japan. So I think that we are working to get much closer in terms of our understanding of what needs to be done and what the opportunities might be.

Senator MENENDEZ. So you see that statement as more of a spending by Japan in the military context for their defense, as well as the joint defense with us, than anything else.

Mr. HAGERTY. That is my interpretation of it, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you the next question. On the campaign trail, the President as a candidate said in an interview with Chris Wallace of Fox News that North Korea has nukes. Maybe they would—meaning Japan—be in fact better off if they defend themselves from North Korea, including with nukes. As you go to a country that has a history here of not pursuing nuclear power for those purposes and considering the consequences of the potential of igniting a race for nuclear weapons in the region, what views do you take with a view to Japan as it relates to should they or should they not be pursuing nuclear weapons?

Mr. HAGERTY. Prime Minister Abe just very recently has made an unequivocal statement that they will not be pursuing nuclear weapons in Japan. And I respect that. They have a very unique history in Japan, having been the only country to receive the results of a nuclear weapon, and I think that sensitivity is something that I appreciate and hold close.

Senator MENENDEZ. And we are not going to be urging them to pursue nuclear weapons, I assume, if you are confirmed.

Mr. HAGERTY. I have no intention to do that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now, with reference to Russia, Prime Minister Abe has pursued a closer relationship with Russia, including efforts to resolve some longstanding territorial disputes over islands in the Kuril chain and to conclude a peace treaty from World War II. They seem benign, but do you believe these efforts at reconciliation—Russia with Japan—or having a more strategic relationship between Japan and Russia is in the national interests and security of the United States?

Mr. HAGERTY. The situation with the islands I think is very close to the Prime Minister's heart, and I know he has invested a good deal of time on that territorial dispute. I also know that the Prime Minister, at least in what I have read, is concerned about the proximity of Russia and China becoming even more close. So I know that there might be many reasons for his engagement, but I know that we are very strong allies with Japan. And my sense is that they continue to support us in our position with Russia with respect to Ukraine and other vital strategic interests that are different. So I am not as concerned perhaps as others that we will not be able to get a good result with this.

Senator MENENDEZ. So you think that Abe is doing this beyond his affinity for the islands and the territorial dispute because he seeks to create a greater distance between Russia and China?

Mr. HAGERTY. I am not certain of that, sir. I am just interpolating from what I have read, but I would like to study that more.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes. Well, I hope you will pay attention to that as we go along because so far, Russia has not proven itself to be anything but an adversary of the United States in a whole different sort of way, violating the international order, cyber attacking the United States in its elections, and a whole host of other things. So while I have a great affinity for Japan, I also want our people to be keeping abreast of what they are doing as it relates to what they may perceive as their national interests but may affect ours.

Mr. HAGERTY. I appreciate your sensitivity.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you for your testimony today.

I want to go back to the trade side. I caught a little bit of Senator Portman's comments as I was walking in the door related to autos. But I believe that the Trump team has announced that they would like to pursue a bilateral arrangement with the Japanese. At least that has been expressed. Is that correct?

Mr. HAGERTY. The structure that Vice President Pence has put in place is an economic dialogue. It is the foundation for a bilateral discussion. I do not think that we have gone to the point of assessing that we are going to an FTA at this point.

Senator MERKLEY. So often in the conversation about trade, people ponder a lot about China, about Mexico. But the trade deficit with Japan is larger than that with Mexico, I believe the second largest in the world, about $69 billion last year. And they range from services and goods and ag all put together.

Why have we allowed such a longstanding structural deficit in our trade with Japan, and what should we do about it?

Mr. HAGERTY. Senator, if confirmed, my hope is to focus a great deal of attention to closing that trade deficit barrier. I think as we discussed earlier, there are a number of not only tariff issues and harmonization issues but also structural issues within the country of Japan that make it hard for us to penetrate.

When I was the Secretary of Commerce for my home State, I was responsible for an office in Japan. And we opened a new effort to try and expand trade. It is frustrating. It takes considerable investment to put in place customer service networks, distribution networks, and the type of facilities necessary to properly serve a market. Localization requirements are also challenging because of the language difference. But I think that those are all areas that I would like to see us make more gains on.

Also, I would say I am very optimistic about the potential to export energy to Japan, and I think that could have a very immediate effect on our trade deficit.

Senator MERKLEY. So the conversation about the barriers in the Japanese economy has gone on for decades. We push; they resist. We push; they resist. And essentially they get to continue running this vast advantage in trade with us.

What can be done differently now that has not been done before?

Mr. HAGERTY. That I think will be the focus of the new bilateral relationship that Vice President Pence is establishing, and I look forward, if I am confirmed, to becoming a member of the team to work very hard on that.

Senator MERKLEY. One of the things that you mentioned, when we were talking in my office, was that women in Japan are an underutilized part of the economic potential. Would you like to share any comments or thoughts or insights about that?

Mr. HAGERTY. Indeed, Senator, we had a good conversation on that. An observation that I made some 20-plus years ago when I was with the Boston Consulting Group is working with Western companies in Japan. As we assessed the performance of those staff, we found that women employees did a very good job. We also found that it was difficult for Western companies to compete against traditional Japanese companies to recruit male graduates from the top universities. So we, in fact, put in place for many of the Western firms doing business in Japan a strategy to recruit women into the workforce, and that worked very well. I am pleased to see that that is now migrated all the way into the broader workforce there because I think it has great opportunity.

Senator MERKLEY. Another area that we pay some attention to is the conflict between Japan and China in regard to islands in the

East China Sea. And we have recognized that the islands were covered by article 5 of the U.S.-Japanese treaty. The Chinese do not recognize that.

What is the status of that dispute? And do any new efforts need to be made in that area?

Mr. HAGERTY. I was speaking with Admiral Harris yesterday about article 5, our responsibilities to that area in the East China Sea. I think we certainly have been unwavering in our commitment under that security treaty and our willingness to support Japan against any sort of unilateral effort to disrupt their administration of that island. I think the concern comes and probably will come later this summer as fishing season approaches, and that is something that we will watch very closely as we see more activity in those waters.

Senator MERKLEY. One of the things that we were involved in recently was a joint exercise with Japan at the same time we were doing a joint exercise, a sea exercise, with South Korea to essentially draw attention to our military presence in the context of pressure being applied to North Korea. Do you anticipate there will be more joint, if you will, efforts to draw attention to the strength of the connection between U.S., South Korea, and Japan as we attempt to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear program?

Mr. HAGERTY. Senator, I commend the exercises that took place. I think they achieved a very strong purpose. I look forward to studying that more because I am not certain what our future plans are, but I look forward to working very closely with our military command in the area to get a better assessment of that.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Mr. HAGERTY. Thank you.

Senator RISCH [presiding]. Thank you very much.

Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Hagerty, thanks so much for your interest in serving. I really enjoyed our time together in the office. Just a few questions based on your written statement here today.

You indicate that you strive as the Ambassador for the United States to Japan to encourage more Japanese investment in the United States with a view to generating even more jobs. Indiana, as we mentioned when we visited, is home to major Japanese brand automakers, Subaru, Honda, Toyota. Thousands of Hoosiers are employed there. They are really the centerpiece of many of our communities.

And so I would just like to get your thoughts. You are on the record about what specific recommendations you have about how the United States and Japan might work in a more effective manner together to increase Japanese investment in the U.S.

Mr. HAGERTY. Well, Senator, thank you very much for raising that. I think we could not have a better person in Vice President Pence to help advance this cause. As you mentioned, he certainly gets it, and his success in Indiana is renowned around the country, if not the globe.

So I think with the Vice President at the point of this, we have opened a new door, and we have the ability to take ourselves to a new level in terms of attracting more foreign direct investment because the Vice President understands, as do I, that we can build

not only important economic ties but important strategic ties by increasing that foreign direct investment.

There is an excess of capital in Japan, and I think the opportunity to earn returns in a market like the United States is very positive. I think that makes sense for their pensioners and their economy. I also think it helps the Japanese economy to expand more to the markets where they sell their goods. It helps to erase trade deficits. Localization lowers cost. It is better for consumers. There are many, many good reasons to do this.

The Japanese are practicers of the Kanban, the just-in-time technique of managing their supply chain. And it is very obvious the closer you can get your suppliers to the OEMs, the shorter your supply chain, again the lower your cost. This is how we sold it in Tennessee. I am sure this is how Vice President Pence sold it in Indiana, and I think we can do a lot more of that.

Senator YOUNG. Do you see opportunities in the area of infrastructure? There is a lot of talk around this town about a major infrastructure package. Would this be one of the major targets of opportunity where a lot of Japanese capital, which is on the sidelines or earning learning a very low rate of return, might be put to a higher value use to the benefit of Americans?

Mr. HAGERTY. I think that is a great opportunity. It has certainly been something that has been discussed a good deal recently, whether it be a maglev train or other types of infrastructure investment where Japanese technology and capital could both be brought to bear in this country.

Senator YOUNG. Very well.

You just invoked our Governor, now our Vice President, Mike Pence. I am glad you did that because as you know, he, along with Deputy Prime Minister Aso, has played a very important role in establishing this U.S.-Japan economic dialogue. As you know, it has three pillars of activity: common strategy on trade and investment rules and issues; cooperation in economic and structural policies; and lastly, sectoral cooperation. In your prepared remarks, you state that you look forward to contributing to this endeavor.

How do you envision this program being carried out? What are top U.S. priorities? And what do you expect maybe some points of contention might be with respect to this?

Mr. HAGERTY. Probably the biggest opportunity would lie in looking to those things that have already been negotiated and advanced through some of the TPP discussions to determine which of those elements might make a good bilateral foundation for our ongoing arrangements.

I would also look to the sector-specific opportunities because I think when you can take an industry-specific situation and then begin to work through it, you actually have a chance to make real progress as opposed to having more hypothetical approaches.

Energy is an area that I see great potential. We have the opportunity to work with liquid natural gas, with other exports now we did not have before. And Japan is the number one importer, for example, of LNG. I think it is the number three importer of oil. But the United States has resources there that I think can very quickly be put into place. We need to invest in infrastructure on our side

and on the Japanese side to make that happen. But I see that as a big and immediate opportunity.

Agriculture has been a concern since I was there 25 years ago. It is going to remain a concern. It is something that I intend to focus on intently while I am there.

Senator YOUNG. Hoosiers farmers will be very happy to hear that. So thank you so much.

And with that, I yield back.

Senator RISCH. Jeanne, welcome. Senator Shaheen, you are up.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Senator Risch.

Welcome, Mr. Hagerty. Congratulations on your nomination. We all appreciate your willingness to serve the country.

I wanted to follow up a little bit. I think Senator Young was asking about trade and what areas might be ripe for trade. I did not hear the beginning of that question. But I wanted to follow up on some of those trade issues.

I heard that a number of the TPP countries are meeting actually today to talk about where to go given the U.S. withdrawal from that effort. Can you talk about if our withdrawal from the TPP has affected our relationship with Japan and what the perceptions are of what opportunities might still exist with the countries that we had been negotiating with?

Mr. HAGERTY. I appreciate your concern, Senator, and I think the Japanese Government has invested a lot of political capital in terms of bringing the TPP forward that relate to the negotiations, but I think Prime Minister Abe took it on and worked very hard to advance those discussions within his own country. They are in a position now where the United States has withdrawn from the TPP, but I am encouraged.

The reason I am encouraged is that the Prime Minister and President have both met early on within 3 weeks I think of the inauguration. The President hosted Prime Minister Abe here in the United States. Vice President Pence has begun an economic dialogue with the Vice Prime Minister of Japan. We have had three cabinet members, Mattis, Tillerson, and Ross, all visit in country already. So at a personal level, at a relationship level, I see advancement taking place that encourages me that we will be able to still achieve a good deal of what we had hoped to accomplish in the TPP, what might have been hoped before, but also to find other areas, perhaps structural areas, that we can add to that and make significant advancements that work in a more bilateral framework.

Senator SHAHEEN. And how important is it for us to continue to do that given China's growing role in many of the Southeast Asian countries?

Mr. HAGERTY. Evermore important I think. My hope is that we can continue to strengthen our alliance. Japan and the United States together, I think we are about 30 percent of the world's GDP. What concerns me is that China continues to flex its economic muscle, its strategic muscle in the area, and the last thing I think we want is the Chinese to be setting the rules of the road in Asia.

Senator SHAHEEN. Absolutely. I certainly agree with that. We want to be part of that discussion.

Mr. HAGERTY. Thank you, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. We all are very aware of the growing threat that not only the United States faces but certainly the Asian region that Japan is in from North Korea's continued nuclear efforts. So can you talk about how we might better leverage our relationship with Japan to address what is happening in North Korea? Are there things that we can be doing to better engage Japan in trying to address what is happening in North Korea?

Mr. HAGERTY. I feel that that is underway, Senator. I had the benefit of speaking with Admiral Harris about this yesterday. Our coordination with Japan is getting ever tighter. They have undertaken new interpretations of their constitution to enable them to work more closely with our military exercises. I think that what we see is not only an increase in military spending but also—and I think more important in my view—an increase in the interdependency and the coordination that is happening with our own forces. That I think yields great opportunity. The movements that have most recently occurred in the area of the Korean Peninsula with the U.S. military vessels, as well as Japanese, I think show a lot in terms of our combined strength and our partnership. And I think we will probably see more of that.

Senator SHAHEEN. And are there ways in which Japan can be helpful working with us on engaging China in trying to encourage them to recognize that it is in the region's interests to demilitarize North Korea—denuclearize North Korea?

Mr. HAGERTY. I am certain that that is the case. China is Japan's largest export market. They have a very vested interest in that region. Japan certainly is closer to the threat in North Korea than we are, but they have very close economic ties with China as well. So I think together Japan and the United States can act as a unified front in moving China in the right direction in this situation.

Senator SHAHEEN. And can you give us any update on any efforts so far that Japan might have engaged in with China on North Korea?

Mr. HAGERTY. I need to study that further, Senator, to give you a more definitive answer.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

And just a final question. I know that Japan's Government is engaging in efforts to increase women's economic empowerment and participation. Can you talk about what impact these efforts have had and what you will do as Ambassador to try and encourage Japan to continue to move in this direction?

Mr. HAGERTY. Senator, I have seen the impact of women engagement in Japan on a firsthand basis. More than 20 years ago, I was living in that country working with the Boston Consulting Group and working very often with Western companies, who then, at that time, found it very difficult to recruit top male graduates from the top universities, but they were able to recruit female graduates. As we evaluated their performance, we realized that female graduates could perform as well or better in many cases than their male counterparts. So we put together a concentrated program to help Western companies recruit females in that market more than 20 years ago. So it comes as no surprise to me that they are adding

a great deal to the economy and I think the potential there is even greater.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Hagerty, thank you so much for being here, and I really appreciate you coming by the office so we could talk about the parochial Idaho questions. We are amused in Idaho when we see the stories about the potato chip shortage. I do not know if you have ever been to Idaho. We got potatoes.

Mr. HAGERTY. I have been fortunate to be in Idaho, sir, and I love the potatoes there.

Senator RISCH. Well, and my family is in the ranching business. So beef has also been an important issue for us. We had a good discussion about those things. And those trade issues are certainly important.

You bring really unique qualifications to this job, and I really appreciate your willingness to take this on. Our relationship with Japan is so good, and it really is aspirational I think for all of us to have that kind of a relationship with every country in the world. We get along so well.

And your counterpart, Ambassador Sasae, thank you so much for being here today. The Ambassador has been incredibly gracious and a great host when we have visited with him. So I know you represent us the same way when you are in Japan.

Mr. HAGERTY. Indeed. I am privilege to have a colleague like Ambassador Sasae to look to.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Let me just say that we look forward to—and there is absolutely no reason why our relationship with Japan will not continue as it is. But as with any country, every country looks after its own interests first. That is particularly true when it comes to trade. And so these are delicate trade issues that need to be resolved, but it is in the interest of both countries to resolve trade issues between the countries. And after listening to you, I have every confidence that you will be able to do that.

Finally, let me say there has been discussed here briefly the difficulties in the neighborhood with the North Koreans. You have instability and the insecurity and just misbehavior and bad things that that country is doing—its administration, its current regime. It cannot go on. I mean, this is going to be resolved, and I suspect it is going to be resolved on your watch one way or another, particularly with the President that we have is dedicated to bringing it to some kind of a resolution. We, obviously, hope it can be done peacefully. There are certainly some signs that we can be some—there would be some optimism that that can happen. Obviously, the Chinese are going to play an important role it. But then so will the Japanese play an important role. Again, I have every confidence that you can thread that needle.

So thank you so much. Anything else you want to say for the record, the microphone is all yours.

Mr. HAGERTY. Thank you very much for the opportunity, Senator. I appreciate being here, and if I am confirmed, I look forward to advancing our relationship with the most important relationship that I can imagine abroad.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Hagerty.

Kids, are you ready to go the lunch? Yeah, I bet you are.

All right. With that, the record will stay open until close of business on Friday for questions for the record. Mr. Hagerty, I know you know that the quicker you can get those back, the quicker this committee can act.

Mr. HAGERTY. Understood.

Senator RISCH. And the more we can stand this government up, the better off we will be. And we are going to make every effort to do that as quickly as we can.

So with that, again, thank you again to you for your willingness to serve. Thank you to your family for taking this on because there are obviously sacrifices that go with that.

And with that, I will declare the meeting adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:35 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM F. HAGERTY BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question 1. In 2005, the United States and Japan signed an agreement that allowed the import of chipping potatoes from about a dozen U.S. states. However, for more than ten years, Idaho has been denied access to the Japanese market while all other states in the agreement have had access. For the past two years, Idaho worked with Japanese officials to finally resolve any concerns they had about the import of Idaho potatoes. Having met all of their requirements, Idaho growers have waited for months for final approval from the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

- If confirmed, what will you do to ensure Idaho is able to receive the same market access that the other states in the agreement enjoy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to expand market access for U.S. agricultural exports to Japan, including for Idaho potatoes. I believe the Japanese market presents important opportunities for U.S. exporters. Furthermore, I would support pursuit of these opportunities and enhanced market access for U.S. firms in the Japanese market as part of the administration's broader effort to reduce the overall trade deficit with Japan. I will make this particular matter a priority.

Question 2. For the past two years, Japan and South Korea have held a series of meetings and signed agreements in order to deepen cooperation and improve their relationship including establishing a hot line between their minsters of defense, reinstituting civil servant exchanges, and restarting a trilateral summit with China. However, there are concerns that with new political leadership in Seoul some of this rapprochement may slow down or stop.

- Do you believe there are valid concerns about South Korea stepping back from any of these agreements? If so, which agreements do you believe are the most crucial for continuing to move forward?

Answer. I was heartened to see media reports of the Republic of Korea's President Moon's phone call with Japanese Prime Minister Abe, in which the leaders reaffirmed the need for close coordination in response to North Korea's unlawful ballistic missile, nuclear, and proliferation programs. Japan and the Republic of Korea are two of our most important allies in the Asia-Pacific region, and we recently have seen significant progress in our trilateral cooperation. Our three countries have carried out trilateral military exercises, and the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) recently signed by Japan and the Republic of Korea has established a new basis for sharing defense-related information. I believe there is scope to strengthen our security cooperation further, and if confirmed I will work to that end.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM F. HAGERTY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. On a volunteer basis, I have worked hard to instill the values of American democracy in our youth. I have served for decades as a volunteer leader in the Boy Scouts of America organization. This service included my role on the Board of the Far East Council in Japan, where we delivered a first-rate values-based program to youth in Japan. I have served as a BSA merit badge counselor for Scouting's Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation and Citizenship in the World programs. By instructing American youth in the fundamental precepts of citizenship, it is my hope that the principles of American democracy permeate their lives and their future impact on humanitarian issues as they may encounter them around the globe.

Over many years as a donor, I have been privileged to support my friend who is a world-leading urologic surgeon, Dr. Jay Smith (Vanderbilt University Medical Center). Dr. Smith travels annually in Africa with the Urological Cancer Foundation, a 501(c)3, to perform complex urinary reconstruction for women who are victims of extreme sexual violence in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Jay and his team have worked with victims of Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army.

The Foundation also works to stand up durable training programs in countries vastly underserved with surgical specialists. The most successful programs have been in Liberia and Malawi.

Dr. Smith and his colleagues have performed hundreds of operations for patients who had no other options for surgical care. The foundation has sponsored 23 different surgical mission trips to Africa. In the process, they have trained local surgeons and there are 7 surgeons practicing in those countries whose training has been greatly facilitated by their efforts and there are currently more in the pipeline.

My recent public service as the Tennessee Commissioner of Economic and Community Development was largely focused on advancing the interests of Tennesseans across our state, the nation and the world. The overseas offices/representatives under my purview were advocates for Tennessee interests. A derivative of promoting Tennessee presence in other countries is that American values can translate through American economic engagement overseas.

Question 2. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Japan?

Answer. Yes. As Ambassador, I would look forward to establishing robust relations with human rights groups, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations both in the United States and in Japan. I understand Mission Japan has built a great network of relationships with many different groups across the spectrum of human rights issues, and I would look to build upon that cooperation.

Question 3. Will you engage with Japan on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. The U.S.-Japan relationship is anchored by a shared commitment to democratic values and human rights. As Ambassador, I would look to coordinate closely with Japan in promoting human rights regionally and globally, including with a focus on the dire human rights situation in North Korea.

Question 4. Over the past several years China has made frequent incursions into the Japanese-claimed territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands in an apparent escalation of pressure by Beijing. What is the U.S. Government's position on the Senkaku Islands and how can we support a peaceful outcome while standing by our alliance commitments to Japan?

Answer. The United States' position on the Senkaku Islands is clear and longstanding and was reaffirmed by President Trump in February. While the United States does not take a position with respect to sovereignty, the Senkaku Islands have been under Japanese administration since the reversion of Okinawa in 1972; as such, they fall within the scope of Article 5 of the 1960 U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. The United States opposes any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands. If confirmed, I will diligently continue to monitor the situation in the Senkakus and consult closely with Japan as allies.

Question 5. Earlier this week, Pyongyang announced that it had conducted another ballistic missile test. As you know, North Korea's provocations threaten Japan

as much as they do South Korea. A successful policy requires sustained diplomatic engagement to strengthen our alliances and partnerships with Japan, which would bolster our deterrence capabilities and help achieve our goal of a denuclearized Peninsula. How would you assess the threat North Korea poses to Japan? How would you advise the Trump administration to clearly define our bottom lines with Pyongyang and to effectively leverage a multidimensional approach that knits together military pressure, alliances, economic sanctions, human rights and diplomatic engagement?

Answer. North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs represent a direct threat to Japan and U.S. troops stationed in Japan. North Korea openly states that its ballistic missiles are intended to deliver nuclear weapons to strike cities in the United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan. The potential for a North Korean attack on South Korea or Japan is real. If confirmed, I will work to coordinate closely with Japan to align our diplomatic, military, and economic response to North Korea's bellicose behavior, with the goal of pressuring the regime in Pyongyang to abandon its UN-proscribed nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs. I will also continue to promote trilateral cooperation among the United States, Japan, and South Korea, as well as diplomatic coordination with partners around the world, to counter the threats posed by North Korea to international peace and stability.Questions for the Record Submitted to

Question 6. Helping to support Japan and South Korea as they have sought reconciliation over "history issues" and the Comfort Women has been an important priority for the United States over the past several years, especially given the importance of deepening trilateral cooperation to deal with North Korea and other regional security challenges. How do you see your role, if confirmed, in helping to continue to support reconciliation between our two allies, friends and partners?

Answer. Japan and the Republic of Korea are two of our most important allies in the Asia-Pacific region, and our trilateral cooperation is critical in responding to the North Korean threat. If confirmed, I would encourage all parties to work together to address history issues in a way that promotes healing and reconciliation.

Question 7. What specific steps, if any, will the Trump administration take to help Tokyo and Seoul put their often-tense relations on a sounder footing, especially on security issues?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support stronger relations between Tokyo and Seoul, particularly as a basis for deeper trilateral cooperation among our three countries. Close trilateral coordination is crucial in particular to address threats posed by the DPRK. I think there is scope to strengthen our security cooperation, through information sharing and joint exercises. I would also push for closer collaboration on other regional and global issues, such as humanitarian development and women's empowerment, which will allow us to leverage the efforts of two of our allies while building working-level contacts and patterns of cooperation between the Japanese and South Koreans.

Question 8. Your two immediate predecessors, Caroline Kennedy and John Roos, both visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the anniversaries of the atomic bombing of those cities. In 2016, Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit Hiroshima. If confirmed, do you plan to continue the practice of visiting these cities on the anniversary of the bombing?

Answer. I understand Ambassadors Kennedy and Roos' attendance at these anniversary commemorations was very positive and promoted reconciliation efforts. If confirmed, I would confer with the White House and Department of State in considering the benefits of my participation.

Question 9. After the nuclear disaster at Fukushima, the United States provided Japan with various means of assistance to help contain the damage, dispose of radioactive waste, and remediate the area. And in the years since, we have continued to work with Japan on ways to promote methods of energy production that do not carry the risk of polluting our air, land, or oceans. Given the increased emphasis on clean energy following the Fukushima disaster, how will you prioritize clean energy cooperation with our Japanese allies and ensure that U.S. exporters and innovators in the industry take full advantage of the related commercial opportunities?

Answer. U.S.-Japan cooperation on clean energy is wide-ranging and, if confirmed, it will continue to be a priority of mine. The initiation of U.S. LNG exports to Japan has created a significant new link between our counties in the energy sector. I support increasing energy exports, to include clean energy solutions, to Japan and see energy cooperation as economically and strategically advantageous. I also welcome, Prime Minister Abe's efforts to restart Japan's nuclear reactors on a safe and sus-

tainable basis, and as Ambassador I would seek ways to assist this. Energy has also been identified as a focus area for cooperation under the recently launched bilateral economic dialogue.

Question 10. What is the appropriate role for the Japanese Government to play in addressing gender issues in the workplace? If confirmed, do you plan to support this campaign, known as "womenomics"?

Answer. Women's issues have long been an area of interest and effort for me. The United States and Japan have cooperated in promoting women's economic empowerment in our two countries and beyond. We have supported Tokyo's annual World Assembly for Women (WAW), sending substantial U.S. delegations, both from Washington and from our Embassy in Tokyo. The U.S. Government also welcomed Japan's identification of women's empowerment as a priority during its G-7 chairmanship year in 2016. Through the Asia Pacific Economic Forum, moreover, our two countries are actively elevating the role of women in the economy. If confirmed, I would continue to support healthy cooperation in this area and look for new opportunities.

I have seen the impact of women's economic empowerment in Japan on a firsthand basis. During my time with the Boston Consulting Group in Tokyo, more than 20 years ago, we put together a focused program to help Western companies recruit Japanese women. It comes as no surprise to me that women are adding a great deal of value to Japan's economy. We know that even greater potential exists with women's sustained participation in the workforce, in leadership positions, and in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Government efforts to raise awareness of the challenges women face in the workplace, together with continued private-sector coordination, should enable more women to enter, remain, and advance in the workforce.

Question 11. Prime Minister Abe has pursued a closer relationship with Russia, including efforts to resolve a longstanding territorial dispute over four islands north of Hokkaido in the Kuril Chain (known in Japan as the Northern Territories) and to conclude a peace treaty from World War II. Do you support these efforts at reconciliation with Russia? Is it in the U.S. strategic interest for Japan and Russia to develop a closer relationship?

Answer. Japan opposes Russia's attempted annexation and occupation of Crimea and its acts of aggression in eastern Ukraine. Together with the United States, European Union, and the G-7, Japan has taken the position of maintaining sanctions against Russia until it implements the Minsk agreements in full. Japan also has its own bilateral concerns with Russia and its own geostrategic concerns in the region. As PM Abe's Government attempts to achieve progress with Russia on the longstanding Northern Territories dispute, I will make it a priority to ensure that U.S. and Japanese policies toward Russia remain closely coordinated.

Question 12. The Trans-Pacific Partnership would have set regional ground rules on issues such as intellectual property, currency manipulation, and labor and environmental standards, and would have resulted in increased market access for American firms in Japan. Without TPP, what avenues will you use to engage with your Japanese counterparts on these issues, and how soon can we expect results?

Answer. If confirmed, I would seek to advance the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue recently launched by Vice President Pence as a vehicle to strengthen the overall bilateral framework of our economic relations, covering trade, macroeconomic, and sectoral issues. I will support efforts by the administration to seek freer and fairer trade with Japan.

Question 13. Is the administration's position that it still intends to seek bilateral deals to replace the TPP?

Answer. The administration's overall goal is to advance free and fair trade and investment that promotes U.S. economic and job growth. The President and senior officials believe this goal can be more effectively achieved through a bilateral approach, and, if confirmed, I will engage with Japan to achieve this important outcome. I defer to administration officials on whether or not that would include negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement.

Question 14. Have any countries agreed to engage with the US bilaterally?

Answer. I defer to current administration officials on the status of bilateral trade discussions with foreign governments.

Question 15. What is Japan's current position on this issue?

Answer. I defer to current administration officials on the status of Japan's current position on this issue.

I will note that our two countries share many economic interests, as seen over many decades of extensive trade and two-way investment. Our new U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue under the leadership of Vice President Pence and Deputy Prime Minister Aso should provide the critical groundwork to strengthen the bilateral framework for trade and investment and to promote our joint prosperity.

As President Trump and Prime Minister Abe said during their February Summit, we "share an interest in sustaining a strong global economy, ensuring financial stability, and growing job opportunities."

Question 16. Since the TPP agreement was premised on cross-cutting concessions among the twelve parties, how can the US convince individual countries to return to the table for a series of smaller deals, without the regional rule-setting that was the hallmark of the TPP?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Tillerson and other U.S. agencies to support the President's commitment to expand economic opportunities for American businesses in Japan and throughout the region, including by addressing candidly any issues that present obstacles to that objective. I would look to identify and build upon areas of common ground that would benefit the United States in advancing our economic relationship.

Question 17. Will you commit to providing information to this committee if you become aware of emoluments from foreign governments or government-owned companies being directed to the President, his immediate family, or anyone else in the executive branch?

Answer. I will comply with the law regarding all such issues and will provide information to Congress when appropriate.

Question 18. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What will you do at the Mission to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign and Civil Service? What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I agree that well-managed diverse teams perform better, and I understand the Department of State is committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse, talented workforce that advances U.S. values, interests and goals around the world.

If confirmed, I will seek through the Foreign Service assignments process to promote the recruitment of under-represented groups for Mission Japan. In addition, I will take my role as a leader and mentor of all employees seriously. I will ensure that all employees are aware, understand, and abide by Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles and that managers receive mandatory EEO training. This is an important issue, and I look forward to working with you and the committee to advance this shared objective.

Question 19. In 2016, Japan adopted The Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. This international treaty, which the U.S. has also ratified, provides a civil mechanism to promptly return children who have been taken out of the country of habitual residence in violation of custodial rights. It is my hope that through this mechanism we will be able to quickly resolve international abduction cases between the United States and Japan. However, there are more than 30 pre-Convention abduction cases that remain unresolved. If confirmed, will you assure me that you will seek to engage with your Japanese counterparts to resolve these pre-Convention cases?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will seek the Japanese Government's most robust efforts to resolve pre-Convention cases. The resolution of these, and all parental child abduction cases, will be a top priority.

Question 20. As Commissioner of Economic and Community Development from 2011 to 2015, you oversaw Tennessee's Department of Economic and Community Development, which administers the state-funded TNInvestco program. Did you play a role in the establishment of TNInvestco?

Answer. I did not play a role in the establishment of this program. It was established by statute, designed and implemented under the administration of then-Governor Phil Bredesen (D) in 2009.

Question 21. What were the goals of TNInvestco, and were those goals met?

Answer. The program was designed to increase the flow of capital to companies in Tennessee in the early stages of their development. Since the program's implementation, Tennessee has moved up the league tables in early stage risk capital deployment from #45 in 2010 to #22 in 2016, according to the Milken Institute State Technology and Science Index.

Question 22. What was your role in providing oversight and monitoring of TNInvestco?

Answer. While I had responsibility for the Department of Economic and Community Development, all day-to-day responsibility for oversight and monitoring of the TNInvestco program was delegated to department officials. As such, I had no direct role in oversight or monitoring this program.

Question 23. In July of 2016, you took a leave of absence from Hagerty Peterson to serve as Director of Presidential Appointments for the 2016 Trump Presidential Transition Team. This position involved oversight on the first group of prominent board, commission, Cabinet and other appointments that President-elect Trump would make. What role did you play in the decision to bring on Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn to serve as National Security Advisor?

Answer. I served prior to the President's inauguration as a volunteer in the role of Director of Presidential Appointments for the transition team, which was a separate legal entity from the campaign. My team and I were primarily focused on candidates for Cabinet positions. The selection of members of the White House staff was generally handled separately.

In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making, I am unable to answer this question further.

Question 24. Were you aware before President Trump's inauguration that Lt. Gen. Flynn was under federal investigation for secretly working as a paid lobbyist for Turkey during the 2016 presidential campaign, or the nature and extent of his contacts and financial arrangements with Russia?

Answer. In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision making, I am unable to answer this question.

Question 25. What role did you play in the decision to bring on Sebastian Gorka as deputy assistant to the president?

Answer. In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making, I am unable to answer this question.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM F. HAGERTY BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. Do you support the renegotiation of our civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Japan to put greater constraints on Japanese reprocessing of U.S.-obligated spent fuel?

Answer. The United States has a long history of productive cooperation with Japan on nuclear safety, nuclear security and nonproliferation. If confirmed, I am committed to maintaining this cooperation. The United States has a longstanding policy that has generally sought to prevent the spread of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to states not already possessing them.

Question 2. If confirmed, will you regularly convey to Japanese leaders that reprocessing is dangerous for Japan and dangerous for global nonproliferation?

Answer. It is my understanding that since reprocessing leads to separated plutonium and, in principle, separated plutonium can be used to make nuclear weapons, generally less reprocessing in the world is better than more. If confirmed, I will indeed share this concern in the course of regular discussions on such matters with Japanese leaders.

Question 3. If confirmed, will you make clear to Japan that there are safer and more economical alternatives to disposing of spent-fuel?

Answer. I understand that the United States has concluded that reprocessing in the United States is not desirable at present, neither from the perspective of energy security, nor that of commercial competitiveness. Rather, U.S. industry has been able to rely on interim dry storage of spent fuel. If confirmed, I will share the views of the United States and our conclusions with Japan.

Question 4. If confirmed, will you work with the Secretary of State and with the U.S. Ambassadors in China and South Korea to coordinate a multilateral "pause" on commercial spent-fuel reprocessing by Japan, China, and South Korea?

Answer. I understand that the United States has in recent years maintained ongoing dialogues with Japan, China, and South Korea in the interest of limiting the spread of fissile materials and their production. I support the continuation of these dialogues.

Question 5. If confirmed as ambassador, will you work to incorporate Japanese input into U.S. diplomatic strategy, and to gain Japan's support for direct negotiations between the United States and North Korea aimed at securing the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula?

Answer. The administration is in close coordination with Japan on our approach to the DPRK. If confirmed, I will work with Japan to align our diplomatic, military, and economic response to North Korea, with the goal of pressuring North Korea to abandon its UN-proscribed nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs. I believe that Japan is in agreement with the administration's current policy approach—North Korea must take concrete steps to reduce the threat that its unlawful weapons programs pose to the United States and our allies, including Japan, before we can even consider talks.

Question 6. If confirmed as Ambassador, how will you work with Japan to reduce whaling in accordance with international standards?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I would continue to support the moratorium on commercial whaling adopted by the International Whaling Commission as a necessary measure for the conservation of large whales. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with Japan and other interested governments ways to improve the International Whaling Commission and seek ways to cooperate on initiatives to conserve and recover the world's large whales.

Question 7. If confirmed, what will you do to assure Japanese leaders that the United States will protect any sensitive information they provide to us?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the U.S. intelligence community to ensure that our Japanese partners can be confident that the United States will safeguard their sensitive information. I will continue to emphasize the long-standing and close working relationship and trust developed between our military and intelligence communities, and will consult at the highest levels to ensure that sensitive information critical to the security of both of our countries is protected.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM F. HAGERTY BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Extent of Mr. Hagerty's knowledge of Flynn's Russian and Turkish dealings a senior transition official responsible for personnel

Question 1. After Vice President Elect Pence received the November 18, 2016 letter from Congressman Cummings regarding Flynn's lobbying for Turkish interests and paid appearance with Russian President Vladimir Putin, were you made aware of this letter?

Answer. I served prior to the President's Inauguration as a volunteer in the role of Director of Presidential Appointments for the transition team, which was a separate legal entity from the campaign. My team and I were primarily focused on candidates for Cabinet positions.

In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making and communications with the Vice President-elect, I am unable to answer this question.

Question 2. Did you ever discuss Ranking Member Cummings November 18, 2016 letter to Vice President Pence with Vice President Pence? If so, when? Please provide details on the nature of those conversations if they took place.

Answer. In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making and communications with the Vice President-elect, I am unable to answer this question.

Question 3. Were you ever in contact with Vice President elect Pence, transition official Marshall Billingslea or other transition officials about Flynn's work on behalf of Turkey or Russian payments?

Answer. In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making and communications with the Vice President-elect, I am unable to answer this question.

Question 4. Did you ever speak to transition official Marshall Billingslea about his meeting with Flynn in late November 2016 where Billingslea expressed concern to Flynn about his contacts with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak?

Answer. In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making, I am unable to answer this question.

Question 5. Did you participate in any transition team meetings with Obama officials regarding Flynn?

Answer. In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making, I am unable to answer this question.

Question 6. Were you aware of Flynn's conversation with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak on December 29, 2016 at any point before Vice President Pence's interview with CBS' "Face the nation' on January 15, 2017? If you were aware of Flynn's conversation with the Russian ambassador prior to Pence's interview, did you discuss Flynn's contact with Kislyak with Pence or any other senior transition officials?

Answer. In light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making and communications with the Vice President, I am unable to answer this question.

TN InvesCo Fund

Question 7. What was your role in the establishment of TN InvesCo Fund?

Answer. I did not play a role in the establishment of this program. It was established by statute, designed and implemented under the administration of then-Governor Phil Bredesen (D) in 2009.

Question 8. Were you involved in the legislation that created the TN InvestCo fund?

Answer. No, the legislation that created the TN InvestCo fund was passed, signed into law and implemented in 2009, prior to my government service, which was from 2011–2015.

Question 9. Did your private investment fund—Hagerty Peterson—benefit financially from the TN InvestCo Fund?

Answer. No. In 2009, I became a limited partner with a minority stake in one of the ten funds that were selected under the TNInvestco program. That fund was separate from Hagerty Peterson and made no investments in any Hagerty Peterson portfolio companies. Nor did any of the other funds selected under the TNInvestco program. Prior to my entering government service in 2011, Hagerty Peterson became inactive. When I entered government in 2011, my interests in the fund were placed into a blind trust. In addition, all responsibility for oversight of the TNInvestco program was delegated to other officials, in consultation with the Governor's counsel.

Question 10. Did the companies that received money through InvestCo have any oversight, reporting, or other monitoring and evaluation protocols?

Answer. The reporting requirements for the companies that received funds were specified by the legislation and had to do with the location of the companies, the capital invested and associated employment. All day-to-day responsibility for oversight and monitoring of the TNInvestco program was delegated to department officials. As such, I had no direct role in oversight or monitoring this program.

Question 11. What were the goals of the InvestCo Fund? Were those goals met? Was there any reported accounting of the activities that found this program created jobs or contributed to economic development for TN?

Answer. The program was designed to increase the flow of capital to companies in Tennessee in the early stages of their development. Since the program's implementation, Tennessee has moved up the league tables in early stage risk capital deployment from #45 in 2010 to #22 in 2016, according to the Milken Institute State Technology and Science Index.

RESPONSE TO FOLLOW-UP QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM F. HAGERTY BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Extent of Mr. Hagerty's knowledge of former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn's Russian and Turkish dealings as a senior transition official responsible for personnel.

Question 1. Thank you for your response to the questions for the record I submitted on May 18, 2017. In reference to your knowledge of a November 18, 2016 letter from Congressman Cummings regarding Michael Flynn's lobbying on behalf of Turkey and a paid appearance with Russian President Vladimir Putin, you replied that you were unable to answer the question, "in light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making and communications with the Vice President-elect."

You also cited confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision making as the reason you opted not to answer my questions about discussions you may have had with Vice President-elect Pence about Congressman Cummings' letter as well as any discussions you may have had with other transition officials regarding former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn's communications and relationships with Russia and Turkey. All of the discussions or other information that I asked you about took place prior to President Trump and Vice President Pence taking office on January 20, 2017.

Accordingly, below are a few follow-up questions to clarify the reasons why you are choosing not to answer my initial questions for the record.

- Please identify the legally recognized privilege (or privileges) that you are asserting as the basis for your refusal to answer the questions regarding your contacts with Vice President-elect Pence?
- If you are citing executive privilege (or any other privilege held by the chief executive or federal agencies), please explain the legal basis for claiming that privilege as a private citizen who was volunteering on a transition team prior to inauguration.
- If you are not citing executive privilege, please specify in detail the legal theory upon which you are basing your refusal to answer these questions.
- If upon reflection and legal review, you recognize that you do not have a sound legal theory upon which to rely, please provide full answers to the aforementioned questions for the record from my May 18 submission.

Answer. I served in the role of Director of Presidential Appointments for the transition team, which was a separate legal entity from the campaign. My team and I were primarily focused on candidates for Cabinet positions. The selection of members of the White House staff was generally handled separately. As noted in my responses to your earlier questions, I was unable to respond in light of the confidentiality interests that attach to executive branch decision-making. Given those interests, I am unable to respond further to your follow-up questions.

NOMINATION

THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:14 a.m. in Room 419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Johnson, Gardner, Young, Isakson, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Markey, and Booker.

Also Present: Senator Baldwin.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

And as a courtesy to three very distinguished guests this morning, Senator Cardin and I will defer our opening comments. We know that each of you have important business to deal with.

We are honored to have Senator Johnson and Senator Baldwin introduce our outstanding nominee for this position, and we are especially honored to have the Speaker of the House of Representatives here, who I thought yesterday delivered some well-needed, unifying comments in a time of need, and I thank him for that and thank him for his leadership.

And with that, knowing that you in particular have a lot of duties to deal with, Speaker Ryan, why do you not begin the process.

Senator CARDIN. And let me just join our chairman in thanking the Speaker for his comments yesterday. You spoke for all of us, and it was an incredibly difficult time, and we are very proud of your comments. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. PAUL RYAN, U.S. CONGRESSMAN FROM WISCONSIN

Speaker RYAN. Thank you. Thank you for that, and thank you for your prayers. We have friends and colleagues in surgery right now, so we need our continual prayers. And I felt like we can speak for all of our colleagues in saying that this is a time for us to unify, and it is a time for us to reflect and I appreciate that.

Let me on a lighter note thank you for having me here this morning. It is not often or ever a Speaker comes to the Senate, so thanks for letting me come over here——

[Laughter.]

Speaker RYAN [continuing]. To what we call the high-rent district.

The CHAIRMAN. There is good reason for that.

Speaker RYAN. That is right. That is right. Yes, I have not been over here in a long time.

I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words about a good, close, old friend. Mark Green needs no introduction to this panel. He has long been a forceful advocate for American leadership in global development. He undoubtedly possesses the expertise and the experience. He is the perfect person for this job to lead USAID and to fulfill its mission.

He is going to deliver the utmost transparency and accountability for taxpayers. The President certainly made the best possible choice.

I have known Mark Green for 20 years. We were both elected together in the same election in 1998, along with Tammy, to the House. Our offices were next door to each other. Our staffs were closely related and integrated. We went to Bible study together every single week. We rose through the ranks in Wisconsin politics together.

It was clear to me back in those days that Mark Green had a higher calling. His heart was always set on making a difference for people in need. You could see it when he talked about his time in Africa when he and Sue lived in a tent and were missionaries and working in Peace Corps work. You could see it when his choice to get on committee was the Foreign Affairs Committee because he wanted to work on things like PEPFAR and the Millennium Challenge Account law. He was so passionate about those issues. I was over working on budget spreadsheets; Mark Green was working on Millennium and PEPFAR and these issues.

You could see it in just the passion that he has for advocating for the people who cannot advocate for themselves. This is his north star. This is his life's work. This is what he does. And so the endorsement I have for Mark Green is not merely personal; it is the fact that you could not have a better person to lead this kind of an organization.

The work done by USAID, funded and overseen by this Congress, is critical to advancing security and democracy around the world, even more at this time at the moment we are in than ever before, I would argue.

I think Mark understands as well as anyone that the strength and clarity of America's leadership is vital to our interests and our overall global security and stability. We are going to be very fortunate to have Mark Green as our voice and representative to the developing world.

As administrator of USAID, he will do what he always has done. He has an uncanny ability to bring people together of differing views, of differing backgrounds, and to get them to work on the same page. He is a person who knows what it takes to improve and transform the lives of others.

And so I just could not give a better unqualified endorsement of a finer person to lead a very important agency at a very important time than Mark Green, so thank you for having me. I appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you. And thank you for being here. And for what it is worth, my sense is your very sincere comments reflect the feelings of I think most people here who have spent time with him, and I thank you for that. And we will not be offended if you go back to the superior side of the building and begin your work. So, thank you so much for being here.

Senator Johnson, with great leadership on this committee, we are thankful that you are here to do the same thing and look forward to your comments.

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

Senator JOHNSON. Well, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, first of all, I want to join you in thanking the Speaker for his unifying comments yesterday as well and a day of just beyond disturbing event, so, you know, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I am also honored to join the Speaker introducing former Ambassador and Congressman Mark Green as the nominee to be the next administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

We are at an important juncture for the future of U.S. foreign assistance, and Mark's exemplary character and unique qualifications make him an inspired choice to lead USAID into the future.

Prior to serving in the State Assembly and in Congress representing Wisconsin's 8th District, Mark taught English in Kenya as a volunteer with WorldTeach. As a Member of Congress, he was instrumental in the passage of PEPFAR and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which has helped save millions of lives and spurred global development.

After serving in Congress, Mark became U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania and served as executive director of Malaria No More and is a board member of Millennium Challenge Corporation. He did this at great personal expense, having contracted both malaria and typhoid while serving others.

Today, he serves as a senior director of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition and as President of the International Republican Institute, a nonprofit organization that works to bring democracy and freedom to all corners of the world.

Mark has repeatedly set his personal well-being aside in order to make the world a better place for countless others. He understands that compassion for those in need is an essential and galvanizing component of USAID's mission, and he also understands that foreign assistance is a strategic investment, which must be integrated with national strategy at the policymaking level. Most of all, Mark is a respected servant-leader with high moral character who will do an outstanding job of representing America's compassion and decency throughout the world. I have no doubt that he will lead USAID with dedication and distinction.

I strongly endorse Mark's nomination and urge my colleagues to support him as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Senator Baldwin, I have not had the opportunity to serve on a committee with you, but I thank you so much for what you bring

to the United States Senate and for being here to show the strong bipartisan support for this nominee.

STATEMENT OF HON. TAMMY BALDWIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN

Senator BALDWIN. Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ranking Member Cardin and members of the committee.

I, too, want to thank Speaker Ryan for his comments yesterday and today. It is time for more than just moments of unity.

And I am proud to be sitting here with my colleagues in unity behind the nomination of Mark Green to be the leader of the United States Agency for International Development.

I have known Mark—I hate to say this—for a quarter-century. Not only, as Speaker Ryan said, did we have the pleasure of being elected, all three of us, to the House of Representatives in the same year, but Mark Green and I were elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly together in 1992 and have had an opportunity to serve together and work across party lines for the people of Wisconsin for many years. I also had the pleasure of serving with Mark on the House Judiciary Committee for many years.

I applaud the President's nomination of Mark Green to serve America in this position. He not only has the exemplary experience and qualifications to take on this responsibility; as you have heard, he has the deep personal passion and commitment to do this job, as shown through years of work in advancing our common good on the international stage.

As we all confront the reality of an increasingly interconnected world that presents both challenges and opportunities, I have no doubt that Mark Green understands that America is always best served when we lead and reach out to the rest of the world, not turn inward.

Senator Johnson, Speaker Ryan and I know and agree Mark Green is the right person for this mission, and I hope that our joint support sends a very strong message to this committee and the entire United States Senate that he is the right choice for the USAID administrator. I am hopeful that this committee and the full Senate will confirm Mark's nomination so that he can begin the work that he has been committed to do throughout his entire life, serving and making a difference in people's lives.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for those comments and all three of you for being here. And what you have said, in many ways I feel like we could adjourn the meeting right now.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. But I would say to each of you, please, again, feel free to leave. As a matter of fact, I am going to pause for a moment so it will not be awkward so that you can do so appropriately. Thank you so much for being here and for your role in making our country what it is.

Ambassador Green, thank you so much for joining us today. This is not the first time we know that you have testified before this committee, and you are certainly no stranger to the halls of the Capitol. You have a long and diverse history in both public service

and international development, and I am very pleased with your nomination to be the next USAID administrator and know that you will bring significant expertise and understanding to this new role.

With a budget of over $25 billion, USAID represents about 46 percent of our international affairs activities but just over half of 1 percent of the total U.S. Federal budget. USAID has an important mission, and many of its programs have stabilizing effects in regions of the world where we have national security interests.

And while I know there has been much discussion about the President's budget request and, as I have said before, it is the role of Congress to fund the Federal Government, not the administration. So instead of focusing on that, I think we would be better served to shift our focus from what can be done towards what should be done. Instead of what can be done, we should focus away from what can be done towards what should be done.

I am reminded of something Secretary Tillerson said at Tuesday's budget hearing: "Funding does not equal results. Show me results, and I will tell you your commitment." And I just want to say I know that that is something that you are very focused on, and that is why we are all so proud that you are our nominee.

That is why I am encouraged by the statement in your testimony that you, as USAID administrator, would set a higher standard for accountability and achieving results. I agree with you that we can create significant change by focusing on economic growth in a developing world. We should look for appropriate ways to leverage shared private and public sector interests and eliminating constraints to trade and investment, creating business environments that will attract investment in the developing world should be our priority.

This commitment has a long history of bipartisanship, which we are going to demonstrate in a really sound way today on the Floor when it comes to oversight of our foreign assistance with the passage of legislation enacting important reforms such as the Global Food Security Act, Electrify Africa, and Water for the World Act. Should you be confirmed, I am confident that we would find a willing partner in our oversight and reform efforts.

To that end, I want to highlight today one of the most impactful aid reforms that is achievable during this Congress, modernizing our food aid. Food for Peace has been operating under decades-old requirements to use 100 percent U.S. farm commodities, 50 percent of which must be shipped on overpriced, uncompetitive U.S.-flagged vessels. If we could modernize the program with increased flexibility in food aid delivery while still maintaining a significant role for the U.S. farmer who cares deeply, deeply about people in need, we could feed 5 to 8 million more people a day with the exact same funding. I know you are very aware of that, and I really feel the time is here for us to address that issue.

Food for Peace is authorized in the farm bill that is being reauthorized next year, and if you are confirmed as administrator, I would seek your commitment to working with us and the Ag Committees and others to modernize the program for the 21st century.

Thank you for coming here today. I know you have important family members who we were honored to meet back behind the podium, but we look forward to you introducing them. We look for-

ward to your testimony. We look forward to you serving in this important role.

And with that, let me turn to my friend, the ranking member, Senator Ben Cardin.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for convening this hearing. And I will call you Congressman Green because I think being in Congress is more important than being an ambassador, but we can argue that issue later.

But, Ambassador Green, thank you for your willingness to serve your country at this critical moment and one of the most important national security posts that we have in America. And I thank your family because this clearly is going to be a family sacrifice. You know that, your family knows that, and we thank them for joining you in this commitment for public service.

I will acknowledge that I am not objective on your nomination. I have known you for a long time. I am very impressed by what you did when you were in the House of Representatives. I know your service that we saw in the Ambassador in Tanzania, what you did with Millennium Challenge Corporation and the NGO community. You have incredible endorsements from stakeholders who I deeply respect and the importance of the mission of USAID. And in our conversations, you were extremely passionate about the values that I think are critically important for America's security. So, you come to this day with a strong record and passion for this position, and I join the chairman in believing that there will be a very smooth confirmation process for you to assume the office as director of USAID.

I say that recognizing that you have accepted a position during a very challenging moment. When we take a look at the conflicts globally and what these conflicts have meant as far as humanitarian crises in so many spots in the world where voids have been created, where we see extremist groups and terrorist organizations that are able to take advantage of that insecurity, that is your commitment to try to deal with both the humanitarian problem and to avoid the voids that allow terrorist groups and oppressive regimes to be able to function.

You also understand the importance of United States leadership. It has been U.S. leadership that has provided the world direction, that deals with issues such as health epidemics that we have dealt with to dealing with good governance, anticorruption, and the creation and support of democratic institutions.

And we are going to see that. The chairman alluded to that. You are going to see that leadership today in the United States Senate at 11 o'clock when we start voting on a bill that expresses not only our commitment as a Congress to take on the aggression of Russia and Iran but also our commitment to support democratic institutions and to have appropriate congressional review of executive actions so we can speak with a stronger united voice in this country. That to me is exactly what we need to do for our national security.

But I need to point out that there are some self-inflicted challenges that we are imposing on ourselves. And we need to recognize

that because we need to overcome these challenges. We have budget cuts that are being recommended that would make it virtually impossible for USAID to carry out the missions that we expect you to be able to carry out.

The budget would withdraw U.S. aid missions from 37 countries. That presents a very, very—if you do not have people on the ground, it is very difficult to be able to understand the circumstances. Having been on the ground, you understand that.

The OMB directive reducing personnel could very well cripple the ability of carrying out missions. How the State Department reorganizes—and we had a hearing Tuesday with Secretary Tillerson. The jury is out on that. I agree with the chairman. Let us wait to see. We can always do things better. But I know how important it is for USAID's independence within the State Department family, and that is an issue that we are going to be looking to you, so this hearing is an opportunity for you to present your vision as how you see USAID fitting into our national security and to American values.

I also will ask you to do two other things. One, assure us that you are going to be an effective voice within the Trump administration as it relates to these key decisions that are being made, recognizing that development assistance is critically important to our national security. How do you weigh in effectively within the Trump administration to carry out that commitment?

And the second and equally as important, you have Democrats and Republicans on this committee that are dedicated to working with you in a bipartisan manner. The chairman mentioned some of these programs, and historically, we are proud of PEPFAR and how that changed the world landscape on HIV/AIDS. We know that what with did with Power Africa, what we have done with Feed the Future, what we have done with the water, so many different issues we have worked together as a team in order to advance U.S. leadership in national security matters.

There are many areas that we want to work together on. I will just mention one. We are working on using the successful model of the trafficking in persons, our commitment to end modern-day slavery, which is a commitment which is continuing, and we will need your help in order to make sure we continue down that path because there are still way too many people being trafficked around the world, but to use that model to fight corruption. And I want to work with you and I want to work with Secretary Tillerson and members of the committee to figure out how we could be more effective in our international leadership to stop the rise of corruption in so many countries. And today, we are taking a major step in that direction against Russia, but we need to have an overall strategy on how to do that.

So today gives you a chance to go over with this committee, the committee wants to work with you, your vision of USAID, how we can work together to promote your mission and how we can be effective in regards to the Trump administration so that we could have more unity in this country, recognizing how development assistance is critically important to our national security. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. [Presiding] Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Mr. Green, I am sure Senator Corker has apologized to you. He has an important matter on the Floor he has to attend to. But he did not leave you to chance. I grew up in Wisconsin. I was born in Wisconsin. I received part of my higher education at the University of Wisconsin. Both sides of my family immigrated to Wisconsin. I see you are a latecomer, having been born in Massachusetts, but I am going to overlook that.

[Laughter.]

Senator RISCH. So with that, the floor is yours and we will be glad to hear from you.

Senator JOHNSON. Just a quick interruption, though. You forgot to mention you are a Green Bay Packer fan.

Senator RISCH. I am a Green Bay Packer fan.

Senator JOHNSON. As is Ambassador Green.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. The floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF MARK ANDREW GREEN OF WISCONSIN, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ambassador GREEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and thanks to the members of the committee. I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee for USAID administrator, and I am truly grateful to both the President and to Secretary Tillerson for their trust and support and confidence.

You heard from the introducers. I am grateful to them, to you for the friendship and the kind words. Speaker Ryan, Paul, he and I do go back a long ways. As we were noting before we came out, Paul famously would walk back and forth from votes reading, you know, numbers tables from ways and means, and I was the guy that would talk about Africa. I think we were both pretty boring people at the time.

I want to thank my family for their unwavering support, my parents, born South African and British but now proud Americans of more than 20 years; my wife Susan, who is here today, and our three children Anna and Alex, who are also here; and Rachel, who is back in Minnesota where she teaches.

Mr. Chairman, 30 years ago this August, Sue and I began a journey as volunteer teachers in Kenya. That journey has taken me to five continents walking hospital wards in Tanzania, observing elections in Jordan and Burma, talking with young political leaders in Europe and Eurasia, meeting with community leaders in Central and South America and so much more. Back here, I have had the honor of helping to craft PEPFAR and MCC and working with a number of truly great organizations.

Along the way, I have learned a lot about what is working in development and what can work even better. But more than anything else, this journey has driven home for me that America and our development tools can be an irreplaceable force for good in this world.

Now, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, you have asked me for my priorities for USAID. I can best sum them up like this: Every President in modern memory has suggested that the purpose of foreign assistance should be ending its need to exist. If confirmed, I will make that our organizing principle.

And that means three things. First, I will work to make sure that our programs respect our taxpayers. Our foreign assistance funds come from hardworking families all across this great country. I think we all realize that we have to use these dollars as efficiently and as effectively as we possibly can. If confirmed, I will focus our limited resources on what is working and end what is not. I will scrutinize every program to ensure that we are maximizing value, minimizing waste, and always advancing America's interests.

Second, I will make clear to our partner countries that our assistance is not open-ended or inevitable or, most important, a substitute for what they must take on themselves. Every program should look forward to the day when it can end. And I will ask our missions to evaluate how each dollar moves a country closer to that day.

To be clear, USAID will not walk away from our humanitarian commitments and will always be there when disaster strikes because that is who we are as Americans. But I believe the truest sense of compassion comes from helping people and countries to take care of themselves and to craft their own bright future.

Finally, third, I will work to reshape our assistance tools and programs to better reflect our evolving relationship with the developing world. When USAID was first created some 55 years ago, about 80 percent of the money flowing from America to the developing world came from the Government, ODA, official development assistance. Today, that figure is under 10 percent.

International commerce, remittances, private philanthropy are now transformational forces. Added to that, we see new technologies emerging each and every day that create marvelous new opportunities. All of this suggests we should change our approach to supporting development. If confirmed, and working with all of you, I will pursue ideas for reforming our policies and procedures, rethinking our structure, and retooling how we engage with our development partners. I will also work hard to strengthen our interagency cooperation because I saw as Ambassador to Tanzania how that can be a truly effective force multiplier.

Mr. Chairman, the same passion that carried me to East Africa 30 years ago still drives me today. I believe in the power of compassion. I believe in the power of development. My journey has reminded me over and over again that fostering development is hard work, but also, if done right and led well, it can not only lift lives and strengthen communities but also help America achieve many of her most important strategic priorities.

And so with your support for my confirmation, I commit to working with USAID's talented team all around the world to make smart choices and take on important work that will lead, I believe, to an even stronger, more effective agency in the years ahead. Thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Green's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK ANDREW GREEN

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to come before you today as the President's nominee to lead the U.S. Agency for International Development.

And I'm grateful to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their trust and confidence.

Senator Baldwin, Senator Johnson, Speaker Ryan, thank you for your friendship, your years of support, and that gracious introduction.

To those with whom I consulted in preparing for today, thank you for your counsel and guidance.

I also want to express my personal gratitude to Wade Warren, who has done an outstanding job leading the Agency these last months as Acting Administrator.

Finally, but most importantly, I want to thank my family for their unwavering support. My parents, born South African and British, but proud Americans for twenty plus years.

My wife, Susan, who is here today, and our three children Rachel, Anna and Alex. Thirty years ago this August, Sue and I began a journey as volunteer teachers in Kenya. We never could have imagined it would bring us to this day and to this great honor.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, should I be confirmed, it is lessons from that journey, touching five continents and working with countless development leaders, that I will bring to my work at USAID.

While teaching in rural Kenya, I learned how desperate so many families are for a taste of the opportunities we as Americans usually take for granted. Many of my students walked miles, barefoot and ill-nourished, to attend class. Never mind that there weren't enough textbooks or that during the rainy season holes in our tin roof and lack of glass in our windows disrupted lessons. When some of the students were sent home for falling behind on school fees, I often caught them trying to sneak back INTO my class. Their determination, their passion, has never left me.

Years later, on September 11th, 2001, while serving the good people of Northeast Wisconsin in Congress, like you, I learned painfully just how small the world had become.

After 9-11, I was part of the team that crafted key development initiatives like the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), programs that have transformed U.S. development assistance, brought about remarkable changes in many parts of the world and taught us lessons that we apply to this day.

Later still, while serving President Bush and the American people as our Ambassador to Tanzania, I saw first-hand how those same tools actually worked in the field, and what could be done to make them even better. I learned additional lessons too numerous to count.

I saw how important our civil-society partners can be, both faith-based and secular, in reaching out to people and communities in need. I learned how important it was to tackle bureaucracy and prevent turf battles, and worked to mobilize every agency and every partner's particular capacities and strengths.

I was so often impressed by the skills and talent of our development professionals, particularly those who powered USAID. And each day, as I drove to my office in Dar es Salaam, past the memorial to those who lost their lives in the 1998 Embassy bombing, I was reminded both that there are forces out there seeking to harm us, and that our diplomacy and development teams are often among the first in harm's way.

Mr. Chairman, my journey in development didn't end with my time in Tanzania, nor did the lessons I've learned. Back here in the States, I've been blessed to work with important organizations that are mobilizing resources, policies and ideas to make our development work in the field so much more effective.

My work with Malaria No More and the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition taught me the importance of bringing together voices from all sectors -- business, civil society and defense -- to educate voters and their representatives on the importance of American leadership. My activities with the International Conservation Caucus Foundation have shown me how bipartisan coalitions can be forged for important causes like common-sense conservation.

My work with the Consensus for Development Reform and my time on the Board of the MCC drove home the importance of monitoring and evaluation, and focusing on outcomes. These last three-plus years as President of the International Republican Institute have shaped my views in so many ways. I've traveled to places like Mongolia, Ukraine and Colombia, and I've seen how vitally important good governance is to sustainable development outcomes.

All of these experiences, from working in classrooms in Kenya, to walking hospital wards in Tanzania, to observing election halls in Jordan and Burma, have shown me that the American people and our lead development agency, USAID, can be an irreplaceable force for good in the world.

It would be an extraordinary honor to lead the men and women of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

From responding to disasters and pandemics, to feeding the desperate and healing the sick, opposing extremism, strengthening governance, and creating opportunity for children, small business owners, and rural farmers, USAID's work is broad and its impact is growing.

Early results show that in the last six years, USAID's food-security efforts have helped save nearly one million children from the lifelong effects of chronic malnutrition, and helped at least nine million more people live free from extreme poverty.

USAID has helped save almost seven million lives through the President's Malaria Initiative, supported life-sustaining HIV treatments for 11.4 million more through PEPFAR, and our humanitarian assistance has reached more than 350 million people suffering through disasters and food emergencies.

USAID isalso pioneering new technologies to help entrepreneurs gain access to financing, combat diseases like Zika and Ebola, and bring reliable electricity to whole communities and countries.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I know that, if confirmed, I will take the helm during a time of unique challenges for the Agency, the wider development community and those of us working to ensure our nation's security.

International development needs have always outstripped resources. Yet, the needs facing us today are nearly unprecedented. We will need to make tough, smart choices in order to best advance our interests and values.

Violent extremism in many parts of the world, hostility to civil society and attacks on values we hold dear are making our work more dangerous and more expensive.

On the other hand, there are reasons for great optimism. Innovations like SMS and smartphone applications are connecting the developing world. Research is hastening the eradication of scourges like Ebola and malaria. These are just a few of the advancements that hold great promise for our work.

International development is one of those quiet places where Republicans and Democrats have long come together on a bipartisan basis. It was, after all, President Bush who created MCC and PEPFAR, and then President Obama who launched Power Africa and Feed the Future.

If confirmed, I will do my best to work in this bipartisan spirit and apply the many lessons I've learned since first arriving in that East African classroom.

Mr. Chairman, you've asked me for my priorities for USAID. I can best sum them up this way: every President in modern memory has suggested that the purpose of foreign assistance should be ending its need to exist. If confirmed, I plan to make that our core organizing principle.

That would mean pursuing three overarching priorities.

First, I will make sure that our programs respect our taxpayers.

I will set a high standard of accountability for USAID and our partners. Our foreign assistance funds are precious: they come from hard-working families all across this great country. We owe it to them to use these as efficiently and effectively as possible.

I will focus our limited resources on what is working, and end what is not. I will scrutinize every program and every expenditure to ensure that we are maximizing value, minimizing waste and always advancing America's interests. But I will need your advice and counsel on how to do this best, and I commit to consulting with you as we move forward.

Second, I will make it clear to our partners that our assistance isn't open-ended or inevitable or, most important, a substitute for what they must take on themselves. Our support must never be seen as a gift or a handout, but instead as the proverbial hand UP.

Every program should look forward to the day when it can end. So I will ask every USAID mission to evaluate how each program dollar moves a country closer to that day.

We should emphasize programs that incentivize local capacity-building and implementation, mobilize domestic resources and ensure that our host-government partners have "skin in the game."

To be very clear, USAID will NOT walk away from our commitment to humanitarian assistance, and we will always stand with people everywhere when disaster strikes, for this is who we are as Americans.

But I also believe that the truest sense of American compassion comes from helping people and countries take care of themselves and craft their own bright futures.

Third, and finally, I will work to reform our assistance tools and reshape our programs to better reflect America's evolving relationship with the developing world.

When USAID was first created, about 80 percent of the money flowing from the United States to the developing world was government money -- "official development assistance." Today that figure is less than 10 percent.

International commerce, remittances and private philanthropy have become transformational forces that are creating unprecedented opportunities for improving the human condition. There are more American companies investing in Africa and more faith-based organizations serving communities across Latin America than ever before.

We are living in a remarkable time of innovation and entrepreneurship. When Sue and I lived in that Kenyan village, only one wind-up telephone served the entire neighborhood. Visiting that same village just a dozen years later, all the teachers had cell phones. These days, just a dozen years after that, these same teachers are paying their bills, accessing electricity and connecting to banks -- all on their smartphones.

These changes have upended the development landscape. There are literally trillions of dollars that could be mobilized for development if we learn to better leverage partnerships, catalyze private-sector investments and amplify the efforts of foundations and non-profits.

If confirmed, and working with you, I will pursue ideas for reforming USAID's offices and procedures, rethinking its structure and changing the way it engages with the many players in the development space to better tap into new financial flows, catalyze mutually beneficial investment and remove unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles to private-sector participation.

I will consult with a wide range of partners, public- and private-sector, commercial and non-profit, to ensure that we are engaging them in the most-effective way possible.

Of course, while USAID is America's lead development Agency, many other Departments, Agencies and offices provide some aspect of foreign assistance. I will work hard to strengthen our interagency cooperation, because I saw firsthand in Tanzania how it can be an effective force-multiplier.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Departments of State and Health and Human Services and other colleagues across the interagency to ensure that USAID's unique development tools are addressing our most significant foreign-policy and national-security challenges.

I will also work to strengthen the Agency's relationship with the Department of Defense, especially in crisis states, where the military and USAID work side-by-side toward that shared goal of building a more peaceful future.

Mr. Chairman, the same passion that carried me to East Africa 30 years ago still drives me today. I believe in the power of compassion and the power of development.

But today, I know what I didn't know then. Years of experience and learning have shown me that fostering development is hard. But if done right, and led well, it can not only help lift lives and strengthen communities in far off lands, but also help America achieve many of her strategic priorities.

USAID has done amazing work over the past 55 years, but we can and must do even better. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with you when there are hard decisions, and working side-by-side to strengthen the Agency.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that USAID is an asset to our national security and the global face of American generosity. With your support for my confirmation, I commit to working with the talented men and women of USAID to build up what is working, change what is not, and deliver an Agency that is even stronger and more effective tomorrow than the one that exists today.

Senator RISCH. Great. Thank you very much for presenting.

Senator ISAKSON. Mr. Chairman?

Senator RISCH. Thank you for presenting what I think is a clear vision for the agency and where you want to take it and drive it. I am going to—I am sorry. Senator Isakson?

Senator ISAKSON. I want to do something that is very rude and apologize in advance. I have to go chair the Veterans Committee, which is my committee, but I came to Washington at the same time Mark Green did. I have known him all 20 years. I have never known a better public servant, a better member of Congress. I have been to Africa and seen firsthand what he has done, and I just

wanted to give him my unqualified endorsement and thanks for all the leadership he has demonstrated for me over the years and wish him the very best.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Coming from you, that means a lot.

So, with that, the chairman is going to reserve his time, and, Senator Booker, I am going to recognize you for questions.

Senator BOOKER. I am going to reserve my time as well and defer to Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Booker, Senator Risch.

Karibuni. Welcome, Ambassador. And as we had a chance to discuss, I am grateful for your willingness to serve as USAID Ambassador. And you and Susan have had a remarkable journey in service and faith and have made a great difference for the people of Wisconsin and for our nation. And I am thrilled to have someone with the depth of your experiences in Kenya, in Kakamega. As a teacher, you were mwalimu. I was mwanafunzi at the time. As a Member of Congress, helping develop some of the most innovative and effective programs in American development history with MCC and PEPFAR, as Ambassador to Tanzania and in leadership roles of IRI and USGLC. All of these will serve you well in this role.

And it is my hope that you will also be an effective voice for U.S.-Africa policy within the administration since we still have very few signals about how the Trump administration intends to engage in a continent with enormous potential and where we have a lot of good but hard work to do.

USAID spends about half of all its money in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is a continent that really needs our effective and engaged partnership. We talked about the Young African Leaders Initiative, or YALI, a relatively small and inexpensive program but that I think has a dramatic impact.

When I visited Liberia during Ebola, I had a chance to meet with the returned YALI volunteers who had spent a summer in the United States and were now back in Liberia, every one of whom was doing remarkable things, leading or starting volunteer organizations or embedded into government ministries that really needed their professionalism and service.

As administrator, will you advocate for programs like YALI and YSEALI that are, I believe, both low-cost and high-impact people-to-people programs to continue? And I wondered if you are familiar with the regional leadership centers that the USAID currently runs in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation and whether you think continuing to support not just the summer program here in the United States but building this network of highly motivated, promising young Africans is a good investment of U.S. dollars.

Ambassador GREEN. Senator, thank you. Thanks for the question and the kind words.

I cannot say that I have been fully briefed on the regional centers, but I can say I am very familiar with YALI and YSEALI. My current organization, the International Republican Institute, has hosted YALI interns and we have hired a YALI intern, who now works for us in Mali. And we have also done extensive work with YSEALI in southeast Asia.

Your question gets to something that you and I discussed briefly that I think is on one hand potentially a challenge but on the other an enormous opportunity, and that is the changing demographics in the world. The median age of a Tanzanian is 17, and it is going down. In Uganda, it is 16. And so we see millions of young Africans who are looking for opportunities, and I think it is important for us to help them find those opportunities, economic opportunities, but also democratic opportunities, helping them to engage in institutions so that they are invested in the survival of the system, so they are making important contributions.

I believe that the area that we are talking about, development from MCC to Power Africa, is one of those increasingly rare places in this town that is truly bipartisan. Every administration makes contributions in terms of the tools that we are able to use in our state craft in this space. MCC we were talking about but Feed the Future obviously, YALI, Power Africa, I think they are great. I think we should continue to build upon them, to find ways to refine them, but I think they are great contributions and so I commit to working with you on these.

Senator COONS. Thank you. I am excited to do that, work together. I have one more minute so I will ask one more question if I might.

Democracy and governance is an area I am very concerned about, I think has been underfunded because those funds were used for important programs that I think have shown promise, Feed the Future and Power Africa in the last administration. And in your testimony you note the importance of good governance to sustainable development outcomes and of working together to promote values like free speech, free press, and fighting corruption. How do you intend to speak up for these values as USAID administrator? How can we better address issues like corruption and security sector abuse through foreign assistance? And frankly, given that there is across Africa a competing narrative from China of sort of an authoritarian approach to development, how do we make this a higher priority and more visible in the Trump administration?

Ambassador GREEN. Senator, thank you for the question. Democracy and governance is obviously a topic I am passionate about and something that is I think an important distinction. We often hear about the importance of governance, and governance is important, but I think democratic governance is awfully important. For the investments that we are all talking about to be sustainable over the long haul, what has to go with them is citizen-centered, citizen-responsive political systems. Otherwise, what happens is we tend to be in a pendulum and these investments only last as long as a particular regime does.

It is in our interest to create and to foster and to reinforce democratic citizen-centered systems. I do not see a dichotomy between emphasizing our values and the other development tools. MCC is built upon the premise that they have to go hand in hand. There is a certain bundle of values and principles that a country must succeed at if it is going to rise, and democracy is at the heart of that, so I look forward to working with you. You can count on me to be a forceful advocate for prioritizing democracy.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you. If I might, in conclusion, I just appreciate your whole family, your children, your wife Susan being here and their support of your lifetime of service. And, Mr. Chairman, I cannot think of a better opportunity today for us to have a truly bipartisan confirmation hearing than this, and I look forward to supporting your nomination and to working with you as USAID administrator. Thank you very much.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Senator Johnson?

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Now that I am on this side of the dais, let me also say thank you for your past service. Let me thank your family for your past service, as well as your future service. You probably, because of his service, have seen less of your dad, less of your husband, and you will probably see a little less of him now that he takes on this very important role.

I really have two questions, Mark, dealing with your testimony. And this is really tying in with what you were just talking with Senator Coons about as well. I think you realizing, having been in the political realm, there is nothing more unpopular than foreign aid. As a fiscal conservative, I have always talked about that if it is spent well, it is money well-spent, and so it is incredibly important that we hold recipient nations accountable.

How familiar are you with the work of, for example, people like Bjorn Lomborg and the Copenhagen Consensus that, very similar to your testimony, says, "We have limited resources; we must allocate those in a prioritized fashion to do the most good for the most people"? Can you just kind of speak to that issue?

Ambassador GREEN. Senator, I cannot say that I am completely familiar with the particular report or point of view. What I can say is that I think our development assistance—prioritized, deployed accurately and effectively—helps keep us safer. I think we are seeing tremendous challenge and turbulence around the world, and I think our development tools can help provide some stability of institutions so that institutions and governments are able to deliver for their people. I think development can be a helpful tool in our efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism.

I think it also helps us to keep the economy growing. Ninety-five percent of the world's population is outside the U.S., so our farmers and producers are looking for markets. I think if we are able to use these tools well, they help to build those markets and advance those markets.

Some of our tools, like Feed the Future and Power Africa help us to mobilize and tap into the private sector here, the entrepreneurial spirit that this country is famous for. It is part of our foreign policy. It is also good for us.

So, we do have to prioritize, absolutely. I just believe that many of these tools, if pointed in the right way, and evaluated well, help us as they help others.

Senator JOHNSON. I think one of the more destructive aspects and really harms our ability to sell foreign aid to the public is when funds are abused. Can you speak to that?

Ambassador GREEN. Great question. You are right. Diversion of funds, poorly spent funds, whether it be fraud, waste, or abuse or

just inefficient spending undermines people's faith in what we are doing. And so you can count on me to place a premium on transparency, on accountability. In the lead-up to today's hearing, I met briefly with the USAID inspector general, just getting to meet her and introduce myself. I look forward to working with her. We have to squeeze these dollars, we have to have good vetting systems, and we have to make sure that these monies do not go astray.

It may not be a lot of money in terms of the overall Federal budget. It is precious money. It is precious money that comes from taxpayers who, in my experience, are willing to see those dollars go to good causes in the right places, if we do not waste it and do not take them for a fool. And so my commitment to you and to the members of the committee is to scrutinize, evaluate, and constantly be measuring what we are doing and make sure that we do not have the kinds of abuse and fraud that we hear about, fortunately rarely, but we do hear about and we have to take care to avoid.

Senator JOHNSON. I appreciate that. And finally, in your testimony I thought it was interesting you used the phrase "irreplaceable force for good." Since I have entered this realm and as a fiscal conservative defending foreign aid, I always talk about America has been a phenomenal force for good, you know, how proud we all must be when there is devastating floods in Pakistan, it is American foodstuffs; when devastating tsunamis in Indonesia, it is America's fleet that goes steaming to the rescue; and when AIDS devastates Africa, it is a program like PEPFAR and billions of dollars spent by America that do so much. And as Secretary Mattis said, you know, you either spend it here or give me 10 times more for bullets.

I have heard you speak with real passion because not only did you help craft and were instrumental in the passage of PEPFAR but you were there on the ground and you have borne witness to how powerful an example that is. I just wanted to give you the last moments of my time to just describe that to the committee.

Ambassador GREEN. Well, thank you. Thank you, Senator.

The story I often tell comes from my time in Tanzania as America. So, 1998, Tanzania was a non-aligned nation, which means it was sort of looking more the other way towards the East. On that terrible day in 1998, the Embassy was bombed essentially by al-Qaida. It was a devastating blow to a country that had not had that kind of violence.

In the rubble and in the ashes, it was America, the American people who went to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the Tanzanians to take on many of their poverty-enhanced challenges. And in the span of 10 years, they became a very close ally because, as they looked around, who was it that was helping them take on AIDS, take on malaria, take on poverty, take on educational challenges? It was the American people.

When I served as Ambassador in 2008, President Bush became the first sitting President to visit Tanzania. And what he was struck by as we were driving the streets, the crowds were 10-deep. And President Bush, to his great credit, said, look, it is not about me; it is about PEPFAR. It is about the President's malaria initiative. It is through these tools they understand that American people care.

That is about the best brand I can think of. If we are able to project that brand to people saying, look, when disaster strikes, we are there, we are with you, we do not waste the money and, we will help your ability to take care of yourselves—because you do need to take care of yourselves—but in those challenging times we will be there. And, again, I think is our great value.

Final point, sort of where you began, there are challenges in the world, and I know sometimes people get tired that it is always America that gets called in to help out. All I know is the world does not get better if America recedes into the shadows. There is just no way the world gets better. And so we have to be a force in the world stage, and we have to be a force for good. And I think these tools, crafted in bipartisan way with tremendous bipartisan support, that is a key part of who we are and a key part of our foreign policy.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mark. The President has nominated a very good man. I just want to say I appreciate the expressions of bipartisan support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I could not agree more with both you and Senator Johnson. As you know, many of us are deeply worried that we are right now in a period of massive withdrawal, America, from the world, and it seems that we have been presented with a budget that is a blueprint for America walking away from all of these leadership positions that we have put ourselves in.

And I always love listening to Senator Johnson talk about his support as a fiscal conservative for foreign aid because I hear that back in Connecticut all the time. The, you know, folks who support Democrats, folks who support Republicans, they understand why we need to be forward-deployed to protect ourselves but also to do good. Folks in Connecticut are really proud when it is America that is coming to the rescue of people who have been devastated by famines and floods.

You know, and the polling is so interesting because it tells you that most Americans think that, you know, about a third of the budget that we appropriate every year is spent on foreign aid when the reality is it is around 1 percent. But the most interesting piece of those polls is that when you ask Americans how much they think we should be spending on foreign aid, they tell you about 10 percent of our budget. And so it is interesting the disconnect that exists between the debate here and especially the budget that the President has proposed to us and where our constituents are.

I am just so glad you are willing to serve in this position, and my hope is that not only will you be an effective administrator but that you will be a political power for good inside this administration, that you can help explain to this President and his national security team how we are cutting off our nose to spite our face if we proceed with 30-plus percent cuts to these programs.

And in that spirit, let me—I know you are not here to defend the budget, but let me just talk to you about one of the facets that worries me about it and get your comments. I think if you look at the budget that is presented to us, you can make an argument that

this administration is proposing to stay in the game of trying to put broken countries back together but is proposing getting out of the game in terms of preventing fragile states from becoming broken. So, we are spending money in this budget in Iraq and Syria and Libya, but we are effectively gutting funding for places like Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and places further afield like Bangladesh and Mali and Nigeria.

You know, in your experience, you know, talk about the importance of spending a little bit of money to help fragile states hold it together rather than waiting until they fall apart to spend a whole bunch of money later on.

Ambassador GREEN. Senator, thank you. I think you are asking one of the key questions that we all need to take on. You are right; as I have been preparing for today, I have been startled by just the sheer need that is out there in the immediate sense. A famine was already declared in parts of South Sudan. We have three other countries that are teetering on famine and unfortunately may fall into famine in 2017, which would be the first time since World War II where four countries will simultaneously be in famine. And obviously, the humanitarian needs that go with that are enormous.

The United States is the largest bilateral donor and the largest provider of such assistance, and I think we will continue to do our part.

But you are right; you have the immediate, but you also have that which is at risk. You have parts of the world that are either newly post-conflict or fragile, and it is important that we find the resources to strengthen those fragile institutions, helping people—for example, we spoke earlier about that demographic of young people who may feel marginalized, who may feel alienated, who may have less than the economic opportunity that they might want. Those are areas where I think we do have to make some investments to prevent longer-term conflicts.

Senator MURPHY. One final quick question about that, and that is flexibility of funds. One of the complaints that I have heard over and over again at State and at USAID is that we box funds in on a country-by-country and capacity-by-capacity basis whereas it might make much more sense to give the administrator or an Assistant Secretary the ability to quickly deploy funds to an area that needs them.

Do you have thoughts on this and recommendations that—maybe not today but you might be willing to give us as to how we grant you and your team that you will have between USAID and State, the ability to move funds a little bit more expeditiously?

Ambassador GREEN. Well, Senator, I have to confess to you that the staff who was preparing me for today said for goodness sakes, do not bring that up, but you brought it up.

Senator MURPHY. I did.

Ambassador GREEN. You are right. So, the numbers that I have seen suggest that, of the most recent, the fiscal year 2017 budget, only 7 percent of that is flexible as opposed to 29 percent back in 2009. Obviously, that limits the ability of USAID, the administrator, working with all of you to adjust to changing circumstances. So, I will come to you with some specific ideas, but obviously circumstances are changing so rapidly these days that flexibility

would be tremendously helpful, and I thank you for raising the point.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman.

Ambassador Green, I just cannot tell you how excited I am to support your nomination today. I cannot think of a better person for this position. I really enjoyed our visit in the office again this week to discuss the future of USAID and how we might reform it. As I mentioned to you in the office, Senator Shaheen and I have convened a bipartisan commission, a task force working with CSIS, and the purpose of this commission is to help you. As you step into your new role, we will be providing some actionable recommendations on what optimal development reform—how to achieve a more optimal development reform and reorganization, something you are focused on.

We have brought in former Bush and Obama administration officials, retired Foreign Service officers, former Ambassadors, former National Security Council staffers. We have met twice. We are going to meet one more time, perhaps two more times, and we intend to issue a public report in mid-July.

Ambassador Green, after our report is released, would you be willing to meet with me and Senator Shaheen, as well as some of these top development experts, to hear our recommendations related to reform and reorganization of USAID in our nation's development enterprise?

Ambassador GREEN. Thank you for the question and the opportunity, very much so. I would be quite interested. Again, I think this is an area of foreign policy that is not partisan.

Senator YOUNG. Right.

Ambassador GREEN. And so the fact that you are able to bring together members of the committee from both sides of the aisle I think is great. I will look forward to the report and discussing it with you, and I am very interested in what you will be putting together.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you for your indulgence on that.

Would you agree that U.S. development efforts can and should be better coordinated across agencies? I think you have already spoken to this.

Ambassador GREEN. Yes.

Senator YOUNG. Yes.

Ambassador GREEN. Yes. I think foreign assistance is right now implemented by 60 different offices, departments, and agencies throughout the executive branch, so sure, I think that makes sense.

Senator YOUNG. Would you also agree that USAID's operations would be more efficient, more effective if they are informed by a fresh strategic analysis that includes the establishment of specific development priorities, objectives, milestones, and metrics supporting the national security strategy and also coordinated with the national defense strategy, while balancing ends and means and identifying risks along the way?

Ambassador GREEN. Senator, I think these challenging times that we see in so many parts of the world require us to ensure that

our development tools are coordinated with other parts of our broader national security strategy, so I think that makes sense, and I look forward to following up with you and seeing how we can help inform that and participate.

Senator YOUNG. Well, that is encouraging. At an earlier hearing before the full committee some weeks ago, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright indicated this very sort of strategic analysis is needed. In fact, she said it would make an important difference. And at that same hearing, former National Security Advisor Hadley said, quote, "I think it is a terrific idea, and we need the kind of process you described."

So, Ambassador Green, do you agree with the assessment of Secretary Albright and Advisor Hadley that our nation's development efforts would benefit from this strategic analysis? This is what we call a leading question in the business.

Ambassador GREEN. Senator, if confirmed, I will look forward to working with you on it, and I do think that such a national security development strategy makes sense and is a useful contribution as we look to craft long-term policy.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I of course agree, and that is why on May 24, Senator Shaheen and I introduced S. 1228. It is the National Diplomacy and Development Strategy Act of 2017, and I look forward to working with this committee to pass the legislation, and once it is passed, look forward to working with you to ensure that our development reform and reorganization efforts, as well as the operations of USAID, are guided by current and careful strategic analysis.

In the remainder of my time I would like to pick up on an issue that my team and I have worked very hard on in recent months, and it pertains to the situation in Yemen, the largest, the most serious humanitarian crisis in the world. I know you are well aware of it. The port of Hodeida in the Red Sea processes between 70 and 80 percent of the incoming cargo, critical imports into the country of Yemen historically. And a large portion of the individuals in most desperate need of food and medicine are right near that port within the country.

For a variety of reasons, we are seeing bottlenecks and delays at Hodeida. There are life-and-death implications. In fact, two-thirds of Yemen's population is at risk of starvation or succumbing to disease in coming months by some accounts.

To increase the port's capacity to deliver these supplies, USAID spent roughly $4 million of our tax dollars through the World Food Program to procure four cranes. Roughly speaking, these cranes would double or triple the capacity of the port to offload humanitarian supplies. Unacceptably, these cranes were on their way to Hodeida but the Saudi-led coalition revoked the clearance.

Ambassador Green, once confirmed, will you work with me to look into this issue and see how we can resolve it?

Ambassador GREEN. Senator, thank you for the question. Yes, I will. Obviously, access for humanitarian reasons is crucial. Yemen is one of the four nations that is either in famine or on the verge of it. Sadly, it is manmade. These are political-driven famines, and so they need political solutions, and I look forward to working with you on it.

Senator YOUNG. Ten seconds with your indulgence, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Ten seconds.

Senator YOUNG. I want to give a shout-out to James Bever, Acting Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs at USAID, he responded to my request for action on open GAO recommendations. And we have drafted legislation working with Senator Menendez on this. And with a little prompting he was able to assure us that these recommendations will be complied with, these open recommendations. So well done, Mr. Bever, if you are watching this.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Senator RISCH. Ambassador Green, I apologize. We have got—as always, we are running over the top of ourselves, and we have got to run down and vote or we are going to miss the vote. So, we are going to take a short recess as quickly as we can go down. I know the Senators have some really important issues that they want to take up, and so we are going to make it happen, but we are going to have to be patient with it.

So, the committee will be in recess subject to the call of the chair. [Recess.]

Senator RISCH. The committee will come to order.

And we apologize for the interruption, but when they call the votes, you have got to go, so thank you very much.

And, Senator Menendez, you are up.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, congratulations on your nomination. I am sure that—while I was at another event while the bulk of the testimony was going on there, I am going to join the many who commend and respect your work and public service as a Congressman, as an ambassador, and, most recently, at the International Republican Institute. And I say that as a Democrat.

So, I have full confidence in your experience and commitment to the mission of USAID, and I believe the agency and the American people will be well-served by your leadership.

However, my concern for USAID, however, is that your passion for public service and what I take to be your fundamental belief that the United States should be a leading advocate on the world stage for democracy, human rights, and the values we champion here at home is not necessarily shared by some leading figures in the administration.

Earlier this week, Secretary Tillerson came before this committee to explain indefensible cuts to critical American foreign policy and foreign assistance initiatives, programs in support of democracy, economic development, lifesaving humanitarian and health initiatives, and unfortunately did nothing in my mind to assuage the concerns that I share with others that USAID and the institutional knowledge, the technical expertise, and the long-term programming it houses would be folded into a weakened and less-effective State Department.

Now, I do not believe USAID is perfect, but I do—and I certainly welcome reforms that promote best practices, efficiency, and transparency, but its mission is fundamentally different from the State Department and critical to United States national security.

So, with that, a few questions in mind. Do you believe that USAID should remain an independent entity from the State Department?

Ambassador GREEN. Thank you, Senator. We had a brief opportunity to discuss this before today. First off, I can tell you about the conversations that I have had with the Secretary on the subject. The Secretary has assured me that he has an open mind as to what the relationship is or should be between USAID and State and also what each internal structure should be.

I have indicated that I have a great passion in reforming foreign assistance, some of the things that you have made reference to in trying to make them stronger, and he said he looks forward to my leadership on reform and otherwise will keep an open mind.

Specific to the question of the structure, to me it is less a question of where boxes should be and what they should look like and more a question of taking a look at what the mission is and how do we organize around it. And to be honest, it is premature in the sense that we have not really gotten into that yet, so I cannot answer you in terms of what I think it is going to look like.

Senator MENENDEZ. I did not ask you that question. I asked you a very specific question, which—and I respect what you were telling me and I appreciate our private conversation that we had. But the question is in all of these things, if you are confirmed by the Senate, you will be in a position to be an advisor, an advocate. You may not always win on your views, but you are going to be in that position.

What I want to know before I vote for somebody, as distinguished as I think your service is, is whether you believe—you may not win at the end of the way—but whether you believe AID should remain an independent entity from the State Department?

Ambassador GREEN. I believe that the State Department and USAID need to be closely aligned, but I believe that they have different cultures within each institution, what that alignment looks like. To be honest, I do not know at this point.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you believe it is in the United States' interest to actively support democracy and human rights?

Ambassador GREEN. I do.

Senator MENENDEZ. Will you be an advocate for maintaining democracy assistance in governance programs?

Ambassador GREEN. I will be.

Senator MENENDEZ. Where do you think USAID's missions differ from that of the State Department?

Ambassador GREEN. I think the biggest differences are in how they go about their work. USAID is an operational agency. It is not so much a diplomatic agency, a policy-setting agency, as it is one that uses soft-power tools to advance ends and priorities identified by the State Department and by the White House, so that to me is the fundamental difference between the two.

Senator MENENDEZ. And one is also a diplomacy effort and the other one also, as USAID, has very specific programmatic, development, democracy, and whatnot that it moves into effect, and so I hope you will be able to maintain those.

Let me make one final overarching question. You and I talked about that there are a number of very interested organized con-

stituencies in our country who find USAID in that respect ineffective and nepotistic. Haiti is an excellent example of that but there are others. I have also heard from U.S. and New Jersey companies, some of them who are leaders in the world in their fields, who cannot get past first base with USAID. And it seems to me that, certainly under the President's made-in-America, America-first efforts and whatnot, that at least when you are the global leader and you are a United States company, then you should have an opportunity at USAID because at the end of the day, I do not know how—you become a global leader in the marketplace itself, and then you cannot get one of your governmental agencies to consider you. Something is wrong with that. Would you agree to look into that if you were to be confirmed?

Ambassador GREEN. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. Thank you very much, Ambassador.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ambassador Green, for the opportunity, Congressman, for us to be here with you today. I truly appreciate your work and your willingness to serve.

And I think one of the most telling ways to learn about a person's capacity, intelligence, understanding in any position is to look at whether they understand our dairy policy. And we have one of the few individuals before us today who actually understands this country's dairy policy.

[Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. Such as it can be understood.

So, on a serious note, I want to thank you for your leadership. You and I had a great conversation about Southeast Asia as a number of countries that I continue to work with through the East Asia Subcommittee. We had a conversation about Aung San Suu Kyi's party, the National League of Democracy, and the fact that after basically 60 years of military rule, Burma has entered into a stage of civilian leadership, given some of the constitutional restraints that still remain and how they are going to have this new democratic government address challenges and how they have promised to address some of the challenges that they face.

As we know, Burma is one of the least-developed countries in Southeast Asia. About 25 percent of the people in Burma live under or below the poverty line. Only 30 percent, only 30 percent in the entire country have access to reliable electricity, and the United States and international community has to do more to help support this democratic effort and success of this new transition and to make sure that we have a country that continues to grow and trade and opportunity aligned with America's interests.

So, last year, I introduced the Empower Burma Act. It was directed at engaging the United States, the administration to produce a comprehensive multiyear strategy to help address a sustainable economic development in Burma, which includes helping to meet the Government of Burma's stated goal of universal access to electricity by 2030, one of the key objectives that government

policy leaders have said in Burma is one of the most important things to be accomplished by this new government.

And so can I get your commitment that you would help prioritize this Burma democratic development at USAID?

Ambassador GREEN. Thank you, Senator, for the question, and yes. I had the opportunity to observe elections in Burma, and it was one of the most uplifting experiences seeing what people do to exercise their right to vote standing in the hot tropical sun for that chance to have the first real free election in generations. There is enormous potential in Burma and enormous need for help.

It is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, and there are challenges in terms of building the social compact, but I think there are opportunities, business opportunities, educational opportunities, opportunities to strengthen civil society, create a more vibrant democracy—I think the sky is the limit for Burma.

Senator GARDNER. And thank you. And we also in our conversation had a chance to talk about the goal of a program or foreign assistance is not designed to create a permanent crutch, but it is to create opportunities for that country to develop the capacity for trade, the rule of law, to be able to be a stronger nation through the work and partnership that the United States can pursue with them.

And so as you look at areas in Southeast Asia like Burma, perhaps others, what do you think the most significant rule-of-law challenge is that you will face at USAID through these nations?

Ambassador GREEN. Of course, it varies country by country, but I think we have the opportunity, through technical assistance and also incentivizing, to help these countries undertake certain policy reforms such as protection for intellectual property that will create enormous economic opportunities for them, as well as for American companies that are seeking to partner.

So, I think it is a part of the world where there is tremendous opportunity there, but they do need our assistance. These are young democracies in many cases, and the technical assistance which we can provide, which is a very modest investment, I think can pay off huge dividends to mutual benefit.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ambassador. I unfortunately have another committee to go to so I will let you off the hook. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Ambassador Green, congratulations on your nomination, and thank you for being willing to take on such a critical post at such a significant time in the world. I very much appreciated the time we had to sit down together to hear a little more of your views.

And one of the things that I am very concerned about and you expressed your concern about, the humanitarian crises that we are seeing in the world, particularly in Syria, Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen. We know that women and girls are disproportionately impacted during humanitarian crises and that sexual violence, exploitation, child early enforced marriage often increase sig-

nificantly, while access to services, including maternal child health, drastically decreases.

Now, despite America's longtime leadership in addressing these issues, the State Department determined back in April to withhold funding from the United Nations Population Fund, the leading and sometimes only provider of maternal health services, post-rape care, and other vital reproductive health services in humanitarian crises.

So, we discussed the whole issue of reproductive rights, and I appreciate that we have different personal views, but I am sure you would agree with me that it is unacceptable to place vulnerable women and girls in a situation where they lose their only access to health care, basic services. So, can you talk about how you will work, if confirmed, with the State Department to ensure that the needs of these women and girls in crisis situations are being met?

Ambassador GREEN. Senator, thank you for your question.

I enjoyed our conversation very much. You are a forceful advocate for programming that rightly involves women and children, girls in particular, and as we discussed, I believe from a development perspective, it is vitally important that we integrate women and girls into all of our programming for lots of development reasons. You get the best development outcomes that way, including in terms of our shared goal to have more responsive citizen-centered democracy. No democracy can succeed if it is not listening to all of its voices. In too many parts of the world, women's voices are not heard and not welcomed at the table, and I am certainly committed to taking it on.

The specific question that you asked, as I mentioned, it is my understanding that the State Department is undertaking a six-month intensive review to study the impacts of the expanded policy and whether it leads to interruption of services on the ground. As I mentioned to you, I know that USAID will be part of that review, and as I committed to you, we will play that straight. We will look to see what those impacts are and be very clear and transparent about what our findings are so you can count on us to be sort of honest brokers in that process.

Senator SHAHEEN. I very much appreciate that. There are two issues here. One is the one you just referenced about the expansion of the Mexico City policy. The other one that I was clearly not direct enough about referring to is the decision to stop funding UNFPA by the United States. And so how will you address that issue within the State Department?

Ambassador GREEN. In that separate issue I understand the State Department issued the finding that you referenced. What I do not know is how those monies are being reprogrammed; I simply do not know that at this point. I would be happy to get back to you as I learn more about that process and what is happening there.

Senator SHAHEEN. I would appreciate that. I will continue to advocate that that is money well spent that is a benefit to us here in America if we make sure that women and girls who are vulnerable around the world get the health care that they need.

Another issue that has been very troubling has been the violations of LGBTQ rights around the world from Africa to Asia, and it is not just discrimination. That in and of itself would be bad

enough, but it is beating, jailing, terrorizing, and often killing people who are identified as being LGBTQ. Again, the United States has had a very important leadership role in working with other countries around the world to urge them to protect the human rights of all of their citizens. So, can you tell me how, as administrator of USAID, you would handle situations where you have countries that are discriminating and terrorizing members of their LGBTQ community?

Ambassador GREEN. Thank you, Senator. And it is a very important issue, increasingly important issue. As you may be aware, last weekend, the State Department put out what I thought a very appropriate statement. And it said violence and discrimination targeting any vulnerable group undermines our collective security, as well as our America values, specifically about LGBTI, and I think that is a very important policy for us all to follow.

Senator SHAHEEN. I agree.

Ambassador GREEN. Again, the way I look at our work at USAID is that we need to make sure that our programming reaches all marginalized communities, and in many parts of the world, LGBT marginalized communities, and that is something that we will continue. It is important. No country can rise if it is discriminating against any marginalized community. No country can be a vibrant democracy if it is not listening to all of its voices. So that is certainly something that I plan on continuing. It is important.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I very much appreciate that and will look forward to working with you as you continue to be a voice to prevent discrimination not just against women and girls but against all members of our global world.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Booker, did you have anything else that you wanted to add?

Senator BOOKER. Okay. I just wanted to do two quick things if you do not mind.

Senator RISCH. Sure.

Senator BOOKER. I have a lot of concerns, as I know you do, about the Kenyan elections coming up in early August. We have about 1,000 people in the U.S. mission that are on the ground doing incredible work in Kenya right now, again, as I know you are aware of. I just have some concerns about this election and fear that a lot of our personnel will actually be at risk at the Kenyan election, sees kind of the related violence we saw back in 2007. I just wonder if you have any thoughts about what we can do there, especially and very frankly when I see the budget proposed by the administration's fiscal year 2018, which is almost a 40 percent cut in sort of governance and democracy work.

Ambassador GREEN. Senator Booker, thank you for that question. It is a very important question. I, too, worry about Kenya. I was Ambassador in Tanzania during that horrendous election and fallout in Kenya. In fact, then-Secretary Condi Rice, who was with us in Tanzania, had to fly back and forth trying to deal with the fallout from those terrible, terrible days. I share your concerns. USAID is, as I understand it, at this moment trying to help in a number of ways. There are the obvious preparations for an election and the integrity of the process and the voter rolls and the Inde-

pendent Election Commission, but also there are the investments around—God forbid—knock on wood, but the post-election violence and USAID is working on reconciliation tools. Violence is something that we all need to keep a close watch on. Those 2007 elections that led to all that violence were horrendous, and I am not sure we even have an accurate measure as to how many lives were lost.

Senator BOOKER. So I just want to say, first of all, I appreciate that. I am encouraged by who you are, what you stand for, what you have advocated for in your leadership roles, especially the most recent one. I do really worry, and the wisdom of—we are both acting chair and ranking, but the wisdom of Senator Risch about creating a balance, we all want to be fiscally responsible and make sure—to steal a metaphor that was just told to me—when we throw stuff against the wall, that the stuff sticks and it is not wasted money and resources. I am very sympathetic to that as a guy who ran a local government and saw a lot of waste, increase efficiency and effectiveness. But I do know that we are in this global competition in many ways, and the rise of China concerns me not just for my children but my grandchildren and my great grandchildren.

China's development assistance to Africa has increased 780 percent since 2003. They have now pledged $124 billion more at a time that we seem to be receding in our investments. We lead with our values in countries like that. China seems to have overt utilitarian purposes for their investments. And so I just worry as a country who is beating us on infrastructure investment in their country, stepping up to compete with us in investments in information technology, beating us with education investments, now on the global stage, they seem to be advancing in terms of their investments as we are announcing receding.

So, I know this is something that you are now smackdab in the middle in one of the most important jobs that I have seen as I have traveled around the world, see these amazing USAID workers right there putting themselves at risk, doing critical work, building democracies, leading with our values. And so I just wanted to—I think that we are going to close this hearing momentarily, but I just want you to know that I have grave concerns about a retreat of American leadership at a time that our globe severely needs it.

I know from being a mayor that your budget reflects your values, and I have a lot of concerns that the values you have expressed, that I have read about, the reason why I think you have so much bipartisan support, I worry that those values that you are expressing might not be expressed and seen within our budget. Thank God article 1 branch of government sets the budget, and I have great leaders on the Republican side here who understand that.

So, I just want to thank you for your leadership. I want to thank your family especially for their commitment to you and empowering you. Clearly, from a few moments with your wife, I see that you married up, sir. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Senator, we all did.

Well, thank you very much. And Senator Booker is in on something that does not get a lot of ink yet, but it is going to get more, and that is those of us on this committee, everywhere we go, we

cut the Chinese path. They are everywhere. They do things differently than we do. They do have a lot of investment that they are putting in place on the ground. They do not have anything like USAID, and we Americans should be very proud of that.

Well, I am going to keep the record—there are a couple Senators I think that have other questions, but I am going to keep the record open until close of business tomorrow for questions for the record that you may or may not get.

Mr. Green, very seldom do we get people that have the support you do for this from both sides of the aisle. I think the world is going to be a better place when you are confirmed, and I am absolutely confident you will be confirmed. Thank you to you. And just as importantly, thank you to your family for their support.

So, with that, the meeting will be adjourned.

Ambassador GREEN. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. You bet.

[Whereupon, at 12:04 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MARK GREEN BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question 1. The Electric Africa Act directs existing U.S. Government resources from many agencies to encourage the installation of 20,000 megawatts of additional electrical power and to promote efficient institutional delivery of electrical service to rural and underserved areas. This law improves access to affordable and reliable electricity in order to unlock the potential for inclusive economic growth, job creation, food security, improved health and education and environmental outcome and poverty reduction.

- Do you agree that the provision of electricity throughout Africa and the world is a top development priority and in the national interest of the U.S.?

Answer. Yes.

Question 2. How will you work and engage with USAID and partners to ensure that the law is carried out and support this law and to advance the goals of the Electrify Africa Act?

Answer. If I am confirmed, I will work with Power Africa's many partners, public and private, to carry out the Electrify Africa Act, recognizing that every U.S. taxpayer dollar spent on Power Africa leverages investments from the private sector, national governments and others. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that USAID continues to tap into and coordinate the work of Power Africa's more than 150 partners.

Question 3. Any reorganizing should eliminate duplication and maximize efficiency. There are three offices that handle overlapping pieces of our humanitarian assistance, two at USAID and one at State. We are told USAID commissioned a study of the impact of consolidating its two offices and found up to $130 million in basic savings. Should you be confirmed, will you provide the committee with a briefing about this study and ensure this is considered during the administration's reorganizing plans?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will provide the committee with a briefing on the study you mentioned regarding potential consolidation options within USAID.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MARK GREEN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. If confirmed, how will you engage with Secretary Tillerson, the OMB Director and the President to best represent and protect USAID's equities in U.S. foreign policy planning and administration?

Answer. As I stated in my written testimony, I believe that USAID is an asset to our national security, and the global face of American generosity. If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Tillerson and other relevant colleagues to ensure that USAID's unique development tools are addressing our most significant foreign-policy and national-security challenges.

Question 2. If confirmed, will you commit to consulting with Congress and the development community on the development and implementation of the reorganization process?

Answer. Yes.

Question 3. Which regions or sectors should USAID prioritize and what criteria should be used to inform how priorities are set?

Answer. There is no one measure that we should use, but instead a combination of factors. Criteria would include, but not be limited to, overall strategic considerations (the country's importance in U.S. foreign policy); the cost and effectiveness of the interventions and programs under consideration; the immediacy and severity of the needs to be addressed; the opportunity for advancing America's economic interests; the opportunity for advancing America's security interests; the potential for conditions in a particular country or setting to create dangerous conditions in another; the potential for a particular project or intervention to serve as a model that can enhance our overall development knowledge; and, of course, the security situation for USAID personnel and partners.

Question 4. USAID was made a regular member of the National Security Council Deputies Committee earlier this year. What role do you expect to play in the NSC? Given USAID's permanent participation on the NSC committee, how will you assert USAID's presence on the NSC and ensure development is well integrated into the NSC's planning processes?

Answer. USAID will continue to engage at all levels of the National Security Council (NSC) policy process. If confirmed, I expect to attend Principals and Deputies Committee meetings regularly, and to be an advocate for USAID.

Question 5. Do you believe, as was stated in the 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), that development is an equal pillar in American foreign policy to defense and diplomacy?

Answer. Yes.

Question 6. What, in your view, does an "America First" policy as declared by President Trump mean for an agency whose work focuses entirely on other countries?

Answer. I believe that "America First" means ensuring that our policies and programs are focused on advancing America's interests above all others. I also believe that USAID has a key role to play in advancing our interests. First, many of the agency's tools (both humanitarian and development-oriented) can help address conditions in other parts of the world than can create fertile ground for violent extremism and conflict. Second, many of USAID's development initiatives (specifically including Power Africa and Feed the Future) can strengthen market opportunities for our goods and services, as well as give rise to closer trade relationships. After all, ten out of America's 15 top trading partners are former recipients of U.S. Government economic assistance. Finally, highly visible efforts, such as global food security and Power Africa, as well as our predominance in humanitarian assistance, contribute to America's global leadership and reputation as a force for good in the world.

Question 7. In your view, what have been the most lasting results of the USAID Forward reform effort launched by Administrator Rajiv Shah? What further reforms are needed to make USAID the world's premier development agency, as called for in the 2010 and 2015 QDDRs?

Answer. In my opinion, Administrator Shah's most lasting contributions were in the area of enhanced monitoring and evaluation. While there is always room for improvement, we know more about the efficacy of our approaches to development because of these improvements in our ability to measure outcomes.

As I indicated in my written statement, I believe we are living in a remarkable time of innovation and entrepreneurship, which has upended the development land-

scape. While the agency has made strides on reforming itself, it must continue to learn how to better leverage partnerships, catalyze private-sector investments and amplify the efforts of foundations and non-profits.

If confirmed, I will pursue ideas for reforming USAID's offices and procedures, rethinking its structure, and changing the way it engages with the many players in development to better tap into new financial flows, catalyze mutually beneficial investment, and remove unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles to private-sector participation. I will consult with current and potential partners, as well as the Congress, to ensure that the Agency is working in the most effective way possible. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the talented men and women of USAID to build upon what is working, change what is not, and continue to strengthen the Agency and improve its effectiveness.

Question 8. How will you prioritize the U.S. Global Development Lab's work on innovation?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to exploring the opportunities that technology and entrepreneurship present by turning to the broad network of USAID teams—from the U.S. Global Development Lab to the keenest minds we have in our field Missions and offices, and with our many partners. Such a spirit of innovation is what I like to call the "software of development," and it represents America's advantage in shaping development outcomes across the globe.

Question 9. What lessons learned from your service on the MCC Board of Directors will best serve you as USAID Administrator? How would the MCC lessons and innovations be applied to broader development and/or humanitarian assistance? Would you recommend Congress set no sector funding mandates for USAID in the same way there are no sector mandates set for MCC?

Answer. I believe there are many lessons from my service on the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) that could help me in my tenure with USAID, should I be confirmed. Perhaps the most important one is the effectiveness of incentivized policy reform and strategic human capacity-building. I visited with several leaders of a particular African country not long after it completed an MCC Compact. I will never forget what one leader told me: in essence, she said that it was not so much the road built through the Compact that was important, but the experience of building it and managing the resources. She said the country now had tangible proof that it could build a public work, on time, on budget, to world-class standards and without corruption. More important, the country had a large group of young leaders who gained experience by carrying out the project, experience they could apply to other national needs.

The MCC model has many strengths, including the indicators that are a starting point to assess countries' capacity and commitment to good governance. For example, the democracy and corruption indicators are hard hurdles to eligibility that can incentivize reforms and strong policies. USAID has a complementary role to play in helping to move countries along the continuum of development so they can qualify for eligibility for the MCC. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with MCC in a manner that complements USAID's strengths.

In terms of sectors and mandates, the subjects of each MCC Compact are largely determined through the constraints-to-growth analysis performed in advance of negotiations. I believe that development-assistance priorities should reflect the greatest need, and that it is always helpful if those needs can be determined in an objective, measurable manner. It would be useful for USAID to have the same sort of flexibility to determine allocations to sectors that Congress has granted the MCC.

Question 10. What will you do at the agency to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign and Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working to ensure that USAID's workforce reflects America's diversity.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the agency are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the workforce of USAID reflects America's diversity, including appropriate training of supervisors.

Question 12. The Payne Fellowship in particular has been a hallmark recruitment tool for diversity at USAID. What will do you to ensure the success of the Donald Payne Fellowship program and ensure they receive the support necessary from the agency?

Answer. Congressman Payne was a personal friend of mine. If confirmed, I will welcome the Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship Program's con-

tribution to attracting outstanding young people interested in pursuing careers in the Foreign Service.

Question 13. What do you believe is the appropriate way for the U.S. Government to help countries transition from aid recipients to self-sustaining partners of the United States?

Answer. We must make it clear to our implementers, especially national governments, that our assistance is not open-ended or inevitable or, most important, a substitute for what they must take on themselves. Our support must never be seen as a gift or a handout, but instead as the proverbial hand up. Every program should look forward to the day when it can end. So, if confirmed, I will ask every USAID Mission to evaluate how each program dollar moves a country closer to that day.

There are three approaches we should take. First, we should prioritize programs that foster local capacity-building and implementation, mobilize domestic resources and ensure that our host-government partners have "skin in the game." Second, we should incentivize policy reforms that give rise to the conditions that experience tells us improves economic growth and opportunity. Third, we must work with partner countries to increase their own domestic resource-mobilization.

Question 14. If confirmed, how will you maintain and build upon USAID's effectiveness in lifting countries out of extreme poverty and set on paths towards self-sustained development with a budget proposal that would cut 37 percent from the International Affairs Budget?

Answer. USAID needs to be as efficient and effective as it can with its budget, regardless of the level of funding. The work USAID does must align with U.S. national-security interests, and advance the strategic priorities of the current administration and Congress.

If confirmed, I will do my best to ensure USAID works in the most accountable and efficient manner possible. Furthermore, I will advocate in the interagency for better coordination of tools and efforts to maximize outcomes and also reduce duplication. Finally, I will work to better leverage other sources of support, from the American private sector to other donors and partners.

Question 15. If confirmed, will you work to protect and restore USAID's budget and preserve resources for its critical development efforts?

Answer. If confirmed, my first obligation is to the American people. They have many priorities that the President is working diligently to address with limited resources, but certainly, I'll be committed to ensuring that USAID operates in the most effective, efficient way possible; raises the bar even higher on accountability and transparency; and preserves development gains. While recognizing that we will never have enough resources to do everything we would like, I commit to working with you, if I am confirmed, to build support and resources for critical development priorities.

Question 16. What do you believe the impact would be to USAID's global health, food security and humanitarian programs if the FY18 budget cuts to these programs were realized?

Answer. I was not involved in the creation of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget request. However, if I am confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on the specifics of the request, as well as how the administration is looking to prioritize efficiencies and preserve development gains. As I mentioned in my written statement, I also have my own ideas on efficiency and effectiveness, and look forward to the opportunity to be able to bring them to the discussion. Moreover, if confirmed, I commit to working with you to address these and other critical development needs as effectively and efficiently as we can.

Question 17. How would you seek to mitigate the consequences of the FY18 budget's proposed closure of 37 USAID missions around the world? What are the legal steps required to close a Mission?

Answer. As you are aware, USAID is rightly being asked to do more with less. We need to focus on our core priority—advancing America's interests through foreign assistance. Everything USAID works on should directly improve humanitarian and development outcomes, and be designed to lead to the day when each recipient country can take responsibility for its citizens' wellbeing. We also need to continue partnerships with other donor countries, and develop new partnerships with the private sector to leverage additional resources. I understand that no final decisions have been made with respect to the closure of specific Missions, and I have not been briefed on what legal steps would be required to close a Mission. Nonetheless, in the event of the closure of any Missions, I commit to following all legally required steps to accomplish that goal.

Question 18. How would you propose the U.S. maintain its commitments to the countries where the budget proposes to end USAID missions? How would you seek to transition countries off of U.S. assistance?

Answer. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget acknowledges that our aid must be more effective and efficient, and that advancing the national interests of our country must always be our primary mission. To that end, if confirmed, I commit to working with my colleagues at the Department of State and throughout the inter-agency to ensure that we maintain U.S. leadership in the world, and that everything we do advances our national interests.

As indicated in my written statement, I also believe we need to signal to our implementing partners that U.S. assistance is not open-ended or inevitable or, most important, a substitute for what they must take on themselves. Every program should look forward to the day when it can end. So, if confirmed, I will ask every USAID Mission to evaluate how each program dollar moves a country closer to that day. We should emphasize programs that incentivize local capacity-building and implementation, mobilize domestic resources, and ensure that our host-government partners can take control of their own futures.

USAID has transitioned or closed a number of Missions in the past and I will review what has previously been done. However, if I am confirmed, and in consultation with members of the committee, I would look to craft plans for sustainability that provide for an ongoing partnership between USAID and any host country in which we move away from our traditional foreign-assistance model.

Question 19. If confirmed, will you prioritize funding for democracy promotion and human rights?

Answer. Yes.

Question 20. Do you believe it is in the U.S. national interest to fund foreign assistance programs intended to mitigate conflicts and prevent mass atrocities? What will you do to strengthen existing atrocity prevention initiatives within USAID?

Answer. Yes, I believe it is in the U.S. national interest to support such programs. If confirmed, I will support current programming that mitigates atrocity risks and builds resilience in fragile states. But, I will also support new approaches based upon quantitative and qualitative analyses of the drivers of such conflicts. Furthermore, I will continue to support USAID's leadership in responding to atrocity situations with life-saving humanitarian assistance.

I understand that USAID's leadership participates in interagency policy processes that monitor and address the warning signs for mass atrocities through both diplomatic and development channels. If I am confirmed, I will ensure USAID continues to strengthen collaboration with interagency partners and multilateral institutions in this regard. With these combined efforts, USAID can reduce the risks of future crises before the options narrow and costs increase, saving, I hope, millions of lives and billions of dollars.

Question 21. How will expand USAID's current initiatives to ensure that people with disabilities remain at the forefront of the global development agenda?

Answer. It is critical that inclusive programming remain at the forefront of USAID's work, as fifteen percent of the world's population has a disability, and 80 percent of this population resides in developing countries. To be effective, USAID programs must provide equal access to resources and opportunities, and all persons need to be able to participate meaningfully in their communities, without facing discriminatory practices. If confirmed, I will continue USAID's efforts to advance these goals by providing technical assistance to our field Missions, strengthening the local capacity of organizations of people with disabilities to expand their reach, and collaborating with host-country governments, civil society and multilateral institutions to improve national disability laws and policies, as resources allow.

Question . What will you do to ensure that USAID is reaching vulnerable LGBTQ populations in the areas where USAID is doing its work?

Answer. I share your concern, and I am troubled by the violence against LGBTQ and other marginalized communities around the world. As I said in my hearing before the committee, USAID needs to ensure that its programming reaches all marginalized people. No country can be a vibrant democracy if it is not listening to all of its voices. If confirmed, I will continue USAID's long tradition of advocating for the human dignity and peaceable treatment of all people, especially marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Question 23. As USAID Administrator, will you support U.S. food assistance programs utilizing various modalities, including, when and as appropriate, monetary transfers, vouchers, and in-kind contributions from the United States, in order to

assist hungry people around the globe with the most appropriate and timely means available?

Answer. Yes.

Question 24. The President's budget request and its proposals to eliminate entire accounts that reduce food insecurity—such as Food for Peace Title II and McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program—comes at a time when famine conditions threaten 30 million people in Africa and the Middle East. These different accounts reflect different contexts—such as development and humanitarian assistance—as well as different modalities that can prove especially useful in certain contexts. How would you ensure we have access to the greatest number of modalities, and the flexibility to use the tools most appropriate when needed to address these challenges?

Answer. I understand that, in response to situations of food insecurity, USAID aims to use the right tools, in the right place, at the right time, and that the Agency's food-security team relies on the flexibility provided by Congress to pursue this approach so that the choice of tool in any given situation depends on what they deem most-effective based on the conditions on the ground. By way of illustration, in recent years, USAID has utilized U.S.-purchased commodities in Yemen, locally procured grains in Uganda, and electronic vouchers for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Market-based interventions can help promote recovery, strengthen and expand market linkages, encourage local trade, and stimulate an appropriate production response from farmers in developing countries. For example, the food-voucher program for Syrian refugees not only provides food to those who need it, but also has a crucial secondary benefit of helping the local economy and creating jobs. As I understand it, food-voucher program for Syrian refugees has injected more than $1.7 billion into the economies of Syria's neighbors, and has created more than 1,300 new jobs since it began.

Under the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget request, I understand the International Disaster Assistance account will provide support for the local and regional procurement of agricultural commodities, the procurement of U.S. commodities, cash transfers, food vouchers and complementary activities that support the relief, recovery and resilience of populations affected by food crises. Given the growing complexity and the current number of global humanitarian crises, having the flexibility to choose among a range of authorized tools will ensure USAID responds most effectively, with the greatest impact.

Question 25. If confirmed, how will you bring to bear the expertise of USAID to address longer term issues that present the potential to destabilize communities, such as drivers of conflict, drivers of migration, and food insecurity?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to using and building on the tools USAID has to identify and address the drivers of conflict and fragility, and to mitigate them before they destabilize communities. I understand that in the leadup to the 2016 elections in Kenya, USAID worked throughout the country to prepare for potential violence by designing and implementing programs to help address a range of identified drivers, reduce inter-communal conflict, and build confidence in local governments. I am told that USAID believes these efforts helped lower the risk of post-election violence in an important U.S. national-security partner in the Horn of Africa.

Interventions such as those used around the Kenyan elections seek to address root causes upstream, and to bolster communities against the dysfunction, instability and conflict that can emerge in fragile states. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen and further refine these tools, and to invest resources into enhancing USAID's ability to analyze and assess the unique drivers in each country's context. Preventing conflict is obviously preferable to responding after conflict is well underway.

Question 26. How will you balance prevention efforts, such as building resilience and conflict mitigation, when the humanitarian needs are enormous?

Answer. This is a challenge, but prevention investments in agriculture, food security, health, and human capital, as well as the management of disasters, natural resources, and conflict can be cost-effective means of reducing future humanitarian needs. A recent study in Kenya and Ethiopia by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom found that every $1 invested in resilience will result in $2.90 in reduced humanitarian spending, as well as improved poverty, hunger, and malnutrition outcomes.

For example, in one community in Malawi, responding to urgent, life-saving needs cost an average of $390 per person during the 2016 drought induced by the El Niño weather phenomenon. By contrast, a community in which USAID invested roughly

$376 per person over five years did not require food assistance. Over the long-term, the savings of investing in community resilience can be extraordinary.

USAID's strategic approaches are helping shift the burden for making these investments and managing these risks from external donors, including USAID, to the Governments and communities themselves. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that we balance the need to respond to immediate life-saving, humanitarian needs, while partnering with governments who are helping themselves, to make the strategic investments in resilience that are needed to reduce this liability in the future.

Question 27. If confirmed, how would you plan to support the integration and expand proven, successful initiatives such as the Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) and Infant Young Child Feeding (IYCF) programs to combat wasting in order to save the lives of children suffering from acute malnutrition?

Answer. USAID's Infant and Young Child Feeding and Community Management of Acute Malnutrition are cornerstones of its successful maternal and child health and nutrition programs. If confirmed, I will continue to support these programs, but I will also seek ways to use data to improve them, and to build the capacity of host-country partners to take these initiatives on themselves.

Question 28. Should global food security remain a priority focus of United States Government development assistance funding? Will you commit to continuing to implement the Global Food Security Strategy, including support for the complementary strategies and investments listed in appendix 3 of the strategy?

Answer. Yes, global food security should remain a priority focus. Thanks to Congressional leadership, the Global Food Security Act of 2016 affirmed the United States' leadership and commitment to combating the root causes of hunger and poverty in an accountable and effective way. If I am confirmed, I will continue to implement the Global Food Security Strategy.

Question 29. How do you envision the United States benefitting from promoting international education programs that invest in developing the minds of the world's most at-risk and vulnerable children? How do you prioritize USAID initiatives such as Let Girls Learn and Global Book Alliance? What will you do as the incoming USAID Administrator to ensure that USAID is resourced adequately to tackle the global education crisis?

Answer. Education in the developing world is near and dear to my heart. My first steps in development were as a volunteer teacher in East Africa. My first overseas trip as a Member of Congress was to Mali and Ghana to review education programs for girls in those two countries. In other words, I agree that improving education opportunities for vulnerable populations and strengthening education systems accelerates economic growth, strengthens communities, and reduces instability that often fuels war, conflict, and extremism. Education is a foundational driver of development—the sustainability of investments across all sectors requires skilled populations that are capable of leading and managing their own future.

When we invest in women and girls, including in their literacy and numeracy, we accelerate progress—toward a safer, more-secure and more-prosperous world. If I am confirmed, I will make sure we remember this principle.

At the same time, we need to take a strategic, comprehensive approach to address the global education crisis. We will never have enough funding to solve every problem. This means we must extend our reach through partnerships, promote domestic resource-mobilization and encourage investment from a range of organizations, including the private sector. If confirmed, I will be looking into this issue further.

Question 30. Please describe how you will advance the rights of women and girls around the world through USAID programming so as to further American leadership and further help empower women and girls globally.

Answer. When we invest in women and girls, we accelerate progress toward a safer, more-secure and more-prosperous world. USAID has become a recognized global thought-leader, innovator, and convener in gender equality and women's empowerment, and is well-positioned to continue advancing women's and girls' equality in the countries where the Agency works. Since I returned from Tanzania in 2009, I have been committed to organizations that foster women's participation in civil society, and the defense of their civil and human rights. If confirmed, I will bring that focus and priority with me to USAID.

Question 31. How will the goal of helping empower women and girls be reflected within the leadership, architecture, and institutional policies of USAID?

Answer. When we invest in women and girls, we accelerate progress toward a safer, more-secure and more-prosperous world. If confirmed, I will look for ways

USAID can increase women's empowerment by broadening access to human, financial, social and physical capital. I believe that USAID needs to continue to innovate to ensure the Agency remains on the cutting edge of programming to reduce gender disparities for women. I also believe that the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally should continue to inform USAID's programming. Finally, I will ask our program-design teams to seek out new ways to advance the goal of empowering women within the sectors and countries where USAID works, and to improve our measurement of the outcomes and impact of our investments.

Question 32. How will USAID ensure local organizations continue to have a meaningful role in advancing our international assistance to promote gender equality and women's rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with all partners—donors, host-country governments, multilateral agencies, the private sector, and local organizations, including civil society and non-governmental—to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Local organizations are critical to advancing USAID's work on gender equality and women's empowerment, just as understanding the local context, and engaging communities is vital to promoting sustainable change. I understand that in the design of the Agency's programs, policies and procedures call for plans to provide inclusive, meaningful and consistent engagement with local actors, including those focused on gender equality and women's empowerment. If confirmed, I will ensure this practice continues.

Question 33. How should USAID address its internal barriers to implementing more effective programs to protect children and youth from violence and exploitation around the world? What measures will you take to collaborate with the State Department to prevent and respond to violence and exploitation against children?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID remains a global leader in protecting children and youth from violence. I support efforts to strengthen USAID's efforts to address violence against children and youth through the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

Success in these endeavors requires continued engagement with interagency partners, including the State Department, as well as the Departments of Health and Human Services and Labor. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID continues its close coordination with partners, including host-country governments, multilateral institutions and civil society, so that the U.S. Government's collective work aimed at preventing violence and exploitation against children and youth is complementary, collaborative, results-focused and sustainable.

Question 34. How much of USAID's assistance is currently specifically targeted towards anti-corruption programs and activities?

Answer. First, I would like to acknowledge the attention you have devoted to this issue. Corruption is not only a financial problem, but—as we heard during the hearing you held on this subject last year—creates an environment of resentment and hatred for authority that can foster violent extremism and terrorism. Corruption remains a tremendous obstacle to political, social, and economic development, and is a symptom of a broader pattern of poor governance, weak institutions and impunity. To fight corruption effectively, we need diplomacy, international law-enforcement efforts, and development assistance to work together as part of a global anti-corruption effort.

I understand that USAID currently spends approximately $1 billion annually on its "good governance" programs, which include most USAID anti-corruption activities.

I understand the Agency also funds other anti-corruption activities from different budget lines, and, if confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on these activities. I would welcome the opportunity to work with you to best focus USAID's resources and attention on anti-corruption activities.

I believe that corruption, including the generalized subvention of government by elites that the democracy community terms "kleptocracy," is a significant barrier to inclusive economic growth in many parts of the world. I am encouraged by some of the new corruption-assessment tools being developed, and, if confirmed, I would support the deployment of these new tools in appropriate settings.

Question 35. What will you do to see to it that our aid programs help developing countries combat corruption and hold corrupt officials accountable, if confirmed?

Answer. Corruption remains a tremendous obstacle to political, social, and economic development around the world. It usually is a symptom of a broader pattern of poor governance, weak institutions and impunity. To fight corruption effectively, we need diplomacy, international law-enforcement efforts, and development assist-

ance to work together as part of a global anti-corruption effort. If confirmed, USAID's anti-corruption programs will remain a top priority for me, and I look forward to working with you on this important issue. I will ensure strong coordination of USAID's efforts with those of other U.S. Government departments and agencies, multilateral institutions, and private-sector actors to ensure the best, most-effective use of taxpayer dollars in our collective fight against corruption.

Question 36. What role should USAID play in promoting grass roots reconciliation and funding activities that support healing the conflict in South Sudan?

Answer. Conflict takes human lives, destroys communities and their livelihoods, erodes development gains, and leaves a legacy of fear, hostility, and trauma. Without effective, inclusive peace and reconciliation processes, countries are likely to revert back to violence.

I understand that USAID is supporting reconciliation programs in South Sudan, at both the national and grassroots levels, to prevent the spread of violence and calm tensions. This work provides opportunities for antagonists to address issues, reconcile differences, and work on common goals with regard to potential, ongoing, or recent conflict.

In addition, decades of conflict in South Sudan, exacerbated by the ongoing violence and atrocities against civilians, have resulted in severe trauma. I understand that USAID trauma-awareness programs work with communities to understand how trauma has perpetuated historical tensions, and to begin to bridge these divides, thereby paving the way for reconciliation.

South Sudan is the world's most-fragile state, and is an ongoing tragedy of immense proportions. If confirmed, I hope that my first major trip as Administrator will be to South Sudan, so that I can see for myself some of the problems there, as well as meet with some of USAID's partners in the relief and reconciliation process.

Question 37. Given the wealth of rigorous evidence available about what works in HIV programming, how can you assure the American people that these cuts will not reverse the gains we've seen globally in mitigating the impact of HIV nor increase HIV-related deaths worldwide?

Answer. I understand Secretary Tillerson recently signed a memorandum that asked the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) to devise a strategy to control the HIV/AIDS pandemic in 13 priority countries of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on the specifics of this strategy, as well as on how the administration is planning to prioritize efficiencies and preserve gains already made against HIV/AIDS in many countries. In the future, USAID should continue to support OGAC in its focus on the geographic regions and populations that are most at risk—which can provide for the greatest impact with every dollar invested, and interrupt the specific dynamics of transmission that are fueling the epidemic. Furthermore, if confirmed, I will seek ways to optimize the coordination of all of our global health programs with the Departments of State, Defense, Health and Human Services and multilateral institutions to make our limited resources go even further. Finally, I will work to support sharing financial responsibility with partner governments to better ensure the sustainability and impact of our HIV/AIDS efforts. As one of the original Congressional supporters of PEPFAR, I can assure you that our battle against HIV/AIDS is important to me personally, and I am looking forward to the day we can reverse the tide of the disease.

Question 38. With a 15 percent reduction in resources as proposed in the FY18 budget, how would current HIV/AIDS patients stay on treatment, and not result in a reversal in trends where the number HIV/AIDS contractions and deaths start increasing?

Answer. I refer you to the Department of State's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator on the specifics of the Fiscal Year 2018 budget request for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). I understand the funding request would continue support for the current levels of patients on HIV/AIDS treatment. Again, as an original supporter of PEPFAR, and an ambassador who oversaw one of the world's larger PEPFAR programs, this is a cause that is important to me.

Question 39. How does the budget's proposed cuts to malaria prevention advance U.S. economic security and prosperity?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on the specifics of the administration's Fiscal Year 2018 budget request, as well as how the administration is looking to prioritize efficiencies and preserve the gains the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) has achieved in many countries in Africa. As a survivor of malaria my-

self, and someone who lost students to malaria, if confirmed, I will work hard to build upon PMI's record of success.

Question 40. Do you think it is important that USAID is working with the nations of West Africa to build systems to prevent, detect and respond to any future Ebola and other pandemic outbreaks?

Answer. Yes. The Ebola epidemic demonstrated exactly why events in developing countries should matter to Americans. A viral outbreak in a remote corner of Guinea nearly brought three countries to the point of collapse, and sowed fear and panic in Dallas, Texas, and across the world.

The Ebola crisis also demonstrated the need to build healthcare capacity in developing countries, as well as the need for early identification of outbreaks of infectious disease, the rapid declaration of Public Health Emergencies of International Concern, and rapid response to events that involve dangerous pathogens. Such efforts are instrumental to stopping an outbreak of a lethal, contagious disease at the source, which is critical to prevent or minimize the spread of, and subsequent deaths from, an epidemic. I understand that USAID, along with non-governmental implementing partners, continues to work with the nations of West Africa to strengthen their healthcare systems, services, and health-security measures.

Question 41. How do you envision USAID's global health programs partnering with Gavi and other organizations to reduce child mortality and to reduce the dangers of infectious diseases from impacting the United States and other countries around the world?

Answer. USAID's partnerships in global health, both within the U.S. Government, including under the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and with other organizations—such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)—have made, and will continue to make, critical contributions to reducing child mortality and the dangers of infectious disease. Partnerships such as Gavi help to leverage other donor resources to ensure that cost-effective, life-saving solutions can reach more children and reduce the impact of infectious disease worldwide.

The experiences in recent years with outbreaks of novel infectious diseases, such as Ebola, Zika, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, and H1N1 influenza have also demonstrated that emerging infectious diseases that originate in other parts of the globe can quickly become homeland-security threats. USAID should continue to partner with the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services and State, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Organization for Animal Health, and other key stakeholders, to further USAID's investments in strengthening the capacity of local and national institutions around the world, which will help prevent and detect outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases.

If confirmed, I will closely with the White House Global Health Security Agenda and interagency team to strengthen public health capacity in critical hot spots.

Question 42. Will you commit to ensuring that ending preventable deaths of mothers and children remains a USAID priority?

Answer. Yes.

Question 43. What correlation do you see between national security and improved maternal and child health?

Answer. Any time that we are able to promote stability and social integration in a community, we are helping to immunize it against at least some of the potential drivers of despair, one the most significant being the preventable loss of mother or child. In a time when extremists are looking to exploit despair, alienation and marginalization, that effort is helpful in our broader struggle against extremism. Furthermore, humanitarian assistance and strategic investments in health, can help improve our national security by strengthening our relationships with people around the world, particularly in conflict-prone areas.

Question 44. If confirmed, how will your pro-life voting record and views on family planning effect your decision making on related health issues that are a part of USAID's work?

Answer. I have been a strong supporter of global health programs throughout my career, and I understand the importance of women's health issues, including voluntary family-planning programs that are implemented consistent with the law, available resources, and the Presidential Memorandum issued on January 23, 2017. I was part of the team that crafted key development health initiatives like the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the President's Malaria

Initiative (PMI), and, if confirmed, I will remain fully committed to advancing these programs that save women's lives.

Question 45. How do you plan to structure USAID global health investments to help recipient countries move towards sustainable, domestically-financed health programs, increasing country ownership of such programs while maintaining U.S. leadership in global health?

Answer. I understand that transitioning programs to the management and financing of partner countries is an explicit goal of all USAID global health investments. Because USAID works with countries in different stages of development, there is no one-size-fits-all model for health care and financing, and the Agency should tailor its global health investments to an individual country's needs, with a focus on sustainability, and a goal of self-sufficiency.

Question 46. How will you build on USAID health successes and work with partners to address persistent systems barriers like the need for more trained and supported frontline health workers?

Answer. As I indicated in my written statement, I believe "the purpose of foreign assistance should be ending its need to exist." That means that, if confirmed, I plan to assist governments and civil society in partner countries to strengthen their own ability to manage their health systems. I would look to incentivize partner governments to adopt key reforms, including task-shifting, and, as permitted by available resources, provide assistance for training and equipping frontline health workers to do more to support communities and save lives.

Question 47. How will USAID prioritize the stability of funding for disaster risk reduction in countries facing significant natural hazards and the need for investment in preventative measures that save lives, build resilience, and are cost effective?

Answer. USAID's work in disaster risk reduction over the past 30 years has demonstrated clear results in increasing the capacity of countries to respond to their own calamities and to those that affect their neighbors. For example, I understand that following the earthquake in Ecuador in 2016, 73 percent of the search and rescue personnel who responded from neighboring countries such as Chile and Peru were trained by the United States. As a result of these regional interventions, the U.S. Government did not need to deploy its own search-and-rescue teams to respond.

I understand that USAID recognizes that national and local entities can play a key role in responding to emergencies. The main goal of the Agency's programs should go beyond strengthening its own ability to respond to emergencies overseas, and extend to helping communities across the world become more resilient themselves to disasters and better able to deal with their impact. Relatively small investments in disaster risk-reduction can pay huge dividends in helping partner countries build capacity and resiliency. If confirmed, I will continue to support these efforts.

Question 48. How will you ensure USAID upholds its commitments to developing and implementing a Global Water Strategy (as required by the 2014 Water for the World Act) that addresses how the U.S. will increase access to safe drinking water and sanitation and hygiene services, improve the management of watersheds and water resources, and mitigate or resolve water-related conflicts?

Answer. I agree that a comprehensive water strategy is critical to achieving results in this very important sector. If confirmed, and once fully briefed on the details of the Global Water Strategy, I look forward to working with Congress to address the intersection of water, sanitation and health.

Question 49. What criteria will you use to prioritize the allocation of humanitarian assistance?

Answer. Thanks to the generous support of Congress, the United States is the world's leading provider of humanitarian aid by sheer volume, and works in partnership with other donor governments, multilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, local relief groups and others to respond to an average of 65 disasters in more than 50 countries every year.

I understand that USAID's two emergency-response offices, the Office of Food for Peace and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, continuously monitor humanitarian needs worldwide and make emergency funding decisions on a rolling basis, to provide life-saving assistance where it is most needed today, while also meeting and mitigating anticipated emergency needs several months in the future. I am told they rely on a variety of tools to determine need and vulnerability and guide the prioritization of resources, including information from field staff, partner

reporting, and forecasting from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).

Unfortunately, humanitarian needs always exceed available global resources, and USAID will never be able to provide as much assistance as we would all like. Difficult trade-offs, such as prioritizing immediate action at the expense of longer-term resilience and development activities, might need to be made.

Recognizing that the U.S. Government cannot meet global humanitarian needs alone, and should not try to do so, USAID engages with fellow donors and actors in the international humanitarian architecture to seek their assistance and collaboration. Sustained U.S. humanitarian leadership, both diplomatic and financial, is critical for continued engagement from both traditional and emerging donors. The good news in this regard is that donors such as Japan and Germany have recently increased their support for humanitarian assistance. If confirmed, I intend to use my experience as both a diplomat and a Congressman to press donor counterparts for both more funding and a more-efficient coordination of effort. I also intend to turn to other potential funding sources, including traditional and emerging donors, as well as the private sector.

Question 50. How will you ensure that humanitarian assistance goes to the most vulnerable, regardless of location?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work hard to coordinate with the Department of Defense and multilateral organizations to secure safe access to areas of humanitarian need. Beyond that, as Administrator of America's lead development and humanitarian-assistance agency, I would work relentlessly to highlight areas of greatest humanitarian need, wherever that might be at any moment.

Question 51. How will you protect humanitarian assistance from political/security/economic priorities of other United States Government entities?

Answer. The United States prioritizes humanitarian assistance based on need, whether that need arises from a man-made or natural disaster. While foreign assistance fulfills multiple objectives, some of which are strategic, political and/or economic, the U.S. Government has always targeted humanitarian assistance itself towards those most in need. Furthermore, humanitarian assistance should not be considered a substitute for political solutions in man-made crises. To do otherwise risks politicizing that assistance, which, among other things, puts aid workers at increased risk.

If confirmed, I will ensure USAID continues to work with implementing partners committed to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

Question 52. Do you intend to push back on OMB's intended withholding of humanitarian relief funds to meet the exceptional levels of humanitarian need globally?

Answer. I have not been briefed on the situation to which you are referring. But, if I am confirmed, I commit to working to ensure we are providing humanitarian assistance as quickly and effectively as conditions permit.

Question 53. How would you work at USAID—and with Congress—to ensure that the U.S. takes a forward looking, multi-year approach to its response to humanitarian crises where possible?

Answer. Unfortunately, there is little chance that needs arising from current humanitarian emergencies will decline in the near future. The situations in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, and Yemen represent what has become the norm—protracted, man-made, large-scale crises driven by conflict. In just over a decade, the number of people in need of humanitarian aid has more than doubled. I understand that the Famine Early Warning System Network indicates Somalia, Yemen, and Nigeria could fall into famine this year, and the United Nations has already declared famine in South Sudan.

The U.S. Government funds partners in a reliable, timely manner, through arrangements that help to ensure continuity of assistance. If confirmed, I will continue to support USAID's mission to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance through, where feasible and appropriate, a multi-year approach in the American response, while adapting our responses to the crises of today and making the most of taxpayer dollars.

Question 54. What are the greatest needs facing Iraqis and Syrians returning to areas liberated from ISIS?

Answer. While, if confirmed, I will be in a much better position to respond to this question, I understand that more than 531,000 Iraqis have been displaced since the start of the campaign to retake Iraq's city of Mosul from ISIS. As the campaign in

Syria to retake the city of Raqqah intensifies, potentially tens of thousands more will be forced to flee their homes. I understand that the U.S. Government and its partners continue to assist these populations as they escape from ISIS-held areas, through the provision of medical care, food, and emergency commodities. Assistance also continues in camps and emergency sites, as well as areas of return in eastern Mosul, despite continued insecurity.

Many of those displaced would obviously like to return home. Security is the most-critical factor for returns—especially as ISIS leaves behind unexploded ordnance, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and booby traps. The greatest stabilization needs are for immediate repairs to basic infrastructure, the creation of jobs, the extension of small-business loans, and the creation of medium-term programs that rehabilitate transport corridors among liberated cities and incentivize additional displaced persons to return. Working to ensure there are safe, habitable places for the displaced to return, with opportunities for the future, will help provide normalcy and stability, as well as further weaken ISIS's hold. Despite challenges, tens of thousands of people are returning to liberated areas, including an estimated 145,000 people to liberated parts of Mosul so far. I understand that USAID is supporting those returnees with humanitarian assistance, and as programs transition from relief to early recovery, will make longer-term investments in infrastructure and livelihoods.

Question 55. Should the U.S. Government assist in the stabilization of post-ISIS areas?

Answer. I know that we will want to help as best as we can, but our overall policy is developed by more than just USAID, so I'll wait to consult more broadly within the U.S. Government before providing a more fulsome answer.

Question 56. What more can and should the United States do to ensure that conflict parties refrain from causing harm to civilians and exacerbating already severe humanitarian catastrophes while conflicts are ongoing?

Answer. I agree the U.S. Government should do whatever it can to ensure that combatants do not target civilians in and around conflict zones. I understand that the U.S. Government uses de-confliction processes with armed actors, where appropriate, to help avoid any unintentional targeting of humanitarian assistance or innocent civilians. The State Department and USAID continually urge all parties in conflict areas to respect international humanitarian norms, and to allow for unfettered access of aid to reach civilian populations. If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate on these issues.

Question 57. What is the role of the United States to ensure compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 2286 to document and conduct investigations of attacks on health workers and facilities?

Answer. I refer you to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations on the specific question of UN Security Resolution 2286. However, as the President of the International Republican Institute (IRI), the safety and security of my people on the ground is something I worry about every day. As you know, IRI carries out programs and activities in places where democracy advocates are often targeted for intimidation. Similarly, I know that USAID takes safety and security of its staff and implementing partners very seriously. If confirmed, I will continue to make this a priority for the Agency. More broadly, I am troubled by reports over the past several years of persistent attacks on health facilities, medical staff, and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. Consequently, if confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the Department of State and the rest of the interagency on this very important issue. Furthermore, if I am confirmed, I will take steps to make sure that USAID calls on all parties to prevent attacks, that it pushes for timely and appropriate channels for the investigation of reports of violence, and that it insists upon prosecution of any individuals responsible for intentional attacks.

Question 58. What is your assessment of the last 15 years of the counterterrorism/countering violent extremism efforts and why they have largely failed?

Answer. Not every question or challenge can be entirely addressed through a development lens, so this question can only be fully addressed in conjunction with other voices from the security sector and beyond. Furthermore, I agree with those who have opined that taking on violent extremism is a sweeping challenge for our time, one without simple answers or quick fixes. Violent extremism is not merely an idea to be challenged or countered, but something used by terribly dangerous individuals and groups who seek to end our way of life. We not only have to counter an ideology, but also defeat the evil practitioners of that ideology as well.

What USAID can bring to these challenges are tools that can help us understand and address the drivers of extremism in many settings. With years of on-the-ground

experience, the Agency is particularly suited to leading this analysis in many places, and then designing interventions and initiatives that can, in some cases, counter violent extremism. But more important, armed with good analysis, USAID can build resilience in communities to prevent or limit the expansion of extremist ideology, or help communities recover from the devastating effects of the battles extremists wage.

Question 59. Under your leadership, how would U.S. counter violent extremism efforts seek to address citizens grievances, including security sector abuse, exclusion, and inequality?

Answer. I understand that USAID's existing programs to counter violent extremism focus on addressing core grievances that extremist organizations seek to exploit, as well as contest their promotion of intolerance in the larger public.

If confirmed, I will continue to encourage this focus. We will pursue prevention (advocating for these causes), accountability (investigating and holding perpetrators to account) and support for those aggrieved.

Question 60. How can we bring real evidence and metrics to measure whether our counter violent extremism efforts are making an impact in reducing levels of support for violence?

Answer. I understand that USAID is constantly gathering both quantitative and qualitative data to design, monitor, and evaluate its programming to counter violent extremism. If confirmed, I will seek to use those findings in both country- and context-specific analyses and surveys, among other tools, to measure the impact of these very important programs. We must be careful not to jump to conclusions on the drivers of extremism in any context. But, instead, undertake an informed, qualitative, analytical approach that enables us to tailor our approach to local and regional conditions.

Question 61. What will USAID do, under your leadership, to ensure Burma's democratic transition and prospects for sustainable development are not undermined by the military's continued role in the economy and politics?

Answer. I have had the honor of visiting Burma on a couple of occasions. While the elections two years ago were a historic victory for both the people of Burma and the cause of democracy, they were merely the beginning of a journey to a truly citizen-centered, citizen-responsive society. To sustain the gains of Burma's democratic transition, if confirmed, I will work to accelerate USAID's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, including Parliament, the judiciary, and civil society; foster national reconciliation and peace; and improve the lives of the Burmese people by increasing access to better health services, economic opportunities, and, when needed, humanitarian assistance.

Question 62. Given that USAID supports Burma's peace process through the Joint Peace Fund, will it endorse the recommendations of more than 135 civil society organizations calling for a new approach to natural resource management in the country as a way to address one of the root causes of the conflicts and build a better future for Burma's people?

Answer. I agree that challenges with access to, and management of, natural resources are having a dangerous effect upon ethnic conflict and strife in Burma. Working with civil society is a key component of USAID's development strategy, and the U.S. Government currently supports non-governmental organizations in Burma on a wide array of development issues. If confirmed, I commit that USAID will engage with the 135 civil-society organizations that are calling for a new approach to natural resource-management in Burma, and identify areas where we can work effectively together on this very important issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MARK GREEN BY SENATOR JOHNNY ISAKSON

Question 1. I have long been supportive of efforts to engage the private sector in a meaningful way in our development efforts. Public-private partnerships are a key tool we can use to achieve sustainable, long-term economic development. As you may know, Sens. Coons, Perdue, and I reintroduced the Economic Growth and Development Act that authorizes USAID to create a mechanism that would allow for the private sector to more easily engage and partner with USAID's development programs. Will you commit to me that you will work with us on this bill if you are confirmed?

Answer. Yes.

Question 2. Last year, Congress passed into law the Global Food Security Act. I am thankful for all the work this committee did to get that bill across the finish line. It is up for reauthorization next year. Will you commit to me that you will work with me on continuing to improve the Global Food Security Strategy, the whole-of-government approach, and our agricultural development programs?

Answer. Yes.

Question . I am the chair of the subcommittee with direct oversight of the management of the State Department and USAID. If confirmed, will you commit to working with me to thoughtfully consider any reforms or reorganization of State and USAID and ensure that the proper authorities are in place to carry out any reforms or reorganization?

Answer. Yes.

Question 3. On April 13, 2017, I joined a bipartisan group of Senators in sending a letter to USAID's acting leadership supporting the Volunteer for Economic Growth Alliance's skilled volunteer initiative. Additionally, a bipartisan group of eight Members of the House of Representatives also sent a letter expressing their support for this initiative. VEGA leverages pro-bono American private-sector expertise in cost-effective, flexible, efficient and strategic U.S. investments in emerging markets. However, after a short-term extension was granted to give the next Administrator time to review this initiative, it will soon expire. Given the bipartisan support for skilled volunteerism, do you intend to coordinate closely with Congress to ensure that our development efforts continue to draw on skilled volunteers and seek new, innovative ways to expand their involvement?

Answer. Yes, I support drawing on volunteers, where practical and cost-effective, to better leverage our resources.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MARK GREEN BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question 1. Ambassador Green, Secretary Tillerson has stated that he is seeking efficiencies through potential reorganization plans. How do you assess the relative performance of PEPFAR versus PMI, and do you see any opportunities for efficiencies at the intersection of these two programs that would sustain or improve the current level of performance?

Answer. There is plenty of evidence to prove that the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) have both been successful global health initiatives, with an impact measurable both in terms of lives saved and, in some places, lower rates of transmission. There are several key factors to the success of PEPFAR and PMI, which include clearly articulated, quantitative goals and strategies focused on scaling up proven interventions; statutory Coordinators with clear authorities; high standards for transparency; the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of programs; and implementation structures that aim to maximize results through integration with other global health programs when programmatically relevant. If confirmed, I look forward to deepening the successes of these programs, to developing a close working relationship with the PEPFAR and PMI Coordinators, and to applying these lessons learned across the development landscape to further increase efficiency and effectiveness.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MARK GREEN BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question 1. I support making the Department of State and USAID leaner, more efficient, and more effective. The State Department and USAID need to advance our national security objectives while ensuring the best use of American taxpayer dollars.

- What opportunities exist for streamlining, efficiencies and savings at USAID?

Answer. As stated in my written testimony, making sure that USAID programs respect American taxpayers will be an overarching priority, if I should be confirmed. It is our responsibility to use precious foreign assistance funds as efficiently and effectively as possible. If confirmed as Administrator, I will scrutinize every program and expenditure to ensure the Agency is maximizing value, minimizing waste, and

always advancing America's interest. This will mean focusing the agency's limited resources on what is working, and ending programs that are not. I am committed to consulting with the Congress as we move forward in this effort.

Question 2. Are you committed to eliminating duplication and redundancies?

Answer. Yes.

Question 3. How would you recommend more deeply integrating USAID's policy and budget process into those of the Department of State?

Answer. I am committed to improving efficiency and appropriate reforms to advance development. I am more interested in ensuring that we have the right functions and capabilities to meet the complex challenges before us rather than on agency structure, and I have an open mind on the best way to accomplish this. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my interagency colleagues at the Departments of State, Defense, Health and Human Services, Agriculture and elsewhere, to ensure we are all working together to further U.S. national interests and strategic foreign-policy priorities.

Question 4. The Obama administration focused on food security, global health and climate change as its top development priorities.

- What would be your top three development priorities?

Answer. Should I be confirmed, my overarching development priority would be helping target countries take on their own development needs by incentivizing and supporting both the policy reforms and capacity-building necessary to do so. Each nation has particular strengths and needs, and I believe we should try to address them in a strategic and tailored way. Having said that, I would also emphasize development sectors that can also create economic opportunities for America. Feed the Future and Power Africa, for example, can help American businesses with new markets and new partnerships.

Question 5. With the national debt rapidly approaching $20 trillion, the federal government must be good stewards of taxpayer funds. Given the increasing need for humanitarian assistance, food insecurity, democracy promotion and global health crisis, I do not support U.S. taxpayer dollars going to the Global Climate Change Initiative and other international climate change programs. President Obama's administration requested about $1.3 billion in FY 2017 for these types of program. President Trump's administration requested $0 for the UN Green Climate Fund and the Global Climate Change Initiative.

- If confirmed, will you ensure that funding is being properly prioritized and eliminate funding for international climate change programs?

Answer. I certainly agree that we are facing serious budget challenges, and that we need to be good stewards of taxpayer resources. I also agree that humanitarian-assistance challenges and existing commitments, such as global health, are important priorities for USAID.

As the question notes, the administration's budget does not provide funding for the Green Climate Fund or Global Climate Change Initiative. Instead, I would favor modest initiatives to prevent and deal with weather-related disasters, such as the assistance we have provided to the Philippines to assist in developing that country's typhoon early-warning system. This is the kind of intervention that has clear humanitarian and development applications.

Question 6. What are your views of Power Africa?

Answer. I share your support of Power Africa, which is a valuable and successful program, with great potential to transform the continent, while also creating new and expanded opportunities for U.S. companies.

Power Africa's efforts and American leadership have resulted in significant international momentum towards tackling Africa's energy crisis. Power Africa is now among the largest public-private partnerships for development in history, having mobilized more than $54 billion in commitments towards achieving its goals.

If confirmed, I am interested in understanding how we can use Power Africa's model and other initiatives to incentivize good policies, capacity-building, and investments in our partner countries by leveraging the financing and expertise of the private sector.

Question 7. As administrator of USAID, would you ensure that USAID is promoting all forms of energy projects across the globe, including oil, gas, and coal?

Answer. Yes. Of the more than 7,000 megawatts of new power projects that Power Africa has helped reach financial close to date, more than three-fourths involve natural gas. I understand the Power Africa team has been engaging with Congressional staff, including your own, as well as with industry, on these very important issues.

These discussions are exploring the ways we might deploy U.S. technologies and expertise to help African Governments and companies both to take advantage of their own domestic resources, as well as to examine the potential for gas imports from the United States and world markets. If confirmed, I would like to explore what more Power Africa could do to support the production of electricity from diverse sources of energy.

Question 8. There has been a great deal of concern regarding reports of upcoming famines in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance at USAID and the Office of Food for Peace at USAID provide humanitarian assistance during international crises and disasters.

- Please discuss the main obstacles and best approaches to resolving the humanitarian crisis facing Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen.

Answer. I am deeply concerned about the food-security situation in these countries, in which a combined total of 41.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. I understand that U.S. assistance to the people of these countries includes emergency food and nutrition, support for livelihoods, critical health care, shelter, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services, and protection for civilians.

Access to populations in need is a considerable challenge, particularly in conflict situations. The numbers of people whom donors can reach in several of the ongoing conflicts is limited, and requires persistence, creativity, and talented and dedicated staff. For example, in South Sudan,ongoing conflict, deliberate bureaucratic impediments, and high levels of insecurity continue to stymie the ability to provide direct assistance to those most in need. In Yemen, as much as 90 percent of humanitarian assistance flows through a single port, which requires constant negotiation to obtain the necessary clearances to ship, offload, and distribute assistance to people on the verge of starvation. There are signs that famine likely occurred in Northeastern Nigeria in 2016, and might even be ongoing, but continued violence and insecurity limits access to many areas, which has triggered large-scale displacement, and leads to greater emergency needs. In Somalia, humanitarian access has improved in some areas compared with the previous 2011–2012 drought and famine, but the situation remains tenuous, as much of this improved access is in cities and towns, and al-Shabaab's presence continues to limit the ability to access many hard-hit rural areas. Despite constraints, humanitarian assistance continues to reach many of those in need in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

While humanitarian assistance can save lives and alleviate suffering, it cannot resolve man-made crises, which require political solutions. In settings like Northeastern Nigeria, the end of violence and restoration of public infrastructure and security are the only lasting ways to end a humanitarian crisis born from insecurity. Similarly, the U.S. Government's continued support of Somali efforts to strengthen the federal government's structures and improve security are critical to ensuring sustained and reliable access to populations in need. If confirmed, I will commit to working with my colleagues across the whole of the U.S. Government, and with multilateral institutions and others in the international community, to develop enduring, political solutions in these countries.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Todd Young, presiding.

Present: Senators Young [presiding], Gardner, Isakson, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, and Merkley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TODD YOUNG, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator YOUNG. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today we meet to consider the nominations of the following individuals: the Honorable David Steele Bohigian to be Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation; Mr. Ray Washburne to be President of OPIC; Ms. Kelley Eckels Currie, to be U.S. Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and Alternative Representative to the Sessions of the U.N. General Assembly; and Mr. Jay Patrick Murray to be Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations and Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the U.N. General Assembly.

I welcome each of our nominees, as well as your families.

I would also like to welcome our distinguished guests to introduce one of the nominees, the senior Senator from Texas, Senator Cornyn.

Before I do that, I would also like to acknowledge your fellow Texan, my former colleague, a great American, Pete Sessions, a Congressman who kind of showed me the ropes as I was getting started in Congress.

So thank you, Senator Cornyn, for being here today, and I would like to recognize you for your remarks, sir.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN CORNYN, U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS

Senator CORNYN. Chairman Young and members of the committee, thank you for letting me be here today to introduce my friend and fellow Texan, Ray Washburne.

Today's hearing and the issues at the core of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation come at an opportune time. On the heels of the President's trip overseas and as our country reasserts

its economic role on the global stage, it is important for us to be realistic about how we support our allies. U.S. direct aid is only a small portion of the capital flow that drives the world's economy. Our best tools are frequently found in the private sector, and that is where Ray comes in and his experience.

When you look at his background and dedication, you will see that he is a strong fit for this role. His drive for success started at an early age. His first business venture, I am told, was mowing lawns at age 9 with 20 employees. That is pretty impressive.

And his vision for what can be accomplished with hard work and perseverance started even before that. I am told he keeps a ruler hanging on his office wall from when the Park City Bank and Trust Bank building in Dallas opened when he was 8 years old. He now owns that building and views the ruler as a symbol of one's ability to set goals and find creative potential.

But many across Texas know him for the role he has played in the Dallas economy specifically. After paying his own way through Southern Methodist University, he went on to become one of Texas' most successful real estate investors and entrepreneurs. As the co-founder of MCrowd Restaurant Group, his footprint now spans 40 restaurants, including the perennial Texas favorite, Mi Cocina. He understands the importance of investing not simply for the sake of ownership and profit but for reinvigorating the local economy. One look at Highland Park Village in Dallas, a refurbished shopping center near his alma mater, will show you what I mean by that.

Ray also serves as an adjunct professor at the SMU Cox School of Business where his wisdom and expertise are shared with future generations. And he also lends a hand as a volunteer and board member for organizations around Texas, including the Urban Land Institute, Baylor Health Care System Foundation, the Real Estate Council, and the World Presidents Association.

Alongside his family Ray volunteers for the S.M. Wright Foundation, which serves the most impoverished in Dallas, and Family Legacy in Africa, which encourages education for the region's orphans.

And somehow he manages to balance all of this with his three children at home, who are here today, and with this life partner Heather, who is a formidable business woman in her own right.

I know Ray shares my belief that OPIC is an important tool in the United States' toolkit. It allows us to encourage natural economic growth and stability in areas of the world that need it the most. And while there are certainly changes that can be made, especially when we consider the long-term future of OPIC and the sometimes unbalanced investments made by the United States, Ray, I believe, will be an experienced and dedicated person at the table advocating on behalf of the United States of America.

Once he is confirmed, we can be sure that he will marry the United States' interests and the developing world's potential into an economically sufficient and innovative future.

So thank you, Chairman Young and members of the committee, for giving me the privilege of introducing my friend, Ray Washburne, and I hope the committee will support his nomination.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Senator Cornyn. And since the good Senator introduced Mr. Washburne, I will take liberties here and provide a little additional background on the other three nominees.

Mr. Bohigian is the Managing Director of Pluribus Ventures, an advisor to financial services firms in growth companies. Earlier he served on the core management team of Bridgewater Associates, the world's largest hedge fund. Prior to Bridgewater, Mr. Bohigian served as an Assistant Secretary of Commerce. Welcome.

Ms. Currie is currently a senior fellow with the Project 2049 Institute where she specializes in political reform, development, and humanitarian assistance, human rights and other nontraditional security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. She previously held senior policy positions with the Department of State and several international and nongovernmental human rights and humanitarian organizations. Good to have you here.

And Colonel Murray is a retired U.S. Army colonel with distinction in Iraq, the Balkans, the U.S. Embassy Moscow as an advisor in the Bureau of Political Military Affairs at the Department of State and as the U.S. military representative at the United Nations. Good to have you here, Colonel.

Before I go further, I would like to invite Senator Cornyn to depart at your leisure. I know how busy we get around here.

And thank you Chairman Sessions again for your attendance.

Before I turn to Senator Merkley for his statement, in light of the positions today's nominees seek to fill, I would like to make a few brief comments about the U.N. and OPIC.

As you point out in your prepared remarks, Mr. Murray, the United Nations is an entity with much promise. It is also an entity that too often falls short of that promise. I admire Ambassador Haley's efforts to do what she can to seek reform and accountability at the U.N. There is no doubt that having additional high-level appointees at the U.N. will allow for increased U.S. engagement with the United Nations on a reform agenda.

The Ambassador for the Special Political Affairs position will play an important role in peacekeeping reform in particular. This is an area in dire need of reform for missions that fail to fulfill their mandates to missions that outlive their purpose or, worse yet, missions rife with sexual exploitation that victimize those that are supposed to be protected. There is no doubt U.N. peacekeeping reform is long overdue. As you suggest in your prepared remarks, Mr. Murray, both whistleblower protections and training must be strengthened.

The Ambassador to the Economic and Social Council of the U.N. will also play an important role, including potentially in efforts to reform the U.N. Human Rights Council. I would note that our sub committee held a hearing on the U.N. Human Rights Council on May 25th. As that hearing highlighted, some of the countries with the worst possible human rights records sit on the Human Rights Council using their membership to deflect attention from their egregious human rights abuses, instead attempting to pass judgment on Israel. Addressing this unacceptable status quo should be a top priority.

Those are a few of the reasons I am hopeful that this committee and the larger Senate will process these two U.N. nominations ex-

peditiously so that they can be in a position and get to work before the U.N. General Assembly in September.

As I said, we also have two individuals who have been nominated to lead OPIC. I look forward to discussing OPIC's mission and the increasing importance of the private sector in international development.

With that, I would like to recognize the distinguished ranking member for his comments. Senator Merkley?

STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF MERKLEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I am delighted we are holding this hearing as we exercise our advise and consent responsibility. And thank you to each of you for putting yourselves forward to take and consider serving in these important public roles.

In the aftermath of the most destructive conflict in history, the United States worked in concert with its allies and partners to found the United Nations, a body chartered to, quote, save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and to promote social progress and better standards of life and larger freedom. Those are powerful aspirational missions.

And the United Nations has pursued these lofty standards better when guided by American leadership. Confirming nominees to critical roles will help the United Nations fulfill the aspirations that were so well laid out in the beginning.

I have been concerned about the pace of the process for nominating candidates to key positions and am pleased that we are moving forward today with this hearing at the United Nations for the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Security Council. I look forward to hearing from all of you in terms of what you see as key changes or objectives that you might bring to your roles.

I am delighted that we now have nominees for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or OPIC. OPIC is a self-sustaining U.S. agency that does important work facilitating American investment in emerging markets. I have been long impressed with their work, which is why I was so troubled to see the administration's budget call for OPIC's elimination. Zeroing OPIC is especially problematic as OPIC operates at no net cost to taxpayers and in fact reduces our deficits. Its revenues back to the U.S. Treasury have helped reduce the deficit for 39 consecutive years, including more than $3.7 billion in deficit reduction over just the past 10 years. So I am excited that these nominations may well signal a reversal in the administration's plans to eliminate the agency, and I certainly look forward to hearing the nominees' views on the administration's plans.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve. I look forward to your comments.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Senator Merkley.

We will now turn to our nominees. I appreciate your willingness to serve in these important capacities. I would remind you your full statements will be included in the record, without objection.

For your opening statements, let us go in the order that I used earlier. I encourage each of you to start by recognizing any family or friends who may be attending today. Mr. Bohigian?

STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID STEELE BOHIGIAN, OF MISSOURI, TO BE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

Mr. BOHIGIAN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for offering me the opportunity to appear here today. I am honored to be nominated to be the Executive Vice President of OPIC.

I would like to thank the members of the committee and their staff for time they spent with me prior to the hearing.

Thank you too for the invitation to have my family join me here today. My son Steele and younger daughter Caroline are away at camp. I am joined here by my fantastic wife Catherine, who I love more than words can express, and I would note, in particular, my daughter Kate served as Delegate for the United States in model United Nations where she achieved outstanding delegate earlier this year. Thank you for being here.

I also want to thank my parents for supporting me. Every day I am trying to live up to their example of serving their community and their family.

I would also like to recognize my fellow nominees and in particular Mr. Washburne who has been nominated to be the CEO and President of OPIC. As noted earlier, Mr. Washburne is a successful businessman who has a long history of analyzing companies and investments for their potential. He combines a keen business sense with a deep consideration of the impact that businesses will have on the broader community. His superb character has been shaped by a family not only here today but that has served this Nation as Senators, governors, Congressmen, and also includes a Secretary of State and an ambassador. I expect these qualities will serve him well as President and CEO of OPIC.

If confirmed, I hope my government experience and business track record will complement his values and abilities and skills as OPIC seeks to help American businesses succeed in international markets.

Earlier in my career, I had the distinct privilege to serve as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for market access and compliance in the International Trade Administration. My job was to ensure that American companies could compete fairly in international markets. I worked with American businesses and foreign governments to develop an international business climate that created opportunities for American workers and spread American values. In that role, I am proud to have launched the Entrepreneurship Initiative where small businesses could advocate to reduce barriers to trade and open new markets for American goods and services. I am also proud to have led the U.S. Government's first clean energy trade mission where U.S. businesses developed lasting and profitable relationships in China and India. Prior to that role, I was the Director of the Department of Commerce's Office of Policy and Strategic Planning where I advised two Secretaries on economics and energy.

In business, I have helped companies grow and prosper, working across every corporate function from operations to strategy in a variety of roles including founder, CEO, and managing director. I have founded businesses such as an energy efficiency project finance firm and a startup incubator, as well as assisting countless companies enter new markets. I have helped manage some of the world's most innovative financial services firms in a career that has spanned venture capital, private equity, investment banking, and hedge funds. Across these disciplines, I have learned to turn concepts into companies, analyze business prospects, structure projects, develop global supply chains, and evaluate microeconomic and macroeconomic developments. I believe these experiences have helped prepare me to guide the important work ahead.

American businesses operating in international markets deliver opportunities to workers in the U.S. and develop tangible benefits to partner companies, laying the foundation for global peace and prosperity. When the American private sector builds power plants, water treatment facilities, or airports, the benefits are not simply economic. These partnerships lift environmental, social, and governance standards around the world. International connections developed through business lead to deeper cross-cultural understanding and create the conditions for global opportunity and compassion. Throughout Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the western hemisphere, American private sector investment has promoted American jobs, American values, and lifted living standards to heights unimaginable in earlier generations.

Almost 250 years ago, the Declaration of Independence boldly asserted that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were inalienable rights. I believe these rights are immutable and eternal and underpin values that have spread prosperity and freedom at home and abroad. If I am confirmed, I would be honored to continue that tradition and help advocate for American opportunities in the years ahead.

Mr. Chairman and the committee, thank you for that opportunity.

[Mr. Bohigian's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID BOHIGIAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for offering me the opportunity to appear here today. I am honored to be nominated by President Trump to serve as the Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

I would like to thank the members of the committee and their staff for the time they have spent with me prior to the hearing. Thank you too for the invitation to have my family join me here today. While my son Steele and younger daughter Caroline are away at summer camp, I am joined here by my wife Catherine and daughter Kate. Thank you for being here. I also want to thank my parents for supporting me—every day, I'm trying to live up to their example of serving their community and family.

I would also like to recognize my fellow nominees here on the panel. If confirmed, I particularly look forward to working with Ray Washburne, who has been nominated by the President to serve as OPIC's President and Chief Executive Officer.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Washburne is a successful businessman who has a long history of analyzing companies and investments for their potential. Mr. Washburne combines a keen business with a deep consideration of the impact that business will have on the broader community. His superb character has been shaped by a family that has served this Nation as Senators, Governors and congressmen, and also in-

cludes a Secretary of State and Ambassador. I expect these qualities will serve him well as President and Chief Executive Officer of OPIC.

If confirmed, I hope my government experience and business track record will complement his values, abilities and skills as OPIC seeks to help American businesses succeed in international markets.

Earlier in my career, I had the distinct privilege to serve as Assistant Secretary for market access and compliance in the International Trade Administration of the Department of Commerce. My job was to ensure that American companies could compete fairly in international markets. I worked with American businesses and foreign governments to develop an international business climate that created opportunities for American workers and spread American values. In that role, I am proud to have launched the Entrepreneurship Initiative, where small businesses could advocate to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade to open new markets for American goods and services. I also am proud to have led the federal government's first clean energy trade missions, where U.S. businesses developed lasting and profitable relationships in China and India. Prior to the International Trade Administration, I was the Director of the Department's Office of Policy and Strategic Planning, where I advised two Secretaries on economics and energy.

In business, I have helped companies grow and prosper, working across every corporate function from operations to strategy in a variety of roles including founder, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director. I have founded businesses such as an energy efficiency project finance firm and a startup incubator as well as assisting countless companies enter new markets. I have helped manage some of the world's most innovative financial services firms in a career that has spanned venture capital, private equity, hedge funds, and investment banking. Across these disciplines, I have learned to turn concepts into companies, analyze business prospects, structure projects, develop global supply chains, and evaluate microeconomic and macroeconomic developments. I believe these experiences have prepared me well to help guide the important work ahead.

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Almost 250 years ago, the Declaration of Independence boldly asserted that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were unalienable rights. I believe that these rights are immutable and eternal and underpin values that have spread prosperity and freedom at home and abroad. If I am confirmed, I would be honored to continue that tradition and help advocate for American opportunities in the years ahead.

Mr. Chairman, I welcome the chance to serve our country as the Executive Vice President of OPIC. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, the other members of the committee, the committee staff, and OPIC's talented and committed professionals to advance our common goals.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Mr. Washburne?

STATEMENT OF RAY WASHBURNE, OF TEXAS, TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

Mr. WASHBURNE. Thank you, Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. Thank you also to the members and staff for graciously giving their time to meet with me prior to today's hearing. I also would like to thank my Senator Cornyn for his kind words in support of my nomination and to my local Congressman, Pete Sessions, for his support.

It is a great privilege to address the committee as President Trump's nominee for President and Chief Executive Officer of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

I am joined this morning by my wife Heather sitting directly behind me. I would also like to introduce my three children, Hill, Andrew, and Margo. They are students of history, and today is an opportunity for them to see how our great democracy works.

My family has been involved politically and in public service with our republic since the 1850s. My forbearers served as mayors, Congressmen, Senators, governors, ambassadors, and Secretary of State that by example have given me a great desire to serve the American people. I have personally served on city and State boards and commissions. I have been fortunate to have traveled the world extensively and recently have spent a great deal of time in Africa. In particular, my wife, children, and I support an orphanage in Zambia and we have worked there the last two summers and have recently funded the construction of a new K through 12 school for 300 children in the middle of the most distressed areas of the Zambian capital, Lusaka. We continue to support many of the orphans there, and the experience has given me a deep insight into developmental issues in Africa.

I have been an entrepreneur for 37 years. I have paid my way through college at SMU by selling carpet door to door to students, as well as working in construction. I know the value of a dollar both in the hard work it takes to earn it and to not unjustly take risks to lose it. Since graduating from college, I have been involved in financial services, hospitality, manufacturing, and real estate development. In financial services, my experience has included being on the board and loan committee of several banks involving hundreds of millions of dollars of loans and credit facilities. In private equity, I have invested and served on boards of infrastructure, construction, and businesses involved in various equipment and transportation manufacturing. Businesses I have grown have allowed workers to provide for their families, develop their skills, and are cornerstones of the economic fabric of their communities. I believe entrepreneurship promotes values that are integral to the American dream.

In real estate, I have acquired and developed everything from office buildings, warehouses, shopping centers, and land developments. In hospitality, 26 years ago I was a co-founder of a small 10-table restaurant that has grown to over 2,000 employees. Last year we served over 6 million customers.

All these experiences have prepared me well to lead OPIC.

As a businessman, I have dealt with the challenges of running a company, meeting a payroll, and ensuring prudent financial management and risk mitigation. If confirmed, I will use my experience to make OPIC more efficient while being a good steward of the American taxpayers' dollar.

I have seen firsthand how American innovation and American capital can impact developing companies. America's entrepreneurial spirit can improve the well-being of people living in some of the world's most vulnerable countries. When an American business is willing to risk capital, it sends a signal to the rest of the world. It signals to the business community that markets are via-

ble. It signals that American businesses have faith in a country's rule of law and that a country is capable of upholding labor and environmental standards.

I am confident, if confirmed, I can guide OPIC to the path forward as determined by the Congress and the President.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you, the members of the committee, the committee staff, and my colleagues in the administration to ensure OPIC continues to prudently manage its portfolio while upholding American principles abroad. I will provide steady but adaptable leadership.

In the meantime, I welcome the chance to serve our country as President and CEO of OPIC and look forward to any questions you have today. Thank you.

[Mr. Washburne's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RAY WASHBURNE

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. Thank you also to the Members and staff for graciously giving their time to meet with me prior to today's hearing. I want to thank Senator Cornyn for his kind words in support for my nomination.

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My family has been involved politically and in public service with our Republic since the 1850's. My forbearers have served as Mayors, Congressmen, Senators, Governors, Ambassadors, and a Secretary of State. I have personally served on city and state boards and commissions. I been fortunate to have traveled the world extensively and recently spent a great deal of time in Africa. In particular, my wife, children, and I support an orphanage in Zambia and we have recently funded the construction of a new K-12 school for 300 children in the middle of the most distressed areas of the Zambian capital, Lusaka. We continue to support many of the orphans there, and the experience has given me deep insight into developmental issues in Africa.

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businesses have faith in a country's rule of law and that a country is capable of upholding labor and environmental standards.

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Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you, the other members of the committee, the committee staff, and my colleagues in the administration to ensure OPIC continues to prudently manage its portfolio, while upholding American principles abroad. I will provide steady, but adaptable, leadership.

In the meantime, I welcome the chance to serve our country as President and CEO of OPIC and look forward to any questions.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Washburne. It is broadly understood that public administration can be quite challenging, but I cannot imagine it would be any more challenging than selling carpet to college students door to door. [Laughter.]

Mr. WASHBURNE. Primarily in the girls' dorms. [Laughter.]

Senator YOUNG. We will move on. Ms. Currie?

STATEMENT OF KELLEY ECKELS CURRIE, OF GEORGIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, AND TO BE AN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Ms. CURRIE. I am not sure I can follow that.

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, distinguished members of the committee, thank you so much for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. I am honored to have this opportunity to serve my country and appreciate the confidence President Trump, Secretary Tillerson, and Ambassador Haley have shown in me.

I also want to thank my wonderful family, who is here today, particularly my husband Peter and my children, Mack and Sarah, for all of their support and encouragement; my mother Beth and my step-father, Gene Price, who have come today from Thomasville, Georgia; and my mother-in-law, Dottie Currie, who is very much looking forward to seeing more of her grandchildren in New York, if I am confirmed.

I also have to thank everyone at USUN and the other offices at the State Department and the White House and, of course, the great committee staff here at the Foreign Relations Committee who have helped to guide me through this process.

I also am glad to be here today with my fellow nominee Patrick and hope that we can move through this process together the rest of the way.

Finally, I have to give a shout out to my colleagues from Project 2049 who are here today in the audience.

When I was growing up in small-town south Georgia, enthusiastically participating in model U.N. programs in high school, I never dreamed that I would be asked to represent our great Nation at the U.N. Whether serving as the majority staff director of the congressional Human Rights Caucus or supporting democratic activists in closed societies during my time with the International Republican Institute, I have spent my career working to promote international human rights, human freedom, and human dignity.

Today, the universality of human rights is under attack from resurgent authoritarian regimes that are threatened by the very ideas of freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of religion. Regimes that rule through fear, coercion, and cooptation rather than the consent of the governed will always seek to limit basic freedoms both of their own citizens and of others when possible. Unfortunately, repressive regimes have too often found a safe harbor in the very international bodies that are meant to protect the most vulnerable. This must change if these bodies are to continue to enjoy the support of the American people. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Ambassador Haley and our colleagues at the State Department to advance the protection of human rights worldwide by refocusing the U.N. on the core missions that Senator Merkley spoke so eloquently of earlier.

Among the most critical aspects of America's efforts to elevate and defend human rights and human freedom is our longstanding focus on empowering women and girls. As a mother of a young girl, this issue is of deep personal importance to me. It is vital that girls have equal access to education, women are given equal opportunity in the workforce, and women and girls are protected from sexual violence and exploitation. If these efforts are to succeed, men must be partners in these initiatives. Many of the lead U.N. agencies that address these challenges fall under the ECOSOC umbrella. Unfortunately, overlapping mandates, bureaucratic competition, and other factors have made these U.N. mechanisms less effective than they could and should be. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our global partners to support the full economic and political participation of women and girls.

Another major focus of ECOSOC's work is the global effort to achieve the sustainable development goals. While recognizing the value of the framework established by the SDGs, it is important to realize that achieving a more stable, prosperous, and secure global community also requires tackling political issues implicated in systemic human rights abuses and conflict-related crises. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our partners to see how we can work within this framework while also addressing some of its gaps.

While there are certainly areas for improvement, ECOSOC is a critical forum for the United States to advocate America's human rights, development, and humanitarian values and interests. If confirmed, I will be honored to represent the United States at this important body and will work closely with our partners, as well as with Congress, to demonstrate American leadership in these areas.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to appear before the committee today, and I look forward to taking your questions.

[Ms. Currie's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KELLEY CURRIE

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. I am honored have this opportunity to serve my country, and appreciate the confidence President Trump, Secretary Tillerson, and Ambassador Haley have shown in me. I also want to thank my family, particularly my husband Peter and my children Mack and Sarah, for their support and encouragement; my mother Beth and my step-father Gene Price who have come today from Georgia; and

my mother-in-law Dottie Currie who is looking forward to seeing more of her grandchildren in New York. I also have to express my appreciation to everyone at USUN and the other offices at the State Department and the White House who helped guide me through the process.

When I was growing up in small-town South Georgia, enthusiastically participating in model United Nations programs in high school, I never dreamed I would be asked to represent our great nation at the United Nations. Whether serving as the majority staff director of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus or supporting democratic activists in closed societies during my time with the International Republican Institute, I have spent my career working to promote international human rights, human freedom and human dignity.. Today, the universality of human rights is under attack from resurgent authoritarian regimes that are threatened by the ideas of freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of religion. Regimes that rule through fear, coercion and cooptation rather than the consent of the governed will always seek to limit basic freedoms—both of their own citizens and of others, when possible. Unfortunately, repressive regimes have too often found a safe harbor in the very international bodies that are meant to protect the most vulnerable. This must change if these bodies are to continue to enjoy the support of the American people. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Ambassador Haley and our colleagues at the Department of State to advance the protection of human rights worldwide by refocusing the U.N. on its core mission of promoting genuine international peace and security.

Among the most critical aspects of America's efforts to elevate and defend human rights and human freedom is our long-standing focus on international efforts to empower women and girls. It is vital that girls have equal access to education, women are given equal opportunity in the workforce, and women and girls are protected from sexual violence and exploitation. If these efforts are to succeed, men must be partners in these initiatives. Many of the lead U.N. agencies that address these challenges fall under the ECOSOC umbrella. Unfortunately, overlapping mandates, bureaucratic competition and other factors have made these U.N. mechanisms less effective than they could and should be. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our global partners and the U.N. management to improve the functioning of those agencies that are intended to support the full economic and political participation of women and girls.

Another major focus of ECOSOC's work is the global effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Providing improved access to food, water, and health care are laudable and important goals, but without broad-based domestically-driven economic growth—not to mention peace, security and responsive, accountable governance—any short-term gains in these areas are likely to be illusory. While recognizing the value of the framework established by the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to realize that achieving a more stable, prosperous and secure global community also requires tackling political issues implicated in systemic human rights abuses and conflict-related crises. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our partners to see how we can work within this framework while also addressing some of the gaps on political reform.

While there are certainly areas for improvement, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations is a critical forum for the United States to advocate America's human rights, development, and humanitarian values and interests. If confirmed, I will be honored to represent the U.S. at this important body, and work closely with our partners, as well as with Congress, to demonstrate American leadership and to further American values and interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. I look forward to taking your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ms. Currie.

Colonel Murray?

STATEMENT OF JAY PATRICK MURRAY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR AND TO BE AN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. MURRAY. Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. I am grateful to President Trump, Secretary Tillerson, and Ambassador Haley for this opportunity.

I am also grateful to have some friends and family in the audience I would just like to introduce: my nephew Clay, his wife Heidi, and my sharp-as-a-tack great niece Rebecca sitting right here; also some good friends that are here today, Jackie Wolcott, Jim Gilmore, Sherry Simmons, David Norcross, and Laurie Michael. And, Kelley, I also appreciate the opportunity that we have had to go through this together and, if we are confirmed, to work side by side at the United Nations.

It was the honor of my life to serve my country in uniform for almost 25 years. And while I have retired from the Army, that solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution has no expiration date. If confirmed, I pledge I will take those same values to the United Nations where I will work tirelessly to defend American national interests and protect our sovereignty.

Upon its creation after World War II, the United Nations was seen as a mechanism for peace and stability around the world, and since that time, we have seen the United Nations provide lifesaving food and medicine globally, help the weak and the most vulnerable, and send peacekeepers into some of the most dangerous and volatile corners of the world.

However, the U.N. also retains a culture of mismanagement, inefficiency, and too often a lack of accountability. An organization that ignores the activities of grave human rights abusers while repeatedly and unfairly assailing one of our greatest allies Israel. As we look around the world, it is clear that the United Nations Security Council leaves a great deal to be desired in fulfilling its mandate to maintain international peace and security. So there is certainly much work to be done, and American leadership and American values at the United Nations will be essential as we move forward.

I am grateful for Ambassador Haley's leadership at the United Nations pressing for vital reforms, insisting on the fair treatment of Israel, and defending global freedoms. We face a myriad of global challenges, including a devastating famine across Africa and Yemen, the growing threat of North Korea, and the ongoing conflict in Syria. Currently there are some 100,000 peacekeepers deployed around the world, including in some very volatile places such as Mali, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic. The American taxpayer foots 29 percent of that bill, making our contribution far and away the largest of any United Nations member state. And while we appreciate the vital role of those peacekeepers, the

scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse threatens to undermine that role and permanently damage the reputation of the U.N.'s blue helmets. Indeed, when peacekeepers prey upon the very people they are ostensibly there to protect, it is not only vile and wrong, but the viability of the peacekeeping operation itself is greatly diminished. If confirmed, I will fight to ensure that the U.N. finally holds those responsible, both the individuals and the troop-contributing countries, publicly to account and work to improve training efforts at home and whistleblower protections in the field.

Additionally, based upon my previous experience, I believe the Security Council must take a goal-oriented approach to peacekeeping. Instead of allowing peacekeeping operations to perpetuate for decades, I think we should establish mandates with clear objectives and hold both the leadership and the host parties responsible for accomplishing those objectives so that we can declare victory and go home. We owe that not only to the troops in the field and the citizens that they are there to protect but also to the American taxpayer.

I have a strong background of military, political, and diplomatic experience. Army Foreign Area Officers have long been described as America's soldier statesmen. I proudly served as a Foreign Area Officer at numerous embassies around the world and at the Department of State in the Bureau of Political Military Affairs and later at the U.S. mission to the United Nations. I participated in frequent Security Council deliberations pertaining to international peace and security, peacekeeping operations, and other issues. If confirmed, I will be involved with these and other similar issues at the United Nations.

I am grateful for Ambassador Haley's leadership to the U.N., and once again, I am honored to be considered for this post, for the opportunity to work under her leadership. I believe we are at a tipping point where the injection of strong American leadership and values can make a powerful, positive difference. A secure, stable world is decidedly in America's national interest.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee today, and I look forward to your questions.

[Mr. Murray's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAY PATRICK MURRAY

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. I am grateful to President Trump, Secretary Tillerson, and Ambassador Haley for this opportunity.

It was the honor of my life to serve my country in uniform for almost twenty-five years. While I've retired from the Army, that solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution has no expiration date. If confirmed, I pledge to take those same values to the United Nations, where I will work diligently to defend American national interests and protect our sovereignty.

Upon its creation after World War II, the United Nations was seen as a mechanism for peace and stability around the world. Since that time, we've seen the United Nations provide lifesaving food and medicine globally, help the weak and most vulnerable, and send peacekeeping troops into some of the most dangerous corners of the world. However, the U.N. also retains a culture of mismanagement, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability. An organization that ignores the activities of grave human rights abusers while repeatedly and unfairly assailing one of our

greatest allies, Israel. And as we look around the world, it is clear that the United Nations Security Council leaves much to be desired in fulfilling its mandate to maintain international peace and security. So there is certainly much work to be done, and American leadership and values at the United Nations will be essential moving forward.

I am grateful for Ambassador Haley's leadership at the United Nations, pressing for vital reforms, insisting on fair treatment of Israel, and defending global freedoms. We face myriad global challenges, including a devastating famine across Africa and Yemen, the growing threat of North Korea, and the ongoing conflict in Syria. Currently there are some 100,000 U.N. peacekeepers deployed around the world, including in volatile places like Mali, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic. The American taxpayer foots 29 percent of that bill, making ours far and away the largest contributing nation. And while we appreciate the vital role of peacekeepers, the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse threatens to undermine that role and permanently damage the reputation of the U.N.'s blue helmets. Indeed, when peacekeepers prey upon the very people they are ostensibly there to protect, it is not only vile and wrong, but the viability of the peacekeeping operation is greatly diminished. If confirmed, I will fight to ensure that the U.N. finally holds those responsible, both the individuals and the troop contributing countries, publicly to account, and work to improve training efforts at home and whistleblower protections in the field. This must be stopped.

Additionally, based on my previous experience I believe the Security Council must take a goal-oriented approach to peacekeeping. Instead of allowing peacekeeping operations to perpetuate for decades, we should establish mandates with clear objectives, and hold both the leadership and the host parties responsible for accomplishing those objectives so that we candeclare victory and go home. We owe that not only to the troops in the field and the citizens they are there to protect, but also to the American taxpayer.

I have a strong background of military, political and diplomatic experience. Army Foreign Area Officers have long been described as America's "Soldier-Statesmen." I proudly served as a Foreign Area Officer at numerous embassies around the world, at the Department of State in the Bureau of Political Military Affairs, and later at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations as the American Military Representative to the United Nations Military Staff Committee. I participated in frequent U.N. Security Council deliberations pertaining to international peace and security, Peacekeeping Operations, and other issues. If confirmed, I will be involved with these, and other similar issues at USUN.I am grateful for Ambassador Haley's leadership at the United Nations, and once again, I am honored to be considered for this post, and for the opportunity to work under her leadership. I believe we are at a tipping point, where the injection of strong American leadership and values can make a powerful, positive difference, not only in an institution with so many shortfalls yet so much promise, but also for those most vulnerable around the world. A secure, stable world is decidedly in America's national interest.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee today. I look forward to taking your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Murray.

Before I proceed, I would just like to acknowledge the presence of Governor Jim Gilmore in the audience. I did not see you earlier, sir. Thank you for your service.

We are going to proceed with questions, 7-minute rounds, and I will begin with Ms. Currie.

Ms. Currie, in your prepared statement, you note that a major role of the United Nations Economic and Social Council is the global effort to achieve the sustainable development goals. Some of these 17 goals include zero hunger and clean water and sanitation. When I consider these worthy goals, I cannot help but think of the urgent crisis in Yemen. What is your assessment of the situation in Yemen, Ms. Currie?

Ms. CURRIE. Thank you for asking about the famine and the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and for your excellent work with Senator Cardin introducing your resolution on the four famines and all the attention that you have brought to the issue of the four famines. These complex humanitarian disasters, all of which are man-

made, have been almost invisible despite their huge proportions. It is quite amazing that millions of people are at risk of starvation, imminent risk of starvation, and the world has barely paid attention to it.

The United States, through the generosity of the Congress, has supported a $1 billion contribution to the UNOCHA appeal of $5.6 billion, but we have been, I think, disappointed by the lack of participation by other partners and hope to see that stepped up.

In Yemen, this is one of the most complex of the four because of the presence of different groups that are fighting and the involvement of external actors, including the United States and the Saudis. So there is a huge conflict element obviously here. If confirmed, this is going to be a top priority, working on not only Yemen but the other three famine or near-famine states and working very closely with my colleague, if he is confirmed with me, to coordinate both the kinetic aspects of responding to these disasters, as well as the humanitarian.

Senator YOUNG. So continuing with Yemen, let us consider the sustainable development goal of zero hunger. According to the U.N., there are 6.8 million people in Yemen on the brink of starvation. These people are not worried about sustainable development goals a decade from now. Of course, they are worried about where their next meal is going to come from, where their family's next meal is going to come from, their friends', and so forth.

Consider the sustainable development goal of clean water and sanitation. Due in part to the lack of both of these, it is estimated that about 300,000 people in Yemen have now been infected with cholera, with more than 1,700 deaths. The scale of this crisis demands action not fatalism, and it sounds as though you have an action orientation. So that is fantastic.

You spoke to the lack of participation of partners vis—vis this crisis. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Yemen 2017 humanitarian response plan is only 33 percent funded. We still need $1.4 billion.

Now, there are a number of countries, a number of partners that have nominally participated. They have committed to give more funds to Yemen to help address this crisis. They have committed to take action with great fanfare, and yet the money is still slow in arriving.

If confirmed, Ms. Currie, will you look at the situation in Yemen and consider what countries that you can press to fulfill their financial and moral obligations in Yemen?

Ms. CURRIE. Absolutely, Senator Young. If confirmed, this will, as I said, be one of the top priorities for the ECOSOC office. It already is a major priority of the ECOSOC team in New York.

The unwillingness or inability of various actors to constrain their own forces that are harassing and making it impossible to deliver humanitarian assistance is one of the key factors. So, again, working with my colleague in Special Political Affairs, we have to tackle all of this. As you note, this a manmade famine. This is a famine that results from a conflict and not a natural disaster or weather event. And, therefore, most of the routes to resolving this famine lie in the political sector and dealing with the political crisis in Yemen.

Senator YOUNG. So I do not want to linger on Yemen because I want to have enough time to pivot to OPIC briefly. But there is another concrete action you can take. It is something I have been working on and it pertains to U.S.-funded cranes. These are cranes that are needed in the major port of Hodeidah in Yemen to offload food and medical supplies and help mitigate, help stanch this ever-growing humanitarian disaster. And there are things, as I see it, that can be done.

If confirmed, will you look at this situation regarding the cranes working with our office and others and consider pressing the Saudi Government at the U.N. to permit delivery of these cranes?

Ms. CURRIE. Absolutely, I pledge to do that, if confirmed.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Mr. Washburne and Mr. Bohigian, thanks for meeting with me in the office yesterday. Let me ask the question that may be on the minds of multiple members.

In its fiscal year 2018 budget request, the Trump administration has proposed the elimination of OPIC. At the same time, you both have been nominated to lead OPIC. Can you concisely, in light of this uncertainty, indicate how you view your nomination and the role you would play at OPIC? Mr. Washburne?

Mr. WASHBURNE. Thank you, Chairman. That is the elephant in the room question. I am a builder and creator of jobs, and the President and his team know that I am a builder. I am not someone to sit there and look at an organization and wind down.

But in light of that, the mission of OPIC is something that I believe in. I feel like I have got the right experience to grow it and continue to take its mission forward. But given the light that the President has proposed, I am willing to work with the committee and the administration in any way that you dictate us to go. OPIC currently has $22 billion in projects in 162 countries. So to shut it down and flip a switch just would not be practical to do. And so, if confirmed, I look forward to growing it and proving to the committee, Congress, and the administration that OPIC is a valuable entity to go forward with.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I for one am encouraged by that response. And you rightly point out that someone would still be needed to manage the existing portfolio.

Mr. Bohigian, anything to add to that, sir?

Mr. BOHIGIAN. Thank you for that excellent question and the excellent answer.

I would just say that President's budget, obviously, is the start of the process, and if confirmed, Mr. Washburne and I look forward to being part of the conversation that Congress and the administration will have in the months ahead.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Mr. Merkley?

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Murray, as you know, the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs plays an important role in negotiating U.N. Security Council resolutions. Few tasks in diplomacy are more difficult than negotiating resolutions on critical peace and security issues with 14 other council members. It is made all the more difficult by the veto power enjoyed by four other members, including

two, China and Russia, that are often at odds with our values. If confirmed, how do you intend to rally support at the council for U.S. interests?

Mr. MURRAY. Thank you for that question, Senator Merkley.

That is one of the huge challenges with the Security Council, and we have seen it play out in places like Syria where Russia has become so isolated within the Security Council and the world when it comes to resolution after resolution after resolution that they have vetoed. And that is part of the way the Security Council is set up. It requires us to have extensive conversations and deliberations before we put forward a resolution, and also, I think this is somewhere where we can get help from the United States Senate, as well as the administration, in dealing directly with Russia, in this case, or when it comes to North Korea, with China.

Senator MERKLEY. So it is a very complex and difficult task, and if you are in this position, I wish you well in representing the United States.

Let me turn to a different question. When we met before, you expressed doubt on whether human activities are causing climate disruption. Let us set that aside. Let us just acknowledge that 2016 was warmer than 2015 was warmer than 2014, whether or not it was caused by human activities. Many national security experts believe that this climate disruption is a threat multiplier leading to increased instability around the world as societies clash over resources. Do you share that view of many national security experts? And your thoughts on how to address that issue in the context of the United Nations.

Mr. MURRAY. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and the discussion that we had in your office.

As Ambassador Haley has said, climate change needs to have a role, a position at the table, and when we are discussing these important issues, that we should make sure that is a metric that we include, and I agree with that.

Senator MERKLEY. Let me turn to the challenge of our peacekeeping missions, which you have mentioned would be an important responsibility. The U.N. peacekeeping operations are tasked with increasingly complex mandates, and some, like MINUSMA in Mali, operate in places where there is no peace to keep. Are U.N. peacekeeping forces the right tool to address complex security situations like those present in Mali?

Mr. MURRAY. Mali is the most dangerous peacekeeping operation. We have had, I believe, 77 peacekeepers killed to date. And you are right. The peace is not so much there to keep.

This is where I believe the Security Council has to play an important role when they start to look at a peacekeeping operation. Obviously, you want to get somebody in there for humanitarian reasons and to protect the most vulnerable, and at the same time, if you design a mandate that oversteps its bounds, then you are setting a peacekeeping operation up to fail. And I believe that is incumbent upon the Security Council to plan that carefully and then to resource it properly.

One of the foundations that goes back to the founding of the U.N., when you put in a peacekeeping operation, the host parties or the host country needs to be in agreement with that. It is one

of the problems we are having in southern Sudan, or South Sudan now, is we have a government that is actually hindering this process. I traveled to southern Sudan with the Security Council a few years back, also to Darfur where we see the same issues with the host country government actually being a hindrance. And so those are some things that the Security Council needs to take very seriously and balance across from the need to protect the most vulnerable and to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Senator MERKLEY. So often after a peacekeeping mission begins, facts on the ground can change. Are there any peacekeeping missions that you would put forward as examples of ones that should be shut down?

Mr. MURRAY. Currently we are up to 15 peacekeeping operations. Now we recently shut down successfully the Ivory Coast and Liberia, which if it continues to plane as it is, I think will be another successful mission when that closes down in March of 2018.

So I think the Security Council has the responsibility to look at the mandates that come up either biannually or annually. That is when we should have a lot more flexibility to tweak these peacekeeping operations, to tweak the mandates, and also to hold the leadership, as well as the troop-contributing countries, responsible to fulfill their mandate. As I mentioned in my testimony, it would be great to have a political solution so that we can accomplish that, as appears to be the case in Liberia, for example, and then we can shut that peacekeeping operation down, maybe transition it into a political operation to continue with some institution building and then that frees up troop-contributing countries and troops to go elsewhere such as Mali where right now—the size of Texas—we have only about 10,000 or 11,000 peacekeepers. So those are the balances and the criteria I think that the Security Council needs to look at when it comes to peacekeeping operations.

Senator MERKLEY. You mentioned the mission in South Sudan, UNMISS. And one of the things that developed there is that people were fleeing violence and tens of thousands descended on the compounds in Juba seeking shelter and as fighting spread outside the capital, several other UNMISS bases became de facto displacement camps referred to as protection of civilians sites. And currently UNMISS is providing physical protection to more than 200,000 civilians at six sites around the country.

It raises a whole host of questions about how the mission has been transformed. But do you support this role of the U.N. in providing this protection to these civilians, and is this a strategy or this tool, the protection of civilians, that should perhaps be used elsewhere?

Mr. MURRAY. That is a very good and a very difficult question, Senator Merkley.

You look at all of those POCs, as you pointed out, where there are some almost a quarter of a million citizens being protected by peacekeepers. I do not want to pull them out because that makes those citizens vulnerable. That makes the most vulnerable at risk. At the same time, I think it is important to look at what we do at the outset with a mandate, and I think a lot more pressure is needed on the leadership and the disparate parties down in South Sudan in order to mitigate these threats to the individuals, to

carve out a political solution, and then move toward implementing that solution.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Murray.

Senator Isakson?

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like for the record to reflect that while I was a little bit late to the committee, I was right on time to hear Ms. Currie speak. She is from Thomasville, Georgia. I think I met her in 1990 in the Thomasville Rose Parade in Thomas County, Georgia when I was running for Governor of Georgia, and she was a senior at the University of Georgia. Is that not right?

Ms. CURRIE. Actually we met in Professor Charles Bullock's class in 1990 when you were running for Governor, and you came and spoke. I was not in the Rose Parade. I was busy at school, but yes, we did meet in 1990.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, I do not forget a pretty face, and I knew we had met somewhere. And when you run for Governor of Georgia, you always start in Thomasville at the Rose Parade and work your way up to Atlanta by the end of the race.

But we are very proud to have you nominated and we are glad to have you here. We are glad to have all of you here. And I am going to have a question for you in just a minute.

Mr. Murray, I really appreciate your answer in response on the question about should we be involved in peacekeeping missions and your reflection on the issues of those 15 that we currently have in the world. Is that right?

Mr. MURRAY. Yes, Senator, 15.

Senator ISAKSON. I was the second Member of Congress to ever go to Darfur, and if any of you have ever been to Darfur, you thank God there is a peacekeeping mission of the United Nations because if they were not there with mostly South Korean troops and a couple other smaller countries like that, countries like the United States would be implored because of our social conscience to do it or take on that effort in one way or another. So while the U.N. is problematic in a number of ways in things that it does, it can be central to solve problems that seem insolvable. And I appreciate your attitude towards the peacekeeping missions. I hope you will work to make them as accountable as possible. But we cannot turn our back on the least fortunate in this world, those that are as oppressed as the people in Darfur because somebody somehow has got to come to their aid. And I would like any comments you might have on that.

Mr. MURRAY. Well, thank you very much for that, Senator. I spent some time in Darfur as well, and I completely concur with your assessment. When you have a group called Janjaweed there, which translates into "devils on horseback," preying on the local populace, this is why we have a United Nations. And I think they have been pretty effective.

Also, one of the reasons I like Darfur, as well as what is going on in Somalia, is our evolving ability to work with regional groups. The Darfur peacekeeping operation, Senator, as you know, is a hybrid with the African Union, and we have actually drawn down some of the U.N. troops because we built up those African Union

troops. The same with what is going on in Somalia with the fight against terrorist groups there like Al Shabaab.

So these are the kind of things that are exciting to me, if I am confirmed, that we can work with regional groups, as well as evolve peacekeeping and how we look at it in the Security Council with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in order to make it more efficient, more nimble and maybe save a few taxpayer dollars at the same time.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, the U.N. is not a very popular institution in Georgia, and a lot of people think we waste a lot of money sending it to the U.N. But if you have ever seen the role they play in these peacekeeping missions, as you mentioned in South Sudan, with the conference peace agreement where we tried to make a difference there, which obviously fell apart in large measure, but you would appreciate the work that they do for the world. And one of these days, this effort is going to materialize into friends of the United States, friends of peace and liberty, not the type of evil things that are going on in Africa right now.

Ms. Currie, you are an honor graduate of the University of Georgia, magna cum laude or cum laude, one of the two.

Ms. CURRIE. Just cum laude.

Senator ISAKSON. Neither one of which I achieved.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Laude.

Ms. CURRIE. Just cum laude, sir. Thank you.

Senator ISAKSON. After leaving the University of Georgia, I note she had a quick stint on Hilton Head Island, which everybody ought to go through once in their life, to earn a living waiting on tables. But from there you went straight to Washington and went straight where?

Ms. CURRIE. I came to work on the Hill, sir, and I worked for my home State Congressman from Georgia, Sanford Bishop, for a year and then went to work for a great Member of Congress, who I had interned with, John Porter in the House.

Senator ISAKSON. Yes. Sanford is a great Representative from our State, and John Porter is one of the finest people you would ever want to meet and did so much good in the arena that you are going to be working in so much in terms of the United Nations.

Ms. CURRIE. I could not agree with you more, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. With regard to the United Nations, my plea to all of you is to help elevate the influence and the role of the United States in the operation of the United Nations. Every time they do good things, they turn around and appoint somebody like Iran the head of the Human Relations Council or Committee and do something that is just unfathomable consideration-wise. But it is a valuable tool for us.

I know in OPIC and the number of investments that the United States makes around the world where we can use the economic power of the United States and invest in things that create jobs and opportunity for people in oppressed countries and depressed communities, then we are going to help create more and more friends around the world.

Lastly, from time to time, there is a critical vote that makes a large difference in which way the body politic goes in the world today. One of those big issues in the next few years ahead is going

to be the Palestinian issue, which raises its head oftentimes in the United Nations. As you interact with the countries you will be interacting with particularly, Mr. Murray, some of the things you have talked about in terms of those countries, their votes are going to be critical to us to help us influence the direction of the U.N. in terms of which way we go in terms of Palestinian recognition or no recognition thereof or something in between. So I urge you to keep in mind the perspective of not just your job for what it is at ECOSOC, but also the job to win more friends and influence more of our enemies on the U.N. stage so that when they go to vote, they will vote with a positive image of the United States of America and what we are trying to accomplish through the U.N. rather than be an obstacle for us on the issues we stand for like Israel and other things like that.

So I wish you the best. I am proud of your nomination. We are glad to have another Georgian come in. If I can ever help you, let me know.

Ms. CURRIE. Thank you so much, Senator Isakson. It is a great honor to have your support, and I really appreciate your kind words especially about Thomasville, my wonderful hometown. I think that actually may have been my sister Emily who was in the Rose Parade that year. I will have to ask my mom. She is back here. So maybe she can clarify all that.

But, yes, the issues that you raise are critically important for the work that we will be doing. And I take your message very much to heart and, if confirmed, look forward to working with you and the rest of the committee members to implement these things.

Senator ISAKSON. Congratulations to all of you and best wishes.

Senator YOUNG. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all very much for your willingness to serve this country.

Mr. Washburne, I was encouraged by your comments about taking over at OPIC with the idea of growing the agency and being more productive because I was very distressed when I saw the budget proposal from this administration that would phase out OPIC, an organization that I believe has been very important to businesses throughout the country. In New Hampshire, we have about $115 million in projects that have helped small businesses in our State, and it has been very important.

So can you share with us whether you have any understanding with the administration about what your role will be as the head of OPIC? Was there a request from the administration when they nominated you for this position that you would phase out the agency as President?

Mr. WASHBURNE. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

No, there was never any specific discussion at all about phasing the agency out. Again, I run a private business in Dallas. I got a great life. I do not need to come up here and shut something down. I am a builder and a grower. And if I thought I was coming up here just to melt something away, I would melt in Dallas in the heat today. [Laughter.]

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, again, I am encouraged to hear that.

You know, one of my favorite statistics is about the number. We have only about 1 percent of small and medium-sized businesses who do business overseas, and yet large businesses have that opportunity every day. And one of the challenges I believe we have is to help those small businesses, in particular, through organizations like OPIC, through the EXIM Bank. They have been so important to success for smaller and medium-sized businesses in successfully trading overseas. And so I hope that you will continue that role as the head of OPIC and with Mr. Bohigian that the two of you will preside over an expansion of OPIC in a way that helps small businesses in this country create jobs because that is our goal.

I wanted to ask you, Ms. Currie. I was very pleased to see your statement about the importance of empowering women, something that I think is absolutely critical, and as we look at how do we raise the economic prosperity of countries around the world, we know that empowering women is a very important piece of that, that women tend to give back more not just to their families but to their communities and that that is important in developing economic opportunities.

One of the areas where I think it is very important to help empower women is—where the U.N. has been very important is through UNFPA because they have provided women access to the ability to determine their—to plan their families and that affects everything from domestic violence to what kind of job opportunities they get in the future to their education.

So can you tell me whether you think we should continue to support UNFPA in funding?

Ms. CURRIE. Thank you for that question, Senator Shaheen.

As you know, according to the Kemp-Kasten determination that the Department made, they are rescinding $32 million in funding to UNFPA. And those funds will be redistributed through global health programs by USAID so that there will not be breaks in service and that women will continue to have access to important family planning and other care that they need to manage their lives, birth spacing, and all of the key issues that you raise that make it possible for women to engage economically, politically, and to fully participate in the lives of their countries.

If confirmed, I look forward to participating in the discussion in the next fiscal year and looking at the Kemp-Kasten determination and whether UNFPA has made the kinds of reforms that will allows us to participate in their work again. And that is all I can offer to do at this point.

Senator SHAHEEN. The experts that I have talked to have suggested that Kemp-Kasten is not an issue with UNFPA, that that is a red herring and that in fact the ability to distribute those dollars through other organizations to be as effective is really not going to achieve the same outcomes. Do you think we are going to be able to be as effective by distributing dollars through those other organizations?

Ms. CURRIE. Well, as you know, I was not part of the discussion or the decision. So I would have to refer you back to the State Department and the people who did make that determination, what

the basis for their determination that UNFPA was in violation of the Kemp-Kasten provisions.

And I think that USAID has excellent partners in women's health and global health that they can utilize, and they are working very hard. And I would refer you to them about how they plan to continue to provide these services.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I look forward to seeing your ongoing efforts to continue to work to empower women because I think that is a critical piece of what we need to do and what we need to do if we are going to provide economic opportunities around the world.

Mr. Murray, I am very pleased to hear your comments about the importance of peacekeeping missions. This committee had a chance to meet with Secretary-General Gutierrez not too long ago where he talked about the importance of reforming the peacekeeping operations. And I know he is working very closely with Ambassador Haley to try and do that.

But one of the concerns I have is that one proposal to try and reform peacekeeping would be to decrease the resources that are available. Is that something that you believe is important as we look at all of the challenges we have around the world, that cutting off their money is a way to reform them?

Mr. MURRAY. I appreciate that question, Senator.

In terms of the budget with peacekeeping operations, what we have seen since Ambassador Haley has arrived at the United Nations as our Permanent Representative, they have negotiated a new budget, and it is $500 million less than it was last year. And part of that comes from some cost savings, a couple of things that we have already mentioned such as the hybrid operation in Darfur where the African Union is taking a larger role, enabling us to pull some U.N. troops out, saving money there, closing down the operation in Ivory Coast, transitioning the operation in Haiti from a peacekeeping operation into something that is more institution building, especially with regard to rule of law and having more police forces there than troops. And finally Liberia, which I alluded to earlier, is on a glide path to close in March of next year after they hopefully go through some elections which, by the way, if they have successful elections, this is the first time since 1944 that Liberia will have had a peaceful transition of power. So those are the kinds of cost savings, Senator, that I think that we should look for, and that is all under the rubric, as I was mentioning earlier, about goal-oriented peacekeeping with a defined political objective that we can achieve and then declare victory and go home.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Murray.

Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you very much, Senator Young, Senator Merkley, for convening this hearing and to our four nominees before us today for your willingness to serve or continue serving our Nation. I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with several of you before today's hearing.

I support the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. I had the same question that Senator Shaheen did about the tension between the administration's budget proposal and the intentions of Mr. Washburne and Mr. Bohigian. And I was pleased to hear your

answer, and I was encouraged by our private conversation before this and by your opening statement and by the impressive dedication that you and your family have shown to engaging personally in the work of building in the developing world.

More and more of the money that is making a difference in the developing world comes from private sector sources. And so I think having at the helm folks in OPIC who understand the importance of development finance and the disciplines of the private sector could be a real contribution.

There is also a huge demand for more development financing, and our competitors in Asia and in Europe recognize that. And so the developing nations of Africa, Latin America, and Asia have increasingly looked to Chinese and European sources rather than American because ours are so limited. I am hopeful that we will work together in a bipartisan way on this committee not to reduce the scope and capability of OPIC but to actually expand it and to strengthen it. I hope to see us take up legislation to reform and improve the way that the United States Government pursues development finance, and I am pleased we had an opportunity to discuss those ideas. So let me jump into that, if I might.

Mr. Washburne, can you just explain to me and to critics not here I think today the value of OPIC and why it returns value, not just money to the Treasury, but value to the American people and whether you believe that it crowds out activity in the private sector as some critics of OPIC have suggested?

Mr. WASHBURNE. Thank you, Senator Coons, and thank you for your time and our discussions last week.

As we discussed in the meeting, OPIC has a very unique—it is not crowding out people in other countries. We are actually crowing in. And what I mean by that is we are going to countries where banks will not go, companies will not go. Companies do have to put a substantial amount of risk capital in place which sitting on loan committees of banks, I always like to see. I never like to see someone to get 100 percent loans. They have got risk capital in place. But before someone can acquire a loan guarantee, political risk insurance, they have to prove—it is a very, very stringent underwriting process that you have to go through at OPIC to show that you cannot get money from any other source or insurance product from anywhere else.

We currently have $22 billion out. Only $4 billion of that is in insurance. And so a lot of the criticisms come in the political risk insurance. But there are some countries you just cannot get insurance in at all, and without OPIC there to do it to protect American interests, there would be no way we could go in there and do business.

Senator COONS. I think as you demonstrated, you know by time spent in Lusaka and elsewhere in the developing world, that in countries like that, if we want there to be an American private sector footprint, without OPIC it is not going to happen. I agree with you.

I would be interested in hearing from both of you, if I might, what reforms to OPIC you would pursue, if confirmed, to make it more effective, how you plan to convince other administration officials of OPIC's positive and constructive role in mobilizing private

sector development, and what work you might want to do with this committee to help advance those reforms or improvements.

Mr. BOHIGIAN. Thank you, Senator, for that opportunity.

I believe OPIC represents the best in American values, and the administration has opened a process whereby we can reexamine across the Government how to reform agencies such as OPIC. So I know Mr. Washburne and I look forward to being part of that discussion.

Additional authorities for OPIC could include what counterparts in development finance institutions overseas have such as direct equity investments, which is something that the development community in the United States has long looked for to be able to promote American jobs here, as well as American values abroad. When you look at, as you mentioned earlier, our European and Chinese counterparts who are truly investing trillions of dollars in these sort of efforts, America is ready for a 21st century OPIC.

Beyond that, critics have called OPIC market-distorting, and we believe that over the last 15 years, many of those objections have been answered, whereas Mr. Mosbacher, who is here in attendance today as a former President of OPIC, Mr. Watson, as well as Elizabeth Littlefield, have worked with this committee and Congress to ensure that at a transactional level, as Mr. Washburne stated, each and every transaction is looked at for any sort of market distortion, including a certification on the insurance side, that this business will not distort the market. That is true through the Office of Investment Policy, through the President's office, through the board, and through oversight through committees such as this.

In addition, critics have also said that we need to look at the ability for having additional tools throughout reorganizing the U.S. Government. That could include working with the Millennium Challenge Corporation more closely, USAID more closely, and certainly through coordination with the board of OPIC in the interagency process.

So I think this conversation that this committee has led in conjunction with the President's budget proposal truly allows OPIC the chance to begin a conversation about what development finance should look like in the 21st century. And if confirmed, I welcome that conversation.

Senator COONS. Well, I am optimistic that both of you will find in your engagement with OPIC that there is a thorough and rigorous review process, a motivated and capable staff, and that this is a role that we should be working together to strengthen so that we can be a more effective partner in development around the world, and I look forward to doing that with both of you.

I have additional questions for the other two witnesses, but my time is up and I will either submit them for the record or wait for a second round. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thanks to all. Congratulations to all for your appointments—or your nominations. We would not presume for your nominations but each of you have a significant public service record.

I am going to pretty much focus on the OPIC question too. There is an old line that everything that needs to be said has been said, but everybody who needs to say it has not said it yet. And I want to emphasize the importance of OPIC in Virginia.

Before I do, I want to acknowledge one of my predecessors as Governor of Virginia. Governor Gilmore is here. And I think, Mr. Chair, you acknowledged him too, a fine public servant. I just want to recognize him.

OPIC really helps a lot of Virginia businesses. I do not get lobbied from Virginia businesses saying this is a bad thing. It should be reduced. It should be shut down. I know there are some criticisms in the ether about OPIC, but this is not what I am hearing from Virginia businesses. What I am hearing about OPIC and similar agencies like the EXIM Bank is, frankly, we need more support, and this is really critical to enabling private sector businesses in America to succeed. So I am confused with the budgetary proposal.

First, let me just make sure I am right about this. The quote from the President's budget on this is that they want to engage in activities to, quote, initiate orderly wind-down activities. And there is money allocated in the 2018 budget proposal, $60.8 million to, quote, initiate orderly wind-down activities.

My understanding is that OPIC is not a drain on the general fund budget, but OPIC actually returns money to the general fund budget. Am I correct about that?

Mr. WASHBURNE. Yes, sir, approximately $300 million a year.

Senator KAINE. $300 million. $2.3 billion has generated for the federal budget in the last 6 years. I mean, this is returning dollars.

The pronunciation of your name, sir.

Mr. BOHIGIAN. Bohigian. It took me 5 years to learn.

Senator KAINE. You were talking about sort of critics' arguments about OPIC. Have either of you had discussions with the administration? What did they say about the reason that they want to wind down OPIC?

Mr. BOHIGIAN. I think within the administration there is a range of opinions that you would expect from any executive branch. Certainly, if confirmed, we look forward to continuing those conversations with executive branch officials. But I think if you look at the OPIC budget page in particular, they have left open the opportunity to reform OPIC. They say that over almost 10 years OPIC has not had the chance of reauthorization, which has left it open to critics who are looking for reform. So I think it is a first step in putting OPIC on a 21st century footing.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Washburne?

Mr. WASHBURNE. As you mentioned, with this committee and also with Congress, in our meetings with several members around this table, we hear the same thing back. You know, 75 percent of OPIC's loans are to small businesses. Less than 8 percent is to Fortune 500 companies. It has less than a 1 percent loan loss. I mean, when you look at that——

Senator KAINE. Which any private lender would just kill for that. Would they not? I mean, it is fantastic.

Mr. WASHBURNE [continuing]. It has staff of around 250 people. It is an amazing group they put together. They have been in business since 1971. It is really a shining example for what government

could be. And that is why I am excited about going in. I do not have to reform it from the standpoint of something that has issues.

The reform we want to bring in is more of bringing it into the 21st century on financing mechanisms because when it was set up originally, it was a leftover after the Marshall Plan and USAID and it was formed on its own. Really more than anything else it was a political risk insurance facility to have for people to go into developing countries where no one would go into.

Well, the way businesses evolve today, people look at the expertise of OPIC to go into some third world countries like, as I mentioned earlier, Zambia which we know well. American businesses are not going to go in there. And this is a way to have a soft diplomacy. It is a great foreign policy tool for the U.S. Government, and we think it is something that we are excited to get in and try to find some other financing vehicles we can put with the toolbox we have and expand its scope.

Senator KAINE. I think everybody on this committee is very familiar with arguments about this sector is crowding out my sector. We all are in tug of wars between banks and credit unions, for example. They are crowding me out. No, they are crowding me out. We just do not hear this about OPIC. We are not hearing from private sector financial institutions or others that OPIC is blocking other private sector entities from being involved. So I am puzzled about this one, but I am heartened by your discussion that comments with the administration suggest an openness to reform.

This is part of a bigger pattern. We are grappling, for example, with an overall State Department, USAID budget that is dramatically reduced. And when we have talked to the Secretary of State about it, I would have felt really good if he had said we need to reform how we spend. We can spend more effectively. Instead, what we are being told is we cannot spend that money anyway. I know what other nations are doing around the world in terms of trying to build relationships, invest, find allies, find trade. I know what they are spending. And so when there is an attitude that, well, we do not need these agencies, it causes me great concern.

So I am heartened by your discussion that maybe, you know, 10 years after the last reauthorization, it is time to think about reforms that can make the dollars that we do spend on OPIC, the effort that we pay to OPIC even more productive.

And with that, I am going to cede the rest of my time. My colleagues and I—we would love to work together with you on reform to make OPIC even more effective. But I know this. Virginia businesses will consider it a real loss to them. Just to extend beyond, we are in a global economy now. Your ability to find deals and customers around the world is a sine qua non of being economically powerful. And if you remove organizations and institutions that help you do that, we are really just—it is like eating our seed corn. We are going to hurt ourselves. So let us help our businesses, not hurt them, and if reform is part of it, you will find a lot of willing partners. If a wind-down is part of it, I think there is going to be some significant opposition to that.

Mr. WASHBURNE. Yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I thank my colleagues for their thoughtful comments and questions. I understand Senator Merkley would like an additional 5 minutes. So we will give him a second round, and I believe everyone else is fine. So Senator Merkley?

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

Mr. Murray, I think it is probably good to give you a chance here to address one of your comments that may come up among members, and that is when you wrote that government is a massive parasite putting us on a path to civil unrest—I am summarizing and shortening it—a failed government of career politicians of both parties have the problem. And then you go on to call for an Article V convention.

In this case, as you talk about government being this problem, how will you in your position at the U.N. make sure that our U.N.-governmental team does not become part of the problem?

Mr. MURRAY. Thanks for the opportunity to address some comments from my book. The intent of those comments had to do with my concern as a private citizen at that time with our excessive federal debt. I have heard a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as Senator Hillary Clinton, mention that our federal debt is one of the biggest, if not the biggest, threats to our national security. And as an individual who spent his adult life in the military, that was of great concern to me. And that was the nature of those comments. I am looking for a way to mitigate that.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Ms. Currie, I want to go back to the question that Senator Shaheen was asking about, the UNFPA, Family Planning Association. It has a record in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan of facilitating care for 7,400 women who gave birth to 7,400 babies without a single baby or mother dying, which is rather extraordinary in a refugee zone. And they work in areas of conflict and refugee camps around the world in pursuit of enabling children to get a good start in life with the type of health care that they have been providing. Would it not make sense to keep empowering the UNFPA?

Ms. CURRIE. Thank you for the question, Senator Merkley.

Again, as I said with Senator Shaheen, I was not part of those discussions. I would have to refer you back to the people at the State Department who made the determination under Kemp-Kasten that UNFPA was not the appropriate vehicle for U.S. funding for family planning internationally. And my understanding is that USAID is working hard to try to make sure that there are not gaps in service and that the organizations—as you know, UNFPA also contracts out much of its work to other organizations, and it is possible for the United States through USAID and other mechanisms to fund those same organizations bilaterally rather than through the multilateral vector of UNFPA.

And I would add further that I think that the United States is always open, and it has been my understanding over the years that this issue has come up in various contexts where I have worked on it, whether it was on the Hill as an appropriations staffer when a lot of this legislation was coming up, that we are always trying to work with UNFPA to try to deal with the problematic issues, which in this case is, my understanding is, a finding related to China and the coercive elements of their family planning program.

Senator MERKLEY. So I would just like to note that UNFPA, for the record, does not provide any financing for abortions, does not conduct any abortions, and has had an extraordinary record of supporting successful pregnancies and births in very difficult settings.

And I think there will be children and women hurt by this decision. And I know you referred me back to others, but I was looking for your opinion on it. But I will not put you under further pressure on it since you have had a couple chances to respond to it.

But let me ask about something different. We have 20 million people facing starvation, a high threat of starvation over the next 6 months due to the four famines. And ECOSOC's humanitarian affairs segment is a unique platform that brings together the member states, U.N. organizations, humanitarian and development partners, the private sector, and affected communities. Has the U.N. responded quickly enough and, if you will, effectively enough, or what more should be done? And should we commit more resources, more United States resources?

Ms. CURRIE. The four famines, as we have all discussed, is an epic tragedy and failure of multiple political actors to conduct themselves in a humane fashion. The conflicts that are driving these famines are not going to be solved by humanitarian assistance. We can only attempt to alleviate the human suffering in the short term, but the long-term answer to these problems is political in nature.

UNOCHA very quickly worked together with other humanitarian actors, including the ICRC, to come up with a coordinated appeal. Unfortunately, as Senator Young said, the response has not been what one would hope, especially considering the involvement of certain countries in some of these conflicts and their ability to marshal substantial resources to improve the situation. Not just financial resources but also use their own influence to make access easier and more safe and get the resources to the people who need them the most.

The fact that in Yemen 60 percent of the population is food insecure is beyond belief. This is not something that is going to be solved quickly. The political solutions need to be addressed in the Security Council and through the political mechanisms, bilateral, multilateral, whatever we can throw at this problem. We need to be working them.

But on the humanitarian side, I think that the effort that UNOCHA is trying to put together with its partners is sufficient to meet the short-term needs. It is just a question of the member states coming up with the resources, and if confirmed, I really hope I can work with you to help marshal other countries, other partners to bring those resources to bear so that we can all tackle this together because we cannot solve it ourselves. The United States cannot resolve these problems. We need a lot of teamwork from a lot of other actors who are more involved in them directly.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Senator Merkley, to you and your team for your continued partnership on this sub committee.

I want to thank our nominees again for your thoughtful responses and for your testimonies.

For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, including for members to submit questions for the record. We ask the nominees to respond as promptly as possible. Your responses will also be made a part of the record.

I want to note the presence of Senator Gardner for the record.

And with the thanks of the committee, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:27 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DAVID BOHIGIAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As Assistant Secretary of Commerce, one of my proudest efforts was an initiative that I launched to provide forums for small businesses around the world to exercise freedom of speech and to petition their government. The Entrepreneurship Initiative convened small businesses from the United States and host countries (including Brazil, Mexico, China and India) to speak directly to foreign government officials to press for pro-growth economic policies. I have always considered freedom of speech and the right to petition one's government among the most fundamental human rights. The very nature of entrepreneurship and job creation helps develop more democratic and engaged citizens. I am deeply gratified to see the impact of this project. Launched as a joint venture between the Department of Commerce and the Kauffman Foundation, the initiative attained global reach. According to the website, over 120 heads of state and ministers from more than 60 countries supported Global Entrepreneurship week in 2013.

Emoluments:

Question 2. Will you commit to providing information to this committee if you become aware of emoluments from foreign governments or government-owned companies being directed to the President, his immediate family, or anyone else in the executive branch?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to follow the law and all appropriate procedures. Should questions about legal or ethical issues arise, I will consult with the lawyers and ethics officials at OPIC.

Diversity

Question 3. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What is your plan to ensure that the workforce in your agency, at all levels, is diverse, and how do you plan to ensure supervisors and managers are equipped to manage their teams effectively?

Answer. My fellow nominee and I are united in our commitment to diversity at OPIC. Creating a more diverse workforce isn't just the right thing to do it is the smart thing to do. Diversity can bring innovation to the marketplace of ideas, which is particularly important at a development institution, like OPIC, that works in every region of the world. We believe OPIC should lead by example if it is going to represent American values abroad.

If confirmed, we will continue OPIC's current practices that include : (1) use of special hiring flexibilities to improve its competitiveness with the public and private sectors; (2) outreach initiatives to reach a highly qualified and diverse workforce with the skills needed for OPIC's mission-critical occupations; (3) communicating its EEO/diversity policy, program and OPIC's employment needs to all sources of job applicants; (4) increasing recruitment of veterans and persons with targeted disabilities as a means of achieving the 2 percent Federal goal for disability employment;

and (5) increasing the representation of minorities and women in OPIC's officials and managers categories. Our focus on these commitments will support OPIC's continuing efforts to diversify its workforce, improve the overall representation of employees in the various EEO groups, and to remain a model employer.

Question 4. The federal workforce has made progress in hiring diverse professions in most agencies. There is, however, work to be done to cultivate work environments where all employees feel valued and included. What plans do you have to ensure your agency leverages the diversity of its employees and develops an inclusive work environment?

Answer. Prior experiences and challenges enrich a person's ability to think creatively and problem solve, which are qualities essential to OPIC's continued success. We believe diversity also fosters a sense of community which can strengthen communication within the workplace and ultimately enhance efficiency and effectiveness by encouraging people to work together to maximize resources and minimize time. It is important for leadership to imbue these ideals by consistently respecting and cultivating differences at the highest levels, and we, if confirmed, will work to ensure that OPIC upholds these ideals.

Our goal is for OPIC to remain a model employer and have an inclusive workforce. We will ensure OPIC supports workplace diversity. OPIC will continue to focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting a highly qualified and diverse workforce, based on merit and equal employment opportunity. Training managers and administrative support staff will be key to this effort. OPIC will comply with relevant EEO statutes and regulations, including the No FEAR Act (Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002). OPIC will continue to train its workforce on the various Federal anti-discrimination statutes, which also will help to promote workforce inclusiveness.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO RAY WASHBURNE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. The most important actions I have taken in my career to promote human rights involve my family's volunteer work in Zambia. When my family and I first stepped foot in Lusaka in 2014, we were immediately struck by the lack of basic fundamental human rights. On our very first day, we visited the compound of Chaisa and observed the rampant poverty, pollution, and devastating hunger that stretched across this shantytown of approximately 100,000 Zambians.

My family's humanitarian work thus has focused primarily on the children of Zambia. We volunteer for an organization which houses over 700 orphans on the outskirts of Lusaka, and also provides medical care and other support to approximately 7,000 Zambians each summer. The funding that our family has committed to the organization provides for the care of over fifty orphans, including expenses to cover the child's school, food and housing. Most recently, our family has funded the construction of a school for three hundred students in the heart of Chaisa that is being built on the property of a former brothel.

My work in Zambia has opened my eyes to the positive impact that America can achieve by devoting time and resources to projects in the developing world. If confirmed, I am confident that the perspective I have gained in Zambia will serve me well as the Chairman and CEO to ensure that OPIC's projects continue to promote human rights and democracy around the world.

Emoluments

Question 2. Will you commit to providing information to this committee if you become aware of emoluments from foreign governments or government-owned companies being directed to the President, his immediate family, or anyone else in the executive branch?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to follow the law and all appropriate procedures. Should questions about legal or ethical issues arise, I will consult with the lawyers and ethics officials at OPIC.

Diversity:

Question 3. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What is your plan to ensure that the workforce in your agency, at all levels, is diverse, and how do you plan to ensure supervisors and managers are equipped to manage their teams effectively?

Answer. My fellow nominee and I are united in our commitment to diversity at OPIC. Creating a more diverse workforce isn't just the right thing to do it is the smart thing to do. Diversity can bring innovation to the marketplace of ideas, which is particularly important at a development institution, like OPIC, that works in every region of the world. We believe OPIC should lead by example if it is going to represent American values abroad.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO KELLEY CURRIE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

*Question 1.*What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I spent nearly five years working for Congressman John Porter as his staff director for the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and as his foreign operations appropriations associate. One of my greatest accomplishments during that time was the integration of our human rights advocacy into the foreign operations bills on a range of issues, including: limiting military assistance to countries over human rights abuses by their security forces; tightening restrictions on Burma; and expanding financial support to democracy and human rights promotion efforts, especially regarding Tibet, Burma and East Timor. I also helped to develop an ″adopt a political prisoner″ program that paired Members of Congress with Chinese and Tibetan political prisoners, and encouraged the Members to advocate for improved treatment and release of their 'adopted' prisoner. I vividly remember the day that

I met Jigme Sangpo, the long-serving Tibetan political prisoner our office had adopted, after he was released and exiled to Switzerland on medical parole. It was one of the highlights of my life to see him free.

After leaving Capitol Hill to work for the International Republican Institute (IRI), I was fortunate to work on implementing several of the initiatives we had legislated. As the program officer managing several of IRI's programs in Southeast Asia, I worked to help set up IRI's operations in Indonesia and Timor Leste, providing key electoral and governance assistance to those countries at the time of their democratic transitions. I also managed IRI's support to the Burmese democracy movement at a critical juncture, when the military junta was engaged in one of its most severe crackdowns. When Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest in 2001, we arranged for video equipment to be provided to the National League for Democracy. They used this equipment to document Daw Suu's travels around the country, showing that she and the NLD retained their strength at the grassroots. This equipment also documented the attack on the NLD at Depayin, in which Aung San Suu Kyi was nearly killed.

It also was during this period that I helped some former Burmese political prisoners to launch an organization to provide humanitarian support to, and conduct documentation and advocacy on behalf of, Burma's thousands of political prisoners. Today, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) is one of the most important civil society organizations in the country and a key player in promoting legal reform as part of Burma's transition, but before 2012 it was literally a lifeline for hundreds of political prisoners and their families. Over the past four years, Project 2049 has coordinated US support for AAPP through a grant from the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

In addition to AAPP, I have worked with a number of other important Burmese organizations and individuals who are helping to push forward human rights and democracy in that country.

My work with them has been among the most consequential and personally fulfilling I have done, even as the outcome remains unclear. By supporting the work of catalytic Burmese organizations and individuals through funding and demand-driven technical assistance, the small grants project we have been running at Project 2049 is helping to lay a strong foundation for a genuine democratic transition in Burma.

My work on human rights in China and Tibet since leaving the Congress has been rather less rewarding in terms of broader outcomes but no less so in terms of the amazing advocates and human rights defenders I have had the privilege to work with. While focused on empowering Chinese and Tibetan voices, I have tried to find ways to keep pushing these issues even as the space for international advocacy on them has diminished over the past two decades. In the Office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues under Ambassador Paula Dobriansky, we worked to institutionalize the Tibetan Policy Act in U.S. policy and get important funding to efforts to preserve Tibetan culture inside Tibet. After leaving the State Department, I led the research, writing and editing of a report on cultural genocide in Tibet published by the International Campaign for Tibet. I have also continued to work with my human rights colleagues to keep human rights on the U.S. policy agenda with China, including by linking up my security-focused colleagues at Project 2049 with Chinese human rights defenders on research projects.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in ECOSOC today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy at ECOSOC and with its member countries? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The U.N. Economic and Social Council does not formally deal with human rights questions on its agenda. However, the Economic and Social Affairs section of the United States Mission (informally known as the ECOSOC Section) covers human rights issues that come up in the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

The most pressing human rights concerns in the General Assembly's Third Committee today include Iran, the Russian occupation of Crimea, the egregious abuses in the Syrian conflict, and the continuing human rights violations and abuses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Of course, the protection of human rights is deeply intertwined with international peace and security, and situations in many countries, including for example the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are also addressed in other U.N. committees as well.

In order to advance human rights and democracy at ECOSOC, I believe the U.S. resolution, advanced at the 2015 United Nations General Assembly, on strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing periodic and genuine elections

and the promotion of democratization must remain a key priority. Other important resolutions facing the United Nations include those on the protection of journalists, protection of human rights defenders, the report of the United Nations Human Rights Council, including reporting on reform progress, and the resolution on freedom of religion and belief. If confirmed, I will continue to vigorously advocate for resolutions that advance these priorities.

As always we will lobby like-minded states to improve the vote count on country-specific resolutions and to pursue the same priorities as ours; a large number of votes in favor sends a strong message about the global community's commitment to these issues. It is essential that the international community address human rights violations and abuses in these priority countries and regions, as they have a direct impact on U.S. security and prosperity.

Question 3. 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 by ECOSOC member countries in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. There are several potential obstacles to addressing human rights concerns in the aforementioned crises. Russia is unlikely to cooperate on resolutions regarding Crimea and Syria, and we must continue to urge China to play a constructive role with regard to the human rights and humanitarian issues in the DPRK. A critical step in addressing these issues, as well as those mentioned in my previous response, is to enlist member states to play constructive roles, including by voting affirmatively for country-specific resolutions that hold human rights offending countries accountable for their actions, as well as resolutions that call for the protection of human rights defenders and participation by civil society. At the same time, we must continue to maintain cross-regional support for resolutions on the human rights situation in those countries despite opposition from Russia and others, something we have historically been quite successful in achieving.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from ECOSOC member countries?

Answer. The United States has long been a leader in championing the participation of NGOs, human rights defenders, journalists and others from civil society at the UN, and I intend to prioritize these issues during my tenure. If I am confirmed, I absolutely plan to engage closely with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. Leadership on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is not possible without continued, close, and sustained contact with such organizations, whether they be based in the United States or in other ECOSOC member nations. If confirmed, I will regularly consult with such groups, pay attention to the challenges they face in their operations as well as the issues they address, and work closely with them to advance human rights at the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

I am very concerned about the efforts undertaken by a number of governments to suppress the legitimate activities of civil society, including by human rights defenders, NGOs and journalists within the U.N. If I am confirmed, I will work hard to address reprisals against civil society representatives for their engagement with U.N. or other international human rights mechanisms. I will also address the lack of NGO accreditation by the U.N. ECOSOC NGO Committee.

Question 5. Will you commit to providing information to this committee if you become aware of emoluments from foreign governments or government-owned companies being directed to the President, his immediate family, or anyone else in the Executive Branch?

Answer. I commit to comply with all ethics laws, regulations, ?and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have benefitted personally and professionally from working with colleagues with diverse backgrounds and experiences. My personal approach to staffing is to find the best person for the job regardless of race, gender, religious or other background, but I have always gone out of my way to seek and promote candidates from underrepresented groups and diverse backgrounds. I have also found it deeply rewarding to mentor young women in the field of foreign and security policy. As staffing positions become available, if confirmed, I will work

with the human resources officials of the Department to ensure that we are drawing from the broadest and most diverse candidate pool possible to ensure that USUN's ECOSOC team continues to lead the way as a rewarding and exciting office that showcases the best of America's federal workforce.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JAY MURRAY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Thank you for this question. Most of my professional life has been serving in the U.S. Army. One important lesson I've learned in my service is that human rights are a core component of international peace and stability. Indeed the abuse of human rights is often the underlying cause of strife and violence. Additionally, facilitating democracy and representative government also serves to minimize human rights abuses.

While serving in the Balkans I worked with the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe as an on-the-ground election observer in order to facilitate free and fair elections. In Kosovo, I also worked directly with the Kosovo Liberation Army in order to transform it into the peacetime Kosovo Protection Corps, as well as to help with institution building that would ultimately lead to Kosovo's independence. On my personal time, I frequently visited the local orphanage in Pristina, delivering food, blankets, bedding and toys.

While serving at the United Nations, one of my roles was to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Troop Contributing Countries in order to deploy and maintain peacekeeping operations around the world. At that time we were focused on Darfur and Sudan. I deployed to both locations in order to get an on-the-ground perspective and to talk with government officials, the local population, and visit the refugee camps there. I also traveled to the African Union Headquarters in Ethiopia where we helped to negotiate what is now the hybrid U.N.-AU peacekeeping operation in Darfur. I understand the linkages between military/peacekeeping operations and the focus on human rights. If confirmed, I pledge to maintain that focus in the Security Council, and I look forward to working with you and this committee.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in U.N. peacekeeping operations and security cooperation activities? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and good governance in U.N. peacekeeping operations and security cooperation activities? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. One of the most pressing issues in U.N. peacekeeping is the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse. Over the last several years, the U.N. has taken important steps to uphold the zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse, especially in peacekeeping missions. The U.N. has instituted stronger vetting procedures and improved training for peacekeepers, enhanced transparency through regular public reporting on allegations, and strengthened accountability measures, including those outlined in Security Council resolution 2272. These measures should be continuously strengthened, expanded, and rigorously implemented.

During his first six months, the Secretary-General has already demonstrated his strong commitment to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse. I support his attention to and prioritization of this issue, especially the renewed focus on putting victims first. I commend the work of the Special Coordinator, Jane Holl Lute, and her efforts to ensure that the U.N.'s approach to sexual exploitation and abuse is truly a system-wide strategy.

If confirmed, I would continue to support the U.N.'s recent work in developing minimum standards for investigations and prosecutions of sexual exploitation and abuse. Member states must be more accountable, and more transparent, in their pursuit of justice for their nationals responsible for sexual exploitation and abuse. They must hold themselves, as well as the U.N., to the highest standards of accountability. By promoting a policy of zero tolerance, I hope we can preserve and promote the credibility and the legitimacy of U.N. peacekeeping and ensure the protection of civilians on the ground.

Question 3. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What chal-

lenges will you face in peacekeeping operations and security cooperation activities in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. One of the biggest challenges in U.N. peacekeeping today is holding troop- and police- contributing countries (TCC/PCCs) accountable for poor performance, including but not limited to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. Certain TCCs have been reticent to properly investigate and punish incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse, even when they have been informed of these incidents by the U.N. In a letter to the Secretary-General on June 14, Ambassador Haley noted the importance of sending a strong message to all troop- and police-contributing countries that performance will be monitored, and when it is found lacking, there will be accountability. Subsequently, the U.N. broke new ground by calling for the repatriation of troops from the Republic of Congo on the basis of the U.N.'s zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. Ultimately, ROC responded by withdrawing the troops from the mission. I strongly support the highest standards of accountability and a performance-based approach in deciding which TCC/PCCs will participate in U.N. peacekeeping.

More broadly, the United States continues to face challenges negotiating the human rights, civil society, and democracy components of U.N. peacekeeping missions in the Security Council given that not all Council members, host countries, or regional neighbors share this priority. The United States continually faces difficult negotiations with China and Russia over the inclusion of human rights advisors in missions, and host countries such as Sudan often fail to provide visas and access to human rights personnel. If confirmed, I will work to resolve these obstacles so that the U.N. can meet its ideals and advance our interests.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in countries with peacekeeping operations and security operations?

Answer. Absolutely. The perspective of non-governmental organizations both in the United States and in countries with peacekeeping and security operations is invaluable in helping to understand the context in which we are operating. Non-governmental organizations that cover human rights, humanitarian issues, democracy, and peacebuilding are frequently on the forefront of providing in-depth reporting and analysis on important conflict dynamics and often have access to remote locations where others do not. If confirmed, I would adopt and widely encourage the practice of meeting with them.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support continued implementation of the Leahy Law. I am aware that under the Leahy Law, the United States Government is prohibited from providing assistance to any unit of another country's security forces if the Secretary of State has credible information that the unit committed a gross violation of human rights. This law is well known around the world, and is an important component of our foreign policy, It provides the opportunity for open dialogue on human rights as well as an incentive for positive behavior. It is important to note that the law permits the Secretary of State to resume assistance to foreign security force units previously deemed ineligible if he determines that the foreign government is taking effective steps to bring the responsible members of the security forces unit to justice. This mechanism encourages foreign security partners to investigate credible allegations and hold accountable those responsible.

Question 6. Will you commit to providing information to this committee if you become aware of emoluments from foreign governments or government-owned companies being directed to the President, his immediate family, or anyone else in the Executive Branch?

Answer. I commit to comply with all ethics laws, regulations, ?and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. Thank you for this question. I agree completely with your supposition regarding the value of diversity. I've experienced it firsthand throughout my military career. I've served alongside of soldiers from diverse ethnicities and faiths. What we discovered is that regardless of background, we all wore the same uniform and we were all Americans.

Over a decade of my service was deployed overseas, where I worked with military and political counterparts from multiple nations and faiths. I also served for almost five years at the United Nations where diversity is the norm. So I've seen the power and value of diversity firsthand. And that is precisely why, if confirmed, that I commit to promote, mentor and support individuals on my staff who come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups. I believe it is the right thing to do, it is the American thing to do, and it will also enable us to be more successful within the U.N. Community.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JAY MURRAY BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. Colonel Murray, on July 11, 2016 you published a piece focused on domestic and national security in Newsmax. You concluded it by saying: "Come November it's your choice sheep. Vote with the sheepdogs, or vote with the wolves," implying that a vote for your candidate's opponent was a vote for those who would attack the American people.

- Why did you choose such extremely divisive rhetoric to characterize the national security choice before the American electorate in last year's election?
- Do you stand by your characterization of the American electorate as "sheep"?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify. I wrote this article while I was a private citizen. It was not the intent of the article to be derogatory towards Americans. I have the utmost respect for the American electorate, indeed all Americans, so much so that for some twenty-five years I put my life on the line to protect and defend them.

Question 2. Colonel Murray, in your book Government is the Problem you portrayed those serving in Congress as being adverse to the interests of the American people, describing those in serving in public office as being "like cunning bacteria." By contrast, Ambassador Haley has consistently expressed an attitude of personal collegiality and mutual respect, and an understanding of the role and oversight responsibilities of Congress.

- Do you still stand by the views expressed in your book about those serving in Congress?
- Do you believe members of Congress are "like cunning bacteria?"
- Do you agree to work with members of this committee and our staffs as we exercise our constitutional responsibility for oversight of the Executive Branch's conduct of foreign relations?
- Will you respond promptly and completely to our questions and requests for information?
- Do you recognize why many people see a propensity toward the kind of extreme, divisive, and inflammatory rhetoric that you've used in your publications as disqualifying for the position of third-ranking U.S. diplomat at the United Nations?

Answer. Thank you for this question. I hold both members of Congress and the institution in the highest regard. I wrote the book while I was a private citizen.

One important lesson I learned while serving in the Army is that there are no political parties in the military—only Americans. I believe that is the case with the practice of diplomacy as well. Writing articles as a private citizen in the midst of a heated political campaign is one thing. Service to country is very different, and I understand that difference.

Over a decade of my military service was overseas, including in my capacity as a military attaché working daily with host country military and political counterparts. I also served at the United Nations for several years as the American representative to the U.N. Military Staff Committee. I learned that my words and actions as an American are watched very closely. That is a responsibility that is larger than self; I've felt it before and I take it very seriously. If confirmed, I pledge to serve in a capacity that is worthy of my post and of my country. I also commit to work with you and this committee to the utmost of my ability.

Question 3. Colonel Murray, the President has nominated you for a critically important position representing the United States at the United Nations, including in the Security Council. Yet you seem to take a pretty dim view of that organization and of multilateral diplomatic initiatives generally.

In your book Government is the Problem you blasted the "Obama regime" for pursuing a range of multilateral initiatives that are "arguably designed to constrain American power and wealth by chipping away at our sovereignty."

- Do you still believe that multilateral diplomacy and agreements undermine U.S. sovereignty?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify. In the course of my military service at the State Department and at the United Nations, I was constantly involved in multilateral initiatives, including in the Security Council, the General Assembly and inside the Secretariat. I know the strengths and weaknesses of those bodies very well, having been directly involved for several years.

Moreover, as a soldier I served for over six years in NATO. I also worked directly with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on multiple occasions as an election observer in the Balkans. In Iraq, I was part of the Multi-National Force—Iraq. I am a graduate of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, an Institute that brings together military and political leaders from more than 152 countries. In short, I have a great deal of experience serving in multilateral organizations and initiatives.

I wrote the book while I was a private citizen. While I may have been critical of multilateral institutions, it was because I know the potential they have, but they sometimes fall short when it comes to human rights and the maintenance of international peace and security. Those principles are not only the right thing to do, but they directly serve U.S. interests. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to further those ideals, and I look forward to working with you and this committee to do so.

Question 4. In May 2016 you wrote in Newsmax that "David Petraeus's recent opinion piece in The Washington Post entitled 'Anti-Muslim bigotry aids Islamic terrorists' targeted Donald Trump's recommendation about curbing Muslim immigration. The retired general's accusations are typical of the rash of strawman arguments now common from the Obama/Clinton camps."

And in March 2016 you wrote in Newsmax that "Muslims now comprise almost 25 percent of the Brussels population. Most have not assimilated and have no intention of doing so. At worst they're planning to kill their infidel neighbors, at best they protect and harbor those who are doing the killing."

- Why have you made these kinds of generalized accusations against Muslim people?
- How do you plan to work with your Muslim counterparts at the United Nations?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify. Any inference of generalized disparagement of a single group, including Muslims, is both hurtful and inaccurate. I've served proudly and successfully alongside my Muslim counterparts on multiple occasions and locations throughout my adult life. In Kosovo, I worked extensively with Kosovar Albanian Muslims in support of their transition to a sovereign nation. In ethnically and religiously diverse Bosnia, I worked with Muslims, Orthodox Christians and Catholics to build a united military inclusive of all groups. In Iraq, I worked with a confidence-building committee comprised of Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish military officers. At the U.N., I worked with numerous Muslim military and political counterparts, including from Troop Contributing Countries, in order to successfully deploy Peacekeeping Operations. When I was a candidate for public office, I met with numerous Muslim groups, listened to their concerns and appreciated their support. I wish to make it clear that I have respect and tolerance for the Muslim faith.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my Muslim counterparts, as well as my counterparts of all faiths at the United Nations in support of international peace and security.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JAY MURRAY BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question 1. Colonel Murray, in our meeting before your confirmation hearing you expressed doubts about the human impact on climate disruption and on the need to "act fast" to address the issue. You indicated we should wait for the results from scientists, however 97 percent of scientists have affirmed that climate change is occurring. We are already seeing the impacts of climate disruption around the world. 2016 was the hottest year on record and some countries have already relocated citizens due to climate change, creating the world's first climate refugees. Additionally, national security experts, including military leadership at the Pentagon, have

warned that climate change poses a range of threats from the impact on U.S. installations around the world, to global health trends, to international dynamics in the Arctic, and as a "threat multiplier," leading to increased instability around the world as societies clash over resources that become scarcer and scarcer.

- Do you believe climate change poses a national security threat?
- If so, do you believe the United States should be a leader in helping find global solutions?
- What role should the United Nations play in helping combat climate disruption?
- Will you commit to discussing climate disruption with your foreign counterparts and to look for areas of international cooperation?

Answer. Thank you for this question, I respect your leadership on this issue. As Ambassador Haley has remarked and as I also stated in response to your question during my confirmation hearing on 11 July 2017, climate change should always be on the table as one of the factors we consider. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you regarding the appropriate roles that the U.N. should play regarding climate change.

Question 2. In various articles you make derogatory remarks about members of Congress, including members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Do you stand by these statements? Do you feel attacks on Senators are appropriate for diplomats? How will your statements attacking both individual Senators and Senators of a group impact your ability to work constructively with members on both sides of the aisle?

Answer. Thank you for this question. I hold Members of Congress in the highest regard, and I deeply appreciate Members' of Congress service to our Nation. I wrote that in my capacity as a private citizen.

I am grateful to Ambassador Haley for having the confidence in me to fulfill this role. If confirmed, I pledge to serve in a capacity that is worthy of my post and of my country. I also commit to work with you and all members of this committee, regardless of party, to the utmost of my ability.

Question 3. You have also referred to government and Senators as "massive parasites," "cunning bacteria," and a "problem." Do you believe members of the House and Senate are bacteria or parasites?

Answer. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to clarify. I hold Members of Congress, regardless of party, in the highest regard. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and this committee to the utmost of my ability.

Question 4. Do you recognize this rhetoric could be unhelpful for a diplomat at the United Nations?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify. Writing as a private citizen is very different from serving the country. I understand that my words and actions while representing the United States are watched very closely. That is a responsibility that I have proudly and successfully borne in the past while serving at the U.N. and abroad. I take it very seriously. It is an honor to be considered for this post, and I am grateful to Ambassador Haley for having the confidence in me to serve in this role. If confirmed, I pledge to serve in a capacity that is worthy of my post and of my country.

Question 5. I have appreciated Ambassador Haley's personal collegiality and mutual respect. She has made a concerted effort to consult regularly with Congress, calling the Senate Foreign Relations Committee her "board of directors." Do you share her sentiment and approach?

Answer. Thank you for this question. I agree completely with Ambassador Haley's approach and appreciate the professional, respectful relationship that has developed. If confirmed, I pledge to pursue the same approach and look forward to working with you and the entire Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Question 6. There are reports that the Trump administration has directed agencies to ignore oversight requests from Democrats and only respond to requests for information from the Chair of committees of jurisdiction. Will you commit to consulting regularly with this committee? Will you respond promptly and completely to questions and requests for information from both parties?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to furthering the same respectful approach that Ambassador Haley and Secretary Tillerson have pursued with you and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, regardless of party. One important lesson I learned while serving in the Army is that there are no political parties in the military—only Americans. I believe that should also be the case with diplomacy.

Question 7. The administration is working to better match peacekeeping missions and mandates while simultaneously cutting costs for the U.N.'s peacekeeping activi-

ties. Cost efficiency is important, but so is ensuring that U.N. peacekeeping missions have sufficient troops and resources to carry out their mandates. How is the administration balancing cost savings with mission effectiveness? Are there any existing missions that you would recommend strengthening?

Answer. To ensure each mission is appropriate to the situation in each country and advancing the Security Council's objectives, the United States has invited U.N. Security Council members to join in evaluating every U.N. peacekeeping mission as its mandate comes up for renewal through the lens of the five peacekeeping principles Ambassador Haley articulated in April: 1) missions must support political solutions, 2) host country strategic consent is critical, 3) mandates must be realistic and achievable, 4) clear sequencing and exit strategies are required at all stages, and 5) missions and mandates must be adjusted where Security Council objectives are not achieved.

Throughout this process, the United States seeks to strengthen all missions by ensuring they are appropriately resourced and designed to respond to the unique circumstances of the environments in which they are operating, and to implement Security Council mandates efficiently and effectively.

Question 8. The Obama administration successfully launched an effort to generate new troop contributors and new force capabilities for U.N. peacekeeping operations, highlighted during a high-level event at the 70th Session of the U.N. General Assembly in 2015. Do you plan to continue the Obama administration's efforts? How important do you believe it is to improve the quality and capability of U.N. peacekeeping forces?

Answer. It is crucial to continue to improve the quality and capability of U.N. peacekeeping forces. U.N. peacekeeping helps share the cost of collective security in some of the most dangerous and difficult environment around the world.

The 2015 U.S.-led peacekeeping summit generated the pledges needed to ensure strategic force generation in U.N. peacekeeping. It was followed by the 2016 UK-hosted Defense Ministerial and a French Ministerial on Peacekeeping in French-Speaking Environments. These events helped maintain momentum for continued reform, identifying ways to improve the planning and performance of U.N. peacekeeping operations, including by generating new pledges and reviewing previous pledges to fill personnel and capability gaps, increasing women's participation, tackling sexual exploitation and abuse, improving rapid deployment and training, and developing performance-based management systems.

In November, Secretary Mattis will co-host with Canada the 2017 U.N. Peacekeeping Defense Ministerial in Vancouver. This ministerial is another important step in U.S. efforts to make U.N. peacekeeping more effective, particularly at the operational level. The ministerial is an important opportunity to generate additional pledges to fill shortfalls in ongoing U.N. peacekeeping missions, as well as provide the Secretary-General with an opportunity to report on progress made in implementing peacekeeping reforms and chart a course for reforms to be implemented throughout 2018. If confirmed, I would strongly support this effort and continue to exercise U.S. leadership to ensure much-needed reform of U.N. peacekeeping.

Question 9. The Obama administration, in conjunction with South Korea and other partners, successfully added the human rights situation in North Korea to the U.N. Security Council's agenda, meeting on the topic most recently in December 2016. Ambassador Haley has also made the nexus between human rights and peace and security a focus of her work at the Council. Do you support this approach? What would you do to make human rights a focus at the Council?

Answer. As Ambassador Haley emphasized in the U.N. Security Council in April, the protection of human rights is deeply intertwined with international peace and security and should be addressed by the Council accordingly. Human rights violations and abuses are not merely the byproduct of conflict, but are often the trigger. Violations of human rights by states exacerbate violence and instability that can spill across borders. The Security Council should continue to address human rights, as it has through reporting on peacekeeping and special political missions, sanctions, and dedicated sessions on the worst human rights abusers, as well as consider the connection between human rights and security more broadly.

If confirmed, I will redouble efforts to ensure that U.N. peacekeeping and political missions are working to fulfill their mandates related to protection of civilians, and monitoring and reporting on human rights violations and abuses. I will also work within the U.S. Mission to the United Nations to amplify the Council's voice on human rights abuses and violations in countries on the Council's agenda such as North Korea, Venezuela, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and will use the platform of the Security Council to reinforce the work of the U.N. Human Rights Council.

Question 10. The Obama administration and members of Congress from both parties have continuously prioritized U.S. national security interests including by fighting terrorists like Al-Qaeda and ISIS. In a July 18, 2016, article you state that the "left" believes "wolves like ISIS are just misunderstood victims." Do you think Democratic members of the House and Senate are sympathetic to ISIS?

Answer. I hold Members of Congress, regardless of political party, in the highest regard. I do not believe that any Member of Congress is supportive of ISIS. If confirmed, I pledge to work with all members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a timely and respectful manner.

Question 11. We are seven months into the Trump administration and we have yet to see any new comprehensive strategy for Syria, Afghanistan or the broader fight against ISIS. Do you think broad strategy on these issues includes the United States leading partner nations in these efforts?

Answer. On January 28 the President directed Secretary of Defense Mattis to work with interagency partners to conduct a 30-day review of the U.S. Government's strategy to defeat ISIS, and identify ways to accelerate it. The Department of State was DOD's primary partner in drafting a strategic framework and, as the White House has announced, it was delivered to the White House on February 27 for consideration and broader discussion.

Question 12. As you may be aware from 2009–2017 the unemployment rate dropped from 10 percent to 4.6 percent, there were 75 continuous months of job growth with 11.3 million new jobs created, and the federal budget deficit as share of gross domestic product went down from 9.8 percent to 3.2 percent. Yet, in a November 2, 2016, article you state that Obama's "presidency has been a shambles by every conceivable metric both at home and abroad." Given these metrics, do you still support that statement, or do you think these were an improvement?

Answer. Thank you for this question. President Obama inherited a very difficult economic situation upon taking office in 2009. My function while writing as a private citizen was to debate issues such as this. If confirmed, my role at the United Nations will be markedly different, and I am very clear about that. If confirmed, I pledge to serve in a capacity that is worthy of my post and of my country.

Question 13. Under the Affordable Care Act, 20 million people nationwide gained health insurance, Medicaid was expanded, and the exchanges were established. The result was access to lifesaving affordable care for low income individuals and families, those suffering from chronic illness, and people with preexisting conditions. That being said, you have referred to the Affordable Care Act as "devastating to the middle class." Do you still believe these results to be "devastating"?

Answer. Thank you for this question. My function while writing as a private citizen was to debate issues such as the Affordable Care Act. If confirmed, my role at the United Nations will be markedly different, and I am very clear about that. If confirmed, I pledge to serve in a capacity that is worthy of my post and of my country.

Question 14. In a July 18 article you make an endorsement of Mr. Trump for President by saying we need "A president who will focus on bringing Americans together instead of fomenting division for political gain." At the time of writing, Mr. Trump and his campaign used divisive rhetoric against women, Muslims, Hispanics and other minority groups. Do you think that type of rhetoric is helpful for bringing people together?

Answer. I believe that we should strive to bring our nation together. Our diversity can be an asset. Throughout my career I've served alongside service members and Foreign Service Officers from diverse ethnicities, genders, and faiths. I've experienced the value of diversity firsthand. I am honored that Ambassador Haley has the confidence in me to serve in this role at the United Nations. If confirmed, I pledge to serve in a capacity that is worthy of my post and of my country.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson [presiding], Risch, Gardner, Young, Isakson, Murphy, Menendez, Shaheen, Udall, Kaine, and Merkley.

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

Senator JOHNSON. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order. I want to welcome everybody. We gather today to consider the nominations of two ambassadorships and two senior positions at the State Department.

Mrs. Callista L. Gingrich is the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See.

Mr. Nathan Alexander Sales is the President's nominee to be coordinator for counterterrorism with the rank and status of Ambassador-at-Large.

Mr. George Edward Glass is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Portugal.

Mr. Carl C. Risch is the President's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs.

I want to welcome the nominees and their families to this committee and congratulate them on their selection by the President. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

I also want to note that we have Congressman Rooney here supporting Mrs. Gingrich. Congressman Rooney was the Congressman from Florida and also the Ambassador to the Holy See during President Bush's term.

This committee is also honored to welcome our distinguished colleagues who will introduce two of our witnesses, the senior Senator from Oregon, Senator Ron Wyden, and an esteemed member of this committee, Senator Portman from Ohio. Thank you both for being here today.

With that, I will recognize Senator Wyden to introduce Mr. Glass.

STATEMENT OF HON. RON WYDEN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

Senator WYDEN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your courtesy. As Senator Portman knows, we are right in the middle of debating tax reform, I know a topic of great interest to many Senators here, and I am trying to help out Chairman Hatch, so I will make this a filibuster-free opportunity, Mr. Chairman.

And it is a great privilege to be able to introduce a longtime friend, George Edward Glass. Mr. Glass has been nominated to serve as our next Ambassador to Portugal.

And as we begin this discussion, I am glad that the President has begun submitting more nominees to the Senate for consideration, because we all understand that having a Senate-confirmed Ambassador makes a world of difference when challenges emerge, as this committee knows better than just about anybody.

Knowing Mr. Glass as I do, I am confident that, as all of you get to know him better, you are going to report him favorably to the Senate floor.

As he is going to tell you, George Glass is an Oregonian through and through. He was born in Eugene. He attended college there, graduating from the University of Oregon. Like me, he is a Duck, and he has continued to be involved with the university, with the community, as he has been recognized as a pillar of Portland's financial, real estate, and tech communities.

He has been involved in a number of projects to help our community. I am particularly pleased that he has had a long interest in the Oregon Health and Science University. They are a lifeline in terms of reaching out to our community and to those who have really found it hard to access health care. He has been a trustee for the Oregon Health and Science University, a former president of the University of Oregon Alumni Association, and also a member of the Catholic Business Leaders Association.

I just feel very strongly that as you look to Portugal and to that part of the world, we are going to need people who have demonstrated a track record of stepping up, being involved in their community, someone with expertise in a variety of areas, not just his chosen profession of finance, but health care, with his background at Oregon Health and Science.

And I believe that as you get to know him and confirm him, after you have had a chance to hear from him, you will come to the conclusion I have, which is George Glass has values shared by Americans and by those in the country he seeks to serve, Portugal.

And I very much appreciate my colleagues going out of order to extend this courtesy to me. And my guess is Chairman Hatch is probably grateful to you all as well, as we try to keep matters proceeding in the Finance Committee.

So thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I very much look forward to members of the committee getting to know George Glass, as I have. I think you will come to the same judgment I have, that he will serve and reflect great credit on the United States in this position.

Thank you very much.

Senator JOHNSON. Thanks, Senator Wyden, for the great introduction and your strong support for the nominee.

As long as you are taking a look at my corporate tax reform, I really do encourage you to get out of here and get back to the task at hand.

Senator Portman?

STATEMENT OF HON. ROB PORTMAN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OHIO

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Chairman Johnson.

I will be joining my colleague in a minute back on the tax reform front, but I wanted to be here to welcome this distinguished group of nominees.

Thank you for your willingness to serve. And to Mr. Risch and Mr. Glass, you have just gotten a nice accolade from someone who will help you not just in this committee but in the vote on the floor.

To Callista Gingrich, again, thank you for serving. You could have no better person behind you than former Ambassador to the Holy See, Francis Rooney. That means a lot to all of us, and we are looking forward to supporting you.

Finally, Nathan Sales, Mr. Chairman, he is from Ohio.

Senator JOHNSON. I wouldn't have guessed.

Senator PORTMAN. Yes, you wouldn't have guessed. Did I tell you that he was from Ohio?

But we are very proud of him. He is before this committee to be the next coordinator for counterterrorism at the State Department, so, obviously, an incredibly vital national security position that needs to be filled as quickly as possible.

And by the way, in these national security positions, we need to have honorable, capable individuals who understand the importance of that mission, protecting the homeland but also working with our allies to combat the threat of global terrorism. So we are pleased to have you here.

Did I mention he is from Ohio?

Senator JOHNSON. You did. It never hurts to mention it again.

Senator PORTMAN. Okay. Canton, Ohio, to be specific. He also intended Ohio's Miami University. He then, for some reason, headed south and went to Duke Law School. Following law school, he did clerk for the Honorable David B. Sentelle of the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, a very prestigious position.

And he is no stranger to public service. He served in the Office of Legal Policy at the Department of Justice, and then as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Department of Homeland Security during the George W. Bush administration, where I also served. There, he focused on intelligence, information-sharing, terrorist travel.

At DHS, he drafted critical legislation to improve the security of our visa waiver program, something that the chairman and I have had deep interest in, in his other role as chairman of the Government Affairs and Homeland Security Committee.

In the past 2 years, Nathan returned to the private sector and academia. He has been counsel at Kirkland & Ellis here in Washington, but also an associate professor of law at Syracuse University College of Law. By the way, he teaches and writes in the fields of national security law and counterterrorism law, among other areas. So he is perfectly qualified for this position.

So, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to supporting Nathan Sales as our next coordinator for counterterrorism, not only because of his ties to the Buckeye State, which are important. But much more importantly, because of his relevant experience, because of his strong record, and because of his lifelong commitment to our Constitution, our laws, and the security of our country.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in this effort to quickly fill this critically important national security role with an experienced and capable public servant.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Portman, for that great introduction. Again, by all means, go back to the Finance Committee and start working on that Ron Johnson corporate tax proposal.

Again, thank you for that.

Now, as great as it is to have nominees from Oregon and Ohio, I certainly appreciate the fact that I have the privilege of introducing our nominee from the State of Wisconsin. Although I am chairing this hearing, in my capacity as the senior Senator from Wisconsin, I also have the honor of introducing my fellow Wisconsinite, Mrs. Callista Gingrich, our nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See.

Callista was born and raised in Whitehall, Wisconsin, a particularly beautiful area of the State. Although, as I have driven through it, it is an area where you drop cell coverage frequently. It is hard to do radio interviews as you are driving through that region.

She graduated from Whitehall Memorial High School as the valedictorian, and served as an organist at St. John's Catholic Church. Callista attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where she was a Regent Scholar and honors graduate.

Almost 3 decades ago, Callista came to Washington to intern for her hometown Congressman, Steve Gunderson. She became a member of Congressman Gunderson's personal staff and later served as the chief clerk of the House Committee on Agriculture.

After 18 years of service, Callista left Capitol Hill to found Gingrich Productions, a multimedia production consulting company. She has been the president and CEO of Gingrich Productions for the last decade, producing documentary films, writing books, and advising clients. Callista also works to support many charitable causes through her role as the president of the Gingrich Foundation.

Callista is a lifelong Catholic and has been active in her faith community for many years. She has sung for 21 years in the choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception here in Washington.

As part of her work with Gingrich Productions, Callista collaborated with church leaders to produce and host " Nine Days That Changed the World," a documentary about Pope John Paul II's historic 1979 pilgrimage to Poland. She also produced a documentary about Pope John Paul II's canonization.

Callista's interests in Pope John Paul II is fitting, given her nomination. President Reagan's friendship with Pope John Paul II led

to reestablished formal relations with the Holy See in 1984, and together, they helped orchestrate the fall of the Soviet Union.

Since then, Popes and American Presidents have collaborated on a wide range of issues, including promoting human rights and respect for human dignity, interreligious understanding, and economic progress in the developing world.

Callista's understanding of the Catholic Church, her considerable experience in government and business, and her talents as a communicator make her an ideal choice to represent U.S. interests at the Holy See. I support her nomination and urge my colleagues to support her as well.

So thank you, Mrs. Gingrich, for your willingness to serve.

I am also delighted to introduce Mr. Carl C. Risch of Pennsylvania, the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs. Mr. Risch is a highly regarded Pennsylvania attorney and current acting Chief of Staff in the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. He was previously the field office director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at the American Embassy in Seoul, South Korea.

A senior immigration official abroad and in Washington, D.C., for over a decade, and a former consular Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State, Mr. Risch is an expert on responsibilities and challenges of managing Consular Affairs worldwide.

With that, I would like to recognize the distinguished ranking member for his comments, Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have, actually, a good full house of members here, so I am going to defer my opening remarks.

I thank all of you for your service. Mr. Sales and I had a chance to sit down and have a very productive conversation yesterday. I am very glad for your testimony and for us to engage in a dialogue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

The order of our nominees' opening remarks will be Mrs. Gingrich, Mr. Sales, Mr. Glass, and then Mr. Risch.

Mrs. Gingrich?

STATEMENT OF CALLISTA L. GINGRICH OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE HOLY SEE

Ms. GINGRICH. Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See.

I am thankful to President Trump for the confidence and trust he has placed in me to be his representative at this important Embassy.

In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for supporting my nomination.

It is a special honor to be introduced by Chairman Johnson from my home State of Wisconsin. Thank you.

I am also grateful to appear before this committee today with the full support of my husband, Newt. As veterans of Capitol Hill, we

both have great respect for your role in assessing and confirming those who represent the American people abroad. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members and staff of this committee.

Like the United States, the Holy See is active on a global scale. It is engaged on every continent to advance religious freedom and human rights, to fight terrorism and violence, to combat human trafficking, to prevent the spread of diseases like Ebola and HIV/AIDS, and to seek peaceful solutions to crises around the world.

Those who serve in the State Department are known the world over for their patriotism and dedication. The professional staff at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See exemplify these traits. They work tirelessly to leverage the Vatican's global reach and to advance our strong bilateral relationship.

Charge d'Affaires Louis Bono and the Embassy team did an extraordinary job preparing for and hosting the President on his visit to the Vatican in May. During that visit, President Trump and Pope Francis highlighted shared concerns, including the protection of Christian communities in the Middle East.

Pope Francis has powerfully called on religious leaders and people of all faiths to unequivocally reject terrorism and violence in the name of religion. The Vatican and its organizations play an active role in troubled areas around the globe, from Venezuela to South Sudan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, countries where the Holy See's support for peaceful solutions and democratic institutions directly benefits the interests of the United States.

The Catholic Church is a unique global network, overseeing the world's second largest international aid organization, operating 25 percent of the world's health care facilities, and ministering to millions in every corner of the world.

As global leaders, the United States and the Vatican must continue to work closely to advance our shared values of human dignity and freedom. This can only happen if we maintain and build upon a strong foundation of trust and mutual communication. If confirmed, I will continue this vital dialogue, which has been so important for the people of the United States and the world.

I understand how the United States and the Holy See can act as a worldwide force for good when we work together. Several years ago, I had the honor of producing a documentary film entitled, "Nine Days That Changed the World." It chronicles Pope John Paul II's historic pilgrimage to Poland in 1979, an event that inspired the Polish people to renew their hearts, reclaim their courage, and free themselves from the shackles of communism.

Producing this film required substantial work with key church leaders and other experts in the United States, Poland, and the Vatican. This film has been well-received by the Catholic Church and is used in religious education programs throughout the United States. Most importantly, this film is a powerful example of the invaluable role the Vatican plays in international affairs.

Recently, I produced another documentary film entitled, "Divine Mercy: The Canonization of John Paul II." These projects, along with my decades-long membership in the choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, have given me the opportunity to build relationships with many church leaders,

clergy, and religious scholars. These experiences have instilled in me the highest respect for the Holy See, a deep appreciation for the responsibility of this post, and confidence that the United States-Vatican bilateral relationship is a force for good and one that cannot be ignored.

As a lifelong Catholic, business owner, documentary film maker, author, and former public servant, I am profoundly humbled at the prospect of serving my country as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See. If confirmed, I will work diligently to develop even stronger ties between the United States and the Holy See.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to be before you today and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

[Ms. Gingrich's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CALLISTA L. GINGRICH

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See. I am thankful to President Trump for the confidence and trust he has placed in me to be his representative at this important Embassy. In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for supporting my nomination.

It is a special honor to be introduced by Chairman Johnson from my home state of Wisconsin. I am also grateful to appear before this committee today with the full support of my husband, Newt. As veterans of Capitol Hill, we both have great respect for your role in assessing and confirming those who represent the American people abroad. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members and staff of this committee.

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These experiences have instilled in me the highest respect for the Holy See, a deep appreciation for the responsibility of this post, and confidence that the United States-Vatican bilateral relationship is a force for good, and one that cannot be ignored.

As a lifelong Catholic, business owner, documentary film maker, author, and former public servant, I am profoundly humbled at the prospect of serving my country as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See.

If confirmed, I will work diligently to develop even stronger ties between the United States and the Holy See.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mrs. Gingrich.

Our next nominee will be Mr. Sales.

Mr. Sales?

STATEMENT OF NATHAN ALEXANDER SALES OF OHIO, TO BE COORDINATOR FOR COUNTERTERRORISM, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE

Mr. SALES. Thank you, Chairman Johnson. Thank you, Ranking Member Murphy. And thank you, members of the committee for holding this hearing today. It is an honor to be with you this morning.

Let me start by introducing my family, my wife, Margaret, along with our daughters, Anna and Cate. They are the ones with the coloring books and the stickers. My parents, Alex and Marsha, are here. They came out from Ohio. And I would also like to acknowledge my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Charlie and Anna Tretter, who are home in Boston and couldn't be with us this morning.

A special word of thanks to Senator Portman, a fellow Buckeye, for his kind words of introduction. You can take the boy out of Ohio, but you cannot take Ohio out of the boy.

I also want to express my gratitude to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for putting me forward for this important position. If I am confirmed, I will do everything in my power to earn and pay back the trust and confidence that they have shown in me, and that the Senate will have shown in me.

I came to the field of counterterrorism almost by happenstance. In 2001, I was a young lawyer at the Justice Department. I had been hired to work on administrative law issues. It was the middle of August 2001.

Three weeks later was 9/11. I still vividly recall the chilling rumors that flew that morning as we evacuated Main Justice. I am sure many of the people in this room recall those rumors as well. Car bomb at the State Department. Fires on the National Mall. Another hijacked plane heading for the capital.

Some of those rumors turned out to be false alarms, but that was little consolation. The reality was bad enough.

Suddenly, the Chevron doctrine no longer seemed so important. My job and the job of everybody at the Justice Department, everybody in the administration, everybody in Congress, now shifted to one fundamental and overriding priority: preventing another assault on our homeland. 9/11 was not just an attack on our citizens and our landmarks. It was an attack on our very way of life, our democracy, our commitment to the rule of law, our veneration of individual liberty.

And so our top priority at the Justice Department was to equip our Nation's cops, and spies, and soldiers with the tools they needed to confront this new menace and, just as importantly, to do so in a way that maintained faith with our fundamental values as Americans, our basic national values. We couldn't allow our fundamental values to become a casualty of war.

I took that commitment with me to Homeland Security a few years later. At DHS, I learned the importance of working with our allies around the world to confront the specter of terrorism. And I saw firsthand that our alliances are strong, not just because of our shared economic and military might, but because of our shared values.

Let me also say a few words about the dedicated career professionals that I hope to join at the State Department. Before she became a lawyer, my wife earned a master's degree at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, and many of her classmates went on to serve at State Department. There is a reason they call the West Point of the Foreign Service.

Getting to know them, I have developed a deep appreciation for their extensive knowledge, their commitment to the mission, and the sacrifices they have made for our country. It will be a privilege to serve alongside them, if I am confirmed.

I started with my family and I would like to end there, too. I come from a long line of patriots. My father, Alex, was an ROTC cadet and a Navy officer in the tumultuous Vietnam era. During World War II, my grandfather, Clarence, served in the Army Corps of Engineers. He was stationed in England, which is where he met my grandmother, Agnes, an Army nurse. She actually outranked him, which is a fact that she never let him, or anybody else, forget. My other grandfather, Chic, was an infantry captain. He saw action in Normandy, helped liberate France, and earned a Bronze Star for valor and a Purple Heart.

It was a great honor for me to carry on their tradition of service at Justice and Homeland Security. And it will be a great honor, if I am confirmed, to continue their legacy at State.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee. And I look forward to your questions.

[Mr. Sales's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATHAN ALEXANDER SALES

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing. It's an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism.

Let me introduce some family members who are here this morning: My wife, Margaret, along with our daughters, Anna and Cate. My parents, Alex and Marsha,

came out from Ohio. And I'd like to acknowledge my father- and mother-in-law, who are home in Boston and couldn't join us today: Charlie and Anna Tretter.

I'd like to thank Senator Portman, a fellow Buckeye, for his kind words of introduction.

I also want to express my gratitude to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for putting me forward for this important position. If I'm confirmed, I'll do everything in my power to justify the trust and confidence that they—and the Senate—have placed in me.

I came to the field of counterterrorism and national security almost by happenstance. In 2001, I was a young lawyer, fresh off a judicial clerkship, when the Justice Department hired me to work on administrative law issues. I started in mid-August.

Three weeks later was 9/11. I still vividly recall the chilling rumors that flew as we evacuated Main Justice that sunny morning. Car bomb at the State Department. Fires on the national mall. Another hijacked plane heading for the capital. Some of the reports turned out to be false alarms, but that was little consolation. The reality was bad enough.

Suddenly, the Chevron doctrine no longer seemed so important. My job—indeed, the focus of the Justice Department and the administration as a whole—now shifted to one fundamental and overriding priority: Preventing another assault on our homeland.

September the 11th wasn't just an attack on our landmarks and our citizens. It was an attack on our very way of life—our democracy, our devotion to the rule of law, our commitment to individual liberty. And so our top priority as policymakers was to equip our nation's cops, spies, and soldiers with the tools they needed to confront this new menace, and to do so in a way that affirmed our basic national values. We couldn't allow our fundamental rights as Americans to become a casualty of war.

I carried that commitment with me when I joined the fledgling Department of Homeland Security a few years later. At DHS, I learned the importance of working with our allies around the world to confront terrorism. And I saw firsthand that our alliances are strong, not just because of our shared economic and military might, but because of our shared liberal values.

I also learned the ins and outs of the interagency process, working with key counterterrorism players throughout the Government. Terrorism is a complex threat that requires all tools of national power—the armed forces and the intelligence community, to be sure, and also the diplomatic corps, economic officials, and law enforcement.

Let me say a few words about the dedicated career professionals I hope to join at the State Department. Before she became a lawyer, my wife earned a master's degree at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, and many of her friends and classmates have gone on to work at State. Getting to know them, I've developed a deep appreciation for their extensive knowledge, their commitment to the mission, and the sacrifices they've made to advance our country's interests and values. It will be a privilege to serve alongside them, if I'm confirmed.

I started with my family and I'd like to end there too.

I come from a long line of patriots. My father, Alex, was an ROTC cadet and a Navy officer in the tumultuous Vietnam era. During World War II, my grandfather, Clarence, served in the Army Corps of Engineers. He was stationed in England, where he met my grandmother, Agnes, an Army nurse. She actually outranked him, a fact that she never let him—or anyone else—forget. My other grandfather, Chic, was an infantry captain. He saw action in Normandy, helped liberate France, and earned a Bronze Star for valor and a Purple Heart.

It was a great honor for me to carry on their tradition of service at Justice and Homeland Security. And it will be a great honor, if I'm confirmed, to continue their legacy at State.

Thank you again and I look forward to your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Sales. I appreciate you introducing your family. I was remiss in not encouraging everybody to do so.

So, Mr. Glass, if you have members here, please introduce, and then we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE EDWARD GLASS OF OREGON, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC

Mr. GLASS. I will, Senator. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee, it is with great humility and honor I sit before you today.

I am deeply grateful to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their trust and support in nominating me to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Portugal. If confirmed, I am committed to focusing all my energies to further the interests of the United States of America.

I could take a moment, I would like to introduce my family, for without their support and love, I would not be here today. I would like to acknowledge my wife, Mary, who is sitting here with me who came out from Oregon. I would also like to acknowledge my three sons and their wives, who are supporting me from afar. My oldest, Gordon, and his wife, Giau, currently live in Japan. He teaches English over there. My middle son, George, and his wife, Emily, are not here for the best of all reasons. They are due with their first child here in August, and that is actually our first grandchild. And our youngest, Andrew, is in the throes of his very first job just after graduating from college.

I would also like to acknowledge my mother and step-father, Mary and Jay O'Leary, and Mary's parents, Joe and Laurie Ferguson.

Lastly, I want to thank my father, who is here in spirit. It is his courage and wisdom that brings me strength every day.

I take seriously representing the United States of America to the Republic of Portugal, which includes the Azores and Madeira. Portugal is amongst our oldest and most reliable allies. The history of our two nations has always been one of mutual respect and support. Portugal was the second country to recognize America's independence, and our consulate in the Azores is the oldest continually operating consulate in the world.

If confirmed, I also look forward to working with the outstanding personnel that currently serve our country at Mission Lisbon.

Portugal's traditional and geographic orientation to the Atlantic, the presence of 1.5 million Portuguese Americans living in the United States, and a strong pro-American sentiment across the political spectrum make the relationship between our two countries one of the three focal points of Portugal's foreign policy. This unique relationship has allowed us to turn to Portugal for political and material support in almost every peacekeeping mission the United States, NATO, and the United Nations has led since the end of the Cold War.

If confirmed, it will be my job to lead Mission Portugal to further expand enhance this political and economic relationship.

More recently, the Republic of Portugal was hit especially hard by the 2008 global recession, to the point where a financial rescue package was adopted in 2011. Mary and I were in Portugal for an extended trip in 2014 and saw for ourselves what the wage and spending cuts and tax increases were doing to the business envi-

ronment. At that time, unemployment rates were over 15 percent, and they were double that for young adults.

What we witnessed on that trip endeared us to the people of Portugal for life. Even with that economic backdrop, they were focused on the same values that we hold dear in America, God, family, and the belief that hard work will ultimately help one to succeed. These observations were not unfounded. Merely 3 years later, Portugal is in the midst of a remarkable economic recovery.

The United States is now Portugal's No. 1 trading partner outside the EU single market and the fifth largest trading partner overall. The most recent example of this resurgence in bilateral trade occurred in 2016 when Portugal received the first-ever shipment of liquefied natural gas from the United States to Europe.

It is this newfound momentum in Portuguese business that makes it such an exciting time to engage in commerce between our two countries. Lisbon is currently rated one of the hottest technology startup cities in the EU. Given my former position as president of Pacific Crest Securities, I am uniquely situated to help partner U.S. and Portuguese businesses to build upon the technology boom we are seeing today.

The emergence of small startups, incubators, and boot camps looks a lot like the San Francisco Bay Area did in the late 1980s and early 1990s. If confirmed, I cannot wait to join the 200-strong at Mission Lisbon to help them in their endeavor to support and expand the business ties between the United States and Portugal.

Lastly, if I may, I would like to express my deepest sorrow for the family and friends of the over 60 dead, and hundreds injured in the latest forest fire in Portugal. This has been a tragedy of great proportions, and it is seldom that we see this kind of tragedy today.

Coming from Oregon, where timber and timber-based products have been historically one our largest industries, I know the pain that a forest fire can render and the burden that an entire people can feel. Mary and I continue to include the families of those who perished and the brave firefighters who battled mightily in our prayers. I hope, somehow, someday, we can help prevent something like this from occurring again in the future.

Distinguished Senators, once again, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your time. Please have confidence that, if confirmed, I will serve our great country, the United States of America, to the best of my abilities. Thank you.

[Mr. Glass's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEORGE GLASS

Thank you, Senator Wyden, for your gracious introduction. And thank you especially for your many years of public service to our great State of Oregon. Both Mary and I sincerely value your friendship and thank you for being here today.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee, It is with great humility and honor that I sit before you today. I am deeply grateful to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their trust and support in nominating me to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Portugal. If confirmed, I am committed to focusing all my energies to further the interests of the United States of America.

If I could take a moment, I'd like to introduce you to my family, for without their support and love, I would not be here today. I would like to acknowledge my wife Mary who is sitting here with me, she traveled out from Oregon to be here. I'd like

to acknowledge my 3 sons and their wives who are supporting me from afar. Our oldest Gordon and his wife Giau are currently living in Japan. Our middle Son George and his wife Emily are not here for the best of reasons. They are due with their first child, and our first Grandchild in August. And lastly Our youngest son Andrew, who has just graduated from College and in the throws of his first job in Dallas Texas. I would also like to acknowledge my mother and step-father, Mary and Jay O'Leary, and Mary's parents Joe and Laurie Ferguson. Lastly, I want to thank my father who is here in spirit; his courage and wisdom bring me strength every day.

I take seriously the responsibility of representing the United States of America to the Republic of Portugal, which also includes the Azores and Madeira. Portugal is among our oldest and most reliable allies. The history of our two nations has always been one of mutual respect and support. Portugal was the second country to recognize America's independence, and our consulate in the Azores is the oldest continually operating consulate in the world. If confirmed, I also look forward to working with the outstanding Foreign Service personnel that currently serve our country at Mission Lisbon.

Portugal's traditional and geographic orientation to the Atlantic, the presence of 1.5 million Portuguese Americans living in the United States, and a strong pro-American sentiment across the political spectrum combine to make the relationship between our two countries one of the three focal points of Portugal's foreign policy. This unique relationship has allowed us to turn to Portugal for political and material support in almost every peacekeeping effort the United States, NATO, and the United Nations has led since the end of the Cold War. If confirmed, it will be my job to lead Mission Portugal to further expand and enhance this political and economic relationship.

More recently, the Republic of Portugal was hit especially hard by the 2008 global recession, to the point that a financial rescue package was adopted in May 2011. Mary and I were in Portugal for an extended trip in 2014 and saw for ourselves what the wage and spending cuts, and the tax increases were doing to the business environment. At that time, unemployment rates were over 15 percent and nearly twice that for young adults. What we witnessed on that trip endeared us to the people of Portugal for life. Even with that economic backdrop, they were focused on the same values that we hold dear in America: God, family, and the belief that hard work will ultimately help one to succeed. These observations were not unfounded.

Merely three years later, Portugal is in the midst of a remarkable economic recovery. Strong export performance and rebounds in private consumption and investment led to a positive GDP of 1.4 percent in 2016. And this year Portugal has posted its lowest deficit since the 1974 revolution, allowing the country to exit the EU's Excessive Deficit Procedure.

The United States is now Portugal's No. 1 trading partner outside the EU single market and the 5th largest trading partner overall. The most recent example of this resurgence in bilateral trade occurred in April of 2016 when Portugal received the first ever shipment of liquefied natural gas from the United States to Europe. This was followed by a second shipment in February 2017. The Portuguese Government has expressed its eagerness to further expand bilateral cooperation in regards to energy.

It is this newfound momentum in Portuguese business that makes it such an exciting time to engage in commerce between our two countries. Lisbon is currently rated one of the hottest technology start-up cities in the EU. Given my former position as President of Pacific Crest Securities, I am uniquely situated to help partner U.S. and Portuguese businesses to build upon the technology boom we're seeing today. The emergence of small startups, incubators, and boot camps looks a lot like the San Francisco Bay Area of the 80's and early 90's. If confirmed, I can't wait to join the 200 strong of Mission Lisbon in their endeavor to support and expand these business ties between the United States and Portugal.

Lastly, if I may, I would like to express my deepest sorrow for the family and friends of the over 60 dead, and hundreds injured in Portugal's recent forest fire. This has been a tragedy of proportions seldom seen in our world today. Coming from Oregon, where timber and timber based products have been historically one our largest industries, I know the pain that a forest fire can render and the burden that an entire people can feel. Mary and I continue to include the families of those who perished and the brave firefighters that battled mightily in our prayers. I hope, somehow, we can help prevent something like this from ever happening again.

Distinguished Senators, once again I would like to thank each and every one of you for your time today. Please have confidence that, if confirmed, I will serve our great country, the United States of America, to the best of my abilities. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Glass.

The final nominee will be Mr. Risch.

Mr. Risch?

STATEMENT OF CARL C. RISCH OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Mr. RISCH. Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs.

I am joined today by my family, my wife of over 22 years, Wendy Taylor Risch, who has supported me throughout my career and accompanied me on three overseas assignments. Wendy also worked for the Department of State as a spousal employee during two of my overseas tours. I am also joined by our daughters, Anneke Risch, a rising 8th grader, and Ilse Risch, a rising 6th grader.

My family is the center of my life, and instilling in our children a sense of kindness and empathy, as well as a respect for public service, is a priority for us.

I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence and trust they have placed in me. It is, without a doubt, the greatest honor of my professional life to be nominated. And, if confirmed, I will devote all of my skills, experience, and attention to performing my duties.

My wife and I are both natives of central Pennsylvania, where we were born, raised, and educated. I practiced law there for 8 years. My father, a veteran of the Korean War, worked for 30 years in a factory, now closed, which made automotive parts. My mother stayed home with me after my adoption.

Being an adopted person, I have felt a special kinship with the abandoned, the orphaned, and the forgotten, and this kinship has influenced me throughout my life. For example, over the past 9 years, I have volunteered to serve on refugee processing trips for my agency, USCIS, in Thailand, Pakistan, Namibia, and Malaysia, where I worked toward resettlement to the United States of hundreds of victims of persecution and torture.

As an attorney and civil servant, I will bring to the Bureau of Consular Affairs the same values and principles that have guided my career for the past 22 years—a commitment to the rule of law, to efficiency, to justice, and to transparency. My entire career has been focused on serving the public, especially Americans living and working abroad, and to the equal and fair application of the law.

I began my government service as a Foreign Service Officer. My consular tour was one of the most professionally enriching and rewarding experiences of my life. I am grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to work with the dedicated men and women of the State Department, especially in the days and weeks after the attacks of 9/11. In 2006, I returned to public service as a civil servant with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

It is at USCIS where I expanded my knowledge of immigration and nationality law. I rose through the ranks at USCIS, first as an appeals officer, then as a manager, and finally as chief of staff of the agency.

In 2013, my wife and I made the decision to return to international service, and I have spent the past 4 years serving USCIS in our embassies in the Philippines and in South Korea. During those years, I had the pleasure of working side-by-side with consular sections throughout the world. I remain a dedicated civil servant to this day.

If confirmed, it will be a privilege of a lifetime to lead the fine men and women of the Bureau of Consular Affairs. Consular officers are a first line of defense in our efforts to protect our country from those who will do us harm, and they are among the hardest working, most dedicated, and bravest employees in government service. They work in dangerous, uncomfortable places, all to serve the American people. This work is both complex and emotionally taxing, and I am immensely proud to say that I was once one of them, even for a short period of time.

Since my days as a consular officer, so much has changed for the better at the State Department. A suite of interagency security review processes, continuous vetting of applicants using updated technology, biometrics capturing, a longer and better training program, a serious commitment to fraud detection, close cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security, and a culture of making national security a number one priority, this has strengthened State's shared mission to protect our homeland.

Every visa decision the State Department makes thousands of times a day is a national security decision. If confirmed, I will strive to make sure our officers continue to have the training, resources, and leadership necessary to accurately adjudicate applications in accordance with the laws of the United States, while also facilitating legitimate international travel and protecting our national security.

Should I be confirmed, I commit to working with members of this committee and to being responsive to your questions and concerns. Thank you for your time and I look forward to your questions.

[Mr. Risch's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARL C. RISCH

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs.

I am joined today by my family: my wife of over 22 years, Wendy Taylor Risch, who has supported me throughout my career and accompanied me on three overseas assignments. Wendy also worked for the Department of State as a spousal employee during two of my overseas tours. I am also joined by our daughters, Anneke Risch, a rising 8th grader, and Ilse Risch, a rising 6th grader. My family is the center of my life, and instilling in our children a sense of kindness and empathy, as well as a respect for public service, is a priority for us. In the past five years, my daughters have lived in three different countries and, thus, have attended three different schools, all due to my service to the Government. I'm in awe at their resilience and positive attitudes, and we are both very proud of them.

I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence and trust they have placed in me. It is, without a doubt, the greatest honor of my professional life to be nominated, and, if confirmed, I will devote myself to serving the American people in this important capacity within the Department of State.

My wife and I are both natives of central Pennsylvania, where we were born, raised, and educated. I practiced law there for eight years, first as an associate attorney and later as a partner in a law firm. My father, a veteran of the Korean War, worked for 30 years at a factory, now closed, which made automotive parts. My mother stayed home with me after my adoption. I had a stable and happy childhood, and my parents encouraged my lifelong interest in—my passion for—international travel and public service. Being an adopted person, I have also felt a special kinship with the abandoned, the orphaned, and the forgotten, and this kinship has influenced me throughout my life. For example, over the past nine years, I have volunteered to serve on refugee processing trips for my agency in Thailand, Pakistan, Namibia, and Malaysia, where I worked toward the resettlement to the United States of hundreds of victims of persecution and torture, so that they could start new lives. My family and I have also served as cultural orientation volunteers for refugees already resettled in the United States.

As an attorney and career civil servant, I will bring to the Bureau of Consular Affairs the same values and principles that have guided my career for the past 22 years—a commitment to the rule of law, to efficiency, to justice, and to transparency. My entire career has been focused on serving the public, especially U.S. citizens living and working abroad, and to the equal and fair application of the law. I began my government service as a Foreign Service Officer in 1999, after four years of private practice as an attorney. Choosing the consular cone was an obvious and easy choice for a young man entering the Foreign Service with an interest in immigration law. My consular tour was one of the most professionally enriching and rewarding experiences of my life, and leaving the Foreign Service to return to private practice and to start a family in Pennsylvania was a difficult career decision. Nevertheless, I am grateful and honored to havehad the opportunity to work with the dedicated men and women of the State Department, especially in the days and weeks after the attacks of 9/11, an experience that has profoundly affected me personally and professionally.

In 2006, I returned to public service as a civil servant with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. It is at USCIS where I expanded my knowledge of immigration and nationality law, as well as learned to manage adjudicatory systems and backlog reduction efforts. I rose through the ranks at USCIS, first as an appeals official, then as a manager, and finally as Chief of Staff. In 2013, my wife and I made the decision to return to international service, and I have spent the past four years serving USCIS in our embassies in the Philippines and in Korea, most recently as my agency's director in Seoul. During those years, I had the pleasure of working side-by-side with consular sections throughout the world, from Fiji to Namibia, to address thorny questions of law, policy, and process involving our shared mission of facilitating travel and lawful immigration to the United States. While abroad, I also had the honor of serving the interests of U.S. citizens living and working overseas, especially the men and women serving in the military. Assisting military families with lawful immigration was a highlight of my career, but my greatest honor was administering the oath of allegiance to hundreds of military members and spouses at dozens of overseas naturalization ceremonies. When I was asked by our career Acting Director to serve as Chief of Staff of USCIS, I was honored and immediately put in motion my family's early return to the United States. I remain a dedicated civil servant to this day.

If confirmed, it will be a privilege of a lifetime to serve again in the Department of State and lead the fine men and women of the Bureau of Consular Affairs. Consular officers are a first line of defense in our efforts to protect our country from those who will do us harm, and they are among the hardest working, most dedicated, and bravest employees in government service. They often work in dangerous places, under challenging conditions, all to serve the American people and advance the interests of the United States. Many of those who work with us abroad are foreign nationals, lending their expertise in pursuit of our goals. Domestically, Consular Affairs' employees thoughtfully and promptly adjudicate millions of passports, work with colleagues at USCIS to process immigrant visa documents, and support the Bureau's global enterprise. Together, these talented professionals are responsible for advancing one of the Department of State's core responsibilities: protecting the lives and interests of U.S. citizens. The Bureau of Consular Affairs is committed to crisis management and response, assisting individual U.S. citizens who are imprisoned, injured, or in distress, and working with grieving family members when tragedy strikes. This work is both complex and emotionally taxing, and I am immensely proud to say that I was once one of them, even for a short period of time. If confirmed, I look forward to leading this critical organization in continuing to succeed in its important mission.

Since my days as a consular officer, so much has changed for the better at the State Department and the Bureau of Consular Affairs has proved to be a center of innovation and leadership. An impressive array of interagency security review processes, continuous vetting of visa applicants using updated technology, biometrics collection, an improved training program, a serious commitment to fraud prevention, close cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security, and a culture of making national security a number one priority, has strengthened State's shared mission to protect our homeland. As my predecessor, former Assistant Secretary Michele Bond stated in her testimony before this committee two years ago, "every visa decision we make, thousands of times a day, is a national security decision." If confirmed, I will strive to make sure consular professionals continue to have the training, resources, and leadership necessary to fulfill their duties in accordance with the laws of the United States, while augmenting our national security and facilitating legitimate international travel. As I have noted, CA's number one priority is the safety and protection of U.S. citizens overseas, and, if confirmed, I will make this my number one priority as well.

Should I be confirmed, I commit to working with members of this committee and to being responsive to your questions and concerns. Thank you for your time and I look forward to your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Risch.

I want to thank all the nominees for your testimony.

Mr. Glass, by the way, congratulations on your soon-to-be first grandchild. I have three now. They are everything they say, all of the joy with a lot less responsibility.

Mr. GLASS. Wonderful. I am looking forward to it.

Senator JOHNSON. You will enjoy it.

I want to thank all my colleagues for your strong attendance, and in respect of your time, what I will do is I will hold off on my questions until the very end.

Senator Isakson, if you are ready?

Senator ISAKSON. Mr. Chairman, I did not really come for a question. I came to pay tribute to Ms. Gingrich. We have something in common. She married Newt Gingrich. I replaced him in the House of Representatives.

[Laughter.]

Senator ISAKSON. He got the best end of that deal, I can tell you.

But Callista is a lady of great talent. In fact, one of her great, great persuasive talents is to not only convince Newt to marry her but convert him to Catholicism, which will serve him well in the Holy See, as well.

Callista, we are mighty proud of you. We are very proud of Newt. I know you will do a great job, and I just want to be here to cheer you on and tell you how proud we are of you.

Ms. GINGRICH. Thank you so much, Senator.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to all of the nominees for your willingness to take on these positions and to serve this country.

I want to begin with you, Mrs. Gingrich, because you talked about the important role of Catholic charities and the Catholic mission around the world. I certainly agree with that. I had the opportunity to visit a nursing home in northern New Hampshire on Friday that is operated by Catholic charities in the State providing great care to people.

So I wanted to ask you, I know that Pope Francis has called on America and the rest of the Western world to uphold our tradition of moral leadership by welcoming vulnerable refugees fleeing vio-

lence and oppression into our country. I just wonder how you would argue the United States' position that is taken by this administration that has been less welcoming of refugees, and how will you work with the Holy See on that very critical issue?

Ms. GINGRICH. The President and the Pope should have grave concerns regarding the global refugee and migration crisis, and this is a priority for our President to deal with right now. We have a deep commitment in this country to work to forward peace and stability, so people do not have to become refugees.

The United States has been and will continue to be the largest provider of humanitarian aid in the world. We are not disengaging. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Holy See to emphasize the impact that our foreign assistance will have, and our partners around the world.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, certainly, we are not disengaging on foreign aid. I agree with that, and I think that we should continue to support that in every way we can, especially in those places where we are seeing famine as the result of manmade conditions.

But this administration has reduced the ability of refugees to come to the country, particularly Syrian refugees who are fleeing violence and a horrible situation in their own country.

Is this something that you think we can work with Pope Francis and the Holy See to try to ensure that we can help those refugees who are trying to get into the country?

Ms. GINGRICH. I think we can communicate our commitment to help those most in need, yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Professor Sales, Secretary Tillerson has spoken repeatedly about the possibility of increased cooperation with Russia. In Syria, we have a ceasefire that still seems to be holding in a very small southern part of that country. But time and again, Putin has demonstrated that he is interested in preserving the Assad regime.

So do you believe that we share the same interests and objectives in Syria? And if not, how would you describe our objectives differently?

Mr. SALES. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I think the answer is yes and no. I think we do have some shared objectives in Syria. We face a common enemy in ISIS. We have other interests that diverge, as you well know, Senator.

As to what we can do with Russia or other members of the international community to achieve our objectives in Syria, our number one priority, I think, as the administration has made plain, is to defeat ISIS. What that means is taking their leaders off the battlefield and their foot soldiers off the battlefield, liberating the cities that they have seized, defeating their ability to recruit foreign fighters from around the world, particularly Europe, and drying up their sources of funding.

The key question after that goal is accomplished is what comes next? I think one important thing that has to happen is a political process involving all of the relevant stakeholders that can produce stability, such that the people of Syria can chart a way forward.

That is something that cannot be accomplished entirely by military force. It is something that is going to require sustained diplomatic engagement.

And, Senator, if I am confirmed to this position, that is going to be a priority of ours.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. One of the benefits that we have in fighting terrorism at home is engagement from the communities that terrorists have often come from. In the Muslim community, for example, making sure that there are good relations with people in the Muslim community here has been very helpful here.

How would you see our promoting those kinds of positive relationships?

Mr. SALES. I could not agree with you more, Senator. It is absolutely critical to maintain strong relationships with domestic populations, as well as international populations, because oftentimes, these are the groups of people who have the first insight into the fact that a problem may be taking place. It is critically important for us to have open lines of communication, such that our friends are confident that they can tell us we think that something amiss may be afoot without fear of stigmatization or any other sort of negative repercussion.

So I strongly agree with the sentiment behind that question and look forward to maintaining those strong relationships, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I have other questions for the panelists, but my time is up, sadly.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks and congratulations to all the witnesses for your nominations.

To Mr. Glass, the U.S.-Portugal relationship is a very important one. I do a lot of work in the Iberian Peninsula in my work on this committee, and I applaud you for that nomination.

Mr. Risch, consular officials have very tough work. They really do. When I travel for the Foreign Relations Committee, I always ask to meet without the Ambassador with FSOs on their first or second tours, and they are almost always out of the consular section.

I basically say, congratulations, you have achieved a wonderful job working for the State Department. What will be the difference as to whether you make it a career or whether you leave after a few years. That is usually all I have to say to engender about a 2-hour conversation. I really enjoy visiting with our consular officials. And your work will be very important.

A question or comment for each Mr. Sales and Ms. Gingrich.

Ms. Gingrich, I am very happy with your answer to Senator Shaheen's questions about refugees. I was at the Vatican in February and had an opportunity to meet briefly with the Pope and with other Vatican officials purely on the refugee issue. In my conversation with the Pope, I thanked him for his leadership.

Obviously, a key aspect of his speech to Congress in 2015 was about refugees. He had given a speech the day before my visit in Rome focused on refugee issues. And he was pleading with the United States to please be a leader on these issues. I was thanking him for his leadership, but he was not just going to accept the thank you. He wanted to put an ask on our shoulders. And, as you know, there are so many issues in this important bilateral relationship, and I know that that will be an important one.

You are not the budget official, so I completely get this. You play the hand that you are dealt by a President's submitted budget, and also the budget that Congress comes up with. But the cut to the refugee bureau proposed in the President's budget, the refugee bureau within the State Department, is 31 percent.

I think that sends a very loud message. Rhetoric sends a message, and budget sends a message. Probably the two most significant messages you can send are with the rhetoric and with the budget. We are sending a message.

I hope that it is the will of this body to do some repair on the budget, so that the message that we send is not one that we are reducing America's traditional commitment to those issues.

I take you, because of your background, the comment that you made to Senator Shaheen, that you will do all you can to advance our longstanding policy of being a Statue of Liberty Nation that welcomes people who are oppressed, I appreciate your commitment to that.

Mr. Sales, let me just ask you this. I am on the Armed Services Committee as well. Last year, we were able to get something done in the NDAA that I thought was pretty good, and my colleagues agreed. We enabled, through the NDAA, the DOD to transfer funds to State or USAID on the say-so of the SecDef for countering violent extremism, if the SecDef felt like, "Well, I think State or USAID can do a better job at this than us."

So, in particular areas, it really has been more in the expertise of State or USAID to do particular programs that can counter violent extremism, and sometimes the State and diplomatic touch is better than the military touch.

So if the SecDef agrees, there is no transfer authority. I hope that that is something that you will look at.

But I have noticed there has been some discussion of stripping away some CVE aspects of the administration's counterterrorism strategy.

To your knowledge, and I know we are not presuming nomination, so you are not there yet, but will CVE remain a strong priority of the CT Bureau at the State Department?

Mr. SALES. Yes, Senator. If I am confirmed, it will continue to be a top priority for me and for the bureau that I would lead.

I think all counterterrorism has to involve a countering violent extremism component. Terrorism is a global problem that presents all sorts of different facets, and some of those facets require different kinds of solutions. Sometimes military solutions are required. Sometimes law enforcement solutions are required.

But it is not just hard power that has to be deployed to counter ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other like-minded groups. We also have to use the softer tools in the national toolkit, such as moral suasion, such as engaging at the community level, such as providing off-ramps for those who might be tempted to take a path toward radicalization.

So I am grateful for this capability that you and others have worked to build into the State Department. And if confirmed, I will continue the good work that has been done, Senator.

Senator KAINE. And, Ms. Gingrich, if I can just go back, because you have a communications background, too, and, of course, CVE is an important priority of the Vatican, as well.

Could you talk a little bit about, to my last question, how you see your role as Ambassador to the Holy See and what you could do in the bilateral relationship with the Vatican to counter extremism?

Ms. GINGRICH. Well, it is very exciting to have the opportunity, if confirmed, to be working at an Embassy, to lead an Embassy, that has a global influence and works on a global scale.

I am very interested in working on projects to advance religious freedom, to fight terrorism and violence, to combat human trafficking, to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS and Ebola, and to work on—to seek peaceful solutions to crises around the world. So this is an awesome opportunity, if I am confirmed.

There are many issues on which we do agree. We have a very strong bilateral relationship with a shared agreement on many issues. Of course, there are always issues where diplomatic partners do not agree. But I look forward to working on those issues of our shared policy opportunities.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congratulations to all of you.

Mr. Risch, in 2007, you appeared before the House Subcommittee on the Civil Service, Census, and Agency Organization of the Committee on Government Reform in a hearing titled, "Strengthening America: Should the issuing of vises be viewed as a diplomatic tool or security measure?"

You said, and I quote, "During my tenure as unit chief, I adjudicated approximately 25,000 visa applications. I resigned in May 2002, even though I received top evaluation in a challenging onboard assignment. While I longed to return to my private practice, I was also discouraged by the State Departments lack of dedication to the effective enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States. I took my job very seriously. The State Department did not."

So, Mr. Risch, do you believe the State Department is not committed to the rule of law and the national security of the United States?

Mr. RISCH. Thank you, Senator, for the question, and for the opportunity to address that testimony.

I will point out that the testimony was in 2002, not in 2007, so it was 15 years ago that that testimony took place. It was during the time when the Department of Homeland Security was just being stood up. It was in the almost immediate aftermath of 9/11.

I believe a lot has changed at the State Department in 15 years, and I am very enthusiastic about the future of the way the Bureau of Consular Affairs will be fulfilling its function. With interagency cooperation and continuous vetting.

Senator MENENDEZ. I do not want my time to expire. We have a lot of candidates here.

Do you believe the State Department is committed to the rule of law and the national security of the United States?

Mr. RISCH. Currently, Senator, I absolutely do.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. Let me ask you, you went on in the same hearing to say, "The fact that even I was terrified by State's incompetence and apathy toward law enforcement proves just how far this problem has progressed. I urge the Congress to support the transfer of the visa-issuing function from State's Bureau of Consular Affairs to the new Department of Homeland Security, a department that will be committed to the rule of law and the national security of the United States."

Now, PRM's mission is to provide life-staining assistance to those who are persecuted, uprooted people, by working through multilateral systems, to build global partnerships, promote best practices in humanitarian response, ensure that humanitarian principles are thoroughly integrated into U.S. foreign and national security policy. For example, refugees and migration are important policy issues in our bilateral relations with countries like Turkey and Iraq.

So do you believe that the Department of Homeland Security, which is notoriously bloated with a whole host of dysfunctional components, should be responsible still to have the visa, the very essence of the department you are being nominated to, to be transferred to the Department of Homeland Security?

Mr. RISCH. Well, 15 years ago, Senator, I stand behind my testimony. It was a completely different time, and there was a lot of talk about consolidating different things into the Department of Homeland Security.

Currently, I watched the Deputy Secretary testify yesterday that it is currently not the intent of the Department of State.

Senator MENENDEZ. I am not asking what their intent is. I am asking you your view. You are being nominated for this position.

Mr. RISCH. My view is I would follow the leadership of the Department of State, if confirmed. But as of today, I intend to lead the Bureau of Consular Affairs as it is currently formed. I believe that I will be, if confirmed, a strong leader of all functions of the Consular bureau, including the visa function.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Sales, since 9/11, the United States has been developing and redeveloping strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. Our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan lead very little doubt that extremist ideologues and terrorists flourish and find the best recruits in areas of conflict and poverty and where people have no hope for the future.

The 2016 State Department and AID joint strategy on countering violent extremism outline five objectives. In those objectives, they talk to those very issues that I just spoke about.

So my question is, how do proposed cuts to the State Department and USAID programs that are the foreign assistance tools that advance the goals of combating terrorism and violent extremism actually align with our very own policy?

Mr. SALES. Thank you for the question, Senator. I spent some time in academic bureaucracies. I have spent some time in government bureaucracies. In my experience, it is usually the case that they can afford to tighten the belt a bit.

Now, as far as the overall State Department budget is concerned, Senator, Congress has the power of the purse under the Constitu-

tion, so Congress will have to decide the levels at which it wishes to fund these activities.

Senator MENENDEZ. My problem with these answers is that you all want to kick the ball to someone else, but your nominations are, in essence, going to be part of policy decision-making. You will be in a room to be able to advocate at the State Department and interagency.

So simply saying that Congress has the power of the purse, I am fully aware of that. The question is, what is your advocacy at a given point in time? Are these the essential programs that are necessary, as Secretary Mattis has said, that this is how we fight these ideologues? This is a guy who is a general.

So I would like to get better answers.

Finally, if I may, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Glass, we have a lot of Portuguese-Americans in New Jersey and from the Azores, an extraordinary group of citizens that have done extraordinary things in communities.

Have you visited Portugal?

Mr. GLASS. I have.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you speak Portuguese?

Mr. GLASS. At this time, no. I have had some Spanish, and I am working on Portuguese and will certainly utilize the experts that are in the Embassy to help us learn the language.

Senator MENENDEZ. I ask that question, because, in the past, these questions have been asked, when I was the chairman, of the nominees. And for some, it was disqualifying. For me, it is not. But I just wanted to know.

Thank you very much.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Glass, why don't you take this opportunity right now to provide some comfort to Senator Menendez. Talk about your experience on your trip to Portugal that you conveyed to me in my office.

Mr. GLASS. The trip that Mary and I took to Portugal was 3 years ago. We were on a pilgrimage to Fatima. When we got there, it truly transformed our lives. It transformed the way we look at each other. It transformed the way we look at our religion.

As we traveled throughout the country, we realized the hospitality of the people there was extraordinary. And this was at a time, 3 years ago, that they were under a very severe recession. They had an austerity program that was enacted, so there was a lot of unemployment. Yet, that did not stop everybody from welcoming us there.

So we knew at the time when we left that we, frankly, left a big piece of our hearts there and that we wanted to come back. We certainly had no idea that we would possibly be coming back, if confirmed, in this role.

But Portugal is very important to us, and we look forward to serving the United States in Portugal.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Udall?

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much, Chairman Johnson.

New Mexico, my home State, has one of the oldest Catholic traditions in the country, and it has been over 400 years since the Catholic Church was first established in the State of New Mexico,

which obviously was not a State at the time. Those traditions still run very strong in the State.

Like Pope Francis, many New Mexicans have a strong reverence for St. Francis de Assisi. In fact, the Catholic missionary efforts in New Mexico were started by the order named for him, the Franciscans.

The full name of my hometown of Santa Fe, the oldest capital city in the country, is also named for St. Francis. Its full name is La Villa Real de la Santa Fe de San Francisco de Assisi, the Royal Town of the Holy Faith of St. Francis of Assisi. The traditions of St. Francis run strong in New Mexico.

The Pope honors the saint by taking his name and working in his tradition, writing in his encyclical, "Laudato Si," or "Praise Be to You," and it was subtitled, "On Care for Our Common Home," Pope Francis stated, "I believe that St. Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable, and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast."

Those are the words of the Pope. The Pope gifted his encyclical on climate change to President Trump when he visited the Pope at the Vatican.

Pope Francis in "Laudato Si" and on many other occasions has called on Catholics and people from every faith to work together to address climate change and protect the environment.

In New Mexico, my constituents are at the frontlines of global warming, and we are already beginning to see the impacts of extreme weather events.

Ms. Gingrich, could you share your thoughts on "Laudato Si" and how you would dialogue with the Holy See regarding climate change and what Pope Francis calls a dialogue about how we shape the future of the planet?

Ms. GINGRICH. Well, the Pope and the President share a great concern about our environment. President Trump wants to maintain that we have clean air and clean water, and that the United States remains an environmental leader. As President Trump said, we will disengage and pull out of the Paris Agreement, and either we enter the Paris Agreement or an entirely new agreement, one that is fair to Americans.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Holy See as the United States pursues a balanced approach to climate policy, one that promotes American jobs, American prosperity, and energy security.

Senator UDALL. I really believe the essence and core of diplomacy is listening and having an open mind, and I hope that you will go over there with that approach and listen to the Pope.

The Holy See has played an important role, along with the United States, to engage Cuba and to improve relations with our island neighbor. Cardinal Ortega in Cuba and Pope Francis have used the dialogue to help resolve differences between the United States and Cuba.

What are your views on this dialogue? And would you be willing to work with the Vatican to increase ties between the United States and the Cuban people?

Ms. GINGRICH. Well, we certainly appreciate the Holy See's concern for a better relationship between the United States and Cuba. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Holy See to advance religious freedom and human dignity and human rights in Cuba.

Senator UDALL. Do any of the other panelists have a view on the Pope's encyclical on climate change?

I take that as no? No, no, no, all three.

Okay, thank you very much.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here.

I wanted to follow up on Senator Menendez's line of questioning, especially to you, Mr. Risch, and to you, Mr. Sales, because it is an important point. You are going to be asked for your opinion. In fact, you are being nominated to your positions because of your policy expertise in both of these areas.

So he is right. It is simply not enough to suggest that you are going to follow orders. It is important for the nominating committee and for the Senate to know what advice you are going to be giving.

So, Mr. Risch, let me just drill down to ask you a question that you have not answered yet, which is, if you were asked for your opinion as to whether State should retain function over visa responsibilities, or it should be shifted to the Department of Homeland Security, what will your advice be?

Mr. RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

This has been a subject of debate for quite some time. My understanding is, currently, the debate is framed around government efficiency. When I have seen this proposal bubble up, usually, it has been in the context of these efficiency initiatives and brainstorming sessions.

I cannot speak to whether or not it would bring a certain efficiency to move that function from one department to the other. I do not intend to advocate for that. I am simply not in the position to make that efficiency call around that function.

My concern in the past in criticizing the State Department was around a lack of respect for consular work, around national security concerns, and around the rule of law. I believe those issues have been addressed, so I do not intend to advocate for that change based on any concern around the way the State Department does its job.

Senator MURPHY. Okay. I think that is fairly clear. It is important for us to understand whether you are being nominated to this position to effectively end the functionality. And I hear you to be saying that that is not your intent.

Mr. RISCH. It is not my intent, Senator. I do not intend, if confirmed, to lead a diminished Bureau of Consular Affairs. I intend to lead a bureau that I believe will probably be gaining responsibility and importance in protecting our country.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Mr. Sales, I appreciate your answer around efficiency. I do not think any of us disagree that every bureaucracy can get more efficient. But that is not what is happening to the Department of State.

This is a strategic focus on a greatly diminished capacity, and specifically some of the biggest cuts happen under your portfolio. So there is a 10 percent cut in funding for the counterterrorism bureau. But then more damaging, there is a 30 percent cut to NADR funding proposed in the President's budget, and that is foreign aid for counterterrorism activities at State. That budget request moves a $1.1 billion fund down to a $680 million fund.

So do you think that you can effectively carry out on the set of responsibilities you are given with a 30 percent cut to NADR funding, which seems to go beyond just those savings that can be captured by efficiency?

Mr. SALES. Thanks for the question, Senator. I will answer it as best I can from my vantage point as an outsider, somebody who has not yet gotten a great deal of visibility on the internal deliberations on these very important questions.

So with that caveat, what I can tell you is, if I ever thought—we talked about this yesterday in your office, Senator, so I can assure you that if I ever thought that I did not have the resources I needed to do the job to which I had been confirmed, I would have no hesitation whatsoever about raising that concern with my superiors and advocating for what I deem to be necessary.

Senator MURPHY. I appreciate that answer. I think if that is your sincere answer, you will be in a position of advocating very vigorously very early.

The hiring freeze that at first applied to the entirety of the Federal Government now applies to only one agency, and that is the State Department. And you will all feel that, because you will not be able to hire individuals that you need in order to perform the tasks at your departments and your embassies. Extraordinary measures have been taken to prevent lateral transfers within the Department of State. Thus, you will see certain functionalities hollowed out because of the traditional ways in which State moved people back and forth are no longer available.

There is something extraordinary happening right now, and many of us cannot derive the motivation for it. But you are all going to feel the brunt of it. I hope that all of your answers would be the same as Mr. Sales, that if you felt that you did not have the resources, that notwithstanding the decisions that have been made by the White House, you would argue for more resources.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. If we have a second round, I might have more one or two more.

Senator JOHNSON. Before I turn to Senator Merkley, as long as we are on the subject, Mr. Sales, talk about your experience at DHS and the coordination that is going to be incredibly important between the Department of State and DHS. I think that is a legitimate discussion point, in terms of where these activities are best carried out.

Mr. SALES. Thank you, Senator.

In my experience at DHS, one of the most important areas of international engagement that bears real fruit, in terms of counter-

terrorism, is information-sharing. It is really critically important for our international allies to tell us if they know about a known or suspected terrorist who might be trying to travel to the United States, to tell us if they know about somebody who has a criminal history as long as your forearm trying to travel to the United States.

We have made some great strides toward ensuring more effective sharing of that kind of information since 9/11. Here in the United States, we have pioneered information-sharing. After 9/11, one of the refrains that we constantly heard was the need to tear down the wall. Well, there are not just walls in our domestic law. There are also walls in our international relations that impede the effective sharing of information.

So if I were confirmed to this position, that would be, I think, a top priority of mine, working with our allies around the globe to talk about ways to share that information to enhance our counterterrorism effectiveness on both sides of the transaction.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay, I just wanted to give you that opportunity, because I think when you take a look at this massive Federal Government, with the results of the 9/11 commission talking about the stovepipes, it is a legitimate management discussion and, quite honestly, an initiative to take a look at where best these functions should reside.

So I do not see any problem whatsoever in having this administration do a top-to-bottom review and take a look at that. And where it all shakes out, there is a second branch of government here, and Congress will certainly engage in that. Certainly, under my other committee, chairman of Homeland Security and Government Affairs, will be discussing these things. But this is what effective management does. You are always doing postmortems. You are always taking a look at what is the most effective way to spend the money to get the best result.

So with that, Senator Merkley?

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

It is a pleasure to join my colleague, Senator Wyden, in welcoming our fellow Oregonian, George Edward Glass, nominated to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Portugal. Mr. Glass has probably been introduced in terms of the details, that he is a native Oregonian, a proud graduate of the University of Oregon, but I want to emphasize those things again, and that he certainly has tremendous Oregon passions, like the love of Oregon's outdoor spaces and Ducks football—hopefully a good season ahead.

I am grateful that he is willing to put those loves on hold to be overseas to serve our country.

A warm welcome to Mr. Glass's wife, Mary. Thank you for joining us today.

Ambassadorial posts are necessarily family affairs, so I appreciate the fact that Mrs. Glass is willing to join her husband in traveling and representing the United States in Portugal.

Portugal has been a very important ally, and we have seen a very intriguing and successful economic story unfold there. I think nurturing this relationship will be of great service. I thank you, Mr. Glass, for being willing to undertake that mission.

Mr. GLASS. Thank you, Senator Merkley. Thank you for serving the great State of Oregon in the United States Senate. We really appreciate it.

Senator MERKLEY. You are welcome.

And, Ms. Gingrich, I wanted to follow up on the question that was asked in regard to the Pope's encyclical. He gave it as a present to President Trump when he was there. Has President Trump had a chance to read or digest that encyclical?

Ms. GINGRICH. I am not aware whether or not he has read the encyclical.

Senator MERKLEY. In your preparation to serve, have you had a chance to take a look at it?

Ms. GINGRICH. I have looked at some of it, sir.

Senator MERKLEY. Are there pieces of it that particularly resonate for you?

Ms. GINGRICH. Well, I think we are all called to be stewards of the land. You know, as I said earlier, President Trump cares for our environment. He wants to sustain our clean air and our clean water, and he wants the United States to be an environmental leader.

We are not backing off of that. But we are looking to increase the security of this country, to promote more jobs for Americans, and to have better prosperity. So the focus is slightly different, but we do want to remain an environmental leader.

Senator MERKLEY. The Pope has indicated that he feels that there is a huge urgency to acting quickly to address the basic factors driving climate disruption. Do you share that sense of urgency?

Ms. GINGRICH. Well, I do believe that climate change exists, and that some of it is due to human behavior. But I think as the President pursues a better deal for Americans, we will, indeed, remain an environmental leader in the world.

Senator MERKLEY. I appreciate your confidence in that. I must say I must have missed a few of the President's statements that have given you that have faith. I wish it were so. I am not persuaded, but perhaps we will see more unfold in that regard.

What other two or three things do you see as the key to your particular responsibilities, should you hold this post?

Ms. GINGRICH. If confirmed, I am looking forward to working with the Holy See to combat human trafficking. This is a horrific offense that threatens our global security. The President has made it a priority to combat human trafficking. Chairman Corker and other members of this committee have made it a priority as well. The Holy See is a valued partner in this regard, and the Pope has lent international focus to this issue.

So if confirmed, I look forward to working with the White House, the Congress, and the Holy See to combat human trafficking around the world.

Senator MERKLEY. My appreciation to all of you for putting yourselves forward in what can be a complex, difficult, and trying nominations process.

With that, I will yield back the rest of my time.

Senator JOHNSON. Thanks, Senator Merkley.

Looking at my list of questions, when I did some follow-ups to some of the other Senator's questions, I have pretty well covered it and questioned everybody except for Mrs. Gingrich, my fellow Wisconsinite.

So let me just give you an opportunity. George Santayana, I am probably mispronouncing it like I did "basilica" earlier, a senior moment, made the famous statement that those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it. I know both you and your husband are serious students of history.

In particular, your study of Pope John Paul II, your documentary, "Nine Days That Changed the World," from my standpoint, that really puts you in a very good position to understand exactly the power of leadership. And I believe, as I am sure you do to, I think America has been a phenomenal force for good in the world. I think the Catholic Church has been a phenomenal force for good in the world.

In my own community, one of the things I got involved in that got me involved in public service was trying to save the Catholic school system there as a private-sector alternative.

So can you just talk a little bit about your study that produced those documentaries and how that leadership—what you learned in terms of leadership and how America and the Holy See can work together to really help change the world?

Ms. GINGRICH. Our movie, "Nine Days That Changed the World," highlights this exact topic.

In 1979, Pope John Paul II traveled to Poland on a historic pilgrimage to see the Polish people, and it was against the wishes of the communist government. Millions of Poles came out to greet the Holy Father. It was really seen as the beginning of the end of communism in Poland and Eastern Europe.

Pope John Paul II worked very closely with President Reagan. Ten years later, you had the first free elections in Poland.

So it is so important that we reach out to places like the Holy See to forward good in this world and to make it a better place to advance our peace and our freedom and our human dignity.

Senator JOHNSON. I think an ambassador that understands that history, understands the power of that leadership, is perfectly suited for this position.

Senator Murphy, do you have any further questions?

Senator MURPHY. Just an additional two questions.

One for Mr. Risch. We have been talking about this administration's policy toward refugees. Multiple courts have held that the policy is illegal, in part because it appears discriminatory, given that it is targeted only to refugees of certain countries, when we have security vulnerabilities that still exist in many other refugee programs, in many other immigration programs, I would argue visa waiver at the top of that list.

Can you speak to whether you believe that the only means of protecting this country is an outright ban on refugees? Or whether you believe that, at some point, there is going to be an amendment of this policy by the administration, may be advocated by you once you are in place, to provide additional screening within the program to allow it to restart? Do you need the ban or can you make

changes to the program that satisfy the concerns that many people have about it?

Mr. RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

As for refugee policy, I will point out that that really is not something that would fall underneath the Bureau of Consular Affairs. It would really be under PRM and their relationship with my agency now, USCIS.

As for vetting, at least in the refugee context, I can speak as someone who has done refugee interviews over many years that the interviews are very detailed and go into great detail about their persecution story, biographic data. And every one of them is spoken to by an American officer.

So as for whether or not refugees are screened, they most certainly are, in the sense that they are spoken to at great length about their qualifications.

As for the current situation with a travel pause of certain countries and the way that is playing out, I certainly support any kind of steps that are necessary to review our national security posture and take a look at whether or not our vetting processes are sufficient to protect the United States.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Sales, let me ask you one specific question, and then I will defer to written questions for the remainder.

We talked a little bit in my office about some of the current conflicts in the Middle East today. The most recent intelligence estimate provided to Congress shows that AQAP, which has always been the most lethal and most homeland- oriented arm of Al Qaeda, is growing stronger and stronger inside Yemen because of the civil war. Under the Obama administration, there was a robust political process that Secretary Kerry was leading to try to end that violence and to try to end the benefit that was being provided to AQAP.

I have talked to all of the players inside that conflict, and none of them see that political process happening today. It is, by and large, dead, in part because Saudis feel empowered by the green light that they interpret as having been given through the President's visit there.

Can you just speak to the importance of a political process inside Yemen and the danger of allowing for this civil war to persist, given the growth of AQAP during that time?

Mr. SALES. Senator, I could not agree more with the premise of your question that a purely military solution is never going to achieve the counterterrorism gains we need.

What is needed is a stable environment, because as you point out, terrorists thrive in political vacuums. That is the lesson of Afghanistan. That is the lesson of Libya. That is the lesson of Iraq.

So diplomatic engagement, I think, is absolutely essential to ensure that we have a durable and stable status quo in Yemen to bring the fighting to an end and empower local players to gain control over territory and borders.

That is the only way you are going to get AQAP under control, Senator.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Again, I want to thank all the witnesses for your testimony. Congratulations again on your nominations. I want to congratulate the President. I really think that the selection here, your unique backgrounds and capabilities I think suit you well for the positions to which you have been nominated.

Thank you for your willingness to serve. I want to thank your families. You will probably be seeing less of your loved ones. These are serious responsibilities.

But again, thank you very much.

With that, I have to find the secret words here.

For the information of the members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, July 20.

Senator JOHNSON. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:19 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO CALLISTA GINGRICH BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. For the past 10 years, my work as a documentary film producer and author has highlighted the fundamental importance of liberty and democracy in American history, and in America's exceptional place in the world.

In our documentary film, Nine Days that Changed the World, we explored the quest for freedom and democracy in an international context, focusing on Pope John Paul II's historic pilgrimage to Poland in 1979—an event that inspired the Polish people to renew their hearts, reclaim their courage, and free themselves from the shackles of Communism. Nine Days that Changed the World is frequently used in religious education programs throughout the United States—helping to instill a strong appreciation for liberty and democracy in the next generation.

My Ellis the Elephant American history series for children features the pivotal moments that have shaped our great nation. These books also highlight our American values of liberty and democracy and have reached a wide-ranging audience.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Holy See to support and promote human rights and democracy throughout the world.

Question 2. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 3. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 4. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Holy See?

Answer. No.

Question 5. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I strongly believe that those who represent the United States abroad must represent the full beauty, strength, and diversity of the fabric of American so-

ciety. As the State Department's Statement on Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity notes, "Our commitment to inclusion must be evident in the face we present to the world and in the decision-making processes that represent our diplomatic goals."

As a small business owner, I have made it a priority to build a strong, mutually supportive team. If confirmed, I will take the same approach to managing each member of the Embassy Vatican team, taking special care to ensure that each individual is able to draw upon his or her unique background and experience to contribute to the goals of our mission. I am fully committed to equal employment opportunity principles.

Question 6. What steps will you take to ensure that each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. Just as I take seriously my own responsibility, if confirmed, to lead a diverse and inclusive mission, I am committed to ensuring the managers and supervisors at Embassy Vatican fully uphold equal employment opportunity principles and promote the success of each member of our embassy community. If confirmed, I will clearly and consistently articulate these principles as chief of mission, and I will ensure our embassy supervisors consistently prioritize them in their interactions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO NATHAN SALES BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. Hezbollah remains one of the world's most deadly terrorist organizations and is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans. In addition to the funding it receives from Iran, Hezbollah runs a sophisticated network of criminal activities to fund its terrorist operations in Lebanon and throughout the world, including in the Western Hemisphere. Do you have recommendations on how the United States can better confront the threat posed by Hezbollah? Do you agree with long-held U.S. policy that there is no distinction between military and civilian wings of terrorist groups like Hezbollah or Hamas? If confirmed, will you press our EU allies to designate all of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization?

Answer. Hizballah is a U.S. designated foreign terrorist organization whose global terrorist operations, and illicit activity and military operations in Syria and elsewhere, threaten global security and contribute to regional instability. If confirmed, disrupting Hizballah's far-reaching terrorist and military capabilities will be one of my top priorities. I will continue engaging in a range of efforts to counter Hizballah, including using designations tools and working closely with the Departments of Treasury and Justice and other U.S. Government entities to improve capacity and increase awareness in regions where Hizballah is most active, including Eastern Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and West Africa.

The United States does not distinguish between Hizballah's different wings. This approach is based on a careful review of all available information, which indicates that Hizballah's numerous branches and subsidiaries share common funding, personnel, and leadership, all of which support the group's violent actions.

Question 2. Although ISIS is steadily losing territory, it will remain a terrorism threat for years to come. Its foreign-born fighters will return to their homelands, including the United States. ISIS will also continue to have an online presence that will allow it to inspire and support potential homegrown terrorists. How do you believe ISIS will evolve after it loses its territory in Iraq and Syria? Once ISIS is stateless, how should the U.S. combat the group? Where will America be most vulnerable?

Answer. As ISIS continues to lose territory, the group has had increasing difficulty attracting foreign terrorist fighters to travel to Iraq and Syria. Additionally, Coalition-backed military operations in Iraq and Syria are being conducted simultaneously both to accelerate the defeat of ISIS and to ensure that foreign fighters already on the battlefield are unable to escape. Nevertheless, we expect the group to continue to rely on its global networks and branches to carry out and inspire attacks beyond Iraq and Syria. ISIS will likely continue to urge its followers to carry out attacks in their home countries, including the United States, rather than calling for followers to travel to Iraq and Syria—a message the group began to disseminate last year when it began to lose large swaths of territory.

In response, the United States has made important strides to defeat ISIS and reduce the number of terrorist safe havens around the world. If confirmed, I will con-

tinue to work with partners to improve information sharing; increase law enforcement and judicial capacities to detect, deter, investigate, and prosecute terrorists and terrorist financing; strengthen borders; and improve our ability to counter terrorist narratives.

Question 3. What do you see as the most urgent counterterrorism issues for the U.S. Government to address? What would be the most important counterterrorism issues for you as the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the State Department?

Answer. Today's terrorist landscape is more complex, multifaceted, and localized than ever before and we should expect ISIS to adopt new tactics and targets as a result of Coalition success in Iraq and Syria. But we must also remain vigilant against threats posed by al-Qa'ida and its regional affiliates as well as by Iranian-backed terrorist groups.

Anticipating new terrorist threats by ISIS outside of Iraq and Syria, the CT Bureau and its interagency partners will have to ensure that police, border security officials, prosecutors, and other civilian-led entities in foreign partner countries are prepared to counter more attacks by battle-hardened foreign terrorist fighters and homegrown violent extremists operating in places like Southeast Asia, Western Europe, Africa, and potentially the homeland. If confirmed, I will employ diplomacy and targeted programmatic assistance to ensure that our partners have the will and capacities to address evolving terrorist threats, tactics, and travel.

If confirmed, I would carefully consider and prioritize which efforts the CT Bureau could lead or support to address the long-term drivers of extremism. Specifically, I would coordinate closely with other departments and agencies to coordinate the Department's international countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts.

Question 4. Do you believe that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps—not just the Qods Force—should be designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization?

Answer. My understanding is that the Department of State is committed to a whole-of-government approach that ensures appropriate action against the IRGC's illicit activities. The administration is currently reviewing its overall Iran policy. This review presents the U.S. Government with an opportunity to identify additional actions the U.S. can undertake to counter the IRGC.

As an entity of the Iranian Government, my understanding is that the IRGC is currently subject to a range of restrictions and sanctions that derive from Iran's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism (SST). There are other restrictions and sanctions that impact the IRGC, to include: numerous Executive Orders that collectively block Iranian property and interests from the U.S. commercial and financial systems, and which can have secondary sanctions consequences.

I am aware that the administration is aggressively targeting Iran's destabilizing activities around the world, including its support for terrorism, by imposing sanctions on individuals and entities related to the IRGC-Qods Force and Iranian proxies like Hizballah and Al-Ashtar Brigades, as well as individuals and entities connected to Iran's ballistic missile program. Additionally, the State Department has recently announced multiple designations and sanctions targeting people and entities affiliated with Iran and the IRGC.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO NATHAN SALES BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy has been a top priority of mine, both during my government service and as a law professor; I believe that it is essential to preserve a durable balance between national security needs and the fundamental rights that are a bedrock of our democracy. For example, as a policymaker at the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security, I worked to ensure that new counterterrorism initiatives included concrete and specific protections for privacy and civil liberties, such as judicial review, congressional oversight, internal audits, and similar safeguards. During my time as a law professor, I have sought to instill in my students a deep appreciation for this country's basic constitutional values, especially the many foreign students I have taught over the years. I also have promoted those values overseas, by teaching classes and giving to lectures to students, lawyers, and other audiences around the world—including in post-Communist countries like Georgia, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia—about

the rule of law, judicial review, and judicial independence. If confirmed, I would bring this enduring commitment with me to the State Department.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues related to counterterrorism? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy with respect to counterterrorism? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Respect for human rights while combating terrorism is an essential part of any successful and sustainable counterterrorism strategy. If confirmed, I will ensure that principles of democracy, good governance, and human rights protections for all members of society are embedded in the CT Bureau's policies and programs.

An effective approach to countering violent extremism (CVE) requires developing an understanding of the factors that may be driving individuals towards radicalization and violence. The denial of human rights and the inability of citizens to gain redress for grievances peacefully are some of the factors that can feed terrorist propaganda that seeks to justify violence. Conversely, freedom of speech and freedom of religion are important components in efforts in countering violent extremism.

In addition to ensuring the protection of basic human rights, it is also important to make sure that the criminal justice system promotes and adheres to the rule of law in the course of detecting, disrupting, and prosecuting terrorist offenders. Countries need clear legal frameworks that are consistently and uniformly applied to all citizens. Criminal justice actors, who implement the law, must conduct their work in an accountable and transparent manner. Oversight mechanisms must be in place to ensure that criminal justice actors and institutions operate in accordance with domestic and international laws, including protections for human rights.

In recognition of the important nexus between human rights and counterterrorism efforts, if confirmed, I will use diplomatic and foreign assistance tools to continue to press for well-functioning law enforcement agencies that respect citizens' basic rights; I will ensure that human rights are integrated in criminal justice efforts; and I will stress the importance of using a range of stakeholders to combat terrorism and counter violent extremism.

Question 3. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response?

Answer. Political will is critical to ensuring that counterterrorism measures are carried out in accordance with human rights standards. Should I be confirmed, I will make it a priority in my dealings with foreign partners to emphasize the importance of a strong and enduring commitment to human rights. Another potential obstacle may be an insufficient understanding of the critical role that human rights play in a sustainable and effective counterterrorism approach. A government that regularly transgresses broadly accepted human rights standards in its approach to countering terrorism could contribute to radicalization. Given the U.S. experience balancing security and strong human rights protections under law, we can assist governments to improve their understanding and practice on this essential issue. If confirmed, I intend to marshal the diplomatic weight and resources of allied and other like-minded countries to underscore that counterterrorism efforts must be carried out with respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Question 4. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. U.S. Government-funded security assistance initiatives must reinforce essential American principles and values, including respect for and promotion of human rights. All beneficiaries of such assistance must be fully vetted per the guidelines of the Leahy amendment. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Counterterrorism Bureau fully complies with Leahy vetting requirements. I also will emphasize, in my diplomatic outreach to counterparts globally, that a commitment to strong human rights protections is vital to effective counterterrorism practice.

Question 5 Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking

any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms or productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that comes from backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. I agree strongly that a diverse team is a stronger team. If confirmed, I will promote diversity across the organization and ensure full and equal opportunity for all individuals and voices no matter what their backgrounds. In so doing, I will remain committed to the following core principles: (1) respect for the dignity of the individual, (2) integrity, (3) trust, (4) credibility, (5) continuous improvement, and (6) robust and open lines of communication. In setting these expectations, I believe this will help to build a well-rounded organization. Ensuring access to, interaction with, and opportunity for employees of different backgrounds will bring their unique perspectives, experiences, and skills to bear on the challenges the CT Bureau will face, thereby improving our workforce.

Question 8. Women have a key role to play in combatting terrorism and violent extremism. Unfortunately, women continue to be underrepresented in our security sector institutions. What do you plan to do to better include women in the security sector and bring in their ideas to more effectively counter terrorism?

Answer. I strongly believe that women play a critical role in combatting terrorism and violent extremism, whether as community leaders, civil society members, or government officials and security sector practitioners. As a father of two young girls, I believe we cannot afford to allow women's roles in preventing and countering violent extremism to go untapped. Whether as observers, supporters, facilitators, preventers, or victims of terrorism, one thing is clear: we do a disservice to women, and all of society, if we disregard their perspectives in the analysis, research, advocacy, and partnership-building that is so essential to the work we do every day to counter terrorism and violent extremism. If confirmed, I would lead the CT Bureau's efforts to involve women in all of these arenas, particularly in key frontline states with active terrorist threats.

Question 9. How will you ensure that soft power tools are sufficiently funded and properly implemented within our overarching CT and CVE policies?

Answer. Countering terrorist narratives, messaging, recruitment, and inspiration to violence are critical soft power tools for defeating ISIS and other terrorist groups and networks. If confirmed, I am committed to working internally, with the interagency, and especially internationally to secure support and resources to fund these tools and efforts.

When I feel it is warranted, I will not hesitate to advocate for resources to support these tools from within our own government. I also plan to encourage other donor countries, host-country governments, and local partners to take more responsibility for leading CT and CVE efforts; they are best positioned to ensure sustained success. Already, the State Department has leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars over the last several years from Western European and other donors to fund many CVE initiatives and programming around the world. I look forward to continuing that work to ensure we and our partners are committed to these soft power tools.

Question 10. Do you believe these tools to be important in our fight against terrorism?

Answer. These tools are a critical part of U.S. counterterrorism efforts. CVE is a whole of government and whole of society effort. Non-law enforcement, civilian agencies of government play a role in this effort—as do cities and municipalities. Women, youth, families, educators, social workers, religious leaders, and the private sector also need to be engaged in countering violent extremism. Bringing to bear the expertise of these diverse elements of society is critical for the design and implementation of CVE programming.

Question 11. Do you agree with the administration's cuts to critical components of State's soft-power portfolio?

Answer. Countering terrorist narratives, messaging, recruitment, and inspiration to violence is a critical part of defeating ISIS and other terrorist groups and networks. If confirmed, I would work internally at the State Department and with the interagency to secure support and resources to fund appropriate tools and efforts. In addition, my understanding is that the State Department encourages other donor

countries, host-country governments, and local partners to take more responsibility for leading CT and CVE efforts; they are best positioned to ensure sustained success. In fact, the Department has leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars over the last several years from Western European and other donors to fund many countering violent extremism initiatives and programming around the world.

Question 12. We are entering an era where our counterterrorism programs and activities have to be both more comprehensive and more flexible. The classic al-Qaeda model of centralized direction and financing of massive and complicated terror attacks against the West is largely obsolete, yielding to ISIL's decentralized, inspirational and entrepreneurial model. How should the U.S. adapt to meet these new challenges?

Answer. Today's terrorism landscape is more complex, multi-faceted, and localized than ever before. I believe that the evolving terrorist landscape, especially given the Defeat-ISIS Coalition's military success in Iraq and Syria, will place a new premium on combatting terrorism through non-military approaches and will require that our partners in key areas have the will and capacities to address decentralized, regional terrorist threats. The State Department generally and the CT Bureau specifically will have an outsized role to play in this effort. If confirmed, I will work to improve the civilian-led capabilities—police, border security, prosecutors, and others—of key partners to ensure they are able to more effectively confront new terrorist trends and tactics. In particular, we and our allies must be prepared to address threats by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) returning from Iraq and Syria as well as by homegrown violent extremists (HVEs). Identifying and addressing these types of individuals, in the wake of our Coalition's success, will require improved capabilities and information sharing among front-line partners. If confirmed, I would invest the time and resources to ensure the United States and its allies increasingly coordinate and develop non-military approaches to identifying and addressing these and other emerging threats.

Question 13. What can the CT Bureau and the State Department do to push for those changes?

Answer. Anticipating new terrorist threats by ISIS and other terrorist groups outside of Iraq and Syria, the CT Bureau, working with interagency partners, will have to ensure that police, border security, prosecutors, and other civilian-led entities in foreign partner countries are prepared to counter more attacks by battle-hardened foreign terrorist fighters and homegrown violent extremists operating in places like Southeast Asia, Western Europe, Africa, and potentially the homeland. If confirmed, I will employ diplomacy and targeted programmatic assistance to ensure that our partners have the will and capacities to address evolving terrorist threats, tactics, and travel.

If confirmed, I would carefully consider and prioritize which efforts the CT Bureau could best led or support to address the long-term drivers of extremism. Specifically, I would coordinate closely with other departments and agencies to coordinate the Department's international CVE efforts.

Question 14. The administration is attempting to slash the resources for US diplomacy and foreign assistance for development across the board. Such actions deeply undercut any comprehensive strategy and effort to support and inoculate at-risk countries from terrorism and extremism. How should the CT Bureau and the State Department compensate for that?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson has made clear that countering terrorist narratives, messaging, recruitment, and inspiration to violence is a critical part of defeating ISIS and other transnational terrorist networks. Protecting U.S. national security and countering terrorism is the administration's top priority and the CT Bureau's budget request reflects this. This funding is critical to sustaining gains from the surge of assistance in FY 2016 and FY 2017 and will allow the Department to continue to address the rapidly evolving terrorist threat. If confirmed, and if I determine that additional resources are needed in the future to meet our global counterterrorism objectives, I would not hesitate to advocate for them.

RESPONSE TO ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO GEORGE GLASS BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. Portugal is a NATO ally and houses U.S. forces in the Azores. Still, NATO estimates that Portugal spent less than 1.4 percent of its GDP on defense,

far below the NATO guideline of 2 percent. If confirmed, do you intend to encourage the Portuguese Government to increase its defense spending?

Answer. If confirmed, I will press Portugal to meet the 2 percent defense spending pledge made at the 2014 Wales Summit and reaffirmed at Warsaw in 2016, to spend two percent of GDP on defense, with 20 percent of total defense expenditures on major equipment.

I look forward to seeing Portugal's national plan later this year, which should articulate how Portugal will reach the Wales goals.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO GEORGE GLASS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. My wife, Mary, and I have served on numerous Educational Boards because we both feel deeply that Education is the fundamental tool used to defend human rights. (K–12, University, and Medical School). However, there are two missions that we serve now that have most profoundly affected our lives. We have recently begun working with the Catholic Charities organization in Portland Oregon in their Refugee Relocation Program and the Backpack for Kids program. In the refugee relocation program, hearing the accounts of numerous families and what they've been through to finally reach our shores is gut wrenching. The dangers, the loss of life, and the struggles of their journeys sets everything in perspective regarding how we live and govern in America. The impact of our efforts is never enough, but we have been trying to help individuals learn English, obtain housing, and find jobs. In the backpack for kids program, what we found was in some of the lower income level grade schools many kids were showing up Monday morning literally starved from lack of food over the weekend. The school we work in consists of a high percentage of migrant working families and in the off season work for their parents is difficult to find. The program consists of the children picking up a backpack Friday afternoon's loaded with enough square meals to feed both them and their siblings over the weekend. (The backpack is provided so that there is no public stigma for the kids regarding "getting a hand out" of food). This program has gained both religious and corporate sponsorship and is now feeding over 70 families at this school alone.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Republic of Portugal today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Republic of Portugal? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Portugal has a strong record on human rights, but—like in any country—there are areas where improvements can be made. The biggest human rights problems in Portugal include excessive use of force and abuse of detainees and prisoners by police and prison guards; poor, unhealthy, and overcrowded prison conditions; and violence against women and children. Some of these issues have been brought to light in an ongoing case involving 18 officers of the Portuguese Public Security Police (PSP) and their alleged abuse of six black youths.

Other problems include the incarceration of juveniles with adults, denial of legal counsel and family contact to detainees, disregard of detainees' rights by the Judiciary Police (PJ), lengthy pre-trial detention, detention of asylum seekers, some government corruption, the practice of female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) of girls in the Bissau-Guinean and other African communities, societal discrimination and exclusion against Roma, hindrances to labor organizing, trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and forced labor, and a growing gap between pay for men and women.

If confirmed, I will press Portuguese authorities to work on these issues. I will also make clear the United States' support of human rights through public and private outreach. Through these actions I hope to improve Portugal's already-strong record on human rights.

Question 3. 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 the Republic of Portugal in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. In general, Portugal has a strong record on human rights. Still, management mechanisms within the justice system need to be improved and cultural norms

are largely to blame for ongoing violence against women and children. Portugal has a good record investigating and prosecuting these crimes but, if confirmed, I will work with my Portuguese contacts to improve their work in this area.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Republic of Portugal?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I am committed to meeting with all of these organizations and, if confirmed, I will continue Mission Portugal's close work with these groups. I will also ensure that Mission Portugal continues to support the Leahy Law and other provisions by maintaining stringent vetting standards and closely monitoring all security assistance and cooperation activities.

Question 5. Will you engage with Portuguese Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will look to continue and expand Mission Portugal's proactive interactions with the full spectrum of government officials and NGOs dealing with human rights, civil rights and governance.

Question 6. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Portugal?

Answer. No. Neither I nor any members of my immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Portugal.

Question 9. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I would foster an open environment by encouraging hiring from diverse backgrounds. Enable individuals to connect with affinity groups at State to share experience and opportunities. Encourage officers with diverse backgrounds to take greater leadership roles within the community.

Question 10. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, some steps that I would I would take to ensure that each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive include encouraging supervisors to enroll in diversity training and being aware of and addressing unconscious bias in the workplace.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO GEORGE GLASS BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. For decades the United States has maintained an air force base at Lajes Field in Portugal's Azores Islands as a strategic refueling point in the mid-Atlantic. The base's location and extensive infrastructure have been essential to the movement of U.S. forces to and from Europe and the Middle East.

This capability remains strategically critical today, but over the past several years the Department of Defense has sharply reduced the U.S. operations at Lajes. Today there are only about 160 Americans there. Portuguese Government officials have said they want the U.S. presence to remain. However, Portuguese officials have said that if the Pentagon does not continue to use the facilities they could be opened to American, European, or Chinese institutes for scientific research.

Last year Portugal's Prime Minister said that the Azores are "very important both logistically in the Atlantic Ocean but also in terms of technology and research, in the field of climate change and deep water research."

The United States has a historic opportunity to capitalize both militarily and economically on a facility that we built in one of the most strategically important locations on earth. A U.S. withdrawal could open new opportunities for China to gain a political, economic, and security foothold in the Atlantic.

- If confirmed, what will you do to work with the Government of Portugal to ensure that the United States does not lose the opportunity to make full military and civilian use of the facilities we have built in the Azores?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to make this issue a priority as I believe it is in dire need of attention. While the United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) streamlined its presence at Lajes Field, the United States remains there. USAFE currently has 165 Americans and 417 Portuguese working at Lajes Field, for a total of 582 personnel.

We remain committed to our strategic relationship with Portugal, which is far broader and deeper than our presence at Lajes Field. We are proud of the increased bilateral military engagement and training in recent years, and we support initiatives to continue this positive trajectory. We appreciate Portugal's contribution to transatlantic and global security.

We will continue to work with the Department of Defense to ensure an open and transparent dialogue with our Portuguese partners in order to assist Portugal in addressing economic and political challenges caused by the downsizing.

Question 2. In an effort to cut costs, the Trump administration has indicated an interest in examining small diplomatic and consular posts with a view to possibly consolidating or eliminating some of them.

- What will be the impact of this process on the U.S. Consulate in Ponta Delgada?

Answer. I understand that State Department staffing and resources are under review.µ If confirmed, I would make the best use of the resources and staffing provided to Mission Portugal in order to serve the American people and the interests of the United States.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO CARL RISCH BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. My most important actions to promote human rights and democracy would be my participation in six refugee processing circuit rides in four different countries as an officer with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). In this capacity, I conducted hundreds of interviews of refugees being resettled to the United States. As part of this process, I recorded hundreds of instances of human rights abuses, persecution, and torture on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, and membership in a particular social group. The impact of these actions was the permanent resettlement of victims of persecution to the United States, where they could start new lives and contribute to our nation.

In addition to my refugee work, I have promoted democracy through my cooperation with the U.S. military to naturalize hundreds of active duty service members, and their spouses, during their service overseas. Working with the military, we provided new citizens with information on voting, travel, and other rights and obligations associated with being citizens of the United States.

Question 2. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 3. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 4. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What is your plan to ensure that the workforce in your Bureau, at all levels, is diverse, and how do you plan to ensure supervisors and managers are equipped to manage their teams effectively?

Answer. The Department of State's Statement on Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity underscores that our workforce must reflect the rich composition of our citizenry. "The skills, knowledge, perspectives, ideas, and experiences of all its employees contribute to the vitality and success of the global mission," it continues. I agree that diversity improves businesses and teams in many ways, and, if confirmed, I intend to ensure that the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) continues and enhances its current focus on the importance of diversity and inclusion in our workforce.

In accordance with the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic plan, CA's Executive Office (CA/EX) has taken steps to promote diversity, not only in recruiting and hiring qualified candidates from a multitude of backgrounds, but also in providing opportunities for career advancement for all employees. Further, CA's Bureau Training Team held a training session on diversity and inclusion in partnership with the senior leadership of the Office of Civil Rights in January of this year.

With regards to hiring, Human Resource Specialists and all hiring managers in the Bureau currently are required to complete training on federal hiring procedures such as the Merit System Principles (MSP) and Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPP), ensuring that CA adheres to federal regulations in promoting diversity among prospective candidates. The Bureau has utilized special hiring programs such as Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA), Schedule A appointments, and the Pathways Programs to recruit and retain employees from a diverse array of backgrounds. Currently, CA's workforce is 55 percent female, 61 percent white, 22 percent African American, 10 percent Hispanic, 6 percent Asian, and 10 percent have a disclosed disability, making the Bureau one of the most diverse bureaus in the Department. In addition, CA prides itself on its regional diversity, a benefit of having passport agencies and visa and passport centers across the country.

CA aims to promote diversity in supervisory and managerial positions through offering professional development opportunities and training to all levels of its bureaucracy. The Bureau accomplishes this not only through the Department's Foreign Service Institute, but also through its own Training Team located in the Human Resources Division, working directly with employees and leadership to address the Bureau's unique challenges with creative training solutions. By offering a multitude of learning and development opportunities across the Bureau, CA strives to offer career advancement for all CA employees and encourage diversity in senior-level positions. Furthermore, CA actively pursues diversity and sensitivity training for its current supervisors and managers, primarily through its Consular Managers Human Resources Workshop which highlights inclusion, sensitivity training, and promoting the benefits of diversity in the workplace.

Question 5. The federal workforce has made progress in hiring diverse professionals in most agencies. There is, however, work that remains to be done in order to cultivate work environments where all employees feel valued and included. What plans do you have to ensure your Bureau leverages the diversity of its employees and develops an inclusive work environment?

Answer. The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) recognizes, and I personally firmly believe in, the benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce. If confirmed, I will build upon the groundwork already laid to enhance and further leverage the diversity and inclusive work environment of the entire Bureau.

In line with the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, CA has taken tangible steps to promote diversity in both hiring and learning and development. In addition to hiring a diverse workforce, CA's Bureau Training Team works to highlight the benefits of workplace diversity through various learning and development opportunities. This includes providing hiring managers training on the Merit System Principles and Prohibited Personnel Practices, coordinating diversity and inclusion training opportunities with the Department's Office of Civil Rights, and providing supervisors with ample training on proper management, workplace sensitivity, and promoting inclusion in their offices. In addition, employees are encouraged, and in some cases mandated, to take Foreign Service Institute (FSI) courses that foster diversity and inclusion. For example, FSI offers trainings to help managers identify the commonalities and differences across generations that in turn promote creativity and differing ideas within the Department.

CA has created Leadership and Management Tenets that set forth clear expectations to guide all aspects of our work and in the way we interact with our colleagues. CA strives to ensure all consular supervisors hold themselves accountable for modeling these tenets and consular professionals at all levels are encouraged to cultivate the qualities embodied in these tenets and integrate them into their approach to work.

Question 6. Members of the Foreign Service who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) do not receive the same equal treatment as their fellows Foreign Service personnel when they are assigned to countries that do not recognize same-sex marriage. The spouses and partners of these FSOs are unable to attain spousal Visas, even though the State Department provides full benefits to the diplomats coming to the United States from these countries. If you are confirmed, will you commit to producing a report on countries not issuing visas to the spouses or partners of all Foreign Service personnel posted overseas due to their sexual orientation? Additionally, will you work to find a solution to this problem, including eliminating visa reciprocity with countries found to be instituting these practices against the spouses of Foreign Service personnel in order to ensure that all spouses of Foreign Service personnel receive visas for the country to which their spouse is assigned, regardless of sexual orientation?

Answer. As Secretary Tillerson said in a statement recognizing LGBTQI Pride Month, "Dignity and equality for all persons are among our founding constitutional principles, and these principles continue to drive U.S. diplomacy." If confirmed, I will work to continue the push for dignity and equality for all persons, including our LGBTQI Foreign Service personnel who face reciprocity issues with host nations as we deploy our personnel around the globe. I will work with the Department's Bureau of Human Resources—the leader on LGBTQI accreditation issues—Congress, social groups, and the LGBTQI community of Foreign Service personnel to seek ways to ensure their rights are respected.

As a matter of current practice, the Department seeks to accredit same-sex domestic partners from countries that reciprocally accredit U.S. same-sex domestic partners. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to keep reciprocity at the center of its response to this important issue for the Foreign Service community.

Question 7. Will you commit to ensuring that the core operations and functions of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, particularly the visa-issuing functions, remain with the State Department and the Bureau, and will not be transferred to another department or agency?

Answer. I do not support moving the core operations and functions of the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA), out of the State Department. As the Secretary has noted, CA is vitally important to our mission at the Department of State, and consular work is essential to the Department's mission highest priority—to secure our borders and protect the American people.

The Department's unique experience and skills in dealing with foreign governments, cultures, and languages add a critical layer to our border security. Decisions on passport and visa operations can have profound implications for foreign and economic policy in addition to security. By having a seat at the table on border security issues, the Secretary of State can ensure all equities are presented for the President's consideration. The Department's cadre of language qualified Foreign Service Officers, Consular Fellows, Civil Servants, and Local Employees bring broad knowledge of regional and local cultures to visa and passport decisions. It would be costly, time-consuming, and duplicative to develop a separate corps in another department or agency to do this work when State is already proficient in this field. Transfer of these functions would also weaken the Secretary's ability to fulfill the responsibility for the security of U.S. citizens abroad.

U.S. border security depends on a system of "layered defense" for maximum effectiveness, and the current system of vetting and adjudicating visas has built-in checks and balances that strengthen our national security. DHS sets visa policy, CA vets applicants' biometric and biographic data against U.S. law enforcement and intelligence community databases, and Consular officers review the vetting results and use their expertise to interview applicants and determine their eligibility for a visa, seeking input from CA, as appropriate. For example, when a visa applicant raises potential security concerns, consular officers are required to request Security Advisory Opinions. That process involves a hands-on review by a Visa Office analyst, after the analyst has collected input from relevant interagency partners and other components of the State Department, as appropriate. When an application raises legal questions or questions about the appropriate visa classification, the adjudicating consular officer may reach back to a team of lawyers in the Visa Office

who are dedicated to addressing those questions. When fraud is suspected, in addition to fraud prevention expertise and tools available at the overseas post, consular officers may reach back to CA's Office of Fraud Prevention Programs analysts and subject matter experts to assist with complex or multinational fraud cases.

If the intending traveler is found eligible and issued a visa, DHS then vets inbound passengers before they board flights, and at U.S. ports of entry. Visa and passport data is widely shared with law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and all visas are subject to continuous interagency vetting, which can lead to the Visa Office revoking the visa at any time, if information arises after issuance suggesting the visa holder may no longer eligible for the visa. This layering and sharing of responsibilities ensures complete and careful attention to security, foreign policy, economic and other dimensions of visa-issuance decisions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KRISHNA URS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Over the course of 31 years in the Foreign Service, I have worked to promote human rights in many different contexts and countries. At one point in my career, I advocated for and prepared a statement issued by the Department of State calling for an end to spiraling political violence involving security forces and a specific political party in one country. In several countries, I worked with national and local governments to establish safe houses for victims of human trafficking and to step up awareness campaigns about trafficking in persons. At my urging, the U.S. Government ended all assistance to a national police force in one country in which I served due to our concerns about the use of extrajudicial killings as a crime prevention tactic. In several countries, I advocated public statements by the Embassy to highlight areas of eroding respect by foreign governments of democratic institutions and norms.

My actions in support of human rights over the course of my career produced concrete results. To provide just a few examples—our statement decrying spiraling political violence involving security forces resulted (at least temporarily) in fewer exchanges of gunfire involving the police. After we cut off assistance to the police in another country, the Government replaced the police chief (who had been linked to human rights abuses) with another official publicly committed to protecting human rights. Our statements in support of democracy served as encouragement to like-minded allies in the local society, helping to protect institutions and norms.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Republic of Peru today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Republic of Peru? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Our close relationship with Peru is built on shared interests and values, including the importance of human rights. Peru has made significant strides in support of human rights since the end of its 20 year internal conflict in 2000. Human rights challenges, however, persist in the areas of violence against women and children, trafficking in persons, and discrimination against Afro-Peruvians, Indigenous persons, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) persons. Corruption enables an environment allowing these and other human rights challenges to exist.

If confirmed, I will use all the tools at my disposal to assist Peru in addressing its human rights challenges.

By working together to promote human rights, social inclusion, and poverty reduction, we can achieve a more prosperous, inclusive, and democratic future for Peru.

Question 3. 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 the Republic of Peru in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The Peruvian Government has shown a commitment to address many human rights challenges. If confirmed, I will encourage the Peruvian Government to continue its efforts to improve social inclusion and respect for human rights, seek opportunities for public-private partnerships toward this end, and cooperate with non-governmental organizations to multiply the effect of our assistance.

I will work with Peru's Government to combat corruption, which can exacerbate social conflict, enable human rights abuses, and undermine confidence in government institutions.

If confirmed, one of the challenges I will face will be to help the Peruvian Government and civil society find new ways to include the country's historically marginalized communities in Peru's economic success story.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the Republic of Peru?

Answer. Yes. Developing strong relationships with human rights advocates, civil society, and non-governmental organizations is one of the cornerstones of our partnership with the Peruvian people. If confirmed, I will continue the United States' longstanding practice of closely engaging Peruvian civil society to ensure I am fully attuned to Peru's human rights landscape. I will work closely with the Peruvian Government, civil society, and all relevant agencies of the U.S. Government to ensure every dollar of U.S. assistance is used wisely and in accordance with our human rights goals and the Leahy Law.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. As a U.S. Government employee with 31 years standing, I am firmly committed to implementing all relevant U.S. laws and regulations, including the Leahy law, when fulfilling my duties. If confirmed, I will work to ensure no assistance is provided to foreign security force units where the Department has credible information that such units engaged in gross violations of human rights, in accordance with the Leahy law. I will also work to ensure the U.S. Mission in Peru works with the Government of Peru to help them take effective steps to bring those responsible for any violations of human rights to justice.

Question 6. Will you engage with Peruvian Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will engage the Peruvian Government and civil society on human rights, civil rights, and democratic governance. Peru has a critical role to play in encouraging regional stability and is an important partner of the United States.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Peru?

Answer. No. Neither I, nor any members of my immediate family, have financial interests in the Republic of Peru.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I am a strong believer in the value of diverse teams in identifying, analyzing, and addressing issues and problems. Diversity helps prevent "groupthink," ensuring that issues get a thorough examination from all possible perspectives and making sure that all viable options are explored. If confirmed, I can assure you that I will take diversity into consideration in filling high level positions at the U.S. Mission in Lima, as I have done in past assignments. I am committed to mentoring for all staff members, but especially for those from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with each member of my country team to ensure they are giving proper consideration to assembling a diverse and representative team. I will also ensure country team members understand their responsibility to provide mentoring and guidance to mid-level and junior members of their teams, with specific emphasis on diverse and under-represented groups.

Question 12. Earlier this year, Peru issued a new decree to establish a payment process to service longstanding debt related to agrarian reform bonds. Numerous U.S. firms and citizens hold an interest in these bonds, including several Maryland pension plans. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Peru, will you commit to working with the Peruvian Government to achieve a final resolution of this issue? Will you work with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of the Treasury to ensure that they have accurate information about the amount owed on the bonds?

Answer. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Peru, I look forward to learning the details of this complicated case. I fully commit to engaging with the Government of Peru to press for a fair and timely resolution of these complex issues. I understand the independent regulator with jurisdiction over Peru's U.S. law bonds, the Securities and Exchange Commission, has been asked for views on this case, and I will follow up. I will also engage Treasury for its views on the appropriate treatment of these particular domestic obligations in national economic statistics. I understand there is considerable debate on the appropriate valuation of these securities, the resolution of which could impact on the value of other U.S. investors' holdings of Peru's domestic and international debts, and I will press for a speedy resolution of the related methodological issues.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:20 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio, presiding.

Present: Senators Rubio [presiding] and Menendez.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

Senator RUBIO. Thank you all for being here. My apologies. We were at a meeting at the White House.

This meeting on the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere will come to order.

Again, I apologize to our nominees. We were at the White House. It took a few minutes to get here and my apologies to the ranking member.

With that, I am going to defer my opening statement in the interest of your time and that of the ranking member and just defer to him, if he has an opening statement.

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, Mr. Chairman, in the interest of time, I am going to keep it really brief compared to what I normally would do, not that it is long, but I am going to keep this one really brief.

I will just say that, as we often do on this committee, despite our presence, we overlook the western hemisphere. But on migration, trade, and national security what happens in our own hemisphere impacts us here in the United States most directly. So it is critical that we have capable, experienced professionals representing the United States in our embassies in the hemisphere. So to our career nominees, we salute your service and we welcome your insight, and, Ms. Day, we look forward to hearing from you as well.

And I will defer the rest, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you to the ranking member. And again, my apologies for it. I hate being late.

With that, let me introduce the nominees. I will introduce you for your opening statements, and then we can go into questions.

Obviously, we have one panel testifying today: the Honorable Luis Arreaga of Virginia to be the Ambassador to Guatemala; Ms.

Sharon Day of Florida to be the Ambassador to Costa Rica; and Mr. Krishna Urs to be the Ambassador to Peru. They all have impressive resumes.

Mr. Arreaga was appointed Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement in January 2016. He is responsible for the State Department's programs combating illicit drugs and organized crime.

Ms. Day is someone I know personally and known for a significant period of time. She is a dedicated person. She is a hard worker. She is a friend and someone that under different circumstances I would be at the table presenting her, but we are up here. So I am presenting you now. I am happy you are here today. I am encouraged that the President nominated you, and I know, if confirmed, you will represent our country well in Costa Rica.

Krishna Urs has served the Department of State and the American people for more than 31 years, and that includes posts in the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Mexico. He has served as the Director of the Office of Economic Policy in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere affairs, and given his wealth of experience in the region, we are encouraged today to hear from him about his views on how to lead this embassy.

We thank you all for being here today. And we will begin with Ambassador Arreaga. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. LUIS E. ARREAGA, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA

Ambassador ARREAGA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez. I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to Guatemala.

If you allow me to indulge a bit, I would like to acknowledge my wife Mary, to whom I owe everything, and my beloved family who are here with me today back here somewhere.

If confirmed by the Senate, I will work with the Congress and our Guatemalan partners to meet the commitments made by President Jimmy Morales and Vice President Pence in mid-June when they met in Miami.

Our common agenda has three pillars: prosperity, governance, and security. Of particular note will be an emphasis on fighting corruption, narcotrafficking, gangs, trafficking in persons, and strengthening the rule of law. If confirmed, I will also work to create conditions to attract investment and to protect human rights, labor rights, and advance health, nutrition, and education, especially in the western highlands of Guatemala.

Ultimately, however, my duty will be first and foremost to the American people.

I thank you for the privilege of appearing today and welcome your questions.

[Ambassador Arreaga's prepared station follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LUIS ARREAGA

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala. I am deeply grateful for the trust the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me. If confirmed by the Senate, I will work with the Congress to advance our interests in Guatemala.

If you allow me to indulge, I am an immigrant born to a migrant worker and an elementary public school teacher whose sacrifice and teachings inspired me to come to this great nation and earn the privilege of becoming one of its adopted citizens. I have many people to thank for this moment and I cannot name them all. I do want, however, to single out my beloved family, for they have been a source of inspiration and indispensable support. Foremost is my wife Mary, to whom I owe everything. My children are here to share this special moment. They include my daughter Melania, who is also a Foreign Service Officer, my son-in-law Vince, grandchildren Elena and Sebastian, and my sons Juan Carlos and Luis.

I previously had the privilege of serving as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland, so I understand what is required to represent the United States abroad. I have served in Latin America, Europe, and Canada as an economist and diplomat and have great respect for the importance of working with strong U.S. allies to protect our nation and the American people.

The United States and Guatemala have strong relations. These are rooted in common interests and people-to-people connections that go back generations. We work closely with our Guatemalan partners to promote prosperity, good governance, and security all of which are in the interest of our country.

Our engagement is at the highest levels. Vice President Pence, Secretary Tillerson, and Secretary Kelly met with Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales and his team in Miami at the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America. At that meeting, we pledged to work together to promote investment and facilitate sustainable growth, and to combat corruption, narcotics trafficking, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations, all of which undermine stability there, threaten our country, and drive fleeing migrants to the United States.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly with our partners in Guatemala to comply with these commitments. I look forward to expanding our programs on information sharing and capacity building that strengthen border security, dismantle criminal networks, and stem the tide of violence affecting the region. A safer and more secure Guatemala will have a positive effect on communities in both of our countries. Our work will also include programming that strengthens the rule of law, transparency, accountability, and especially the protection of human rights.

Security cooperation is just one part of our joint strategy. If confirmed, I will also strive to foster sustainable economic growth in Guatemala. By supporting efforts to facilitate trade, promote education, and minimize red tape, we can improve the business climate, spark investment, and help to reduce unemployment. We'll continue our emphasis on the Western Highlands, where most of the migrants originate. We seek to create opportunities that benefit both Guatemalans and U.S. businesses looking to engage in the region.

Underlying all these efforts is a commitment by both governments to fight corruption and build upon the successful efforts by President Morales, CICIG, and the Attorney General to end impunity.

Let me conclude, by reiterating that, if confirmed, my duty would be, first and foremost, to the American people. There is much to be gained through cooperation with Guatemala as our safety and security are inextricably linked. In this role, I will be vigilant in protecting the interests of American citizens, both abroad and at home.

I thank you for the privilege of appearing today and welcome your questions.

Senator RUBIO. We thank you.

Ms. Day, welcome and it is great to see you here.

STATEMENT OF SHARON DAY, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA

Ms. DAY. Senator Rubio and Senator Menendez, it is my honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to rep-

resent the United States as Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica.

I am humbled by both President Trump and Secretary of State Tillerson's trust, and I am mindful of the responsibilities that are being asked of me to share our country's principles of freedom and democracy and to protect our mission family and all Americans in country.

I want to thank my loved ones, my family and friends, for their love, support, and guidance and especially for all their encouragement on this journey. I have been blessed to witness firsthand Costa Rica's natural beauty and her biodiversity, its rich culture and the kindness of its people.

The United States and Costa Rica share a long and close relationship that centers on both our countries' commitments to democratic principles, strong commercial ties, and the relationship between our people. The strong bilateral relationship between our two countries is strengthened by our longstanding and meaningful ties, which are something I have witnessed firsthand in my home State of Florida.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with our professional embassy team and to continue to build on the long history of bilateral cooperation on regional and global issues.

Thank you for your time and your consideration, and I look forward to your questions.

[Ms. Day's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHARON DAY

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, It is my honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to represent the United States as Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica. I am humbled by the President's trust and I am also very mindful of the responsibilities that are being asked of me—to both share our country's principles of freedom and democracy, and protect our Costa Rica Mission family and all Americans in country. I want to emphasize that, if confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica; my duty would be, first and foremost, to the American people.

I want to thank my loved ones and my family—my mother, Mary Swartz, my son, Coby, his wife Stephanie, my beautiful grand babies Aidan, Tristan, and Maci, my sisters and brothers, and my stepson Aaron Day and his family. I also want to thank my friends who have helped guide me on my journeys and successes. And to my late husband, Larry, thank you for always encouraging and believing that all things were possible for me. Our loved ones pay the biggest price for our passion of serving, and I will always be thankful for their love and support.

I sit before you today mindful and appreciative of the journey my life has taken. I am thankful for the opportunities and the understanding that in our country anything is possible. I grew up in San Antonio, Texas in a middle class family—my dad was an electrician and my mom was a stay at home Mom. We weren't rich with money, but I was rich by the principles that I was taught—that hard work matters—that honesty matters—that lying about a misdeed was worse than the deed itself—to have respect for every individual, in fact, even today I say "sir" or "ma'am" to everyone I meet in person or that I may come in contact with—it was instilled in me that you can do anything you put your mind to—and no dream was too big if you had an education. My home was also where I learned you can have very divergent beliefs—very different political philosophies—and you can also sometimes have loud discussions while still being united in ways that really matter and count because you see, as I mentioned my dad was a union electrician and also a Democrat while my mom was a Republican.

I thank you for the opportunity to share the principles that have been instilled in my life. I could have never imagined or dreamed that I would be sitting before you today as the nominee for United States Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica.

I have travelled to Costa Rica and witnessed firsthand its world-renowned natural beauty and biodiversity, its rich cultural and historical attractions, and the kindness of its people. The United States and Costa Rica share a long and close relationship that centers on our commitment to democratic principles, strong commercial ties, and the relationships between our people. The strong bi-lateral relationship between our two countries is strengthened by our longstanding and meaningful people-to-people ties which is something I have witnessed firsthand in my home state of Florida. Costa Rica is a key tourist destination for my fellow Americans with over a million visitors annually and the number one destination for U.S. students studying abroad in Latin America. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to build on our long history of bilateral cooperation, as well as cooperation on regional and global issues.

The administration is engaging with Costa Rica at the highest levels. In March, Vice President Mike Pence welcomed President Luis Guillermo Solis to the White House. In June, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Manuel Gonzalez Sanz, at the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America in Miami.

This early engagement is emblematic of the close and cooperative relationship the U.S. Embassy in San Jose has established with President Solis and his administration. If confirmed, I would promote U.S. policy in three priority areas:

1. Working with Costa Rica to ensure U.S. citizen visitors and residents are safe;
2. Improving the capacity of the Costa Rican Government to disrupt the northward flow of illicit drugs and illegal migrants through Costa Rica to the United States; and
3. Supporting Costa Rica's efforts to strengthen its economy and improve its business climate, which will provide greater opportunities for U.S. companies.

If confirmed, I will work with our Costa Rican partners to help the country disrupt trafficking and smuggling operations of people and goods in order to ensure that organized crime does not destabilize the country's democratic institutions. Costa Rica has already proven to be an excellent, willing partner with the United States in these efforts. A safe and secure Costa Rica is beneficial for both the U.S. citizens who visit this beautiful country, and for those who call Costa Rica home.

Additionally, if confirmed, I would focus on expanding and deepening the economic ties between our nations. Improving the Costa Rican business climate would give U.S. businesses greater export and investment opportunities.

We talk of the American dream. Today I am the embodiment of the American dream. The principles and values that my parents instilled in me are the ideals that make America great and it is these beliefs that will serve me well in the important role for which I am asking your consideration and support—the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Mr. Urs?

STATEMENT OF KRISHNA R. URS, OF CONNECTICUT, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSEL, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PERU

Mr. URS. Thank you, Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez. It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Peru.

I am very pleased also to have family members with me: my wife, Denise, who is also everything to me, and my son David. Unfortunately, my daughter Katie could not be here today.

The Republic of Peru is a steadfast partner in a sometimes turbulent region. Successive Peruvian administrations have pursued market-based economic and trade policies yielding 2 decades of robust, inclusive growth. As Peru's economy has boomed, the country has taken a more active role internationally, leading efforts to re-

solve Venezuela's current crisis and agreeing to host the Summit of the Americas in April 2018.

But some significant challenges remain. Transnational organized crime, persistent rural poverty, weak institutions, environmental degradation, and endemic corruption threaten the country's progress.

In President Kuczynski and his government, we have a strong partner. U.S. Government programs in the country advance U.S. priorities by supporting Peru's efforts to combat transnational criminal networks, address remaining pockets of poverty, and halt environmental degradation.

Mr. Chairman, for many of the 31 years that I have been in the Foreign Service, I have been fortunate to work on western hemisphere issues. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our truly extraordinary U.S. mission team in Peru to advance our interests, ensure the safety and welfare of all Americans and U.S. Government employees, and to further strengthen bilateral relations. I look forward to working with the committee in the furtherance of these goals.

I am happy to answer any questions now or in the future.

[Mr. Urs's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KRISHNA R. URS

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee: It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Peru. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests and values in Peru and to help the Peruvian people move towards a prosperous, inclusive, and democratic future.

Accompanying me here today is my wife Denise, who is also a senior Foreign Service Officer, and my children, Katie and David, who have come from Oklahoma and Madrid respectively.

The Republic of Peru, with a population of more than 30 million, is one of the United States' most steadfast partners in a sometimes turbulent region. Successive Peruvian administrations, including both center-right and center-left governments, have pursued market-based economic policies yielding two decades of robust and inclusive economic growth. Peru has cut poverty rates in half, reduced infant mortality, and expanded access to education.

Peru has staked its future on expanding international trade and the U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement spurred an increase in bilateral trade from some $9 billion in 2009 to more than $14 billion in 2016. The United States enjoys a cumulative surplus of more than $18 billion. As Peru's economy has boomed, it has taken a more active role in the region and the world. The Government of Peru has been a leader in efforts to find a solution to the crisis in Venezuela. Peru hosted the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in 2016, and it will host the Summit of the Americas in April 2018.

But even as Peru has emerged as a regional leader and staunch partner, it still faces challenges. Transnational organized crime, persistent rural poverty, weak institutions, and endemic corruption threaten the country's progress. Peru remains among the world's largest coca and cocaine producing countries. Environmental degradation associated with illegal drug production, logging, and mining is a serious concern.

The United States is committed to partnering with Peru to address threats to our common security. In President Kuczynski and his government, we have a strong partner. U.S. Government programs in the country advance U.S. priorities by supporting Peru's efforts to combat transnational criminal networks. We also support Peruvian Government efforts to overcome persistent rural poverty and improve the livelihood of marginalized populations.

Mr. Chairman, for much of my 31 years in the Foreign Service, I have been fortunate to work on Western Hemisphere issues. I had the privilege of serving four years as Economic Counselor in Lima, from 1996 to 2000. I also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in its Andean neighbor, Bolivia. Prior to my Foreign Service career,

I spent my junior year in college studying in Quito, Ecuador. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our truly extraordinary U.S. Mission team in Peru to advance U.S. interests, to ensure the safety and welfare of all Americans and U.S. Government employees, and to further strengthen bilateral relations with the Republic of Peru. I look forward to working with the committee in furtherance of these goals, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have, now or in the future.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you all for being here.

I am going to begin with just two questions to all three of you. The answers I do not think will take long, and then I am going to turn it over to the ranking member for his series of questions.

The first question is, as many of you are aware, the President recently announced a change in policy towards Cuba. As we know, U.S. policy towards Cuba has often been a point of contention with our friends and allies in the western hemisphere. And I just want the assurances of each of you that irrespective of whatever personal views you may have about that policy, are you prepared, willing, able, and determined to defend the policy decisions of this administration in our interactions with the countries in which you will be representing the United States? Ambassador Arreaga?

Ambassador ARREAGA. Senator, you can count on me in terms of supporting all of the President's policies, regardless of what I think personally.

Ms. DAY. Thank you, Senator, for the question. And yes, I will.

Mr. URS. Thank you for the question, Senator, and I will as well.

Senator RUBIO. The second challenge in the hemisphere, as we are all aware of, is the deteriorating situation in Venezuela. It is my sincerest hope that, in combination with the countries that each of you, if confirmed, will be serving, along with the other four G5 nations in the hemisphere, Mexico, Canada, Brazil, and Argentina, we can pursue a way forward that restores the democratic order in Venezuela in a way that we hope is peaceful and leads to reconciliation. It is our hope that that can be done in conjunction with our partners in the region. It is possible, however, that the administration, as they have signaled, are prepared to act unilaterally, if necessary, should the illegal and unconstitutional assembly in Venezuela move forward on the 30th of July.

Are each of you committed and prepared, able, and willing to defend such unilateral measures on the part of the administration if that is the direction they go with regard to punishing those responsible for basically trying to nullify the democratic process in Venezuela?

Ambassador ARREAGA. Thank you for your question. The answer is yes.

Ms. DAY. Thank you, Senator. And, of course, we will do all we can to confirm democracy and freedom across the globe.

Mr. URS. Thank you, Chairman. Yes, absolutely.

Senator RUBIO. The ranking member.

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

I got worried that somehow the lunch consumed you. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. So I am glad to see that you are back with us, and we are happy to be here with you.

Congratulations to all of the nominees. It is a significant honor to be nominated to be the United States Ambassador to any country in the world. And so we congratulate you and all of your fami-

lies because families are part of the sacrifice that is made here, and so we appreciate your families being here.

Let me start with you, Ms. Day. So what is your view—I ask these questions of all of the nominees. I am going to turn around and ask each one of them because I am creating a historical precedent here or following a historical precedent, led by others, not that I believe in it, but I want to make sure we continue it.

So you said you visited Costa Rica.

Ms. DAY. Yes, Senator, I have.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you speak Spanish?

Ms. DAY. I do not, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. So that is not disqualifying as far as I am concerned, but for some it has been for other nominees.

Let me ask you what do you see as the main items that you will be engaged in as our U.S. Ambassador in Costa Rica? What do you see as the top three things that your mission will be, if you are confirmed?

Ms. DAY. I think the top issue is to make sure that the mission runs in a manner that is the best use of our taxpayers' dollars and the opportunity to promote the safety and security of not just our friends and staff and members of the mission team, but also all Americans in country, and then to help with security issues to protect—Costa Rica to protect its borders and stop the infrastructure that is happening with narcotics.

Senator MENENDEZ. So what is your evaluation of—I do not know if you have had any briefings about the U.S.-Costa Rican joint patrol agreement that we have been involved in intercepting illicit narcotics destined for the United States. Have you had a chance to be briefed on that? Do you have any sense of it?

Ms. DAY. I have had some briefing information on it, Senator. Thank you for your question. The one instance that we do, it is a very great bilateral partnership with Costa Rica. They understand the importance of security in their countries and the problems that narcotics coming into its country for transportation and warehousing is an important issue. And they work very strongly with us, as well as the information and the staffing, the tools, the training, and the equipment that the United States is giving to Costa Rica for this cause.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now, Costa Rica has borne part of a significant share of addressing the crisis of unaccompanied minors from Central America. The last administration developed a comprehensive strategy for engagement in Central America that was largely in line with something we called the Alliance for Prosperity. How do you believe the United States should be engaged with Costa Rica as it relates to this question of within Central America, since it is one of the key Central American countries, and with the question of the flow of migrants?

Ms. DAY. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

If confirmed, we will continue to work with the mission to make sure this happens. Costa Rica understands that there is an issue there, and from that end of it, we have worked very hard with the United States again with the training, with judicial training, some again efforts in place and systems in place to help those that have been trafficked to protection of it. So we will continue to work with

them. We are working with them on language that meets U.N. regulations to strengthen that position. So we will continue at the mission. If confirmed, I will be glad to lead that support and effort for our country and to help the Costa Rican people.

Senator MENENDEZ. Finally, it is not a question but more of a statement. I know the chairman, I, and the chairman of the full committee have very much engaged in the question of human trafficking, and while Costa Rica is a great ally in so many different ways, I hope that you will pay some attention, when you are confirmed, to looking at the question of human trafficking in Costa Rica as part of your mission. Can we get you to say that?

Ms. DAY. I will. Thank you, Senator. It will be a high priority.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Arreaga, you have a distinguished career serving in a variety of posts. So let me thank you for your service up front. Only in America can someone who is born in Guatemala become a United States citizen and return as the United States Ambassador to Guatemala. So it is an extraordinary story. It is also a great example of how immigration can be a positive thing for our country. So we salute you.

I want you to follow on the question I asked Ms. Day about. Do you believe the U.S. strategy for engagement in Central America has been successful? What do you see are some of the major challenges as someone who is going to be in one of the key countries that we are engaged with, particularly as it relates to the movement of unaccompanied minors and others? Guatemala is one of those. Talk to me about what your views are on that.

Ambassador ARREAGA. Thank you for your question, Senator.

This is an issue which I have been working with over the last 3 years. We have a very clear agenda to deal with this problem with Central America, one with Guatemala specifically. As I mentioned earlier, President Jimmy Morales met with Vice President Pence in Miami and they laid out a plan to deal with the three pillars of our engagement: prosperity, governance, and security.

What we are going to be focusing on—the drivers of migration are security and the lack of economic opportunity. The prosperity piece is designed to address the lack of economic opportunity, and we are focusing it on the western highlands where most of the migrants come from. The security piece is absolutely essential because it is a driver of migration, and we have, I think, made significant progress in reducing crime rates, particularly in the areas where U.S. assistance has been provided, which is in training the police, in establishing community policing, and in working with the NGO community particularly in the most—in the areas we have the highest crime.

And underlying all of this is, of course, our efforts to support President Morales' efforts to fight corruption. CICIG is a pillar of that. This is an institution that we have been supporting for years. We will continue to support because it has shown that it can actually address the problem of corruption in a systematic way.

Senator MENENDEZ. I am glad you mentioned CICIG because that was my next question to you. It has been, I agree, a very positive and innovative and successful justice model. But I have heard some alarming reports, including from Commissioner Ivan

Velasquez Gomez himself, that it may be coming under pressure from the powers that be in Guatemala. It has been the U.S. policy to support CICIG, which has not only been successful in addressing impunity in Guatemala but also serves as a model for other countries in the region.

So is it your intention, upon your confirmation, to be a voice in support of CICIG on behalf of the administration?

Ambassador ARREAGA. Thank you for your question, and the answer is an unqualified yes. CICIG is an underlying linchpin for our efforts in Central America—in Guatemala.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Urs, I have been very concerned about reports of increased coca production in Colombia and have concerns about the impact this will have on transnational criminal organizations in the region. So have you had an opportunity to assess Peru's new national strategy against illicit drugs? And if so, what are your views of it?

Mr. URS. Yes. Thank you very much for that question, Mr. Senator.

Peru earlier this year issued a new strategy that runs from 2017 to 2021. It is an integrated strategy that attempts—a comprehensive strategy that attempts to attack narcotics trafficking and transnational criminal efforts in a broad range of areas. It looks at interdiction, eradication. It sets a target of 25,000 hectares of eradication each year for the 5-year period. It has also alternate development as one of the pillars of it. And it has some other elements, health, and some other reform elements.

So we have supported Peru's counternarcotics efforts and efforts against transnational crime for an extended period of time, and the country has made important inroads in terms of dealing with the problem. I think when we look at the total amount of hectares of coca there, the numbers have come up and down, as they have in many countries around the region. But when we look at the areas of the country that are now largely free of coca cultivation, the upper Huallaga Valley, Monzon, we find coca cultivation concentrated in smaller and smaller parts of the country. So I think our feeling is that Peru has been somewhat successful in this effort, and that we ought to continue to support their efforts.

Senator MENENDEZ. Have you visited Peru?

Mr. URS. I have. I spent 4 wonderful years in Peru from 1996 to 2000 as the economic counselor there.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you speak Spanish?

Mr. URS. I do.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now, two last questions, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

What do you see as the most significant bilateral issues, if confirmed, that you will be dealing with as it relates to Peru?

Mr. URS. Thank you very much, Mr. Senator.

We have four items that we list generally as our top priorities in Peru. They are combating transnational crime, and that includes not only drug trafficking but also illegal mining and illegal logging. Actually it is estimated that illegal gold mining may produce as much revenue, $2.6 billion in illegal revenue, as is produced by narcotics activity. And then in addition, illegal logging is also increasingly a problem. These types of issues, the illegal logging and

illegal mining, also bring with them problems of trafficking in persons, environmental degradation. So there is a whole series of associated problems that are there with these other illegal activities and, of course, with narcotics as well. Narcotics production also causes very, very severe environmental degradation. So that is a top priority. We want to help the Peruvians in their efforts. They are front and center on this. We are being supportive of them so the main burden falls on them.

We also have an institutional reform program that we are working with the Government of Peru. This is, again, their effort. We are being supportive. They are looking at dealing with issues about weak institutionality, corruption, those kinds of things by trying to move to an adversarial system of justice so that rather than the civil system, the Napoleonic Code type of system where investigations are done by an investigating judge and held in paper files, these cases are argued in a public way, in a verbal way. We feel that—and I think the Government of Peru feels—that that will allow the best disinfectant of all, which is public attention and air to resolve some of the issues that there are regarding institutionality in Peru.

We also are working with Peru in many areas regarding environment, especially as I mentioned, in the gold mining area where mercury contamination is a byproduct of illicit gold mining. So there we just recently signed an agreement with the Government of Peru, a memorandum of understanding, that provides for cooperation in terms of dealing with the illegal mining problem.

So those are some of our priorities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I appreciate it. That is a very thoughtful answer.

Let me just say we have a lot of Peruvian Americans in New Jersey, a very large concentration and a very industrious people, a very fine community. They have been very helpful. I hope at some point when you are back in the States, after confirmation, we might get you involved with them to listen to some of them. They are also great potential investors in their own country.

Mr. URS. Thank you very much for that, and Mr. Senator, I would be delighted to do that.

Senator MENENDEZ. And finally, I want to echo the chairman's remarks about Venezuela. I hope in Peru, which I want to applaud and, for that fact, Costa Rica as well and I believe Guatemala to some degree—has been good at the OAS. Unfortunately, we cannot seem to get our Caribbean neighbors to be as good on the issues of promoting the democratic charter of the OAS.

So I hope that you and your respective missions will work with those countries, number one, to applaud them when they are actually out there doing things that are good for democracy and human rights in the hemisphere to give them a sense of support of that so that they will continue to stand up at the OAS and to urge them to find ways in which their relationships in the hemisphere are used to also promote at the OAS an opportunity.

We are going to have the Secretary General here at a hearing with the chairman a little later, and it is not very normal that the OAS Secretary General comes before a committee. It is an extraor-

dinary opportunity, and I would like to see it amplified by our Ambassadors.

Thank you all for your answers.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you to the ranking member.

I am not going to be outdone. We have a lot of Peruvians in Florida too. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. And so on your way, as you are connecting flights, you got to stop in Florida and meet with them and with Guatemalans and people from Costa Rica.

But let me just start with Costa Rica because there is an interesting angle to it, and it is in the phrase of both a question and asking for an assurance. We have a lot of U.S. travelers to Costa Rica. We have a growing number of Americans who have made it a part-time or permanent residence in Costa Rica but obviously retain their citizenship and the like.

And one of the debates that is going on here in the Congress and on the Hill is about these budget cuts. A lot of times when people talk about budget cuts to State, they think we are talking about a bloated bureaucracy. And I think even those within the State Department would admit that there is always the need for reform. But part of what we do in our embassies is serve Americans when they are abroad. You lose your passport. You want there to be multiple consulates in a big country and an embassy that is well staffed that can come in and help you out. If you are living there for a significant period of time and have any needs from medical needs or the like, you want an embassy or consulates that are well staffed and well manned. And in the case of Costa Rica in particular, we have a significant number of American visitors and people spending months at a time.

And so I would just ask your commitment, irrespective of, obviously, the chain of command, obviously, that you need to follow within the State Department. But this is really for all of you, but in particular Costa Rica. If at any time there is a need for greater services, it is important for those of us here on these committees to know about it. It is important for us so we can advocate for it. It is also important for us so we can point to it as an example that our embassies are not just these nice buildings that host cocktail parties, and they are not just there to interact with governments. They are also there primarily in many cases to serve our fellow Americans abroad who are in need of consular services for a variety of different topics.

And I start only with Costa Rica because I know the sheer volume of travelers and visitors and increasing number of Americans who have made it home for a significant period of time throughout the year.

Ms. DAY. Thank you, Senator, again for that comment. And it is absolutely true. As we know, we are one of the top tourists groups of visitors that come from America to Costa Rica, 1.2 million last year, plus about 160,000 expats that live there full-time as American citizens. So I will make it my highest priority to make sure that all Americans, whether in the embassy staff or team or Americans that are visiting or actually have decided to live there part-time, are protected and make sure that we have the funds and the

mechanism in place and the security controls in place to protect those individuals while we continue to grow the embassy mission.

Senator RUBIO. And, Ms. Day, the other question on Costa Rica and comment is because of its geography and location, it has also become a transit point for migration. The volume is significant. This is actually true for Guatemala as well, but a place where a lot of people wind up because they cannot get somewhere else on transit and the like.

Let me ask this. As you prepare for this assignment, what are your views? What have you sensed are some of the things we can be doing to help Costa Rica? I know you were asked about human trafficking and you alluded to it a little bit with some of the U.N. reforms and the like. But what resources could we be providing or cooperating with the Costa Rican Government to help? Because, obviously, many of those who are migrating through are headed towards the southern border of the United States and oftentimes have fallen victim to some of these horrifying trafficking groups that do horrible things to people. So what is your sense, as you prepare for this assignment, as to what we can be doing to partner with them to improve their capacity?

Ms. DAY. Thank you, Senator.

Well, I think to continue to work closely in bilateral relationships with Costa Rica is vitally important. And we have seen an opportunity to do that with, again, whether it be the drug interdiction to try to help to stop the transportation and the warehousing that is going on, to fight organized crime because, as we know, again, when you have a strong and secure country, it does stop a lot of the issues.

We have helped control and worked with them in tools and training and the necessary funding to help with our border security to try to prevent the migration again following into the United States. They are working with our data team, working with the tools, whether it be three additional Hueys or, again, vessels and docking opportunities for those vessels on the Pacific coast to stop, again, the migration of drugs into the country that way, and then again to help support the issues with the additional vetting for immigrants that come into country to try to help them relocate those that have come to Costa Rica for, again, safety.

Senator RUBIO. Ambassador Arreaga, I am an enormous supporter, as is the ranking member, of the Alliance for Prosperity. We think it is critical on multiple fronts, first because we do think it helps with some of the irregular migration patterns. The second is these countries face an extraordinary burden from the trafficking in drugs destined towards the U.S. consumer markets. So it is in our national interest to be of assistance.

What you learn as you engage on these issues is that the three nations, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, have similar issues that they confront. They also have differences among them in terms of some are more advanced in one direction and another in terms of capacity.

In your view, in the case of Guatemala, if they were here today with us and we were to propose to them this is where we think we can be most helpful in the short term, what would you say in the next 2, 3, 4 years is the most important part of the Alliance for us

to focus on first in order to increase their capacity to do what I believe—and I think I shared with you and you share the share the same view—is their desire to make advances? Of all the components that they need, is there one or two key areas that we should focus on as we construct the future of the Alliance?

Ambassador ARREAGA. Thank you for your question, Senator.

And, indeed, I would say that corruption remains the top priority. Nothing can move unless corrupt officials and corrupt members of the private sector are removed from what they are doing. That remains an important part.

The other part I think is very important is to have greater engagement from the private sector. The private sector is part of the solution, and there are elements of the private sector in Guatemala that are interested in being part of the solution. So we need to get the private sector more engaged and continuing with a lot of the Government reforms.

For instance, tax collections. Tax collections in Guatemala are among the lowest in the world. President Morales has appointed a very effective director of the tax office, and he is already showing some results. So we need to continue along these areas and also to discuss with Guatemalans the commitments that they made in Miami for the various elements of the plan and keep that moving.

Senator RUBIO. I am not sure about Peru, Mr. Urs. I am concerned that with the loss of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, at least the U.S. participation in it, that the hope of some vehicle by which greater economic engagement, even at a bilateral level, has perhaps been set back. I think Peru is a nation that has made extraordinary economic progress over the last few years and has the opportunity to do so much more.

Irrespective of the decision made with regard to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, what do you view are the opportunities to increase economic engagement between the U.S. private sector and that in Peru?

Mr. URS. Thank you very much for that question, Mr. Senator.

Peru and the United States have a free trade agreement that came into force in February of 2009. That has actually been quite a dynamic agreement. We had two-way goods trade of about $9 billion in 2009. That has grown to $14 billion by 2016. We have done very well in that trade. We have about a $1.8 billion surplus, and we have done well in the agriculture sector as well where we have seen a tripling of our agricultural exports, which is always of great interest in the United States.

I think the agreement, in addition to setting very high standards for market access, intellectual property rights protection, investor protections, environment, and labor, also provides for mechanisms for us to work together to try to further expand trade between the United States and Peru.

And in that regard, I think one of the important challenges for us actually—Peru has seen enormous growth, as you pointed out, and they have seen a reduction in poverty as a result as well, about a half-way reduction in poverty in Peru, a halving of poverty in Peru. But what they have seen is there are some pockets of areas where they have not seen that kind of reduction, certain areas of the mountainous center of the country, the highlands, in

some of the communities, the Afro-Peruvian community, for example.

So one of the things I would like to do, if confirmed, would be to look at how we could use the agreement and see if there are not some ways to link into the agreement so that these communities might possibly benefit from the agreement.

I think there is an alternative side to that as well, another side to that, which is in the United States, there are also communities that might benefit from the agreement more than they currently do. And there might be parts of the United States, perhaps the center of the United States where perhaps the demise of manufacturing companies have really affected those areas, we could try to see if there is not some way to——

Senator RUBIO. I am not trying to trap you into a position where you are taking on the current administration's decisions. So let me rephrase it this way because, obviously, the existing trade agreement is in place.

I will just cut to the chase. My concern is that if, in fact, Peru continues to move forward on free trade engagement with the region, multiple other countries, some of the competitive advantages of our bilateral free trade agreement erode as free trade with other countries become more available. So assuming that that will continue to be the policy for the foreseeable future, I guess the question really I should have asked—the way I should have phrased it was what can we do to ensure that we continue to grow our bilateral relationship in free trade even as the Peruvian economy may have multiple other options other than the United States in which to engage in greater trade. I think you have largely answered it in your answer.

The more people they are trading with in some instances and that we are not a part of, the potential for some erosion is always there because they are getting a better deal from somewhere else. And so that is why I think our engagement is critical. You have touched upon some of the unique niche opportunities.

My final question really has to do with the way the region is so interlinked, and that has to do with whether it is instability in Venezuela or—I want to be frank about this—the decision by President Santos as part of the peace negotiation to cut back on aerial-eradication leading to a massive increase in coca production in Colombia. It is not just impacting Colombia. It is impacting every nation along the supply line. I think that is true of Costa Rica. It is certainly true of Peru. It is especially true of Guatemala.

Anytime you have an increase in production of cocaine, you have to sell it somewhere, and obviously, the United States is that destination. And we have an internal issue that we need to confront with consumption. But all these countries, some of which, like in the case of Guatemala, have limited consumption, are going to face the pressure as that supply races to meet the demand.

From the perspective of that challenge, do any of you have concerns that our existing security, law enforcement engagement with the countries that you are about to, hopefully, represent our country in, that our existing programs are built adequately with enough resources to confront this additional challenge of a massive in-

crease in coca production that is quickly on the way? And I imagine in large extent that question is about Guatemala.

Ambassador ARREAGA. Thank you for your question, Senator.

And, indeed, we do have a very effective demand reduction program worldwide. And we always try to integrate supply reduction with demand reduction programs because we do know that anytime you have drug trafficking in a particular area, the potential for some of the citizens of the country where the drugs travel for becoming a drug addict is there. So we do have programs, and we have the ability to expand them as needed. But the answer is a short yes. We have it.

Senator RUBIO. Would anyone else care to comment?

Ms. DAY. Thank you, Senator.

Again, with Costa Rica—and the President has spoken out very strongly about the support of the United States in helping Costa Rica and, again, gather strength in protecting that border and protecting the influence of drugs coming into Costa Rica for transportation. So absolutely, if confirmed, I will do everything that I can to make sure that we support their effort and we are there. The United States is in a bilateral arrangement with Costa Rica. Thank you.

Mr. URS. Mr. Senator, thank you for the question.

I would just add one point, which is it is unlikely that many of the drugs that are produced in Colombia will come towards Peru. Peru is producing quite a number of drugs themselves.

But what is true is that an increase in drug production in Colombia will strengthen the transnational criminal organizations, and those transnational criminal organizations, some of the same which we are fighting against in Peru—that strengthens the opponent, so to speak. So even in a place like Peru, which is not likely to be the destination of drugs coming from Colombia, can be affected in a negative way by an increase in production in Colombia.

Senator RUBIO. Well, I am out of questions, and the ranking member indicates he is as well.

Just for those that perhaps have not been to one of these before, the fact that it is not full of Senators is actually a good sign, not a bad one.

And we appreciate you being here today, your record of service, your willingness to continue to serve your country.

Just as a matter of record keeping, the record of this hearing will remain open for 48 hours. It is possible the members of the committee may submit questions in writing for the record, and I encourage you to answer those expeditiously so we can continue to move forward.

With that and without objection, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:58 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Matertial Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO AMBASSADOR LUIS ARREAGA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. During 1994–1998, I was responsible for the Africa humanitarian assistance portfolio at the Department. In this capacity I managed our relationship in Geneva with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, at a time when these institutions were grappling with the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. I worked to ensure that the hundreds of millions of dollars of U.S. Government funding to these institutions was directed to the most vulnerable populations in Rwanda (mostly internally displaced persons and the prison population) and surrounding countries (refugees from Rwanda). My engagement contributed to the protection of human rights for the most vulnerable populations in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Beginning in 2013, I have overseen the design and implementation of the Department's INCLE-funded programs in the Western Hemisphere. These programs encompass a range of activities (training, equipping, mentoring, and policy reforms) aimed at strengthening justice systems. We have placed particular emphasis on programs that protect vulnerable and historically marginalized groups (women, LGBTI persons, journalists, human rights defenders, and children). We have seen the positive impact of these programs, particularly in Central America, where special task forces are investigating emblematic cases, and where the law enforcement authorities are trained to investigate and prosecute crimes against vulnerable groups.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Republic of Guatemala today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Republic of Guatemala? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. As Secretary Tillerson said before this committee, our mission is at all times guided by our longstanding values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. Our foreign policy is motivated by the conviction that the more we engage with other nations on issues of security and prosperity, the greater our opportunities to shape the human rights conditions in those nations. The United States remains committed to advancing the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons. Dignity and equality for all are among the fundamental principles, which guide U.S. diplomacy.

If confirmed, I will uphold these principles and continue to support the work of the U.N. Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and the Guatemalan Public Ministry to combat impunity.

If confirmed, I will also encourage CICIG to do more to transfer capacity to the Attorney General's office and other justice sector entities to strengthen their ability to prosecute human rights abusers. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our commitment to addressing the most pressing human rights concerns in Guatemala.

Question 3. 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 the Republic of Guatemala in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Lack of transparency, corruption, weak institutions, and high impunity rates pose significant obstacles to advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in Guatemala. The United States Government has partnered with like-minded leaders in Guatemala to address these issues. If confirmed, I will continue to support the work of CICIG and the Guatemalan Public Ministry to combat impunity and corruption, while supporting the transfer of capacity to the Attorney General's office and other justice sector entities, which will be better positioned to address human rights violations as a result. Robust vetting programs, done with the assistance of the U.S. Government and CICIG, have begun to remove bad actors from historically closed institutions like the police, corrections, and court systems.

If confirmed, I will continue to support these leaders and the reforms they propose, which will ultimately lead to substantial improvements in human rights protections within Guatemala. I welcome the progress that has been made by CICIG to investigate and prosecute individuals engaged in criminal activities.

If confirmed, I will continue to voice support publicly and privately for CICIG, the Public Ministry, and the Attorney General's office and other justice sector entities. If confirmed, I will also continue to support USAID's long-term National Institution Strengthening project to assist the Government of Guatemala in improving tax administration and public financial management of key institutions responsible for the planning, processing and execution of the national budget. Through a combination of these projects USAID supports the Guatemalan Government's efforts to be more responsive to its citizenry and increase investment in key areas such as health and education.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the Republic of Guatemala?

Answer. Yes; if confirmed, I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the Republic of Guatemala.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, we will continue to thoroughly vet all individuals and units nominated to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities, in accordance with the Leahy law. If we find credible information of a gross violation of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training and will assist the Guatemalan Government to bring them to justice.

Question 6. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Guatemalan Government officials to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted?

Answer. Yes; if confirmed, my embassy team and I will actively engage with Guatemalan Government officials to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted.

Question 7. Will you engage with Guatemalan Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes; if confirmed I will engage with Guatemalan Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of my bilateral mission.

Question 8. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 10. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Guatemala?

Answer. Neither I, nor any member of my immediate family (spouse, children or their families), have any financial interests in Guatemala.

Question 11. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. A diverse and inclusive team is the type of team that, if confirmed, I will aim to foster. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Mission in Guatemala continually strives to promote equal opportunity for our officers, including women and those from historically marginalized groups.

Question 12. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, under my leadership, the Embassy will reflect our whole-of-mission commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. I will make certain each of the supervisors at the Embassy has the opportunity to receive proper formal training and regular guidance to ensure they are helping to foster a work environment that is diverse and inclusive.

Question 13. The administration's FY 2018 budget request to Congress includes a 39 percent cut in foreign assistance to the three countries of Central America's "Northern Triangle"—El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Currently, U.S. assistance to those countries supports the "U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America," a plan initiated in FY 2016 to address the root causes of irregular migration and related humanitarian challenges. If the USG cuts these violence-prevention, economic development, community policing, and criminal justice reform efforts, what is the risk that violence and insecurity will worsen and exacerbate migration and humanitarian challenges?

Answer. The United States will continue to play a strong role in Guatemala, and in Central America overall to promote prosperity, governance, and security. Between FY 2015–17, the United States provided almost $2 billion in assistance to Central America. These resources, combined with the $460 million Central America request for FY 2018, emphasize continued U.S. commitment to reducing insecurity and violence, enhancing the business climate, and promoting improved governance. To complement U.S. assistance efforts and ensure long-term sustainability, we are also encouraging increased private sector investment in the Northern Triangle countries and seeking to mobilize additional support from other partner nations and global financial institutions.

If confirmed, I will use the full range of tools available to me as Ambassador to advance U.S. priorities with Guatemala. We are also encouraged by the 23 percent increase in the Guatemalan Government's 2017 budget for Alliance for Prosperity (A4P) activities ($83 million total), compared to 2016.

Question 14. One of the main elements of current efforts to strengthen the rule of law and combat impunity in Guatemala is the need to improve the capacity and independence of the judicial sector, which has been vulnerable to interference from powerful sectors and internal corruption. What is the administration's strategy to support efforts to strengthen Guatemala's judicial sector, ensure judicial independence, and rid justice institutions of corruption?

Answer. The administration is committed to expanding good governance through transparency and anti-corruption programs, and support for the work of CICIG, the Guatemalan Public Ministry, and the Attorney General's office.

Questionn 15. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala, how would you address these issues?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to support our ongoing efforts to improve the capacity and independence of the judicial sector and seek to rid these institutions of internal corruption. If confirmed, I would also continue to support the work of CICIG, the Guatemalan Public Ministry, and the Attorney General's office to combat impunity.

If confirmed, I would also support ongoing joint efforts between USAID, the Guatemalan Government, and civil society organizations to achieve greater security and justice for Guatemalans, and work with these partners to strengthen institutions, including through 24-Hour Courts and the High Impact Court model, as well as courts dedicated to responding to the high incidence of gender-based violence cases. U.S. assistance to the police academy, to investigators, to prosecutors, and to judges, is giving Guatemalans the tools they need to reduce impunity and bring about long-term institutional change.

Question 16. If confirmed, will you prioritize continued support for the important work of the CICIG and the Attorney General's Office in tackling corruption and impunity?

Answer. Yes; if confirmed, I will prioritize continued support for the important work of the CICIG and the Attorney General's Office in tackling corruption and impunity.

Question 17. Guatemala still has one of the lowest levels of tax revenue in the world, limiting the state's capacity to provide basic services, improve economic conditions, and increase citizen security. At the same time, several recent high-profile corruption cases have implicated members of the private sector in bribery and other illicit activities. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala, what will the administration do to encourage the Guatemalan Government to strengthen the tax code and improve tax collection?

Answer. During the June 15–16 Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America, the Northern Triangle governments committed to pursue reforms to improve their business climates, including eliminating red tape, improving transparency, and streamlining business formalization processes. They agreed to maintain macroeconomic stability and to fund their development, including ongoing efforts to raise revenues efficiently while improving the investment climate. These changes will help companies, including U.S. firms, expand their businesses in the Northern Triangle markets. Through USAID, we are also working to help modernize and promote transparency in institutions through our work with the Ministry of Finance, support reforms at the Tax and Customs Agency (SAT), and help the Morales administration reach its target of increasing tax revenues by 3 percent of GDP. The Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) provides training, equipment and a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) customs advisor to SAT, and Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance has supported several advisors in Guatemala to improve tax collection and other issues. These efforts have demonstrated progress. SAT collected a total of 7.5 billion in taxes, exceeding its annual target by 33 million.

If confirmed, I will continue to engage with the Guatemalan Government on ways to increase tax revenues, expand the tax base, and make it easier for companies to pay taxes, while continuing to root out corruption at all levels.

Question 18. How would you ensure that U.S. assistance is not benefiting businesses or individuals implicated in corruption scandals?

Answer. Thorough vetting is an essential component of U.S. assistance programs. We do not provide assistance to businesses or individuals implicated in corruption scandals. U.S. assistance is not used for direct budgetary support to the Guatemalan Government. INL vets government units prior to providing assistance, training, or information, and assists the Attorney General and police with vetting before special units are established. If confirmed, I stand ready to adjust our programming to prevent assistance from reaching corrupt individuals and to ensure that we continue to administer programs directly with implementing partners.

RESPONSES TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO AMBASSADOR LUIS ARREAGA BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. As you know, the United States recently lost a dispute settlement case against Guatemala regarding the country's enforcement of labor provisions of the CAFTA-DR trade agreement. Despite accepting that Guatemala had failed to protect its workers and enforce its own labor laws, the arbitral panel decided that these actions did not constitute a violation of CAFTA-DR. Now that we appear to have lost the leverage provided by the agreement, what will you do to ensure that the Guatemalan Government addresses these longstanding labor abuses?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to continue working with the Guatemalan Government to ensure effective of its labor laws, modernize labor commitments, and advance labor and related political rights in Guatemala. Ongoing U.S. Government-funded programs are helping to strengthen the capacity of worker organizations to advocate for internationally recognized worker rights. I support the Guatemalan Government's commitment to strengthening national labor reform efforts and meeting job creation goals under the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity and, if confirmed, will ensure these commitments are aligned with respect for labor rights.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO SHARON DAY BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question 1. Are you concerned that the judicial persecution of American citizen Ann Patton—who may be subjected to a fourth trial after two acquittals—is based on a defect in criminal procedure that unintentionally vitiates double jeopardy protections under Costa Rican law?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize the safety, security, and protection of the legal rights of U.S. citizen visitors and residents, which includes retirees, veterans, students, and tourists. I will lead the Embassy in working with the Costa Rican Government to carry out this mission and to strengthen the bilateral relationship. The Costa Rican legal system, like that of many other countries, does not have the same double jeopardy protections provided under U.S. law.

Question 2. Should U.S. citizens seeking investment and retirement opportunities abroad be concerned that they will face arbitrary and ceaseless prosecution, even after they have been acquitted?

Answer. Costa Rica is an attractive destination for U.S. citizens seeking to invest or retire. An estimated 100,000 private U.S. citizens reside in the country, many of whom reside without legal resident status. A significant number are retirees and veterans. Costa Rica actively courts foreign direct investment, placing a high priority on attracting and retaining high-quality foreign investment. U.S. products and services have a favorable reputation in Costa Rica and U.S. companies continue to be interested in entering the market. Many companies have operations providing back office services in Costa Rica, and the medical device manufacturing sector has substantial U.S. investment. However, I understand that some concerns facing Costa Rica remain, including infrastructure, navigating bureaucracy, intellectual property enforcement, corruption, real legal property rights enforcement, electricity prices, and liberalization of key sectors. If confirmed, I will continue the strong bilateral relationship between our two countries and build on the efforts to continue to address these challenges.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO SHARON DAY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have spent many years promoting the importance of voting and helping individuals register to vote, monitoring voting locations, promoting Election Day voting, early voting, absentee voting and driving voters to the polls. I have educated, empowered, and encouraged women candidates to run for elected office. I have proudly shared across our country, as well as in foreign countries, America's proud principles of democracy, freedom and liberty.

In 2000, I was responsible for coordinating volunteers to prepare for an election recount in my county and a neighboring county. Additionally, I served as a witness for each of the various media recounts. After the 2000 election, I was asked by Governor Jeb Bush to serve on Florida's Committee for Election Reform, a committee that was tasked to look at every aspect of the voting system in Florida.

I believe, Human Rights are something you live every day—it is the way you live your life not just in a moment, but every day and with every action. It is the actions you take and the beliefs that you serve that every individual should live in freedom and have an equal opportunity. This my belief and it is how I live my life.

I am someone who believes every child deserves the best education no matter their economic status or their zip code. I have stated this belief loudly and often. I believe that without an education a child cannot achieve their American dream and if every child does not fulfill his or her American dream, America cannot live up to our American dream.

I was elected to serve as president of a women's club back in the mid-1990s, and part of the function of the club was community service. Before I was elected, community service consisted of buying a book for a library—usually for a school that didn't need it, to be honest. I created, and along with my board members' support, we initiated a book gifting program, a backpack program and a mentoring program for the students at an underserved school in Broward County. It was a "D" rated school (which became an A rated school in a few short years) whose students included, I believe at the time, 83 percent subsidized breakfast and lunches, some children that were homeless and majority made up of minority students. We adopted this school with our actions and our hearts. We developed a three stage program. First, we acquired books that were appropriate for K through second grade students. On the last week of school we hosted an end of school party with cookies and punch, and each class was brought to the library where they selected a book, wrote their name in it and kept it as their own. On a personal note, as hard as it may be to believe, many of the students had never owned their own book. Second, at the beginning of the next school year we provided a backpack for every student in K–2 with all the school supplies they would need for the year. Third, club members signed up to mentor children that needed help. Those three things happened for the four years that I served as President, and I am very proud to say the club still supports this wonderful elementary school even adding additional support not just for the students, but also for the teachers with grants to help advance their success too.

In 1961, Hurricane Carla hit the Texas coast and many of my fellow Texans from Houston and the coast were forced to evacuate to my home of San Antonio. I spent the entire night and next day and night in my school cafeteria offering warm clothes and blankets, helping to make sure people had a hot meal, helping children settle in, setting up cots and trying to soothe and play with the children who had been displaced and were scared. We all do these things to help people in need, and to play with the children was easy for me and not a problem at all, as I was only 11 years old. I did not come home from school that day as they were setting up things nor the next two days until my mother and father insisted that I come home to rest. It was an event that still vividly lives in my memory today of time when I was able to help others who were so much in need and so scared.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Republic of Costa Rica today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Republic of Costa Rica? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Some of the human rights concerns that Costa Rica faces are trafficking in persons, conditions in overcrowded prisons, and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Trafficking in persons is not just a crime against the person, but a crime against a society. Costa Rica shares our same concerns and is working to continue progress in this area. While I commend Costa Rica for its efforts in the fight against trafficking in persons, as demonstrated by its Tier 2 ranking in the Department's 2017 Trafficking in Persons report, I will, if confirmed, encourage Costa Rica to intensify efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses, convict and punish traffickers, and improve victim identification, referral, and assistance.

If confirmed, I will make it a priority to lead with a passion and intensity to explore avenues in which the United States can help Costa Rica fight against the scourge of human trafficking and continue our efforts to encourage Costa Rica to seek a legal definition of trafficking consistent with international law.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government of Costa Rica and encourage the continuation of bilateral programs that will assist in advancing the protection of human rights. For example, the United States is providing technical assistance to Costa Rica to improve prison conditions, including in management and security, and increase the country's capacity to address gender-based violence. The Department advances reforms to Costa Rica's prison structure and facility operations including human rights training for the penitentiary police and a K-9 unit to reduce drug and cell phone smuggling into facilities. The Department also supports training focused on gender-based violence crimes, including an interagency training program for sexual assault response teams to develop the skills of medical professionals, social workers, police, prosecutors, and judges to support victims and understand the evidence in sex crimes. Materials donated in a successful pilot project have expanded access to medical care for victims.

Question 3. 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 the Republic of Costa Rica in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. President Solis prioritized anti-trafficking efforts and led a whole-of-government effort to focus on and invest resources in the fight against trafficking in persons. There is always the risk that future governments would not prioritize the fight against trafficking in persons, which could also present a challenge in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general.

In addition, the United States has provided anti-trafficking in persons training to law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges in the past, as well as technical assistance to Costa Rica to improve prison conditions, including in management and security, and increase the country's capacity to address gender-based violence. A significant change in this support may negatively impact Costa Rica's capacity.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the Republic of Costa Rica?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs from the Republic of Costa Rica.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, in accordance with the Leahy law, we will continue to vet all personnel and units nominated to participate in USG-funded security assistance activities. If we find credible information of a gross violation of human rights, we will work to assist the Costa Rican Government to take effective measures to bring the responsible parties to justice with the goal of creating a more accountable and professional security partner.

Question 6. Will you engage with Costa Rican Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage with Costa Rican Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of my bilateral mission.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Costa Rica?

Answer. No. Neither I, nor any member of my immediate family, have any financial interests in Costa Rica.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. A diverse and inclusive team is the type of team that, if confirmed, I will strive to foster. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Mission in Costa Rica continually strives to promote equal opportunity for our officers, including women and those from historically marginalized groups.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, under my leadership, the Embassy will reflect our whole-of-mission commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. I will ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy have the opportunity to receive proper formal training and regular guidance to ensure they are helping to foster a work environment that is diverse and inclusive.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KRISHNA URS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Over the course of 31 years in the Foreign Service, I have worked to promote human rights in many different contexts and countries. At one point in my career, I advocated for and prepared a statement issued by the Department of State calling for an end to spiraling political violence involving security forces and a specific political party in one country. In several countries, I worked with national and local governments to establish safe houses for victims of human trafficking and to step up awareness campaigns about trafficking in persons. At my urging, the U.S. Government ended all assistance to a national police force in one country in which I served due to our concerns about the use of extrajudicial killings as a crime prevention tactic. In several countries, I advocated public statements by the Embassy to highlight areas of eroding respect by foreign governments of democratic institutions and norms.

My actions in support of human rights over the course of my career produced concrete results. To provide just a few examples—our statement decrying spiraling political violence involving security forces resulted (at least temporarily) in fewer exchanges of gunfire involving the police. After we cut off assistance to the police in another country, the Government replaced the police chief (who had been linked to human rights abuses) with another official publicly committed to protecting human rights. Our statements in support of democracy served as encouragement to like-minded allies in the local society, helping to protect institutions and norms.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Republic of Peru today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Republic of Peru? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Our close relationship with Peru is built on shared interests and values, including the importance of human rights. Peru has made significant strides in support of human rights since the end of its 20 year internal conflict in 2000. Human rights challenges, however, persist in the areas of violence against women and children, trafficking in persons, and discrimination against Afro-Peruvians, Indigenous persons, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) persons. Corruption enables an environment allowing these and other human rights challenges to exist.

If confirmed, I will use all the tools at my disposal to assist Peru in addressing its human rights challenges.

By working together to promote human rights, social inclusion, and poverty reduction, we can achieve a more prosperous, inclusive, and democratic future for Peru.

Question 3. 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 the Republic of Peru in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The Peruvian Government has shown a commitment to address many human rights challenges. If confirmed, I will encourage the Peruvian Government to continue its efforts to improve social inclusion and respect for human rights, seek opportunities for public-private partnerships toward this end, and cooperate with non-governmental organizations to multiply the effect of our assistance.

I will work with Peru's Government to combat corruption, which can exacerbate social conflict, enable human rights abuses, and undermine confidence in government institutions.

If confirmed, one of the challenges I will face will be to help the Peruvian Government and civil society find new ways to include the country's historically marginalized communities in Peru's economic success story.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the Republic of Peru?

Answer. Yes. Developing strong relationships with human rights advocates, civil society, and non-governmental organizations is one of the cornerstones of our partnership with the Peruvian people. If confirmed, I will continue the United States' longstanding practice of closely engaging Peruvian civil society to ensure I am fully attuned to Peru's human rights landscape. I will work closely with the Peruvian Government, civil society, and all relevant agencies of the U.S. Government to ensure every dollar of U.S. assistance is used wisely and in accordance with our human rights goals and the Leahy Law.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. As a U.S. Government employee with 31 years standing, I am firmly committed to implementing all relevant U.S. laws and regulations, including the Leahy law, when fulfilling my duties. If confirmed, I will work to ensure no assistance is provided to foreign security force units where the Department has credible information that such units engaged in gross violations of human rights, in accordance with the Leahy law. I will also work to ensure the U.S. Mission in Peru works with the Government of Peru to help them take effective steps to bring those responsible for any violations of human rights to justice.

Question 6. Will you engage with Peruvian Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will engage the Peruvian Government and civil society on human rights, civil rights, and democratic governance. Peru has a critical

role to play in encouraging regional stability and is an important partner of the United States.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Peru?

Answer. No. Neither I, nor any members of my immediate family, have financial interests in the Republic of Peru.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I am a strong believer in the value of diverse teams in identifying, analyzing, and addressing issues and problems. Diversity helps prevent "groupthink," ensuring that issues get a thorough examination from all possible perspectives and making sure that all viable options are explored. If confirmed, I can assure you that I will take diversity into consideration in filling high level positions at the U.S. Mission in Lima, as I have done in past assignments. I am committed to mentoring for all staff members, but especially for those from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with each member of my country team to ensure they are giving proper consideration to assembling a diverse and representative team. I will also ensure country team members understand their responsibility to provide mentoring and guidance to mid-level and junior members of their teams, with specific emphasis on diverse and under-represented groups.

Question 12. Earlier this year, Peru issued a new decree to establish a payment process to service longstanding debt related to agrarian reform bonds. Numerous U.S. firms and citizens hold an interest in these bonds, including several Maryland pension plans. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Peru, will you commit to working with the Peruvian Government to achieve a final resolution of this issue? Will you work with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of the Treasury to ensure that they have accurate information about the amount owed on the bonds?

Answer. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Peru, I look forward to learning the details of this complicated case. I fully commit to engaging with the Government of Peru to press for a fair and timely resolution of these complex issues. I understand the independent regulator with jurisdiction over Peru's U.S. law bonds, the Securities and Exchange Commission, has been asked for views on this case, and I will follow up. I will also engage Treasury for its views on the appropriate treatment of these particular domestic obligations in national economic statistics. I understand there is considerable debate on the appropriate valuation of these securities, the resolution of which could impact on the value of other U.S. investors' holdings of Peru's domestic and international debts, and I will press for a speedy resolution of the related methodological issues.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Portman, Paul, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, and Booker.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We have a number of distinguished nominees here today, and we welcome them.

We also have a number of very distinguished introducers, and we welcome you. We thank you for coming to our committee. In order for you to be able to go ahead and do other business today, Senator Cardin and I will defer, relative to making opening comments, and let you go ahead and do what you need to do. We look forward to those comments, and then, we realize, you will probably like to go elsewhere.

I know Senator McConnell is also coming today, and Senator Rubio. But why don't we just start in the order of seniority? We appreciate so much you being here.

Senator CARDIN. That would be Senator Lieberman. Oh, you are not talking about age.

The CHAIRMAN. Actually, I was.

But we welcome you all.

And, Senator Cornyn, why don't you start? We thank you for your distinguished service to our country, and for being here today.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN CORNYN, U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS

Senator CORNYN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee.

It is a pleasure to be back here. It is the second time in less than a couple weeks. It is not often that I darken the door of the Foreign Relations Committee, but as long as the President keeps nominating Texans, I promise to come back often.

I cannot think of a better nominee to an important ambassadorship to Brussels than our dear friend, Kay Bailey Hutchison. She truly is someone who needs no introduction, but I am going to give her one anyway.

I had the honor of serving alongside of Kay for 10 years in the Senate. And when I got here, there were some things that I figured out pretty quickly about her.

Number one, she is tireless. You would be hard-pressed to find a Senator in the Chamber who worked harder than Kay Hutchison.

Second, she was relentless. She would not stop until she achieved her objective.

And most importantly, she always did what she thought was the right thing for Texas. Whether it was working with Republicans or Democrats, that was always her guiding star.

As I think about the type of individual best-suited to represent the U.S. on the world stage, I can think of no one better than Kay.

She has always been a trailblazer. After graduating from the University of Texas Law School, she became the first female on-air news reporter in Houston. Years later, she became the first woman to represent Texas here in the Senate.

When she was here, as you will recall, her leadership was quite evident. She served as the ranking member of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, and chaired the Republican Policy Committee.

Kay was not and is not afraid of working across the aisle. It was the way she was able to get so much done during her time here, not only on behalf of Texas but on behalf of the Nation.

She has always been a fierce advocate for military families. It is no exaggeration to say that every base in our State has felt the impact of her work. And she has worked hard for veterans, to make sure they get the medical assistance, job training, and support that they needed when they came home.

And she has worked hard to promote things like tax relief for hardworking Texas families. And she made it easier for women to save for their retirement and worked to reduce the unfair marriage penalty tax.

During her time here, Kay served on the Intelligence Committee, and the Armed Services Committee as well. So I know that promoting American global leadership and strong diplomacy guided her committee work and will prepare her well for her duties in Brussels.

So I think her time in this chamber was instructive as to how she will serve in this new position. We are, as we all know, in a time of increasing instability across the globe. And now more than ever, our friends and allies need a determined and steady hand representing the United States.

Senator Hutchison has the experience, determination, and tact required for our representative to Brussels. And there is no one better prepared to successfully navigate and strengthen our relationships on the world stage. Kay will do it, and she will do it with poise and grace.

So I look forward to supporting her confirmation on the Senate floor.

Once again, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, and members of the committee for allowing me to say a few words on behalf of Kay Bailey Hutchison.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you so much for being here.

Senator McConnell, you are welcome to go next, or if you want to get your thoughts together, we can go to Senator Cruz. It is your choice. We defer to you.

Senator MCCONNELL. Mr. Chairman, since I also need to also open the Senate, if you would not mind, if Senator Cruz would not mind, I would like to go ahead.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you very much for being here. It is an honor to have you, and we look forward to your comments.

STATEMENT OF HON. MITCH McCONNELL, U.S. SENATOR FROM KENTUCKY

Senator MCCONNELL. It is my privilege to be here today to recommend Kelly Knight Craft, a native of Glasgow, Kentucky, to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Canada.

President Trump made a strong choice when he nominated her, and in today's hearing, this committee will learn of her experience and skill in advancing the priorities of the United States.

Ms. Craft has a distinguished record of service in my home State of Kentucky and to our Nation. She helped lead organizations like the United Way of the Bluegrass, the YMCA of Central Kentucky, the Salvation Army of Lexington, and the Center for Rural Development. She has also served on the board of trustees of our shared alma mater, the University of Kentucky.

In 2007, President Bush named her to serve as an alternate representative for the U.S. delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. The Senate confirmed Ms. Craft to that position by unanimous consent. In the General Assembly, she represented the United States' position on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Her ability to build consensus among international stakeholders toward a common goal served her well at the U.N., and I believe it also makes her an ideal candidate to be the next Ambassador to Canada.

The United States and Canada are closely interconnected, sharing a common history and set of values, while boasting a strong bilateral relationship founded on robust security and trade relations.

The relationship with Canada is particularly important for Kentucky. Direct investment from Canada supports thousands of Kentucky jobs, and Canada is the Commonwealth's number-one export market. Maintaining this strong relationship between our two nations is vital.

So Ms. Craft has the necessary skills and experience to continue the long history of friendship between our nations. Her work will continue to serve the interests of the United States very well.

I would also like to recognize her husband, my good friend, Joe Craft, another extraordinary Kentuckian, who is here today to support his wife's nomination.

So thanks, again, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to testify on behalf of Kelly. I appreciate your consideration of her nomination, and we look forward to her confirmation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much for being here.

Senator Cornyn, if you feel like you want to help open the floor, you are welcome to leave also. Thank you so much for coming.

Thank you both.

Senator Cruz?

STATEMENT OF HON. TED CRUZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS

Senator CRUZ. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, it is a privilege to join you this morning, especially with the great honor of introducing my friend and a true Texas legend, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison.

Many of you served with Kay and know her well as a friend and colleague. All of you, I know, respect Kay. And a great many, I know, were grieved when you saw her successor. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. I don't think that is the case.

Senator CARDIN. Ayes and nays? [Laughter.]

Senator CRUZ. I object. [Laughter.]

Senator CRUZ. But I have to say I think Kay Bailey Hutchison is an extraordinary choice to be Ambassador to NATO. The President has chosen well, and I am confident that the Senate will agree in that assessment.

Kay's history in Texas, she was born in Galveston and grew up in La Marque. She is a proud Texas Longhorn, having earned her law degree at the University of Texas. Her late husband, Ray, was also a Texas public servant, having served in the Texas House and also as chairman of the State Republican Party. And their two children, Bailey and Houston, are the joys of her life.

Senator Hutchison began her public service career in the Texas House, and honorably served our home State for 20 years in this body, where she built a distinguished record of service on the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Defense and Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittees that will give her direct and powerful insight into the security issues facing Europe and North America.

Few statesmen have the qualifications, the relationships, and the gravitas that Senator Hutchison brings to this position.

After years of inadequate resourcing, Kay led an effort in the Senate to rebuild our military and helped prepare to meet the new, more stringent demands of the global war on terror.

After the Kosovo conflict, Kay led the first Senate codel to the region. There, she met with NATO leaders to discuss the future of our NATO endeavor and to help bring stability and democratic elections to the region.

In fact, Kay has toured every major conflict since her arrival in the Senate in 1993. From Bosnia to Iraq, Afghanistan to Serbia, Senator Hutchison made it a priority to meet with commanders in the field, with troops in areas of combat, and with international leaders to make sure that they had the resources that our military needed to carry out their mission. She has a heart for the men and women serving our Nation.

Her commitment to safeguarding America's national security will serve her well in this new role protecting America's and our allies' interests as U.S. Ambassador to NATO.

Kay also has an eye for talent. When I arrived in this body, in my office among the staff, we had a John Cornyn mafia as part of the staff. We had a Rick Perry mafia as part of the staff. But there was no bigger group than the KBH mafia, which was and is a very large chunk of our team because she has such a good eye for talent and she trains them well. That will serve her well as our Ambassador.

You know, I agree with the President's effort to extract more from our allies in support of NATO. I think that is a positive direction for our country. But I think it is also very good to have a U.S. Ambassador who has a strong will and a gracious smile to represent America, to represent America with our allies and strengthen those friendships and alliances. And I am proud to support her nomination.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for being here. I think we would all agree we have had two very strong-willed Senators in this seat.

And so we can save the best for last, Senator Lieberman, I am going to Senator Rubio.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

Senator RUBIO. Thank you for this opportunity and the privilege of introducing Mr. Lewis Eisenberg of Florida to be the Ambassador to the Italian Republic and to the Republic of San Marino.

Mr. Eisenberg is a cofounder and managing partner of Iron Hill investments in New York. From 1995 to 2001, he was chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, responsible for overseeing the region's international airports and seaports, bridges, tunnels, and the World Trade Center. He was named a founding board member of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, which was formed after the terrorist attacks of 11th of September 2001. He chaired its Victims' Families and Transportation Advisory Councils for 2 years, from 2001 to 2003.

Mr. Eisenberg was a senior adviser for Kohlberg Kravis Roberts from 2009 to 2015, cochairman of Granite Capital International Group, both in New York, from 1990 to 2011. He spent 23 years at Goldman Sachs, where he served as a general partner and cohead of the equity division.

He is a recipient of numerous awards and has been honored by the American Jewish Committee, the National Conference for Community and Justice, Monmouth University, Liberty Science Center, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newark, New Jersey, and the New Jersey Alliance for Action.

As you can see, has strong links to New York and New Jersey, so you may ask, what does that have to do with Florida? Well, that is very typical of Florida, strong links to New York and New Jersey.

But I know him as a resident of Florida, and I have known him for quite a while, along with his family. I am excited for him and for the country. He will be an incredible representative of the United States with an important ally.

He is, I believe, deeply qualified for this position, and we are, frankly, grateful for his willingness to serve his country and our country.

So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Senator Lieberman?

STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN, FORMER U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, members of the committee. It is good to be back here.

Let me say, first, just a loud, sincere amen to all of the positive words said about Kay Bailey Hutchison, someone who I have been privileged to know well.

I am honored to be here this morning to introduce to the committee K.T. McFarland as the President's nominee to be our Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore.

K.T. has had a remarkable career, which just says so loudly that she is ready to take on this post. You can see it in the documents before you. If you had a chance to meet her, I think you probably appreciate it.

There have been two letters filed with the committee that I think speak really in a very unique way about the arc of K.T.'s life in service. The first is from Dr. Henry Kissinger who writes on her behalf, as a student at George Washington University, K.T. worked as an assistant for Henry Kissinger when he was National Security Adviser in the early 1970s, and stayed with him through the Nixon and Ford administrations.

The second letter is from General H.R. McMaster, who K.T. has worked with over the last several months as Deputy National Security Adviser.

I think those two letters together tell you how qualified she is.

But I am really here as a friend of K.T.'s, and as a friend of her husband's, Alan McFarland. I just want to speak briefly about them in that regard.

Alan and I went to college and law school together. I will not embarrass either of us by telling you how long we have known each other. Maybe I will say, in general terms, that we are in the sixth decade of our friendship, and it has been a good friendship that has taken us through all the ups and downs of life.

I can tell you, based on that, that K.T. and Alan are people of great character, high principle, a commitment to living an ethical life. They will bring with them, if confirmed, to Singapore a spirit of patriotism and honor, and a commitment to improving the relationship between our two important countries that are such great allies.

I thought that I would tell you two stories to indicate briefly who these people are.

On Election Night, the first time I ran for the U.S. Senate when I got elected, I was an underdog. It was very close. It was not until well after 11 p.m. that I felt confident enough to go down and declare victory. We all remember the maxim that victory has a thousand parents but defeat is an orphan.

My suite at the hotel in Hartford had filled up amazingly as the returns began to come in. And finally, when I was heading out, somebody came over to me and said there is somebody named Alan McFarland on the phone. So it was such a drawing back to a

friendship and earlier life, I went and took the call. And Alan was full of excitement and congratulations. And he said, hey, incidentally, K.T. had an apartment in Washington that we are not using since she is in New York with me. If you need a place to live for a while, why don't you use it?

So I totally forgot about it, went down, got swept up in all the post-election stuff. About a month later, because Hadassah was going to stay in Connecticut with our kids until June when they finished school, I had one of those pre-senatorial moments when you say, where am I going to live? And I remembered the call, and they graciously had me as their tenant for 5 or 6 months.

So I would add to K.T.'s resume that she once operated a shelter for a homeless Senator, and did it well. [Laughter.]

Senator LIEBERMAN. The second is a very different kind of story. You will note on K.T.'s resume that her work life has been divided into two. In between, beginning in the mid-1980s, she made a tough decision, which was that she was going to devote herself to being a wife and mother, eventually of five children.

One of them is a story that says a lot about Alan and K.T. In 1995, Alan's first wife, Nell, who was married to a man some of us knew named David Sawyer, they died within a short period of time of each other, and they left a son who was essentially alone. And it is a long story, but the bottom line is that Alan and K.T. stepped forward and adopted Luke and have raised them as their child. It really says a lot about them.

I grew up with the phrase from the Talmud that, if you save one life, it is as if you save the entire world. And they saved one life, and, in that, I think the entire world.

So for all of these reasons, both professional and personal, I recommend K.T. McFarland to you without hesitation. I truly believe she deserves your support, that she deserves nonpartisan support from the Senate.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you both very much for being here.

Before I turn to Senator Menendez, who is going to introduce our next Ambassador nominee, you all are welcome, if you wish, to go about other business. We really do appreciate both of you being here and elevating our meeting.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Menendez?

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We generally say that the United States and the United Kingdom have a special relationship. And, indeed, there are few other nations with whom our bilateral relationship is as expansive and as important as the United Kingdom. And that relationship is based on shared values of our two nations, democracy, respect for human rights, and having helped shape the postwar, rules-based international order.

Maintaining and strengthening this relationship is critical for the United States' national security, for our transatlantic relation-

ships in general, and many of our foreign and military engagements around the world.

Being a diplomat requires certain qualities and the ability to navigate uncertain waters. Some new diplomats try their hand at this endeavor with the best intentions but fumble in their execution.

Hailing from the great State of New Jersey, however, I have no doubt that Robert Wood Johnson is up to the task and would be an excellent representative of the United States.

Mr. Johnson is the chairman and CEO of the Johnson Company.

He is the CEO of the New York Jets. It is the one few things that I have in disagreement with him. It should be the New Jersey Jets. But in any event, they are the New York Jets.

And he has a wide range of civic endeavors, and also sits on the Council on Foreign Relations.

As the United Kingdom continues to sort out the practical implications of Brexit, including future trade deals, his successful private sector experience, I think, will be critical.

In our conversation earlier this week, he expressed his appreciation for the importance of our robust security relationship and intelligence-sharing operations with the United Kingdom. He has spoken on how he will draw on the knowledge and experience of the career officers with whom he has met. And his extensive management experience will be an asset in running a large Embassy in London.

He has assured me that he will consult with this committee, something we always like to hear from our nominees. And I believe it is critically important that our Embassy in London has the leadership it needs to continue strengthening the already deep bond between our two nations.

And I believe Mr. Johnson can provide that leadership. And I welcome him to the committee, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much. I apologize for not knowing you were introducing until just a moment ago. We thank you for that introduction.

And I thank all of you for being here. I think we have an extremely distinguished panel here today. I am glad that all of you are here together, and I appreciate your desire to serve our country in the way that you have.

We are going to consider, as we all know, the nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Canada, our single largest trading partner as of May 2017.

Throughout the Cold War and to this day, Canada has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States through the North American Aerospace Defense Command, better known as NORAD.

Canada's military is an important NATO partner, and we have close intelligence-sharing and law enforcement ties.

Canada values its relationship with the United States, and we value our very close relationship with our neighbor to the north. This week, Prime Minister Trudeau joined Vice President Pence in speaking to the U.S. National Governors Association.

Canada also supports working with the U.S. and Mexico to update the North American Free Trade Agreement.

We will also have a conversation with our nominee to be the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO.

NATO faces the threat of an increasingly antagonistic Russia, which has occupied the Crimean and eastern regions of Ukraine, a country once considered a contender for NATO membership.

NATO has increased its deployments in the Baltic region in recent months due to fears of a potential clash with Russia there. Both NATO itself and individual member states are members of the U.S.-led coalition conducting airstrikes against ISIS.

Maintaining a strong NATO depends not just on the United States but on all members meeting their commitments on defense.

And we thank you for being here to do that.

We will look to the nominee to be Ambassador to the United Kingdom as well, one of the United States' most critical allies. The bilateral U.S.-U.K. relationship has grown into a global network of military, intelligence, and trade partnerships that together fight terrorism, resist Russian aggression, and drive economic growth.

The United Kingdom has not just deployed its military beside ours, it has helped us build the international framework that includes the United Nations and NATO. Our countries work together with these institutions to help make the world a safer and more prosperous place.

We thank you for being here.

We will also have a chance to engage the nominee to be Ambassador to Italy, where we also have positive and strong relations.

Italy is now on the U.N. Security Council and continues to play a key role in European and Mediterranean security policy.

We thank you for being here.

Lastly, we will consider the nominee to Singapore. Singapore is one of our strongest security partners in Southeast Asia and plays rotational host to the U.S. naval vessels operating in the region.

Singapore is also a key economic and trading partner for the United States in the region. Our strategic partnership is vital to maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

We thank you for being here.

I really am elated that all of you are here together. I think you are going to do an outstanding job for our Nation. I know you are honored to be nominated to these positions.

And with that, I will turn to our distinguished ranking member, my friend, Ben Cardin.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me welcome all five of our nominees and their families.

First, I really want to thank each of you for being willing to serve your country, and thank your families as we recognize this cannot be done without a supportive family, so we thank you.

The five positions that are being nominated are extremely important to our country.

And, Mr. Chairman, I hope that you will be a little bit lenient as far as the time limits are concerned, because these are extremely important countries, and I know members may have questions that they want to ask more than one witness.

Secondly, I would ask our nominees that we do questions for the record. I know Kay is well-aware of that. I would ask that you give that personal attention. I know sometimes there is a volume issue here. I know that we are not going to be able to get through all the questions we want to ask you directly, and the questions for the record are very important.

I know I am going to defer a lot of my questions for the record, so I just ask that you recognize that, because of the large number who are here, and the importance of the countries that are represented, that this is our opportunity to get important issues aired that are in the portfolios that you will be responsible for.

It is particularly a pleasure to have Kay Bailey Hutchison back before our committee, and it must be a little different experience on the other side of the dais, but we thank you very much. I know that you are going to do an incredible service to our country at NATO.

We had a chance to go over some of those issues in my office. NATO is so important to our national security. Probably today more than ever before, there are challenges. We know that Russia's aggression really is a major concern to many of our NATO partners. And our strategies on how we deal with Russia's incursions into Ukraine and Georgia and Moldova is a real challenge to NATO. We know Afghanistan is a continued challenged NATO.

So you are going to have your plate full, and we look forward to working with you and this committee.

I particularly, Mr. Chairman, like one of the suggestions that Senator Hutchison made on how we can formally observe the work at NATO and have representatives of our committee work directly with our Ambassador, so I thank you very much for that suggestion. I thought it was an excellent suggestion.

With all four of the countries that are represented here, there is a common thread. We have democratic countries that share our principles of democracy that are critically important to us for intelligence gathering and sharing of intelligence information. They are major trading partners that are critically important to our economy. And many of these countries share directly in our military burdens, and whenever we need help, it is those countries that we turn to first that help us in regard to our national security concerns. So these are really close partners.

The chairman knows that I always raise issues concerning human rights. You might think that when you are looking at four democratic countries, that maybe that is not as important. Promoting American values is always important. Our strength is in our values, and our values are respect for human rights for all citizens.

So particularly as it relates to Singapore, we do have issues. Singapore does not protect people against discrimination based upon their sexual orientation or gender identity. They also are ranked near the bottom in their protection in many of the human rights issues.

Reporters Without Borders ranked Singapore 151st out of 180 nations in its annual World Press Freedom Index behind neighbors such as Burma, Cambodia, and Malaysia.

So we will be asking you, Ms. McFarland, how you will represent American values in Singapore, a friend and trading partner, and a major commerce center, as to how we can get advancements on these universal human rights, which I believe are very, very important.

I really did enjoy the conversations I had with several of you, and I want to just underscore a point that Senator Menendez said in regard to Mr. Johnson, the same thing is true of Ms. Craft, that there is a real genuine desire to work with this committee, members of Congress, to further the missions of the United States in the countries that you represent.

So I look forward to a robust discussion, and I again thank you all for your willingness to serve our country.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your comments.

Senator Hutchison, we are glad to have you back. Since you have done this so many times on this side of the dais, we thought it would be good for you to lead off and help the others get started.

I understand that at least the first five rows are family members and friends. It may be that the entire audience is that. We hope so.

But please feel free, as you come to your turn, to introduce your family and friends who are here with you. We thank them for their willingness to support you in the effort that you are getting ready to undertake.

With that, Senator Hutchison, thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF HON. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY

Senator HUTCHISON. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

I do not have my two teenagers here. Many of you knew my teenagers when they were little babies, and I was walking the halls with them. They are both back in Dallas. I have my neighbor from Virginia, Mary Jarrett.

The CHAIRMAN. We do hope to get you to NATO by the time school enrollment starts.

Senator HUTCHISON. Thank you. It is so important that my son starts school on time, so I thank both of you for acknowledging that.

And I also want to thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, for your courtesies throughout this process and your leadership and the way you work this committee together. I appreciate it so much.

I appreciate all the members of the committee, and I know how much you spend in time and effort to make sure that our foreign policy, our Ambassadors, our State Department, our military and the Defense Department are covered in the Senate. You do a great job, and I thank you.

I am not used to being on the side of the podium, as you have said, but I had many great years here.

I am here, if you consent, to have the opportunity to represent our country in a different way, but in an area with which I am very

familiar. As my colleagues have said before, I have visited U.S. troops in harm's way in every conflict that we had when I was in the Senate, and very often, there were NATO members with those troops—Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

I have met with military and diplomatic leaders as well, and I have to say that our diplomatic side, which is one that I had not been as familiar with, was amazing.

In Bosnia, when we went in, the Serbs were still shooting from the hills. Our Ambassador resided in a bombed-out building that did not have running water. He slept on a cot in his office to serve our country, when we first went into Bosnia.

I visited Afghanistan right after our troops started going in. I stayed in a Russian-built institution in the hanger that the Russians had built near a runway in Afghanistan. It was the only place that the troops could sleep. So there were hundreds of cots under this leaky-roofed hanger, and all they had with them was a duffel bag with their uniforms. They were making way for the presence that we would have there, for the building of a hospital, for the building of barracks, so that those who followed would have a place to do their job.

That is what our people to in the Foreign Service and the military. And my appreciation for them is boundless.

I look forward to being an effective partner for our policies, for our military, for our allies, who are also making sacrifices for our mutual defense.

NATO is the most successful defense alliance in the history of the world. It was formed in 1949. And at the time, President Truman said, following two terrible World Wars in that century, "By this treaty, we are not only seeking to establish freedom from aggression and from the use of force in the North Atlantic community, but we are also actively striving to promote and preserve peace throughout the world."

It was determined that an alliance between Europe and North America sends a message of solidarity that would deter aggression and help avoid a third World War and, in the event of conflict, make earlier action against a common enemy more effective in protecting freedom for its democratic members.

Does NATO exist to protect allies against any threat of aggression? Yes. That was one of NATO's original mission. It remains relevant today.

But NATO has also evolved into much more, because today's security environment now encompasses a much broader array of challenges, including asymmetric warfare.

Terrorism by ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other extremist elements seek a caliphate to displace religious freedom where it is protected throughout the world. Rogue nations, such as Iran and North Korea, have developed ballistic missile capabilities and may be close to achieving nuclear weapons, a threat to all the 29 members of the alliance and our partners.

Russian disinformation campaigns and malign influence targeting NATO allies and partners seek to undermine Western democratic institutions and principles, and sow disunity in our longstanding transatlantic bonds.

In its evolution, many questions are raised. Does every country in the alliance meet its agreed commitment? No. Improvements are in order.

President Trump has called for a stronger effort from allies not meeting the Wales pledge on defense investment—2 percent of GDP on defense, and 20 percent of total defense expenditures on defense modernization. Allies need to meet this commitment.

We also stand firm on Article 5. President Trump has said that each ally should honor the pledge to increase spending because it will make all of our efforts more robust, our deterrence credible, and the cost of our collective defense will not unfairly rest on the shoulders of American taxpayers.

I believe, as you have said in your opening statements, that the shared values of democracy, protection of human rights, individual liberty, and rule of law bind all NATO members. This bond must be reinforced because it does unite us.

I have said as a U.S. Senator, and will continue to say, that that this alliance is something like the world has never seen. Our allies have been by our side throughout history. Our allies especially have been with us in Afghanistan, which has been a tough road. They have stood with us in solidarity in Afghanistan, where over 900 troops of our allies and partners have given their lives alongside U.S. soldiers for more than 15 years.

Our NATO allies are our core partners in diplomacy and on the battlefield, our partners of first resort in dealing with old and new threats to the security of our people.

The strength of this alliance benefits every member.

If confirmed, I hope to represent the integrity of the American commitment to be a formidable enemy and a reliable ally. America should be both.

In closing, I want you to know how much I appreciate the hard work you do. I have been there, and I know that every one of you love America like I do, and you are here to make sure that our country is the strongest and safest for all of your constituents.

And I want to make sure that we are able to preserve what our fore-fathers and -mothers gave to us and fought for and died for, in many instances: security, freedom, and an indomitable spirit.

Thank you so much.

[Senator Hutchison's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON

Good Morning Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin and all of the committee.

I'm not used to being on this side of the podium, but I am pleased to be where I spent so many great years working with my colleagues for my state and our united country.

I am here if you consent, this time, to have the opportunity to represent our country in a different capacity, but in an area with which I am very familiar.

I have visited U.S. troops often, sometimes together with service members from other NATO nations, wherever they have been in harm's way—Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. I have met with military and diplomatic leaders during their deployments, sometimes as in Bosnia, where our Ambassador resided in a bombed-out building, sleeping on a cot in his makeshift office, or in a Russian-built hanger next to a runway in Afghanistan, where hundreds of troops slept under a leaky roof with only a duffel bag of uniforms under their cots as they began to build a headquarters, barracks and hospital for the larger contingent to follow.

My appreciation for the work of our military and the crucial role of the diplomatic corps is boundless and I look forward to being an effective partner for our policies, for our military and for our Allies, who are also making sacrifices for our mutual defense and protection.

NATO is the most successful defense and security alliance in the history of the world. It was formed in 1949 after the sad experience of the two world wars last century. President Truman said at the time, "By this treaty, we are not only seeking to establish freedom from aggression and from the use of force in the North Atlantic community, but we are also actively striving to promote and preserve peace throughout the world."

It was determined that an Alliance between Europe and North America sends a message of solidarity that would deter aggression and help avoid a third World War, and in the event of conflict, make earlier action against a common enemy more effective in protecting freedom for its democratic members.

Does NATO exist to protect Allies against any threat of aggression? Yes, that was one of NATO's original missions and it remains relevant today. But NATO has also evolved into much more because today's security environment now encompasses a much broader array of challenges, including asymmetric warfare. Terrorism by ISIS, Al Qaeda and other extremist elements seek a caliphate to displace religious freedom where it is protected throughout the world. Rogue Nations such as Iran and North Korea have developed ballistic missile capabilities and may be close to achieving nuclear weapons; a threat to all of the 29 members of the Alliance. Russian disinformation campaigns and malign influence activities targeting NATO Allies and Partners seek to undermine Western democratic institutions and principles, and sow disunity in longstanding transatlantic bonds.

In its evolution, many questions are raised. Does every country in the alliance meet its agreed commitment? No. Improvements are in order. President Trump has called for a stronger effort from Allies not meeting the Wales Pledge on Defense Investment—2 percent of GDP on defense, and 20 percent of total defense expenditures on defense modernization. Allies need to meet this commitment because it is necessary for their security.

I am encouraged by the recent meeting of Alliance Heads of State and Government where, under the leadership of the Secretary General, Allies agreed to redouble efforts to meet their commitments on defense spending and burden sharing.

In addition there are moves to become more focused on the common threat of terrorism, including efforts to ramp up counter terrorism initiatives.

I believe the shared values of democracy, protection of human rights, individual liberty, and rule of law bind all NATO members. This bond that unites us must be reinforced. Those values underscore why we need to remain firm in dealing with Russian aggression, balancing an Alliance commitment to strong deterrence with political dialogue, foremost on issues like the situation in Ukraine. I want—I think all NATO Allies want—a constructive relationship between NATO and Russia, but there can be no return to "business as usual" between NATO and Russia as long as Russia fails to live up to the deal it signed in Minsk and continues to ignore basic norms of international law and responsible international behavior.

President Trump stands firm on the U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. He has also asked that each Ally honor the pledge they made to increase defense spending so that our capabilities will be robust, our deterrence credible, and the cost of our collective defense will not rest unfairly on the shoulders of the American taxpayers.

I have said this as a U.S. Senator and I will continue to encourage our allies to equitably share the responsibility for our common defense.

We are stronger together than any one of our countries would be alone. Our Allies have been by our side throughout NATO's history. The first—and only—time in the Alliance's decades' long history NATO invoked Article 5, the collective defense clause of the Washington Treaty, was when America was attacked on September 11th, 2001. Allies stood with us in solidarity, and there is no better example of this than Afghanistan, where over 900 troops from Allies and partners have given their lives alongside U.S. soldiers for more than 15 years. Our NATO Allies are our core partners in diplomacy and on the battlefield, our partners of first resort in dealing with old and new threats to the security of our people. The strength of this alliance benefits every member.

If confirmed, I hope to represent the integrity of American commitments. To be a formidable enemy, we must be a reliable Ally. I want America to be both.

In closing, I appreciate the role of the Senate. I know how hard you work and the dedication of each of you to represent your state and build the strongest and safest union for those who elected you to be their representative in Washington.

Thank you for your consideration. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to represent this Country that we love and to protect what our forefathers and mothers fought for us to keep—security, freedom and an indomitable spirit.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much for your comments.

Ms. Craft?

STATEMENT OF KELLY KNIGHT CRAFT OF KENTUCKY, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO CANADA

Ms. CRAFT. Thank you. I would like to express our thoughts and prayers for Senator McCain and his family.

Thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee.

And a special thanks to my fellow Kentuckians, Leader McConnell, who has been such a dear friend to our family for so many decades, and Senator Paul, who, as a friend and a member of this committee, makes me feel right at home.

It is an honor to be with you today as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Canada. I am humbled to be entrusted with this responsibility to lead our engagement with such an important friend, ally, and neighbor.

I have not made this journey alone. With me today are my husband, Joe; two of our children, Jane and Kyle; my brother Marc and his wife, Elisabeth; our close friend John Wyatt. My daughter, Mia, is home preparing for her wedding in 2 weeks. My sister, Micah, is watching from our hometown of Glasgow, Kentucky. Our other children and grandchildren are watching from Oklahoma.

Although my parents, Dale and Bobby Guilfoil, have passed away, they gave me the gift of unconditional love and an unwavering faith in God, for which I will always be grateful.

I appreciate the confidence that President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Secretary Tillerson have shown in me, and, if confirmed, I commit to work every day to live up to their trust, in collaboration with the most talented and dedicated public servants. They are truly exceptional.

On a personal note, I am a testament to the fact that if this young girl, who grew up 671 miles southwest from here, can be nominated by the President of the United States as the first woman to serve as Ambassador to Canada, anything is possible when you work hard.

And I know that Senator Shaheen knows this firsthand, as I have been so inspired by her public service.

My first diplomatic experience with Canada was in 2007 when I represented the U.S. Government with the American people at the opening of the United Nations General Assembly. While observing several multilateral negotiation teams, I experienced how the American-Canadian relationship could be a powerful force around the world.

I share the President's belief that the United States is deeply fortunate to have a neighbor like Canada. Just 3 weeks after his inauguration, on February 13th, President Trump hosted Prime Minister Trudeau. As President Trump said that day: Our two nations share much more than a border. We share the same values. We share the love, truly a great love, of freedom. And we share a col-

lective defense. American and Canadian troops have gone to battle together, fought wars together, and forged the special bonds that come when two nations have shed their blood together.

Today, the economies of the United States and Canada are similarly intertwined. We are one another's number one trading partner.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to further enhance our strong economic partnership, the most extensive and integrated economic relationship of any two nations in the world. The nearly $2 billion in goods and services and 400,000 people crossing the border every day are testaments to the strength of this relationship.

I believe we can do better. If confirmed, I will seek new opportunities to foster further growth to create more jobs for both countries while promoting free and fair trade to ensure that American businesses and workers can compete on a level playing field.

A significant part of our economy is our energy relationship, the world's largest. If confirmed, I will advance our shared goals of energy security, a robust and secure energy grid, and a strong and resilient energy infrastructure.

Recognizing that our cooperation on energy is inextricably linked with the environment, I will also work to advance our shared environmental goals, stewardship of our common watersheds, landmass, wildlife, farm life, and the air we breathe, from coast to coast to coast as the Canadians say, the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Arctic.

At 5,525 miles, the U.S.-Canada border is the longest shared border in the world. We in Kentucky know a few things about borders. We have seven States with whom we share a border. And the only trouble comes when they go home, like to Tennessee and Indiana after losing to the Kentucky Wildcats. [Laughter.]

Ms. CRAFT. The United States is fortunate to have a neighbor that shares a strong commitment to democratic values and works tirelessly to promote peace, prosperity, and human rights around the world.

Canada is our partner in NORAD and NATO, and it is with great appreciation that I acknowledge the Canadian troops who have served bravely alongside Americans throughout our shared history.

If confirmed, I will be a respectful steward of this partnership with Canada. Thank you for this opportunity to be with you today.

[Ms. Craft's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KELLY CRAFT

Thank you Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee. And a special thanks to my fellow Kentuckians, Leader McConnell who has been such a dear friend to our family for so many decades, and Senator Paul, who as a friend and a Member of this committee makes me feel right at home.

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As the President said that day, "our two nations share much more than a border. We share the same values. We share the love, and a truly great love, of freedom. And we share a collective defense. American and Canadian troops have gone to battle together, fought wars together, and forged the special bonds that come when two nations have shed their blood together." He added that "both of our countries are stronger when we join forces in matters of international commerce. We will coordinate closely to protect jobs in our hemisphere and keep wealth on our continent, and to keep everyone safe."

Today the economies of the United States and Canada are similarly intertwined. We are each other's number one trading partner.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to further enhance our strong economic partnership—the most extensive and integrated economic relationship of any two nations in the world. The nearly $2 billion in goods and services and 400,000 people crossing our border every day are testaments to the strength of this relationship.

I believe we can do even better. If confirmed, I will seek new opportunities to foster further growth to create more jobs for both countries, while promoting free and fair trade to ensure that American businesses and workers can compete on a level playing field.

A significant part of our economic relationship is our energy partnership—the world's largest, in fact. If confirmed, I will advance our shared goals of energy security, a robust and secure energy grid, and a strong and resilient energy infrastructure. The United States and Canada's highly integrated and interdependent energy markets make North America a potential global energy powerhouse.

Recognizing that our cooperation on energy is inextricably linked with the environment, I will also work to advance our shared environmental goals, stewardship of our common watersheds, landmass, wildlife, farm life, and the air we breathe—from coast to coast to coast as they say in Canada, meaning not only the Atlantic and Pacific, but the Arctic as well.

At 5,525 miles, the U.S.-Canada border is the longest shared border in the world. The two countries are connected by more than 120 land ports of entry, more than 200,000 annual flights, and the numerous commercial and recreational vessels that cross the maritime border. We work closely with our Canadian partners to promote lawful trade and travel, while securing our common perimeter. We in Kentucky know a thing or two about borders, we have seven states with whom we share a border, and the only trouble comes when zealous basketball fans from Tennessee and Indiana to find themselves headed back home after, oftentimes, losing to our own Kentucky Wildcats.

The United States is fortunate to have a neighbor that shares our strong commitment to democratic values and works tirelessly to promote peace, prosperity, and human rights around the world.

Canada is our partner in NORAD and in NATO, and it is with great appreciation that I acknowledge and respect the Canadian troops who have served bravely alongside Americans throughout our shared history. If confirmed, I will be a respectful steward of this partnership with Canada.

Thank you for this opportunity to be with you today. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your comments and your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Mr. Johnson?

STATEMENT OF ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON IV OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, I would like to offer my family's prayers to the McCain family and wishes for a speedy recovery as well.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished Senators, I am deeply honored to appear before you today. I am grateful to President Trump for nominating me to be the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

And I am also deeply humbled that I may be permitted to act as the Ambassador of the President and the American people. Both family history and personal experience confirm to me that public service is both a privilege and an obligation, and that the ties between the United States and the United Kingdom are profoundly important.

Today, I am joined here by my wife, Suzanne; my children Jamie, Daisy, Brick, and Jack; and, most gratifying, my 97-year old mother, Betty, who, during World War II, served in the Navy, teaching celestial navigation to Navy sailors.

She inspired in me the importance of service and love of country. I can assure you that she expects nothing less of me than the best of me right now. And, if confirmed, I will not disappoint.

I am committed to the United States' historic partnership with the U.K. Almost 100 years ago, my grandfather opened the first Johnson & Johnson facility in the U.K. That company is there to this day.

During World War II, he also served in the military to help small- and medium-sized businesses play a direct role in the United States' wartime partnership with the United Kingdom. This partnership, this special relationship, endures today.

I first traveled to the United Kingdom more than 50 years ago and have been back many times for both business and pleasure. I care deeply about the United Kingdom and our relationship with it. If confirmed, I will devote all of my energy to strengthening and deepening that relationship.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Senators, as the U.K. undergoes a complex transition, politically and economically, there are opportunities and challenges for the United States. I believe I can make a contribution by drawing both on my business and philanthropic experience.

I have had the privilege of managing many organizations, bringing in people from diverse backgrounds and experience and perspectives. It is my belief that diversity of experience and expertise are strengths in achieving shared goals and priorities.

In my years working with the Robert W. Johnson Foundation to improve health and health care for Americans, I learned the value of patience and tenacity in meeting challenges. The foundation's 40-year, multibillion dollar effort to reduce smoking is just one example.

After my daughter Jamie was diagnosed with lupus, I launched the Alliance for Lupus Research in 1999. I did this not only for my daughter, but to help the 1.5 million Americans that suffer from lupus, 90 percent of whom are women stricken with lupus.

It took years to bring together this organization with the best scientists, organizational structure, and figuring out how to raise money to become now the world's largest non-government funder of lupus research, to treat, cure, and prevent lupus.

Owning the New York Jets has taught me the importance of commitment and perseverance. [Laughter.]

Mr. JOHNSON. Right. Exactly.

One example of that, not a football example, one example of that is our 10-year effort to build a stadium. It is very difficult to build a stadium, and we accomplished the objective. We built a privately funded $1.6 billion stadium in the great State of New Jersey.

If confirmed by the Senate, my mission will be to strengthen America's special relationship with the U.K.

The U.K. has been our most steadfast ally in promoting freedom, fairness, and the rule of law. My first task there will be to know the talented professionals at the Embassy. I have been tremendously impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the men and women of the State Department, and the Embassy is home to many of our best people. I want to inspire and enable our Embassy to provide exemplary service to American citizens and businesses.

If confirmed, my goal would be to provide the strong leadership needed to preserve and strengthen, once again, this absolutely special and critical relationship.

Thank you very much.

[Mr. Johnson's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WOODY JOHNSON

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished Senators, I am deeply honored to appear before you today. I am grateful to President Trump for nominating me to be the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I am also humbled that I may be permitted to act as the Ambassador of the President and the people of the United States.

Both family history and personal experience confirm to me that public service is both a privilege and an obligation, and that the ties between the United States and the United Kingdom are profoundly important.

Today I am joined by my wife Suzanne; my children Jamie, Daisy, Robert and Jack; and, most gratifying, my 97-year old mother, Betty. During World War II, my mother, Minnesota-born and raised, served in the navy, teaching celestial navigation to sailors. She inspired in me the importance of service and love of country. I assure you that she expects nothing less than the best from me and, if confirmed, I will not disappoint.

I am committed to the United States' historic partnership with the UK. Almost 100 years ago, my grandfather opened Johnson & Johnson's first overseas operation in the UK, and the company is there to this day. During World War II, he too served in the military and helped small and medium-sized businesses play a direct role in the United States' wartime partnership with the United Kingdom; this partnership, this special relationship, still endures.

I first travelled to the United Kingdom more than 50 years ago, and have been back many times for business and pleasure. I care deeply about the United Kingdom and our relationship with it. If confirmed, I will devote all of my energy to strengthening and deepening that relationship.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Senators, as the UK undergoes a complex transition, politically and economically, there are opportunities and challenges for the United States. I believe I can make a contribution by drawing upon both my business and philanthropic experience.

I have had the privilege of managing many organizations, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. It is my belief that diversity of experience and expertise are strengths in achieving shared goals and priorities. In my years of working with the RWJ foundation to improve Americans' health, I learned the value of patience and tenacity in meeting challenges. The foundation's forty-year multi-billion dollar effort to reduce smoking is just one example.

After my daughter Jamie was diagnosed with Lupus, I launched the alliance for Lupus research in 1999. I did this not only to treat my daughter, but to help the 1.5 million people in the U.S.—ninety percent of them women—stricken by Lupus. It took years to bring together the best scientists, organizational structures and capital sources to make it the world's largest non-government funder of research to treat and cure Lupus.

Owning the New York Jets has taught me the importance of commitment and perseverance. One example is the ten-year effort we undertook to build a new, privately-funded, $1.6 billion stadium in the Meadowlands, in the great state of New Jersey.

If confirmed by the Senate, it will be my mission to protect and strengthen America's special relationship with the UK. The United Kingdom has been our most steadfast ally in promoting freedom, fairness and the rule of law. My first task there would be to know the talented professionals at the Embassy. I have been tremendously impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the men and women of the State Department, and the Embassy is home to many of our best people. I want to inspire and enable our Embassy to provide exemplary service to American citizens and businesses. If confirmed, my goal would be to provide the strong leadership needed to preserve and strengthen our special relationship with the United Kingdom.

Thank you for the opportunity to be considered for the position of United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom. I Look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We very much appreciate your comments and your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Ms. Johnson, based on my experiences over the last few weeks, we could use a little help with celestial navigation on health care. [Laughter.]

Mr. Eisenberg?

STATEMENT OF LEWIS M. EISENBERG OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO

Mr. EISENBERG. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, thank you—K.T. McFarland—Senator Marco Rubio, for your kind introduction and full description of my background.

It is with sincere humility that I appear before you today. I am most grateful to President Trump to make me his nominee for the position of Ambassador to the Italian Republic and the Republic of San Marino, without compensation.

I would also like to express my thanks to Secretary Tillerson for his support and confidence. I am humbled for the opportunity to be of service to our country, should my nomination be confirmed.

And since Senator Rubio and Senator Lieberman were so kind to say a few words, I would like to depart from what I was going to do and read my history and my interest in serving our country in Italy, although it is interesting to note that Senator Menendez, were he here, would testify that I lived many years of my life in the State of New Jersey while I worked in New York, and I have

learned that there are some 20 million Americans of Italian descent. I am confident that the largest percentage of them live in New Jersey and New York and, hence, they are my neighbors and some of my closest friends.

I am going to depart and talk, rather, on why I want to do this in, as Senator Lieberman pointed out, Alan McFarland's and my late stage in our distinguished, so far, careers, if confirmed.

This is hard for me, a little bit, to depart from script, but it was a day not too dissimilar from this. It was a sunny day, not quite so warm, and I had a meeting that had been called suddenly and drew me from my original point of departure. That morning, when I left that meeting, I was met by two police officers from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey who asked me to get into the car, their car, and informed me that the Port Authority, the towers, had been struck, not by one airplane but by two.

It began one of the most difficult periods not only in my life and your lives but in the lives of our country and the world.

My wife was picked up and brought from New York to our home in New Jersey, and I was brought to a makeshift station in Jersey City, where we waited for survivors to come, and we learned of the hit on the Pentagon and the crash in Pennsylvania.

I was asked by the police to try to organize what staff we had from the police who were always there, always professional in response.

And, you know, it is amazing. There are these plates in your life that change. There are births. There are deaths. There is marriage. There is graduation. It was one of those unique shifts in life that has changed us all forever.

We put together a makeshift organization around trying to identify who was lost. I learned that the person who had taken my life at Windows on the World had been lost that morning. The head of police who had climbed to the 27th floor and called me to say he was coming up to get me, learned that I was not there, died that day.

I learned over the subsequent days that we had lost 84 people with whom I worked and thousands of Americans. The Port Authority is a unique bi-state organization. It was my seventh year. It was the day before I was to retire from that office. I remained for 90 days.

After that, I traveled to daily from our Jersey headquarters to what was then called Ground Zero. I acted as a spectator amongst heroes. I served coffee. I gave hugs. I saw the families. It hurt.

The following few months, as my term there came to an end, Governor Pataki of New York asked me to serve in the Lower Manhattan Development Corp., which was to rebuild lower Manhattan, and asked me to chair the Families of Victims Committee and Transportation Committee—clearly, the hardest task of my life.

When I left that, I said to the people in those commissions, to the families of the Port Authority, to my children and grandchildren, who I neglected to introduce as I sat down, but who sit behind me, I pledged that if any opportunity ever came up for me to contribute to the welfare of our country economically or through security, I would do whatever it takes.

If confirmed, I pledge my faithful service, and I thank you for this opportunity.

[Mr. Eisenberg's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEWIS M. EISENBERG

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee:

It is with sincere humility that I appear before you today. I am most grateful to be President Trump's Nominee for the position of Ambassador to the Italian Republic and the Republic of San Marino. I would also like to express my thanks to Secretary Tillerson for his support and confidence. I am humbled by the opportunity to be of service to our country, should my nomination be confirmed.

I would also like to introduce those most dear to my heart and sitting behind me: My wife, Judy, we recently celebrated our 52nd anniversary; and two of my daughters, Lisa Goodwyn and Laura Barr; my sons-in-law, Rick Goodwyn and Dr. Kyle Barr; and 3 of our 10 grandchildren, Henry Goodwyn, Chase Goodwyn, and Jack Balestro. Unfortunately, my daughter Stacy Lyle, my son-in-law Paul, and their three children could not be here. Judy's parents, Lois Lee and Leonard Bierman, and my parents, Estelle and Seymour Eisenberg, all have passed away, but have given us the gift of enduring love, hard work and guidance, for which we will always be grateful.

Judy and I met in college in 1962 and were married in 1965. Judy worked. I studied. I graduated with an MBA in 1966 and joined Goldman Sachs in the summer of that year. It was the beginning of a fifty-year career in the world of finance; becoming a partner and co-head of the equity division at Goldman Sachs, co-founding Granite Capital International Group, becoming a senior advisor at KKR and establishing Ironhill Investments LLC. In addition to business, I have always had an intense interest and involvement in politics, government service, and philanthropy.

There are certain events, that like shifting Tectonic plates, significantly alter the course of one's life.

In 1994 Governor Christine Todd Whitman appointed me to serve as commissioner to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and in 1995 the Board of Commissioners elected me Chairman.

As Chairman, I led policy decisions that deepened our ports; refurbished our bridges and tunnels; initiated trains running to and from our airports; and witnessed

a police force of 1,500 reduce crime in our region and protect our transportation assets. The agency ran on budget with excellent bond ratings, and included a team of 7,200 professionals. My leadership role of this bi-state agency allowed me to regularly negotiate with unions, cities, towns and, of course, between the states of New York and New Jersey. I have never worked with a more dedicated or professional organization.

In the late summer of 2001, under the direction of Governor George Pataki of New York, I led the agency's successful negotiations for the sale of the World Trade Center. At the time, the $3 billion plus real estate transaction was the largest in New York history. I was due to leave that position on September 12, 2001. On September 10th, my office on the 67th floor of Tower One was arranged for a goodbye celebration the following morning.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I made an unexpected stop to meet someone for a quick cup of coffee in midtown Manhattan. As I left my meeting, I was greeted by Port Authority police officers who informed me that the World Trade Center Towers had been struck by not one, but two commercial airliners. I immediately knew we had "been attacked." The buildings would come down and, of course, I learned the Pentagon had been hit and of the crash of United #93 in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

The shock of the loss of thousands of lives and the nature and extent of these tragedies was hard—very hard—to comprehend. More than 3,000 lost. Our homeland was hit. The world forever changed.

For the next ninety days, I led an agency so deeply wounded by events, attending many funerals, sometimes three a day, and reacting to daily crises.

Many days I commuted from our Jersey City headquarters to Ground Zero—referred to by many in those harrowing weeks as "the pile"—where I was but a spectator amidst heroes. We worked and we grieved. We lost 84 dedicated colleagues, including our executive director, Neil Levin, the secretary of the agency, Danny Bergstein and our superintendent of police, Fred Morrone.

In January of 2002, New York Governor George Pataki appointed me as a founding board member of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) and

Chairman of the 9/11 Families and Transportation Advisory Councils—the most demanding and heart-wrenching challenge I ever had.

In departing the LMDC in 2003, I pledged to the people of the Port Authority, the grieving families and to my wife, children and grandchildren that I would, at every opportunity, dedicate myself to the service of our country.

Today, as I sit before you, my commitment remains. U.S. cooperation with Italy is at an all-time high, as demonstrated in May when President Trump made his visit to Rome a centerpiece of his first trip abroad. We are also working with Italy as G-7 President and a member of the UN Security Council to advance our shared priorities.

As a top global partner, Italy has been a leader in the NATO-led missions in Afghanistan and in the fight against ISIS in Iraq. In both countries, Italy has committed the most troops of any U.S. ally. Italy also hosts nearly 30,000 U.S. service members, DoD officials, and family members at bases that allow us to operate effectively and efficiently across the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Africa.

If confirmed, I look forward to further strengthening our security cooperation, and working with Italy to continue increasing its defense spending consistent with NATO leaders' commitment.

Italy is also a vital economic partner for the United States. U.S. exports to Italy and Italian investment in the United States together support over a quarter-million American jobs. If confirmed, I will work to increase opportunities for U.S. businesses in Italy.

Of course, it is the lasting bonds between our peoples that form the bedrock of the U.S.-Italy friendship. In addition to the 20 million Americans who trace their ancestry to Italy, over a million Italians continue to visit the United States each year, and more than four million Americans travel to Italy—including over 35,000 U.S. students.

If confirmed, I will work to sustain our countries' historic ties and expand these meaningful connections. I will also dedicate myself to continue our cooperation with the Republic of San Marino, whose friendship with the United States dates back to 1861, when San Marino's heads of state bestowed honorary citizenship on President Abraham Lincoln. Today, our two countries are working together on critical challenges like combatting money laundering and terrorist financing.

The staff of the U.S. Mission to Italy—across our embassy and three consulates general—works tirelessly to serve American citizens, promote

American business, and advance our cooperation on the full range of top global challenges. If confirmed, I look forward to leading this extraordinary team.

I have had the opportunity to visit Italy over the years on business and pleasure, with my wife, enjoying the beauty of the country. Italy has always occupied a place in our hearts and memories. The warmth and spirit of the Italian people, as in America, is founded on faith in God, love of country, and an abiding love in family. If confirmed, I will strive to continue our cooperative relationships with Italy and San Marino, strengthen our economic, security, history, and friendship. It would be one of the greatest honors of my life. Thank you for your consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for those touching comments and your desire to serve in this capacity.

Ms. McFarland?

STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN TROIA McFARLAND OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

Ms. MCFARLAND. Thank you so much.

And, Lew, thank you so much for sharing all of that with all of us. We were all someplace September 11th, and the fact that you were where you were has made our lives a lot better, so thank you.

And thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee for the honor of addressing you and testifying before you for the nomination to be the Ambassador to Singapore.

I would like to thank my friend Joe Lieberman for his very kind introduction, and for the family friendship that spans over half a century. Senator Lieberman is a man of integrity, enormous ability,

and true patriotism. He is also a man that encourages us all to be better people, and we are all the better for having him in our lives.

I am also deeply humbled by Dr. Henry Kissinger's letter, which Senator Lieberman referred to, Dr. Kissinger endorsing my nomination to serve in this position. He has been a boss, a mentor, and a friend for decades, beginning with my first job as a freshman at George Washington University in 1970 and continuing through my years at Oxford and MIT, the Reagan administration, while I was in cable news, and then coming full circle when I joined the Trump administration in the very same West Wing office that I had started working in 45 years before.

I am also thankful for that very strong endorsement from the President's current National Security Adviser, General H.R. McMaster, who sent a letter to all of you. He is a man of great intellect and strategic vision.

I would also like to thank Secretary Tillerson for the opportunity to work with him and the very able people at the State Department and at Embassy Singapore.

But most importantly, I would like to thank President Trump for believing in me and selecting me for not just one, but two, of the most important positions in his administration.

But I would not be here today without the encouragement of John McCain, because in 2005, the two of us stood in the rain outside the Naval Academy football stadium and he encouraged me to get back into public life and to run for office. So I think all of us wish him and his wonderful family Godspeed, frankly, as he slays yet another dragon.

If I am confirmed, I would not be able to take on this new responsibility were it not for the support of my very large family, my husband of 33 years, Alan McFarland; our five children, Andrew, Gavin, Fiona, Luke, and Camilla; daughter-in-law, Gretchen; son-in-law Matt Melton; our five grandchildren, Arabel, Alasdair, Lachlan, Louisa, and Gigi, almost all of who are sitting right behind me.

If I am confirmed, I also would not presume to take on the responsibility without the support of Embassy Singapore. It is home to some 19 government agencies, and especially to the extraordinarily talented and dedicated Foreign Service Officers who serve there. The men and women of Embassy Singapore are the very best of the best. And I would consider it an honor if you allow me to serve with them.

So, why Singapore? Three reasons.

First, our economic relationship is robust. We have had a bilateral trade agreement since 2004, and it is the first such agreement we have had in Asia. The U.S. has a healthy trade surplus of nearly $20 billion in goods and services. U.S. businesses invest over $180 billion in Singapore, twice as much as we invest in China, five times as much as we invest in India. And 4,200 American businesses have headquarters in Singapore. More than 30,000 Americans live there.

Second, we have a close security relationship. When America closed our bases in the Philippines in 1990, Singapore stepped up to make its facilities available to us. In 1990, we signed the U.S.-Singapore Memorandum of Understanding, which was expanded by

two follow-on agreements since then. Today, our Poseidon P–8 aircraft operating out of Singapore. Our littoral combat ships rotate out of Changi Naval Base.

And in fact, the USS Coronado, one of the Navy's newest littoral combat ships, is currently in Singapore Harbor, and my daughter, sitting right behind me, Lieutenant Fiona McFarland, was one of the sailors that took the Coronado from its construction in the shipyard through its sea trials and its commissioning into the fleet.

And third, we have a lot in common. We are both melting pot nations where people of different races and cultures and religions have come together to create a meritocracy and a democracy. Our free-market economies are innovative, dynamic, entrepreneurial.

But even so, we urge them to go further in their human rights agenda. We urge them to continue their efforts to curb human trafficking, building on their adoption in 2015 of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act. And we urge them to expand their political freedoms, freedom of speech, assembly, and a free press.

And, Senator Cardin, I listened to your remarks, and I agree with them, and I know the power of the bully pulpit.

And on March 30, 1981, Ronald Reagan spoke to the AFL-CIO here in Washington. And in that speech, he added a couple sentences, talking to the people in Poland. There were Polish dockworkers who were trying to organize, trying to strike, under their leader, Lech Walesa.

President Reagan made a few comments, made a few sentences, and nobody remembered them, because within a few minutes, he was shot and narrowly survived an assassination attempt.

But the Polish people heard him. And years later, when the Iron Curtain came down and the Polish people were free, Lech Walesa, the first President of Poland, said that what kept him going and what kept them going in their darkest moments of taking on the communist empire were the words of President Reagan and others, the encouragement he gave them to keep going to demand their rights.

And so I understand the power of what you are saying, and I would hope that, were I confirmed, I would be able to speak out and use the bully pulpit in the same kind of way. Thank you.

So if the Senate does confirm my nomination, I see my job as the steward of all aspects of that close relationship with Singapore. It is a security relationship, because they stand at the entrance to the South China Sea. It is an economic relationship, because it is the gateway between East and West. And I would do so as the chief proponent of American values.

I look forward to answering your questions today. And if I am confirmed as Ambassador to Singapore, I will look forward to working with all the members of this committee, as well as within the administration, to advance our interests. Thank you.

[Ms. McFarland's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF K.T. MCFARLAND

Thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee for the honor of allowing me to testify before you here today as the nominee to become the United States Ambassador to Singapore.

I'd like to first thank Senator Lieberman for that very kind introduction, and for our family friendship that spans over half a century. Senator Lieberman is a man

of integrity, enormous ability and true patriotism. He is also a man that encourages us all to be better people, and we are all the better for having him in our lives.

I am also deeply humbled by Dr. Henry Kissinger's letter of endorsement for my nomination to serve in this position—he has been a boss, mentor and friend for decades, beginning with my first job in Washington, when I was a freshman at George Washington University in 1970. It continued through my years at Oxford and MIT, during the Reagan administration, while I was in cable news and coming full circle when I joined the Trump administration—in the same West Wing office that I had started working in 45 years before.

I am also thankful for the strong endorsement from the President's National Security Adviser, General H.R. McMaster, most my recent boss. He is a man of great intellect and strategic vision. I would also like to thank Secretary Tillerson for the opportunity to work with him and the very able people at the State Department and at Embassy Singapore.

But most importantly, I would like to thank President Trump for believing in me, and for selecting me for not just one, but two, of the most important positions in his administration, first as Deputy National Security Adviser, and now as nominee for Ambassador to Singapore.

If I am confirmed, I would not be able to take on this new responsibility of moving halfway around the world to promote America's interests, were it not for the support of my very large family, including my husband, our five children, their spouses and our five grandchildren. My husband Alan, and our five children Andrew Gavin, Fiona, Luke and Camilla. Daughter in law Gretchen and son-in-law Matt Melton our five grandchildren Arabel, Alasdair, Lachlan, Louisa and Gigi.

And if confirmed, I would not dare take on this heavy responsibility without the support of Embassy Singapore, home to some 19 government agencies, and especially to the extraordinarily talented and dedicated Foreign Service Officers who serve there. The men and women of this Mission are the very best of the best. I would consider it an honor to serve with them.

So, why Singapore? Three reasons:

First, our economic relationship is robust. We have had a bilateral Free Trade Agreement since 2004, our first such agreement with an Asian country. The US has a healthy trade surplus of nearly $20 billion in goods and services with Singapore. 215,000 American jobs are supported by our trade with Singapore. US businesses invest over 180 billion dollars in Singapore, twice as much as we invest in China and five times our investment in India. 4,200 US business are headquartered in Singapore, and more than 30,000 Americans live there.

Second, we have close security relationship. When America closed our bases in the Philippines in the 1990s, Singapore stepped up to make its facilities available to the US Navy. In 1990 we signed the U.S.-Singapore Memorandum of Understanding, which was expanded by follow-on agreements in the years since. Today our Poseidon P-8 aircraft operate out of Singapore. Our Littoral Combat ships rotate out of Changi Naval base. In fact, the USS Coronado, one of the Navy's newest Littoral Combat ships, is currently in Singapore—my daughter Navy Lt Fiona McFarland was one of the sailors that took the Coronado from its construction in the shipyard, through its sea trials, and its commissioning into the Fleet.

Singaporean pilots train with American pilots, Singaporean sailors join programs with our sailors, our militaries train together, our intelligence, homeland security and law enforcement communities share information and best practices.

Singapore was the first Asian nation to join the Global Coalition Against ISIS. When Secretary Tillerson asked me to chair the 68-nation ministerial earlier this year, I met with Singapore's foreign minister. We discussed our common threats: the spread of radical Islam, North Korean nuclear proliferation and competing territorial claims on the South China Sea.

Third, we have a lot in common. We're both melting pot societies where people of different races, cultures and religions have come together to create a meritocracy, and democracy. Our free market economies are innovative, dynamic and entrepreneurial. We're at the cutting edge of technology and the digital age. Our nations have been beacons of stability and prosperity—and an important example of what can be accomplished through hard work, the rule of law and economic freedom.

Even so, we urge them to go further with human rights agenda. We urge them to continue their efforts to curb human trafficking, building on their adoption in 2015 of the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act. We also urge them to expand their political freedoms, freedom of speech, assembly and a free press.

But the Singapore's value to the United States is more than just our bilateral relationship, strong as it may be. I'm a New Yorker where one of the first rules is location, location, location. Despite its small size—Singapore is about four times the size of Washington, DC, or about the size of NYC without Staten Island—Singapore

sits astride one of the most important geostrategically important locations in the world. It is the economic gateway between East and West as one of the world's most important trade routes—on the Malacca straits. It is the world's largest transshipment port.

Singapore is also the security gateway between East and West as the entrance to the South China Sea.

The world's diplomatic chessboard is being rearranged. Economic growth will increasingly come from Asia, especially Southeast Asia. North Korea is on the verge of becoming a nuclear weapons state that will threaten not just Northeast Asia but South Asia as well, and even the US. China is building a blue water navy and flexing its military muscles up and down the Asia Pacific. It seeks to disrupt our relationships with many Asian nations as it lures them into China's orbit. Radical Islamic elements—including terrorists fleeing the crumbling Islamic State—are moving to other parts of the world, including the Asia Pacific region. With each of these security issues, the strength of the U.S.-Singapore relationship will be instrumental to our success.

If the Senate does confirm my nomination, I see my job as the steward of all aspects of our close relationship with Singapore: as the chief commercial officer in promotion of U.S.-Singapore trade; as the chief security officer in maintaining the close U.S.-Singapore security and law enforcement relationship; as the chief proponent of American values; and as the President's personal representative to one of America's most important partners in the region if not the world.

I look forward to answering your questions today, and if confirmed as Ambassador to Singapore, I will work with the members of this committee to advance America's interests. Thank you for taking the time to consider my nomination. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Without objection, the two letters you referred to will be entered into the record.

[The information referred to is located at the end of this hearing transcript on pages 488–90.]

The CHAIRMAN. I am personally struck by the deep sense of duty that all of you have, your desire to serve our country, and look forward to your confirmation.

I am going to defer my questions and save that time for interjections down the road and, with that, turn to Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to join you. Each of you have an impressive background, and your testimonies here today have been very much in keeping with the impressive backgrounds that you have.

Mr. Eisenberg, I want to first thank you for your testimony. When we think we have tough days here, I am going to recall your eyewitness testimony about 9/11 and recognize exactly why we are fighting so hard for the security of our country. So thank you for sharing that. That was inspirational to all of us.

Mr. EISENBERG. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Ms. McFarland, I thank you for your response in regard to American values and reminding us of some of the great moments in American history where our leaders have stood up to oppression and stood up to countries that have proposed policies that are contrary to universal values.

And you are right. Singapore is a small country. It is an important country. It is one of the economic powers. It is the gateway to the China Seas, which is very important for national security. It is a democratic country. But it is a country that does not protect the human rights of its citizens against discrimination. It is a country that does not do well with freedom of the press. And it is a country where America's spokesperson, our Ambassador, can fur-

ther the hopes of people of Singapore who want to see their country protect these rights.

So I thank you for the statement you made. I am satisfied by your response and just want to let you know that you have support on both sides of the aisle to reinforce American values in Singapore and elsewhere. Of course, the region in which you are going to be operating, there are countries that are problematic when it comes to basic values. So you are going to be operating in an area that your mission there, working with other U.S. missions, can very much further U.S. values.

I will be checking in with you and all of the Ambassadors about how we are proceeding on American values, what specifically you have done in regard to your speeches, in regard to people you meet with, in regard to the priorities that you supervise with the people that are there to advance American values. So I look forward to that.

You have a very impressive background. I am going to be asking some questions for the record, but I am going to give you a chance here to respond to one of the statements you made, and it was made in 2013. This is before Russia invaded Ukraine, certainly before they interfered in our elections.

And you said that Mr. Putin is one who really deserves the Nobel Peace Prize. I hope your views are not the same today, but I wanted to give you a chance to respond to that.

Ms. MCFARLAND. Senator, thank you, first of all, for the very kind words, and thank you also for the chance to set this record straight and to put that into context.

Now I regret that it was a little tongue-in-cheek, but at the time, President Obama had laid a redline down on Syria's use of chemical weapons against its civilian population and was either unable or unwilling to carry out that redline. When Secretary Kerry said that perhaps if Syria were to give up its chemical weapons, we would think differently, the Russians stepped forward and said they would like to help broker that deal.

Secretary Kerry, the Russian Foreign Minister, and the Syrians got together. They agreed that Russian would take the lead to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons program.

We now flash forward to today. They were either unable to do it or they were unwilling to do it, and Putin deserves no prize for that. In fact, when I entered the Trump administration, one of the first crises we faced was there were the Syrians again, using chemical weapons against women and children.

So I, certainly, feel that, as you pointed out, the invasion of Ukraine and the other things that the Russians have done, perhaps with President Putin's personal direction, I have a very different opinion today.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for clarifying that.

Senator Hutchison, I want to pivot to Russian and the problems that we are going to have. Clearly, Ukraine is continuously under attack by Russia. We know that there is a continuing presence in Georgia and Moldova.

What can NATO do, working with those countries, in order to shore up their capacity to deal with the aggression of Russia?

Senator HUTCHISON. Well, it is one of NATO's prime focuses, the aggression of Russia in Ukraine, of course, Georgia as well.

And I would say, first of all, the European Reassurance Initiative is an effort to strengthen the areas that are most vulnerable, where we have four battle groups now, one in each of the Baltic states plus Poland, and the United States is leading in the one in Poland. And Canada is leading as well. U.K. is leading as well. And Romania in the other three. So I think we are beefing up defenses for an aggressive Russia.

And secondly, I am pleased that the administration has sent to Kurt Volker over to Ukraine now as a special envoy, because I think that attention to the whole Russian aggression in Ukraine is so important.

And as NATO has said, there is not going to be business as usual with Russia as long as they violate the agreement they made in Minsk, which is regarding Ukraine.

Senator CARDIN. I just want to point out that we hope that, within a matter of days, we are going to pass legislation through both the House and Senate in regard to Russia that includes a NATO-like commitment to unify on the misinformation attacks that Russia is doing in Europe and their use of the Internet. So we are trying to give you additional tools, working with our NATO partners, to share best information and practices against the aggression of Russia.

Ms. MCFARLAND. And I think that Congress is doing the right thing to put those sanctions in place. I know there are some disagreements on some of the language, and everyone is working to make sure that it does not have unintended consequences. I think it is very important.

And that is also an initiative that was made in the May 25th meeting of the heads of state of NATO, that there would be more of a focus on this hybrid warfare, the use of Russian cyberwarfare to interfere with several democracies within our alliance. And that is a focus of NATO, and I think your bill and the inclusion of that language will give us more strength.

Senator CARDIN. We will use your endorsement in the House to try to get it passed.

Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. I think it will happen very soon.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman.

I want to thank all our nominees. We have, from my perspective, a very competent, qualified panel of distinguished individuals, who I think will serve this country well.

Ms. Hutchison, I enjoyed our visit and would like to continue our conversation we began in the office about the INF Treaty.

In July 2014, 3 years ago, our Department of State issued a report that said the following: The United States has determined that the Russian Federation is in violation of its obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty not to possess, produce, or flight test a ground-launched cruise missile with a range capability of 500 to 5,550 kilometers, or to possess or produce launchers of such missiles.

Now State has issued its latest report in April of this year against certifying that Russia "continued to be in violation of its obligations under the treaty."

While Russia has been developing and testing the missile in question for years, on March 8 of this year, General Selva, who is the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as you know, testified that Russia deliberately deployed it in order to pose a threat to NATO and to facilities within the NATO area of responsibility.

So my question to you is this. Given this threat to our troops in Europe and our NATO allies, as the nominee to serve as our Ambassador to NATO, do you believe we should take tangible and urgent steps to ensure Russia does not gain military advantage based on this treaty? Should we compel Russia to comply with the treaty?

Senator HUTCHISON. Absolutely. We should reinforce our efforts to get Russia to comply with the treaty, and it is the position of the American Defense Department, State Department, that Russia is in violation.

We are consulting with our allies. There are many views about what should be done to continue to encourage and push the Russians to meet this agreement.

But I will say, Senator Young, that we are also beefing up defenses, and we have ballistic missile defense capabilities that are within the treaty that we have signed, INF. Well, we did not, but the treaty. We are complying with it.

And our efforts to build up our missile defense in several countries in the alliance also are a signal to Russia that we are serious about this treaty.

Senator YOUNG. I am encouraged to hear that the pressure campaign will ratchet up and will continue and, no doubt, evolve. I will look forward to continuing to work with you, assuming you are confirmed, which I believe you will be.

This is a good segue, the latter part of your response to my question.

The INF is it two-part treaty. It is United States. It is Russia. But Russia is not complying. So it has become a one-sided treaty, which defeats the whole idea of a treaty, in a sense.

So meanwhile, according to the Commander of the Pacific Command in April, over 90 percent of land-based missile forces in China's arsenal fall within this range that is prohibited under the INF Treaty. Now, China is not a party to this treaty, but the point here is that the world has changed since the INF Treaty was signed in 1987.

It begs the question, if Russia fails to return to compliance with the treaty, without delay, do you believe that we should withdraw from the treaty?

Senator HUTCHISON. That is something that has to be, from the NATO standpoint, a consensus. Some of our allies are concerned that a withdrawal would make Russia more aggressive.

I think we have to consult. I know the State Department and the Defense Department are looking at what are our best efforts to apply what leverage we have for Russia to comply, and I think we have to look at all the factors before that decision is made.

Senator YOUNG. That is a fair answer. It is a complicated question.

Senator HUTCHISON. It is hard.

Senator YOUNG. We will have to continue to work through this, and I hope you will keep the committee informed as these assessments continue.

Senator HUTCHISON. Of course. They will be, I am sure, on everyone's mind. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. I would just like to end here.

Ms. Craft, congratulations to you. I have little doubt that you will serve with distinction in this new role.

I am going to perform a task, since you did invoke the Kentucky-Indiana rivalry. I see Coach Calipari behind you, for whom I have great respect. But consider this a diplomatic test. [Laughter.]

Senator YOUNG. I am going to play a very brief audio clip, and this audio clip is from December 10, 2011. And I would just like to get a response. [Audio presentation.]

Senator YOUNG. You can respond in writing, if you prefer. [Laughter.]

Senator YOUNG. I suspect I will be hearing from thousands of Kentucky residents as well.

I have nothing else, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for indulging me.

Ms. CRAFT. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I believe that is a first.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I have a procedural comment, and that is that the breadth and scope of the nominees and the countries and institutions for which they have been nominated makes it impossible in 5 minutes to pursue the issues I certainly want to. I do not know how others feel.

So to the extent that there is the opportunity for second round, I would urge you. And if not, I am going to be looking for very substantive answers to questions for the record, in order to be able to determine to move forward with the nominees.

The CHAIRMAN. I would be glad to accommodate both.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Congratulations to all of you.

Senator Hutchison, it is good to see you again.

Two quick questions. Do you believe NATO is obsolete? And secondly, do we have an unequivocal commitment to Article 5, in your view?

Senator HUTCHISON. Absolutely. The President has come to see that NATO is important.

Senator MENENDEZ. Which one is absolute? Which one is absolute, my first question?

Senator HUTCHISON. The commitment to Article 5.

Well, first of all, NATO is not obsolete, and I think the President has acknowledged that he, after meeting with many of the Defense—including General Mattis' appointment to the Department of Defense, with Rex Tillerson, the Secretary of State, and with Secretary General Stoltenberg, I think the President realized immediately that it is an important and successful alliance.

He has made the commitment, of course, to America's support of Article 5, and so has the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of State.

Senator MENENDEZ. Your role in asserting that will be very important, and I appreciate your service.

Senator HUTCHISON. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. Ms. McFarland, judgment in a United States Ambassador is incredibly important, so I know that Senator Cardin lightly talked with you about your suggestion at one point that Putin is the one who really deserves a Nobel Peace Prize.

But I look at a regime that actually bombs indiscriminately citizens in Syria, that obviously either did not have the ability or actually, I believe, had the complicity to allow the Syrians to go ahead and continue with their chemical weapons.

I look at some of your other comments that have been made in the past.

On Islam, terrorism, the people of the Middle East: "Look, they're Arabs. They're not going to say to your face something they know is going to upset you."

On waterboarding: "Even if it's torture, it's probably worth doing."

On President Obama: "To me, it's a dereliction of duty. What was this president doing? Well, he was playing a lot of golf this summer"—that sounds very familiar to what is going on this summer—"but he clearly was not attending to the defense of the United States."

And I could go on and on.

When you are, if confirmed, going to a country that is critically important in the South China Sea, how we deal with that issue, who has questions on human trafficking, who also has a significant population that is part of our challenge in the world, can you tell me that your judgment is better than the comments that you have made in the past?

Ms. MCFARLAND. Thank you very much for that question, Senator Menendez.

I think it is important, for me, anyway, to think of this as a different kind of position. In the past, when I have been a media commentator, it was to draw certain points and perhaps points drawn very sharply. As an ambassador, if I am confirmed, it is a diplomatic mission. It is to take direction from the Secretary of State and the President, and what their positions are, the United States Government positions.

I would feel that that is the image I want to project.

As far as representing American values and judgment and the whole world of an ambassador in promoting American interests and the American way of life and America's core values, those I would promote absolutely.

You know, America is a big tent. We have a big roof. And I would welcome all under my roof.

Senator MENENDEZ. A United States Ambassador must represent that entirety.

Ms. MCFARLAND. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you, if you were to be confirmed, how would you work to ensure that Singapore and the United States work productively to address tensions and seek common interests in the South China Sea, particularly at a time that Singa-

pore continues to think about its balance of its interests between China and the United States?

Ms. MCFARLAND. It is a topic that I have actually discussed with the Singapore Foreign Minister when he was in Washington, the greater topic of not only the U.S.-Singapore security relationship but the South China Sea, and what does that represent?

Singapore has said that on any of these contested islands, these militarized, contested islands, that international law should prevail. It has also said that it is in a neighborhood where they have to recognize the interests of all of the countries.

The fact that they have allowed us and, in fact, embraced us, to have rotational deployment of our aircraft, our military vessels, in the various Singapore naval bases I think is an indication that they want to work with us.

Our sailors train together. They buy their military equipment from the United States. And so it is a security relationship that I would, if I am confirmed, would want to not only endorse as it is now but strengthen it.

Senator MENENDEZ. My question, maybe unartfully phrased, is that, how will you help tilt that balancing that they are doing between China and the United States in our favor?

Ms. MCFARLAND. The Singaporean Government, because we have a lot of the shared values, not all share values, but the shared values of a democracy and the rule of law, they have indicated, in many ways, that they value our relationship and do not want us to leave.

One of the things that I think is so important, and why I was interested in Singapore for myself, as somebody who has spent a lot of time studying Asia, is because I look at not just Singapore but that entire region as critical to American national security. They are the swing states.

And if Singapore and the others, if they conclude that we are not interested in being an Indo-Asia-Pacific power, if America is a Nation in decline—as often the Chinese are encouraging them to say, we are the rising power, America is a declining power. And so a lot of the importance of the mission that I would have, it is not just the normal bilateral relationship, but also encouraging them to believe that we are there. We take this region seriously.

The fact that Singapore is going to be the chairman in 2018 of ASEAN, that they want to take ASEAN the direction of cyber technology, cybertheft, cyber defense. That is something that we could encourage with them. They have said that, as they are looking for a cyber partner, they look to the United States, not others.

So I think that there are opportunities there to increase that security relationship with them, and I would hope that that would be one of my primary missions, is not only the economic interests that we have not Singapore but the strategic interests.

It is the gateway to the South China Sea, which is a military trade route as well as an economic trade route, but it is also a security route.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I do not want my fellow New Jerseyans to think I am ignoring them, but since my time has expired, if you do have a second round, I have a series of questions for the other candidates.

The CHAIRMAN. Absolutely. Thank you, sir.

Senator Rubio?

Senator RUBIO. Thank you all for being here.

Ms. Craft, let me begin, as you know, President Trump intends to conduct negotiations to modernize NAFTA. What do you see as your role in that modernization negotiation?

Ms. CRAFT. Thank you for your question, Senator Rubio. Twenty-three years ago, when NAFTA was signed, there were so many aspects of the economy that were not yet conceptualized. And not being confirmed, I have not had a role in writing any of the policies.

However, if confirmed, I am looking forward to working closely with Ambassador Lighthizer and Secretary of Commerce Ross to promote the priorities for the NAFTA negotiations.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Johnson, as you know, as I shared with you yesterday, because of my lifelong being a fan of the Miami Dolphins, support for your nomination due to your relationship with the New York Jets is painful and difficult, but I am willing to do it for the good of the country.

I will, however, say that I think you and I agree that the country would be well-served if a certain Thomas Brady of Massachusetts were nominated Ambassador of Brazil. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. Perhaps that could be arranged before September of this year. [Laughter.]

Mr. JOHNSON. I am glad we got that out.

Senator RUBIO. I do not know why people are laughing. I am very serious about that. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. I see that Senator Markey is not here to object, and Senator Shaheen, so I think we can get this done.

Now, the U.S.-U.K. relationship, what do you feel—obviously, is it very closely link, historic. Our security, I do not know that there is a rival to it, in terms of relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom.

What do you see as the most important issue today in our bilateral relationship?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, if I look at that relationship from a macro standpoint, it is preserving and protecting and enhancing that relationship, which has been very valuable to the U.S. for a long time, going back to World War II. But actually, going back—it was coined World War II by Winston Churchill. But it was a relationship that is really going back even further than that.

It is one based on trust and working together through thick and thin for many, many decades. The security relationship is fundamental to that, and that is based on trust and confidence, and sharing information and gathering information, being very innovative to the task at hand, which keeps changing. The world is getting more complicated with cyber and various types of terrorism that are occurring now. So it is challenging us to be innovative and creative and working together even stronger.

So this will continue to be an important relationship, very important.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Eisenberg, as I said, I am proud to have introduced you today. We have known each other for a while. I think above all else, you can confirm that, unlike New York and New

Jersey, it does not snow in Florida in December and January. Just a plug.

But I will say this. I want to ask you this, because this is often not pointed out. Italy has the eighth largest economy in the world, in essence, a $2 trillion GDP. It is basically the equivalent of the Russian economy, which receives an extraordinary amount of attention. But also, I think, it is a testament to their capabilities.

So I would ask if you are prepared to commit to press our Italian partners to increase their defense spending as part of their obligations to our treaty alliance through NATO. They certainly have the capability to do it. I think among friends and allies, that is a point that has been stressed by multiple administrations. There has been a lot made of this administration's insistence on that. But you go back in the record, you will see multiple Presidents have made the same request.

We do not mean this in an adversarial way, obviously, toward our partners in Italy, but at $2 trillion, that is a significant economy with the capability to contribute to our mutual defense.

And so I would just ask for your commitment that we would continue to further what has been not just this administration's position, but what they agreed to do and what multiple administrations before us have asked of our partners as well.

Mr. EISENBERG. Of course, my answer to that is I will continue to strive to have Italy take up a greater portion of the expense for defense.

But I would like to note that, as we speak, Italy is defending the Mediterranean that is now experiencing probably the most dramatic immigration and refugee problem in Europe. They had 180,000 depart from Libya last year with a significant amount of casualties, and are incurring great and unusual expense.

That number is being exceeded this year. They will probably take in over 200,000. And they are retaining, within Italy, in a very humane way, monitoring trafficking, with our help and support, almost 90 percent of that immigration and refugee problem, while at the same time, they maintain 30,000 U.S. troops on five distinct military bases. They have the second largest commitment in both Iraq and Afghanistan of troops on the ground.

So in many ways, their efforts and what they have achieved is quite meaningful. They have committed as recently as the G–7, and I think afterward at a meeting between the Prime Minister and the President here, that they would continue to honor their agreement to move to the NATO requirement of 2 percent by 2024. And they have moved in that direction meaningfully in the last year.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Congratulations to each of the witnesses. These are very important relationships.

I want to start with Ms. Craft, just quickly. I am going to be with some great Kentuckians tomorrow. My wife is from Wise County, she and her family on her dad's side, which is right across the border, I think, from Harlan, Letcher County, and Pike County.

And tomorrow and over the weekend, there is an amazing event that is called the Remote Access Medical Clinic, where people who do not have health insurance gather from all over the Southeast of the United States to get free treatment from volunteer doctors and nurses. It is an amazingly uplifting event because of the hundreds of volunteers, many from Kentucky and Virginia and elsewhere. And it is an amazingly heartbreaking event.

Every time I go, and I have been going since 2002 to work the registration table, it reminds me of when I was a missionary in Honduras, and that was the way that health care was done in that country, which is the second poorest country in the Americas. And to see it right in my own Commonwealth, it is heartbreaking.

But the valor of the Kentuckians who participate will be a really impressive thing, and I am looking forward to being with them tomorrow.

Kay Bailey, congratulations. I am so excited you are the nominee. I will be real blunt. My oldest was deployed with the European Reassurance Initiative on the border with Russia last year, and when he was there doing an exercise with Lithuania and others, Russia was engaged in cyberattacking our election, Russia was engaged in an amazing effort to cyberattack an election in Montenegro, and their Plan B was to assassinate the Prime Minister, assassinate opposition leaders, all to try to keep Montenegro out of NATO.

Russia is engaged now in activities in Lithuania to destabilize NATO exercises that are happening there.

Watching that going on, and, frankly, I was very, very worried in the early days of this administration to hear the President basically suggest that Russia was not doing anything wrong, but also to say that NATO was obsolete when the entire 1,200 members of my son's battalion were deployed there in harm's way doing work that I thought was important.

Your nomination sends a signal that the NATO relationship is an important one. I do not think the administration would have asked somebody of your qualification if they did not mean to send a signal that, whatever the earlier statements or thoughts about NATO, there is now a commitment.

And as you shared with me yesterday, if you wondered whether there was a commitment to the seriousness of the relationship, you would not have accepted the nomination.

So I am very, very happy to see you before this committee, and I am very anxious to get you confirmed as quickly as we can, because I think this is incredibly important.

To Ms. McFarland, Senator Menendez asked you some questions about statements. It is a little bit of a burden being a commenter. You comment sharply, and your statements are mostly self-explanatory. But there was one that I was curious about.

When there was press around your earlier position on the National Security Council, one of the things that was often mentioned in accounts that I was curious about, because it was never a quote from you, so I do not even know if it was accurate, is that you were in favor of the Brexit vote. You approved and were happy about the outcome of the Brexit vote.

I was just curious if that was accurate reporting. And given that we have a U.K. Ambassador nominee and will have an EU nominee before us soon, I was curious, if that is true, what did you think was positive about that vote?

Ms. MCFARLAND. I do not specifically remember saying it in those terms, but at the time, I said that—the important thing is for the British people to decide what they want to do. I do not think it is for anybody to tell them what to do, and was encouraged by the fact that the British people, in a very large percentage and large numbers, were taking it on their own authority to make a decision.

Senator KAINE. So you did not have a personal opinion yourself about whether the removal of the U.K. from the European Union was a good thing or a bad thing?

Ms. MCFARLAND. I do remember making the statement that—and, again, I do not want to—I know this is an important issue. I do not want to speak off the top of my head. But I did say something along the lines that, if the British do choose to do that on their own, that that might present opportunities for them in bilateral trade agreements with the United States or other relationships.

Senator KAINE. I do not want to catch you flatfooted on this, either, so I may ask that in writing——

Ms. MCFARLAND. Sure.

Senator KAINE [continuing]. With a reference, and have you follow up on that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Paul?

Senator PAUL. Congratulations to all of you for your nominations. As a proud father of two Kentucky Wildcats, particular congratulations to my fellow Kentuckian, Kelly Knight.

And sometimes when we put things forward, we do not get the whole truth. And so we heard a little bit from the Senator from Indiana about a particular game in 2011. [Laughter.]

Senator PAUL. But I think there was a rematch later in the NCAA finals. Do you remember who won the rematch?

Ms. KNIGHT. Of course. The Kentucky Wildcats.

Senator PAUL. And then do you remember who were the national champions that year?

Ms. KNIGHT. The Kentucky Wildcats.

Senator PAUL. The Kentucky Wildcats. Absolutely. But I think we have set the record straight there.

I have a little bit more of a serious sort of point, and then maybe we will see if we get a response.

I think it is important that we remember that the State Department is not the Pentagon. We have a Pentagon. We have the mightiest military in the world. And for most of you, and we may exclude NATO to a certain extent, but for most of you, your job is with the State Department, not the Pentagon, and there is a different role.

I mean, the Pentagon is to have the mightiest defense and to be able to wipe out any enemy that should strike us, to be prepared, to try to deter attack, et cetera.

But the job of the State Department is different. Your job is one of friendship and trade. And you are going to be going to friendly countries. Obviously, I jokingly say I do not want war with Canada or Italy or England.

But it is important that your role in the world, as you are out there mixing with other Ambassadors in your region of the world, your role is to foster peace. I think that is important.

Ms. McFarland I think was involved with Secretary Weinberger and the Weinberger Doctrine, which she knows that I am aware of.

Part of that was that we only go to war under certain circumstances. It was not that we are ever gleeful for war. It was that we restrict and restrain ourselves to only go into war. One of the points of the Weinberger Doctrine is we go to war as last resort. One was that we go for vital national interests.

I think sometimes we get sloppy with that, and we just say everything is in our vital national interests. And that is really a conclusion that requires debate and the facts on both sides before we go.

But my hope is always that there is a sufficient voice for war being the last resort. I am not saying we never go, but the State Department is supposed to be part of that, to a certain extent at NATO also. It is about preparedness, but still the goal of NATO is defense, not offense.

I just hope all of you will remember that and realize that really part of your role is to try to preserve peace and keep peace.

And if you would like to, since I named you, Ms. McFarland, you are welcome to respond about the Weinberger Doctrine, your role, or what your thoughts are about your role in the world or our role in the world.

Ms. MCFARLAND. Thank you very much, Senator Paul. You and I have had this conversation a number of times about the Weinberger Doctrine.

I was privileged enough to be at the Pentagon in the Reagan administration and work for Secretary Weinberger and help craft the speech that he delivered that was the Weinberger Doctrine.

There were several points do it. These were guidelines of when the United States should consider going to war or using combat forces overseas.

One of the considerations was that we would do so to protect our vital national interests, that we would do so with a clear idea of what was required, and that we would also have the full support of the American people, and, finally, that our objective would be to win and to prevail.

So I know that is something that has guided your own thinking on national security issues, and I thank you for the opportunity to discuss it, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to all the nominees for your willingness to serve, and for the opportunity to be with you here today.

Senator Hutchison, thanks for the opportunity for a great conversation yesterday about the importance of NATO and the role to which you have been nominated.

Let me just ask again here in this setting, how do you intend to convince our NATO allies to stay the course with us in Afghanistan, given how much they have already sacrificed, given how uncertain the path is ahead? I would be interested in how you think, together, we will make that argument to our vital NATO allies.

Senator HUTCHISON. Yes, thank you very much. Thank you for meeting with me.

Senator Coons, Afghanistan is hard. It is hard for America, and it is very hard for all of our allies. But we know that Al Qaeda is rising up in Afghanistan. We know that that is a common thread. It is a common threat to all of us.

And our allies have never flagged. When we have asked for certain numbers of increased help or capacity, they have stepped up. They have stepped up for 15 years in Afghanistan. Our allies have been with us side-by-side.

They are stepping up now in Iraq, because we are regrouping and doing more in Iraq. These are very tough duties, but they are there.

And to say, what are you going to do to keep them? I think they have been there. I think that they have been with us. And it is our common threat.

Senator COONS. I agree.

Senator HUTCHISON. Al Qaeda is our common threat. ISIS is our common threat.

So I will appreciate them and continue to encourage all of us to stay firm.

Senator COONS. Thank you. I have two more questions, if I might. First to you, Senator.

How would you also help shape NATO's cyber strategy? We have seen cyberattacks in the past on our now-NATO ally, Estonia. Many of us are concerned about the cyber actions by Russia in American domestic matters, as well as the matters involving our key allies.

Does a cyberattack on a NATO ally trigger Article 5? And if so, how should the alliance respond? And how do we strengthen cyber?

And I have one more question I would like to get to, if I might.

Senator HUTCHISON. I think we have to see what kind of attack we would be addressing before we talk about whether it would invoke Article 5. However, the Leaders' Meeting in May, as well as the previous defense meetings of NATO, have made it more of a focus and more of an awareness of the cyberattacks of Russia and the interference with many processes and many of our allied countries.

And I think cyber is going to continue to be more of an emphasis of NATO as we go forward, but I think the leaders have already staked out that as a new focus.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator.

If I might, Ms. McFarland, thank you for your service and your willingness to step up to this role. I had the chance, the honor, to travel with Senator McCain to Singapore, along with Senator Barrasso, to the regional security conference, and was struck at how broadly our regional allies and partners expressed concern at withdrawal from TPP.

How will the Trump administration, how would you, if confirmed as Ambassador, undertake economic statecraft? And given some grave concerns, I think, about security issues in the Philippines, and elsewhere in the region where ISIS is making some advances, how will you work with your counterparts to confront the growing threat of terrorism in the region?

Ms. MCFARLAND. Thank you very much for that question, and particularly for your interest in Asia, Southeast Asia.

The President, first of all, we have a bilateral trade agreement with Singapore, as you know. It is the first one we have had with any Asian nation, and it has been very successful for the two of us.

When the administration pulled out of the TPP, I had the opportunity to meet with the Singapore Foreign Minister, not knowing that I was eventually going to be sitting before you, hoping to be confirmed to be the Ambassador to Singapore.

And he said, you know, we understand. We have a strong and robust economic relationship. We want to continue it.

What the administration has said is that the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement is one that would be a foundation. It would be something that they would use as a template to have bilateral economic relations with other countries.

And when President Trump withdrew from TPP, he said that he felt that the best interests of the United States would be served by bilateral trade agreements. I have been out of the administration for 2 months, so I am not sure where the issues go, but that would be the first.

And the second one is the security relationship. One of the reasons that I was interested in this position, and when it was offered to me, was excited about it, is because I, too, had heard in my position as the Deputy National Security Adviser, I had heard from a number of counterparts from other countries, and they all made the same point that you are making, that there was concern that the United States was lessening its commitment to the region, was not as concerned about what was happening in the South China Sea, that they saw an increasingly aggressive China building a blue water navy and kind of muscling its way across the whole Asia-Pacific region.

So one of the things that I would hope to do with Singapore, and then work with the other Ambassadors, if they are confirmed, if we are all confirmed, the other Ambassadors in the Southeast Asia region, would be to put this at the forefront.

The Vice President went to Indonesia, met with the ASEAN. President Trump will make a trip to the Far East in a similar capacity.

So I think part of it is just to show our interests, our commitment, and then to keep—let them know that we are not a waning power, that the United States is not a declining power, that this is not an inevitable thing that is going to happen. We are just as committed to the region as we have ever been, and we continue to be even more committed to the region. And also that we are a power that is not in decline. America's greatest days are ahead of it, and we hope that they will be with us.

Senator COONS. Well, I hope to have the opportunity to work with each of you and the countries to which you have been nomi-

nated, to advance that I think shared and important goal, which is to continue to strengthen our alliances, to strengthen our role in the world, and to work in a bipartisan way in that.

And, Mr. Chairman, you have played a critical role in this committee in advancing that vision, so thank you.

And to your families, thank you for supporting your public service.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator Barrasso?

Senator BARRASSO. Very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Craft, thank you very much for being here. Congratulations on your nomination.

Ms. CRAFT. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. The thing about Canada, it is the second largest trading partner of the United States. It is Wyoming's second largest export market. In 2016, two-way, cross-border goods and services traded between the United States and Canada was $1.7 billion.

So the two nations have a highly integrated energy market. We work closely together. Canada is the largest supplier of U.S. energy and the largest recipient of U.S. energy exports.

Can you talk just a little bit, as the Ambassador, about how you will promote American exports and work to further expand the trade relationship between our two countries?

Ms. CRAFT. Thank you for your question, Senator.

If confirmed, I am going to work very closely with Ambassador Lighthizer and Secretary of Commerce Ross to promote the priorities of the Trump administration's agenda with NAFTA and also with the different areas of softwood timber, the dairy industry, the poultry industry, and the other industries that would be a benefit to the American prosperity and the American people, both small businesses and large businesses.

Senator BARRASSO. The same follow up with you, Mr. Johnson. The United States and United Kingdom, an incredibly significant trade and investment relationship. U.S. imports from the United Kingdom were worth—as well as the other way around.

Can you talk a little bit about, as the United Kingdom is leaving European Union, what opportunities exist? What challenges exist for great trade and investment between the two countries?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you very much for that question, Senator.

If confirmed, I will be working on Brexit and trying to help the Congress, the President, and Secretary Tillerson, figure out what opportunities and challenges that we can have access to.

You are right, exactly, the relationship has been robust. It is not as big as Canada. I think it is about $200 million in trades and services. There are a million jobs on either side of the Atlantic that rely on that relationship. And our job is to encourage, as I said in my opening testimony. The overall relationship with the U.K. has to be enhanced. We want to enhance it and leave it better than we found it. A big part of that is trade. I do not know if that is a direct answer.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. Ms. McFarland, I just want to talk about kind of the area of the world that you have been nominated to serve. I was in Singapore last month with John McCain, who you mentioned how he had encouraged you, for your service.

And we went to Singapore for an international defense conference, security conference, following the time that we went to Vietnam. So we had just been to Singapore, meeting with the leaders there.

But Singapore really has been, one, a strong partner of the United States in trade as well as in security. It is also a major focal point in that whole part of the world.

So can you talk a little bit about how important the U.S. presence is in that region, specifically in Singapore? And as Ambassador, how do you plan to further strengthen the cooperation between the United States and Singapore?

Ms. MCFARLAND. Thank you, Senator Barrasso. And thank you, too, for your interest in that part of the world. I think you and I both agree that it is going to be an extremely important part of America's future as well.

A lot of economic estimates are that 60 percent, even as much as 80 percent of the world's economic growth in the next decade are going to come from Southeast Asia and that region.

The United States has 4,200 American companies that are headquartered in Singapore. That is up from about 3,700 about 2 years ago. And Singapore acts as the hub of a lot of the economic interests throughout the region.

So in other words, if there is an American company headquartered in Singapore, it will do business in Singapore, but it also may do business in other nations in Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia, et cetera.

So given that trend, I think it is an important place for the United States to be to advance those commercial interests. As good as they are now, they could be a lot better. And it is an area of the world that we do not want to forsake, or that we do not want to be edged out of as that area of the world increases in its economic relationship.

As far as all the other parts, it also remains a hub for security relations. If you look at a map, the Strait of Malacca is the gateway. All trade that is going from Europe, from the Middle East, energy trade, has to go past Singapore on its way to all of Asia. American trade going from the West Coast goes in the opposite direction through Singapore.

So it is important for us to have an economic presence there, but also have a security presence there.

Singapore understands its responsibilities. As a small nation-state, it is only 5.5 million people. Its landmass is about four times the size of Washington, or for a New Yorker like me, it is like New York City without Staten Island. So it is a small place, but it plays big. And it plays particularly big in the security relationship.

Singapore spends close to 4 percent of its GNP on defense. And out of every—its entire national budget is spent on a number of things, but $1 out of every $3 or $4 is spent on defense. A lot of that military equipment that they buy is American military equip-

ment, which, as you know, Singapore buys planes from your part of the world and trains in Wyoming.

The Singapore military, because it is a small area, they have bases elsewhere. They have training facilities in the United States and in other parts of the world that they then use that equipment as they come home to Singapore.

So I think it is those things. It is the fact that it may be small, it may have a small population, but it is a hub for so many things.

And it is an important part of the world that we need to be in, and particularly, as you mentioned, as other countries look and wonder about our commitment, because those are the swing states. If we are somehow not present economically, are not present in a security sense, that is a part of the world that make its own separate deal, and it is a part of the world that we may not be heavily involved in for hundreds of years.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you very much. Congratulations to each and every one of you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Markey?

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

I have been informed of Senator Rubio's earlier comments, and I just want to say that I do not think that is going to be possible because co-owner Robert Kraft is a very close friend of Donald Trump's, so I do not think there is any chance of Tom Brady leaving the country until he has won at least two or three more Super Bowl championships. And at that point, it is whatever he wants, okay? So that is our approach.

You understand that, Mr. Johnson, very much, notwithstanding the competitive advantage the Jets would receive.

Mr. JOHNSON. I am open to it.

Senator MARKEY. Let me ask you, Ms. McFarland, the rigorous enforcement of sanctions on North Korea is essential to get North Korea to the table for serious negotiations of our denuclearization of the peninsula. Singapore has an important role in the effort.

The United Nations panel of experts set up to monitor North Korean compliance with international sanctions has assessed that North Korea continues to evade sanctions through the use of front companies, including in Singapore.

That panel's report linked a Singaporean company to a North Korean firm that is involved in the sale of conventional arms. The company, Glocom, was identified as a front run by North Korean intelligence agencies that sell equipment in violation of U.N. sanctions.

More recently, the research organization NK News published a comprehensive report indicating that a Singapore-based company named OCN Singapore is involved in importing luxury goods into North Korea in defiance of U.N. Security Council sanctions.

Singapore needs to fully investigate those allegations and ensure that North Korea is not using its open financial and trading environment to evade sanctions.

If you are confirmed, Ms. McFarland, would you ensure that the strongest possible message is sent from the United States to the

Singapore Government that we expect full compliance with the North Korean sanctions?

Ms. MCFARLAND. Absolutely. As President Trump has said, North Korea's nuclear proliferation program is one of the most serious and immediate crises we face. And whether it is the financial technology issues, the fintech, or whether it is the counterproliferation transshipment points that Singapore is for goods that might be going to North Korea of any type, it is important not only that we have these international agreements, but that we enforce them.

So you can have complete confidence that, if I am confirmed, I will pursue that. Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. It is hard to get the attention of North Korea, if China is not imposing tough sanctions. There has been a 37 percent increase in trade between China and North Korea over last year. The same thing is true for some of these other countries.

We just have to make sure that the pressure is intensified, so that North Korea does come to the bargaining table.

Mr. Johnson, the issue of Northern Ireland is very important to tens of millions of Irish in the United States. Following his nomination by President Clinton, Senator George Mitchell chaired the all-party negotiations that ultimately produced the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. It ended years of bloodshed.

But a crisis in Northern Ireland has prevented the formation of a government there since January when Martin McGuinness resigned as Deputy First Minister 2 months before he died.

Since January, Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party have been in difficult talks to form a new government.

The June election in the U.K. has resulted in Prime Minister May's Conservative Party forming a coalition with the Democratic Unionist Party. The DUP was the only party in Northern Ireland that opposed the Good Friday Agreement, although its founder, Ian Paisley, ultimately agreed to a government in which he served as First Minister and McGuinness served as Deputy First Minister.

Prime Minister May's coalition was formed with the DUP, and it is particularly troubling because the British Government is the guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement and is responsible for mediating the political crisis in Belfast.

So all of these factors raise serious concerns, especially since the Northern Irish voted overwhelmingly against Brexit, even as there is a goal set by Prime Minister May that she wants a hard Brexit, which causes real problems, potentially, in Northern Ireland.

Could you talk a little bit about that issue and how you would represent the United States?

Mr. JOHNSON. Senator, I thank you for that very complicated question, because it reflects the complications of what is happening in Northern Ireland and its relation to both the U.S. and the U.K.

The Good Friday agreements, as you pointed out, that were shepherded by the U.S., by the U.K., and by the Irish themselves led to roughly 19 years, so far, of peace, relative peace and tranquility from a period that was very turbulent.

These are complicated issues, particularly now, if you inject Brexit into the equation as a factor, as a major factor. You have issues, border issues, trade issues, immigration issues. A lot have been done, as you commented on, with supporting jobs along the

border to harmonize the relationship and to try to have a better understanding between secular beliefs that were the cause of some of the unrest.

I pledge to you, because I know this is an important issue, that, if confirmed, I will spend a lot of time trying to do anything I can do to facilitate the establishment of an understanding and try to pick up on what you did in 1998 to establish this. Because it is in the U.S.'s best interests to have a stable U.K., including Northern Ireland.

Senator MARKEY. So I thank you for that. The more attention you pay to it, I think, the greater the likelihood that the peace will hold. It is the economic integration largely, the customs integration issues, the security issues, that have really helped to integrate Northern Ireland into Europe, and with Ireland itself.

So the more that Brexit kind of starts to fool with that formula is the more it could lead to a delay in the full integration, which I think ultimately is what the people of Northern Ireland need to finally bring permanent peace and tranquility to their country.

So thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to all the nominees for your willingness to serve our country. Welcome to your families who are in attendance to today. And I just appreciate the fact that you are willing to serve our country. I truly do appreciate it.

I have had the chance to visit with all of you about the work that you will be pursuing in the various countries that you will be representing, and the alliance, of course, that is so important and critical to the safety and security of Europe and the United States. I look forward to working with you in years to come, upon confirmation.

I do serve as chairman of the East Asia Subcommittee, so, Ms. McFarland, I am sorry, I am going to spend most of my time sending questions your way.

We have had a lot of conversations already that even Senator Markey most recently brought up about North Korea and actually covered one of the companies that I was going to talk about. Recent reports are OCN, as Senator Markey mentioned, was found to have been doing business with Pyongyang, doing business in Pyongyang and North Korea, a luxury goods store.

As Ambassador, how do you approach that situation? How will you approach that situation where you see a report and find out some information about a company that is doing business in violation of either a U.N. resolution or a U.S. law like we passed last Congress dealing with North Korean sanctions? How do you approach this? How do you work with the Government of Singapore or any Nation, for that matter? How do you work within ASEAN to spread greater awareness of the need to address these sanctions and fully enforce them? And how do you deal with that, within the Trump administration?

Ms. MCFARLAND. Thank you, Senator Gardner. And I do, if confirmed, look forward to a long and fruitful conversation with you as the chairman of the East Asia Subcommittee.

I think I would start with Embassy Singapore. It has not only Foreign Service Officers who are economic officers as well, but there are members of the Commerce Department, special trade rep, intelligence community and others.

The first step would be to find out, okay, what is going on? What are these companies? What is their economic tie? And what is, potentially, their military tie to North Korea? And working through the State Department, as well as those people at Embassy Singapore who would be working with their home agencies, some 19, including even the Agriculture Department has representation in Singapore.

And then it would be to present that issue to the appropriate place in the Singapore Government. Singapore wants good relations with us. They have said that time and again. Whether it is economic relations, whether it is military relations, whether it is political relations, security relations, they value our support at the United Nations and others. So that is worth something.

And I think that the ability to go to a friendly country and say this is what we have determined, this is what the United Nations has determined, with regard to a company of yours. How are we going to work together to stop this?

Singapore has said, Singaporean leaders, the Prime Minister, and others have said that they, too, are concerned about the threat of North Korea. And as Senator Markey pointed out, the only way that North Korea is ever going to get to the point of potentially giving up its nuclear weapons or changing its attitudes is if they feel the pressure.

And where are they getting the pressure? We have had a number of sanctions that are against North Korea through the United Nations and other international organizations, but there has to be secondary pressure that is brought to bear. And as Secretary Tillerson has said, with regard to North Korea specifically, China looks at North Korea as a strategic asset. How are we going to change their minds to view it as a strategic liability? One of these would be the kind of economic pressure.

But as we are bringing economic pressure to other countries not to do business with North Korea, Singapore we hope would work with us in that same goal.

Senator GARDNER. You mentioned talking about presence and you talked about the fact that, if we are not present within the region either economically or from a security standpoint, that creates a challenge for U.S. leadership.

We have been working on legislation to try to create a long-term Asia strategy. What do you think some of the key points and framework should be of a long-term U.S. strategy to build that presence in Singapore and Southeast Asia overall?

Ms. MCFARLAND. Yes, and I think that in the conversations I have had with you, the direction you are going I think is very much in concert with what the administration, what Secretary Tillerson and others have said is their goal in the Asian region.

One place that I think offers an enormous amount of future opportunity is cyber. Singapore and the United States have both been named as the two countries which are the best at and take most

seriously the whole cyber issue, whether it is intellectual property theft, whether it is cyber defense, whether it is cyber hacking.

And since Singapore is going to be chairman of ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, in 2018, they have already said that they want the cyber issue to be first and foremost, not only for Singapore but for the other countries in the region.

Singapore's goal is to be the first smart nation where they use digital technology, where they use logarithms to help various aspects of their society, civil society.

So I think that represents the future. And the world is going in the cyber direction, the Internet of Things. And if Singapore said that they are interested in doing that, we know we have had an interest in doing it.

We know that we are both very vulnerable. We are the most connected countries in the world, but that leaves us with great vulnerabilities as well.

So I would think that is a place to look, not only that I would be interested in looking at with Singapore but any work that you are doing as I proceed with this legislation that you are proposing.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Thanks to all of you for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy?

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

Thank you to you all for your willingness to serve the country.

Senator Hutchison, I am sorry that we did not get to serve together here in the Senate, but I am glad that the siren of public service has called you once again. I wanted to ask you a question about the role of counterterrorism within the NATO alliance.

I think there are still some pretty glaring vulnerabilities in Europe, with respect to their ability to share information about terrorism threats, both to Europe and to the United States. It is as if the United States were trying to thwart terrorist attempts without the FBI, with 50 different State law enforcement jurisdictions voluntarily cooperating with each other.

Is this an issue that should be left to the EU to figure out and to the EU Ambassador? Or is this a proper subject for our NATO Ambassador to engage with countries through that forum, to try to improve the ability of European countries to share information, perhaps through new mandatory procedures regarding counterterrorism threats?

Senator HUTCHISON. Thank you. I think that is a very good question.

I definitely think it is in NATO's purview. And I think the President, President Trump, brought that up. And NATO has now affirmed that cyberterrorism is a threat, in many instances. It could be in a communications system. It could be in any kind of business disruption. And it could be in our military communications or military activity.

So I think it is in NATO's interests. They have already agreed that it will be one of the focuses and one of the main focuses.

NATO is somewhat like the United States Senate, or any group that has different threats and different constituencies. Some members of NATO are more concerned about Russian aggression. Oth-

ers are more concerned about terrorism and counterterrorism, depending on where they fall geographically.

So I think it is very much a common threat, and it should be in the purview of NATO.

Senator MURPHY. I think it is probably in the purview of NATO. It is also in the purview of the EU. I think we need to apply as much pressure as possible to clean up these vulnerabilities, in part because there are vulnerabilities. These are visa waiver countries in which these threats can land on our shores without any security screens, so I thank you for that.

Senator HUTCHISON. Your point, also, is very important, that NATO and the EU are also beginning to do more sharing than they have ever done before.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Johnson, I know you got a question when I was not here earlier on Brexit and the future of Britain's relationship with the EU. But I wanted to talk to you about the conversation around a free trade agreement with Britain.

There has been some talk within this administration of engaging in talks with Britain, with respect to a free trade agreement. There is great worry. I am in the category of those who worry that, if this is placed before a bilateral negotiation with the EU on what we call T–TIP, that it is going to provide an incentive for other countries to exit Europe, because they can get first in line for a trade agreement with the United States.

Do you think that it is appropriate to negotiate a free trade agreement with England, with Britain, before we have engaged in a trade agreement negotiation with Europe, as a whole?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you for that question. Thank you for that question, Senator.

Yes, Brexit is going to be complicated. It is going to be a complicated series of agenda items going forward. And one of them is free trade and how that is played, I mean the bilateral trade between the U.S. and that country, and what impact that has, positive or negative. So I think that has to be factored in.

I suspect that we are going to have to wait until this process unfolds a little more, so we figure out what the pieces are.

And as Ambassador, if confirmed, I would be talking to the political and business leaders, and opinion leaders, in the country to figure out what vulnerabilities and what opportunities there are for American businesses and Americans.

And you point out, there is every one of these factors, whether it is negotiating a bilateral agreement or even looking at cybersecurity, like you were just talking about. Everything is impacted by Brexit and our ability to kind of predict and project what is in our best interests as this unfolds.

Senator MURPHY. I do not expect you to be able to answer the precise question, but I would just caution you on this issue. It is one thing for our President to cheerlead Brexit. It is quite another to reward with them with a free trade agreement that will be fodder for many of the groups that are pushing for other countries to leave the EU as well. So I appreciate you giving more thought to that issue.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, sir.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I see the making of a diplomat there.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have been asking this question of all of our nominees when they go to a specific country, so it is not personal, but it is just a continuing effort.

Ms. McFarland, do you speak Mandarin, Tamil, or Malay?

Ms. MCFARLAND. No. My undergraduate degree was in Chinese studies, and I did study Chinese intensively for those years. My graduate work at MIT was on the Sino-Soviet military balance and the Sino-Soviet military conflict of 1969. The dissertation, sadly, I did not have an opportunity to finish.

My Mandarin is very, very, very rusty. And one of the first things I would do is look forward to trying to see if I could remember back 40 years and try to refresh that. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Eisenberg, you speak Italian?

Mr. EISENBERG. [Speaking in Italian.]

If you will allow me, Senator, since you have asked the question, I was remiss in the opening, gratified by the introduction of Senator Rubio, since my wife and I have now been residents of Florida for almost a decade, but very remiss, I might say, in not addressing the fact that nine of my 16 immediate family are sitting directly behind me, who are residents of the Garden State.

Senator MENENDEZ. Oh, I am familiar with that. [Laughter.]

Mr. EISENBERG. I know that you are, but if you would just allow me, my wife, Judy, we just celebrated our 52nd anniversary, so for personal reasons, I would like to introduce my wife. My oldest daughter, Lisa Goodwyn, and my daughter, Laura Balestro, are here. Their husbands, Rick Goodwin, it is actually Laura Barr and Dr. Kyle Barr. And unfortunately, my daughter, Stacy Lyle and Paul Lyle, could not be here, but have three children who also will be voters in the State of New Jersey. [Laughter.]

Mr. EISENBERG. So I would just be remiss if I did recategorize a little bit my origin, so thank you for that extra moment.

We will continue to take Italian lessons, so that I can speak more than that opening phrase.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, we should have made you the nominee to the Holy See, based upon that large, expansive family. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. But I do not believe that not having a language ability is disqualifying. And I did not ask you my second question, because you all said it in your testimony, about whether or not you visited the country.

Unfortunately, some of my colleagues in the past have held against Democratic nominees whether they did not speak the language or did not visit the country.

So I am going to create a continuing record, so that we hopefully have equity at the end of the day, regardless of who the nominee is.

Senator CARDIN. Aren't you going to ask Mr. Johnson if you can speak the British English? [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. We have been working with each other on our Gaelic.

So let me ask you all, with just a simple yes or no answer, do you believe that Russia sought to interfere in our presidential elections last year?

Ms. MCFARLAND. Yes.

Mr. EISENBERG. I do not know the answer to that, but I think there is enough investigation and discussion going on, so I would like to reserve judgment for the moment.

Senator MENENDEZ. With 17 intelligence agencies, you still do not have a view.

Mr. EISENBERG. I think it is likely, but I do believe there are investigations that are going on to corroborate it as fact.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Johnson?

Mr. JOHNSON. I have not studied the evidence on the inside, so I can just go by what I read, and it looks like, you know, it could have happened, maybe it did happen. But until I, really, if I went—if I did a complete analysis with all the information, I would be able to give you a much better judgment.

Senator MENENDEZ. Ms. Craft?

Ms. CRAFT. Thank you. I believe, just from reading the material that everyone has had the opportunity to read, that it looks as if, yes. I would have to investigate this further and learn more points, but I do believe, yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator Hutchison?

Senator HUTCHISON. I think, from what our intelligence community has said and what has been in the newspapers and other media, that there is a good likelihood yes. I also think it is important that we know the extent and how it was done, and that is what the investigations are meant to do.

Senator MENENDEZ. And the reason I asked the question, it may seem unrelated to your nominations, but the fact is that the Senate passed 98–2 sanctions—it is very rare these days we get 98–2 votes—on Russia for, among other things, interfering in our elections.

And when I heard your answer, Senator Hutchison, to Senator Murphy about cyberattacks and NATO, and how you described the different elements of what a cyberattack would be, we need to have our Ambassadors abroad making clear, unequivocal advocacy in the countries in which they are assigned join us in our multilateral sanctions effort, whether it be Iran, which is also part of that legislation, or whether it be Russia.

So I am a little worried that, with all of the public knowledge—I am not saying that they affected the election. The mere fact that they tried to affect the election should be of great concern from the average citizen to the President of the United States. We need our Ambassadors to be advocating that point of view as it relates to sanctions when this finally passes the House and is signed by the President, and I hope we can count on you to do that.

In that regard, Mr. Eisenberg, in reference to that legislation, one of the concerns that I have is to Italy. While Italy has complied with sanctions, it has relatively close relations with Russia and has indicated interest in doing more business with Iran.

As my colleagues have noted, we expect this legislation soon to pass the House.

How will you engage with the Italians on maintaining economic pressure, both on Russia and Iran?

Mr. EISENBERG. If confirmed, Senator, I would intend to become more decisively involved in that discussion.

But I would note that Italy is 80 percent reliant on its energy resources from Russia and Libya, but they have continued to maintain their substantial support on the sanctions. And I have no reason to expect that I would not continue to encourage and try to help them to live up to that.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate their energy challenges, and you are right. But as a NATO ally, and dependent upon the United States as a major element of that, we need them, as well as other European countries that some of you will be nominated to—I do not have any doubt about Great Britain—but nonetheless, to be engaged in making sure that—because the European Union is by unanimity, one country breaking away breaks the sanctions regime. And if our multilateral sanctions regime is broken, then we have a real challenge in returning to the international order.

So I commend that to part of your commitment to your work.

And if I may take one last moment, Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Johnson, I appreciate the answer you gave on peace and justice in Northern Ireland, something that we spoke about when you came to visit me, and I am glad you came to visit me.

Let me ask you this. The other problem with Great Britain right now is it is a critical security ally of ours. Sharing intelligence is critical to the national interests and security of the United States. We had some irritants between what happened at the Ariana Grande concert with leaks. We had comments made about the mayor of London.

Will you work as our Ambassador to assure the United Kingdom that our commitment to security and our confidentiality in terms of the sharing of intelligence is going to be preserved?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator. I certainly will.

Senator MENENDEZ. I have questions about Canada that I will submit to the record and look for a response.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Eisenberg, I want to follow up on Senator Menendez's point, because your response in regard to Russia's interference in our elections, I fully appreciate the fact that you have not studied the issue, but there has been widespread reporting on it, and this Congress feels very strongly that Russia represents an extreme danger against America.

That is the reason we are going to pass and enact the stronger sanctions taking away some of the discretion of the President as it relates to imposition of sanctions against Russia.

Italy is a country that does business with Russia. Of the countries that we have Ambassadors, that is the only one of the four that currently does business with Russia. It is very possible they are going to be impacted by the sanctions.

We have to work very closely with our European partners for sanctions to work against Russia. Europe is more vulnerable than we are to the activities that Russia is doing, so it is in their inter-

ests that we have strong unity between the United States and Europe in enforcing sanctions against Russia.

But there will be business interests, and perhaps some governmental interests, in Italy that will resist some aspects of this, saying, "Gee, can't we at least get a pass, so that we can continue to do this?" And that weakens the whole fiber, the whole fabric of our sanctions regime. And we are going to need a very strong voice in Italy working with the EU and the United States to have a very united, strong position against Russia that, if they continue to interfere in our countries, they are going to pay a heavy economic price.

Are you prepared to be that person?

Mr. EISENBERG. If confirmed, I think I can deliver that message and execute on that message.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I want to thank you all for, again, your willingness to serve.

I do want to reiterate, especially in Italy, U.K., and at NATO, Russia will do everything it can to destabilize and to pose a threat to democracy. And I think it is rare that the United States Senate has acted in the way that it has, regardless of what people may or may not think happened during the election, and I do think they did attempt to interfere, there is no question their goal is to destabilize democracies. I know that each of you will be strong advocates for that not occurring.

I want to say, in particular, to Italy, I know that you will not be the Ambassador to the Vatican, but on my recent visit there, I was struck by the public relations campaign Russia had done to hold itself up as the protector of Christians, and the fact that the Pope and others seemed to be open to that.

So I think there is a lot of work that we have to do there, and that mostly is in relation to what is happening in Syria.

Then finally, I would just say that, in addition to passing a bill 98–2, this committee unanimously reported, and the Senate has adopted a major effort to end modern slavery around the world. In all the countries that you are going to, slavery exists. It exists in our own country. I know that each of you will have questions about trafficking, and that kind of thing. But we do hope that you will be advocates on that human value.

The record will remain open until the close of business on Friday.

I know a number of you have family issues, and you need to get to countries before school starts and that kind of thing. It is an usual time here in the Senate, but one of the things that can speed it along is, when you do get the questions, to the extent you can, pay personal attention and answer them fully.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all for your desire to serve.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:54 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. KAY BAILEY HUTCHINSON BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. NATO estimates that only four other countries last year met the NATO guideline of spending 2 percent of GDP on defense. I know that some countries have now reached that mark or are on pace to do so in the near future, like Lithuania and Latvia. Still, there are too many in the Alliance that aren't reacting quickly enough to the new reality of consistent and destabilizing Russian aggression. Do you intend to press our NATO allies to hit NATO's 2 percent guideline? As defense spending increases in NATO countries, where should NATO look to add capability?

Answer. As President Trump has made clear, it is no longer politically sustainable for the United States to maintain a disproportionate share of NATO's defense expenditures. If confirmed, I will continue to press Allies to increase their defense spending to meet the Wales pledge, in which Allies agreed to aim to move toward two percent of GDP on defense spending by 2024, with twenty percent of total defense expenditures on defense modernization. This issue goes beyond equitable burden sharing; it reflects what Allies need to do for themselves to meet the changed security environment.

Five Allies—Estonia, Greece, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States—already meet the two percent goal. We expect Romania to reach two percent this year, and Latvia and Lithuania should reach that goal in 2018. Thirteen Allies spend at least 20 percent of their defense budgets on major equipment. Three Allies—Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States—currently meet both the two percent and the twenty percent goals, and Romania should reach both targets this year.

At the May NATO Leaders Meeting, Allies agreed to develop national plans to put them on a path towards achieving these goals. I will continue to work with Allies through NATO structures and bilaterally to ensure that they meet their commitments.

As the President has said, NATO must adapt to the challenges of the future. This includes acquiring the capabilities necessary to focus on today's most pressing security challenges, including the fight against terrorism.

In June, Allies agreed to new capability targets—specific areas where the Alliance plans to improve in order to meet collective defense requirements in the face of existing and evolving threats. It is important for Allies to invest more on defense, with an eye towards meeting capability targets and modernizing in a way that avoids duplication, in order to fulfill capability shortfalls.

NATO's Secretary General announced prior to the June 2017 Defense Ministerial that defense spending increases will be spent in such areas as heavy equipment, air-to-air refueling, more exercises, salaries, and missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

Question 2. NATO added its 29th member this year, Montenegro, which was the first expansion since 2009. As Russian aggression continues, particularly in Eastern Europe, do you believe we should continue expanding NATO in the region? Should NATO invite Moldova to the Alliance? Georgia? Ukraine?

Answer. Montenegro's accession demonstrates to NATO's other aspirants and the broader international community that NATO's commitment to its Open Door Policy is enduring and that no third country has a veto on NATO membership.

The Open Door Policy is a Founding Principle of the Washington Treaty and one of the Alliance's great successes. NATO's door is open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, which are in a position to further the principles of the Treaty, and whose inclusion can contribute to the security of the North Atlantic Area. Decisions on enlargement are for NATO and the nation in question; no other outside country, such as Russia, has a voice in the process. At the Warsaw Summit NATO Allies said that they remain fully committed to the integration of those countries that aspire to join the Alliance, judging each on its own merits. The current aspirants are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Macedonia. That continues to be the right approach, and if confirmed, I will work to assist these countries in making progress. The enlargement process has and will

continue to serve as a particularly effective vehicle for promoting democratic values, reform, and respect for the rule of law within the Euro-Atlantic region.

The Membership Action Plan (MAP) is a NATO program of advice, assistance and practical support tailored to the individual needs of countries wishing to join the Alliance. Participation in the MAP program does not prejudge any decision by the Alliance on future membership. The MAP process provides a focused and candid feedback mechanism on aspirant countries' progress on their programs. This includes both political and technical advice, as well as annual meetings between all NATO members and individual aspirants at the level of the North Atlantic Council to assess progress, on the basis of an annual progress report. Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine do not participate in the MAP program.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I believe the pillars of freedom, human rights and democracy, are the crucial values on which America stands and our global leadership must project.

As a founding honorary co-chair of Vital Voices, an organization that promotes women's equality, I have championed the women who have stood up for human rights and dignity throughout the world.

I serve on the board of the International Republican Institute (IRI), part of the National Endowment for Democracy, that with its democratic counterpart promotes democratic institutions in emerging democracies.

Mission Statement

> A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, the International Republican Institute advances freedom and democracy worldwide by helping political parties to become more issue-based and responsive, assisting citizens to participate in government planning, and working to increase the role of marginalized groups in the political process—including women and youth.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns facing NATO today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy at NATO and with its member countries? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. NATO's Open Door and its enlargement process encourage and support democratic reforms and the establishment of civilian and democratic control over military forces. Countries seeking NATO membership must, among other things, demonstrate that they have a functioning democratic political system. Critical elements of a functioning democratic system include free and fair elections, rule of law and an independent judiciary, and respect for human rights. These requirements provide aspiring countries a blueprint to set up democracies that protect human rights. I will promote these principles for our present and future allies. These are principles we also promote with our over 40 partners, even those not seeking to join the alliance.

With regard to NATO-led operations, NATO remains vigilant about maintaining the highest standards of human rights in its military operations and activities.

Over the past several years, NATO has worked closely with the UN to develop a policy on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) and Protection of Civilians (PoC). I will work with Allies to ensure the continued implementation of these policies not only in NATO-led operations and activities in the field, but also throughout the NATO Command Structure and NATO Headquarters.

Question 3. 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 at NATO in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Within NATO, the biggest challenge is the lack of resources for these initiatives. Most of the resources for these projects are provided by nations through trust funds and voluntary contributions of personnel. Another challenge is to continue to encourage aspirants to meet NATO standards for democratic governance. Each aspirant is unique and judged individually on its merits. We are unwavering in our commitment that any Euro-Atlantic country that wishes to join the Alliance

must meet the requirements to do so. If confirmed, I will continue the work that we do bilaterally and through NATO structures, to assist them in their reform efforts to meet NATO standards.

Like aspirants, all NATO partners are unique. The challenge will be ensuring that partners maintain the same high democratic standards, especially when participating in NATO-led operations. I will continue to work through NATO structures and bilaterally to ensure that in executing operations and designing partnership agreements we continue to encourage partners to maintain NATO standards and values.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. If confirmed, my primary job as Ambassador is to lead the men and women at USNATO. My success rests on all of them. As their leader, I will strive to make sure they are empowered to advance U.S. national interests at NATO, and that they have the political and other support they require to effectively and efficiently do their jobs. I am conscious that my leadership legacy at USNATO is about more than securing policy successes. It is also about building the mission as an institution and developing the people who work there. I take this very seriously. If confirmed, I will fully support the Department's mentoring programs, and along with my Deputy Chief of Mission, ensure staff are provided with the professional development opportunities they require to build their capacity to serve at USNATO and at higher levels in other assignments. I am also cognizant of the importance of ensuring my team contains a diverse group of individuals from different backgrounds. I will expect my Department of State and Department of Defense employees, especially my senior managers, to demonstrate the same cognizance as we recruit employees, build internal teams or working groups, and set mission strategy. Finally, I understand the importance of mentoring, especially mentoring new employees or employees early in their careers, from all backgrounds.

Question 7. What more is needed to build defense capacities within Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia?

Answer. Russian aggression along portions of its periphery has affected or has the potential to directly affect these states. We recognize the need to increase these states' capacity to provide for their own defense, improve interoperability with NATO and other Western forces, and implement deep and sustainable defense reforms, which will contribute to collective security and stability along NATO's eastern flank.

In response to Russian aggression, the United States has committed more than $600 million in security assistance and has provided training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, better monitor and secure its borders, and deploy its forces more safely and effectively. Working with Ukraine's Armed Forces, we have also established a Multinational Joint Commission and training group to coordinate international efforts to help build Ukraine's defense capacity and deter further Russian aggression. NATO assistance to Ukraine was formalized in a Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) adopted at the July 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit. The more than 40 targeted support measures in the CAP focus on assisting Ukraine's ongoing defense reforms, which aim to bring Ukraine up to NATO standards, including civilian control of the military, by 2020.

Efforts in Georgia seek to strengthen its defense readiness, support expeditionary deployments, and support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity through the Georgia Defense Readiness Program. Georgia received a significant increase in security assistance to total more than $30 million in FY 2016. NATO Allies, including the United States, also are supporting Georgia's defense institutions through the

Substantial NATO-Georgia Package, which provides resources and advisors help to prepare Georgia for eventual NATO membership.

NATO Allies support Moldova through a Defense and Related Security Capacity Building program aimed at reforming the country's defense and security sector. Allies also support the wider democratic, institutional and judicial reform process underway in the country. U.S. security assistance to Moldova totaled $12.75 million in FY 2016 and focused on defense reform, strengthening internal defense capabilities, and ensuring interoperability with regional partners, including NATO.

Question 8. What opportunities do you see to better support democratic governance and institutional reforms in countries vulnerable to Russian aggression?

Answer. Transparent and accountable defense institutions under democratic control are fundamental to stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond, and are essential for international security cooperation. Within the framework of its Building Integrity Program, NATO works to support Allies and partner countries to promote and implement the principles of integrity, transparency and accountability in accordance with international norms and practices.

Because no single model will work for all countries, there is a wide range of support NATO and the U.S. Government can bring. NATO support to vulnerable countries such as Ukraine and Georgia can help bolster democratic governance and further institutional reforms. The United States and Allies help train the militaries and advise governments on necessary military reforms, such as civilian control of the military and in promoting anti-corruption efforts, offering our own programs as well as supporting European experts in their work. Corruption is a key lever of influence for Russia, and eliminating it is essential to building resilience.

RESPONSES TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. If confirmed as NATO ambassador, you would be entrusted with safeguarding relationships with our most trusted allies and partners and, if President Trump's latest meeting with NATO is any indication, addressing the statements of the President while not further fracturing alliances with our allies.

Nicholas Burns, who served as ambassador to NATO under President George W. Bush, stated "I do think Trump's visit to NATO was the least effective of any American president since 1949," following President Trump's attendance at the NATO summit earlier this summer. The President did not reaffirm Article 5 even after NATO states came to America's aid after 9/11—the only time in the alliance's history that it has invoked Article 5. About a third of the NATO soldiers killed in Afghanistan have come from countries other than the United States.

- Do you believe that the United States should abide by our Article 5 commitment and how will you reassure our allies that we stand shoulder to shoulder with them?

Answer. I fully agree with the public statements made by President Trump, Vice President Pence, Secretary Tillerson, and Secretary Mattis, that the United States is fully committed to Article 5. Collective defense in accordance with Article 5 is a bedrock principle of NATO and underpins the transatlantic relationship.

The United States' commitment to Article 5 is ironclad and the United States backs up this commitment with action. The United States leads a rotational multinational battle group in Poland as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence. In addition, the United States supports deterrence and defense activities in Europe through the European Readiness Initiative (ERI). This administration's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget request included $4.8 billion—a $1.4 billion increase from last year—to fund ERI. I appreciate Congress' steadfast support for this initiative.

I welcome recent resolutions passed by the House and Senate reaffirming the U.S. commitment to Article 5.

We recall with gratitude that the only invocation of Article 5 in NATO's 68 years happened in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO KELLY CRAFT BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

On NATO and ISIS

Question 1. While Canada has a contingent of 800 troops to fight ISIS, it recently discontinued flying counterterrorism sorties in Syria due to security concerns. In 2016, NATO estimates that Canada only spent less than 1 percent of its GDP on defense. Are Canada's contributions to NATO operations and the coalition against ISIS enough? Do you commit to press the Canadian Government to increase its contributions to NATO and the anti-ISIS coalition?

Answer. Canada continues to play a central and critical role in U.S. counterterrorism operations worldwide, including in Afghanistan and Iraq, where Canada has troops deployed on the ground. In support of D-ISIS operations in Iraq, Canadian forces are training, assisting, and advising Iraqi forces together with U.S. and Coalition personnel, including throughout the recent nine-month operation to liberate Mosul.

The United States has made clear to NATO allies, including Canada, our expectation that they live up to their Wales commitments to allot 2 percent of GDP to defense. We have raised this repeatedly with Canada and I will continue to do so if confirmed. Canada recently released the results of a comprehensive defense policy review, which includes many welcome elements which will reform and strengthen Canadian military capabilities. We will continue to urge fulfillment of these commitments and greater burden sharing from NATO allies.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO KELLY CRAFT BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. One of the most important ways to promote democracy is to be an active participant in our great American experiment. Throughout my life, starting with my father (a life-long Democrat), I have learned the importance of participating in elections by supporting candidates in whom you believe, volunteering on campaigns in your own community, and speaking up against inequities regardless of political repercussions. With regard to human rights issues, I previously had the privilege to serve our country as an alternate delegate to the United Nations, an international organization whose mission, in great part, is to advance the rights of all people around the world.

If confirmed, I look forward to building on these past experiences and working with President Trump, Congress and other key stakeholders to advance human rights and democracy. In particular, I anticipate dedicating my time and energy to the issue of human trafficking—a matter on which Chairman Bob Corker, Ranking Member Ben Cardin, Senator Robert Menendez and their colleagues have shown greater leadership in recent years. As part of this effort, I will work diligently on the State Department's recommendation for Canada to: "increase specialized services and shelter available to all trafficking victims. . . . " as well as pay special attention to interagency and bilateral efforts that can improve data collection and coordination on anti-trafficking efforts here in North America and in multi-lateral fora in which Canada and the United States collaborate.

Question 2. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from Canada?

Answer. Yes. Canada and the United States have a long and proud history of jointly advancing the cause of human rights both at home and abroad. I look forward to working with my Canadian counterparts to continue to promote our common values.

Question 3. Will you engage with Canadian Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. I look forward to working with my counterparts to promote the cause of human rights, civil rights, and governance worldwide.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you sus-

pect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Canada?

Answer. To my knowledge, neither I nor any of my immediate family members have any direct financial interests in Canada. If confirmed to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Canada, I will commit to the highest standards of ethical conduct for government officials and honor my ethical obligations under applicable federal law, regulations and rules. Additionally, if confirmed, I will adhere to all of the commitments set forth in my pre-clearance ethics agreement with the U.S. Department of State and raise any pertinent conflict of interest or ethical concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. Yes. I share the view that a diverse workforce is key to ensuring a productive and creative team. I will endeavor to reflect the diversity of our great nation by promoting the value of diversity as Ambassador to Canada through our Embassy and our activities.

Question 8. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will lead by example by fostering a culture of acceptance and inclusivity throughout Mission Canada. To achieve a diverse workforce, I will:

- Work to implement appropriate procedures for support and mentoring of staff;
- Fully comply with federal non-discrimination laws and regulations in our Embassy and consulates; and
- Clearly communicate the importance of complying with established protocols and procedures.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO KELLY CRAFT BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. Until recently, Canadian courts have applied a utility requirement—referred to as the "promise doctrine"—when assessing biopharmaceutical patents. Canada has used this policy to invalidate 26 patents over the last decade. Last month, the Supreme Court of Canada invalidated the promise doctrine.

- Will you press for full and immediate implementation of this decision?
- How will you work to ensure that our trading partners, including Canada, uphold their FTA and WTO commitments on intellectual property rights?

Answer. Yes. I am aware of the Canadian Supreme Court decision, which addresses a longstanding concern of the United States. Together with my team at Mission Canada, we will work closely with our colleagues at the Department of Commerce and the U.S. Trade Representative's office to press the Government of Canada to enforce the highest standards on intellectual property rights and to ensure that U.S. companies are fairly treated.

Question 2. More money is spent on biomedical research and development in the U.S. than in any other country in the world. Proposals under consideration by the Canadian Government to change the way medicines are paid for in Canada would adopt pricing setting measures that discount this important investment. This could significantly harm U.S. biopharmaceutical companies and ultimately patient access to medicines.

- How will you work to advance policies for American innovators that appropriately recognize and reward the value of medicines and ensure patients have access to the medicines they need?

Answer. Patients in both countries benefit from continued innovation in the medical and pharmaceutical industries. If confirmed, I will work with U.S. Government agencies to ensure that U.S. biopharmaceutical companies are fairly treated in the Canadian market.

Question 3. Under NAFTA, when a U.S. investor in Canada is denied "fair and equitable treatment", the recourse for the U.S. investor is to file a claim with an arbitration panel. In certain cases, after a NAFTA arbitration panel decides in favor of a U.S. investor against Canada the Canadian Government has resorted to its own domestic courts to strike down the decision. After spending considerable time and resources to undertake the dispute panel process, U.S. companies must then fight the Canadian Government in the Canadian courts to preserve their victory.

- Will you commit to work with me and your Canadian counterparts to find a just resolution of these issues?
- How will you seek to impress upon the Canadian Government the importance of fulfilling their existing obligations under NAFTA, including the decisions of dispute resolution panels?

Answer. I share your commitment to protect U.S. investors and, if confirmed, I will work with the Congress and with the Government of Canada to support fair and just treatment of U.S. companies in any dispute resolution process with our NAFTA partners.

Question 4. Following the President's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, the United States and Canada, we recently saw Prime Minister Trudeau reaching out directly to states to engage on critical issues including the environment, clean technology cooperation, and other energy priorities.

- What implications do you think this has for traditional bilateral engagement and how do you plan to represent the United States as a country, when our states are taking the lead with a different policy position?
- Do you plan to continue to work with Canada on mutually beneficial clean technology development? How?

Answer. The issues you mention remain priorities for both of our countries. The United States supports a balanced approach to climate policy that lowers emissions while promoting economic growth and ensuring energy security. We will continue to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions through innovation and technology breakthroughs. This administration believes in cooperative federalism, and therefore is supportive of states and cities making their own choices within their respective borders on climate policy.

Refugees and migrants

Question 5. Given significant and severe refugee crises around the world, Canada has adopted overwhelmingly welcoming policies. Additionally, Canada has migration policies in place that open the doors for entrepreneurs to come to Canada, welcome increasing numbers of students to their universities, and generally promote a positive image of migration in Canada.

- How do you plan to engage Canada on the issues of refugees and migration?
- Do you believe it puts the United States at a disadvantage to have more restrictive immigration policies that those of our neighbor?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage the Canadian Government at the federal and provincial level to share views on immigration and refugee issues and ensure continuing cooperation. The United States and Canada work together closely on border security and information sharing, and we are both proud of our history as countries with diverse populations and a strong record of welcoming immigrants and migrants with legal status.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO KELLY CRAFT BY SENATOR RON JOHNSON

Question 1. In 2015, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Canada's broadcasting and telecommunication regulatory agency, issued a decision that singled out the Super Bowl as it relates to simultaneous substitution. I, along with Senator Marco Rubio, first raised this issue in a December 2016 letter to Canadian ambassador David MacNaughton, urging Canada to reverse

the CRTC's ruling related to the Super Bowl. I also am aware that colleagues in both the House and Senate, from both sides of the aisle, also raised this issue over the course of many months with the Ambassador and other officials in both Canada and the United States. Unfortunately, however, the Canadian Government took no action, and the policy went into effect, causing significant harm to the NFL and its Canadian partner with the exclusive broadcasting rights there. If confirmed, will you commit to examining this issue and working with officials and stakeholders on both sides of the border to resolve this issue and protect the interests of the NFL as a U.S. copyright owner?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to examine this issue and work with the appropriate government officials and stakeholders in both countries, and to advocate on behalf of the NFL on the issue of broadcasting rights for the Super Bowl.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As a private citizen in the United States, I've taken a number of philanthropic steps to improve the lives of those living in disadvantaged communities or poor state of health and physical condition. Some of the accomplishments of which I'm most proud include my philanthropy toward relief from diabetes and lupus as well as supporting catastrophically injured veterans.

As a former Chairman of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International, I initiated the campaign "The Only Remedy Is a Cure," transforming a small, non-profit group into the largest private medical entity focused on finding a cure for diabetes. I devoted a good deal of time working with the National Institutes for Health to secure government funding for diabetes research, and this led to a three-year term on the National Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Advisory Council.

In 1999 my focus expanded to include medical research to better treat and cure lupus. As there was no formal organization devoted exclusively to researching this debilitating autoimmune disease, I established the Alliance for Lupus Research (now known as Lupus Research Alliance) to raise funds to prevent, treat and cure lupus. ALR-funded research laid the foundation for development of 30 percent of all lupus drugs currently in the clinical-trial pipeline.

As a New Yorker, I feel compelled to recognize the important sacrifices made by our service members. Through the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Tower Foundation, we support catastrophically wounded veterans in the region to fund the construction of smart homes through the Foundation's Building for America's Bravest program. This program builds specially adapted, custom-designed smart homes to help restore independence and improve the quality of life for our nation's most seriously injured service members. Each smart home imparts self-sufficiency; by means of special technology, a wounded veteran can manage day-to-day tasks without depending on others. It's humbling to be a part of a program that restores independence to veterans who put their lives on the line for their country.

Lastly, following my grandfather's legacy, I have served as a Trustee Emeritus of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropic organization devoted exclusively to promoting health and advancing healthcare. The Foundation aims to prompt new public policy, inspire action from the private sector, and improve the delivery of the best health care to the most people. Among its many successes, the Foundation has made substantial inroads in its anti-smoking campaign as well as reducing the rate of childhood obesity.

Question 2. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the United Kingdom?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to working with civil society groups and NGOs to advance U.S. priorities, including human rights. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with experts in these areas on both sides of the Atlantic.

Question 3. Will you engage with British Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Mission's strong partnership with Her Majesty's Government and British civil society to engage on these topics.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the United Kingdom?

Answer. I have identified all applicable financial interests on my public financial disclosure form, including interests that may be connected to the UK and have consulted at length with the Office of Government Ethics and the Department of State's designated agency ethics official to identify any potential conflicts of interest. All potential conflicts of interest have been resolved to the satisfaction of ethics officials and in accordance with the terms of my ethics agreement.

Question 7. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. My experience in business and philanthropy has given me myriad opportunities to build high-functioning teams with diverse members. I remain committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a work environment which recognizes the contributions of all employees, and will make sure they have information available about the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, foreign affairs affinity organizations, and opportunities specific to various groups.

Question 8. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage all supervisors to take available courses on EEO principles, diversity, and related issues. I will urge them to discuss unconscious bias and similar topics when they mentor junior colleagues. I will direct supervisors to transparently and fairly provide opportunities to all entry- and mid-level professionals. By providing time for professional development discussions to address diversity, I will highlight that this is a priority for me as the Ambassador.

Question 9. What is your assessment of the United Kingdom's military capabilities and defense spending?

Answer. The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Armed Forces are our closest partners and one of the top contributors to NATO and U.S.-led missions globally. Her Majesty's Government (HMG) remains committed to spending at least two percent of GDP on the defense budget, and is spurring other NATO Allies to meet that same commitment. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will underscore the importance that America's allies, including the United Kingdom, share the burden in meeting and addressing threats to our peace and security, including by continuing to meet its commitment to spend at least 2 percent of GDP on its military.

The MOD in 2015 presented ambitious defense capability upgrades and force integration plans. Officials confirmed that the MOD would bring two new aircraft carriers into action, continue acquiring the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and improve capabilities by acquiring the P-8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft, additional AH-64 attack helicopters and CH-47G heavy lift helicopters, and the new Ajax armored vehicle. In July 2016, HMG committed to its continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent with the intent to commission four new nuclear ballistic missile submarines.

Question 10. Do you think recent United Kingdom defense cuts have affected transatlantic cooperation and burden-sharing or the United Kingdom's military's ability to carry out operations?

Answer. The United Kingdom maintains a high-tempo of global military operations and defense engagement. UK operational priorities include support to defeating ISIS and supporting the Iraqi Security Forces; countering violent extremism in Libya; supporting the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces in NATO's Resolute Support Mission; deterring Russia by leading a battle group in Estonia as part

of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence effort; and building defense capacity in Ukraine, Nigeria, Tunisia, Jordan, and east Africa. In addition, MOD officials work closely with U.S. counterparts to achieve our shared counterterrorism objectives.

Question 11. Should U.S. policymakers be concerned that the United Kingdom could become a less robust and less influential defense partner in the coming years?

Answer. Prime Minister May has made clear that the UK will continue to be a global leader, and a key U.S. partner, in tackling global security and defense challenges.

Even before the decision to leave the European Union (EU), HMG made international engagement a priority in its 2015 defense strategy review. The MOD committed to work with Allies and partners in NATO, the Joint Expeditionary Force, the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, and to deepen its interoperability with U.S. forces.

The MOD also charged its forces to increase international defense engagement—to increase British influence globally and build partner defense capacity. This defense engagement task coincides with the UK national prosperity agenda to market and sell British products, primarily defense articles, to partner nations and Allies globally.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question 1. Mr. Johnson, I noticed that you could not affirmatively say that Russia was behind the cyber intrusion into 2016 U.S. elections. While I understand that you have not reviewed the classified intelligence, do you trust the judgment of our intelligence community and will you be able to affirm their judgment in your bilateral discussions with the UK and other foreign representatives on this and other matters?

Answer. I have the utmost respect for the women and men of the U.S. intelligence community. While planning Super Bowl XLVIII, I saw first-hand their professionalism, judgment, and patriotism as they worked to keep Americans safe during the week-long activities. I trust our intelligence community's judgment and devotion to our nation.

If confirmed, I will carefully review available intelligence and analysis to ensure that I am most effective in advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives in the United Kingdom. And I will certainly affirm my confidence in the judgment of the U.S. intelligence community during bilateral discussions with British and other foreign representatives where appropriate.

Question 2. One other issue that I'd like to raise is something that's been brought to my attention by someone who has testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the challenge of dealing with Vladimir Putin and his associates in the Kremlin. Vladimir Kara-Murza, a prominent Russian dissident who has suffered multiple assassination attempts, has emphasized the need for the U.S. and the UK to prevent Russian oligarchs who wish to hide stolen assets in the West. This practice is well-documented by investigative journalists and the UK documentary "From Russia with Cash" revealed how real estate agents in Great Britain, in particular, can be key enablers for laundering dirty money. Are you familiar with this issue? How best can the United States close such loopholes in this country and encourage Allies like the UK to do the same? Can you commit to raising it with your British counterparts, if confirmed?

Answer. While not familiar with this specific issue or documentary, I recognize the importance of preventing money launderers from hiding stolen assets in the United States or anywhere else. If confirmed, I will raise this issue and commit to working closely with Her Majesty's Government to explore joint strategies for improving anti-money laundering efforts.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LEWIS EISENBERG BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. The importance of American democracy and our basic liberties, values, and way of life was never clearer to me than in the days after September 11, 2001. As the Chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and later as a board member of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, I was intimately involved in the immediate rescue, recovery, and rebuilding efforts following the attack on the World Trade Center—efforts that helped send a message that Americans would defend and protect our way of life, even at great cost.

Before and since that terrible day, human rights and democracy have been important values in my career. For the past 15 years, I have worked in electoral politics, including efforts to promote political participation and get young people involved in the democratic process. I served for over 15 years as a board member and volunteer for New York Service for the Handicapped, and in that position I worked to advance the rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities. In my philanthropic activities, I have supported efforts to end discrimination against LGBT persons. And throughout my career, I have worked to promote equal treatment and professional opportunities for women in the financial industry.

Serving with my wife as a national Board Member of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), I had the opportunity to advocate for democratic values in an international context, working to strengthen U.S. support for Israel as a critical democratic ally in the Middle East.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Republic of San Marino today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Italy and the Republic of San Marino? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Italy and the Republic of San Marino are strong partners in advancing human rights around the world. Nevertheless, some important challenges remain. In San Marino, official corruption and transparency issues are important challenges, given the Republic's historic role as an international financial hub. Access for persons with disabilities is another area where more can be done.

Italy's place on the frontline of Europe's ongoing refugee and migration crisis has brought into sharp relief challenges of human trafficking, including labor and sex trafficking, particularly for unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable populations, as well as challenges regarding capacity and adequacy of housing. Other issues in Italy include corruption and incidents of mistreatment and social exclusion of members of minority groups, including Roma.

If confirmed, I am committed to continuing Mission Italy's active engagement with Italian and Sammarinese officials on these important issues. In particular, in the context of the ongoing refugee and migration crisis, I would seek to redouble our efforts to partner with Italy and San Marino in combating human trafficking and addressing human rights abuses against refugees and migrants. I would also look forward to strengthening Mission Italy's programs to combat corruption and promote good governance and transparency.

Question 3. 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 Italy and the Republic of San Marino in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The people and governments of Italy and the Republic of San Marino are strong, willing partners in addressing human rights issues at home and around the world. However, the refugee and migrant crisis has strained Italy's capacity to screen and identify victims of trafficking, provide adequate shelter to newly arrived refugees and migrants, and protect refugees and migrants from exploitation and abuse. If confirmed, I look forward to doing everything possible to support Italy's efforts—together with its European Union neighbors and the international community—to meet this historic challenge and protect the human rights of all who arrive on Italy's shores.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Italy and the Republic of San Marino?

Answer. These are very important issues, and if confirmed, I am absolutely committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in Italy and the Republic of San Marino.

Question 5. Will you engage with Italians and Sammarinese on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. These are very important issues, and if confirmed, I am absolutely committed to engaging with the Italians and Sammarinese on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of the bilateral mission.

Question 6. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Italy or the Republic of San Marino?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. My investment portfolio includes companies that have a presence in Italy, but I have worked closely with the State Department Ethics Office and the Office of Government Ethics and will divest my interests in those companies the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. I will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 9. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I am fully committed to equal employment opportunity principles. I firmly believe that those who represent the United States abroad must fully reflect America's diversity. As the State Department's Statement on Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity notes, "Our commitment to inclusion must be evident in the face we present to the world and in the decision-making processes that represent our diplomatic goals." Throughout my career, I have worked to ensure the organizations I helped lead had no barriers to opportunity based on race, religion, gender, or other protected categories. If confirmed, I would uphold the same principles of equality and equal opportunity throughout Mission Italy.

I have worked to promote the success of the diverse teams I have led. If confirmed, I will take the same approach to managing the Mission Italy team, ensuring each member of the mission community is able to draw upon his or her unique background and experience to contribute to our shared goals.

Question 10. What steps will you take to ensure that each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I take seriously not only my own duty, if confirmed, to lead a diverse and inclusive mission, but also my responsibility to ensure managers and supervisors across Mission Italy fully uphold equal employment opportunity principles and promote the success of each member of our embassy community. If confirmed, I will clearly and consistently articulate these principles as Chief of Mission, and I will work with my Deputy Chief of Mission and Country Team to ensure our mission supervisors consistently prioritize them in their interactions.

Question 11. Over many years, the Russian Government has developed, refined, and deployed its toolkit for malign influence in Europe and elsewhere. I believe that these efforts, which seek to erode citizens' confidence in the credibility of democratic institutions, pose a grave threat to the national security interests of the United States and our allies and partners around the world. There are reports that the Russian Government has sought to exert undue influence in Italian politics, media and civil society. How will you work to counter nefarious Russian influence in Italy?

Answer. Italy shares our concerns about Russian aggression in Europe, including Russian disinformation campaigns and malign influence activities. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our coordination with Italian partners, across relevant agencies, to detect and counter these activities that seek to undermine democratic institutions and principles. If confirmed, I will make U.S.-Italian cooperation on this issue a priority, particularly in advance of Italian national elections that are likely to take place in 2018.

Question 12. Will you commit to engaging with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on this issue?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LEWIS EISENBERG BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question 1. Mr. Eisenberg, I noticed that you could not affirmatively say that Russia was behind the cyber intrusion into 2016 U.S. elections. While I understand that you have not reviewed the classified intelligence, do you trust the judgment of our intelligence community and will you be able to affirm their judgment in your bilateral discussions with Italy and other foreign representatives on this and other matters?

Answer. The weight of publicly available evidence clearly indicates Russia attempted to interfere in the 2016 U.S. elections. I take this very seriously. As Secretary Tillerson has said, Russian attempts to influence democratic political systems have been well documented in the United States and elsewhere. I have tremendous respect for the United States Intelligence Community, and I look forward, if confirmed, to reviewing the more detailed intelligence and analysis that will be available to me upon confirmation.

If confirmed, I will have no hesitation in presenting U.S. Government views and assessments to my Italian counterparts and will strongly advocate for shared action to address common concerns. I will work to strengthen our coordination with Italian partners, across relevant agencies, to detect and counter activities of Russia and other countries that seek to undermine democratic institutions and principles. If confirmed, I will make U.S.-Italian cooperation on this issue a priority, particularly in advance of Italian national elections that are likely to take place in 2018?

Question 2. If confirmed, will you continue to stress to the Italian Government the importance of their support for U.S.-EU economic sanctions on Russia? What are the biggest challenges do you feel you will encounter in this regard and how will you address them?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly advocate for continued U.S.-EU unity in maintaining pressure on Russia through sanctions. Our administration and the Government of Prime Minister Gentiloni have made clear that sanctions must remain in place until Russia fully implements the Minsk agreements, including ceasing aggression in eastern Ukraine and respecting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Maintaining Italian popular support for EU sanctions can be a challenge, particularly amid flawed perceptions that Italian businesses have suffered uniquely from reduced trade with Russia. If confirmed, I will work to dispel these misperceptions, make sure Italians understand the stakes of Russia's aggression—including the suffering of the Ukrainian people—and I will stress the vital importance of continued unity in our response.

RESPONSES TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LEWIS EISENBERG BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. Italy has called for increased U.S. engagement in addressing the ongoing conflict in Libya. There was also some press reporting that a Trump aide, Sebastian Gorka talked to the Europeans about partitioning Libya into three. This idea has been widely discredited.

- What do you think about a possible effort to divide Libya into three?
- What steps is the United States taking to support international efforts to bring stability to Libya and what role do you think we should play in working with European partners in this effort?
- Do you have concerns about militarized responses to areas we are countering extremist networks without a comprehensive diplomatic strategy in place?

Answer. The United States and Italy have been strong partners in support of Libyan efforts to improve security and foster the political stability necessary to defeat ISIS and other terrorists, restore the economy, and address transnational flows of migrants and weapons. Both the United States and Italy have engaged a wide range of Libyan political and security figures, pressing all parties to de-escalate tensions and negotiate a political compromise within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), which provides a roadmap for a transitional government and na-

tional elections. The United States supports a united Libya, with a capable, unified government and unified national security forces.

The United States believes that political stability and peace in Libya depends on national reconciliation. We will work closely with the UN and European and regional partners such as Italy to foster political dialogue among Libyans. Libya's neighbors, states in the region, and European partners such as Italy all have an important role in supporting Libyan-led efforts to reach a political solution. There is no military solution to Libya's conflict. The parties must reach a political compromise to stabilize the country, avoid civil conflict, and unify all Libyan forces against the real enemy: ISIS and other terrorists.

If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our diplomatic engagement with Italy to help stabilize Libya so it cannot be a platform for terrorists, or for criminal gangs that traffic and exploit migrants.

RESPONSES TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO K.T. MCFARLAND BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. The State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report 2017 places Singapore on Tier 2, stating that "The Government of Singapore does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so" and indicates that Singapore still has a ways to go on reducing labor trafficking. Do you believe that trafficking in persons is a problem in Southeast Asia? In Singapore? Do you commit to working with our partners in the Singaporean Government to support their efforts to reduce the scourge of trafficking in persons?

Answer. Yes, I do believe trafficking in persons is a problem in Singapore and Southeast Asia. While Singapore has implemented measures to curb human trafficking, including through the adoption of the 2015 Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, Singapore can take additional steps to improve its anti-trafficking efforts within the country. If confirmed, I commit to work closely with the Government of Singapore, the Singapore Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, and Singaporean civil society to address this issue.

RESPONSES TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO K.T. MCFARLAND BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. One of the greatest advances in human rights and democracy in modern times was the collapse of the Soviet Empire and discrediting of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It was brought about in large part by President Reagan's policies of no longer accepting mere coexistence with the Soviet Union but to push toward ending and winning the Cold War on our terms without firing a shot. President Reagan and his administration pressured the Soviet Union on many fronts: by building up America's armed forces, revitalizing our alliances, pressuring the Soviet economy, and using the bully pulpit to call out the evils of communism and oppression.

As President Reagan's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and the Senior Speechwriter to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, I had, on many occasions, the privilege of crafting the words and articulating the public positions for the senior members of the Reagan administration, including the President.

There are hundreds of millions of people today who are free because of Reagan's words.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Singapore? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in the Republic of Singapore? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. As stated in the State Department's annual Human Rights Report on Singapore, the Government has broad powers to limit citizens' rights on freedoms of speech, assembly association and press, effectively silencing political dissent and allowing the controlling party to overwhelmingly dominate the political scene. Cor-

poral punishment such as caning is used as punishment for some crimes, both violent and non-violent. Human trafficking is also a concern in Singapore, and the Department of State's 2017 Trafficking in Person's Report lists Singapore as a Tier 2 country. Singapore has taken steps to curb trafficking through the adoption of the 2015 Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, which prohibits all forms of human trafficking and sets stringent penalties that meet international standards for those found guilty. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Government of Singapore and civil society to promote basic freedoms in support of their democratic system and to address trafficking in persons.

Question 3. 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 by the Republic of Singapore in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. While Singapore has free and fair elections, restrictions on media and free speech exist as outlined in our annual Human Rights Report, and further progress is needed in stemming human trafficking. We regularly discuss our concerns with Singapore, and the country has made significant efforts to address human trafficking. We will, however, continue to urge the Government of Singapore to take additional steps to increase investigations, prosecute trafficking cases, and improve victim identification methods. Singapore takes the issue of trafficking in persons seriously, and I look forward to working with Singapore to find better ways to address this problem and other concerns.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the Republic of Singapore?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and non-governmental organizations in Singapore.

Question 5. Will you engage with Singapore on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Singapore to engage on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance. I will also seek to exchange best practices between our governments.

Question 6. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Singapore?

Answer. No.

Question 9. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I value the diversity of our Foreign Service Officer corps, and other sources of employees who comprise the staff of Embassy Singapore, which reflects all of America. A strong, diverse workforce ensures we craft the best possible solutions for the foreign policy challenges facing the United States. I will make it a high priority to support my staff at the Embassy, particularly those from diverse backgrounds or underrepresented groups. I will also actively engage the other leaders at the Mission to prioritize mentoring and ensure that we are developing a new generation of diplomats to represent our country effectively.

Question 10. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will make it clear to the supervisors and all employees at our Mission that I value a respectful and inclusive work environment and will hold supervisors

accountable for abiding by the leadership and management principles established by the Department of State, such as valuing and developing our people. As I have done throughout my career, I will seek to model this behavior through my own leadership of the Mission.

Question 11. Do you believe the United States should lift sanctions on Russia?

Answer. No, not until Moscow reverses the actions on Ukraine and Crimea that triggered sanctions in the first place.

Question 12. Can you share with the committee during your time as a national security advisor to candidate and then-President elect Trump any meetings, contacts or conversations you had with the Russian Government or any Russian-connected individuals?

Answer. To the best of my recollection, there are only two occasions when I encountered any Russian officials during my time as a national security advisor to candidate and then-President-Elect Trump.

The first was at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. The Russian ambassador, Sergey Kislyak, was one of two hundred or so attendees at the Global Partners in Diplomacy Conference hosted by the Republican National Committee, the Heritage Foundation and the State Department for members of the diplomatic corps. I understand a similar event was held for the Diplomatic Corps at the Democratic National Convention.

I was the moderator of a multi-person panel discussion on then-candidate Trump's foreign policy held at Case Western Reserve University. When we opened the floor to questions from the audience, Ambassador Kislyak asked a question of the panel. I had no personal contact with the Ambassador during the conference. In fact, I did not know who he was until after he identified himself to the audience during his question.

The second was in a receiving line on January 19, 2017. I gave a speech at a luncheon hosted by the Business Council for International Understanding for approximately 100 members of the diplomatic corps and business community. Ambassador Kislyak attended the luncheon, and we exchanged brief pleasantries in the receiving line, as I did with the thirty or so ambassadors and businessmen who also participated in the receiving line.

Question 13. At the Global Partners in Diplomacy conference, a RNC event hosted in Cleveland, press reports say you and Ambassador Kislyak were both in attendance. Did you have any contact or conversations with Russian officials or conduits at this event?

Answer. Please see the answer to Question 12 (above).

Question 14. On Islam, you have said "Islam is religion, Islamism is death cult." You said that the United States "reluctance to hurt their feelings" and "political correctness is getting people killed" Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, who brought you on to the Trump team called Islamism a "vicious cancer inside the body of 1.7 billion people" that has to be "excised". Singapore has a population that is 15 percent Muslims. Like in any other country, Muslims in Singapore are Members of Parliament, mayors, and crucial members of the Singapore society. How can you represent U.S. values abroad, which was founded on the principles of religious freedom, diversity and inclusion, while also believing that Islam is a death cult?

Answer. Let me clarify the question. I believe Islam is a religion, and not a death cult. I do, however, believe Islamism, is a death cult. I have tried to be careful to make the distinction between Islam on the one hand, and Islamism as practiced by ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the Islamic State on the other. I believe Islamism, which promotes suicide bombers, and the killing of innocents, including women and children is a death cult.

In my previous position as Deputy National Security Adviser, I had several conversations with Singaporean officials, several of whom are Muslim, about the threat posed by the spread of radical Islam. They expressed concerns, and I agreed, that it presents a growing security issue in Southeast Asia.

Like the 68 member Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, I believe Islamism, Islamists and radical terrorists pose a threat to international peace and stability and continue to commit gross abuses to human rights and violations of international law.

Question 15. In 2012, when asked about waterboarding you said "Even if it's torture, it's probably worth doing." I believe waterboarding, which is classified by the United Nations as torture, is not only morally objectionable but has proven repeatedly to not work. Can you share with the committee your current views on torture?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify my position. As I said during my nomination hearing, I have come full circle in my thinking on this issue in the

last five years. I have listened to the arguments of Senator McCain, Senator Graham, General (now Defense Secretary) Mattis and others that torture is ineffective, violates international and U.S. law, and leaves our own military open to torture by others. Finally, I have come to agree with them that there is nothing more important in this regard than living our values.

Question 16. Are there instances in which torture are justifiable to you?

Answer. No.

Question 17. Singapore is a regional hub for American business, and much of the U.S. Ambassador's job inevitably touches on American business interests. Singapore's penal code criminalizes homosexuality, and the country offers no protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This poses a negative impact not only on U.S. companies' gay and lesbian employees and families, but on talent assignment by American companies. What would you do as ambassador, in partnership with U.S. companies, to encourage Singapore to rescind its anti-LGBT laws and offer employment and other protections for LGBT people?

Answer. LGBT rights are a topic of discussion in our conversations with the Singaporean Government. We continue to urge equal treatment for all and to underscore our commitment to diversity and inclusion. If confirmed, I will engage not only with the Singaporean Government, but also with civil society organizations, the private sector, and like-minded missions to further these discussions.

Question 18. Singapore-based businesses have been accused in recent years of helping North Korea evade sanctions. In 2014, the Singapore-registered Chinpo Shipping company was criminally charged in Singapore for doing business with North Korea's Ocean Maritime Management company, which had been the target of international sanctions. If confirmed, how do you see your role as making sure that Singapore fully implements and enforces its international commitments made to Singapore?

Answer. North Korea's provocations threaten international peace and security. Singapore has reiterated its commitment to fully implement all UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea, including establishing new visa requirements for all DPRK passport holders. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with Singapore to coordinate our diplomatic, military, and economic response to North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs.

Question 19. What role do you think Singapore should play in addressing maritime tensions in the South China Sea?

Answer. Singapore is a critical partner in promoting a regional architecture that maintains security and promotes economic prosperity across the Asia-Pacific. Singapore is one of the founding members of ASEAN, and views ASEAN as a forum to manage maritime disputes in the South China Sea. We believe that Singapore has an important role to play in helping bring forward a unified ASEAN position that bolsters international law and calls for peaceful settlement of disputes. As China's country coordinator in ASEAN for the next few years, Singapore will also play a significant role in shaping the substance of Code of Conduct negotiations between ASEAN and China.

Question 20. If confirmed, how will you ensure that Singapore and the United States work productively to address tensions and seek common interests in the South China Sea?

Answer. Singapore has a national interest in ensuring freedoms of navigation and overflight, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea. If confirmed, I will continue to discuss with Singapore how we can uphold rights and freedoms in the South China Sea that are reflected in international law.

Question 21. Singapore was one of 11 nations that negotiated the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement with the United States. In an October 2016 interview, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said failure to ratify the proposed TPP would be "a very big setback for America," and that the result would be "your standing goes down with many countries around the world." If confirmed, how will you address concerns about U.S. credibility and leadership in regional and global trade policy voiced by Singapore, a nation heavily dependent on trade?

Answer. Our economic engagement in the Asia-Pacific does not depend on a single agreement or initiative. The United States remains fully committed to strengthening its economic relationships across the region, including in Singapore. The Asia-Pacific remains a top priority for this administration because it is hugely consequential to the future security and economic prosperity of the United States. The high tempo of engagement by senior officials in Asia reflects the administration's focus

on the region. The United States and Singapore have enjoyed a free trade agreement (FTA) since 2004, and we continue to work together with Singapore through our membership in APEC and engagement through ASEAN to promote free and fair trade in the region. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Singapore to promote economic growth and high standards for trade and investment throughout the region.

Question 22. What role does Singapore play in the Trump administration 's strategy in Asia?

Answer. Singapore's strategic location in Southeast Asia makes it a hub for people and goods transiting through the region. It is a key partner for the United States on counter-proliferation, counterterrorism, and cybersecurity—priority issues for both of our countries. Our cooperation on both the military and law-enforcement fronts is substantial, and based on 50 years of partnership. If confirmed, I will engage immediately and effectively with the highest levels of Singaporean Government to determine how to strengthen our partnership in these areas, and to empower my staff to grow the working level relationships that are key to day-to-day cooperation.

Question 23. Do you see Singapore's role as different compared to its role during the Obama administration ?

Answer. Singapore's role under the current administration is deeply important and bilateral relations remain strong. The U.S.-Singapore relationship is anchored by enduring economic and political ties, and for over 50 years we have enjoyed a close partnership based on our shared vision for peace and prosperity.

Question 24. How do you assess U.S.-Singapore security relations following the 2015 signing of an "enhanced" Strategic Framework Agreement?

Answer. Singapore is one of our strongest defense partners in Southeast Asia, and is committed to regional stability and security. Singapore provides the U.S. military access to bases, ports, and runways and has over 1,000 military personnel and four permanent air force detachments training in the United States.

Question 25. Where do you see opportunities for closer cooperation in areas where the United States and Singapore could benefit from doing more?

Answer. As technological advancement continues to create a more inter-connected world that is increasingly vulnerable to cyber threats, greater cyber security cooperation would benefit both Singapore and the United States. Singapore leads the region on cyber security. In 2016, it launched the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity and a $7.5 million regional capacity building program. Through the U.S.-Singapore Third Country Training Program, the United States and Singapore are working closely together to conduct joint capacity building courses and trainings for countries across Southeast Asia in areas such as cyber security and cyber-crime. If confirmed, I will continue to support efforts to deepen our cybersecurity cooperation, and work closely with our Singapore partners to identify all areas of potential collaboration in our mutual interests.

Question 26. How do you assess the utility of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) rotations that began in 2013?

Answer. The Littoral Combat Ship rotations underscore strong U.S.-Singapore defense ties. The strategic benefits of our cooperation with Singapore are considerable. In addition to supporting rotational deployments of U.S. P-8 aircraft and U.S. Littoral Combat Ships, Singapore allows U.S. Navy helicopters to use its airfields.

RESPONSES TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO K.T. MCFARLAND BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Views on Brexit

Question . During your hearing, I asked you if press reports about your support for the Brexit vote were accurate. You testified that you believed that the will of the British people should be respected. When I asked you in follow up whether you had ever expressed personal support or opposition for Brexit, you could not recall.

Press accounts reveal that you celebrated Brexit, calling it Britain's opportunity to "leave a sinking ship" and said that "Europe is collapsing," comparing it to the Titanic. In a June 24, 2016 article titled "After Brexit: Mr. Trump (or Mrs. Clinton) let's resurrect the Anglo-American alliance," you wrote: "The British people just voted to take back self-rule from the faceless, unaccountable, arrogant, power-grabbing bureaucrats in Brussels."

- Can you explain why you supported Brexit, if you still hold that it was a positive outcome for the UK and Europe, whether you still believe that EU officials are "arrogant, power-grabbing bureaucrats," and whether you continue to believe that Europe is collapsing?

Answer. I supported the view held by many conservatives, especially in the Tory Party, that British sovereignty was being eroded in favor of the European Union. One British politician in particular who helped shape my views was Steve Hilton, former Senior Adviser to Prime Minister David Cameron. According to them, Brexit would allow British to reclaim sovereignty over issues like immigration, regulatory reform and pursue a pro-growth economic policy, cut taxes and slow the expansion of the welfare state.

Since the Brexit vote, the IMF has predicted that the British economy will expand by 2 percent in 2017, making it one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, and the second fastest-growing advanced economy after the U.S.I believe that the constant expansion of the welfare state in many European countries, coupled with slow economic growth and high deficits, plus the added financial, social services and security burden of large influx of migrants in some of the member states will put pressure on these states as well as the European Union.

RESPONSES TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO K.T. MCFARLAND BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. You wrote an op-ed titled "Putin is the one who really deserves that Nobel peace prize." In that piece, regarding President Obama's Syria policy, you say that "Putin has saved the world from near-certain disaster."

- Do you agree that Putin regularly has dissidents, opposition leaders and journalists jailed or murdered?

Answer. Yes.

Question 2. Considering your op-ed on Putin was regarding Syria policy, do you disagree with the assessment that Russian forces are actively supporting the Assad regime through airstrikes that have killed thousands of Syrians, particularly in Aleppo?

Answer. No. I don't disagree.

To put that opinion piece in context, I wrote it in 2013, after Russia offered to take the lead in brokering a U.S.-Russian-Syrian deal to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons stockpile. At the time President Obama and Secretary Kerry praised the Russians, as did most members of Congress from both sides of the political aisle.

In the four years since, however, Russia has invaded Ukraine, murdered opposition leaders, propped up Assad in spite of his vicious pursuit of the Syrian civil war, and stood by while the Assad regime used chemical weapons against its own civilian population, including women and children.

One of the early issues the Trump administration confronted was Assad's renewed use of chemical weapons with attacks against innocent civilians, including women and children. I strongly supported the President's decision to attack the Syrian airfield involved in those attacks.

Question 3. According to Politico, while you served as Deputy National Security Advisor, you gave President Trump a fake 1970s Time magazine cover warning of a coming ice age. The photoshopped magazine cover circulated around the internet several years ago, but was debunked in 2013.

You also reportedly gave President Trump another fake 2008 Time magazine cover about surviving global warming. President Trump reportedly "got lathered up about the media's hypocrisy" but "staff chased down the truth and intervened before Trump or tweeted or talked publicly about it."

- Did you provide President Trump "fake news" about climate change to promote a policy position antagonistic to the Paris climate agreement?

Answer. No.

Senator Booker, Thank you for the opportunity to set the record straight.

It was an honest mistake on my staff's part, with no intention to deceive or to make the case against climate change.

I do believe the climate is changing, and that humans play a role in it. I would also point out that my husband was one of the founding directors of the World Resources Institute in the early 1980s, one of the early pro-environmental policy groups in the country. He had my full support in that endeavor.

Question 4. If yes, why did you provide President Trump fake Time magazine covers taking contrasting positions on climate change?

Answer. N/A

Question 5. Recent reporting has suggested that Lt. Gen. Flynn was warned by senior members of President Trump's transition team about the risks of his contacts with Russian ambassador Sergey Kisklak. Flynn was reportedly told during a late November meeting that Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak's conversations were almost certainly being monitored by U.S. intelligence agencies, officials said, a caution that came a month before Flynn was recorded discussing U.S. sanctions against Russia with Kislyak.

Trump transition official Marshall Billinsglea, warned Flynn that Kislyak was likely a target of U.S. surveillance and that his communications—whether with U.S. persons or superiors in Moscow—were undoubtedly being monitored by the FBI and National Security Agency, according to officials familiar with the exchange. Billingslea then said that he would obtain a copy of the profile of Kislyak, officials said, a document that Billingslea urged Flynn to read if he were going to communicate with the Russian envoy. Flynn's reaction was noncommittal, officials said, neither objecting to the feedback nor signaling agreement. Shortly thereafter, during the week of Nov. 28, Billingslea and other transition officials met with lower-level Obama administration officials in the Situation Room at the White House.

Furthermore, Ranking Member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Elijah Cummings sent a letter to Vice President-elect and Director of the Transition Mike Pence on November 28, 2016, outlining Flynn's Russian and Turkish conflicts of interest. In that letter, Ranking Member Cummings explicitly laid out how Lt. Gen. Flynn's firm was being paid to lobby on behalf of Turkish business interests closely connected to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The letter also made clear the Flynn was paid to travel to Moscow for a speech in December 2015 and join Russian President Vladimir Putin at the head table during a dinner honoring the Kremlin-backed media network RT.

- Did you ever discuss any of General Flynn's contacts with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak directly with General Flynn?

Answer. I am not aware of any of the issues or events as described above.

Question 6. As a Trump transition official, did you have any contacts with Russian officials after your meeting with Ambassador Kislyak at the Republican National Convention?

Answer. As a first matter, I did not meet Ambassador Kislyak at the Republican National Convention. He was one of two hundred or so attendees at the Global Partners in Diplomacy Conference hosted by the Republican National Committee, the Heritage Foundation and the State Department for members of the diplomatic corps. I understand a similar event was held for the Diplomatic Corps at the Democratic National Convention.

I was the moderator of a multi-person panel discussion on then-candidate Trump's foreign policy held at Case Western Reserve University. When we opened the floor to questions from the audience, Ambassador Kislyak asked a question of the panel. I had no personal contact with the Ambassador; in fact, I did not know who he was until after he identified himself to the audience during his question.

To the best of my recollection, the only other occasion when I encountered any Russian officials as a national security adviser to then-candidate or President-Elect Trump was in a receiving line on January 19, 2017. I gave a speech at a luncheon hosted by the Business Council for International Understanding for approximately 100 members of the diplomatic corps and business community. Ambassador Kislyak attended the luncheon, and we exchanged brief pleasantries in the receiving line, as I did with the 30 or so diplomats and businessmen who participated in the receiving line.

To the best of my knowledge, I did not encounter any other Russian officials during the transition.

Question 7. Were you aware of General Flynn's conversation with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak on December 29, 2016 at any point before Vice President Pence's interview with CBS's "Face the nation' on January 15, 2017? If you were aware of Flynn's conversation with the Russian ambassador prior to Pence's interview, did you discuss Flynn's contact with Kislyak with Pence or any other senior transition officials?

Answer. Any conversations I may or may not have had with General Flynn would have been confidential. As such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on them.

Question 8. If you were aware of Flynn's conversation with the Russian ambassador prior to Pence's interview, did you discuss Flynn's contact with Kislyak with Pence or any other senior transition officials?

Answer. Any conversations I may or may not have had with the Vice President would have been confidential. As such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on them.

Question 9 Did you participate in any transition team meetings with Obama officials regarding General Flynn?

Answer. No.

Question 10. After Vice President Elect Pence received the November 18, 2016 from Congressman Cummings regarding General Flynn's lobbying for Turkish interests and paid appearance with Russian President Vladimir Putin, were you made aware of this letter?

Answer. No.

Question 11. Did you ever discuss Ranking Member Cummings November 18, 2016 letter to Vice President Pence with Vice President Pence? If so, when? Please provide details on the nature of those conversations if they took place.

Answer. Any conversations I may or may not have had with the Vice President would have been confidential. As such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on them. However, generally speaking, the letter described above would have been outside of my area of responsibility.

Question 12. Were you ever in contact with Vice President elect Pence, transition official Marshall Billingslea or other transition officials about General Flynn's work on behalf of Turkey or Russian payments?

Answer. Any conversations I may or may not have had with the Vice President would have been ere confidential. As such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on them. However, the topic described above would have been outside of my area of responsibility.

Question 13. Did you ever speak to transition official Marshall Billingslea about his meeting with General Flynn in late November 2016 where Billingslea expressed concern to Michael Flynn about his contacts with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak?

Answer. Any conversations I may or may not have had with Marshall Billingslea would have been confidential. As such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on them. However, the topic described above would have been outside of my area of responsibility.

Letters Submitted in Support of K.T. McFarland's Confirmation As U.S. Ambassador to Singapore

Henry A. Kissinger

July 10, 2017

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I understand that you are preparing to consider K.T. McFarland to be America's next Ambassador to Singapore. I am writing to encourage her confirmation.

I have known K.T. since she joined my national security staff in 1970 while she was studying at George Washington University. She continued to serve on that staff throughout the Nixon and Ford Administrations with increasing responsibilities. When I retired from government in 1977, she followed me to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where she spent a summer working in my office as a research assistant. As a graduate student at Oxford, K.T. helped conduct research for the first volume of my memoirs.

Since then, over decades, I have watched her career evolve; she has been a speechwriter, a spokesperson, a commentator, and most recently, an advisor to President Trump. The relationships she has developed with the President as well as with foreign dignitaries will serve her well as Ambassador. And in addition to her experience and her relationships, I am certain K.T. will bring to the position her customary intelligence, skill, and style. I strongly recommend her confirmation.

Best regards,

Henry A. Kissinger

Senator Bob Corker
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 19, 2017

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I fully and enthusiastically endorse the nomination of Kathleen Troia McFarland to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore.

I got to know KT in my first days as President Trump's National Security Advisor. I came into my first Washington-based job under challenging conditions and KT was there for me and the National Security Council. She provided the continuity and institutional knowledge to set us on the right path to becoming the disciplined organization the President wants, responsive to his guidance and respected across the interagency. I quickly came to rely on her advice on pressing challenges that were upon us from North Korea to Syria to Iran. KT, with her unflappable professionalism and good humor, even made those days enjoyable, qualities that will serve her in good stead as a diplomat representing our country.

Even more importantly, KT goes into her new role with the full and personal support of President Trump. Singapore is a key strategic partner in a critical part of the world, and they will know they are getting an Ambassador who has a direct line to the Secretary of State and the President, as well as to her colleagues on the National Security Council.

Combined with her deep experience in national security circles dating back to her work for her mentor Dr. Henry Kissinger, these attributes will make her a formidable voice for America on the international stage. I am pleased to be in the position to strongly recommend her for your approval, and only sorry my schedule did not allow me to do it in person.

Please contact my office with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

H.R. McMaster
Lieutenant General, United States Army
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

Senator Bob Corker
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:00 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake, presiding.

Present: Senators Flake [presiding], Gardner, Young, Booker, Coons, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF FLAKE, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

Senator FLAKE. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today the committee will consider the nominations of three experienced career Foreign Service officers to be the U.S. Ambassadors to Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, and Algeria. I was pleased to meet each of today's nominees in my office earlier and to learn about them and this potential posting.

Ethiopia is a key regional security partner, helping to counter al Shabaab in the region, helping to diffuse a violent crisis that we just learned more about in South Sudan.

Sierra Leone's economy continues to struggle while the country is still recovering from the devastation brought by the Ebola virus.

Algeria and the United States work together on important counterterrorism issues, but more can be done on the economic front to allow for greater opportunity and investment in that country.

Before I recognize Ranking Member Booker, let me take a moment to thank the families who are here. We know that the work is hard and separation sometimes is difficult when the post is in a far-flung place, as all of these are. So we appreciate your sacrifice and are glad to have you here today. And I am sure you will be introduced later.

Senator Booker?

STATEMENT OF HON. CORY A. BOOKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator BOOKER. I just want to echo my colleague and friend and his comments. It is extraordinary the service you all have already rendered to the United States of America. Citizenship in the United States has tremendous blessings and privileges, and most of us luxuriate in rights that were fought for and struggled for by

generations before. But you all are not just enjoying your privileges, but you are showing that your commitment to the obligations of citizenship through service under difficult conditions, difficult circumstances, and a service that necessitates sacrifice. And for that, I am just very, very grateful.

As Senator Flake said, it is not just you. Obviously, when you all are serving, it is your entire families as well. And so my gratitude to all of you for stepping forward to these difficult challenging positions of leadership in areas of the world that desperately need leadership and service and the best of America. So thank you for your willingness to represent that.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you.

Our first nominee is Michael Arthur Raynor, former Ambassador, who has served as an American diplomat since 1988. He served in eight missions, including Benin, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Guinea, Djibouti, and Congo Brazzaville.

Our second nominee, Maria Brewer, has served one of her first postings as a Foreign Service officer in Sierra Leone. So this will be a return, if she is successful, to the country for which she is now nominated. That is a great thing, I am sure, the prospect of returning.

Lastly, we will hear from John Desrocher currently serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Egypt and Maghreb Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State.

With that, the committee recognizes Ambassador Raynor first. Please feel free to introduce any family that you have here as well.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL ARTHUR RAYNOR, OF MARYLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

Ambassador RAYNOR. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their trust and confidence in me.

I am also very proud to have my family with me today: my wife Kate, my son Bradley, and my daughter Emma. I could not be more grateful for their support.

During my 29 years as a Foreign Service officer, I have developed substantial African policy and managerial experience and a record of leadership fostering strong performance from interagency teams and challenging environments.

If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, my top priority will be the security, interests, and welfare of American citizens. I will also seek to strengthen our strong partnerships with Ethiopia, to support, health, education, food security, and economic growth.

Starting in November 2015, Ethiopia began experiencing widespread unrest, resulting in the imposition of a state of emergency.

If confirmed, I will advocate for full respect of the rights guaranteed under Ethiopia's constitution.

Ethiopia has a deep commitment to promoting regional stability and countering terrorism. If confirmed, I intend to sustain and strengthen this important security partnership.

U.S. national interests also lie in supporting Ethiopia's economic progress because a sound business environment is a strong driver of good governance, development, and long-term stability.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you and for considering me for such an important posting. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[Ambassador Raynor's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL ARTHUR RAYNOR

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their trust and confidence in me. I am also very proud to have my family with me today: my wife Kate; my son Bradley, who is serving with Teach for America in Buffalo, New York; and my daughter Emma, who is going into her senior year at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York.

During my 29-year career as a Foreign Service Officer, I have developed substantial African policy and managerial experience, and a record of leadership fostering interagency collaboration, strong performance from diverse teams, and high morale in challenging environments. As U.S. Ambassador to Benin, I strengthened the country's democratic trajectory, elicited strong anti-terrorism cooperation, and helped improve the business climate while promoting U.S. commercial interests. As Assistant Chief of Mission in Afghanistan, I coordinated some of the United States' most complex law enforcement and foreign assistance programs as well as the embassy's large security and management operations, while also engaging with the Afghan Government on security and governance challenges. As Executive Director of the Bureau of African Affairs, I led management and crisis support to over 50 African posts.

If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, my top priority will be the security, interests, and welfare of American citizens. Whether ensuring responsive consular services, advocating for U.S. businesses, or strengthening partnerships against terrorism, this priority will guide the Embassy's activities and objectives. If confirmed, I also commit to doing everything I can to ensure that the dedicated women and men working at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa are safe, secure, and have every opportunity for success.

The United States has strong partnerships with Ethiopia, in alignment with the Ethiopian Government's own priorities, to support health, education, food security, and economic growth. These programs contribute meaningfully to Ethiopia's governance, stability, and prosperity. However, starting in November 2015, Ethiopia began experiencing widespread unrest, resulting in the imposition of a state of emergency that has included arbitrary detention, excessive use of force, and restrictions on civil and political freedoms. The unrest stems from complex factors including land tenure, ethnic tensions, and joblessness, but is rooted in popular desires for greater political freedom and civil liberties. If confirmed, I will advocate for full respect of the rights guaranteed under Ethiopia's constitution, as well as for reforms that strengthen democratic institutions. Such steps will not only support Ethiopian's own aspirations for stability and development, as well as its efforts against violent extremism in the region, but they will also strengthen the foundation for the U.S.-Ethiopia partnership in areas of vital interest to both nations.

Ethiopia is a strong partner to the United States in the Horn of Africa, and has a deep commitment to promoting regional stability and countering terrorism. This engagement includes Ethiopia's significant contributions to the African Union's counterterrorism and peace support mission in Somalia and to the United Nations' peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan, as well as Ethiopia's leading role in the South Sudanese peace process. Ethiopia also contributes to regional stability as the second-largest host of refugees in Africa. If confirmed, I intend to sustain and strengthen this important security relationship.

U.S. national interests lie in supporting Ethiopia's economic progress as well, because economic freedom and a sound business environment are strong drivers of

good governance, rule of law, and long-term stability. These factors also create opportunities for American businesses, and if confirmed, I will work to promote a business climate in Ethiopia that encourages U.S. private sector activity and ensures a level playing field for U.S. firms.

Ethiopia is a dynamic nation with an extraordinary history of independence and accomplishments as well as a future of enormous potential. I am honored by your consideration of me to serve in such an important posting. If confirmed, I will welcome input and advice from you and your staff on any aspect of the multi-faceted relationship between the United States and Ethiopia. I will also be pleased, if confirmed, to receive you and your staff in Ethiopia and to keep you apprised of the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you so much, Ambassador Raynor.

Ms. Brewer?

STATEMENT OF MARIA E. BREWER, OF INDIANA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Ms. BREWER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, thank you for your consideration of my nomination to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone.

I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their trust in me to lead the U.S. embassy.

And I am honored and fortunate to have my husband Mark and our 8-year-old daughter Arina here with me today. I thank both of them for their constant love and support. Without them, I would not be here before you.

Senator FLAKE. That is a nice looking young ambassador you have there. [Laughter.]

Ms. BREWER. We have a strong relationship with Sierra Leone. If confirmed, I will work to enhance our bilateral relationship while maintaining the U.S. principles of promoting democracy and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will advocate for transparency, accountability, and economic stability.

But in addition to these policy aims, I hold paramount the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Sierra Leone and the entire U.S. embassy team.

My initial introduction to Africa was as a first-tour officer assigned to Lagos, Nigeria. I was then posted to Freetown, Sierra Leone. At the time, Sierra Leone was suffering through the last years of its civil war. But despite their many hardships, the positive spirit and the resilience of the people of Sierra Leone both moved and impressed me.

After several tours in South Asia, I returned to the African Affairs Bureau in Washington, D.C. from 2010 until 2013 and then was Deputy Chief of Mission in Abuja, Nigeria, 2013 to 2016.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

[Ms. Brewer's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARIA ELENA BREWER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and for your consideration of my nomi-

nation by President Trump to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone. I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their trust in me to lead the U.S. Embassy and to maintain our relationship with Sierra Leone. If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, I will uphold that trust. I am honored and very fortunate to have my husband, Mark, and our eight-year-old daughter, Arina, here with me today. I thank both of them for their constant love and support. Without them, I would not be here before you today.

Sierra Leone has shown remarkable progress in maintaining peace, strengthening democracy, and working toward an environment suitable for economic growth. Its perseverance is especially remarkable considering the challenges it has endured. After its devastating decade-long civil war, Sierra Leone rebuilt itself and made notable economic progress. Sierra Leone saw impressive economic growth in 2012 and 2013. But in 2014, the Ebola crisis struck. By late 2015, roughly 14,000 individuals in Sierra Leone contracted the disease, of whom approximately 3,900 died.

In late 2015, Sierra Leone adopted a post-Ebola recovery plan, which received indirect and direct U.S. support. While damage from the Ebola crisis is still evident, collaborative efforts such as USAID's Ebola Transmission Prevention and Survivor Services Project have helped Sierra Leone to make great strides in combatting the epidemic and advancing in its aftermath. Sierra Leone ranks eighth from the bottom among countries on the U.N.'s Human Development Index. One in eight Sierra Leonean children will not live to age five. Sierra Leone has one of the world's highest rates of maternal mortality. Sierra Leone must allocate funds and resources to public health; doing so will be crucial to the country's future progress. If confirmed, I will work with Sierra Leonean leaders to ensure that public health remains a top national priority. Good governance and the rule of law will be key. The United States has made great inroads in working with Sierra Leone. Through programs funded by the Department of State's Bureau of Immigration, Narcotics, and Law Enforcement Affairs, Embassy colleagues have built relationships that have resulted in tangible diplomatic and law enforcement achievements. These include extraditing a U.S fugitive and repatriating Sierra Leonean nationals from the United States. These projects have bolstered access to justice, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and security for ordinary Sierra Leonean citizens. If I am confirmed, I would plan to increase collaborative efforts toward mutually beneficial goals for Sierra Leone and for our bilateral relationship.

Also if confirmed, I will continue our focus on strengthening democratic institutions and combatting corruption. Since 2002, Sierra Leone has held three successful presidential and legislative elections that were broadly judged to be free, fair, and transparent. Sierra Leone has an important presidential election in March 2018. If confirmed, I will make it a priority in my first months to engage with candidates and other stakeholders to advocate for another free and fair election with a peaceful transfer of power.

I will also work to continue U.S. support for market-oriented endeavors and to boost employment in Sierra Leone. The International Monetary Fund predicts growth of 6–7 percent for Sierra Leone in 2017 and 2018. If confirmed, I will advocate for transparency, accountability, and economic sustainability. And at the same time, I will work closely with the U.S. business community to encourage greater trade and investment between our two countries as a way to spur prosperity both for U.S. citizens and Sierra Leoneans.

I should emphasize that we are starting off on a strong footing with our relationship with Sierra Leone. We have many shared goals, as evinced by our successful projects in country. If confirmed, I will enhance our strong bilateral relationship as we work together to achieve new goals in an increasingly globalized world, while maintaining our principles of promoting democracy and rule of law.

In addition to these policy aims, I hold paramount the safety and security of hundreds of U.S. citizens resident in Sierra Leone, and the entire U.S. Embassy team, including U.S. citizen employees, their families, and our Sierra Leonean colleagues. If confirmed, I would do all within my power to ensure the security of our Mission and oversee its smooth operation.

My initial introduction to Africa was as a first-tour, entry-level officer, when I was in Lagos, Nigeria. I was then posted to Freetown, Sierra Leone, for my second tour from 1999 through 2001. At the time, Sierra Leone was suffering through the last years of their brutal civil war. Despite their many hardships, the positive spirit and resilience of the people of Sierra Leone moved and impressed me. After several tours in South Asia, including India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, I returned to the African Affairs Bureau in Washington, DC., serving in the Executive Office from 2010 until 2013. I then served as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Abuja, Nigeria from 2013 until 2016. If confirmed, I would bring a strong understanding of the African con-

tinent and its people, as well as the knowledge and experience to successfully advance our national interests in Freetown.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Desrocher?

STATEMENT OF JOHN P. DESROCHER, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Mr. DESROCHER. Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Booker, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored that President Trump has nominated me to be the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence he and Secretary Tillerson have shown by making this nomination.

I am also very pleased that my wife Karen could join me here today. She has put up with a lot of those separations that you mentioned, Mr. Chairman.

If confirmed by the Senate, my first priority will be to keep safe the people who serve in the U.S. embassy in Algiers and the American expatriate community in Algeria. I will also work to advance three critical U.S. interests: strengthening our bilateral security cooperation to fight terrorism and promote regional stability; expanding bilateral trade and investment; and working with Algerian counterparts as they pursue political and economic reforms that will foster stability as Algeria navigates new economic realities.

The U.S.-Algeria relationship has grown broader and deeper in recent years. In the last several years, we have consulted extensively at high levels and with broad interagency participation regarding terrorism in North Africa. Our governments also hold bilateral strategic dialogues and joint military dialogues on a recurring basis. Our embassy in Algeria also facilitates a broad and ever-growing spectrum of bilateral cooperative programs that strengthen our security, economic, governance, educational, and cultural ties. This speaks to the value that both of our countries place on our growing partnership.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, for giving me the opportunity to address you. It is a great honor to have been nominated as Ambassador to Algeria. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to lead an active, talented mission at U.S. Embassy Algiers, as we work with Algeria to advance our shared interests.

And I would be happy to take any questions you might have.

[Mr. Desrocher's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN DESROCHER

Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Booker, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Trump has nominated me to be the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence

he and Secretary Tillerson have shown by making this nomination. I am also very pleased that my wife, Karen, could join me here today.

If confirmed by the Senate, my first priority will be to keep safe the people who serve in U.S. Embassy Algiers, and the American expatriate community in Algeria. I will also work to advance three critical U.S. interests: (1) strengthening our bilateral security cooperation to fight terrorism and promote regional stability, (2) expanding bilateral trade and investment, and (3) working with Algerian counterparts as they pursue political and economic reforms that will foster stability as Algeria navigates new economic realities.

The U.S.-Algeria relationship has grown broader and deeper in recent years. Algeria's Foreign Minister visited Secretary Tillerson in Washington this May. In the last several years we have consulted extensively, at high levels and with broad interagency participation, regarding terrorism in North Africa. Our governments also hold bilateral Strategic Dialogues and Joint Military Dialogues on a recurring basis. Our Embassy in Algeria also facilitates a broad and ever-growing spectrum of bilateral cooperative programs that strengthen our security, economic, governance, educational and cultural ties. This speaks to the value that both of our countries place on our growing partnership.

From Algeria's fight against terrorism in the 1990s, it has achieved a hard-won stability, which it has maintained through rigorous counterterrorism efforts, national reconciliation programs, and de-radicalization initiatives. Algeria has also exported this peace dividend to its neighbors. I am consistently impressed by Algeria's efforts to foster political reconciliation in Libya and to align neighboring states in support of a political agreement. Algeria has also provided security assistance and training to other neighbors such as Tunisia and Niger.

As the largest country in Africa and situated in a volatile neighborhood, Algeria clearly recognizes the threat that regional unrest poses to its domestic security. Fighters from Iraq and Syria returning to the region, smuggling networks, and organized criminal groups represent significant threats. Left unchecked, these threats have the potential to harm vital U.S. interests. For this reason, if confirmed by the Senate, I will work to expand our important bilateral security and counterterrorism relationship.

The U.S.-Algeria relationship is also growing in the economic and commercial spheres. The government has faced budgetary difficulties following the decline in global oil prices, as hydrocarbons account for most of its revenue. Yet, these challenges have given Algeria an opportunity to make important structural economic changes, promote private sector growth, as well as foreign investment. Last year, Algeria launched a new economic model to develop and diversify its domestic industries. It has also reevaluated state subsidy programs and explored new forms of financing.

The U.S. Government has supported Algeria's economic transition. In January, the Treasury Department sent a technical advisor to Algeria to provide advice on efficient debt management and domestic debt market development. In April, our governments held the latest annual meeting of the Trade and Investment Framework

Agreement Council, to identify ways to strengthen economic ties by reducing barriers to trade and investment. Additionally, our Embassy in Algiers supports U.S. firms in Algeria through commercial advocacy. In April, GE Power signed a services deal with Algerian utility Sonelgaz, valued at $3.3 billion, to provide upgrades and long-term services for 10 gas plants throughout the country. Many other companies have also benefitted from U.S. Government advocacy, and, if confirmed, I will continue to prioritize this critically important function of our Embassy.

While new investments are essential, Algeria also remains one of the key regional producers of oil and gas, and it provides an essential energy lifeline to Europe and the Middle East. It ranks 10th in world gas reserves and 16th in oil reserves. As the United States has considerable expertise in the energy industry, if confirmed, I will promote U.S. companies as they seek to partner with Algerian firms to develop the energy sector.

Last year, the Algerian Government adopted a package of constitutional reforms to strengthen Algeria's political system and enshrine freedom of religion. If confirmed, I will work with the Algerian government to solidify these important reforms, which will strengthen Algeria's democratic and social fabric. I am committed to continuing our outreach to key human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in Algeria. I will also prioritize expanding social ties through new academic and people-to-people exchanges.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, for giving me the opportunity to address you. It is a great honor to have been nominated as Ambassador to Algeria. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to lead an active, talented mission at U.S. Embassy Algiers, as we work with Algeria to advance our shared interests.

I will be happy to take any questions you might have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. Thank you all.

Ambassador Raynor, opposition activists and journalists have been jailed by the Ethiopian Government on charges related to national security. How will that affect our relationship with Ethiopia, and how do you plan to raise those concerns?

Ambassador RAYNOR. Thank you, Senator.

I do think that these are issues that we must raise and, if confirmed, I would raise with Ethiopian leadership. And I would seek to do so in a way that is thoughtful but forthright and that makes reference to good will, shared interests, and objectives, Ethiopia's own statements with regard to its own intentions to look at political and governance reforms.

The state of emergency, the constraint of political space and rights does not serve Ethiopia's own long-term developmental or security interests. It creates space for potential violent extremism and it precludes members of their society from contributing to the development of their own nation. So I would see every opportunity I could to press that case, to use the resources at the embassy, including a resident legal advisor and a USAID mission who have strong resources and expertise to help facilitate community-based dialogue, other means of bridging gaps, and helping to move the country past this phase where all of its citizens are not being given

the political space they need to participate in the governance of their own country.

Senator FLAKE. How do you understand the investment climate in Ethiopia now? There is some controversy with the government giving away large swaths of land, agricultural land to foreign owners, I guess, for electricity production and some other things. How does that affect the investment climate?

Ambassador RAYNOR. Well, first, I would note that there are extraordinary opportunities in Ethiopia. It has had one of the fastest growing economies in the world over the past 10 years, and I think that creates opportunities for U.S. businesses. And the government's own growth and development strategy calls for greater private sector engagement.

You are right. The land use issues were one of the sources of tension underlying the recent unrest. I think there is still work to be done to resolve those. But there is also work to be done to strengthen the broader business climate in the country so that it is more welcoming to private investment, private sector engagement like the American private sector can bring.

So I would work with the Ethiopian Government, if confirmed, to promote improvements in their business climate and to promote U.S. commercial activity both for the sake of our own business community and for the sake of Ethiopia's development and stability.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you so much.

Ms. Brewer, Sierra Leone was caught up with the Ebola virus and devastating effects there. As bad as it was, it could have been worse had it spread to other countries. It was contained at least in West Africa. And there is concern of new outbreaks at some point. We know it never goes completely away. And public health, certainly having an infrastructure there to contend with a new epidemic that might come there and in other countries is important.

What is the situation with regard to public health in Sierra Leone, and what is the United States doing to improve that?

Ms. BREWER. Yes, thank you, Senator.

Yes, the Ebola crisis was a terrible loss for the country. Some 14,000 Sierra Leoneans were infected and almost 4,000 died during the crisis. So we know that the country is very cognizant of the dangers, as well as to the international community.

The U.S. Government has done quite a bit through USAID and other partners, including DOD. It was truly a whole-of-government approach that was used to stem the tide of this horrible scourge.

Since then, we have been working with post-recovery efforts, including expanding the global health security agenda. We are sampling animals to ensure that we know what kinds of diseases can be spread animal to human, both wild and domesticated. We have just rehabilitated 300 clinics which will serve some 1.7 million Sierra Leoneans to give them some basic health treatment as well. So we are working very closely with our international partners, as well as with the Sierra Leonean Government, and we will continue to encourage them to put more of their own national assets and resources towards health care as well.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Desrocher, we talked in my office about some of the challenges facing Algeria. Low oil prices have, obviously, affected their

revenues. What efforts are being made to diversify that economy? And how is the U.S. helping in that regard?

Mr. DESROCHER. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

You are right. Low oil prices have had an impact on Algeria's economy. It is traditionally an oil-dependent economy, but the government is looking to diversify that economy. It is very interested in foreign direct investment. That is something we are obviously interested in as well. A diverse economy is a more robust economy. That is certainly good for Algeria. It is also good for countries like us that want to work with Algeria.

We want to help with those reforms as Algeria moves forward with its own reform program. We have a Treasury Department technical advisor in Algiers working on issues like private debt management, and we are willing to look at how we might expand the way we cooperate with the Algerian Government in this economic reform area because we really think it would benefit both our countries. If confirmed, that is something I will certainly strongly encourage.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. If it is all right with you, Mr. Chairman, I am going to defer to Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for that, Senator Booker.

And congratulations to each of you. I am not on the Africa Subcommittee of FRC, but I am on the subcommittee that overseas Arab North Africa. I call it the subcommittee from Marrakech to Bangladesh. And so, Mr. Desrocher, my questions are going to be for you. But for all of you, congratulations both on your lengthy careers of service but also on these important nominations.

You referred in your opening testimony to new economic realities from Algeria without description. I assume you were referring primarily to low oil prices and how that has affected the country. And you responded a bit to the chair on that question.

But what are some other areas that you think the U.S. can be particularly helpful? Are there private investment opportunities, industries in the United States that might find promising opportunities in Algeria? What can we do to help them deal with that challenge?

Mr. DESROCHER. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I think there is a great deal that the United States can do to work with Algeria as it seeks to reform and diversify its economy. Obviously, American firms bring a great deal of expertise and technology across all sectors, and Algeria could really benefit from that. Algeria is anxious for foreign direct investment, and I think we can work with the Algerians to help build an environment that is more welcoming to foreign direct investment.

I mentioned the Treasury technical advisor that is there. That is something that we certainly think—he has only been there a short time, but it is already showing some fruit. I have worked in other countries where we have had programs from various parts of the U.S. Government that help countries that are looking to examine their domestic investment environment and look at ways to make it more attractive for private investment. And that is certainly

something that I would address with my Algerian counterparts, if confirmed, and be very ready to look for ways to move forward on.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that.

Share a little bit about your thoughts on how Algeria is dealing with anti-terrorism efforts. There was a Reuters report this morning that they had just broken up an ISIS cell that was headed by a former al Qaeda operative. And so there is this mixture of al Qaeda and ISIS elements in Algeria. It sounds like a good bit of investigative and intel work to break up the cell. But talk a little bit about the challenge they face and how they are dealing with it.

Mr. DESROCHER. Certainly, Senator. Thank you for the question.

Algeria has a great deal of experience in this area, and it has proven itself to be an effective counterterrorism partner for the United States. It does have some terrorism presence in the country, as you mentioned, but it has been effective at constraining that.

We work closely with the Algerians on counterterrorism and security issues. We have a number of assistance programs, not very large particularly, but we have a number of assistance programs that help with managing terrorist incidents, with forensics, with investigations, airport security, and issues like that. Certainly, if confirmed, that is something I would want to encourage because we have found thus far the Algerians to be a very willing and very effective counterterrorism partner.

Senator KAINE. We have a very strong ally next door to Algeria in Morocco. The relations between Morocco and Algeria have been very, very challenged over many years. There is a whole series of issues, including the Western Sahara.

Do you see any prospects based on your expertise and work in the area? Do you see any prospects for change in the Algeria-Morocco relationship so that there would be a cessation of challenges and stronger bilateral ties?

Mr. DESROCHER. Thank you, Senator.

You are right. The Algeria-Morocco relationship has certainly been a tense one for some time. It is something that we think is in the interest of both countries to try to find ways to work better together. If confirmed, that is something that I would certainly work on. There are definitely areas of cooperation in border security and drug smuggling and other issues, counterterrorism where the ability for those two countries to work together would really benefit them both and the wider region. And it is certainly something I would very eagerly work on.

Senator KAINE. Great.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And I appreciate your answers to those questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman.

Ms. Brewer, I first want to congratulate you so much on your nomination to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone. I am glad that your family, who I met earlier, could be here with you. Your husband Mark and your daughter Arina, a cute little 8-year-old right there—I am glad they are here as well.

So as many of you know, Ms. Brewer is a career member of the senior Foreign Service. She served as Deputy Chief of Mission at

our embassy in Nigeria. She also served in important positions at our embassy in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, as well as our consulate in Mumbai, India. You have valuable experience, Ms. Brewer, related to the Ebola crisis, as well as the Boko Haram and al Qaeda threats.

But most importantly to me, Ms. Brewer was born in Indiana and you earned your degree at Valparaiso University. Based on your status as a Hoosier and a tremendously qualified career member of the senior Foreign Service, I look forward to supporting your nomination and supporting your important work in Sierra Leone, once you are confirmed.

So, Ms. Brewer, I just want to touch on something in your prepared statement. You mentioned a number of development-related issues that will be important to the future of Sierra Leone, including good governance, rule of law, democratic institutions, economic sustainability, and anti-corruption measures. Which of these do you believe will be particularly important to the future of Sierra Leone and U.S. interests there?

Ms. BREWER. Thank you, Senator, for those remarks. And thank you for your acknowledgement of my status as a Hoosier. My husband and I are both proud Hoosiers. So it is really an honor for a girl from Portage, Indiana to eventually go and represent our country all over the world. It has been amazing. So thank you for that.

Regarding the various issues that face Sierra Leone, there are many and they have many deep challenges. I think one of the issues that I would like to focus on during my tenure, if confirmed, would be to help them create the economic and business climate where they can attract the business that they will need to truly advance. That includes issues of corruption. It includes issues of rule of law. Businesses need to know that when they go to have a contract to have a business, that the terms of that contract will be honored, that they will not be endlessly asked for a number of fees, other issues like that that will make it harder for them to attract the kind of business that they need.

Recently the embassy stood up an American business community to help U.S. entities doing business in Sierra Leone bring their issues forward to the government and help amplify those voices. But I think creating an environment that includes the respect for rule of law and respect for contracts and strong judicial bodies will help Sierra Leone advance the most quickly.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I am encouraged by that response. And increasingly our own country's development assistance programs, as you know better than I, are focused on helping countries graduate out of receiving development assistance. I know there are a number of opportunities in Sierra Leone to grow their economy amidst all the challenges that they face in that regard.

One of the things I think is really important from our standpoint is to make sure that we optimize our development enterprise. This is something I have been involved with with Senator Shaheen forming a bipartisan panel with CSIS, the think tank, and we have produced a report about how we can reform our development enterprise to support efforts like yours in Sierra Leone. So I would commend that to you, recommend you take a look at the website and

download the report. And I think a number of those recommendations will be incorporated in the forthcoming reforms we will see at USAID.

So thanks again to all of you for your interest in serving and for your service to date.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

I am told that we have a hard stop at 11:30 for this, but we will try to get through as quickly as possible.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. Senator Coons, please go ahead.

Senator COONS. Thanks, Senator Booker. I will be quite brief. Just two quick questions, if I might, to Mr. Raynor for your upcoming service, if successful, in Ethiopia.

Just talk to me briefly, if you would, about how you understand China's role in Ethiopia. I have some concerns about adoption and ongoing challenges that Delaware families and many others have in concluding adoption cases that had been open. And I would be interested if you could speak to those two topics just briefly.

Ambassador RAYNOR. Thank you very much, Senator.

China is certainly very active in Ethiopia, has identified Ethiopia as a preferred partner in Africa. I think that is most visible in infrastructure projects, work on the airport, work on the railroad connecting Addis to Djibouti, and in many other areas as well. It is an interesting dynamic. It is something that I think the U.S. Government needs to be cognizant of. And yet, I think that there is value in multiple donors and multiple points of engagement with a country like Ethiopia that has enormous potential. And I think it is incumbent on us to look at how we engage in ways that complement with other donors, including China. But I think it is clear that there is a strong and deep relationship between Ethiopia and China.

On adoption, that is of paramount concern to me, Senator. There are about 300 American families currently in the process of trying to adopt and have invested emotionally, time, resources, formed real connections with real children who are desperate for that connection and for the resources that they can gain from being adopted by loving American families.

The Ethiopian Government did suspend international adoptions in late April. The embassy immediately began engaging to resume those, receiving quite thoughtful and helpful engagement from the Ethiopian authorities to resume international adoptions. The 40 or so that had gone through the judicial process I understand have all gone through the entire process at this point, including the final documentation. About 250 other families are farther back in the pipeline. The government has engaged to continue processing those as well.

One of the challenges is that some of the early steps in the process take place at the regional level, and there is some variation in how the various regions are doing that.

So, if confirmed, I would continue to engage constructively with Ethiopia and to welcome their constructive engagement to see these cases through, but also to engage on the regional level to make sure that we are getting appropriate cooperation.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Raynor. Given the press of time, I will defer to the ranking member. Let me just in quick closing say McKinsey has recently issued a report about China's ascendancy across the continent, a trend that has been underway for a decade. I urge all of you to be active in promoting American exports and engagement with the continent. Thank you.

Thank you for the chance to question, Senator.

Senator FLAKE. Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. I have got about 3 minutes before they actually literally stop the cameras because of some wonderful non-bipartisanship in our Senate.

So, first of all, Ms. Brewer, I am very concerned about human trafficking concerns. Is there anything you can enlighten me as to how much of a focus that will be for you?

Ms. BREWER. Certainly. Thank you, sir.

I know that the U.S. Government has been engaging with the Government of Sierra Leone for several years on this issue, and in fact, we have been supporting through our Trafficking in Persons Office in the State Department—we have been supporting a women's shelter there for victims of trafficking. It is also heartening. I have learned that the government has laws against such acts. However, it has been some years since anyone has been prosecuted and jailed under these provisions of the criminal code. So that is something that I know that I will continue, if confirmed. I would continue to press for actual action and convictions against traffickers.

Senator BOOKER. I appreciate that, and anything you can highlight for us as a legislative body that we could be doing more on that issue and especially to help with Sierra Leone.

There were programs I was reading about in preparation for this about the Young Africa Leaders Initiative that Obama talked a lot about and funded very well. Do you have concerns about that not being funded in this next administration?

Ms. BREWER. I do not have specific information about what would or would not. I understand those conversations are still going on in terms of what the funding levels will finally be to the Department of State. So, of course, whatever the funding levels are, I will seek to be a good steward of U.S. taxpayer resources, to maximize them.

Sierra Leone, while a small country, has been able to benefit greatly from these programs, sending about a dozen young people to the U.S. for these training programs over the last several years every year in each program, both the YALI and the Mandela fellowship. So I think we really are maximizing our relationship as much as we can.

Peace Corps also has recently been reestablished. And over the years, there have been nearly 4,000 Peace Corps volunteers that have deployed to Sierra Leone, many of whom are back here in the U.S. and continue to keep Sierra Leone in their hearts.

So we have many avenues of engagement and YALI is a strong one, but I look forward to, if confirmed, continuing to maximize all of those.

Senator BOOKER. Great.

Mr. Raynor, really quickly, we just were hearing in our previous hearing, as you probably did, about the challenges between Ethiopia and Egypt, the conflict over the dam, as well as how that is playing out and the conflict that we are having in South Sudan. In the 120 seconds I have left, could you take up a third of that or two-thirds of that and give me a short answer?

Ambassador RAYNOR. Sure. Thank you, Senator.

I think the main issue being about the water rights and the dam. At the moment, it is incumbent on all countries to share the waters of the Nile, to work collaboratively on how that water gets used. I would, if confirmed, encourage Ethiopia to continue its consultative process in that regard and the launch of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in a manner that takes into account the interests of all those who share the water.

More generally, I think these are two very powerful and influential countries in the region, and everything they can do to communicate clearly and collegially with each other is in the interest of the regional stability and our own interests as well. So I would take every opportunity to encourage them to continue to be constructively forthright in their engagement with each other.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much. I am going to cut you off before the cameras cut off. I do not have time to ask you about Russian influence in Algeria, but maybe we can do that offline. And I am going to turn it over to the chairman to close us out.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you so much for your testimony. Thank you for your willingness to serve. We are always well served by our career diplomats.

This hearing is so short that Senator Coons did not even have to talk about chicken exports to Africa. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. But anyway, with the thanks of the committee, we look forward to the business meeting.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. MICHAEL RAYNOR BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have sought to contribute meaningfully to the promotion of human rights and democracy throughout my career. As Assistant Chief of Mission in Afghanistan, I directed U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and State International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) programs that increased girls' enrollment in primary and secondary schools, improved access to basic health services, and increased women's enrollment in public universities. I worked closely with USAID to launch the "Promote" program to strengthen Afghan women's participation in civil society, the economy, and decision-making positions within the Afghan Government. Also in Kabul, I helped resolve missteps by Afghan partners that threatened to curtail U.S. Government capacity-building in justice and corrections, ensuring continued U.S. engagement to improve Afghan rule of law and prison conditions. I worked closely with Afghan counterparts to bolster their commitment to democracy, chairing the U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Commission working group on

democracy and governance that elicited strong Afghan commitments to strengthening democratic institutions and practices.

As Chief of Mission in Benin, my close rapport with the then-President enabled me to counter negative tendencies that threatened media crackdowns, divisive constitutional amendments, and other potentially anti-democratic actions. I helped strengthen Benin's respect for human rights, with a particular focus on gender equality. I elicited greater Beninese commitments and resources to combat trafficking in persons, launched USAID and Peace Corps projects to counter violence against women, and supported greater female access to education, health care, and business opportunities. I beefed up U.S. engagement to improve Beninese labor conditions, to resettle the last refugees in Benin, to tackle HIV/AIDS along transportation routes, and to support disability rights. I strengthened U.S. interagency engagement in Benin to professionalize the country's judiciary by enhancing its responsiveness and transparency and countering judicial corruption. I provided strong support to Benin's traditions of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence, while developing an innovative interagency program to prevent violent extremism in the face of extremist threats immediately across Benin's borders.

As Zimbabwe desk officer during the height of Zimbabwe's economic, political, and humanitarian crisis, I helped preserve Economic Support Funding for Zimbabwe's civil society and worked to ensure that U.S. sanctions focused on the corrupt Zimbabwean elite without worsening the hardships of average Zimbabweans. This included fostering a compromise to allow a pilot U.S. feeding program for Zimbabweans who had been excluded from assistance because they had been resettled onto commercial farmland seized by the Zimbabwean Government.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. In the past year, the most significant challenges to human rights and democracy in Ethiopia included excessive use of force by state authorities to silence dissent, arbitrary arrests, politically motivated prosecutions, and continued restrictions on free speech, assembly and other activities of civil society and non-governmental organizations. If confirmed, I will work with the Ethiopian people and government to open political space, to advocate for full implementation of the Ethiopians' constitutionally-guaranteed rights, political freedoms, civil liberties and due process, and to promote reforms that strengthen democratic institutions. I will make the case that adhering to its own constitutionally guaranteed rights and basic freedoms will enhance Ethiopia's stability and further support its sustainable development goals and ability to act as a bulwark against the spread of violent extremism in the region. I will also argue that an empowered civil society can and would be an important ally for a government that prides itself on good governance. My goal will be to convince the Ethiopian Government that forward progress in democratic development serves its own interests as well as the interests of the Ethiopian people.

Question 3. 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 the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The main obstacles to achieving progress on these areas are laws and policies that run counter to the Ethiopian Government's stated goals of political reform and democratic development, and that in some cases violate constitutionally protected rights. In particular, I am concerned by the continued use of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, and more recently the state of emergency, to silence journalists, activists, and opposition voices. Also, the 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation ("CSO law") has placed restrictions on funding for non-governmental organizations, which makes it extremely difficult for well-intentioned Ethiopians to sustainably operate civil society organizations, thereby undercutting their ability to channel popular grievances into proposals for policy solutions. If confirmed, I plan to engage in frank discussions with Ethiopian officials about how long-term stability comes through the protection of human rights and democratic governance.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will meet with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations. I will encourage the Ethiopian Government to seek input from a broad range of viewpoints, including civil society. I will also advocate for the protection and defense of human rights.

If confirmed, I will make certain the Embassy continues to rigorously implement Leahy vetting to ensure that U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training to Ethiopian peacekeepers in Somalia and South Sudan under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, require specific human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in peacekeeping operations in which Ethiopia participates. I will do the same for rule of law programs with the police. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Ethiopian people.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Ethiopia?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will work hard to ensure that the rule of law is respected in Ethiopia, including the Ethiopian Constitution, which not only guarantees basic human rights but also enshrines a wide range of other rights. I have very real concerns regarding reports that there are a number of cases where these rights are infringed by violations of due process and political interference, including with regard to members of the political opposition. It is important to urge the government to follow due process for trial proceedings, to refrain from appealing acquittals pronounced by Ethiopian courts, and to protect the rights of anyone who is accused of committing a crime.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to advocate for the respect of fundamental human rights to include the freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, and advocate for persons unjustly detained by the Government.

Question 6. Will you engage with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consider human rights and democracy advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job and will engage with the Ethiopian Government. I will make support for human rights, civil rights, and good governance key elements of my engagement with the Ethiopian Government across the full range of issues. Ethiopia stands to benefit greatly in all areas when its people are empowered, informed, and have trust in the rule of law.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As a management-coned Foreign Service officer who has managed diverse teams throughout my career, I am a strong believer in the value of diversity in the workplace and have sought to create supportive and inclusive workplaces in each of my assignments. In my current capacity as Director of the State Department's Office of Career Development and Counseling, I oversee the Department's Continuity Counseling operation, which exists to support and promote the success of underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa has active and accessible Equal Opportunity (EEO) and Federal Women's Program (FWP) operations, programs, and outreach, and I

will ensure that EEO and FWPC counselors at the Embassy are properly trained and afforded sufficient time in the workplace to perform these important functions. I will ensure that the Embassy has formal, structured mentorship programs and will be attentive to ensuring that each member of the Embassy team has every chance for personal growth and professional success. In my own behavior, I will model a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. I will ensure that the employee evaluation process is rigorously followed, including formal and documented counseling sessions throughout each performance period, so that employees receive timely and constructive feedback on their performance and have structured opportunities to raise with their supervisors any workplace concerns or impediments to success.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will speak publicly and regularly, including in Town Hall and Country Team meetings, about my own commitment to diversity and inclusion and my expectations that all members of the Embassy team will experience and sustain an inclusive and supportive workplace. I will require all supervisors to promote an inclusive, supportive, and ethical workplace. I will encourage that the performance evaluations of all supervisors comment on the supervisor's success in valuing diversity and promoting inclusion, and will recognize and commend efforts among supervisors to value diversity and foster inclusion. I will ensure that supervisors are cognizant of EEO principles and rules, and held accountable for respecting them. I will ensure prompt engagement, and corrective action when warranted, on any expressions of concern that the Embassy workplace does not value diversity or promote inclusion.

Question 12. The U.S. and Ethiopia began a human rights working group to follow up on the commitments the Ethiopian Government made to improve in the areas of democracy and human rights as a result of the President's visit to Ethiopia in July 2015. Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Tom Malinowski traveled to Ethiopia several during the remainder of the Obama administration to participate in the working group, and met with both the Prime Minister and other high ranking officials to discuss U.S. concerns, and proposed setting up a civil society fund for Ethiopia which is exempt from the 10 percent cap on foreign funding imposed by the 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation.

- What is the status of the working group? When was the last meeting? Who is currently participating on behalf of the United States?
- What is the status of the proposal to set up a civil society fund? How much has the United States contributed and what organizations are being funded?
- If confirmed, what will you do as Ambassador to secure agreement to the advance the aforementioned initiatives?

Answer. The U.S. Government and the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) maintain a bilateral Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights Working Group, which most recently met on December 15, 2016. Then-Assistant Secretary Malinowski, Chargé d'Affaires Peter man, and Ethiopian Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu were the co-Chairs of those discussions. Typically these working group meetings are held annually. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to hold these meetings as they provide a proven platform in which both sides can speak candidly.

It is my understanding that the Embassy consistently advocates for more open and inclusive political and civil space in Ethiopia, including a loosening of restrictions on civil society and greater tolerance for opposition views. Our Embassy has consistently engaged in this space through a variety of mechanisms. My understanding is that the Government of Ethiopia has our proposal on the Civil Society Fund but has yet to provide an answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will make the case that adhering to its own constitutionally guaranteed rights and basic freedoms will enhance Ethiopia's stability and further support its sustainable development goals. I will assert that this adherence will serve to strengthen the Government of Ethiopia's ability to act as a bulwark against the spread of violent extremism in the region. I will also argue that an empowered civil society can and would be an important ally for a government that prides itself on good governance. My goal will be to convince the Ethiopian Government that forward progress in democratic development serves its own interests as well as the interests of the Ethiopian people. To achieve this, I will leverage the tools available through USAID and State to continue to advocate for space for NGOs to operate freely as a feature of any democratic and law-based society.

Question 13. The United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, who visited in May, was reportedly denied access to the Oromia and Amhara regions the locations

of widespread popular protests in 2015 and 2016 that resulted in hundreds dead and tens of thousands detained.

- Has the Government of Ethiopia granted the High Commissioner or U.N. Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association access to Oromia or Amhara? What concrete steps can you take, if confirmed, to encourage the Government of Ethiopia to provide such access?
- Will you commit to ensuring that you and your embassy staff attempt to regularly visit if you are confirmed?

Answer. The High Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein traveled to Ethiopia in May but did not get to Oromia or Amhara. During his three day visit, by his own account he met with government officials, spoke to the press, and advocated for greater and freer civic space. He appealed to the Government of Ethiopia to grant U.N. human rights officials access to areas that experienced unrest. He also expressed interest in returning to Ethiopia in 2018. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will speak frankly and openly with the Government of Ethiopia about the value of hosting visits by the U.N. bodies. The Embassy staff in Addis Ababa maintains a robust and active tradition of traveling throughout the country as part of our ongoing outreach and engagement with the people of Ethiopia. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to uphold this tradition including in Oromia and Amhara regions.

Question 14. When is the last time the State Department conducted a review of security assistance to Ethiopia? If none has been conducted when will one be? If one has been conducted, when will that review be shared with Congress?

Answer. The Departments of State and Defense regularly conduct a review of security assistance to all recipient countries. This is also the case for Ethiopia. The Departments of State and Defense conducted a review of security assistance to Ethiopia in the fall of 2016. The review was completed earlier this year. These exercises form the basis for future decision-making and provide useful context. It is my understanding that the Department can provide a classified briefing regarding the current security assistance to Ethiopia. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will be a steward of our assistance programs and fully comply with our standards and regulations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO MARIA E. BREWER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have sought to support human rights, strengthen the rights of women, and reinforce principles of democracy. When I served as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Nigeria from 2013–2016, we pressed for peaceful, transparent, and democratic national elections in 2015. We did so in numerous ways, from supporting the work of Nigeria's Independent National Election Commission (INEC) with technical advice and providing independent election observers, to working with the major parties to reinforce the need for the parties to cooperate with INEC, to reinforcing on a daily basis the message of violence-free elections, including the potential of personal sanctions against anyone who would foment violence. In the end, Nigeria experienced a peaceful transition of power from the ruling party to the former opposition party, a first in its history as a democratic nation.

At the same time, my staff and I at the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria ensured that we scrupulously carried out Leahy vetting to ensure that our support to military and law enforcement bodies only reached those with a clean human rights record. We pressed the Nigerian Government to strengthen its broader human rights record, reinforcing that respect for human rights would support its armed forces in its fight against Boko Haram. We noted that security is a multidisciplinary endeavor, requiring coordinated engagement by all aspects of federal, state, and local governments, as well as civil society. We addressed issues of accountability, stating that the United States remains ready to support Nigeria and its security services as the country fulfills its responsibilities with restraint and impartiality.

When Boko Haram carried out the horrific kidnapping of 276 young women from a secondary school in the town of Chibok, the worldwide public outcry included a major social media movement, #BringBackOurGirls. I coordinated and focused the efforts of multiple U.S. agencies addressing the crisis. We brought in an interagency team of experts representing a wide variety of skill sets. I ensured that U.S. efforts were closely coordinated, internally and with Nigerian and international partners.

We focused on both the immediate crisis and on finding longer-term solutions to the underlying causes. I coordinated activities, reviewed policy imperatives, and leveraged resources to maximum effect. Working as one team, our military, intelligence, humanitarian, strategic communications, and law enforcement representatives shared information and created strategies. I was honored to lead a complex interagency U.S. Government response to a crisis with significant political, security, and public diplomacy dimensions. While not all of the girls have been returned to their families, our work supported survivors as they were rescued, made their way to safety, or were released through negotiation.

During my tenure, Nigeria passed comprehensive Anti-Trafficking in Persons legislation in 2015. In 2014, we successfully nominated Beatrice Jedy-Agba, Executive Secretary of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), to receive recognition as a "TIP Report Hero Acting to End Modern Slavery," thanks to her efforts to fight human trafficking. Additionally, I spoke out against violence against women and children, including during my annual participation in the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the ensuing 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence.

Throughout my career, as a Management Officer entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing our Human Resources operations in both domestic and overseas environments, I reinforced the need for scrupulous adherence to U.S. and local labor laws, including support for Equal Employment Opportunity principles.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Sierra Leone? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Sierra Leone? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. As a member of the U.N. Human Rights Council, Sierra Leone has a strong record of voting with the United States, including on contentious country-specific resolutions. Nonetheless, a number of human rights challenges remain. Among the most significant are: abusive treatment by police, prolonged detention and imprisonment, harsh prison conditions, widespread corruption, lack of access to justice, violence against women, culturally-entrenched female genital mutilation, child abuse, societal discrimination against LGBTI persons, trafficking in persons, and child labor. As noted in the 2016 Human Rights Report, constraints on freedom of speech and expression remain. Government officials have used the criminal libel provision in the Public Order Act of 1965 to harass journalists and members of civil society who have expressed views critical of the Government, although no one has been convicted under the libel provisions for many years.

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize to the Sierra Leone Government the importance of holding free, fair, and peaceful elections in March 2018. I would reinforce the importance of freedom of expression as a fundamental freedom for a democratic society in my dialogue with the Government, politicians, and press contacts. The embassy has strongly advocated for free, fair, timely, and peaceful elections. If confirmed, I would do the same.

Question 3. 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 Sierra Leone in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Extreme poverty in Sierra Leone has impacted all aspects of society. Lack of technical capacity and resources have created an environment in which corruption has taken root, reducing the Sierra Leone Government's ability to address many of the country's problems.

Nevertheless, the Government of Sierra Leone has made efforts to address such issues. President Koroma declared his support for human rights. The U.S. Government is supporting the Government of Sierra Leone to professionalize security forces, combat human trafficking, improve judicial processes, address official impunity and corruption, empower women, and protect the human rights of marginalized groups including disabled individuals and individuals in the LGBT community. Since 2009, the U.S. Government has provided $1.7 million to help operationalize Sierra Leone's Transnational Organized Crime Unit through specialized training, mentorship, and provision of equipment. Additionally, the Embassy has provided oversight to the "Promoting Transparency in Sierra Leone's Judiciary" project, which has drafted modern bail and sentencing guidelines to combat corruption, promote transparency, and greater credibility in the judiciary and law enforcement, and alleviate prison overcrowding. The Embassy is also implementing a $1.1 million "From Prisons to Corrections" project to help Sierra Leone's Corrections Services antiquated prison system become a modern corrections service that conforms to international human rights standards.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Sierra Leone? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. I will encourage the Sierra Leonean Government to seek input from a broad range of viewpoints, including civil society. I will advocate for the protection and defense of human rights.

If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Embassy continues to rigorously implement Leahy vetting regarding U.S. security assistance, security cooperation, and law enforcement activities. The U.S. Embassy, with Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics, and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) funding, is implementing a prison reform program to improve prison conditions to meet international human rights standards. The "Promoting Transparency in Sierra Leone's Judiciary" project has produced modern bail and sentencing guidelines to address problems relating to prolonged detention, abuses relating to the granting of bail, and alleviate prison overcrowding. This, along with other programs, will result in strengthening Sierra Leone's justice system and corrections service. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that support for any and all security endeavors is made carefully, and under strict adherence to the Leahy Law.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Sierra Leone to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Sierra Leone?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advocate for fair and equal treatment for all under Sierra Leonean law. We are sensitive to concerns from opposition political parties and civil society groups that some political figures have been unjustly targeted and arrested, but as noted in the 2016 Human Rights Report, there are no political prisoners in Sierra Leone.

During the upcoming 2018 Sierra Leonean election season, if confirmed, I will reiterate the U.S. Government's support for inclusive campaigning, and our expectation that Sierra Leonean authorities will allow for the free exchange of diverse opinions.

Question 6. Will you engage with Sierra Leone on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to engage Sierra Leonean leadership on matters of human rights and good governance. I will encourage credible, free, timely, and peaceful elections in March 2018. I will continue to advocate for adherence to international humanitarian law. If confirmed, I will engage with the full range of Sierra Leonean society regarding the importance of upholding human rights and democratic freedoms, to include the right of all registered candidates to campaign freely and safely.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Sierra Leone?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. Throughout my Foreign Service career, I have served as a mentor to many of my fellow staff, a role that I hold of the utmost importance for the development of the next generation of leaders. Most recently, as Deputy Chief of Mission

to the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, I managed a formal mentoring program that included a wide range of events intended to assist first and second tour staff with learning about the Foreign Service and enhance their future careers. Such programs are extremely valuable, and my intention would be to establish a mentoring program at all of my future postings. I also believe in making myself available to hear the concerns and answer the questions of all my staff, both U.S. and local employees, at all levels.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I believe that senior managers must first themselves be model actors that foster inclusivity and respect for diverse backgrounds. As a Hispanic female Management coned officer from an under-represented part of the country myself, I appreciate the need for respecting all kinds of diversity in our work force. As the most senior U.S. Government official at the U.S. Embassy in Sierra Leone, I would require that all who report to me would demonstrate the same kind of respect for each other. I would encourage Embassy staff to remain open and willing to learn from each other and from our host nation, modeling the best aspects of diplomacy to all.

Question 12. Sierra Leone's general elections are next slated for March 2018. The country's constitution provides for two five-year terms limit for the president. President Ernest Bai Koroma and his supporters have repeatedly denied he intends to run for a third term. However, rumors persist that he intends to do so.

- If confirmed as Ambassador, what will you discourage any possible attempts by Koroma to run for a third term?
- What will you do, if confirmed, to help promote the transition of power through free, fair and on-time elections?

Answer. While it is the responsibility of the Sierra Leonean Government to enforce their laws fairly, Embassy Freetown has advocated for free, fair, timely, and peaceful elections every time our diplomats have met with the Sierra Leonean leadership, opposition candidates, non-governmental actors, journalists, and ordinary citizens. If confirmed, I would continue to promote the transition of power through free, fair and on-time elections. The embassy has welcomed President Koroma's personal assurances that he will not seek a third term and that he will not try to change the constitution in order to stay in power, and we expect that he will adhere to his promise. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to engage, pointing out the importance of strengthening respect for the constitution and democracy in maintaining peace.

Question 13. Civil society groups in Sierra Leone are playing important roles in promoting good governance and community participation in government decision-making. The opposition also plays a role in defining the political and social landscape of any country.

- If confirmed, what steps do you intend to take to ensure that there is an appropriate understanding of opposition and civil society viewpoints in developing U.S. diplomatic strategic goals?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I would make a priority of engaging with the Government and civil society to reinforce personal responsibility and accountability in the actions of individuals and government officials. The U.S. Government is building on efforts of civil society engagement and if confirmed as Ambassador, I will support several initiatives to promote more female aspirants to run for national, district, and local positions; to assist the media in holding issue-based public policy debates; and to provide pre-election monitors to keep watch over potential flash points where there is a heightened potential for conflicts turning violent in the lead-up to and immediately following the elections.

Question 14. Sierra Leone is a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Sierra Leone has been designated a Tier 2 country since 2013 in the Trafficking in Persons Report published by the State Department. (Prior to 2012 it was a Tier 2 Watchlist country.)

- If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that the Government of Sierra Leone takes concrete steps to implement its 2015–2020 national action plan to counter trafficking?
- What will you do if confirmed, to direct appropriate USG efforts towards helping Sierra Leone address the recommendations outlined in the report, including, but not limited to, improving prosecutorial and legislative responses to trafficking cases? Is the United States currently funding specific programs and activities aimed at addressing corruption in the Judiciary, or training prosecutors

and judges to investigate and prosecute trafficking as recommended in the TIP report?

Answer. The Government of Sierra Leone does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. As such, the U.S. has commended the Government's efforts in a resource-scarce environment to identify trafficking victims, refer them to services, and fund repatriation for 25 Sierra Leonean trafficking victims exploited abroad. The U.S. Government continues to engage with the Government of Sierra Leone on trafficking issues. Since 2013, the U.S. Government has invested $1.2 million to provide shelter and care to victims of trafficking in Freetown. The project is currently focused on building capacity within the Sierra Leonean Government to budget for trafficking victim services and administer the shelter in the capital. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will maintain communication with key stakeholders on human trafficking in Sierra Leone, including government officials, NGOs, and civil society, to make progress combatting human trafficking and to ensure that the Government of Sierra Leone takes concrete steps to implement its 2015–2020 national action plan to counter trafficking.

If confirmed, I would also continue to engage with the Government of Sierra Leone on strengthening their state institutions and implementing legislation to empower existing entities to establish a culture where corruption is not tolerated in the judiciary. Starting in June 2012, a U.S. attorney began intermittently mentoring officials in the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to impart knowledge and skills to prosecute public corruption cases. Since then, the ACC has pursued several new cases of corruption. The Embassy has also provided oversight to the highly successful $1.5 million Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement-funded Promoting Transparency in Sierra Leone's Judiciary project, which has drafted modern state-of-the art bail and sentencing guidelines, to combat corruption and promote transparency in the judiciary and law enforcement.

Question 15. More than 15 years after the end of the civil war, and despite recent efforts to combat corruption, Sierra Leone continues to face governance and corruption challenges.

- What programs and activities is the United States currently engaged in to combat corruption? What more could the U.S. be doing in this area?
- If confirmed, how do you intend to undertake the actions referenced in the previous answer?

Answer. Despite its successful post-conflict reconstruction efforts and three consecutive credible national and local elections, Sierra Leone must continue to address serious development challenges. This includes entrenched corruption and a culture of impunity. The prerequisite for improving the country's human rights situation is political stability and a shift in the culture of impunity that prevails. The United States and other donor nations engage with the Government of Sierra Leone to strengthen its state institutions and implement legislation to empower existing entities to establish a culture where corruption is not tolerated.

If confirmed, I would leverage our bilateral relationship and assistance to press for enhanced transparency in government, increased public awareness of reporting mechanisms for corruption, and robust efforts to investigate and prosecute corruption.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JOHN DESROCHER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have endeavored to help counterpart governments in the Middle East build effective, responsive institutions that value and support the full spectrum of human rights.

During my work on Iraq in both Baghdad and Washington, I pressed the Iraqi Government to adequately protect Mujaheddin e Khalq (MEK) members under threat in Iraq. While the MEK did suffer from attacks, most MEK members were later safely evacuated from Iraq. While I was Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad, I had a leading role in the U.S. Government response to ISIS attacks on Iraq's Yazidi community after the fall of Mosul.

Supporting Tunisia's democratic transition following its Arab Spring revolution was central to my tenure as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Maghreb. U.S. as-

sistance played a critical role in helping Tunisia hold its 2014 Presidential and parliamentary elections, the first since the revolution. Our support to the elections commission, civil society, candidates, and political parties enabled a free and fair process. My frequent engagements with civil society actors in subsequent visits to Tunisia reinforced U.S. commitment to human rights and Tunisia's democratic transition.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in Algeria include restrictions on the freedom of assembly, lack of judicial independence, and limitations on civil society, religious freedom, and the media. If confirmed, I will prioritize the promotion of human rights in Algeria. I will work closely with Algerian leaders to press for progress on this important issue. The State Department's annual Human Rights reports remain one of our most effective tools in highlighting human rights issues around the world. Our report regularly garners press attention in Algeria and is studied carefully by NGOs and other groups working on human rights issues in Algeria.

Question 3. 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 the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. While domestic and foreign NGOs operate openly in Algeria, the country's Law on Associations imposes a cumbersome registration process and limits on foreign financing. I understand the Government is revising the law and, if confirmed, I will encourage the Government to take into account the views of civil society as it moves forward with the reforms.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to continuing my predecessors' tradition of meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and in Algeria. Our embassy in Algiers routinely meets with local NGOs to learn about alleged human rights abuses and hear their views on how the United States can be even more effective in advancing human rights in Algeria.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria?

Answer. If confirmed, I stand ready to engage with the Algerian Government on cases involving political prisoners and other unjustly detained people.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our strong compliance with the Leahy Law and maintain robust vetting procedures.

Question 7. Will you engage with Algerians on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make promoting human and civil rights and governance one of my highest priorities. In addition to promoting human rights for its own sake, encouraging Algeria to uphold such commitments underpins nearly every pillar of our bilateral relationship.

Question 8. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 10. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Algeria?

Answer. No.

Question 11. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. My tenure with the Foreign Service has given me the opportunity to manage teams of talented individuals from diverse backgrounds. If confirmed, I will firmly uphold equal employment opportunity laws and will work to ensure that all of my colleagues, regardless of background, have the opportunity to grow professionally and pursue positions of leadership in the State Department and throughout the U.S. Government.

Question 12. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that all supervisors take mandatory EEO training and strictly adhere to related laws and policies. I will emphasize the necessity of transparency, fairness, and inclusivity when making hiring decisions, my assessment of my subordinates' performance will include evaluation of their commitment to diversity, and I will take immediate corrective action if I learn of any incident that does not reflect the value the United States and the State Department place on diversity and respect for all.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:03 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson [presiding], Gardner, Murphy, Shaheen, and Kaine.

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

Senator JOHNSON. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We are holding this hearing today to consider the nomination of Stephen B. King of Wisconsin to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

I certainly want to welcome Steve and his family. I want to congratulate you on your selection by the President and thank you for your willingness to serve this Nation. I want to thank your family for the sacrifice they will be making as well, because you will be pretty busy.

Although I am chairing this hearing because Steve is a fellow Wisconsinite who I have come to know over the last 6 or 7 years, I would like to offer a few words on his behalf.

Steve is a prominent public servant and businessman, a natural leader, and a patriot. Steve was born in Indianapolis and raised in Chicago. He eventually settled in Janesville, Wisconsin—we have heard of that city before now with Speaker Ryan, also his hometown—and his wife, Karen, and their three children.

Early in his career, Steve investigated civil rights violations in Jackson, Mississippi, for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and then served as an investigator for the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. He later became special assistant to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, serving as liaison between the USDA and the Agriculture Committees of the House and the Senate.

Steve left Washington in 1976 to become the director of alumni and development at his alma mater, Western Illinois University. In 1979, he entered the business world and led a management buyout of Tomah Products, and later founded King Capital, a successful private investment firm.

Active in the Boy Scouts of America his entire life, Steve is a recipient of the Silver Buffalo award, the organization's highest volunteer award for work at the national level.

Steve's success in public and private sectors is a reflection of his strong interpersonal skills, a key understanding of governance and leadership, and his personal integrity.

His extensive experience and willingness to serve causes greater than himself make him ideally suited to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic. I support Steve's nomination and urge my colleagues to support him as well.

With that, I would like to recognize our ranking member, Senator Murphy.

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

Senator MURPHY. Welcome, Mr. King. I look forward to hearing your testimony. Congratulations on your nomination.

This is an important hearing, given the fact that the Czech Republic is a crucial ally, one that has supported U.S. policy of making sure that Russia understands the consequences that come with invading a neighboring country and trying to influence elections in and around the region, but also a country that has strong economic ties to Russia, also pulls and tugs that come from the business community to find a different way.

We have had a very, very strong bilateral relationship, a history of very strong Ambassadors in that post, and I know you come with a strong endorsement of the chairman of the committee. I look forward to hearing your testimony and engaging in some dialogue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Now we will turn to the nominee's opening statement.

Mr. King?

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN B. KING OF WISCONSIN, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Mr. KING. Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, thank you for taking the time to meet with me this morning, and for considering my nomination to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

Let me also thank you, Chairman, for your kind introduction, your service to the country, your leadership of the European Subcommittee, and your shared devotion to the Green Bay Packers.

I appear before you today humbled by President Trump's nomination of me to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic, an unwavering ally in the heart of the European continent.

Prague may be far from my own upbringing in the heart of America's Midwest in Indiana, where I was born on the Fourth of July, and in Wisconsin, where I lived and worked for most of life. But in many ways, it is that not much different.

International affairs and government service have been both trademarks of my professional life. I began my career as a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and then investigated public corruption on behalf of this institution, the United States

Senate. I eventually used my skills and expertise to create innovative businesses that provide many good jobs to many people in southern Wisconsin.

As Karen, my wife of 54 years, and I found success in Wisconsin, I now had the opportunity to give back to that community. Our shared belief in the American Dream continues to grow.

Our three grown children, Kristen, Steve Jr., and Russ, have been our greatest source of pride, along with our seven grandchildren.

It was not that long ago that the Velvet Revolution ended the Soviet occupation of then-Czechoslovakia, and the first democratic elections in over 40 years were held in 1990. I will never forget the awe-inspiring moment when the philosopher poet Vaclav Havel was finally elected President after fighting against tyranny his entire life.

If confirmed, I would view my Ambassador role as a facilitator of the natural alliance that has grown between our citizens and the fiercely independent Czech people. As an indispensable NATO partner and ally, the Czechs have gone the distance in our strategy to defeat ISIS and have supported sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

In line with President Trump's expectation, the Czech Republic should endeavor to increase the percent of its GDP devoted to defense, strengthening the NATO alliance and our bilateral military and intelligence cooperation.

The Czech Republic is to be commended for its sacrifices for the good of the alliance, and I look forward to working with them on behalf of Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis.

However, as I suspect the committee knows, the once-resolute and indelible imprint of democracy spreading across Central Europe in the 1990s has given way in some quarters to current skepticism and self-doubt, where longtime opponents of freedom deliberately seek to undermine and devolve democratic values and economic freedoms into question marks.

Today, we need to reaffirm our commitment to allies like the Czech Republic and make clear that the United States is dedicated to the democratic values we espouse here at home.

The United States and the Czech Republic share a unique and lasting bond of history, from the vision of an independent Czechoslovakia spelled out in Pittsburgh in the Pittsburgh Agreement almost 100 years ago—their celebration will be in the year 2018 of 100 years of independence in Czechoslovakia—to the post-communist vision and leadership of Vaclav Havel, whose bust now stands in the U.S. Capitol.

If confirmed, I will work to sustain our countries' historic ties and expand the people-to-people connections that are crucial to that relationship. Like us, the Czechs have proven they know democracy and economic freedom require daily attention and renewal. Soon, I hope to meet a Czech deputy or even a senior minister who has spent his or her entire life free of the bonds of tyranny that still haunt their parents and grandparents in the Czech Republic.

The foundation beneath our bond between our countries is cast in steel, this steel of shared values: hard, honest work; independent thinking; and fidelity to the commitments that we make.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I pledge to this committee and the American people that I will work hard, stay honest, speak my mind, but always uphold the promises of our Nation.

At the end of our service, if I am confirmed, when Karen and I get ready to fly home, I will measure my performance against a few yardsticks. First, did I break anything in the residence? Secondly, have we upgraded our partnership across-the-board? And, thirdly, did I serve the hardworking, patriotic team at Embassy Prague well as a leader, a manager, and a supervisor, and did I equip them to better serve our country?

I pledge to each of you to keep these questions at the forefront of my mind, particularly the last two, to strengthen our partnership with the Czech people to advance our shared values and our strategic interests in Europe and around the world.

Thank you, Senators, for your consideration. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[Mr. King's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEPHEN B. KING

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy and members of the committee—thank you for taking the time to meet with me this morning, and for considering my nomination to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

I appear before you today humbled by President Trump's nomination of me to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic, an unwavering American ally in the heart of the European continent. Prague may be far from my own upbringing in the heart of America's Midwest, in Indiana where I was born on the Fourth of July, and Wisconsin, where I lived and worked for most of life. But it my mind, and in the hearts of many Americans and Czechs, both are part of the same common cultural foundation upon which many of our shared values are based.

International affairs and government service have both been trademarks of my professional life. I began my career as a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, investigating public corruption on behalf of this institution—the United States Senate. I eventually used my skills and expertise to create innovative businesses that provided good jobs to many of the hardworking people in southern Wisconsin. As Karen, my wife of 54 years, and I found success there and had the opportunity to give back to that community, our shared belief in the American Dream continued to grow.

Our three grown children, Kristen, Steve Jr. and Russ have been our greatest source of pride, along with our seven grandchildren.

It was not that long ago that the Velvet Revolution ended Soviet occupation of then-Czechoslovakia, and the first democratic elections in over 40 years were held in 1990. I will never forget the awe-inspiring moment when the philosopher-poet Vaclav Havel was finally elected President after fighting against tyranny his entire life.

If confirmed, I would view my role as Ambassador as a facilitator of the natural alliance that has grown between our citizens and the fiercely independent Czech people.

As an indispensable NATO partner and ally, the Czechs have gone the distance in our strategy to defeat ISIS and have supported sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. In line with President Trump's expectation, the Czech Republic should endeavor to increase the percent of its GDP devoted to defense, strengthening the NATO alliance and our bilateral military and intelligence cooperation. The Czech Republic is to be commended for its sacrifices for the good of the Alliance, and I look forward to working with them on behalf of the President and Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis.

As the committee knows, the once-resolute and indelible imprint of democracy spreading across central Europe in the 1990s has given way in some quarters to a current of skepticism and self-doubt, where longtime opponents of freedom deliberately seek to undermine and devolve democratic values and economic freedoms into question-marks. Today, we need to reaffirm our commitment to allies like the Czech Republic, and make clear that the United States is dedicated to the democratic values we espouse at home.

Fortunately, our partnership with our Czech allies is a great asset in opposing this trend. If there is one thing I instantly understood learning from (former) Amb. Richard Graber about America's relationship with the Czech Republic, it is that we have both invested our reputations and resources in the idea that freedom and free markets will create the most just and prosperous societies ever imagined.

The United States and the Czech Republic share a unique and lasting bond of history—from the vision of an independent Czechoslovakia spelled out in the Pittsburgh Agreement almost 100 years ago, to the post-communist vision and leadership of Vaclav Havel whose bust stands in the U.S. Capitol. If confirmed, I will work to sustain our countries' historic ties and expand the people-to-people connections that are crucial to our relationship.

Like us, the Czechs have proven they know democracy and economic freedom require daily attention and renewal. Soon I expect to meet a Czech deputy—or even a senior minister who has spent his or her entire life free of the bonds of tyranny that still haunt their parents' memories. As a younger cadre of leaders rise in the Czech Republic, we will embrace our longstanding responsibility to recognize and assist them, whether through sponsored exchanges or merely by making introductions to their American counterparts.

The foundation beneath our bond is cast in the steel of shared values: Hard, honest work, independent thinking, and fidelity to the commitments we make. If confirmed as Ambassador, I pledge to this committee and the American people that I will work hard, stay honest, speak my mind, but always uphold our promises as a nation.

At the end of our service if I am confirmed, when Karen and I get ready to fly home, I will measure my performance against a few yardsticks. Have we upgraded our partnership across the board? And, did I serve the hardworking, patriotic team at Embassy Prague well as a leader, manager, and supervisor, and did I equip them to better serve our country? I pledge to each of you to keep these questions at the forefront of my mind to strengthen our partnership with the Czech people, to advance our shared values and our strategic interests in Europe and around the world.

Thank you, Senators, for your consideration. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. King. I would remind you that being a Green Bay Packer fan will get you a few votes in the Senate—more than two. We have quite a few fans. It is everybody's second team.

Mr. KING. As long as Aaron Rodgers stays healthy.

Senator JOHNSON. Can you just, for me, lay out your top priorities. If confirmed and you assume the ambassadorship, what are the top two or three things you are really going to be focusing on?

Mr. KING. I think the first and foremost thing, Mr. Chairman, is obviously the security of any and all American personnel in the country, starting, of course, with our Embassy staff, any ex-pats residing in the country, and then certainly, of course, any citizen of our country that is visiting in the country.

Secondly, I view myself as a business person, and I would like to be an ambassador that is somewhat business-centric, if you will. So my hope is to build on what is already a pretty good economic relationship with the Czech Republic.

And thirdly would just be to leave the Embassy and leave the country in better shape in terms of the relationship between the two countries, better than I found it.

Senator JOHNSON. You mentioned security. When we met in our office, you talked about, within your class of future Ambassadors, there is a fair amount of concern that, yes, you have security for the Ambassador, but not necessarily for the Ambassador's spouse. Can you share those thoughts here? I kind of would like my colleagues to hear what was being talked about within that class.

Mr. KING. There was some concern on the part of several of my classmates, who are very important and good people, that the secu-

rity that the State Department provides only extends to the Ambassador, not necessarily to the spouse, in terms of outside the Embassy or outside the residence. And a number of those classmates decided that they were going to fund some private security for their spouse.

Senator JOHNSON. I think that is an important issue that has been raised. I think it is something that Congress really ought to take a look at, based on the very dangerous world we are living in today, so I appreciate you raising that.

We have a fellow Badger, a fellow Wisconsinite that was also a former Ambassador, Ambassador Rick Graber. I know you have spoken with him. Can you talk about some of the words of wisdom he has imparted with you, as you start this next chapter in your life?

Mr. KING. Thank you, Senator.

I am here largely because, without ever having been to the Czech Republic, I kind of bonded with them largely because the folks old Czechoslovakia, even before Czechoslovakia, began to migrate as refugees to this country in the late 1800s, and, for whatever reason, decided to settle in the upper Midwest. So the bulk of the migrants coming over in the late 1800s and the early 1900s settled in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa. Therefore, I grew up with a lot of their descendants. We used to kid each other about our ancestry.

Then, about 15 or 20 years ago, I befriended a fellow by the name of Rick Graber, who was an attorney in Milwaukee who subsequently became Ambassador to the Czech Republic under the George W. Bush administration, and spent the last 10 years or so, when I am with Rick, talking about his experience in the Czech Republic, which he said they are a proud people, they are an independent people, they are a freedom-loving people. It is one of the few countries, especially Prague, that was preserved coming out of the war. He said it was an experience of a lifetime for me.

So when the opportunity for me came to serve this administration overseas, I told them I would like to go to the Czech Republic.

Senator JOHNSON. I appreciate that.

In my last minute, just talk about some of the economic ties. What are some of the best opportunities that we have, in terms of economic cooperation between the Czech Republic and the U.S?

Mr. KING. The T–TIP, obviously, is probably a good start. I think we also, as a country, need to work and develop an economic relationship with the EU. That will benefit not only us and the EU but I think, in particular, the Czech Republic.

We, the United States, are probably the 13th biggest investor, if you will, in the Czech Republic and the third outside of the EU. We have wonderful opportunities.

There are wonderful opportunities for business interests in the Czech Republic to invest in the United States. And for that reason, I am going to work with the Department of Commerce, the Department of State, OPIC, and the Trade Representative to try to encourage and enhance and build on the business relationship, because, as we all know, a strong economic relationship is really kind of a key to any relationship between any two countries.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. King.

I will turn it over to Senator Murphy.

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

I neglected to thank you for your service to the Boy Scouts. I know you have been a great regional leader. Speaking as a Scout leader myself, I know the organization has been getting a little bit of a rough time lately, but I thank you for your great service there.

I think you mentioned this in answer to a previous question from Senator Johnson, but as this question was asked of Obama nominees for the record, I think it is important just to ask it of President Trump's nominees as well. You mentioned you have not traveled to Czechoslovakia before. Can I just ask, you do not speak the language?

Mr. KING. I do not speak the language. I am looking forward to taking some classes, beginning upon my service, should I be confirmed. In the morning, I am told, you can have a half-hour to 45 minutes of classes every morning. Probably not in my time there, assuming I am confirmed, that I become conversational, but I take solace in the fact that most every diplomatic official discussion usually takes place in English.

Senator MURPHY. Great. So you mentioned your ability to have a strong relationship with the business community there. Let me ask the question about sanctions through that prism.

I mentioned in my opening remarks that there are elements of the business community in the Czech Republic who are nervous about the long-term continuation of sanctions on Russia, given the fact that there are historic business ties. And yet, we believe that it is in both U.S. national security interests and European national security interests to send a strong, unequivocal message to Russia that territorial integrity matters.

As the Czechs have seen themselves, Russian interference in elections continue. They have set up their own counter-propaganda center because of their discovery of dozens of Web sites inside the Czech Republic that were potentially influenced and funded through Russian propaganda efforts.

So how are you prepared to talk to the business community in the Czech Republic about the importance of sanctions? And how do you address their concerns about the potential impact on the economy and the way that you weigh that effect on the important message that we need to send to the Russians?

Mr. KING. I recognize, Senator, that there are some concerns within the business community in the Czech Republic over some of the sanctions and the impact it may have on them, but I think they also step back and realize that the 40 years of Russian and Soviet tyranny ruling their country prohibited them from practicing the very things—the private enterprise in a free economic society.

So my job, I think, is to continue to engage the business community in the Czech Republic, as well as the leadership.

The leadership of the Czech Republic, the Government, actually, has been very supportive of the actions of the EU and the United States with regard to sanctions, not only in Ukraine but other parts, and they are very concerned about the upcoming Russian military training exercises. So I am confident that the opportunity will give me, being Ambassador, to work with the business community to recognize that sanctions are what they are.

Senator MURPHY. U.S. democracy promotion infrastructure at the State Department was an important partner during the Czech Republic's transformation process. Indeed, the Czechs have helped export the lessons that they went through to other neighboring countries. They sent transition teams to Ukraine, for instance, to help Ukraine make a transfer to democratic norms in the way that they did.

There is an ongoing review at the State Department now about the future core mission, and there is a worry that the core mission will become all about economic development and security, and that a focus on democracy promotion will be scrubbed from the State Department's mission.

You are going to go to a country that has had a long, productive history with the U.S. State Department's democracy mission. Do you believe that the pursuit of democracy for people around the world should be a priority for the United States and for the State Department?

Mr. KING. I know it is important to the Czech Republic. They are now going to celebrate, next year, about 25 years as a new nation. They held their first democratic direct election of a President just 4 or 5 years ago and will hold another one in 2018.

So I absolutely agree, Senator, that proposing and encouraging democratic values that both countries share is probably one of the highest priorities that I have.

Senator MURPHY. I appreciate your answer with respect to the specific relationship between the United States and the Czech Republic. I will not press you on this, except to say that there is going to be a very important internal discussion happening at the State Department while you will be there. You will be a prominent Ambassador inside that department. You will be in a country that can tell a very important story about the good that comes from the United States promoting democracy abroad. You mentioned in your opening comments, rightly, that there is a slide away from participatory democracy happening in countries that are very close to the Czech Republic.

I would hope, upon getting your feet on the ground, that you would participate in the internal debate happening within the State Department and tell the story of the success of U.S. democracy promotion in the Czech Republic.

You may not want to testify as to the reorganization here in front of us, but it is a debate that will be happening.

Mr. KING. I understand.

Senator MURPHY. And we look forward to you participating in it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. King, congratulations on the nomination.

This is a great committee, because we sort of segregate a little bit into regions of the world, and these are three Europe experts here. My assignment has been Latin America and the Middle East, but that is why I like to come to these hearings, because it gives me a chance to learn about areas where I am not so fluent.

Let me just tell you a thing that is puzzling me about the Czech Republic right now and just get your thoughts about it.

In the aftermath of the Brexit vote, the popularly elected President of the republic called for a referendum about whether the republic should stay in NATO and the EU. The Prime Minister and Cabinet sort of scotched that idea, so there was not a referendum.

But when a President who is popularly elected who probably has a pretty good sense of the will of the people thinks this is a good thing to do, then that tells me something is going on. Polling in the Czech Republic has shown pretty low approval for the EU, even though the Czech Republic economy is deeply integrated in the EU. I think 80 percent of the exports of the Czech Republic go into the EU.

So just talk to me a little bit about that. What is going on? Should we read the reticence about the EU or NATO as anything with respect to the Czech-U.S. relationship? Or is this just an internal European dynamic right now?

Mr. KING. Good question, Senator, and I think you captured the mood somewhat correctly.

I think it is really important for the United States and its representation overseas, specifically to the Czech Republic, to continue to encourage the Czech Republic collaboration and involvement, both economically as well as in NATO, with its allies in Western Europe. It is our job, I think, to take a lead in that. It is beneficial, despite Brexit, enjoying a good economic relationship between the Czech Republic and its EU partners, as well as the United States. It is critical, I think, to the continued blooming of democracy in that country.

Senator KAINE. I am just curious, do you read that as—should we be concerned at all about the Czech-U.S. bilateral relationship, when the President calls for a referendum that deals not just with EU membership but NATO membership? Or to your interpretation, is it really more kind of internal European?

Mr. KING. I think it is more internal. The bilateral relationship between the Czech Republic and the United States is excellent. It is very, very strong.

Senator KAINE. I think some of attribution that I have seen about this suggests that this anti-EU thing is scuffling about the migration issue.

I think the Czech economy is really integrated into the EU economy, especially into the German economy. There are great economic ties there.

So do you have a sense—are there upcoming elections in the Czech Republic? And as far as you know, is this migration issue playing a significant part in the upcoming elections?

Mr. KING. Another good question, Senator.

I am not sure how important the refugee issue is playing in the elections, but they adopted a parliamentary form of democracy in 1990, and the parliamentary elections for both the upper and lower houses will be in October. It remains to be seen what is going to happen there.

In terms of the migration and refugees, the EU mandated that each member country take so many refugees. It was a kind of quota. The Czech Republic has not met that quota. For that reason, Brussels, I think, is looking at taking some action against not only the Czech Republic but the so-called Visegrad Four countries—

Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic—all who have not met their quotas for taking refugees.

The refugee problem is a global problem, and I think that is an issue that the Czech Republic needs to work out with its leaders in Brussels.

Senator KAINE. Just to conclude, and then to hand it back to the chair, we are always so sensitive. We cannot be involved in dictating any decision about internal politics of another country. They have to work that out for themselves.

But we had a hearing last week with the proposed Ambassador to the EU. I think one of the things that our Ambassadors can often do is not only working within their portfolio but working with other U.S. Ambassadors in the region to try to build up some of the ties. I think that it sounds like that could be a significant portion of what you might do in a productive way, should you be confirmed.

Mr. KING. I would agree.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. King, congratulations on your nomination. You are going to be serving Europe at a very critical time, when I think the future of the EU, of NATO, and of the transatlantic alliance is really at stake.

So I want to follow up a little bit on Senator Kaine's questions about what Czechs are thinking about in terms of the EU and their relationship with the EU, because as I am reading the upcoming elections and the potential for victory by the ANO party, which is center-right, it sounds like their leader has suggested that he does not support the Czechs staying in the euro zone. He talks about it as one of sovereignty.

As Ambassador, recognizing what Senator Kaine said and what we know about our need to stay out of the internal politics of a country, how do you see the ability of an ambassador to try to recognize and highlight the importance of the EU to stability in Western Europe and the potential for Russia to undermine the EU as part of their way of trying to destabilize Western Europe?

Mr. KING. Thank you for the question, Senator.

It is important, obviously, not only for the United States, but I think for the Czech Republic to remain a strong partner in the EU, as well as NATO, and they have been such.

I am not going to speculate as to what party is going to win. Coalitions have to take place, and I am not that familiar with the local politics there.

But I feel pretty confident that, whatever happens coming out of the election, that the freedom-loving people of the Czech Republic and the economic-freedom-loving people of the Czech Republic want to remain, the bulk of them, want to remain part of the EU.

And I think part of my job will be to encourage not only the Czech Republic to continue its engagement with the EU, as well as NATO, to, among other things, as you suggest, prevent some of the disinformation and other such things that the Russian Government is doing not only in Eastern but Central Europe, too.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I agree that is a real threat.

I think I came in on Senator Murphy asking you the question about the new center that they are standing up, did I catch that, in the Czech Republic? That is going to be focused on I guess responding, pushing back against the disinformation from the Russian Government.

Mr. KING. Yes. We support that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Absolutely. One of the things that I would encourage you to do is to visit Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, which is headquartered in Prague, because they have been very successful certainly in the past and are looking at how they can ramp up to respond to the Russian disinformation that is going on.

Mr. KING. Indeed, they do. I am starting with that right here in this city, where BBC and Radio Free Europe have some offices, too.

Senator SHAHEEN. That is great. They have made a number of reforms that I think are very important. One of the jobs that we have is to try to figure out how to make them more effective and make sure they have the resources that they need.

Mr. KING. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Let me ask you, because in your statement, you talk about reaffirming our commitment to the Czech Republic and to our allies like the Czech Republic, and making it clear that we are dedicated to the democratic values that we want them to encourage, that we espouse here in America.

So I want to follow up a little bit on Senator Kaine's question about refugees, because, obviously, one of the big challenges that Europe has faced over the last 2 years has been migration of so many refugees from Syria, from North Africa, from Afghanistan, and the challenge of trying to help, in terms of the humanitarian crisis but also looking at resettlement efforts.

To what extent do you think that rhetoric here that marginalizes refugees, that suggests that America is not interested in having immigrants come to this country, to what extent does that undermine our conversations with a country like the Czech Republic, as we look at the challenges they are facing in Europe?

Mr. KING. Thank you, Senator. Good question.

We are all sensitive to terrorism and the issue that kind of open gates with immigration can present. I am just happy that the Czech Republic has bought into the visa waiver program, which we launched, which minimizes and gives them authority, of course, to prevent certain movement of certain people. I think that is important, and I note that the republic is serious about preventing terrorism not only in their country but in the rest of the European Union.

For that reason, I am confident that, once I get there, I can engage the republic to continue to keep a wary eye toward that problem, to that issue, but at the same time, open up their doors for people that have truly opportunities to live in a free—and want an opportunity to live in a free and democratic and economically free country.

The Czech Republic actually has a strong economy and actually has a labor problem, so I know that they, too, would welcome the opportunity to have people that can work in the country.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Mr. King. I look forward, and for the committee, to working with you individually, because, as you point out, the Czech Republic and their continued movement toward democracy and the West is very important, as we look at maintaining the partnerships that are going to be important to the United States, so thank you.

Mr. KING. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Before I close out the hearing, I will offer an opportunity for any further questions.

With that, again, Mr. King, you will, if confirmed, assume a very serious responsibility of not only representing America to the Czech Republic but also representing the viewpoints of the Czech Republic back to the Congress.

Mr. KING. Indeed.

Senator JOHNSON. Very important. Speaking for myself, I will be traveling over to Europe. It is also incredibly important for Ambassadors, when Members of Congress come over to the nations that you are representing, that you really lay out, from my standpoint, a very rigorous schedule, laying it out so we really understand the issues.

Again, I want to congratulate you on your nomination. Thank you for taking on this responsibility. Thank your wife, Karen, and your son, Steve, and your other children.

It is a great opportunity. We have serious challenges and serious responsibilities. So, again, thank you for providing us with your testimony and your responses.

The record will remain open for further questions until close of business on Thursday, August 3rd.

Senator JOHNSON. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO STEPHEN B. KING BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. The most important action I have taken in my career to promote human rights and democracy was when I served as a Special Agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. During my tenure with the Bureau, I spent two years in Mississippi during the Civil Rights era investigating violations of federal laws pertaining to matters including human and civil rights.

A number of these investigations resulted in enforcement of federal law and resulted in criminal prosecutions and cessation of human and civil rights violations in the State of Mississippi.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Czech Republic today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Czech Republic? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The Czech Republic is widely respected for maintaining a strong human rights record, both domestically and globally. However, as is the case in all countries, work remains. As noted in the 2016 State Department Human Rights report, the most pressing concern in the Czech Republic is the integration of Roma into so-

ciety. For example, while the Czech Government recently passed a law designed to improve Romani children's access to quality education, press reports indicate that over 25 percent of Romani children attend schools for children with disabilities, where they receive low-quality education that does not prepare them to enter the workforce.

If confirmed, I will work with the Czech Government and non-governmental organizations, to urge the full implementation of the new education law and other measures necessary to facilitate the integration of the Roma people into society. Additionally, I would build upon the Embassy's strong work on behalf of the Roma community, offering U.S. Government support wherever possible.

Question 3. 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 the Czech Republic in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The largest obstacle confronting human rights in the Czech Republic is societal attitudes. Although Czech society is generally quite open and tolerant, discrimination against the Roma community remains widespread. While the Czech Government has taken some steps to integrate the Roma, such as helping to foster greater understanding and appreciation of their culture, it can take many years for public opinion to change. If confirmed, I would support an open dialogue between the Roma community and the Czech Government to better address the concerns of the Roma people. I would also engage in personal outreach to the Roma community and continue Embassy Prague's programs to encourage mutual understanding and reduce discrimination.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Czech Republic?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to meeting with all of these organizations and continuing Mission Czech Republic's strong relationship with these groups.

Question 5. Will you engage with the Czechs on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, I will fully engage with Czech officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance, building upon Mission Czech Republic's strong body of work in this area.

Question 6. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Czech Republic?

Answer. No.

Question 9. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As a businessman, I have witnessed the positive effects that diversity can have on the productivity of a company. Over the years, the State Department has taken steps to recruit a more diverse diplomatic corps that reflects the various ethnicities and cultures of the American people, ensuring America's diplomats truly represent the face of our diverse country. I believe this emphasis on diversity is critical not only to uphold the values of the American people and the State Department, but also to set an example for other nations.

If confirmed, I will maintain an open dialogue with all members of Mission Prague on the importance of diversity, encouraging maximum communication to ensure everyone's viewpoint is heard and appreciated, and also to make sure that tra-

ditionally underrepresented groups feel fully valued. I will also do my utmost to make sure employees are recognized based on merit, regardless of their gender, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. I believe that fostering an inclusive environment increases the retention of employees, particularly for women and minorities who can sometimes feel marginalized.

Question 10. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I believe that the Chief of Mission plays a critical role in establishing the values and high standards of an embassy. If confirmed, I will work with supervisors within Embassy Prague to create a collaborative and flexible environment that enables individuals to freely contribute their ideas. I will also ensure managers not only fully comply with the Department's EEO regulations, but go a step further by proactively seeking out ways to help identify and counteract any unconscious biases which may exist, particularly with respect to the recruitment process. If confirmed, I will also reach out to the Office of Civil Rights and discuss which additional training sessions may be available for the mission, such as an in-person all-hands EEO training program.

Question 11. How will you specifically work to assist the Government and civil society groups of the Czech Republic in countering the Russian Government's malign influence?

Answer. The Czech Republic has a multifaceted relationship with Russia, but the Government has taken an increasingly active approach toward countering Russian disinformation and malign influence, launching its Center for Terrorism and Hybrid Threats in January 2017 to counter Russian disinformation campaigns. If confirmed, I will work with the Czech Government to hold Russia accountable for its ongoing aggression in Ukraine, to ensure Moscow meets its international obligations, and to deter Russia from actions that undermine international peace and security. In addition, I would build on Embassy Prague's close cooperation with Czech civil society groups on countering the threat of negative Russian influence through public engagement and programming.

Question 12. What specific tools will you use to address this threat?

Answer. Embassy Prague, in collaboration with the Czech Government, has put in place several relevant programs, such as support for conferences on countering disinformation, media literacy courses for Czech university students, training events for Czech and Russian speaking journalists, and inclusion of Czech journalists on reporting tours to Ukraine and NATO.

If confirmed, I will encourage even greater cooperation on these types of proactive efforts by the Czech Government to prevent Russian disinformation and malign influence campaign. I will also seek to increase cyber cooperation and help the Czechs move away from their reliance on Russia through military modernization, and through diversification of energy sources, routes and suppliers, for themselves and for the wider European Union.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Johnson, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Portman, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

Also Present: Senator Enzi.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

And, in keeping with the great way that Senator Enzi runs his committee, we start on time here, too. And, as a matter of fact, Senator Cardin and I will defer our opening comments, out of respect for you, so that you can make your introduction and go on about your business. But, you honor us by being here. We thank you for that. And the floor is yours to introduce one of our nominees.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL B. ENZI, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator ENZI. Thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee this morning on behalf of Eric Ueland, the President's nominee to serve as the Under Secretary of State for Management. He has been my budget director. He is an excellent manager. He has tremendous historical knowledge, and he is able to coordinate many efficiently.

Eric was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, and attended college in San Francisco. He remains loyal to his West Coast roots. After graduating college, he had actually considered teaching diplomatic history. While he never had a chance to pursue that interest, the opportunity to serve at the State Department in a role that supports the creation and execution of U.S. foreign policy will be a great privilege.

He began work in the legislative branch in 1989, and served in a variety of positions, including running the office of the Senate Majority Leader and serving the Senate Assistant Majority Leader,

as well as now overseeing the Senate Budget Committee for the past 4 years. He is careful in that work, precise in his analysis, thoughtful with others, and dogged on behalf of his bosses and their goals. He has worked for and with Republicans and Democrats, Senators and Congressmen, and Democratic and Republican administrations. He is comfortable working across the partisan divide and building coalitions to bring legislation across the finish line.

As a successful Senate staffer going to a significant Department position, he will be an asset not just for the Department, but for Congress, as well. His understanding of how we work, his appreciation for the challenges we face, and his ability to dive in with us as a partnership to find solutions for our shared responsibility on behalf of America's foreign policy, all that will stand us in good stead.

A key to Eric's value for me has been his interest in very carefully learning how a law or process actually works. Examples include his facility with Senate rules and precedents, and the Budget Act, our budget enforcement regime, and the reconciliation process.

I have also mentioned his historical knowledge. He is always open to new information and new learning, and reflecting it accordingly. I know we will have that same ability and talent as he enters the executive branch to learn the operation of the Department, the rules under which it works, how it interacts with Congress and partners across the executive branch, and how to best and appropriately carry out his responsibilities on behalf of the Secretary and the administration.

We all know that the makeup of the Senate requires that Senators cooperate with each other and provides many opportunities for Senators and staff to both learn that lesson and then put it into action. I believe that experience will inform Eric's ability to work with the Department's various stakeholders, including diplomats, the Civil Service, and partners across the Federal Government and internationally, and members and staff here at the committee and in Congress.

Eric is also a careful manager who has had responsibility here in the Senate at several offices, with budget formulation and execution, personnel recruitment and retention, and supporting professional development of his staff. The scope of the Department and the challenges it faces might larger than managing a Senate personnel office or leadership office or committee office, but I believe Eric's management style will be applicable at the State Department, too.

Eric can successfully handle the new challenges and opportunities that he will face, and I am confident he will be a strong and capable Under Secretary for Management on behalf of the Secretary and his senior team and for our diplomats around the world.

So, I commend Eric's nomination to the committee, and urge his favorable consideration.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you for being here. And, as you know, you are welcome to go and continue your other duties. I know you have a important meeting this afternoon at 2:30, but, again, thank you so much for being here.

And I think what the ranking member and I have decided is that we will give opening comments for both panels now.

So, thank you so much for being here. And we will see you later today.

The position that Senator Enzi was just mentioning is vitally important to the functioning of the Department. Fourteen bureaus and offices report to the Under Secretary for Management, including Diplomatic Security, Consular Affairs, and Overseas Building Operations. The Under Secretary is responsibility for the allocation of State Department positions, funds, and any other resources required to implement the foreign policies of the United States Senate.

In addition to making the trains run on time at the Department, the Under Secretary has the critical task of securing our people and families abroad. This is never an easy undertaking, but it is particularly challenging now, given the complexity of our current threat environment.

Department is also in the middle of an extensive reorganization process, which will require heavy involvement and deft leadership from the Under Secretary. This committee has been concerned by some of the Department's recent management challenges, has tried to play a constructive role in making the Department more efficient and effective through our State Department authorization bill. I hope our nominee shares our goal of a stronger and more agile State Department. And I look forward to your cooperation on the authorization bill, should you be confirmed.

On the next panel of nominees, we have The Honorable John Bass to be Ambassador Afghanistan; Mr. Justin Siberell to be Ambassador to Bahrain; and Dr. Steven Dowd to be U.S. Director of the African Development Bank.

A more concerted effort is planned by the administration to address U.S. interests in Afghanistan through a more focused and more firm diplomacy with Afghanistan's neighbors and others. Our embassy country team in Kabul must be properly prepared, equipped, and led to make the most of this new U.S. effort to create better outcomes that serve our national security interests. I believe Ambassador Bass has that experience, and I look forward to hearing how he plans to utilize our resources to meet the President's expectations.

Bahrain is an important ally of the United States and the Middle East, and hosts a critical military base for our forces in the region. Sadly, the country is also facing unrest amongst its majority Shi'a population against a Sunni-led monarchy, resulting in government crackdown of its dissidents. I look forward to hearing from Mr. Siberell about his goals and the vision for U.S. engagement in Bahrain in this complicated political environment.

The African Development Bank provides resources developing countries that, if utilized properly, present opportunities to help those countries grow their economies, improve their standards of living, which ultimately serves our U.S. interest. If confirmed the U.S. Director at the African Development Bank, Mr. Dowd would play an important role in representing the United States interests at an operational level, helping to ensure money is spent wisely, and protecting our investments.

With that, I would like to recognize our distinguished Ranking Member for his comments.

Senator Cardin.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for scheduling this hearing.

I want to welcome all four of our nominees, and thank each of them for their willingness to serve our country in critically important positions. It is a great sacrifice for public service, and we thank you for that. And we know it is a family issue, that the family has to be supportive of that effort, so we thank the members of the family for being willing to share your family member with our country.

Mr. Ueland, it is good to see you, member of the Senate family. It is always nice to have a member—you get certain privileges—not all, but you get certain privileges by your association with the United States Senate. You have been nominated to a position of great trust and importance for the proper functioning of the Department of State, the Under Secretary of Management. This is—it is not a job that often generates flashy headlines, but it is a job that is absolutely critical, often behind the scenes, in a quiet way, for the proper functioning of our foreign policy.

And as I consider the challenges that you face that I have—I have been struggling, over the past several months, to understand the management philosophy of the Department's current leadership. I am struggling to understand the administration's approach to the Department's budget, management, reorganization, and personnel. There is a significant obligation on you, as we consider your nomination, to help this committee better understand how the administration is thinking about and approaching these issues, and helping us to work through our concerns as we move forward.

As I have expressed before, I remain deeply concerned that the administration's approach to reorganization of the State Department is a solution in search of a problem. It has the appearance of a precooked and ideological-driven exercise. Both this committee and the Appropriations Committee have expressed our concerns and made it clear that the road to reorganization runs through Congress.

I also want to flag a couple of issues where we have had concerns over the past few months, including the way the Department handled the Rangel and Pickering Fellows, the suggestion that the Consular Affairs and the Population, Refugee, and Migration Bureau be moved wholesale from the Department to the Department of Homeland Security, and the apparent lack of urgency in filling critical positions, such as the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security. I do this, not to relitigate concerns with you, but, rather, to suggest that real, pressing needs for proper management guidance at the Department.

When we see things like the Department seeking to reduce its workforce through attrition, where critical functions and expertise are lost, it suggests an operation that either does not understand or does not care about using proper management tools to steer that

process. So, as I said, I have concerns about the management of the Department. I am hopeful that you will be able to reassure this committee on the core issues of how you intend to bring to bear your experience in order to institute functional management and processes for the Department.

My overriding concern is that, without proper management and leadership at the Department, the United States is at risk of effectively leaving the stage as a global leader. The Department of State plays a vital role at the heart of our Nation's foreign policy by maintaining our global stature, ensuring the security of our citizens, enhancing our prosperity, and supporting our allies and partners around the globe who share the ideals and values that are the heart of what makes America a unique and exceptional Nation. I trust that we would—you would agree that, if the Department does not function properly, the United States role in the world, our national security, is at risk. Your job, if confirmed, will be to see that that does not happen. So, I look forward to the discussion that we will have during this hearing.

I also wanted to welcome the three nominees that will be on the second panel. For Ambassador Bass, thank you for being willing to come back for a second hearing before this committee. And usually one is all people can tolerate. So, thank you for your willingness to continue to serve our country. I think the President has selected a very well-qualified person for this critical and difficult posting.

I must express my concern, however, over President Trump's long-awaited announcement of a South Asian strategy, last month, which was short on details and has raised many questions on what his implementation will entail. I diverge from the President on his proposed troop increase. I think that this is a singular focus on killing terrorists, ignores the complexity of the situation in Afghanistan and United States interests there. Our approach to Afghanistan must be centered around a bold renewed effort to forge a negotiated political settlement, working with the Afghan and regional actors. We also must spur progress on accountability for human rights abuses and an end to corruption, which undermines the Afghan Government's ability to secure a suitable peace. These goals are the best long-term bulwarks against the risk that Afghan territory could again be used as a base for terrorist activities against us or our allies. I will be introducing legislation shortly that addresses these considerations by hosting the United States diplomatic and programmatic engagements on peace, justice, and reconciliation in Afghanistan. I hope this committee will have the opportunity soon to have a full hearing on Afghanistan and South Asia, giving the pressing U.S. foreign policy interests in that region.

Our Ambassador to Afghanistan will be on the front lines of implementing this administration's strategy, and I welcome the opportunity to hear from you today about your priorities and prospectus on how best to approach this task. I believe that sustained diplomatic engagement by senior U.S. officials is needed now more than ever. We will not solve this conflict through military engagement alone, and our counterterror interests in Afghanistan are intertwined with political, economic, and social issues. So, the diplomatic and programmatic efforts of the State Department of Af-

ghanistan are critical, and our most senior diplomat in Kabul must engage personally and regularly to help move the ball forward on peace, justice, and reconciliation.

Mr. Siberell, for—on—Bahrain and the United States have a longstanding partnership and many shared interests, including confronting Iran's aggression, reversing the spread of ISIS, countering terrorist financing, and maritime security. I listened to the Chairman as he expressed his concerns about Bahrain. Bahrain is a key partner to the United States. Key partner. We have military interests, we have counterterrorism interests. And yet, there are significant human rights concerns that we have with the way that Bahrain treats the Shi'a population. We must engage those issues to have a sustained partnership with Bahrain. And our Ambassador must take the lead to make it clear that we can have partners that have very important strategic interests, but we also must make advancements on the manner in which they handle human rights and protection of universal freedoms, such as the freedom of speech and assembly. These developments that have occurred in Bahrain undermine Bahrain's stability, compromise its ability to be a security partner, and run contrary to U.S. interests.

Finally, I am pleased to welcome Joseph Dowd, nominee to be the U.S. Executive Director of the African Development Bank. Africa is a continent of great promise, but today it is—it—presenting us with great challenges. I noticed you have some interesting early history in Africa, and dealmaking experience in the area of food, infrastructure, and transportation that are key priorities for Africa today. I believe that will suit you well for the position that you have been nominated to.

I look forward to the discussion with all four of our nominees.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank all four of you, for being here and for listening to long opening comments by both of us, but we got it all out of the way, and now we are ready for you.

And so, Eric, if you would, take about 5 minutes to make your comments. Any additional materials, without objection, will be entered into the record. And, with that, go ahead and present your testimony. Thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF ERIC M. UELAND, OF OREGON, NOMINEE TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (MANAGEMENT)

Mr. UELAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Cardin, Senators, good morning. Thank you for the privilege of appearing before the committee.

With me this morning are my wife, Cathleen, and my daughters, Brigid and Charlotte.

My public service, as you mentioned earlier, has centered for many years on the legislative branch. And, thanks to the courtesy of several members, we have all had the chance to see Congress up close as part of that extended Senate family. We thank you very much for that privilege, and for the privilege extended to us from any different predecessors.

I am humbled this morning at the prospect of serving our Nation as Under Secretary of State for Management. I am grateful to both

President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me and for nominating me to serve in this capacity.

Our Nation is now engaged in a robust conversation about her appropriate role on the world stage and how to confront the challenges that we face. The Department serves to express the voice and the vision of the President through the Secretary. If confirmed, I look forward to taking responsibility for the management family at the Department. The 16 bureaus and offices for which the Under Secretary is responsible provide the platform for our Nation's diplomacy, including security, embassy construction, logistics, medical services, human resources, budget and finance, training, and many other critical functions. Our foreign policy must be carried out around the world at 275 embassies, consulates, and other missions on a platform that supports the President's foreign policy.

While the Department does much very well, I know it also faces continued challenges in several areas which fall under the management portfolio. For example, the security of staff in facilities overseas remains an issue. The Department, with congressional support, continues a strong construction program for new secure embassies and consulates, with 133 new diplomatic facilities completed since 1999. Additionally, a consolidated security training center is under construction in Virginia to provide all Foreign Service Officers hands-on training every 5 years. Both of these efforts have, and they will, save lives overseas. I expect to be particularly focused on staff and facility security during my tenure, if confirmed by the Senate.

As with many government and private institutions, cybersecurity is a major concern, especially with the Department's worldwide presence and extensive data systems. I will work to ensure that the Department has a modern and robust IT infrastructure that supports our diplomatic efforts and protects the critical data of the Department. During my tenure as staff director of the Budget Committee, I have faced the challenges of working to harmonize specific department and agency budgets, along with congressional and administration priorities, inside an integrated budget framework. I anticipate the need for harmony, collaboration, and cooperation in this job, too, if confirmed, including with Congress.

The formulation of negotiation for, and implementation of, Department spending rests in the Office of the Under Secretary of State for Management. If confirmed, I look forward to working with partners inside the executive branch and here in Congress to bring the State Department's budgets into law and see that those laws are faithfully executed. Given the past challenges Congress has faced authorizing the State Department, I hope also that we can work together to write and enact a durable and long-lasting authorization statute to reflect shared priorities of Congress and the executive branch.

Although the executive branch will be a new environment for me, I am confident that lessons I have learned here in the Senate will serve me well in my new role. During my decades in the Senate, I have recruited, assembled, and deployed highly qualified staff, created professional and legislative goals, identified partnerships and built coalitions, and worked strongly on behalf of other staff and other members. I am excited to now work on behalf of the

President and the Secretary in the Department, and look forward to finding new opportunities for public service there.

If confirmed, I will be committed to a continued partnership with the committee and Congress in support of a strong and capable Department that effectively advocates for the United States interests around the world.

Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you this morning and your consideration of my nomination. Senators, I am happy to take your questions.

[Mr. Ueland's perpared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIC M. UELAND

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, Senators, good morning. Thank you for the privilege of appearing before the committee.

With me this morning are my wife, Cathleen, and my children, Stephen, Brigid, and Charlotte. My public service has centered for many years on the legislative branch, and thanks to the courtesy of several Members, we've all had the chance to see Congress up close, as part of the Senate family. We extend our thanks to you and many predecessors for such a privilege.

I am humbled at the prospect of serving our nation as Undersecretary of State for Management. I'm grateful to both President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me and for nominating me to serve in this capacity.

During my years of service on Senate staff, the world has changed quite a bit. From the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union, to the rise of terrorism, and even the creation of new nations, I have witnessed a wide variety of international opportunities and challenges for the United States.

But through them all, what endures has been the Department's responsibilities on behalf of the United States.

Our nation is now engaged in a robust conversation about her appropriate role on the world stage, and how to confront the challenges we face. The Department serves to express the voice and vision of the President through the Secretary. If confirmed, I look forward to taking responsibility for the management family at the Department. The 16 bureaus and offices for which the undersecretary is responsible provide the platform for our nation's diplomacy, including security, embassy construction, logistics, medical services, human resources, budget and finance, training, and other critical functions.

Our foreign policy must be carried out around the world—at 275 embassies, consulates, and other missions—on a platform that supports the President's foreign policy. While the Department can do much well, I know it also faces continued challenges in several areas which fall under the Management portfolio.

For example, the security of staff and facilities overseas remains an issue. The Department, with Congressional support, continues a strong construction program for new, secure embassies and consulates, with 133 new diplomatic facilities completed since 1999. Additionally, a consolidated security training center is under construction in Virginia, to provide all Foreign Service Officers hands-on training every five years. Both of these efforts have, and will, save lives overseas. I expect to be particularly focused on staff and facilities security during my tenure, if confirmed by the Senate.

As with many government and private institutions, cyber security is a major concern, especially with the Department's worldwide presence and extensive data systems. I will work to ensure that the Department has a modern and robust IT infrastructure that supports our diplomatic efforts and protects the critical data of the Department.

During my tenure as staff director of the Budget Committee, I've faced the challenges of working to harmonize specific department and agency budgets, along with Congressional and administration priorities, inside an integrated budget framework. I anticipate the need for harmony, collaboration, and cooperation in this job too, if I am confirmed.

The formulation of, negotiation for, and implementation of Department spending rests in the Office of the Undersecretary of State for Management. If confirmed, I look forward to working with partners inside the executive branch, and here in Congress, to bring the State Department's budgets into law, and see that those laws are faithfully executed.

Given the past challenges Congress has faced authorizing the State Department, I hope that we can work together to write and enact a durable and long-lasting authorization statute to reflect our shared priorities.

This begins with ensuring clarity of mission. The Department of State has had multiple mission statements over the years as well. We need to ensure that everyone knows where we are going, what we are doing, who is responsible, how the work is to be carried out, and when the job is done, that we all ended up where we set out to go.

Next, our personnel. The people of the Department are its strongest asset. They are the face of our country to the world. Here at home, many employees work to support those abroad. And together, they bring their talents to bear on a multiplicity of problems and challenges, to advance the United States' agenda in the international arena, build partnerships with other departments, agencies, and nations, and work in the most dangerous parts of the world. A strong, talented, representative workforce is essential for the Department's success.

Then, processes. For decades under both Republicans and Democrats, leadership at the Department has worked to help ensure the Department could adapt to an ever-evolving world. If confirmed, my job will be to help Secretary Tillerson and Deputy Secretary Sullivan move ahead with the improvement and re-design underway at the Department, while supporting efforts to advance the foreign policy of the President.

And finally, execution. The role and responsibility of the Undersecretary for Management is to support the Secretary and ensure effective operations of the Department. With a workforce of over 14,000 Foreign Service employees and 11,000 civil service employees, and an appropriated budget of nearly $56 billion for Fiscal Year 2017, my work to help enhance recruitment, identify and focus talent, ensure smooth and successful operations, prepare budgets, and coordinate with the White House, the OMB, and other departments and agencies with whom we collaborate—all to contribute to a successful and fully engaged Department.

Although the executive branch will be a new environment for me, I'm confident that the lessons I've learned in the Senate will serve me well.

During my decades in the Senate, I've recruited, assembled, and deployed highly qualified staff, created professional and legislative goals, identified partnerships and built coalitions, and worked strongly on behalf of others. I am excited to work on behalf of the President and the Secretary in the Department, and look forward to finding new opportunities to serve.

If confirmed, I will be committed to a continued partnership with the committee and Congress in support of a strong and capable Department that effectively advocates for the United States' interests around the world.

Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you this morning, and your consideration of my nomination.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I will probably ask a few, and then retain the rest of my time for later. But, thank you for that testimony.

Obviously, we have begun the process, over the last several years, of State Department authorizations. We feel that it is important for us to do that, and ultimately complete an entire State Department authorization. Just wondering what your thoughts are, after spending decades on the Hill, relative to that process.

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for that question. And yes, over the years here, I know that this committee has worked repeatedly on efforts to bring State Department authorizations into existence. Democrat majorities, Republican majorities; Democrat administrations, Republican administrations. I think, in my previous roles here on the Hill, I have always worked hard to be very supportive of the committee and its legislative efforts to authorize the full scope and ambit of Department programs. And I expect that, if I have the opportunity to serve, following confirmation, that I will be robustly engaged with this committee as it works to bring a State Department authorization through the Senate, through Congress, and ultimately for signature to the President.

The CHAIRMAN. So, you and I have had a good deal of interaction. And, just on that note, sometimes staffers who have been up here for many, many years can take on an attitude that Senators work for them. And I have seen that happen in—even in some of our encounters. And so, I think it is important for you to talk a little bit about that. The culture at the Department is not good right now. There is not a lot of teamwork felt there right now. And having someone who takes on a temperament of being very effective but sort of running over people in the process could be detrimental to the organization. And I wonder if you might talk a little bit about that here.

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for that question. And I very much appreciate the reality that transitioning from the legislative branch to the executive branch, as I said in my prepared testimony, will be a new venue, a new environment for me.

I do know that I have a lot to learn, and I do know that some of the most capable teachers for that education process are going to be the very talented staff at the Department. There are 16 offices and bureaus for which the Under Secretary of State for Management is responsible. And I expect that I will be going through a very accelerated education process in order to understand, crisply and clearly, their needs and opportunities for action, as well as their day-to-day responsibilities for creating and sustaining this very strong platform and prosecution of America's foreign policy around the world.

As I said, I have a lot to learn. And I am not coming in with a presumption that I not only know it all, but that I have learned it all as a result of the confirmation process and the education that I have received so far. So, I am going to enter this job, if I have the privilege of being confirmed, with big ears wide open, with an objective to learn as much as I can as quickly as I can on behalf of the personnel in our Foreign Service, our Civil Service, and certainly our locally employed employees around the world, in order to fully and successfully carry out the State Department's mission and objective of prosecuting America's foreign policy around the world.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. One of the things, though, that we all count on—we actually engage a great deal with the person in this position. It is very important that we have a good relationship with this person, because there are congressional notifications that take place. Many cases, we want to know background and materials; we want to do that on a timely basis. And I guess I would like to have you not just speak to the staff that will be underneath you, but just your interactions with people here on the Hill, relative to those kinds of issues that are important to us. And, you know, once people are confirmed, sometimes they take on a little bit different attitude as to how they deal with folks. I wonder if you might address that.

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very for—much for that, as well. And I agree, I have had colleagues and friends, over the years, who have been confirmed and sometimes forget from where they came. Because of those experiences over the years, I think that, as I mentioned in my prepared opening statement, the emphasis on partnership with Congress is going to be omnipresent

with me. To your point, this role has a significant continued interaction with both this committee, its counterpart in the House, and certainly the Appropriations Committees. And I expect that counsel of the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs to be spending a fair amount of time comprehensively engaged with the Hill to explain operations and objectives and responsibilities, and ways that we are recommending proceeding forward on anything from reorganization to our budget and spending priorities—to your point, required notifications and appropriate interactions, as well as seeking input; not just letting you know what is going on, but seeking counsel, advice, potential opportunities for direction, and information to feed back into, not just the execution of this role, but, as appropriate, report it back to the Deputy Secretary and the Secretary, as well.

So, I do not think that I am going to lose sight, having been a congressional staffer for many years, of the need and the value for a robust conversation and partnership with this committee, if I have the privilege of being confirmed.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. Well, thank you. I have some additional questions, unless they are asked by others.

With that, Senator Cardin.

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

Mr. Ueland, I really appreciate your testimony, particularly your encouragement on the Congress passing a State Department authorization in a routine manner, which I think would strengthen the unity on foreign policy in this country. So, I think that is a very important point. Under Chairman Corker's leadership, we have been making significant progress on that in the last 3 years. We passed out of this committee a State authorization, this year, that we hope will move forward. And I just want to concentrate on one part of that, which deals with reorganization of the State Department. A new administration is looking at potentially significant changes within the State Department. And, as I said in my opening comment, it is critically important that that be done in conjunction with the Congress. Both our committee and the Appropriations Committee have already spoken to our expectations, that there is going to be a close relationship in this process. Secretary Tillerson has testified before this committee indicating his commitment to work with this committee in a close manner.

And one of the more visible signs of reorganization is how Special Envoys are handled. And I want to compliment the administration in listening to us. There has been some correspondence back and forth. We have it also in our State Department authorization bill. And we are certainly consulting as to how the Special Envoys will be handled. Do we have your commitment that that close relationship—does not mean we will always be in agreement, but that close relationship will exist between you, if confirmed, and this committee and the Congress on input as to how reorganization takes place so that the Congress is part of the process?

Mr. UELAND. Absolutely, Senator. I think, to your point, both the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary, in conversations here at this committee, have expressed their interest and willingness to interact with the committee as they go through the process, with the employees, of thinking through ways to more effectively prosecute

America's diplomacy in the 21st century. And I certainly expect that, to your point, if I have the privilege of being confirmed—to the extent, in addition to the responsibilities that the portfolio of bureaus and offices have that already require constant communication with Congress, to be part of, not just the reorganization effort, by virtue of everything that the Under Secretary of Management is responsible for, but, again, to be working very cooperatively, conversationally, providing information, seeking input and feedback, providing explanations and rationales for the thought process that we are engaged, and potential recommendations about ways to continue to strengthen the ability of the Department to execute foreign policy around the world.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. There will be times, as the Ranking Democratic member on this committee, that I will be requesting information from you in order to carry out our responsibilities here on the committee. Will you respond promptly and fully to those requests?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, I expect that I will be responding promptly and fully to all requests, ranking as well as majority, during the pendency of my tenure, unless I am told by higher authority not to, or modify the response. But, my instinct—again, having been a Senate staffer for many years—is to provide as much information as possible, as quickly as possible, to the committee, upon request, but, as well, continue a very extensive conversation with this committee, the House committee, and our Appropriations Committee as part of the portfolio of what I am responsible for, but also the effort underway by the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary on questions of reorganization.

Senator CARDIN. The Subcommittee on Foreign Ops has made its recommendations, in the Senate Appropriations Committee, on the State Department budget. The President submitted his budget. The comments, among Democrats and Republicans, as to the President's budget, as it related to the State Department, was pretty consistent, a pretty different view. Do you have an opinion as to the resources that you need and whether the Congress is doing the right thing in providing more resources than the administration has asked for?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you for that question. The legislation was reported on Thursday, and, courtesy of preparing for this hearing, I have not had a chance to sit down and review the reported proposals from the subcommittee from last week. Until—unless I have the privilege of being confirmed, sir, I do not have fully formed opinions. I have read the budget justification for the submission for FY18—2018—that was provided earlier this year. Obviously, how a statute is enacted is a cooperative process between the executive branch and the legislative branch.

Senator CARDIN. Let me ask you the question in a slightly different way.

If Congress passes the resources, and it is signed into law, will you carry out the congressional mandate and intent through the funds that we appropriate for the purpose in which Congress has appropriated those funds?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, if Congress has passed, and the President has signed, legislation calling for expenditure of resources in par-

ticular areas, absolutely. When I said that—earlier, that I really believe in the need that laws be faithfully executed, that covers this question, I believe, and is one of the important responsibilities of the Under Secretary, if I am confirmed.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr. UELAND. Your welcome, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Portman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Chairman.

And, Mr. Ueland, thank you for being here, because that means you are stepping up to take on a new task that is really important, management of the State Department. I think Chairman Corker said it right when he said we have got some morale issues there right now, from what I understand. And it is also important that you have been a former chief of staff to a Majority Leader and to a Whip. And I got to work with you when you were director of the Budget Committee. As the staff director, you did a good job, and were effective in not just your command of the budget numbers, but also managing a team that focused on the Chairman's priorities at the time. So, I have seen you in operation. You know us. This committee is incredibly important in the process of the management side, as we have seen with the authorization bill we got through the committee, with the Chairman's help. So, that relationship you have with this place, understanding how we operate, I think is very important, on the management issues and beyond.

I have got two questions for you. One is with regard to security. I noticed, in your testimony, you talked about your interest in protecting, I think you said, staff and facilities. And, you know, sad that we live in a world of increasing danger to our Foreign Service staff and those in-country nationals and Americans. In recent testimony, Secretary Tillerson has noted the potential budget impact on the embassy security issues beyond 2018. So, my question to you is very simple. How do you intend to work with the Secretary and others to ensure that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security remains properly resourced and ensuring the protection of U.S. personnel, as you talked about, and facilities, in the context of budget cuts to the State Department's budget that have been proposed?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for that question. What I expect, if I have the privilege of being confirmed and working with the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, is to, every day, be reviewing our security posture and the support that we provide for security across all fronts at all our posts around the world, including seeking, in conversations with Congress, inside the executive branch, with the OMB, and others, that there be an appropriate amount of resources dedicated to security, and then expend it properly for security on behalf of our personnel. Security and safety will be one of my constant responsibilities that I will expend significant time focused on and advocating for appropriate resources in order to ensure that our Foreign Service Officers and our personnel deployed around the world are in facilities that are safe, are able to safely execute their duties, and have the security for themselves and, as appropriate, for their families and loved ones, is something that is going to be a critical calling that I will work to follow through on, if I have an opportunity to be confirmed.

Senator PORTMAN. I think that is important. And I was glad to hear you talk about it in your testimony. And, you know, we—again, the morale question came up earlier. I think that is one of the things that people are concerned about, is even their physical security. And knowing that you are behind them, I think, will be very important.

You and I talked a lot about the Global Engagement Center when we met, in the context of this nomination, and I told you my concern about State Department not seeking the funding to be able to effectively push back against authoritarian regimes around the world who are using disinformation and propaganda more, meddling here in our own country, but also in fledgling democracies around the world. And you gave me your commitment, in those meetings, that you wanted to focus on that issue, as well. And I noted that Secretary Tillerson did ask for the funding from the Department of Defense recently that we had authorized here in this body, and I was really pleased to see that. And I appreciate Deputy Secretary Sullivan reaching out to me in the last few days, in fact, about this issue, and ensuring that, you know, they have a commitment to getting the GEC stood up properly, both with regard to counternarrative on terrorism, ISIS, but also with regard to pushing back on disinformation. Can you make a commitment today to us that you will indeed continue that focus of making sure that the Global Engagement Center works effectively to push back and provide adequate resources for that?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, absolutely. To your point, we did have a good conversation on this. I believe the mission of the Global Engagement Center is critically important to advocating the United States point of view against both nonstate and state actor propaganda and agitation against our way of life and the values that we represent. So, no question that, if I have the privilege to be confirmed, be working to seek to, in any way that my portfolio interacts or supports the Global Engagement Center, in ensuring that we are robustly acting through the Global Engagement Center, as well as across a wide variety of platforms throughout the Government, on behalf of the expressions of our values, and pointing out some of the challenges that these other values being advocated for truly present to the world.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, thank you. My time is expired. I just—I know it is very important to this committee. Senator Murphy and I did have this legislation that is now in law, and we want to be sure it is properly implemented. Every day, there is a headline about some other aspect of disinformation. So, we appreciate your focus on that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. UELAND. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Ueland, for being willing to be considered for this post, and for taking the time to meet with me and other members of this committee.

I want to follow up on your last line of discussion with Senator Cardin, because I want to make sure I understood very clearly what you committed to.

I am a member of the SFOPS Subcommittee of Appropriations, and so I voted for the 51.2 billion in funding for the State Department, which, as you know, is significantly more than the proposal submitted by the President and the administration. And I understood you to say that, if you are confirmed, that you will work to protect this budget and make sure that the expenditures are made as Congress directed. Did I understand that correctly?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, in relation to the question—again, thank you very much for your time and our conversation—yes, if statute is brought into law, enacted and signed by the President, my responsibility—our Budget Office, Comptroller's Office responsibility—is to ensure that those monies do flow, as called for by statute. So, to the extent that the President, the administration, and the legislative branch have agreed upon appropriate funding, both at an overall level as well as what goes on in accounts and subaccounts, and the money is to flow, the money shall flow.

Senator SHAHEEN. I think it is important to raise this, because there have been some suggestions and concerns raised about the administration using impoundment to actually not spend monies that have been appropriated. I know that, in our office, we have raised, with several departments within State government—or within Federal Government, concerns about money that had been appropriated and had not been spent and—in order to try and urge that spending. But, again, you are putting to rest concerns that, when you are at the State Department, that you will not use impoundment as a way to prevent the spending that has been directed by Congress from getting done. Do I understand you correctly?

Mr. UELAND.Senator thank you for that question, as well.

During the preparation process for this entire confirmation, an explanation of the responsibilities of the Deputy—I am sorry—Under Secretary of State for Management and all the bureaus and offices for which I would be responsible, no one has ever raised with me, inside the administration, anything in relation to impoundment. There is a statutory construct about impoundment, as we all know, in the Budget Act, which talks about two different ways monies can be looked at by an executive branch as it goes about evaluating whether or not, and how best, to move resources forward—funded resources forward. As well, every year, as you know, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, the Appropriations Committee and the executive branch figure out ways, at times, move resources around, pull monies back, reprioritize as it goes through the spending conversation, and again, jointly agree as to how monies should be spent. So, I am not aware of any calling, responsibility, or demand that I am going to be impounding money.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. UELAND. Last point, Senator, if I may. That sort of question, implementation of, might fall in my lane. Again, I have not been told any of that. But, the interpretation of the Constitution and the impoundment power and all that, that is not in the Under Secretary of State for Management's responsibilities.

Senator SHAHEEN. It is my understanding that the Department of State is the only agency now within the Federal Government that has a self-imposed hiring freeze after the administration's freeze was rescinded. Is that your understanding? And do you think that is a sound personnel and management decision, given the number of crises we have around the world and the continued concern about morale within the Department?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you for that question.

I am not aware of the unfolding of the freeze policy in relation to other departments and agencies. In relation to the Department of State, yes, the freeze does continue. The Secretary has a variety of powers to address the issue while this reorganization conversation continues internally. And the budget conversation, appropriations conversation for resources, will continue with the Congress. My understanding is, he has exercised that power in relation to a variety of circumstances that have been presented to him.

And, in terms of staffing, appointments, nominations, and all that, I believe that the Secretary and the Department continues to work through recommendations for potential nominees, ultimately to the Senate and to this committee. Just sent a number of nominees to Congress last week, to the Senate last week. The Deputy Secretary of State addressed this issue at his townhall last month in the Department, saying that approximately 60 percent of confirmable positions either have a nominee, would have a nominee, or have individuals under consideration for them. So, the Department, as I understand it, its leadership, based on public reports, is focusing on working through the system and providing nominees to the Senate for advice and consent and review.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso.

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

Congratulations, and I have great confidence in your ability to do this job, and I am delighted that the President has chosen to nominate you. Terrific.

Mr. UELAND. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BARRASSO. You know, in Wyoming, we have a veteran memorial. It is located on F.E. Warren Air Force Base. It honors 48 U.S. soldiers that were massacred in the Philippines during the Philippine-American War. This memorial displays the bells that the Filipino insurgents used to signal the attack on our U.S. troops. Recently, the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines publicly pledged to move the bells from this memorial to the Philippines. The—during the confirmation process for Secretary Tillerson—I had asked him about this, and he stated, "The Bells of Balangiga are an important war memorial that holds real significance for many Americans, especially our veterans." Secretary Tillerson assured me that he would support an inclusive process with the U.S. Department of Defense to ensure that Congress is fully informed and the views of local communities and veterans are fully respected when evaluating the management of war memorials.

So, last week, I sent a letter to the President, along with Senator Enzi and Representative Cheney, and to Secretary Tillerson, as

well. And, Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that this letter to the President be included in the record.

[The information referred to above is located at the end of this transcript on pages 615–16.]

Senator BARRASSO. So, we sent a letter to the President and to Secretary Tillerson raising concerns about the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines pledging to dismantle the Wyoming War Memorial. In Wyoming, we have strong tradition of never forgetting the sacrifices of our brave men and women. So, the letter asks the President to direct the Department of Defense and the Department of State to cease any efforts to deconstruct existing war and veterans memorials.

So, my question to you is, if confirmed, will you raise this issue with this member of our Diplomatic Corps and share with him the importance of protecting our Nation's veterans memorials?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for the question.

And this story is incredibly inspiring, and a very significant aspect to your point of our World War II history and the work of our soldiers during that conflict. I do pledge that, if I have the opportunity to serve as Under Secretary of Management, as confirmed—if confirmed, that I will do everything I am capable of to bring this information forward—I associate myself with the comments of the Secretary during his confirmation hearing on this matter—and provide all the appropriate information that the Under Secretary of State of Management can provide in relation to this, because it is an important issue—I think, not just for you, but, again, for veterans across our country.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And, Mr. Ueland, congratulations on the nomination.

Mr. UELAND. Thank you, sir.

Senator KAINE. I want to ask you a couple of questions in the embassy security space. You talked about that as a key priority, should you be confirmed. You mentioned the construction of the facility in Virginia that is underway, and look forward to working on that with you. There was an Accountability Review Board that was done at the State Department in the aftermath of the loss of life at Benghazi, that horrible attack. There were 29 recommendations that were made that the State Department should follow, going forward, to reduce the chance of it happening again. There are three recommendations that are not yet closed out. Twenty-six have been closed out and implemented. The three that have not been are all dealing with embassy security issues: actual improvements to physical facilities, full training of the additional marine security guards called for in the ARB report. This will be a responsibility, as you indicate, that you will tackle, and I have two concerns. One, I am concerned about the budgetary issues that have been raised before, should there be a significant reduction in budgetary resources to State, as proposed in the President's budget, what that would do to the ability to deal with the embassy security questions. And sec-

ond, there is an Assistant Secretary for Embassies—Assistant Secretary for Security.

Mr. UELAND. Yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. As far as I know, there has not been a nomination forwarded to the Senate on that position. I wonder if you could address both the budgetary issues and your commitment to making sure we are spending appropriately on these security issues, and, second, do you have any idea or information about when the State Department is intending—I am sorry—when the administration is intending to forward us a nomination on the embassy security position?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you for the question, and I appreciate your raising it, very much.

To your point, as I testified and in previous answers have indicated that I will be focusing a significant amount of time on security matters. And, as for resources, as discussed earlier, I expect that I will be spending significant amount of time understanding the need and advocating in behalf of appropriate resource levels, significant resource levels, on behalf of diplomatic security efforts for our 275 posts around the world.

To your point, we have about 33 of those posts that are high-risk, high-threat. We have an internal validation process for our presence and reviewing where we are and our security needs as we go through a regular look at where we are deployed. And decisions about security are very important and flow through a variety of decisionmaking methodologies that are all part of the responsibility of the Under Secretary for Management. So, in addition to resources, ensuring that processes are going to be followed properly and aggressively are also going to be part of my work.

In terms of the Acting Assistant Secretary, my understanding is, he has been at the Department of State in the Foreign Service since 1987, that he has served as the assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State prior, as well as running the HRHT operation in the past. So, I believe, based on what I have read, that I am very confident in the Assistant Secretary—Acting Assistant Secretary right now. But, I do know that—if I have the privilege to be confirmed, that I will be diving in to examine the leadership, but I have no information on where the administration stands, in terms of a potential nominee. I expect that, if confirmed, I will learn quite a bit very quickly.

Senator KAINE. I would want to have a followup conversation about that. I appreciate what you have said about an—about the Acting. And I am glad you mentioned that, because sometimes, you know, we act as if a—if there is a—there has not been a nomination, it looks like nobody's doing the job. And we have plenty of Actings, and many of our Actings do very well. However, there is also a degree of uncertainty about an Acting. It sends a message, if you do not fill a position. You know, we had Acting Administrators of the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Service for 6 and a half years. It is only the largest line item in the Federal budget. That sends a signal that Medicaid and Medicare was not that important. And, similarly, if there is not a nominee forwarded to the committee on this important security position, it kinds of sends—it sends a signal, in addition—the person doing the job as an Act-

ing might be fine, but it sends a signal that it is not a priority, and it should be. I would love to follow up on that.

Mr. UELAND. Yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. When I tour, as a member of this committee, and I go to embassies abroad, I always sit down and have coffee with first- and second-tour FSOs. And I do not let the Ambassador come. And I ask them this question, "You have been, you know, picked for this wonderful opportunity that is very, very hard to get. What is going to make you decide whether to make it a career or depart early?" And I am always struck by how often the decision points are kind of management issues, like, "I had to be intensely vetted for the security to get this job, but then to requisition a pencil, they treat me like I am a potential felon," you know, "in order to get an office supply." And so, I may want to come and just offer some insights on some of these management issues that affect the morale of people who are doing great jobs or—around the world. And I would look forward to that discussion.

Mr. UELAND. Senator, I would welcome that very much. And the internal process is—for those of you who have reviewed the June report, points to constant examples, anecdotally, along those lines. I would love to follow up and be part of a continuing partnership on this matter, going forward.

Senator KAINE. All right. Thanks so much.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. UELAND. Thanks, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congratulations on your nomination. The Chairman referenced the morale issue at the Department today. And I think it is difficult to overestimate a morale crisis at the Department of State today. I think we are at the lowest point in the modern history of the State Department. We have had scores of senior diplomats leave over the last 6 months. People that come back from visiting our embassies in the field tell me that there are even more mid-level and junior staffers who are planning on leaving. And it is not hard to understand why. They perceive this administration and this Secretary of State to be openly advocating for a fairly dramatic winnowing of authorities at the Department of State, a lack of interest in democracy promotion and human rights advancement. But, it is also because of some very specific personnel policies that have been applied to the Department of State with an enthusiasm that does not exist in other departments. The hiring freeze, for instance, which had, at first, applied to almost all government agencies, now still specifically targets the State Department. The freeze on promotions and the freeze on lateral moves within the Department is sending a pretty clear signal to people who are there that they maybe should look other places rather than make that long-term career decision that Senator Kaine referenced.

And so, you are going to be inheriting a responsibility for staff management at a time when lots of your most important and most valuable staff are getting a signal that they should maybe find a career somewhere else.

In your preparation for this job and for this hearing, can you tell us what you have learned about the plans to continue the hiring

freeze, the freeze on promotions, and the freeze on lateral moves? Can you give us any idea for when those practices will end? Because if they do not end soon, I fear that you are going to have a real vacuum of experienced personnel on your hands, sooner rather than later.

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for that question.

In my preparation for the confirmation process, my nomination, and in preparation for this hearing, I have been given no explanation, nor has there any conversation, about a plan in relation to personnel. So, if I have the privilege to be confirmed, learning what, if any, plan might be in relation to personnel will be part of the core calling. Clearly, in the Under Secretary of State for Management's portfolio, human resources is a significant aspect of the responsibility that I have and the work that we engage in.

As I understand things, though, more generally, Senator, from the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary as they have worked through this reorganization process, one of things they have emphasized repeatedly is that there are no predetermined outcomes. And I think they have been true to that as they go about evaluating what employees point out to them as potential opportunities for more successfully prosecuting our foreign policy here that—around the world on behalf of the United States. As I understand it, they have been very clear, repeatedly. They have an open mind about how better to do the job of representing our values and our democracy around the world. And so, I take that declaration at its word. And if I am confirmed, I expect not only to learn more about, and participate in, the reorganization plan, but then to very robustly engage with Congress to explain the thinking of the Department's leadership, its goals, its objectives, and be in cooperation with this committee, as well as its peer committee in the House, in relation to the authorization bill, appropriations bill, as it works through the process.

So, I expect that there is going to be a very engaged back-and-forth.

Senator MURPHY. I think you need to explain it to us, but, I think, more importantly, you are going to need to explain it to the people that work for you, who right now are mystified as to why the State Department seems targeted by these policies in a way that almost no other agency is targeted by them.

Let me ask one more question.

Mr. UELAND. Yes, sir.

Senator MURPHY. You are the third senior-level nominee to tell this committee that the State Department is going to consult with Congress on the reorganization. We have gotten plenty of promises on consultation, and no consultation. We just passed a State Department appropriations bill in which we just simply guessed at what the State Department would look like. The Deputy Secretary has still not submitted written answers to questions, to this committee, relevant to his confirmation hearing.

So, put a little bit more flesh on the bones. When you say that you are going to consult with Congress, you are saying they same thing that everybody else has, and yet no one has consulted with us. So, what do you mean by that? What is the form of the consultation going to take? When can we expect it? Will we see a plan

before it is announced? Will we not see a plan before it is announced? Give us a little bit of detail.

Mr. UELAND. Thank you very much for the question, Senator.

And at least as I interpret my obligation for consultation, in relation to your question, is that I would be expending a fair amount of shoe leather and time coming to the Hill to explain, as I mentioned earlier, the rationale, the ideas, the potentialities, the objectives, the goals of whatever reorganization recommendations that the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary, as a result of all this feedback, ultimately provide. So, in any way that I am able to, at the counsel and direction of the Secretary, and in the counsel of the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, coming to the Hill to explain where matters stand, where the leadership is intending to go, and what role, if any, I play in that, that is the flesh on the bones of my commitment.

Senator MURPHY. Will we see it before it is implemented?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, I have not been told much about any of that. If I can find an answer through this process, I am happy to provide that to you.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Merkley.

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

And appreciate your bringing up cybersecurity in your initial remarks. Certainly, we have been very concerned about the—both the commercial hacking, the governmental hacking that has occurred by foreign nations and foreign forces, including Russia and North Korea. Even the NSA has been hacked. I was surprised, therefore, that the Special Representative for Cybersecurity was on the list to be eliminated by the State Department. Why would that be eliminated? And, when you say that you are concerned about cybersecurity, how does that translate to a management initiative?

Mr. UELAND. Thank you very much for the question, Senator.

In relation to the elimination of the cybersecurity, I am not—been briefed on any of that, but I am happy, again, through this process, to try to elicit what information I can in relation to that.

For the responsibilities that the Under Secretary of State for Management has, including information technology, there are a variety of initiatives already underway in our information technology area to address questions of cybersecurity, including a risk officer being identified, a joint operating committee being established, and more resources being put towards the question of cybersecurity, both as nominal dollars as well as a percentage of our IT spend. I expect that, if I have the opportunity to be confirmed and working with the CIO to not only reinforce those efforts, but to elicit from them additional recommendations to continue to harden and defend the Department, which suffers millions of efforts every year on the cyber front to attack and penetrate our defenses, in an effort to enhance the stability and protection of the IT platform for all the employees, we have about—a little over a hundred-thousand points of contact, I guess is the best way to put it, computers hooked up to our network. And so, ensuring that all our employees are able to interact with each other on a platform that is stable and secure

is going to be something that I—as I mentioned in my prepared statement, I want to spend a fair amount of time on.

Finally, Senator, there is the potentiality of partnering with the private sector to elicit best practices and work from them that might benefit the Department of State and across the Government throughout all our platforms. Hopefully, there is the ability to also seek out and work in cooperation with the private sector, as well, to assist in this effort.

So, I look forward to, if I am confirmed, diving in on this, as well, inside the Department of State.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, I certainly encourage that, because a hundred-thousand points of contact is hundred point—a hundred-thousand points of vulnerability, and privacy, confidentiality is so important to diplomatic conversations.

My colleague mentioned the freeze on personnel, the—and you and I talked about the hiring of eligible family members, educational fellowships, also of Civil Service promotions. And as you answered him, I did not hear your opinion. What opinion are you bringing to this? Is it time to end this freeze in the State Department?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for that question, as well.

In terms of my opinion, I do not have a fully formed view on the issue. I am aware of a lot of feedback from employees, to your point, expressed by members through a variety of private meetings, as well as feedback that I have read and media reports in relation to this. And so, if I have the opportunity to be confirmed, I expect that I will be learning more about why matters stand as they currently do, and potential plans for addressing this in the future. Again, to my earlier conversation, in my conversation with you, the Secretary does have ability to work through specific issues on personnel, even in relation to the freeze, has done so, and I expect would continue to, but, if I am confirmed, be diving into this to examine where matters stand, to see if I have an independent opinion and what the opinion of the Department is that ultimately, in conversation with you, working through this matter with the committee and the Appropriations Committee as well.

Senator MERKLEY. These kinds of, kind of, basic pieces have a huge impact on the retention of talent, and morale, and the capability of the Department.

But, moving on to two specific questions, in the half-minute left. Do you support transferring the consular functions out of the State Department to Homeland Security? And, similarly, do you support transferring the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration to Homeland Security?

Mr. UELAND. I do not, sir. And I am not aware, during the preparation of this process, of any plans along those lines. I have read a lot of media reports, a lot of speculation, but nobody has told me that that is a plan, going forward.

Senator MERKLEY. When you say "I do not," you would like to see those stay in the State Department.

Mr. UELAND. Yes, sir. I think they are essential aspects of our foreign policy and our diplomacy. Those are some of the most significant interactions foreign nationals have with our United States

Government. And it seems to me, at least as an undereducated amateur from the outside, that it is a natural marriage that they reside in the Department of State and that our consular officers and our Bureau of Consular Affairs conduct this work in conjunction with and cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, our intelligence community, and law enforcement officials. Because, of course, visa decisions are also national security decisions, safety on behalf of the American people, but the Department of State, to me at least, seems to be the right place for these sorts of conversations to occur every day.

Senator MERKLEY. I am delighted to hear that. I certainly support keeping them in the State Department. Thank you.

Mr. UELAND. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin.

Thank you, Mr. Ueland, for your service. Congratulations on your nomination. I regret my schedule did not allow us time to meet individually before this, but I hope we get a chance to work more closely together, in the event you are confirmed.

And I am also appreciative that someone with your seasoning, your service here in the Senate will be in a fairly senior role in the State Department, if confirmed, because, as you have heard from a whole series of my colleagues, there is real concern about communication with Congress about the redesign. So, if confirmed, you will have a central role in the implementation of the redesign of the State Department, and I just wanted to drill down a number of the broader questions I wanted to ask about consultation with the FSO community and morale have been asked by colleagues, and I agree. I have recently visited four embassies in West Africa, and heard many of the same themes. Earlier in the year, I was in South Asia. I heard many of the same themes.

So, let me ask you about two specific programs. In meetings with Foreign Service Officers, I have heard repeatedly about problems created by the freeze and eligible family members being hired. Often, Foreign Service Officers have spouses with advanced degrees or with a deep experience in business or management, or in operations, or in State, who could be assisting our efforts overseas, but the State Department chose to freeze the program as part of the broader freeze Senator Murphy was referencing. If confirmed, will you work with this committee to explore ways to lift the hiring freeze for eligible family members and to analyze and understand the value that eligible family members of Foreign Service Officers posted overseas have for our embassies, not just for the work/life balance and morale of Foreign Service Officers, but for the reach and effectiveness of the foreign post?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for that question.

And, to your point, the EFM program appears to be an extremely valuable addition to all the work that our Foreign Service Officers do around the world. To the earlier conversation with other Senators in relation to the Secretary's discretion in reacting to the freeze when it comes to the EFM program, many waivers have been granted because of the value and importance of this program. So, I do expect that, if I have the opportunity to serve, after con-

firmation, to be engaged in a very good effort to fully understand both the EFM as well as the hiring freeze, potential plans, if any, that will be briefed to me if I have the privilege of serving, and then coming and discussing with Congress the plan and approach in relation to the EFM program.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Let me ask one other that is in the same vein about President Management Fellows. Some of our most talented staff have come from the ranks of former Presidential Management Fellows. And I understand the State Department suspended hiring from the finalist pool, even to the extent of freezing the onboarding process for 35 Fellows who had already received appointments for positions within the Department. Do you think the Department should be honoring its agreements with these highly skilled and distinguished Fellows? And, if confirmed, would you work to do so? And, more importantly, frankly, will you commit to working with this committee to make sure that the State Department is as aligned as successfully as possible with recruiting and retaining high-skilled and high-performance staff?

Mr. UELAND. Well, thank you for that question, as well.

And in relation to PMFs, if confirmed, to your point, a portfolio underneath the Under Secretary of Management does have interaction with this program. And I expect that I will have the opportunity to understand fully matters as they stand, and, in relation to the earlier question as well, what, if any, plans for the future are.

To your point more broadly about recruiting talent, as you know, the Secretary spoke to this issue, in very broad terms, last month, where he observed the need for the Department to look far and wide for extremely talented and highly capable individuals to come to the Department of State and serve on behalf of our foreign policy. So, I expect that, again, my portfolio will work very hard to support that goal and that objective, and I expect, as well, that the Department, under the Secretary, will be working with Congress for ways—to find ways, I should say, to support that work that he set out for all of us to do inside the Department of State.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you, Mr. Ueland. I just—I would close by imparting to you, as my colleague Chris Murphy did, I think there are five members of this committee that are also on the Appropriations Subcommittee for State and Foreign Ops. And it is September. I understand there is a very full menu of foreign policy challenges, even crises, around the world that demand the full engagement of the senior ranks of the State Department. But, I was deeply frustrated. We concluded our appropriations process without really having a sense of the direction of this redesign. So, I hope you will convey a sense of urgency about both the consultation and the forward progress. I hope to be a good partner in pursuing a balanced and appropriate and a responsible effort at trimming some of the costs but retaining the vast majority of the personnel and the programs of the State Department. At a time when we need effective diplomacy more than ever, I was struck at how long it has taken to get this process underway. And my hunch is that your confirmation might well contribute to advancing it, and certainly to advancing communications with the Senate.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your patience.

Thank you, Mr. Ueland.

Mr. UELAND. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

With that, we are going to move to the second panel. The record will remain open for questions until the close of business on Thursday. If you could promptly respond to those, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for willingness to serve in this capacity.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, if I could, just for the record. I—diversity in the Department is extremely important, not—for many, many reasons, not the least of which is our effectiveness in this globally, so I will be asking you some questions for the record as it relates to the Pinkering and Rangel Fellows and as to your commitment on maintaining and expanding the diversity within the Department.

Mr. UELAND. Thank you, Senator. I will look forward to answering any and all written questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Absolutely.

So, the second panel, if you would come up, we would appreciate it.

Okay. Today on the second panel, we have The Honorable John Bass to be Ambassador Afghanistan. Mr. Bass is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, a Class of Minister-Counselor, has served in the—as an American diplomat since 1988. He is currently Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, a position he has held since 2014. He has also served as Ambassador to the Republic of Georgia from 2009 to 2012.

We thank you for your willingness to—as we discussed yesterday, to serve in this prospective capacity. And we thank you for being here today.

Next, we have Mr. Justin Siberell. Is that pronounced correctly?

Mr. SIBERELL. Yes, it is.

The Chairman:—to be Ambassador to Bahrain. Mr. Siberell, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, has served as an American diplomat since 1993. He has served as the Acting Coordinator and the Principal Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the State Department. He has also served at six postings in the Middle East, and speaks Arabic and Spanish.

Thank you for your willingness to serve.

And lastly, we have Mr. Steven Dowd to be U.S. Director of the African Development Bank. Mr. Dowd co-founded Ag Source, LLC, a global agricultural logistics, transportation, and finance company. His prior experience also includes overseeing food aid, operations, and leading port infrastructure projects in Africa.

Thank you for doing that, and for your willingness to serve.

We will now turn to the nominees. And if you—each of you could keep your comments to 5 minutes or so, any written documents you want to have entered into the record, we will do so, without objection.

And, with that, Ambassador Bass.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN R. BASS, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

Ambassador BASS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It would be an honor to again represent our great Nation overseas, and I want to thank the President and Secretary Tillerson for the opportunity to do so. I look forward, if confirmed, to working closely with all of you to advance our interests in Afghanistan, and I will welcome frequent opportunities, as I have during my past two ambassadorships, to consult with you.

I am grateful to be joined today by my wife, Holly, a career diplomat who also will serve in Kabul, as well as my sister, Kristin Bass. And I would like to also recognize and thank some colleagues, some of who are here today, some of who are absent, who have become family during service together in challenging locations.

I have spent much of the past decade focused on curbing threats that terrorists pose to our country and our allies, and I have had the privilege to support my colleagues in Kabul, through diplomacy, to broaden our coalition and sustain our coalition there. And, if confirmed, I will focus on achieving the results we all seek in Afghanistan: a political settlement and sufficient government capacity to prevent its use anew as a platform from which terrorists can strike the homeland.

I know many of you, and many of our fellow Americans, are questioning why the United States must continue to devote so many resources to this problem and to this country. And I understand why they ask how it is we can afford this when we have such pressing needs at home. I believe, however, that we cannot afford not to sustain our efforts in Afghanistan. We do not have to guess at the consequences of choosing otherwise. We experienced them 16 years ago; and, over the past 3 years, after ISIS set up shop in under- or ungoverned spaces in Syria and Iraq, we have experienced the consequences there, as well. And, as the President has made clear, we cannot afford to shy away from tackling the challenges that these terrorist organizations pose to us, head-on.

I am not naive, obviously, 16 years into this, about the scale and complexity of the challenges we face. Fortunately, we have a bit more to work with than in the past. We have a government that wants our help, increasingly listens to our advice, and is making some progress building a government that can provide security to most Afghans. It sounds like a low bar, but if you think about where Afghans started 16 years ago, they have made some important strides forward in some key areas, including health and education. It is a different country today, and, importantly, President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah, and the Government are starting to make some important progress curbing corruption, I think, hav-

ing made more significant progress in this area in the past year than in the previous 15 years combined.

In seeking to fulfill my mandate, I will follow the new strategy approved by the President. The goal here is a sustainable political outcome that prevents terrorists from using Afghanistan as a safe haven. We have to make clear to the Taliban that it cannot outlast us on the battlefield, and that the only path forward for them is through a negotiated political settlement.

As the President emphasized, our strategy requires a whole-of-government effort. Diplomacy and focused development efforts will be instrumental to success. And a key element of our diplomacy, obviously, focuses beyond Afghanistan's borders. And I can assure you that, if confirmed, I will work closely with my colleague, Ambassador Hale, in Islamabad to improve Afghanistan and Pakistan's bilateral relationship, which fuels some of the challenges we face in Afghanistan.

Now, obviously, success cannot, will not, be driven primarily by the efforts and sacrifices of Americans. We will sustain the support of our allies and partners. In some cases, we will be asking them to do more as we go forward. I think it is important to remember and to acknowledge that our approach should not be misunderstood as a desire to occupy or remain in Afghanistan against the will of its people. We respect Afghans' fierce independence. We do not seek a permanent military base or bases there, or a presence in Afghanistan that would threaten its neighbors. And I think that is an important piece of the calculation as we continue to reinforce the diplomatic efforts with other neighbors.

It is clear to us that the Afghan Government has other large obligations to fulfill. We cannot build Afghanistan for Afghans. They have to do it themselves. But, we are certainly going to work with them and encourage reforms that enables Afghanistan to be more self-sufficient over time. Government welcomes this approach. We saw, after the strategy was announced, that Chief Executive Abdullah declared that, "Nation-building is our job." And I will be working closely, if confirmed, with him, with President Ghani, to help them undertake that important work.

Making progress has been hard. It will undoubtedly continue to be hard. But, I believe it is worth the effort and the investments, because the alternatives all lead to worst outcomes for the United States.

And I would just note, in closing, one of the first priorities of every U.S. Ambassador today is to think first of the safety and security of the people who work for them, who serve beside them. Determining how best to achieve our key objectives, while also protecting our people, will be foremost in my mind every day. And, if confirmed, I will ensure that I do everything possible to spend whatever level of funding we have for Afghanistan wisely.

In closing, I want to thank this committee for its support to the vital work of the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. And, as I noted at the outset, if confirmed, I would welcome a candid, ongoing dialogue with you about the challenges and opportunities we face.

Thank you again very much for the opportunity to appear before, and I look forward to your questions.

[Ambassador Bass's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN R. BASS

Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, members of the committee—thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It would be an honor to again represent our great nation overseas, and I want to thank the President and Secretary Tillerson for the opportunity to do so. I look forward, if confirmed, to working closely with you to advance America's interests in Afghanistan. I will welcome frequent opportunities to consult with you.

I am grateful to be joined today by my wife Holly, a career diplomat who also will serve in Kabul, and my sister, Kristin Bass. I would like to recognize and thank colleagues here today who became family during our service together in Baghdad and other challenging locations. All of us who serve in harm's way can only succeed with the support of our family and friends.

During a career devoted to serving the nation, I have spent much of the past decade focused on curbing threats terrorists pose to our country and allies. I have supported through diplomacy our efforts in Afghanistan. As U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and Georgia, I mobilized and sustained additional military and financial contributions to support the International Security Assistance Force and its successor. If confirmed, I expect to apply extensive experience leveraging our bilateral and multilateral partnerships to achieve the results we all seek in Afghanistan—a political settlement and sufficient government capacity to prevent its use anew as a platform from which terrorists can strike our Homeland.

I know many of you, and many of our fellow Americans, are questioning why the United States must continue to devote so many resources to supporting the people and Government of Afghanistan. I understand why they ask: can we afford these big expenditures at a time when we have so many pressing needs here at home? I understand why many Americans carry these sentiments.

I believe the short answer, though, is that we cannot afford not to sustain our efforts in Afghanistan. As a nation, we cannot afford the increased risks and peril that would come from a wholesale departure or rapid reduction in our footprint in Afghanistan.

We don't have to guess at the consequences from that policy choice. We experienced those consequences 16 years ago. And on a smaller but no less lethal scale, we have experienced the consequences that followed when ISIS set up shop in ungoverned spaces in Syria and Iraq, plotting, directing, and inspiring terrorist attacks against the United States and many of our friends and allies. We also know ISIS has used these spaces to conduct research on how to conduct mass casualty attacks using chemical weapons and to evade detection equipment—just as an al-Qai'da affiliate did in Yemen seven years ago.

As the President made clear in his address to the nation on August 21, we cannot—and will not—shy away from tackling these challenges head-on. The security and safety of our homeland and our fellow citizens demands it.

I'm not naíve about the scale and complexity of the challenges we and our allies face in supporting the Afghan people and their government. Fortunately, we have more to work with now than 10 or 5 years ago—starting with a government, led by President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah, that wants our help; increasingly listens to our advice; and is making progress building a reasonably effective government that can provide security and basic functions for most Afghans. That sounds like a low bar and modest results for our efforts. But if you think about where Afghans started 16 years ago, they have made important strides forward. In many key areas—health, education, access to news and information, governance—Afghanistan today is a different country. We have real achievements to build on. President Ghani and his government have made more progress curbing corruption in the past year than in the previous 15 years combined.

In seeking to fulfill my mandate, I will follow the new strategy approved by the President last month. The strategy accounts for both enduring challenges and new factors in Afghanistan and across South Asia. It directs us to tackle the root causes of the enduring conflict in Afghanistan—which include the safe havens the Taliban continues to enjoy in Pakistan, and the support it at times receives from other neighboring states—rather than simply treating the symptoms.

The goal of the new strategy is a sustainable political outcome that prevents the reestablishment of terrorist safe havens in Afghanistan. We will make clear to the Taliban that it cannot win or outlast us on the battlefield; the only path to peace and political legitimacy is through a negotiated political settlement. As you have heard in briefings on the new strategy, our support for the Afghan Government's efforts to combat Taliban violence and intimidation and resolve the conflict will be dictated by conditions on the ground—not by abstract deadlines. Through our ac-

tions, we will demonstrate to the Taliban that it cannot wait us out. We are signaling support to the Afghan public and the entire region that the United States is determined to create the conditions that enable a political settlement. Those settlement talks, if and when they come, must remain an Afghan-owned, Afghan-led process.

As the President emphasized, this strategy requires a whole-of-government effort. Diplomacy and focused efforts by our development professionals are instrumental to success. A key element of our diplomacy focuses beyond Afghanistan's borders. If confirmed, my first regional engagement priority, as directed by Washington, will be to work closely with Ambassador Hale in Islamabad to encourage and support improvements in Afghanistan and Pakistan's bilateral relationship. I intend to supplement this effort with equally focused work with my fellow ambassadors to ensure key regional countries with a stake in the region's stability—including India, Russia and China—are doing everything possible to achieve that shared objective. We must address and prevent the hedging among some regional actors that has empowered the Taliban and lengthened the conflict.

Success cannot—and will not—be driven primarily by the efforts and sacrifices of American soldiers, diplomats and taxpayers. There is a broad international military coalition led by NATO and a community of donor nations that have been essential partners in our common effort to stabilize Afghanistan. We will sustain the support from these partners and in many cases will look to them to do more.

This sustained commitment should in no way be misunderstood as a desire by the United States or our allies to occupy or remain in Afghanistan against the will of its people. We respect Afghans' fierce independence, which is reminiscent of Americans'. We do not seek any permanent military bases in their country—or a presence that would threaten Afghanistan's neighbors.

Success will depend fundamentally on the continued bravery and sacrifices of the Afghan security forces, and improved effectiveness of the national government. If confirmed, I will work closely with General Nicholson and the Pentagon's leadership to help the relevant Afghan ministries provide the logistical and materiel support essential to the success of their troops in the field.

The Afghan Government has large obligations to fulfill as well. As the President made clear, our commitment to Afghanistan does not mean we are in the business of nation-building. The Afghans must build their own nation. We cannot do it for them. But we will work with them to encourage the kinds of reforms that will enable Afghanistan to be more self-sufficient and less reliant on donor assistance over time. The Afghan Government welcomes this approach. Chief Executive Abdullah has recently declared: "Nation building is our job."

On August 23, two days after the President's address to the nation, President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah joined our Charge and General Nicholson to launch a new set of initiatives—the Kabul Compact. This compact sets benchmarks for reforms, including anti-corruption reforms, across the Government. The Afghan Government has asked us to hold them accountable to these commitments; if confirmed, I will lead our efforts to do so. Our support for their reforms will help bolster the legitimacy of the Afghan Government. It will make their security forces more effective.

Another critical area for reform involves steps to improve the electoral process, avoid the conflict and discord we saw in the 2014 presidential election, and increase the legitimacy of the Government in the eyes of its citizens. Next year's parliamentary elections will be an important test of the Afghan Government's reform efforts and a bellweather for the presidential election in 2019. In addition to these reforms, we will continue to support efforts to ensure the ability of women to participate in the electoral process, both as voters and as candidates.

We also will continue to support the Afghan Government's efforts to continue to grow the licit economy and increase public revenues. As with reform and governance, this is properly the responsibility of the Afghan Government, not the American taxpayer. As it focuses on creating the legal framework and conditions to attract additional foreign investors and partners to develop the country's enormous resource potential, I will ensure we support American companies who see those opportunities—as we do in embassies around the world.

Making progress has been hard. It will continue to be hard. That does not mean it is not worth the effort—because all of the alternatives lead to worse outcomes for the United States.

The perilous times in which we live demand that every U.S, Ambassador think first of the safety and security of their people. That has been true for me over three difficult, dangerous years in Turkey, and it will be especially true in Afghanistan. Determining how best to achieve our key objectives while also protecting our people will be foremost in my mind, every day, if I am confirmed.

Like my fellow diplomats, I am also a taxpayer, and wasted resources frustrate me. If confirmed, I will do everything possible to ensure that the funds we spend in Afghanistan are used effectively and transparently.

In closing, I want to thank this committee for the support it has provided, and continues to provide, for the vital work of the U.S. Mission in Afghanistan. If confirmed, I would welcome a candid, ongoing dialogue with you about the challenges and opportunities we face. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Siberell.

STATEMENT OF JUSTIN HICKS SIBERELL, OF MARYLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Mr. SIBERELL. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

I am extremely grateful to the President and to Secretary Tillerson for the confidence they have shown in me to this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Congress and with this committee to advance our Nation's vital interests with Bahrain.

I am privileged to be joined today by my family: my wife, Arnavaz, our son, Samuel, and daughter, Emmeline. Our youngest son, Benjamin, is in school today. Ours is a true Foreign Service family, with each of our children born during one of our assignments in the field: Sam in Tunisia, Emmie in Jordan, and Ben in the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Bahrain share a longstanding partnership based on common interests in regional security and the friendship of our two peoples. Since the 1940s, Bahrain has hosted the United States Navy, and is currently home to thousands of Americans attached to the U.S. Naval Central Command and the U.S. Fifth Fleet. The operational and logistical support that the Kingdom provides our military is essential to the success of our campaign against ISIS, and enables our Navy to lead a 31-country international coalition that counters piracy, drug trafficking, and terrorism across 2 and a half million square miles of ocean and seas.

The United States works closely with the Bahrain Defense Force to ensure Bahrain has the tools and capabilities to defend against external aggression in strength and cooperation with U.S. and other allied regional militaries.

Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, the administration recently notified the Congress of the approval of a number of possible defense sales that will address critical needs in the Bahrain Defense Force's air, land, and naval capabilities, including the sale of new F–16 aircraft and upgrades to previously purchased F–16s. These new military sales will provide Bahrain with reliable capability and increased interoperability with U.S. forces.

I look forward to the close cooperation with colleagues at the Department of Defense to continue to support Bahrain's armed forces to address shared threats. In this regard, we are committed to working together with Bahrain to ensure it is able to counter persistent threats from Iran, including Iran's training and supply of lethal aid to individuals and groups targeting the Government and security forces of Bahrain.

Success in confronting shared threats in the Gulf region rests, in large part, on the commitment of our close partners to work together towards inclusive and mutually supportive security arrangements. It is for this reason that the United States continues to encourage a rapid resolution to the ongoing dispute among the GCC states. If confirmed, I will work to support the efforts of Secretary Tillerson to assist the parties in resolving their differences.

Enhancing our security cooperation with Bahrain does not diminish the enduring emphasis we place on human rights issues. Indeed, our counterterrorism and military cooperation with Bahrain is paired with a clear understanding that Bahrain's own long-term stability and security depend on it achieving political reconciliation and upholding its commitments to universal human rights.

We continue to be concerned with government actions against nonviolent political and human rights actors, and will continue to urge the Government of Bahrain to take steps to ensure inclusive elections in 2018 and to advance reform efforts for the benefit of Bahrain's long-term security and our mutual interests in regional stability. 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.

Increasing American exports and jobs for the American people is a top priority for me. The United States and Bahrain enjoy a strong economic partnership highlighted by the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement. Since that agreement entered into force in 2006, bilateral U.S.-Bahrain trade has more than doubled, to $1.7 billion annually. More than 180 U.S. companies do business in Bahrain, a number I am committed to grow, if given the opportunity.

Bahrain deserves some praise for its efforts to end human trafficking within its own borders by developing a national referral mechanism, promoting a national anti-trafficking strategy, investigating potential trafficking cases, and taking steps to amend elements of the sponsorship system that increases workers' vulnerability to forced labor and debt bondage. There is more that can be done, as is indicated in the State Department's Annual Trafficking-in-Persons Report, including proactive identification of potential forced-labor victims and increased prosecutions of forced-labor crimes. This issue is very important to me and to this administration, as I know it is to this committee.

Advancing our interests in Bahrain will be facilitated by the close bonds of friendship that have been developing over—have been developed over many decades with the Bahraini people, beginning more than 100 years ago through the founding of the American Mission Hospital, which continues to serve patients in Bahrain today.

Hundreds of Bahraini students come to the United States each year to attend U.S. colleges and universities, providing Bahrainis with a deeper understanding of American society and the American people. And more than 2,500 Bahrainis have participated in official cultural and academic exchanges over the several decades, including the Fulbright Program.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, ensuring the safety of the people who serve at Embassy Manama and the American citizen community resident in Bahrain will be my foremost priority, if confirmed as Ambassador to Bahrain. During my career in the Foreign Service, I have served across the Middle East, including in high-threat posts under persistent threat of terrorist attack. I understand the importance of prudent and proactive security measures to protect our personnel, as well as the need for close and open communication with the American citizen community to ensure their safety and security.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is a singular honor to have been nominated to serve as Ambassador to Bahrain.

I welcome any questions you may have for me. Thank you.

[Mr. Siberell's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JUSTIN SIBERELL

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain. I am extremely grateful to the President and to Secretary Tillerson for the confidence they have shown in me through this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Congress and with this committee to advance our nation's vital interests with Bahrain.

I am privileged to be joined today by my family—my wife Arnavaz, our son Samuel and daughter Emeline. Our youngest son, Benjamin, is in school today. Ours is a true Foreign Service family, with each of our children born during one of our assignments in the field—Sam in Tunisia, Emmie in Jordan, and Ben in the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Bahrain share a long-standing partnership based on common interests in regional security and the friendship of our two peoples. Since the 1940's, Bahrain has hosted the United States Navy and is currently home to thousands of Americans attached to U.S. Navy Central Command and the U.S. Fifth Fleet. The operational and logistical support that the Kingdom provides our military is essential to the success of our campaign against ISIS and enables our Navy to lead a 31-country international coalition that counters piracy, drug trafficking, and terrorism across 2.5 million square miles of ocean and seas.

The United States works closely with the Bahrain Defence Force to ensure Bahrain has the tools and capabilities to defend against external aggression and strengthen cooperation with U.S. and other allied regional militaries. Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, the administration recently notified the Congress of the approval of a number of possible defense sales that will address critical needs in the Bahrain Defence Force's air, land and naval capabilities, including the sale of new F-16 aircraft and upgrades to previously purchased F-16s. These new military sales will provide Bahrain with a reliable capability and increased interoperability with U.S. forces.

I look forward to close cooperation with colleagues at the Department of Defense to continue to support Bahrain's armed forces to address shared threats. In this regard, we are committed to working together with Bahrain to ensure it is able to counter persistent threats from Iran, including Iran's training and supply of lethal aid to individuals and groups targeting the Government and security forces of Bahrain.

Success in confronting shared threats in the Gulf region rests in large part on the commitment of our close partners to work together towards inclusive and mutually-supportive security arrangements. It is for this reason that the United States con-

tinues to encourage a rapid resolution to the ongoing dispute among the GCC states. If confirmed, I will work to support the efforts of Secretary Tillerson to assist the parties in resolving their differences.

Enhancing our security cooperation with Bahrain does not diminish the enduring emphasis we place on human rights issues. Indeed, our counterterrorism and military cooperation with Bahrain is paired with a clear understanding that Bahrain's own long-term stability and security depend on it achieving political reconciliation and upholding its commitments to universal human rights. We continue to be concerned with government actions against nonviolent political and human rights actors, and will continue to urge the Government of Bahrain to take steps to ensure inclusive elections in 2018 and to advance reform efforts for the benefit of Bahrain's long-term security and our mutual interests in regional stability. 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.

Increasing American exports and jobs for the American people is a top priority for me. The United States and Bahrain enjoy a strong economic partnership, highlighted by the U.S.—Bahrain Free Trade Agreement. Since that agreement entered into force in 2006, bilateral U.S.—Bahrain trade has more than doubled to $1.7 billion annually. More than 180 U.S. companies do business in Bahrain, a number I am committed to grow if given the opportunity.

Bahrain deserves praise for its efforts to end human trafficking within its borders by developing a national referral mechanism, promoting a national anti-trafficking strategy, investigating potential trafficking cases, and taking steps to amend elements of the sponsorship system that increases workers' vulnerability to forced labor and debt bondage. There is more that can be done, as indicated in the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report, including proactive identification of potential forced labor victims and increased prosecutions of forced labor crimes. This issue is very important to me and to this administration, as I know it is to this committee.

Advancing our interests in Bahrain will be facilitated by the close bonds of friendship that have been developed over many decades with the Bahraini people, beginning more than 100 years ago through the founding of the American Mission Hospital, which continues to serve patients in Bahrain today. Hundreds of Bahraini students come to the United States each year to attend U.S. colleges and universities, providing Bahrainis with a deeper understanding of American society and the American people, and more than 2,500 Bahrainis have participated in official cultural and academic exchanges over several decades, including the Fulbright Program.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, ensuring the safety of the people who serve at Embassy Manama and the American citizen community resident in Bahrain will be my foremost priority if confirmed as Ambassador to Bahrain. During my career in the Foreign Service, I have served across the Middle East, including in high threat posts under persistent threat of terrorist attack. I understand the importance of prudent and proactive security measures to protect our personnel, as well as the need for close and open communication with the American citizen community to ensure their safety and security.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is a singular honor to have been nominated to serve as Ambassador to Bahrain.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Dowd.

STATEMENT OF J. STEVEN DOWD, OF FLORIDA, NOMINEE TO BE UNITED STATES DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS

Mr. DOWD. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the Foreign Relations Committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as Executive Director of the African Development Bank.

For decades, I have worked in project finance, agribusiness, and logistics in developing countries. And, if confirmed, I will marshal all my professional experiences toward bettering the African Development Bank and furthering U.S. interests.

I would like to introduce my wife, Lillian, my life's inspiration, and our three children, Steven, Thomas, and Andrea. Lillian is an attorney who previously served as a Deputy Attorney General in Delaware. Lillian is profoundly committed to combating human trafficking and child stunting and malnutrition, a commitment I share. If confirmed, I will search for ways to make the Bank a forceful check on these twin scourges.

My first encounter with development economics was as a teenaged merchant crewman delivering Food for Peace PL–480 grain cargoes to hungry nations. I watched as the desperately poor struggled to survive and made the most of the grain we delivered to them. Later, postgraduate studies at the Georgetown School of Foreign Service allowed me to deepen my knowledge of development economics in the context of global issues. Since then, I have worked in logistics and finance on private development projects around the world. Therefore, I believe I am well equipped to address the challenges facing the African Development Bank.

If confirmed, I would lead the effort to leverage the U.S. contribution to the Bank in order to ensure that its finance efforts are used to the best benefit for Africa, that they are consistent with U.S. policy interests there, and that American taxpayers get a good return for their money. I will strive to open Africa to American investment and know-how and facilitate U.S. companies doing business in Africa. I will also advocate for additional efforts to curb corruption and abuses of power that inhibit Africans to live longer, healthier, better lives.

Finally, if confirmed as Executive Director of the African Development Bank, I will work closely with the members of this committee and its staff, and with other Members of Congress, to perform my responsibilities as effectively as possible.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to be—to appear before you and the other members of the committee. And I look forward to your questions.

[Mr. Dowd's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF J. STEVEN DOWD

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Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and the other members of the committee, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. I am deferring to Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And again, I thank all three of our nominees, and thank you for your public service, and thank your families.

Mr. Siberell, I would like to start with Bahrain. Secretary Tillerson said, "In Bahrain, the Government continued to question, detain, arrest Shi'ite clerics, community members, and opposition politicians, members of the Shi'ite community there, continue to report ongoing discrimination in government employment, education, and the justice system. Bahrain must stop discriminating against the Shi'ite communities." Secretary Tillerson. Are you prepared, if confirmed as Ambassador, that our mission in Bahrain will be open to the Shi'ite community be able to have an advocate on behalf of their concerns against the Bahrain Government?

Mr. SIBERELL. Senator, thank you very much for the question and for your interest in this particular issue. Those remarks are from the Secretary's release of the International Religious Freedom Report recently. And absolutely, to answer your question, my mission would remain open to all voices within the Bahraini political and civil society, as we have been. And I look forward to continuing that and being open to all voices.

Senator CARDIN. And I want it to be open to all voices, but the Shi'ite population has a particular urgent need.

Mr. SIBERELL. Understood. Yes, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. And you will keep this committee and me informed as to what you are doing in regards to that.

Mr. SIBERELL. I look forward to that opportunity, Senator, absolutely, yes.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Dowd, can you just share with us your commitment in regards to the operations at the Bank or the member countries in fighting corruption, which is a major problem in that region?

Mr. DOWD. Thank you for the question, Senator.

Absolutely. You are correct that corruption is a scourge of the continent. It is pervasive. And I—although I am not onsite yet, and I do not really know what the Bank is currently doing in this regard, I will certainly advocate forcefully for the maximum control of corruption and malfeasance.

Senator CARDIN. I am going to be asking all three of you, in your—if confirmed—in your missions, to keep my staff informed as to your progress being made on behalf of good governance, human rights, anti-corruption, where you can all three play a major role.

Ambassador Bass, you and I had a chance to talk about the fact that you are not going to have a lasting peace in Afghanistan unless the Government is respected the rights of all the people of Afghanistan.

But, I want to ask you a particular question. I agree with your statement that we do not seek any permanent military bases in their country, referring to Afghanistan. Now, we have been there since 2001. Sixteen years might not be permanent, but it is starting to look like a permanent presence of American troops in Afghanistan. What is it going to take for us to be able to get our troops home? Do you really envision that your—during your term of Ambassador, assuming that you are confirmed, that we will be able to bring our troops home?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, thank you for articulating one of the key questions that we are all asking, and have been for a number of years.

It has been out of my lane to offer an assessment on the military side, in terms of where a tipping point will come. I do not think it is realistic to expect that—whether it is 2 years from now or 3 years from now, that we will have a much smaller military footprint.

Senator CARDIN. I agree with that assessment. It is a very honest response. How do you have credibility with this statement that we are not seeking a permanent military base in Afghanistan, when, upon your arrival, there will be more American troops arriving with you?

Ambassador BASS. I think the key aspect of that is what we are doing, and will be doing, which is primarily to support the Afghan Security Forces to get better over time at taking care of their own security needs. And if we are successful in doing that over time, there is less of a requirement for U.S. forces to be there. Easier said than done. As I said, this is going to be hard, and it is complicated. But, I think that is our road to a smaller footprint over time, hopefully through a negotiated political settlement. And it is through that settlement that I think we ensure that we do not have to have a permanent military presence there.

Senator CARDIN. And I think credibility is very important. And, as you said, "a smaller footprint over time" still gives me less comfort that we do not have a permanent presence in Afghanistan, of American troops. Something that I strongly believe is critically important for Afghans' future, is that there is a end—a light at the end of the tunnel that we will be bringing our troops home from Afghanistan. And, quite frankly, I do not see that in the game plan that has been presented. It looks like a permanent U.S. presence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso.

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

Ambassador Bass, I appreciated you making the mention of corruption, because Afghanistan continues to experience corruption, really at all levels. Systemic corruption in Afghanistan, it is a major threat to U.S. objectives, I believe, in that country, to the point that the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan has uncovered terrible examples, as you know, of waste, of corruption, of fraud, in the way that reconstruction funds have been spent in Afghanistan. We talked about it here previously in this committee.

Last year, the Special Inspector General found, quote, "The United States contributed to the growth of corruption—the United States contributed to the growth of corruption by injecting tens of

billions of dollars into the Afghan economy, using flawed oversight in contracting practices, and partnering with malign power brokers."

So, you know, what is your assessment of the amount of foreign assistance that Afghanistan can actually absorb? And these are bipartisan concerns. In the hearing with the Inspector General's finding—I mean, this is not a partisan issue at all; this is an American issue of great concern. So, could you visit a little bit about that?

Ambassador BASS. Thank you, Senator. Again, another key piece of the challenge set, and what we need to be focused on.

I did note, as you mentioned, an emphasis during my tenure, if I am confirmed, in ensuring that we focus a great deal of our efforts on helping the Afghan Government address this problem set, and on ensuring that we are spending wisely, whether we have a lot of resources to work with or not very many. For me, the key variable is making sure we get an impact and a result for spending the taxpayers' dollars.

I think the key is, we now have a government that is taking this problem seriously in Afghanistan, just released a new set of measures under a term called the Kabul Compact, which includes a lot of key reform efforts they are committed to undertaking. And, importantly, they have asked us to hold them accountable for results. And, if I am confirmed, I can assure you that will be a top priority for me.

Senator BARRASSO. I appreciate it, because accountability is a big issue for all of us, and then the oversight to make sure—as you said, to hold them accountable. Can you talk a little bit about what you could do to improve our abilities—the ability of our government to—just to oversee and to monitor this assistance?

Ambassador BASS. Well, I think we are going to continue to need to be creative and thoughtful and imaginative about how we do that, given some of the security challenges. Obviously, I do not want to put people in harm's way unduly, but, at the same time, I also want to make sure we are getting results for our funding.

My understanding is, we have got some pretty thorough third-party monitoring efforts in place utilizing a lot of Afghans, sometimes at risk to themselves. But, I certainly will want to take a fresh look at it to see if there are ways we can improve that.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, you hit the key word that I have been—my next—my little notes to myself is—what about the security? How has the security situation and violence impacted the effectiveness of our civilian mission?

Ambassador BASS. It has definitely made doing our work more challenging. It is harder for people to be out and about in society, but I think my colleagues have done a good job of finding ways to continue to interact with Afghans, whether it is them coming to see us more regularly, working through intermediaries, in some cases. But, as the security environment continues to change, we obviously have to adapt and change with it, whether it is getting worse or whether it is getting better. And I think that is a key piece of what Chiefs of Mission are responsible for, is to make sure we can do that.

Senator BARRASSO. Because, I mean, you have broad experience, a wonderful career. You have been a lot of places, so that—I mean,

that is my question, is, How does the Government then properly evaluate and monitor programs in countries across the world, where there are serious restrictions on freedom of movement and a deteriorating security environment?

Ambassador BASS. As I noted, I think we have to be creative, we have to be thoughtful, and we have to adapt to conditions as they exist. And we have to learn as we go. And my sense is that we are doing that. And we need to continue to do that. But, I think, most importantly, we need to make sure that we continue to have some degree of visibility on individual programs, individual projects so that we are constantly evaluating whether we are getting the results we should.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you. Thank you very much for your willing to serve.

And congratulations to all of you, and to your families, as well.

My time is expired.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all very much for your willingness to serve the country. And congratulations on your nominations.

Ambassador Bass, as we again increase troops in Afghanistan and look at the military conflict there, one of the significant pieces of success is the importance of our local partners on the ground. And one of the promises that we have made is that, for those Afghans who help us in our mission there, that if they are threatened, that we will try and allow them to come to the United States, out of harm's way. And I wonder, if you would—if you can commit, this morning, to publicly continue to support the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program, and whether you agree that it is important that we keep this program in place.

Ambassador BASS. Thank you, Senator.

I think we have a solemn obligation to support local colleagues who often work for us, serve the interests of the United States, at great risk to themselves and their families. My colleague, Mr. Siberell, and I have both worked with Iraqis who would tell us stories of a 2-hour commute in each direction, with five and six changes of transportation, to make sure that it was not visible. And I am sure you have heard many of those kinds of stories. And within the construct of resources and at ref to larger administration policies, certainly I will be continuing to advocate that we do the right thing by those people in Afghanistan who have been serving us.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

On Monday, the Pakistani Foreign Minister went to Iran. And the news out of his meetings with Mr. Rouhani were that they discussed the importance of a political solution in Afghanistan. Can you talk about the role of the region in Afghanistan and in our potential to reach a political settlement there, and how important the role of Pakistan and other countries are in doing that?

Ambassador BASS. Thank you.

It—we will not succeed if we do not have the support and cooperation of Pakistan's neighbors and the wider circumference of significant countries in the wider region who also have an enormous stake in the stability and relative security of Afghanistan. I think one of the things working in our favor as we pick our way through this complicated landscape is that, generally speaking, everyone wants to see the same result in Afghanistan. It is not in anyone's interest for Afghanistan to remain a sinkhole of violence and a safe haven for extreme terrorism.

So, the challenge we have got is to ensure that we have got a common approach among all of these countries about how we achieve that result we all want to see, and ensuring that the neighbors and the—this wider set of countries continue to support the Afghan Government in its efforts, not simply to deal with the violence and the terrorism inside the country, but to also build that government capacity so that, if we do get to a political settlement, there is a capable government that can negotiate with the Taliban and then perform the basic functions of government on the other side of that.

Obviously, Pakistan has a key role to play. They have been, as we know, a source of some of the significant challenges in Afghanistan in enabling the Taliban to rest and refit, plan coordinated attacks. So, I think we have got a lot of work to do. And, as I noted, I am going to be working very closely, if I am confirmed, with Ambassador Hale and many colleagues here in the Department to try to change the Pakistani Government's approach towards this problem set and how they best see a resolution.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Siberell, you mentioned, in your opening statement, the fact that we have just approved a sale of F-16s to Bahrain. And you also pointed out the concerns about human rights there, and how we address those. During the previous administration, the sale of F–16s had been held up. And, as I understand, there was a linkage to human rights violations as part of that sale. Do you think we should continue to try and be—look at tying what is happening on the human rights front to other military assistance to Bahrain, or other aid that we give them?

Mr. SIBERELL. Senator, thank you very much for the question.

I think it is absolutely vital that we pursue the broad range of our interests with the Government of Bahrain, both strengthening their own capability to defend the country from very real threats from Iran and others in the region, and from terrorist threats, but, at the same time, never step away from our obligations to continue to hold a very open and serious dialogue with the Government of Bahrain about conditions inside the country, to include the promotion and protection of human rights.

There are some cases in which we have not been willing to sell the Bahraini Government certain items, particularly with regard to crown control and internal security. And those remain in place. But, the linking directly of the military sales, which get to the, you know, key element of our partnership to help Bahrain defend itself, and also operate alongside U.S. forces, this is a very important component of our military cooperation, to the human rights issue, those just need to be brought together in our conversation, in a

broadbased conversation with the Bahraini Government, in my view.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could, on that note—a very good question—I think that Senator Cardin had a conversation with them. It is my belief that we should not tie human rights directly to arms sales, but we certainly should work at it side by side. These sales, by the way, are ones that were approved prior to the hold that was placed on sales to all GCC members as relate to the—as it relates to the conflict that exists right now between these countries and Qatar. So, this was a previously approved sale. And I know there has been some misreporting on that. The sales that were discussed after the fact are still on hold, and hopefully will help bring resolution to the conflict there.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And congratulations to each of you.

Mr. Dowd, you are—you have a good fortune of being on a panel with two people whose billets are pretty controversial. That means they get most of the questions.

But, let me ask Mr. Siberell, just on the Bahraini question. I was in Bahrain only once. And it has now been a number of years ago. But, obviously, with the Fifth Fleet there, the situation in Bahrain is very important to us. They are facing a very real challenge of Iranian-supported efforts to destabilize the Government, but they also have a citizenry that is 70-percent Shi'a, and a wide perception, in and outside the country, that the Shi'a population there is not being treated well. So, you are going to have a lot of instability if you do not treat 70 percent of your population well. And if you just try to blame it on somebody else, that is not going to go very far.

My perception, over the last few years, is, whether it is, you know, threatened arms sales or not, that the human rights situation in Bahrain, and the sincere effort to deal with and then make progress on concerns of 70 percent of the population, there has not really been much progress. I would love to be wrong about that assumption. Am I wrong about that?

Mr. SIBERELL. Well, Senator, thank you very much for your question. I think you have identified one of the critical challenges we have.

On the one hand, Bahrain faces very real, credible threats from Iran. Those have been voiced by senior officials in the Quds Force that have threatened Bahrain. We know of Iranian training and equipping of individuals and groups who threaten the Bahraini Security Forces. There have been——

Senator KAINE [continuing]. Efforts to ship arms into Bahrain.

Mr. SIBERELL. Absolutely.

Senator KAINE. Yeah.

Mr. SIBERELL. That is right. And, in fact, earlier this year, the State Department designated two individuals who are part of the al-Ashtar brigades, one of whom is resident in Iran, who had been involved in attacks against the Bahraini state and the Government. So, there is a serious threat, there is a real threat there.

At the same time, as you pointed out, channels, and effective channels, for political discourse for involvement in the affairs of the country are critical to ensuring the essential stability upon which our partnership must rest, and ultimately for the stability and strength of the Bahraini state and its relationship with its people.

When I was previously—in my previous position in the Counterterrorism Bureau, we frequently emphasized, with partners in governments, that there need be no contradiction between promotion and protection of human rights, fundamental civil and human rights, and an effective security practices, which protect the population. And that is a point I will continue to emphasize, if given the opportunity, if confirmed as Ambassador to Bahrain, that we need to bring these two together. To conflate security and terrorism with—or to conflate, rather, legitimate political speech with terrorism is to potentially cut off channels for the kind of discourse that is required for, ultimately, a healthy and stable society.

Senator KAINE. I think it is very important. And again, it is important, in and of itself, but, with the Fifth Fleet presence being so important, and its continued viability, long-term, in Bahrain being connected certainly to the stability in that country, it really achieves a huge importance. So, thank you for that.

Ambassador Bass, you are going to do a—as good a job as any human can do in this position. I have such confidence in you from my work with you when you were Ambassador to Turkey. One of the things we are really going to need from you, should you be confirmed, is candor. An area that I always find perplexing here is, when it comes to Afghanistan, whether I am talking to State, DOD, or our intel agencies, I get very different—very, very different pictures of what might happen. And so, we are going to really need candor from you. And once—one of our lead military officers in Afghanistan said something really candid to me, and I say, "I appreciate your candor," and he goes, "I am going to be candid. What are they going to do? Send me to Afghanistan?" [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. So, we are going to need your candor, because I think there is a lot of confusion about the future mission, but also what is the likelihood of success.

And we really need to hear from the administration on this. The President made a speech that, I think, at the top level, was fine, but there were not a lot of details. And then we got a good briefing last week, in a classified setting, members of the Senate did, but, like the briefing we got about the ISIS plan, it was in a classified setting. We have not had public briefings. And this is something that the public really needs to hear. That is more likely to be a briefing in the Armed Services Committee than here. But, we cannot operate just on the basis of classified briefings about what the plan is. We have to bring the public into this.

Let me just ask you one question, quickly. What is your perception, as somebody's who is really skilled in this area—what is your perception about the arc of progress in Pakistan in fighting extremist terrorist elements that are on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border? Are we going in the right direction, are we in stasis, or are we going in the wrong direction?

Ambassador BASS. Thank you very much, Senator.

I think we are going in the right direction. But, as with all of these challenges, it is not necessarily always going to be a linear process. The adversaries adapt. We have to then make adjustments. They adapt again. I have seen this happen persistently through the last 3 years of—from Turkey, working with our colleagues in uniform on that—on the problem set in northern Iraq and northern Syria.

Senator KAINE. So, you believe—and I will be very quick—you believe we are going in the right direction. It is not linear, so we might wish the pace would be faster. But, the way you just said it is, adversaries adapt. So, to the degree to which we are not going fast enough, you view it as more the adaptation of adversaries rather than any equivocal commitment on behalf of the Pakistani Government and military?

Ambassador BASS. I would not make that stark an assessment.

Senator KAINE. Okay.

Ambassador BASS. I think we need both. We need to continue to adapt our tactics. Obviously, outside my lane. But, in my lane, we have got to continue to mobilize diplomatic persuasion and some pressure on the Government of Pakistan to make sure we get the right performance on the safe-haven challenges.

Senator KAINE. Right.

Thank you for letting me go over, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, no problem.

I am going to go ahead and call on Senator Merkley, and then Senator Coons. I have to step out to the ante room for a moment. I know that you all will work cooperatively with each other.

So, Senator Merkley?

Thank you.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, each of you, for your willingness to serve the United States.

Ambassador Bass, which is more complicated, Turkey or Afghanistan?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, I think it depends on the day.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, two extraordinarily difficult situations.

The President has said that we will not dictate to the Afghan people how to live or how to govern their own complex society, and that we are not going to be engaged in nation-building. Does this mean our investment in health centers is ending?

Ambassador BASS. Thank you very much for identifying that aspect of our ongoing efforts.

As I noted in the outset, we are going to continue to need, on the civilian side, to ensure that we have a government that is capable of governing on the other side of a political settlement, if we are successful in creating the conditions that bring the Taliban to the table. From my perspective, a government that is capable is a government that is responsive to the needs that are identified by its citizens.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, I am just trying to get clarity on this point. Are we planning to continue investing in health centers, or not?

Ambassador BASS. My understanding is, in the short term, we certainly are.

Senator MERKLEY. Okay. Let us turn, then, to our investment in road infrastructure. Is that—is the intention to continue that investment, as well?

Ambassador BASS. I believe, for out years, that is under consideration by AID as they reevaluate priorities and the security.

Senator MERKLEY. What projects are we actually canceling, in terms of the President's dictates to no longer engage in nation-building?

Ambassador BASS. My understanding, based on my initial consultations with AID, is that they are now reviewing their current portfolio and planning to put some recommendations forward, but I do not have an specifics.

Senator MERKLEY. So, there is no answer. At this point, it is just a policy idea out there in the air, but no concrete plan.

Ambassador BASS. It is.

Senator MERKLEY. Okay. We have responded to a few things within Afghanistan that are very offensive to Americans: widespread child rape by warlords, and also the widespread societal discrimination against women and girls. When the President says we are not going to dictate how to govern, does this mean we are not going to weigh in on those issues anymore?

Ambassador BASS. I believe we will continue to express our strong concerns about practices and activities in Afghanistan that are outside of commitments Afghans have made to themselves under their constitution and with their international commitments.

Senator MERKLEY. Okay. Well, so far, this sounds very much like our current policy. And we throw in pressure on corruption, which we have been doing forever, there are a few show trials to make us happy, but international organizations say it is as bad as it has ever been, or perhaps worse, with the strength of some of the warlords. We have pressured Pakistan before; in fact, to the point that they shut down the Khyber Pass, and we had to airlift and turn to Central Asia to import things into our supply chain into Afghanistan. We say our new strategy is to support the Afghan forces. That has been our old strategy, to enable them to do that work. We say, "Well, we are working to set the stage for political settlement." That is, in fact, our old policy.

So, on these five fundamental principles, this sounds very much like a continuation of the existing policy. What am I missing?

Ambassador BASS. Well, I think you are going to see a renewed focus on the broader regional challenge. My understanding, from my colleagues at the Pentagon, is that they believe that, notwithstanding the challenges of the past few years, fighting seasons, the Afghan defense forces are becoming more capable, and they are taking on more to the fight, themselves. So, I think it is a different fight, if you will, from 5 years ago. And I think, importantly, on the civilian side, we have a government now that wants our help, is willing to listen to us, is asking us to hold them to commitments they are making to themselves. And my understanding is, that is a bit different from some of the past dynamics.

Senator MERKLEY. I would just note that, in terms of pressuring Pakistan on the safe haven, we applied enormous pressure before. And not only did they shut down our movement of goods into Afghanistan, but they have noted that they have had 50,000 civilian

deaths, or 5,000 Security Force deaths, taking on extremists within Pakistan. That is a higher price than virtually anyone else has paid. And our failure to recognize that is profoundly offensive to them. And they are also very concerned about the drone strikes that have killed many civilians within Pakistan, as well, at least in the opinion of the Pakistani Government.

The argument has always been, "Well, we are not going to let Afghanistan be a haven for terrorists." Al-Qaeda, essentially, long gone, down to less than 100, years and years ago. The Taliban, obviously, control a significant share of the country. They can hold meetings all over the country. But, those meetings occur with far less logistical support than terrorists—related terrorists can have in Somalia, in Yemen, where there is more communications, more access to ports.

The long and short of it is, Afghanistan today, a planning can be held in any one of thousands of buildings. They control more territory. Does not affect whether or not they can hold meetings. Is there not something kind of missing in our basic theory that we are denying—that somehow our current presence is denying planning meetings from occurring inside Afghanistan?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, always hard to prove a hypothetical. What I would offer is different context, but what I have watched over the last 3 years is what happens when you have ungoverned space that is violent, unstable, and creates new opportunities for even more extreme terrorist groups to take root. And I think one of the most disturbing trend lines of the last couple of years is the creation of an ISIS affiliate in Afghanistan that potentially could inject a sectarian dimension into the conflict, which largely has not been there in the past. And if we think we have a big problem set now, it could get even worse.

So, you know, my answer would be, we have to continue this effort, because I think all the alternatives are even worse for us.

Senator MERKLEY. But, you would acknowledge there is a lot of ungoverned space that fits that definition right now within Afghanistan.

Ambassador BASS. Yes.

Senator MERKLEY. Yeah. Okay, thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you. With the concurrence of my wonderful colleague, Senator Young, I am going to proceed, if that is okay.

Senator YOUNG. Duly concurred.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator.

Many of us have competing hearings. And so, forgive me for having departed and returned. So many others do, as well, and it leads to some of this uneven timing.

Thank you, all three of you—Mr. Dowd, Mr. Siberell, and Ambassador Bass—for your willingness to serve our country in these important different posts and regions.

And, Mr. Dowd, when I realized that your wife had served as a Deputy Attorney General in Delaware, I realized I had to come back. I—there was no way I could miss an opportunity to highlight both your passionate engagement in issues in Africa and your wife's dedicated service to law enforcement, and to the important work against trafficking.

Let me begin, if I might, with Ambassador Bass. It is great to see you again. I respect your service in Turkey and, as several of my colleagues have referenced, taking on now the challenge in Afghanistan is one that dwarfs, I think, even the challenge in Turkey.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but one of the things that I found striking about the President's address, about our path forward in Afghanistan, and was in some ways repeated in your opening statement. I think I quote you, "We have to make clear to the Taliban they cannot outlast us on the battlefield." That is clearly our new conditions-based, as it were, framework. How long do you think the Taliban can last on the battlefield? Twenty-five years? Fifty years? A hundred years?

Ambassador BASS. Senator, thank you for that question.

Senator COONS. It is a question I think all of us should be wrestling.

Ambassador BASS. Absolutely.

Senator COONS. It is not meant as a gotcha question.

Ambassador BASS. No, no.

Senator COONS. It is a question I wrestle with.

Ambassador BASS. No. And it is one of the reasons why I welcome this—these exchanges, because these are the right questions for all of us to be wrestling with. Bit difficult for me to answer it at this stage of my preparations, given how much of it is informed by, you know, detailed assessments of our analysts and our military colleagues.

Senator COONS. Well, then, in the interest of time, let me simply say that, as we work together to clarify and refine our Nation's strategy with regards to Afghanistan, one of my core concerns is that, when we are considering people who live in caves and who are deeply dedicated to their work against us, I think we would be wise to assume a longer, rather than a shorter, timeline of their determined unwillingness to negotiate and their commitment to the fight. And I just wish the President's call to arms for a longer-term engagement had been clear about that. And I think all of us wrestle with that. Sixteen years is an awfully long time to be at war in Afghanistan. But, if we are moving to a conditions-based strategy, we might very well be facing a generational commitment.

Now, decades after the Korean conflict ended, we still have significant military assets on the Korean Peninsula. It is not that the United States is unfamiliar with long-term commitments. We still have military units on the ground in Germany, many decades after the end of the second World War. It is not impossible that we would choose to make a generational commitment to the stability and security of Afghanistan. I just think we need to be more clear-eyed about the consequences of that.

Let me briefly ask you how you think we might deal with expanding Russian and Iranian influence in Afghanistan, as well, before I turn to your two colleagues.

Ambassador BASS. Sir, the—I think we have to do two things. We have to make sure that we are in constant dialogue with them, notwithstanding some of the other challenges in our relationship with Russia, and potentially through Russia with the Iranian Government or others who are talking directly with them, to make

sure we have got as close to common assessment of what is happening on the ground as we can. And we also got to continue to work to ensure that they are putting the weight of their effort behind supporting the Afghan Government in this effort, because, to the extent they start to hedge or intensify hedging by supporting the Taliban, that does not lead to a good outcome.

Senator COONS. I am, frankly, gravely concerned, given the role that Vladimir Putin's Russia has played in the North Korean challenge, in Ukraine, in our recent election, that he will choose this moment to actively engage in opposition to our interests and our security in Afghanistan, particularly given he is a leader motivated by grievance over the fall of the Soviet Union, and it was, in many ways, our role in Afghanistan that accelerated the Soviet departure from Afghanistan. So, I would urge you to be attentive to that and communicate with us about it. Thank you for your willingness to take this on.

Mr. Siberell, if I might briefly—while I am grateful for Bahrain's support, partnership with us in military matters and in counterterrorism, as a co-chair of the Senate Human Rights Caucus, I am concerned about the poor human rights conditions, which you referenced in your opening statement, in Bahrain. They have imprisoned the country's leading human rights defender, for tweets; they have banned the country's largest opposition party; they have killed clerics who have called for political reform. How will you encourage Bahrain's rulers and leaders to respect human rights?

Mr. SIBERELL. Senator, thank you very much for the question.

This will be very high priority for me in my discussions with the Bahraini Government. We do raise our concerns with regard to the specific issues in cases you addressed, and maintain a—an ongoing dialogue with the Government of Bahrain about the importance of protecting fundamental human rights. It is not—obviously, these are critical principles for the United States that we raise in many of our relationships, but, with regard to Bahrain in particular, given the strength of the security partnership, given the importance of a strong and stable partnership that must rest also upon stability fundamentally within Bahrain, this takes on a very important role in our dialogue, and I am committed to advancing that dialogue as I engage with senior leadership in the—in Bahrain, in the Government.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Mr. Dowd, I was moved to read your characterization of your first engagement in Africa as a merchant crewman on a PL–480 cargo ship. It is rare we hear that. Chairman Corker and I have worked to understand and to have a positive impact on U.S. food relief programs, both to sustain Food for Peace, in my appropriations role, but provide more efficient alternatives. This is a electric benefits card that is currently being used. I was in a refugee camp in Nigeria just a week ago. And there are other models, other than direct commodity relief. Commodity relief is appropriate in some settings, other more streamlined electronic relief is appropriate in other settings. Any exposure to that, any thoughts about that, on how the African Development Bank might accelerate the use of more transparent, accountable mechanisms for the delivery of assistance and aid?

Mr. DOWD. Thank you, Senator. That is really a terrific question.

I do not—not being there, I honestly cannot speak to it, but I would make a comment, if I may. I have read—I was very moved by the—your trip and the Chairman's trip last spring, when you went to the camps. And I am sure that was a profound experience for you. And I share it. And any way that I can encourage or lead the African Development Bank to assist in these matters, I am there. And I would certainly welcome your input in those, and that of your staffs.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Dowd. I had a great meeting with Bank president Adesina, and we had a long conversation about his high-five agenda, sort of the five priority items. And I would welcome a chance to follow up with you about that and other matters of concern.

I know I am now really impinging on my colleague's good graces.

Thank you, to you, to your wife, Lillian, for your passion for fighting human trafficking and malnutrition. And if we can work together to find ways to do that that are more cost effective and efficient, that would make me a—very grateful, indeed.

So, thank you, all three of you gentlemen, to you and your families, for your careers of service and for the service you are about to undertake.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I thank all our panelists, all our nominees, for your distinguished careers and for your willingness to continue serving.

Ambassador Bass, I enjoyed our visit yesterday. I look forward to supporting your confirmation.

I just want to reiterate my view that the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan should be based on our national security interests, on the advice of our commanders, and on the facts on the grounds. We observed, of course, the 9/11 anniversary yesterday, and remembered our fellow citizens who were killed. And every year, we are reminded, we can never again allow the terrorists to use Afghanistan as a training ground and a launching pad for terrorist attacks against our homeland or that of our allies. For that reason, I applaud the Trump administration's rejection of withdrawal timelines that are disconnected from realities on the ground. At the same time, we have to be honest that the progress is not what it should be in Afghanistan, and the American people are right to demand better, to ask tough questions and insist on more detail and more accountability, moving forward.

So, I will continue to scrutinize the strategy in Afghanistan—I look forward to staying in touch with you as I make efforts to do that, Ambassador Bass—to ensure that this administration has established clear and attainable metrics, milestones, objectives, and so forth, and also to ensure that our diplomats, our development experts, and our troops on the ground have the resources that they need to accomplish the mission. So, I look forward to working with you in that regard.

I am going to turn now to the African Development Bank, Mr. Dowd. According to the U.N., between 2017 and 2050, the popu-

lations of 26 African countries are projected to expand to at least double their current size. To state it differently: During that same period, 1.3 billion of the globe's additional 2.2 billion working-age people will be in Africa. If there is not a corresponding increase in jobs and economic opportunities to accompany this increase in population, then we are in trouble. We are going to have a hard time making sustainable progress with respect to development goals, and we are going to see grinding poverty that causes human suffering, promotes instability, and serves as a push factor for more migration crises.

Mr. Dowd, how do you believe the African Development Bank can better work with the private sector to create the sustainable jobs that we need, and to lessen the predictable jobs crisis that would otherwise accompany the dramatic population growth in Africa?

Mr. DOWD. Thank you, Senator. Certainly, this is a profound question.

The focus of the Bank, of course, is on infrastructure. The notion is, of course, that, led by proper and effective infrastructure, private investment would follow, and, from that, hopefully employment, to begin to deal with this surging population that you alluded to. Not being in the Bank currently, I really cannot speak to the effective—effectiveness of these programs, but I can tell you that I will be committed to a cost-benefit analysis, a rigorous cost-benefit analysis, to, hopefully, gain control of these infrastructure projects so that they really work and they are not the proverbial road to nowhere.

Senator YOUNG. Is there a model you will be looking to, as you engage in cost-benefit analysis, to determine which programs are working, which ones are not? Perhaps you could mimic another module for another development bank, for example.

Mr. DOWD. I do not have a lot of experience or knowledge of other development banks——

Senator YOUNG. Right.

Mr. DOWD [continuing]. But I know, from private development projects, what I looked for. And there are triggers and effective yardsticks that can be brought to bear that I think might apply here. And I honestly cannot speak a heck of a lot farther about that at this point, not being on the ground.

Senator YOUNG. Your private-sector experience may even be more valuable, frankly, than having worked in, or spent time immersed in, development banks.

Mr. DOWD. I hope so, sir.

Senator YOUNG. I attended a briefing last week on multilateral development banks. And a number of experts were present. And more than one of the individuals made the point that we have to make it easier for U.S. companies to compete for contracts with development banks, including the African Development Bank. According to our Congressional Research Service, despite our country's contributions to the Bank, U.S. firms accounted for only 0.4 percent of ADB procurement in 2016. In contrast, Chinese firms accounted for over 22 percent of procurement in that same year.

Mr. Dowd, do you believe there should be efforts to increase participation by U.S. firms in the African Development Bank? And, if

so, how do you believe we can make it easier for U.S. companies to compete?

Mr. DOWD. I—thank you very much, Senator—I would think this would be a good application for value-for-money bidding. That is to say, it is not always the lowest bid that is the best bid, but the way things often operate, it is that way. And so, the Chinese, that is their forte. Very low quality, cheap bidding. And so, perhaps, I hope, we can impose value bidding to help U.S. companies. In addition to helping U.S. companies.

Senator YOUNG. That is looking at the entire life cycle of the project, right?

Mr. DOWD. Indeed, Senator. And another element that you allude to there is, perhaps even contingency payments for some of these longer-term loans to make sure they are not just wandering off into who knows where, so that there would be regular monitoring and accounting and auditing of ongoing project funding.

As far as encouraging U.S. companies to invest and operate in Africa, you are exactly right, the percentage is appalling. And I will do what I can to be a cheerleader for Africa, I suppose, and to meet with, hopefully, and facilitate American businesses trying to do business in Africa.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you much, Chairman.

Mr. DOWD. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And thank all three of you for your willingness to serve, your families' willingness to be a part of that.

The record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, as you heard from the close of the first panel. To the extent you can answer those questions quickly, we would appreciate it. I know you all are anxious to get to the post you have been assigned.

Again, I think, for all of us, it is heartwarming to have people like you who are willing to serve in these capacities. And we thank you for that. We thank you for your testimony today, and the preparation that went into it. And I look forward to you being confirmed.

Thank you very much. The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question 1. Article 25 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations states that the "receiving State shall accord full facilities for the performance of the functions of the mission." However, some host nations have imposed size restrictions on U.S. diplomatic pouches, which has limited the ability of U.S. missions to receive diplomatic pouches.

- Does the imposition of size restrictions on U.S. diplomatic pouches entering a host nation constitute, in your view, contravention of Article 25 of the Vienna Convention?

Answer. I agree that size restriction on U.S. diplomatic pouches can have an impact on our overseas diplomatic facilities. If confirmed, I look forward to exploring this issue with the Department's legal experts and seeking ways to eliminate any burdens imposed on the Department's ability to do its business overseas.

Question 2. Are there circumstances under which diplomatic pouches bound for a U.S. embassy should be subject to a host nation's inspection?

Answer. As a general rule, I understand that diplomatic pouches are protected from search and inspection. If confirmed, I look forward to exploring this issue with the Department's legal experts and protecting the interests of the United States.

Question 3. According to the U.S. State Department's own materials on diplomatic pouches, "international law does not set any limits on the permissible size, weight, or quantity of properly designated diplomatic pouches."

- What, in your view, is the appropriate U.S. response to a host nation imposing limits on the permissible size, weight, or quantity of properly designated diplomatic pouches?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the Department's experts to explore strategy and solutions as matters arise.

Question 4. Under such circumstances, what course of action would you personally be willing to support in response to limitations?

Answer. While I would need to review each case individually, if confirmed, I would be willing to explore the full range of options that have a reasonable possibility of motivating the counterpart government to lift its restrictions. I look forward to consulting with the Department's experts to explore strategy and solutions as matters arise.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. Regardless of the mechanism that the executive branch chooses, if the President wants to rescind or cancel funds that Congress has previously appropriated and the President has signed into law, Congress still must agree to cancel out or rescind those funds through enacting a subsequent law. As a longtime budget staffer and now having reviewed various impoundment procedures, is it your understanding that if Congress does not agree or act in some way to rescind or cancel funds, the executive branch agency must spend the appropriated funds within that fiscal year?

Answer. The process as set out in the Impoundment Control Act is clear. The President must transmit a message to Congress proposing a rescission when he wishes to withhold appropriated funds from obligation permanently, or proposing a deferral for certain authorized purposes when the withholding of funds is temporary. Funds proposed for rescission may be withheld from obligation for 45 days of continuous congressional session. If the rescission is not enacted into law during this period, the President must release the funds on the 46th day.

Question 2. Will you give us your commitment that, if confirmed, will you recommend to your superiors in the administration that the Department not seek rescission or cancellation of appropriated funds below the levels outlined in the applicable appropriations laws?

Answer. I understand that use of the Impoundment Control Act process has been relatively rare, with President Clinton being the last President to propose a rescission with regard to a State Department appropriation. I would advise my principals to follow applicable appropriations laws and, if there is a strong reason to propose a rescission, to follow the statutory procedures under the Impoundment Control Act.

Question 3. Should the President choose to seek to rescind or cancel funds that Congress has previously appropriated and which have been enacted into law, do you commit to communicate any such request to this committee and provide a briefing regarding the rationale for such a request?

Answer. Yes, I commit to brief the committee on the rationale for any requests by the President to Congress for a rescission of State Department funds. As was discussed at my hearing, an important aspect of my work will be communication with the committee.

Question 4. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. In 1998, I worked on bringing to passage through the Senate the International Religious Freedom Act, which created the Office of International Religious Freedom at the Department of State. As the Department website outlines, among its other duties the Office carries out significant responsibilities including issuing

an annual report on international religious freedom issues, advocacy on behalf of religious freedom in countries, and review of countries for potential religious freedom violations that could cause their listing as Countries of Particular Concern. The Act also created an ambassador-at-Large for Religious Freedom, and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

administrations. The level of focus on international religious freedom issues by the United States Government and the Department of State, and the work of the Foreign Service and the Commission on these issues, have been a worthy addition to the range of roles and responsibilities of the U.S. Government in advocating appropriately on behalf of our values around the world.

Question 5. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 7. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I agree with the Secretary's recent speech, in which he stated that a strong, talented, representative workforce is essential for the Department's success. If confirmed, I will encourage mentoring, career development counseling, and active engagement with the Department's various, diverse employee constituencies. I will aim to ensure all our supervisors reflect the strengths of our nation and promote an inclusive merit-based culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness.

Question 8. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Department are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I agree with the Secretary's recent speech, in which he stated that a strong, talented, representative workforce is essential for the Department's success. If confirmed, I will encourage mentoring, career development counseling, and active engagement with the Department's various, diverse employee constituencies. I will aim to ensure all our supervisors reflect the strengths of our nation and promote an inclusive merit-based culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness.

Question 9. How do you plan on committing to the retention of diverse foreign and civil service employees while at the same time making drastic cuts and changes to personnel policy which are causing the attrition of diverse applicants?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that any reduction in budget and personnel does not negatively affect the Department's diversity, inclusion, and retention efforts. I agree with the Secretary's recent speech, in which he stated that a strong, talented, representative workforce is essential for the Department's success. I will continue to apply resources to appropriate training, details and fellowship programs to help mid-level employees attain the career skills necessary for promotion into the senior ranks.

Question 10. How do you intend to support civil service career and executive professional development programs that focus on diversity retention?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to apply resources to appropriate training, details, and fellowship opportunities for the Civil Service workforce to provide invaluable professional development. The Secretary has publicly stated that the Department is a stronger organization when it embraces and incorporates diverse points of view into its work product. If confirmed, I will help the Department expand its mentoring and career development counseling services to assist employees develop the skills necessary for advancement while strengthening the leadership and adaptive capacity of our workforce.

Question 11. If confirmed, will you commit to making sure the Department responds promptly to my letters and other requests for information?

Answer. Yes. As I said in my hearing, having been a congressional staffer for many years I appreciate the need and the value for a robust conversation and partnership with this committee if I have the privilege of being confirmed.

Question 12. Will you come before this committee for full, public hearings on the restructuring of State and USAID if major changes are proposed, prior to making such changes?

Answer. Yes. As I said in my hearing, having been a congressional staffer for many years I appreciate the need and the value for a robust conversation and partnership with this committee if I have the privilege of being confirmed.

Question 13. What is your view on the proposed cut to the State Department budget?

Answer. I am confident the FY 2018 budget request will allow the Department to support the President's priorities to defend national security, assert U.S. leadership, foster opportunities for U.S. economic interests, and ensure accountability to the U.S. taxpayer. The Secretary has publicly acknowledged that the Department had to make tough decisions.

I agree with the Secretary, who has stated publicly that it is first and foremost our people who will determine our ability to succeed in meeting our important foreign policy objectives—not the level of resources. I support the focus of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on ensuring that our people have the organizational support and tools they need to achieve our top goals.

Question 14. What is your view on the proposed cuts to the foreign assistance budget?

Answer. I am confident that the FY 2018 budget request will allow the Department to support the President's priorities to defend national security, assert U.S. leadership, foster opportunities for U.S. economic interests, and ensure accountability to the U.S. taxpayer.

I agree with the Secretary, who has stated publicly that it is our people first and foremost—not the level of resources—that will determine our ability to succeed in meeting our important foreign policy objectives. I support the Secretary and Deputy Secretary's focus on ensuring that State Department personnel have the organizational support and tools they need to achieve the administration's top goals.

Question 15. More than 80 senior positions at the State Department currently have no named nominee. Many of those do not even have an Acting in place, and are vacant. I have shared my concerns in a letter to Secretary Tillerson about the ability of the State Department to effectively carry out its duties with so many unfilled positions. The Department has assured me that it is "working closely with the White House to identify qualified candidates for [its] vacant senior leadership positions," yet acknowledged that there is "no firm timeline for those remaining vacancies." As of today, there are no Assistant Secretary nominees for the Middle East, Asia, or Africa—at a time of daunting challenges and humanitarian crises in those regions. Nor is there an ambassador nominee to South Korea, at a time of increasingly tense relations with North Korea. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing filling senior vacancies, particularly for regions facing pressing challenges? How will you work with the Department and White House to ensure these positions are filled as promptly as possible?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing the filling of vacant senior positions at the Department. This will include working with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to ensure selected candidates move through the entensive vetting and clearance process in a timely manner.

Question 16. One proposal under consideration as part of the administration's efficiency review process is to move the State Department's Consular Affairs and Population, Refugees, and Migration Bureaus to the Department of Homeland Security. I am pleased that Secretary Tillerson opposes this shift and believes this work is "essential to the Department's mission." Can you expand on why is it so critical for these functions to remain under State Department leadership?

Answer. I agree with the Secretary's view that the Consular Affairs bureau belongs at the Department of State. The functions of the CA bureau are vital to the Department's mission to secure our borders and protect the American people. U.S. border security depends on a system of "layered defense" for maximum effectiveness, and the current system of vetting and adjudicating visas has built-in checks that strengthen our national security. The Population, Refugees, and Migration Bureau guides the entire resettlement process and determines which refugee populations can become eligible for consideration for resettlement in the United States. This determination is inherently a foreign policy function. Loss of this function by the De-

partment would undercut the U.S. Government's ability to address international humanitarian crises and respond to the needs of key allies.

Question 17. Please describe the redesign/reorganization process and the next steps.

Answer. The redesign process has been employee led, to include 35,000 State and USAID employees in the United States and around the world who shared views in listening sessions; 200 State and USAID employees who participated in the working groups; and numerous ideas and suggestions submitted through online portals. As I understand it, the Secretary recently submitted to the Office of Management and Budget an Agency Reform Plan with specific recommendations for improving State and USAID. The Department will now pivot toward preparing for implementation of reforms as soon as they are approved by OMB, as well as reforms not requiring OMB approval. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on these reforms and engaging the Congress to discuss them.

Question 18. If confirmed, will you commit to regular consultations with this committee throughout the redesign process to ensure sustainable reforms to the State Department and our foreign assistance agencies?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to regular consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the redesign.

Question 19. How would you seek additional input from the broader stakeholder community?

Answer. The redesign process began with listening to State Department and USAID employees. Additionally, it is my understanding that the State Department and USAID sought input from external stakeholders as part of the process. If confirmed, I would continue to seek input from stakeholders through continued engagement.

Question 20. If confirmed, will you work to ensure that the Department's ability to carry out its mission is not hindered by the redesign process?

Answer. The role and responsibility of the Under Secretary for Management is to support the Secretary and ensure effective operations of the Department. The Department has a workforce of over 14,000 Foreign Service employees and 11,000 civil service employees, and an appropriated budget of nearly $56 billion for Fiscal Year 2017. If confirmed, I would work to help enhance recruitment, identify and focus talent, ensure smooth and successful operations, prepare budgets, and coordinate with the White House, OMB, and other departments and agencies with whom the Department collaborates to ensure a successful and fully engaged State Department both during the redesign process and as long as I would hold the position.

Question 21. In your view, what redesign actions can the Secretary take administratively, without legislation?

Answer. In light of not having been confirmed, I have not been a part of the redesign process, nor have I received any briefings on Secretarial authority. If confirmed, I am committed to working cooperatively with Congress and provide information and rationale and seek input and feedback on the redesign.

Question 22. How do you plan to work with this committee and with Congress more broadly to approach reorganization matters? For changes that require legislative approval or action, with you submit draft legislation o this committee? Will the Department consult with Congress on changes that can be made administratively, without Congressional action? In my view, such consultation would foster broader support and sustainability for the redesign.

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working cooperatively with Congress and provide information and rationale and seek input and feedback on the redesign. To the extent that legislation might be necessary, if confirmed I would support efforts here as well.

Question 23. During his confirmation process, Deputy Secretary Sullivan noted that the reorganization effort should enhance coordination between regional and functional bureaus at the State Department to address transnational threats and new means of communication and technology. Could you share an example of a proposal under consideration to improve coordination between bureaus?

Answer. In light of not having been confirmed, I have not been a part of the redesign process. If confirmed, I will certainly consult and discuss these efforts with Deputy Secretary Sullivan. Also, if confirmed, I look forward to working in partnership with Congress on the redesign effort.

Question 24. Just last week, the GAO released a report reviewing the Department's Diplomatic Security operations since January 2017, and assessing its

progress on outstanding recommendations. The report identified a number of remaining issues, including physical security weaknesses, ensuring U.S. personnel receive threat information in a timely and effective manner, and filling positions with experienced personnel. How do you plan to ensure that Diplomatic Security meets these ongoing challenges and addresses these outstanding recommendations, particularly at a time when the administration is seeking to shrink the Department's budget and resources?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to work closely with the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security to ensure the Bureau of Diplomatic Security is being managed effectively and the challenges you outline in your question are being addressed. I expect to devote a significant amount of time on the safety and security of the Department of State's personnel, and will advocate for appropriate resources in order to ensure that our Foreign Service officers and personnel deployed around the world are in facilities that are safe, are able to safely execute their duties, and have the appropriate amount of security for themselves, their families and loved ones.

Question 25. Do you commit to coming back before this committee if confirmed to address the outstanding issues facing the Diplomatic Security bureau?

Answer. Yes. There is nothing more important than the safety and security of our staff here at the Department. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security is essential to keeping this mission, and to the overall mission of diplomacy. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to engage Congress on the issues facing the Bureau.

Question 26. If the Senate Appropriations Committee's proposal on the Foreign Operations bill gets approved, will you work to protect this budget of $51.2 billion in funding for the State Department and USAID as opposed to arbitrarily slashing it?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Department of State and USAID leadership, bureaus, and offices to follow applicable laws and notification requirements with regard to the budget.

Question 27. How would you ensure a reduction in funding for the State Department does not threaten our ability to address key national security challenges, such as the situation in Afghanistan?

Answer. Enhancing and protecting the national security of the American people is the President's top priority. I am confident that the FY 2018 budget request will allow the Department to support the President's priorities to defend national security, assert U.S. leadership, foster opportunities for U.S. economic interests, and ensure accountability to the U.S. taxpayer. The Secretary has publicly acknowledged that the Department had to make tough decisions.

If confirmed, I will work with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs to ensure resources are available to promote the stability of Afghanistan and the entire region, which is critical to safeguarding U.S. national security.

Question 28. If the State-Foreign Operations bill is confirmed, will you commit that any action you take related to the management or expenditure of appropriated funds is consistent with all legal requirements and the intent of Congress?

Answer. Yes, as I said in my hearing, if confirmed, one of the important responsibilities I will have as the Undersecretary will be to ensure that the laws are faithfully executed by the Department.

Question 29. I understand that as part of the Buy Hire America Executive order, changes which could substantially change the J-Visa programs are under consideration. What is your view on the value of the J-Visa programs? If confirmed, will you commit to continuing to support both federally-funded and private sector exchange programs as key elements of America's diplomatic engagement with the world? Can you assure me that, if confirmed and recommendations are made to eliminate or decrease the size of this program, the Department: a) notifies the appropriate Congressional committees and b) follows appropriate procedures and engages in a formal notice and comment in order to ensure stakeholder input and a fulsome record prior to making changes?

Answer. Educational and cultural exchange programs are undeniably an important part of the State Department's diplomatic mission. The Department knows that they increase American global competitiveness, forge relationships and understanding, and contribute to increased national security. I can assure you that if I am confirmed we will continue to support our educational and cultural exchange programs in ways that best serve the needs of the American people. Also, if con-

firmed, as the Department considers ways to strengthen these programs, we will consult with Congress and stakeholders.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. If you are confirmed as the Under Secretary of State for Management, you will be one of the officials responsible for the performance and health of the State Department's work force. There have been numerous press reports over the past six months on low morale in the Department. Do you believe that morale is low? If so, why? What do you intend to do to address the situation? Do employees feel like they understand the mission of the Department? Do they feel like the important work they do for our country matters?

Answer. The Department of State is fortunate to have a talented and highly motivated workforce. I agree with the Secretary, who has publicly stated that the State Department's employees are its most valuable resource. As I understand the goal of the redesign process, it is for an employee-led process that will lay a new foundation for our diplomacy and development professionals to define America's leadership in the world for generations to come.

You raise important questions. If confirmed, I will seek answers to these during my listenening sessions and meetings with stakeholders across the Department. Further, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that this process leads to an organization in which our people have the support and tools they need to achieve our foreign policy goals.

Question 2. My understanding is that the State Department is the only Executive Branch agency that continues to have a hiring freeze and that it includes a freeze on promotions as well as lateral transfers. What is the rationale behind the continued hiring freeze? What is the Department doing to ensure that its best employees stay with the Department during a time of no upward or lateral movement? When do you expect the promotion and lateral freezes to end?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward working with the Secretary to further understand his vision on the hiring freeze policy and its correlation with the redesign project. My initial understanding is that this is a tool to ensure the Depmartent is hiring enw employees with the skill sets necessary to accomplish the State Departemnt mission in a challenging world environment. I believe employee-led reviews, starting with listening, is a great way to maintain a talented workforce.

Question 3. It is my understanding that A-100 classes have re-started, meaning that the hiring freeze now only applies to the Civil Service. Are you concerned that the Department is now treating its two largest groups of employees differently? Do you expect this to create tension within the Department between the Foreign Service and the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary to understand his vision for the hiring freeze policy, and what the path forward is. I agree with the Secretary, who has publicly stated that an organization's employees are its most valuable resource, and I will seek to relay my appreciation for the hard work of all the Department's employees—both Civil Service and Foreign Service.

Question 4. The Presidential Management Fellows program is one of the best ways to get America's best-and-brightest graduate students into the Civil Service. Does the Department intend to continue participating in this program? Why or why not?

Answer. As the Secretary said in his August 18th, 2017, remarks to student program participants, the Department's current fellowships are valuable pipelines of talent for the Department and necessary to achieving its diversity objectives. My understanding is that the Secretary has approved limited PMF hiring. If confirmed, I will do my best to ensure that PMFs continue to be recognized as an integral part of the Department's workforce.

Question 5. My office has been a beneficiary of the State Department's participation in legislative fellows programs. I believe that these programs provide the Department with an invaluable insight into the legislative process, while also providing offices like mine with additional subject matter expertise. I was troubled to see reports that the Department is suspending its participation in the program. Can you confirm that the Department does not plan to participate in the program in 2018? Why or why not?

Answer. The Secretary said in August that the Department will keep the fellowship and internship programs that advance the Department's goals and objectives. And, during my Senate visits, I was proud to meet several Pearson Fellows. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring the Department continues this practice.

Question 6. Florida is a significant beneficiary of the J-1 visa program. A Washington Post article on September 10, 2017, indicates that the program is under review and could potentially be limited. Is the J-1 visa program being reviewed? If so, who in the U.S. Government is reviewing the program? Why is the program being reviewed? When should the review process be completed? When do you expect J-1 visa applicants and employers to be notified of updated guidance on the program?

Answer. Educational and cultural exchange programs are undeniably an important part of the State Department's diplomatic mission. The Department knows that they increase American global competitiveness, forge relationships and understanding, and contribute to increased national security. While the Department is currently undertaking a review of the program pursuant to the President's Executive Order on Buy American and Hire American, I can assure you that if I am confirmed we will continue to support our educational and cultural exchange programs in ways that best serve the needs of the American people. Also, if confirmed, as the Department considers ways to strengthen these programs, we will consult with Congress and stakeholders.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. I was extremely pleased that Secretary Tillerson acknowledged in a speech in August 2017 that the State Department has a "diversity gap." As I have previously flagged, Hispanic and Asian representation within the Department of State's workforce are at 6 percent each; and although African Americans represent 15 percent of the total State Department workforce, they only represent 5 percent of the Foreign Service. Moreover, only 12 percent of our senior Foreign Service officers are non-white.

- What will you do to ensure the recruitment, retention, and promotion to senior leadership of minorities within the Department of State?

Answer. In his recent speech, Secretary Tillerson said that a strong, talented, representative workforce which is representative of the American people is essential for the Department's success and the key to increasing minorities in leadership positions is to identify qualified individuals early in the process, and ensure that they are seeking and are afforded the opportunities to prepare for those senior roles. If confirmed, I will encourage mentoring, career development counseling, and active engagement with the Department's various, diverse employee constituencies. I will aim to ensure all our supervisors reflect the strengths of our nation and promote an inclusive merit-based culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness.

Question 2. The Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program and Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program are integral to recruiting young, diverse talent to join our diplomatic corps, so I was concerned to find out that the June incoming class of Fellows were being deferred entry to the Foreign Service, because of the hiring freeze. Although, I understand that Secretary Tillerson has since issued a waiver for future incoming classes, I would like to know if you will continue to support these programs and ensure the continued successful recruitment and training of these future diplomats?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support these and other programs that ensure the Department follows the Secretary's charge in his recent speech to ensure that the Department appropriately reflects the diversity of America.

Question 3. As was raised at your hearing, there have been numerous reports regarding the dire state of morale in the Department of State. Department staff have complained about a lack of cohesive policy, lack of leadership, and lack of communication between the Secretary's advisors and career diplomats.

- How will you work on increasing morale within the Department of State and ensure our diplomatic corps is motivated and empowered?

Answer. The Department of State is fortunate to have a talented and highly motivated workforce. I agree with the Secretary, who has publicly stated that the State Department's employees are its most valuable resource. As I understand the goal

of the redesign process, it is for an employee-led process that will lay a new foundation for our diplomacy and development professionals to define America's leadership in the world for generations to come. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that this process leads to an organization in which our people are empowered with the support and tools they need to achieve our foreign policy goals.

Question 4. As I previously raised in a hearing with Deputy Secretary Sullivan, there are several recent policy changes that seem to be affecting morale negatively including a freeze on lateral movements in the Department (significantly limiting the career growth opportunities of civil servants), as well as a freeze on hiring eligible family members (EFMs) at overseas posts and hiring retired Foreign Service Offices to backfill critical positions.

- What is your position on these policies and would you support a review or change of these recent policies?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary to understand his vision for the hiring freeze policy. I will support the Secretary in aligning the Department's staffing programs to strategically recruit, retain, and develop the workforce of the future. I will continue to work with the Secretary and the employees of the Department to ensure that their ideas are incorporated and encourage a culture where employees are empowered.

Question 5. The Department of State has a handful of training/detail assignments that are important professional development opportunities for Foreign and Civil Servants. These programs include obtaining graduate degrees, as well as working within other federal agencies, the military, and Congress, which makes Foreign and Civil Service Officers more effective and strengthens the agencies/organizations in which they serve. As such, I was disappointed to find out that the Secretary was considering significantly reducing and/or ending these opportunities.

- As Under Secretary of State for Management will you ensure that these important professional development opportunities are continued? How do you plan to ensure the continued development of the diplomatic corps?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that professional development continues to be a priority. Developing a workforce that is responsive to the threats of today and tomorrow requires continued investment in their training and professional development and is one of my top priorities.

Question 6. I appreciated your commitment during your nomination hearing to "consult with Congress" on the reorganization/redesign process, because I have serious concerns regarding the process of implementation. In particular, beyond the "listening tour" and working groups used to inform the initial modifications, how do you plan to socialize the organizational changes within the Department of State?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson and Deputy Secretary Sullivan have been very clear that the redesign effort is employee led. In addition to the listening tour, more than 200 State Department and USAID employees took part in the working groups. In addition, I understand that the Secretary and Deputy regularly communicate various milestones in the process to the Department's employees, meet with Embassy staffs, and engage in town halls. If confirmed, I would respect and reinforce the employee-led nature of the redesign process and similarly engage with the Department's employees.

Question 7. As was raised during your hearing, there are many high-level positions within the Department of State that have yet to be filled and are critical to the successful operations of our diplomatic mission, including the Director General of Human Resources. How will you encourage the administration to nominate and fill these positions in a timely fashion?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing the filling of vacant senior positions at the Department. This will include working with Diplomatic Security to ensure any selected candidates move through the extensive vetting and clearance process in a timely manner.

Question 8. We are concerned about reports that there are efforts to consolidate decision-making power within the Department, specifically in the Office of Policy Planning that is staffed with non-Senate confirmed officials. This would undermine the role of the Deputy Secretary and Under Secretary for Political Affairs that are Senate-confirmed positions and hold critical roles within the Department. Will you ensure that individuals responsible for final decisions on specific policies, budget, funding disbursement, and anything else related to implementing major foreign policy objectives of the United States will be made by principals who have been confirmed by the Senate?

Answer. While many individuals in the Department provide valuable advice, the Secretary of State is responsible for decisions made on implementing major foreign policy objectives.

The Department has a deep bench of experienced professionals serving in key positions across the Department who are highly capable and help the Secretary lead the Department and advance U.S. interests worldwide.

Question 9. I was pleased you highlighted the importance of cybersecurity as one of your priorities as Under Secretary, because I was seriously concerned by reports that the Department was considering closing the Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues. The recent Department of State/Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill for FY 2018, specifically allocated funding for this office, because of its indisputable importance given the growing use of cyberwarfare, including the Russian attack against the United States in the last Presidential election. Can you confirm that you will ensure the Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues is preserved under the reorganization? Also, what other strategies will you propose to strengthen our ability to combat cyberwarfare?

Answer. It is my understanding that there are a variety of initiatives already underway to address issues of cybersecurity. While I have not been briefed on the specifics of the disposition of the office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues, if confirmed, I commit to reinforcing those efforts and elicit additional recommendations to strengthen the Department's cybersecurity and defend against cyber attacks.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR RON JOHNSON

Question 1. Often, there is a wide gulf between U.S. foreign policy actions and how they are perceived around the world. The resulting anti-Americanism has a toxic effect on the United States' ability to secure our vital interests globally—a problem that has been compounded by the neglect of our public diplomacy programs since the end of the Cold War. Thankfully, one aspect of U.S. public diplomacy that has been maintained is our international exchange programs. I know the administration is considering curtailing some of these programs as part of its State Department review. As Undersecretary of State for Management, you will be involved in the fate of these exchanges. What is your view of their value to U.S. foreign policy? Specifically, do you believe that International Military Education & Training (IMET) funding is vital to achieving U.S. foreign policy goals? Do you support continuing the Summer Work Travel (SWT) exchange program?

Answer. If confirmed, I pledge to consult with Department experts to learn more about these programs and their value to U.S. foreign policy. I agree with you on the value of exchanges generally in fostering engagement and dialogue. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the overall budget request concentrates resources where they offer the most value and impact to U.S. national security and foreign policy priorities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question 1. Mr. Ueland, when I asked you about the potential for the administration to use "impoundment" to enforce budget cuts, which goes against the Impoundment Control Act of 1974, you replied that "the Budget Act talks about two different ways monies can be looked at by the executive." I'm assuming you were alluding to rescissions and deferrals. Given your experience on the Senate Budget Committee, could you explain, with detail, the circumstances under which an administration would be in violation of the Impoundment Control Act? What procedures would an administration need to follow in order not to be in violation of the Act?

Answer. My answer may have been a bit rusty—I cannot recall the last time I discussed impoundment before your question in the hearing. I have reviewed the issue and found that in general, the Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (ICA) provides for specific procedures with respect to potential impoundments, including the submission by the President of a special message to Congress each time a permanent rescission of budgetary resources is proposed and each time funds are deferred as provided for under the ICA. The circumstances under which such a message would be submitted to Congress would have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Question 2. At the end of our discussion, you mentioned that the "implementation [of impoundment] might fall in your lane." Could you explain what you meant? How, and under what circumstances, would you administer the impoundment of funds at the Department of State?

Answer. As I discussed at the hearing, throughout my preparation for confirmation no one has approached me about anything in relation to impoundment. Questions at the committee were the first time the topic has been raised to me. To the extent if carrying out such a hypothetical instruction touches any of the bureaus or offices in the portfolio of the Undersecretary for Management, it "might fall in [my] lane," and that's what I meant.

During my hearing, I stated that no one has approached me about anything in relation to impoundment, so I have no information as to how, or under what circumstances, I would administer such hypothetical impoundment of funds at the Department of State, if such execution would touch on the operation of any of the bureaus or offices in the portfolio of the Undersecretary for Management.

Question 3. Would you describe, in detail, the difference between routine administrative actions and delays and impoundments? Please use examples.

Answer. While I cannot comment on hypothetical scenarios, I do believe that issues related to administrative actions and delays and impoundments depend on the specific facts and circumstances. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that the Department obligates funding appropriated by Congress consistent with applicable law, including the Impoundment Control Act of 1974.

Question 4. Could you please detail your interpretation of the 1975 Supreme Court case, Train v. City of New York, which is referenced in the report to the FY18 State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee bill? What impact did this case have on the President's "power of impoundment?"

Answer. I am not in a position to provide an interpretation of this specific Supreme Court decision. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that the Department obligates funding appropriated by Congress consistent with applicable law, including the Impoundment Control Act of 1974.

Question 5. Mr. Ueland, referring back to your testimony, is there a legal difference between instructing someone to impound funds and implementing an order to impound funds?

Answer. The Impoundment Control Act of 1974 sets forth the required procedures for the proposed rescission or deferral of funds. Beyond that, no one has raised impoundment with me, beyond the questions raised at the hearing.

Question 6. If confirmed, will you commit that any action you take related to the management or expenditure of appropriated funds is consistent with all legal requirements and the intent of Congress?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit that any action I take related to the management or expenditure of appropriated funds will be consistent with applicable law, including the Impoundment Control Act of 1974.

Question 7. In response to Ranking Member Cardin's question about whether you would respond promptly and fully to committee requests, you began by saying you "expect to respond promptly and fully to all requests," and went on to say, "unless [you're] told by higher authorities not to." Mr. Ueland, you are nominated to fill one of only six Under Secretary positions at the State Department. The Under Secretary for Management, in particular, is a prestigious position with vast authorities. Your predecessor regularly came to Capitol Hill to brief Senators and staff. Could you please clarify which "higher authorities" you expect may prevent you from answering requests from Capitol Hill? When you answered this question, what issues came to mind as topics that may require a higher authority to tell you not to respond to a committee request?

Answer. I have an interest in a strong partnership with the Senate and Congress, including participating in regular discussions with Senators and staff on matters that fall within the portfolio of the Undersecretary for Management.

In the event of my confirmation, while carrying out my responsibilities and working cooperatively with the Senate and Congress, I will also be looking to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary. They are the "higher authorities" I referenced. What came to mind as I answered that question was not any issue, but the knowledge that working in partnership with Congress is a key objective, and both the Secretary and Deputy Secretary have the capacity to set direction and provide guidance and feedback to me as I carry out all elements of my work, including with Congress. I believe that both the Secretary and Deputy Secretary have told the Senate Foreign

Relations Committee of their interest in working with Congress, as have I. I look forward to carrying out our shared commitment.

Question 8. In your testimony, you note that "the security of staff and facilities overseas remains an issue." If confirmed, will you ensure that the department continues to spend at least $2.2 billion annually for new embassy construction and maintenance, as recommended by the Benghazi Accountability Review Board? Please explain whether you believe the $2.2 billion figure properly reflects the Department's needs with regard to these expenses in the coming years.

Answer. The security of staff and facilities overseas is of paramount importance, as recognized in the President's FY 2018 budget request of $2.2 billion for new embassy construction and maintenance. If confirmed, I will support the administration's commitment to sustaining a robust budget for embassy security and maintenance consistent with the recommendations of the Benghazi Accountability Review Board.

Question 9. This week, the State Department submitted its "redesign" recommendations to OMB, outlining proposed reforms to the State Department and USAID in response to the President's March executive order directing a reorganization of the executive branch. Does the State Department plan to submit this report to Congress? If so, when?

Answer. In light of not having been confirmed, I have not been a part of the redesign process. If confirmed, I am committed to working cooperatively with Congress and provide information and rationale and seek input and feedback on the redesign. Further, I will encourage the Department to provide reguarl updates to Congress on the issue.

Question 10. Mr. Ueland, the post of Director General of the Foreign Service has been vacant since the last DG, Arnold Chicon, left on June 2, 2017. It is currently being filled in an acting capacity by the Human Resources Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, William E. Todd, who is a former ambassador to Cambodia and a member of the Senior Executive Service, but not the Senior Foreign Service. According to law, he is ineligible to be nominated by the President to be a permanent replacement. Also according to this law, a Senior Foreign Service officer must be in place to advise the Secretary on personnel matters. The need for such professional advice is great as the Department carries out planning for a major reorganization. While the Department is weighing the Trump administration's reorganization plans, if confirmed, who do you and Secretary Tillerson intend to go to for advice on Foreign Service personnel matters in the absence of a Senate-confirmed Director-General? When do you believe a replacement for Chicon will be nominated?

Answer. I share your interest in filling the position of Director General of the Foreign Service as soon as possible. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to work closely with the White House on this and other senior leadership positions. The Department has a deep bench of experienced career professionals that are highly capable and able to lead the Department and advance U.S. interests worldwide such as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Todd, a career Senior Executive Service Civil Servant and two-time ambassador. He is assisted by two career Senior Foreign Service Officer Deputy Assistant Secretaries and a career Senior Executive and can tap into the experience and expertise of a number of senior Foreign Service Officer colleagues, including Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries.

Question 11. Mr. Ueland, if confirmed, your office also will oversee foreign missions in the United States. Are there conditions under which the Russians could regain access to the facilities that they recently lost access to in the United States? Can I have your commitment that you will notify Congress and in particular, the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on USAID and State Department Management, of any change in this regard?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the Department's experts to consider options on strategy and solutions. I hope to move forward to achieve the stated goal of both of our countries: improved relations and increased cooperation on areas of mutual concern. If confirmed, I commit to informing Congress of any developments.

Question 12. If confirmed, will you commit to working closely with the FBI to help notify them (in a timely fashion) of Russian officials seeking clearance to travel within the United States?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's commitment to interagency cooperation. I look forward to working very closely with the FBI on the travel of Russian officials within the United States.

Question 13. If confirmed, will you work with the future Assistant Secretary of Europe and Eurasia, as well as the future U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation, to ensure that any limitations or restrictions U.S. diplomats experience in Russia will be met with parity for Russian diplomats in the U.S.?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues, including the Department's Office of Foreign Missions which I will oversee, to consider reciprocity prior to extending privileges and benefits to the foreign missions in the United States, including that of Russia. I look forward to fully supporting, encouraging, and enhancing the use of reciprocity to improve the secure and efficient operation of our missions abroad.

Question 14. My office has received calls from career officials at the Department of State complaining that the Office of Civil Rights is often inappropriately used as a tool to discipline civil service employees who aren't engaged in discriminatory behavior. Harassment or discrimination based on age, sex, gender, race, religion, or ethnicity is a serious matter and should be dealt with immediately. Any deviation from this Office's core responsibilities to encourage a safe and diverse workforce is concerning. If confirmed, will you work with the Secretary of State to look into these complaints and ensure that the Office of Civil Rights is elevating cases involving employees who have been discriminated against for their age, sex, gender, race, religion, or ethnicity, rather than being used as an arbitrary disciplining tool?

Answer. The Department of State's Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR) serves an integral role in propagating equity, fairness, and inclusion at the Department. S/OCR is charged with processing complaints of discrimination from U.S. citizen employees, former employees, and applicants for employment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), retaliation, disability, or genetic information. S/OCR also oversees the Department's compliance with anti-harassment laws and policies. In order to preserve the integrity of the workplace and ensure that the Department meets its obligations under the law, the attorneys in S/OCR conduct harassment training, manage harassment reporting, and conduct harassment investigations to ensure that all allegations of sexual and discriminatory harassment are properly addressed. S/OCR is a neutral office and does not make any discipline decisions with respect to complaints of discrimination or harassment complaints. Per Department policies (3 FAM 1525—Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, 3 FAM 1526—Discriminatory Harassment Policy, 3 FAM 4300—Disciplinary Action (Including Separation for Cause)), discipline decisions are made by the Bureau of Human Resources. S/OCR has no role in any discipline decisions for any employees. If confirmed, I will ensure that S/OCR continues to carry out its important mission in accordance with Department policies.

Question 15. What are your views of the dissent channel at the Department of State, and if confirmed, how will you ensure the integrity of this channel?

Answer. I am fully committed to the Dissent Channel as enshrined in the Department's Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM). For over forty years, the Dissent Channel has served as a vehicle for U.S. citizen State Department employees to express dissenting or alternative views on substantive issues of policy to the Department's most senior leadership without fear of penalty. It exists because the State Department has a strong interest in facilitating open, creative, and uncensored dialogue on substantive foreign policy issues within the professional foreign affairs community and a responsibility to foster an atmosphere supportive of such dialogue. Pursuant to the FAM, Dissent Channel messages, including the identity of the authors, are a most sensitive element in the internal deliberative process and are to be protected accordingly.

Question 16. As you consider ways to achieve efficiency as part of the Department's redesign, wouldn't it be more efficient to have a single budget shop that includes the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F) and the Bureau for Budget and Planning? What are the options under consideration for streamlining these two entities? Would they report to you?

Answer. The redesign process has been employee led, including 35,000 State and USAID employees in the United States and around the world who shared views in listening sessions; 200 State and USAID employees who participated in the working groups; and numerous ideas and suggestions submitted through online portals. As I understand it, the Secretary recently submitted to the Office of Management and Budget an Agency Reform Plan with specific recommendations for improving State and USAID. The Department will now pivot toward preparing for implementation of reforms as soon as they are approved by OMB, as well as reforms not requiring OMB approval. If confirmed, I look forward to being briefed on these reforms and engaging the Congress to discuss them.

Question 17. The State Department has taken a number of steps in recent years to make U.S. foreign assistance more transparent and thus, more effective. One of these is the creation of a public website managed by the State Department—ForeignAssistance.gov—where the taxpayer can review how and where the U.S. is spending foreign aid dollars. Every federal agency that provides foreign assistance funding is required to share its information on this website. What is the agency participation rate for the site? What agencies lag behind in sharing their data, and what is the reason for the delay in sharing this information with U.S. taxpayers? What is the status of the State Department's own data on this site?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Office of Foreign Assistance to help the Department meet the requirement of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 that all implementing agencies report their foreign assistance to ForeignAssistance.gov by the end of FY 2018. I believe that the Department of State takes seriously its responsibility for making data on foreign assistance financial activities public, and I will work to continue to make progress on implementing its Foreign Assistance Data Review initiative.

Question 18. I was pleased that the State Department issued an Evaluation Policy in January 2015 encouraging all bureaus and independent offices to undertake at least one evaluation per year "to achieve the most effective U.S. foreign policy outcomes and greater accountability to our primary stakeholders, the American people." However, the quality of State's evaluations varies and it's unclear how learning from these evaluations is used to guide the agency program and budget decisions. What are your plans to ensure that the evaluation policy is carried out, especially related to security assistance programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the Department follows an effective and useful evaluation policy. Accountability to the American taxpayer is a core priority for this administration, and evaluations are critical to holding ourselves accountable.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR JOHNNY ISAKSON

Question 1. The outcome of the ongoing discussion about the redesign of the State Department and USAID is very important to me. Will you commit to engaging with my staff and me as that process moves forward?

Answer. Yes. As I said in my hearing, having been a congressional staffer for many years I appreciate the need and the value for a robust conversation and partnership with this committee and its members if I have the privilege of being confirmed.

Question 2. In the event that the redesign requires Congressional authorization, will you commit to working with me to flesh out whatever reforms are proposed?

Answer. Yes, and I look forward to engaging with you on this effort.

Question 3. In April 2016, the U.S. State Department asked Emory University Hospital to accept and treat a patient, an American non-profit employee working abroad, with Lassa fever. Emory responded and successfully treated the patient. However, Emory has $356,000 in outstanding bills that the Government seems to be unwilling to reimburse. In May 2017, Emory sent a letter to Sec. Tillerson and has yet to receive a response. Can I have your commitment to work with me to resolve this issue and to ensure that in the event that any hospital is asked to treat a patient suffering from a highly infectious disease by the U.S. Department of State that they are then reimbursed for their treatment costs?

Answer. If confirmed, you have my commitment to work with you on this issue. I understand that the U.S. Government has important partners in the private sector, such as Emory University Hospital, for treatment and care of patients with highly-infectious diseases. I will seek to maintain that partnership while ensuring that the Department assists to the extent of its statutory authority.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question 1. There are wide-spread reports that are uncertainly about the reorganization, and budget and staffing cuts are creating low morale at the Department

of State. If confirmed, how do you plan to address talent retention so that an attrition-based reduction does not result in State losing its best and brightest employees?

Answer. The Department of State is fortunate to have a talented and highly motivated workforce. I agree with the Secretary, who has publicly stated that the State Department's employees are its most valuable resource. As I understand the goal of the redesign process, it is for an employee-led process that will lay a new foundation for our diplomacy and development professionals to define America's leadership in the world for generations to come. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that this process leads to an organization in which our people have the support and tools they need to achieve our foreign policy goals.

Question 2. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to work with Congress on any reorganization plans for the State Department and USAID?

Answer. Yes. As I said in my hearing, having been a congressional staffer for many years I appreciate the need and the value for a robust conversation and partnership with this committee if I have the privilege of being confirmed.

Question 3. If confirmed, in your role overseeing Human Resources, how to you plan to attract new talent, address talent retention and increase diversity recruitment?

Answer. I agree with the Secretary's recent speech, in which he stated that a strong, talented, workforce representative of the American people is essential for the Department's success. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues its active recruitment program to bring talented and diverse candidates to the Department. I look forward to continuing the Department's commitment to the Pickering and Rangel Fellowship programs. Ultimately, the Department's ability to recruit and retain a talented and diverse workforce will rest on ensuring the redesign process results in an organization in which our people have the support and tools they need to achieve our foreign policy goals.

Question 4. If confirmed, do you commit to working with Congress to communicate the State Department's efforts to promote equal opportunity and inclusion for all American employees in direct hire and personal service contractor status to include equal opportunity for all races, ethnicities, ages, genders, and service-disabled veterans, with a focus on traditionally underrepresented minority groups?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to continuing the Department's efforts to promote equal opportunity and inclusion for all American employees and contractors, and to work with Congress to communicate these efforts. I believe that the Department takes seriously its obligation to be a "model employer" of individuals with disabilities, as required by U.S. law.

Question 5. If confirmed, will you continue to support professional development programs, including details, educational programs, and fellowships?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to apply resources to appropriate training, details, and fellowship opportunities for the Department's workforce that provide invaluable professional development. These programs are an integral part of ensuring that employees have the skills necessary for current and future work assignments.

Question 6. If confirmed, do you pledge to provide detailed information to Congress on diversity employment statistics that include data on ethnicity, race and gender by grade and occupational code for civil service personnel and Foreign Service promotion statistics by ethnicity, race and gender?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to provide information to Congress on diversity employment statistics to the extent permitted by law. I understand that the Department's website provides some diversity statistics as well as information on Foreign Service promotions.

Question 7. If confirmed, will you provide information on how many positions are unfilled and how long they have been unfilled by Bureau and Office and the reasons why they haven't been filled?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing the filling of vacant senior positions at the Department and ensuring the Department continues to work closely with the White House to identify qualified candidates for those vacant leadership positions. I commit to informing Congress on the Department's efforts to fill vacant positions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. It was reported in a recent Wall Street Journal article that several State Department managed J-1 visa exchange programs—including Summer Work Travel, Au Pair, Intern, Trainee, and Camp Counselor—are under review by the Department and White House as part of the President's Buy Hire American, Hire American Executive Order. In New Jersey, we had 10,642 recipients of the J-1 visa exchange program, half of those went to work in Jersey's tourism industry that would have experienced shortages or negative impacts on their businesses without this resource. At the same time, these individuals go back to their home countries with a favorable view of the U.S. extending at a low cost, U.S. diplomacy and cultural ties.

As Under Secretary of State for Management, you will oversee the agencies process and procedures. I understand that as part of the Buy American and Hire America Executive Order, changes which could substantially change the J-Visa programs are under consideration.

- I would like your assurance that if recommendations are made to eliminate or decrease the size of this program, that the Department notifies the appropriate Congressional committees and follows appropriate procedures and engages in a formal notice and comment in order to ensure stakeholder input and develop a fulsome record prior to making changes. Can you give me your assurances that this will be done?

Answer. Educational and cultural exchange programs are undeniably an important part of the State Department's diplomatic mission. The Department knows that they increase American global competitiveness, forge relationships and understanding, and contribute to increased national security. I can assure you that if I am confirmed we will continue to support our educational and cultural exchange programs in ways that best serve the needs of the American people. Also, as I said in my hearing, having been a congressional staffer for many years I appreciate the need and the value for a robust conversation and partnership with this committee if I have the privilege of being confirmed.

Question 2. Since traveling to embassies and meeting with our diplomats, I hear repeatedly that one of the greatest diplomatic tools they have people-to-people exchange that support global engagement that is critical to our country's prosperity and security. Exchange programs are not only an important State Department tool to promote American foreign policy, the programs also position our citizens to capitalize on an increasing globalized world.

- Do you have any personal experience with international exchange?

Answer. I value the important role that dialogue and exchange can play. While I have not personally been involved in an international exchange program, if confirmed I look forward to being briefed on current exchange programs and how we are using them to advance U.S. foreign policy goals.

Question 3. Can you commit that the State Department will advocate to keep as many tools at your disposal to reach different audiences, rather than cutting off some of your options?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the overall budget request concentrates resources where they offer the most value and impact to U.S. national security and foreign policy priorities. Maintaining flexibility and options will be an essential consideration in the budget and management process.

Question 4. As you may know earlier this year Pickering and Rangel Fellows who completed their coursework and internships were told by the State Department that they would not be inducted into the Foreign Service as scheduled. These are the two premier programs that bring our nation's diversity in all its forms—ethnic, linguistic, socio-cultural, experiential, and many more—to bear in support of our foreign policy.

After Congressional pushback, the Department relented and said that the classes would be issued a waiver and allowed to join the next Foreign Service class. In a recent speech, Secretary Tillerson said, "Our current fellowships and internships are valuable pipelines of talent for our organization and necessary to achieving our diversity objectives," and that the Department "will be keeping all of our fellowship and internship programs in place."

- I am pleased to hear this though I find it hard to square what the Department's previous actions. Will the Department continue to induct future Rangel and Pickering Fellows in the Foreign Service as scheduled? If not, why not?

- Do you plan to make any changes to these Congressionally-authorized programs and do you pledge to consult with Congress before doing so?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department of State's commitment to the Pickering and Rangel programs as its premier diversity recruitment programs. The Department must continue to value these talented individuals and the skills they bring into the Department, and I anticipate no changes to the programs. As the Secretary recently stated, the Department has a long-standing and enduring commitment to shape and build a more diverse and inclusive organization.

Question 5. For the State Department and USAID to carry out their missions, diversity is an urgent matter of national security implications. Our nation is blessed with an unparalleled strength in having people of all backgrounds and experiences. Thus having a Foreign Service that represents the full richness of the American people as we conduct our diplomacy and development efforts allows us to connect with a diverse world in unique and meaningful ways.

However, the State Department has much work to do. Latino/Hispanic and Asian representation within the State Department's workforce are at 6 percent each and while African Americans represent 15 percent of the workforce, they only represent 6 percent of the Foreign Service.

- What do you think the State Department can do to improve these numbers and how can we better retain and elevate diverse leaders into more senior positions in the Department?

Answer. I agree with the Secretary's recent speech, in which he stated that a strong, talented, representative workforce is essential for the Department's success. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues its active recruitment program to bring talented and diverse candidates to the Department, including the use of Diplomats-in-Residence hosted at universities across the country. I will also ensure that the Department continues its commitment to the Pickering and Rangel Fellowship programs. For retention purposes, I will encourage mentoring, career development counseling, and active engagement with the Department's various, diverse employee constituencies. If confirmed, I aim to ensure all our supervisors reflect the strengths of our nation and promote an inclusive merit-based culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN R. BASS BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. Defeating the Afghan Taliban will continue to be difficult so long as it has a sanctuary on the other side of the border in Pakistan. Do you support drone strikes against the Afghan Taliban, regardless of what side of the border it occupies?

Answer. The United States employs a full range of options—including military and diplomatic ones—to resolve this conflict. Military action is not the centerpiece of our strategy. Our efforts in Afghanistan are part of a larger regional strategy. That said, we will exert pressure against the Taliban, wherever they might be, using all elements of national power. If confirmed, I will support full implementation of the President's strategy, including its military components, to ensure the Taliban no longer believes it can wait us out.

Question 2. How do you assess the National Unity Government? Is it stable? Do you see the structure—with both a President and CEO—as something that the U.S. should continue to encourage?

Answer. President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah share a common vision for a secure, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan and are working to bring the reforms needed to advance this vision.

In recent months, both of Afghanistan's leaders have shown in their words and actions that their working relationship is more effective and increasingly producing results. Both expressed their determination to support one another's efforts to implement reforms and live up to their commitments.

It is a government that largely defends itself and has a reformist president willing to work closely with international partners.

It is up to the Afghan people to decide the future structure of their government, including whether or not to retain the President and CEO positions.

Question 3. Do you believe that the Afghan Government should seek a negotiated settlement with the Taliban? If yes, what "redlines" should the U.S. Government insist upon?

Answer. A negotiated peace settlement between the Afghan Government and the Taliban is critical to ending the conflict and ensuring the long-term preservation of our national security interests. We have signaled to the Afghan Government and others our priority to launch a peace process, and we regularly engage Afghanistan's neighbors to press the Taliban to come to the negotiating table.

The U.S. Government has clearly outlined the broad conditions of an acceptable agreement to end the conflict, which would require the Taliban to cease violence, break all ties to international terrorists, and accept the Afghan Constitution, including its protections for women and minorities. These end-conditions are necessary to protect the gains achieved over the last 16 years.

I believe there is an opportunity to make a fresh push to start a peace process in light of the fact we are no longer announcing any artificial deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. The primary obstacle to a peace process is the Taliban's confidence it can outlast us on the battlefield, and indeed, much of this confidence in years past came from the group's awareness of our withdrawal deadlines. We can therefore use the President's new South Asia strategy to make a stronger argument to the Taliban that we will never allow them to win militarily, and that a negotiated political settlement is the only viable path for them.

I personally plan to be a firm advocate for setting the conditions to achieve a political settlement with my interlocutors across the Afghan political spectrum.

Question 4. The State Department's 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report upgraded Afghanistan from the Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2. Do you commit to discuss consistently with senior Afghan Government leaders the U.S. Government's concerns about trafficking in persons?

Answer. We remain committed to working closely and consistently with the Government of Afghanistan to combat trafficking in persons in all its forms. The Afghan Government made marked progress over the past year, by enacting a new law on human trafficking that distinguishes between smuggling and trafficking, and that criminalizes various acts associated with bacha baazi, a practice in which men exploit boys for social and sexual entertainment. Since passage of the law, the Afghan Government has arrested and punished some officials found complicit in bacha baazi.

However, there are still several areas of concern, including official complicity, accountability for abuses, and a shortage of protective services for victims of trafficking. If confirmed, I will lead the embassy's engagement with Afghan Government leaders on this issue, and we will continue to work with human rights organizations and civil society and to support the Afghan Government in its efforts.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JOHN R. BASS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting democratic governance and adherence to core human rights have been priorities and core responsibilities for me throughout my career. Much of my work has focused on supporting a core national security goal of the United States, under administrations of both parties, for three generations: promoting a Europe that is whole, free and at peace. In that regard, several of my assignments at State Department headquarters in the 1990s focused on supporting efforts of countries that aspired to join the NATO alliance to build and strengthen the rule of law, democratic institutions, and competitive electoral environments.

While serving in Embassy Rome, I worked closely with Italian trade unions and civil society organizations to encourage them to provide additional support to nascent counterparts in Cuba as part of a broader effort to strengthen Cuban civil society. As an advisor to Vice President Cheney in 2004–05, I concentrated on reinforcing diplomatic efforts to create a competitive campaign environment and impartial election administration for the November 2004 presidential election in Ukraine. After evidence of widespread fraud was revealed, I helped mobilize like-minded NATO and other partners to push the Ukrainian Government to address the fraud, which resulted in a revote, which produced a more free and fair election and a different outcome.

While leading the Provincial Reconstruction program for Baghdad province 2008–09, I oversaw efforts to underwrite development of modern legal curricula for the Baghdad University law School, and professional development and training pro-

grams for the defense bar, strengthening legal protections and the rule of law for Iraqi citizens.

As Ambassador to Georgia, I strongly supported and ensured funding for training programs to strengthen political party development, election administration, independent media and civil society organizations. I also worked closely with a wide range of government officials and political party leaders to ensure opposition parties and candidates were able to campaign without interference or pressure. These efforts contributed to 2012 parliamentary elections that led to the first peaceful official transfer of power between political parties in contemporary Georgia's history.

In my current role as Ambassador to Turkey, I have encouraged adherence to constitutional norms and Turkey's international commitments under the U.N. Charter and Helsinki Final Act to address restrictions and erosion of freedoms of speech and assembly. I have criticized the Government's increased criminalization of speech and pressure on independent media and continued to strongly support religious minorities and protect their ability to worship freely.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Afghanistan today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Afghanistan? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Our greatest human rights concern in Afghanistan today continues to be the actions and consequences of the ongoing insurgency: its effects on access to education, health, and justice, and the challenge of building and sustaining adherence to human rights norms by government security forces as they combat the insurgency.

The Taliban and ISIS actively target schools, media outlets, government and aid workers, human rights activists, and ethnic and religious minorities. We also continue to receive credible reports of human rights abuses committed by government actors, including security forces.

If confirmed, I will urge the Afghan Government to increase its efforts to address these abuses. We will assist the Afghan Government in upholding human rights and eventually ending abuses by partnering with our Afghan colleagues in the security and justice sectors to ensure they have the requisite capacity and expertise needed to prevent abuses, and to ensure accountability should they occur. As one component of this effort, we will continue to provide human rights training for government security forces and we will engage quickly with the Afghan Government when abuses do occur to ensure that there is full and transparent justice. We will also continue to work with Afghan civil society and with our allies and other partners to advocate for improvements in human rights. My hope is that our combined efforts over time will provide Afghans the opportunity to further strengthen democratic governance and human rights protections because they believe them to be in their national interest.

Question 3. 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 Afghanistan in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. There are significant obstacles to progress, including widespread violence, ethnic tension, weak application of the rule of law, government capacity challenges, a climate of official impunity, and the absence of government writ in many areas of the country. The challenges facing us are significant, but we work closely with the Afghan Government, and Afghanistan has made some important progress over the past 16 years. Perhaps most important at this juncture, the Afghan Government tells us these issues are important to their performance and legitimacy, and they are actively seeking our help to improve. If confirmed, I will lead our engagement and work to support the Afghan Government in its continued efforts.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Afghanistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead and direct the embassy's engagement with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with human rights organizations in Afghanistan, as I have in my prior appointments to Turkey and Georgia.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Afghanistan to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted in Afghanistan?

Answer. If I am confirmed, we will continue to engage with the Afghan Government on such cases, and will continue to voice our strong support for the Afghan constitution, adherence to the rule of law, and due process.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If I am confirmed, we will continue to thoroughly vet all individuals and units nominated for U.S.-funded security assistance, in accordance with the Leahy law. If we find credible information of a gross violation of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law, to ensure that responsible parties do not receive U.S. funded assistance, and will work with the Afghan Government to bring them to justice. We will also work with the Afghan Government to identify cases where individuals have been brought to justice in order to remediate units restricted from receiving assistance.

Question 7. Will you engage with the Afghans on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead the embassy's continued engagement on a wide range of issues centered on human rights, civil rights, and governance. As a result of engagement by USG personnel serving in Embassy Kabul, the Afghan Government has made human rights training a key component of training for security force personnel. It also is making legal reforms to address issues facing vulnerable populations, such as the enactment of the Law to Combat Crimes of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in January 2017, which, for the first time, criminalizes various acts associated with bacha bazi, including sexual exploitation of a minor and forced dancing. Our continued engagement will support further progress by the Afghan Government.

Question 8. What will you do to build people-to-people ties between Americans and Afghans and to support Afghan civil society, human rights activists, and independent media? What do you need from Washington-based U.S. officials on this?

Answer. U.S. Embassy Kabul implements a robust array of public diplomacy initiatives that strengthen academic and professional relationships between Afghans and Americans. If confirmed, I will lead our Embassy's engagement with civil society, human rights activists, and independent media. One of my early priorities will be to assess and improve our engagement strategy to ensure it is supporting fully our efforts to achieve the objectives outlined in the President's new South Asia Strategy. We will look to many elements of the U.S. Government, including Congress, for continued support to ensure our exchange and other programs of this nature are effective and achieving the intended results.

Question 9. What is your understanding for the conditions under which the U.S. could begin to diminish its military presence in the country?

Answer. As President Trump explained in his August 21 address to the American people, a core pillar of the new South Asia Strategy is a shift from a time-based approach, to one based on conditions on the ground. He was clear about our objective in Afghanistan, which is to make Americans safer. A premature withdrawal risks creating a vacuum that terrorists would exploit, as they did on 9/11.

The President was also clear that military power alone will not bring peace to Afghanistan. Rather, "strategically applied force" can "create conditions for a political process to achieve a lasting peace." The mission of our troops in Afghanistan is to apply force in order to make clear to the Taliban that they cannot achieve their objectives on the battlefield and must instead enter negotiations with Afghan Government.

President Trump has delegated to the Secretary of Defense the authority to determine the level of troops necessary to achieve this mission. I would refer you to the Department of Defense for a description of the military conditions under which those troops might be drawn down.

Question 10. What ways do you see to ramp up U.S. engagement in the peace and reconciliation process? How will you personally involve yourself?

Answer. A negotiated peace accord with the Taliban is critical to ending the conflict, stabilizing Afghanistan and protecting our core national security interests. We have signaled to the Afghan Government and others our priority is to launch a peace process. We regularly engage Afghanistan's neighbors to press the Taliban to come to the negotiating table.

The broad outlines of an acceptable agreement to end the conflict would require the Taliban to cease violence, break all ties to international terrorists, and accept the Afghan Constitution, including its protections for women and minorities. These

end-conditions are necessary to ensure the gains achieved over the last 16 years are protected.

I believe there is an opportunity to make a fresh push to start a peace process in light of the fact we are no longer announcing any artificial deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Many observers have noted that the primary obstacle to a peace process is the Taliban's confidence it can outlast us on the battlefield, and indeed, much of this confidence in years past came from the group's awareness of our withdrawal deadlines. We can therefore use the President's new South Asia strategy to make a stronger argument to the Taliban that we will not allow them to win militarily, and that a negotiated political settlement provides them the best opportunity to achieve some of their objectives.

I plan to firmly advocate for increased reliance on politics and negotiations, rather than violence, to address a range of challenges in Afghanistan. I intend to continually seek opportunities to lay the groundwork for a peace process with interlocutors across the Afghan political spectrum.

Question 11. The U.S. has engaged in a series of efforts, dating back to the Tokyo commitments, to incentivize Afghan reforms through our assistance programming. How is the recently announced Kabul Compact any different from these past efforts? Why does the administration expect that the behavior of the Afghan Government will be any different?

Answer. Unlike the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework and other donor-driven commitments of the past, the Kabul Compact is an Afghan-led initiative. President Ghani proposed the Compact in his April 2017 meeting with General McMaster as a way to hold the Afghan Government accountable. In the words of President Ghani, the primary purpose of the Compact is to "restore trust" in the Afghan Government and demonstrate to the Afghan public, the American public, and the international community that the Afghan Government is "serious about making lasting reforms."

The Compact consists of reform benchmarks in four areas: governance, security, the economy, and peace and reconciliation. Working groups co-chaired by American and Afghan officials developed these benchmarks to measure progress over the next three years, and President Ghani has signed an official decree instructing all relevant ministries to implement and comply with the Compact's directives. He has also urged the working groups to provide monthly progress reports and, as appropriate, make those reports public. This frequent coordination with our Afghan counterparts will allow us to monitor more closely what the Afghan Government is doing and calibrate our diplomacy and foreign assistance accordingly.

Question 12. Please describe how you will diplomatically engage with Russia and the countries of Europe to urge more active participation in efforts to address poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.

Answer. We share Congress's concern regarding Afghanistan's unacceptably high level of opium cultivation and lack of eradication. Opium poppy production in Afghanistan undercuts good governance, fuels corruption, provides revenue to terror and militant groups, and undermines our national interests in Afghanistan and more broadly in South and Central Asia. The two greatest impediments to successful opium poppy eradication are insecurity and a lack of political will on the part of the Afghan Government. Eradication is politically unpopular, given the absence of a range of high-value alternative crops as well-suited to Afghanistan's poor soils and transport networks. Eradication operations have turned violent, resulting in deaths of both the Afghan security forces conducting the eradication and local farmers opposing eradication.

Most areas of high cultivation, such as Helmand province, are either under Taliban control or influence, complicating the Afghan Government's eradication efforts in areas where it does not effectively exercise control. Without improved security, eradication is likely to remain at unacceptably low levels.

The State Department takes very seriously the challenge posed by narcotics production in and trafficking from Afghanistan and is working with DEA and DOD to finalize an updated U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan. Measures to generate Afghan political will to increase eradication will be a key component of this review. We will also explore possible options for engaging with Russia, Canada, and countries of Europe, all major markets for Afghan heroin, on how to address the challenges of curbing the Afghan opium trade. This engagement can be both bilateral and through multilateral fora, such as the Paris Pact Initiative. Given constraints imposed by both the security situation and reduced funding for USG counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan, the group will look to target key districts in high poppy producing areas of Afghanistan for best effect. The Department shares

deep concerns over the continued upward trend in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.

Question 13. I am very concerned about accountability for funds provided through the World Bank's Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). What specific measures will you put in place to ensure that the World Bank is providing the U.S. taxpayer with the necessary information to ensure that these funds meet U.S. accountability standards?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID take very seriously the responsibility to ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are spent wisely in support of U.S. national security objectives. We are working with the World Bank and other ARTF donors to identify ways to expand the scope and intensity of ARTF management and oversight mechanisms. This includes stronger results frameworks and more extensive use of third-party project and resource disbursement monitoring. We are also looking at ways to strengthen communication between the World Bank and ARTF donors through regular portfolio reviews and more detailed results scorecards. Furthermore, USAID is working closely with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and other major ARTF donors on the fourth external evaluation review of the Fund. We will continue to conduct additional evaluations of the ARTF, as necessary, to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds are used for the development purposes for which they are intended.

Question 14. SIGAR recently found that U.S. programming to promote Afghanistan's revenue generation through customs collection has been significantly deficient. Given that Afghanistan's best prospects for revenue generation appear to come in this sector, how do you plan to address this significant shortcoming? How will you work to encourage the Afghan authorities to tangibly improve their ability to address corruption at the border crossings and increase domestic revenue?

Answer. The Department of State, USAID, and the Afghan Government all agree that an electronic payment system would be an effective method for reducing corruption at customs checkpoints and collecting the additional revenue that the Government needs. President Ghani and CEO Abdullah are committed to increasing usage of the e-payment system, and since 2013 USAID's Afghanistan Trade and Revenue (ATAR) project has sought to improve the capacity of the Afghan Government to collect customs revenue through the system. The e-payment system is a module within the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), a software system developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and used in many countries' customs facilities. ASYCUDA has significantly reduced customs clearance times (from several days to several hours) and increased customs revenue.

Mission Afghanistan is addressing the issues with e-payment identified in the SIGAR report, including working with the Ministry of Communications on an E-Transaction Law and speeding the transfer of funds from Afghanistan's national bank, Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), and commercial banks to government workers and other designated recipients. However, broader efforts to reduce customs corruption are likely to have the greatest impact on future revenue collection. For example, overly sensitive risk profiles are resulting in nearly all cargo being flagged at the borders—far too many to actually be inspected—providing opportunities for corruption to expedite clearance. The Afghanistan Customs Department is in the process of adjusting those profiles and procedures at the borders to improve system reliability and reduce corruption.

If confirmed, I will continue to engage President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah and other senior Afghan Government officials to ensure they sustain their focus on reducing corruption and improving further revenue collection by the Government.

Finally, it is worth noting that SIGAR's report examined only one of many focus areas that were part of the ATAR project. As of July 2017, ATAR had spent an estimated $559,803 out of the $77.8 million project ceiling for ATAR (approximately 0.7 percent) to support the implementation of e-payment technology. Other facets of ATAR have achieved significant results, including helping the Afghan Customs Department improve its risk management system to align it with international standards, supporting Afghanistan's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2016, and facilitating negotiations on trade and transit agreements with regional trading partners.

Question 15. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. My experience has given me many opportunities to build high-functioning teams with diverse members. I remain committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a work environment that recognizes the contributions of all employees, and will make sure they have information available about the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, foreign affairs affinity organizations and opportunities specific to various groups.

If confirmed, I will encourage all supervisors to take available courses on EEO principles, diversity, and related issues. I will urge them to include unconscious bias and similar topics when they mentor junior colleagues. I will direct supervisors to transparently and fairly provide opportunities to all entry- and mid-level professionals. By providing time for professional development discussions to address diversity, I will highlight that this is a priority for me as the Ambassador.

Question 16. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 17. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 18. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Afghanistan?

Answer. Neither I, nor any members of my immediate family have any financial interests in Afghanistan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN R. BASS BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction continues to issue reports that regularly highlight ongoing serious challenges the United States faces in our efforts to support Afghans rebuild their country. What steps will you take to ensure accountability and transparency in U.S. programs that directly support the Afghan Government?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID take seriously the responsibility to ensure accountability and transparency for U.S. taxpayer dollars. We provide the vast majority of our direct support to the Afghan Government through the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). A large share of this assistance is conditions-based. Through the U.S.-Afghan New Development Partnership (NDP), the Afghan Government can receive up to $200 million each year for meeting mutually agreed-upon reform benchmarks. The World Bank also manages the ARTF Incentive Program, which conditions donor assistance to the Afghan Government on the achievement of public financial management and fiscal policy reforms.

The World Bank uses a variety of monitoring tools, such as results frameworks and third-party monitors, to oversee the use of donor funds. U.S. Government officials meet regularly with World Bank staff in Kabul and Washington on the ARTF. We are working with the World Bank and other ARTF donors to identify ways to expand the scope and intensity of ARTF management and oversight mechanisms. Furthermore, USAID is working closely with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and other major ARTF donors on the fourth external evaluation review of the Fund. We will continue to conduct additional evaluations of the ARTF, as necessary, to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds are used for the development purposes for which they are intended.

Direct government-to-government assistance constitutes only a small percentage of the assistance we provide to Afghanistan. Before implementing such programs, USAID undertakes an extensive risk assessment, known as a Public Financial Management Risk Assessment Framework (PFMRAF), to determine whether the ministry or entity has the systems and controls necessary to effectively manage U.S. government funds. After completion of the risk assessment for a ministry, USAID also performs its own internal risk review. Ultimately, a system of safeguards is in

place to ensure transparency and oversight of U.S. funds before USAID programs are implemented and funds are disbursed.

Question 2. Given the extreme limitations on movement of State Department and USAID personnel due to security concerns, what steps will you take to ensure effective oversight of USG programs throughout the country?

Answer. As the May 31 bombing just outside Kabul's international zone reminded us, Afghanistan is and will remain a dangerous place for U.S. diplomats and development specialists. At the same time, we recognize the importance of closely monitoring our programs in Afghanistan to ensure the appropriate and effective use of our assistance funding in this difficult operating environment. The Department of State and USAID have developed an innovative, multi-tiered monitoring approach for civilian assistance and public diplomacy programs in Afghanistan that utilizes multiple sources of information, including third-party monitors, reporting by implementing partners, and input from Afghan Government and civil society members, among others, to inform programmatic decision-making. This monitoring information allows the United States to expand programs that are working well and to terminate or adjust programs that are not achieving results. When appropriate, we have changed course to refocus resources on more productive programs that have a greater demonstrated impact on Afghanistan's development.

Question 3. Over the past few years, we have seen Iran more boldly assert regional presence, including in Afghanistan. How do you evaluate the evolving relationship between Iran and the Taliban? What do you see as Iran's intended outcome with increased activity and operations in Afghanistan? Is Iran's goal to continue simply destabilizing Afghanistan?

Answer. As Afghanistan's neighbor, Iran has an interest in Afghan security and stability. Iran is one of the top exporters of goods into Afghanistan, and is attempting to enhance its cultural and strategic connections with Afghan Shi'a in western and central Afghanistan. Iran has actively recruited thousands of Afghans to fight in Syria, both within the refugee population and inside the Shia population in Afghanistan, using a combination of religious, financial, or residency incentives.

We encourage Iran, and all of Afghanistan's neighbors, to fully support the Afghan Government and to put pressure on the Taliban to enter peace talks. However, the drawdown of international forces, political instability in Afghanistan, and the transition of U.S. administrations have led Iran to continue its hedging activity with the Taliban—ostensibly to combat ISIS' presence in the country. Iran has also been vocal about its opposition to the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan.

Despite reports that Tehran maintains links to the Taliban, Iran continues to profess support for an Afghan-led peace process and participates in regional fora on Afghanistan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN R. BASS BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question 1. In your prepared statement, you mention the "Kabul Compact," also known as the "Afghan Compact," a set of benchmarks for reforms developed by President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah. These benchmarks reportedly address governance, security, peace and reconciliation, and economics. In an interview in late August, General Nicholson said, "There are literally hundreds of milestones and benchmarks that the Afghans have agreed to meet." Both you and General Nicholson say that the Afghan Government has asked us to hold them accountable to these commitments. If confirmed, working with General Nicholson, do you commit to providing periodically to this committee and my office a detailed, specific, and written unclassified assessment of where the Afghan Government is falling short on these commitments and how Kabul plans to address these shortcomings?

Answer. As I have done during my service as Ambassador to Georgia and now as Ambassador to Turkey, I look forward to engaging with Congress on questions regarding our assessment of host government actions to meet bilateral commitments made with the United States.

I look forward to working with General Nicholson to encourage the Afghan Government to continue making progress on their stated obligations in the Kabul Compact, and intend to remain in close communication with Congress regarding the breadth of our relationship with Afghanistan.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN R. BASS BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. To what extent do you agree with Afghan officials' assessment that Pakistan is one, if not the, crucial impediment to stability in Afghanistan?

- Has Pakistan played a constructive role in Afghanistan in your net assessment? If not, what are Pakistan's strategic considerations for its approach, and how, if at all, can U.S. action change that?

Answer. The administration believes that stabilizing Afghanistan is in the interest of all countries in the region, including Pakistan. If confirmed as ambassador, I will work with Ambassador Hale in Islamabad to promote the efforts of the administration to encourage all of Afghanistan's neighbors to support an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned political reconciliation process, which is the most viable path to end the conflict in Afghanistan.

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have been particularly strained since early this year following a spate of terrorist attacks in both countries, with each blaming the other for harboring and supporting the attackers.

To overcome these tensions, more engagement between Afghanistan and Pakistan on items of mutual interest is crucial. Recent high-level visits between both countries have been an important step. Pakistan's Foreign Secretary recently visited Kabul for a productive high-level diplomatic dialogue, with further senior level engagements planned in the months ahead. In addition, senior Pakistani and Afghan military officials recently met in Kabul and agreed to formulate an action plan to improve border security with coordinated actions. The administration welcomes these renewed efforts and supports intensification of dialogue.

The Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan should redouble their standing commitment to deepen counterterrorism cooperation against all groups that pose a long-term security threat to both countries. Pakistan has been an important partner in combating anti-State terrorist groups, such as the Pakistani Taliban, al-Qa'ida, and ISIS in South Asia. Pakistan needs to disavow, and deny safe haven to, terrorist organizations that target its neighbors. Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with our efforts in the region, including the facilitation of a peace process that will lead to a stable, peaceful Afghanistan, the defeat of ISIS in South Asia, and the elimination of terrorist groups that threaten both Pakistan and the United States.

Question 2. Do you consider the reportedly growing role of Russia and Iran in Afghanistan a strategic threat to the U.S.? Why or why not? Why would these former Taliban opponents now support the group?

Answer. Both Iran and Russia have mixed records in Afghanistan, which is a matter of concern. Especially in recent years, as the ISIS threat has grown, both countries have pursued hedging strategies that include modest support for the Taliban. We expect that our new South Asia strategy, with its clear commitment to Afghanistan, will temper this hedging behavior.

As Afghanistan's neighbor, Iran has an interest in Afghan security and stability. Iran is one of the top exporters of goods to Afghanistan, and is attempting to enhance its cultural and strategic connections with Afghan Shi'a in western and central Afghanistan. Iran has actively recruited thousands of Afghans to fight in Syria, both within the refugee population and inside the Shi'a population in Afghanistan, using a combination of religious, financial, or residency incentives.

We encourage Iran, and all of Afghanistan's neighbors, to fully support the Afghan Government and to put pressure on the Taliban to enter peace talks. Despite reports that Tehran maintains links to the Taliban, Iran continues to profess support for an Afghan-led peace process and participates in regional fora on Afghanistan.

Similarly, Russia has expressed an interest in Afghan security and stability. While Russia maintains diplomatic ties with the Afghan Government it has also been vocal about its opposition to the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. We have called on Russia to fully support the Afghanistan Government and efforts to ensure safety and stability within its borders. We continue to encourage Russia to expand discussions on how we might cooperate to support Afghanistan and to foster a peace process between the Afghan Government and the Taliban.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JUSTIN SIBERELL BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. The 2011 Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), an independent outside review commission, issued 26 recommendations to hold the Government accountable for its suppression of the 2011 uprising. How many of those recommendations has the Government implemented? If confirmed, how do you plan to encourage the Government to fully implement all of the recommendations?

Answer. For a thorough analysis of Bahrain's implementation of the BICI recommendations, please refer to the Department of State's report corresponding to the Bahrain section of Senate Report 114–79, delivered to the Senate on June 21, 2016. In the time since publishing that report, we have noted new and continued restrictions on the existence and operation of political societies, restrictions on free expression, assembly, and association; and lack of due process in the legal system. We have repeatedly voiced concern about these issues and urged the Government of Bahrain, at the highest levels, to reinvigorate its reform program, make the political system more inclusive, and rebuild trust between the Government and citizens. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government of Bahrain to take steps to ensure inclusive elections in 2018 and to advance reform efforts for the benefit of Bahrain's long-term security and our mutual interests in regional stability.

Question 2. Over the past year, Bahrain has dramatically cracked down against human rights defenders, civil society, and peaceful leaders in the opposition. Specifically, they banned the country's largest opposition party, have not fulfilled the 26 recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission on Inquiry (BICI) report that the King publicly committed to implementing, and reversed the few BICI-related reforms they had implemented. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain, how will you encourage the Government of Bahrain to respect the basic human rights of its citizens and implement genuine political reforms?

Answer. These are Bahraini challenges that will require Bahraini solutions, but Bahrain's partners can also be supportive of the process. If confirmed, I will encourage reform, reconciliation, and respect for rights in Bahrain, and these issues will be at the center of my engagement with the Government and people of Bahrain.

Question 3. Bahrain is ranked 164th out of 180 countries in Reporters sans Frontières (RSF) 2017 World Press Freedom Index, falling into the "black zone" in the past year. RSF notes that there are currently 14 journalists in prison in Bahrain. The Bahraini Government has intensified its censorship efforts against foreign journalists deemed critical of the Government, including denying accreditation, restricting visas, and blocking news websites. If confirmed, what role can you and the U.S. Government play in ensuring the Government respects freedom of press and freedom of expression? Do you commit to raising press freedom violations with Bahraini authorities?

Answer. We regularly raise concerns about restrictions on the press, freedom of expression, and other human rights issues with the Government of Bahrain. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to have an open and honest dialogue with Bahrain on the full range of issues affecting our bilateral relationship, including these. A free and independent press allowed to peacefully voice a wide spectrum of views plays a vital role in inclusive, pluralistic governments and societies.

Question 4. Nabeel Rajab is a prominent human rights activists who is currently in prison on charges related to tweets and a television interview. On July 10, 2017, the State Department put out a statement expressing their disappointment for the sentencing of Mr. Rajab and urging the Government of Bahrain to "abide by its international obligations and commitments to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression." What is your plan for dealing with the Bahraini authorities when it comes to freedom of expression and politicized trials like those of Nabeel Rajab? If confirmed, do you commit to raising the case of Nabeel Rajab as well as other political prisoners and urge the Government to unconditionally release him and others? If confirmed, do you commit to providing my office with regular updates on Embassy Manama's efforts to press for Nabeel Rajab's release as well as other political prisoners?

Answer. We were disappointed by the July 10 verdict sentencing Nabeel Rajab to two years in prison. I understand he could face an additional 15 years in prison for tweets he made that were critical of Bahrain's involvement in the war in Yemen. We have repeatedly expressed our concern about his cases at the highest levels and called for his release. If confirmed, I will be happy to provide your office updates on this and other types of engagement with the Government of Bahrain.

Imprisonment and detention of individuals on politically motivated charges undermines the right of political expression and compromises the atmosphere for reconciliation. We have repeatedly voiced concern about these issues, both publicly and privately, at the highest levels, urged the Government of Bahrain to abide by its international legal obligations and to focus on issues such as judicial reform, making the political system more inclusive, and rebuilding trust between the Government and citizens. These are all issues that, if confirmed, I would continue to engage on.

Question 5. The State Department's 2017 International Religious Freedom Report found that the Government of Bahrain continued to discriminate systematically against its Shia Muslim population. At the release of the report, Secretary of State Tillerson stated, "The [Bahraini] Government continued to detain and arrest Shia clerics, community members, and opposition politicians. Members of the Shia community there continue to report ongoing discrimination in government employment, education, and the justice system. Bahrain must stop discrimination against the Shia communities." If confirmed, how will you persuade the Bahraini Government to respect religious freedom and stop the systematic discrimination against its Shia population?

Answer. We will urge the Government to end discrimination against Shia in government employment and education; to pursue reconciliation between the Government and Shia communities; and to allow prisoners to practice their religions. We will also continue to condemn the unfair detention, harassment, and revocation of citizenship of nonviolent Shia religious figures and activists. Additionally, we will advocate for the Government to pursue political reforms, which would take into consideration the needs of all citizens regardless of religious affiliation.

Question 6. Bahrain is on Tier 2 of the Trafficking in Persons Report of 2017. What can the U.S. do to help the Government improve its efforts to combat and eliminate human trafficking in all its forms?

Answer. Bahrain has made progress in addressing human trafficking within its borders by developing a national referral mechanism, promoting a national anti-trafficking strategy, investigating potential trafficking cases, and taking steps to amend elements of the sponsorship system that increases workers' vulnerability to forced labor and debt bondage.

There is more that can be done, as indicated in the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report. If confirmed, I will urge the Government to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, particularly cases involving forced labor or allegedly complicit officials. I will also urge the Government of Bahrain to implement procedures to identify trafficking victims among vulnerable groups, such as domestic workers and women in prostitution, and make efforts to ensure identified trafficking victims are not punished for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking, such as illegal migration or prostitution.

Question 7. Bahrain remains geographically strategic to combating threats in the Middle East. Do you believe the U.S. 5th Fleet Headquarters should remain based in Bahrain? What efforts should be made to ensure the long-term viability of the U.S. military presence there?

Answer. Yes, I believe the U.S. Fifth Fleet Headquarters should remain based in Bahrain. The operational and logistical support that the Kingdom provides our military is essential to the success of our campaign against ISIS and enables our Navy to lead a 31-country international coalition that counters piracy, drug trafficking, and terrorism across 2.5 million square miles of ocean and seas.

Bahrain faces persistent threats from Iran, including Iran's training and supply of lethal aid to individuals and groups targeting the Government and security forces of Bahrain. This also represents a challenge to the long-term viability of our military presence there. I look forward to cooperating closely with colleagues across the Departments of State and Defense to continue to support Bahrain's armed forces to address these and other shared threats.

In addition, our counterterrorism and military cooperation with Bahrain is paired with a clear understanding that Bahrain's own long-term stability and security depend on it achieving political reconciliation and upholding its commitments to universal human rights. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government of Bahrain to take steps to ensure inclusive elections in 2018 and to advance reform efforts for the benefit of Bahrain's long-term security and our mutual interests in regional stability.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JUSTIN SIBERELL BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promotion of democracy and human rights has been an important priority for me throughout my 24-year Foreign Service career.

As a first-tour Political Officer in Panama from 1993–1995 shortly after Operation Just Cause, I worked with political party representatives, including those linked to the former Noriega Government, to engage constructively in the general elections of 1994, and served as an accredited elections observer for that same election.

As Desk Officer for Iran from 1998–2000, I drafted the State Department's Human Rights Report chapter on Iran and worked closely with opposition and dissident groups to call attention to the Iranian regime's systematic repression of political opponents and perceived enemies, for instance the Baha'i community.

As Press Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Amman from 2002–2005, I worked with our diplomats, USAID professionals and civil society representatives to highlight U.S. efforts to strengthen democratic processes in Jordan, even as regional events put significant pressure on democratic reforms. I organized a series of training programs for Iraqi journalists in Amman on the role of a free press in a democratic system, and made use of speaker programs administered by the State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs to invite prominent U.S. academics and democracy experts to engage local audiences.

As Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the Department of State from 2016–2017, I advocated for international approaches to countering terrorism within a strong rule of law framework that ensures the protection of human rights and civil liberties. Through U.S.-led initiatives within the Global Counterterrorism Forum, as an example, we achieved the adoption of "good practice" documents that have influenced governments not to accept a false tradeoff between effective counterterrorism practice and protection of such liberties. I ensured also that all U.S.-funded counterterrorism programming for which the CT Bureau was responsible adhered to requirements under the Leahy Law, and promoted international attention upon and justice for the victims of terrorist violence, including minority communities.

If confirmed, I will remain committed to the promotion of human rights and democracy in carrying out my responsibilities representing the United States in Bahrain.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Bahrain today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Bahrain? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most serious human rights problems in Bahrain include restrictions on the existence and operation of political societies, restrictions on free expression, assembly, and association; and lack of due process in the legal system, including arrests without warrants or charges and lengthy pretrial detentions—used especially in cases against opposition members and political or human rights activists.

If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's discussion with both government and opposition actors with the aim of their agreeing on a roadmap to an inclusive 2018 parliamentary election.

Question 3. 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 Bahrain in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. These are Bahraini challenges that will require Bahraini solutions, but Bahrain's partners can also be supportive of the process. I expect the broader regional political context to complicate and aggravate Bahrain's efforts to address its human rights challenges.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Bahrain?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed I am committed to meeting with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and in Bahrain.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Bahrain to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted Bahrain?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, the embassy team and I will continue to engage with the Bahraini Government to address cases of key detainees in Bahrain.

Question 6. If confirmed as Ambassador, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, we will continue to thoroughly vet all individuals and units nominated to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities or to receive equipment, in accordance with the Leahy law. If we find credible information of a gross violation of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training.

Question 7. Will you engage with the people of Bahrain on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, human rights, civil rights, and governance issues will be a consistent and core component of my engagement with the people of Bahrain.

Question 8. What will you do to build people-to-people ties between Americans and Bahrainis and to support Bahrain civil society, human rights activists, and independent media? What do you need from Washington-based U.S. officials on this?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to engage with a broad spectrum of Bahraini Government and society and encourage U.S. Government visitors to do the same, when appropriate. I encourage Congressional delegations to visit Bahrain and to meet with Bahraini groups in Washington.

Hundreds of Bahraini students come to the United States each year to attend U.S. colleges and universities, providing Bahrainis with a deeper understanding of American society and the American people, and more than 2,500 Bahrainis have participated in official cultural and academic exchanges over several decades, including the Fulbright Program. Many Bahrainis have also benefited from participating in International Visitor Leadership Program visits to the U.S. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting programs like these.

Question 9. During my review of the proposed sale of F-16 fighter aircraft to Bahrain, I sent a letter to Secretary Tillerson on May 11, 2017 to raise my concerns regarding Bahraini Government policies. In reply, I received two letters. One from Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs Joe McManus on May 24, 2017 and a second letter from Deputy Secretary Sullivan on June 29, 2017. Please confirm that you have reviewed this correspondence. Can you provide the same assurance as Deputy Secretary Sullivan, that you will encourage reform, reconciliation, and respect for rights in Bahrain, and that these issues will be the center of your diplomatic engagement with the Kingdom of Bahrain?

Answer. I have reviewed the correspondence and affirm my commitment to advance the objectives identified therein. If confirmed, I will encourage reform, reconciliation, and respect for rights in Bahrain, and these issues will be at the center of my engagement with the Government and people of Bahrain.

Question 10. I am concerned by developments since the beginning of 2017 that indicate backsliding on implementation of recommendations from the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), and even Bahraini Government decisions to reverse previous decisions. For example, on April 3 Bahrain's National Assembly and the King approved a Constitutional amendment authorizing military courts to try civilians in cases of terrorism. This move appears to reverse BICI Recommendation 1720, which required the Government transfer all military court cases from 2011 to civil courts for review. In your assessment, does the Bahraini Government remain committed to implementing BICI recommendations? What steps will you take as Ambassador to motivate the Bahraini Government to commit to the reform program outlined in the BICI?

Answer. We have repeatedly voiced concern about these issues and urged the Government of Bahrain, at the highest levels, to reinvigorate its reform program, make the political system more inclusive, and rebuild trust between the Government and citizens. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government of Bahrain to take steps to ensure inclusive elections in 2018 and to advance reform efforts for the benefit of Bahrain's long-term security and our mutual interests in regional stability.

Question 11. How will you work with the Bahraini Government to address the gaps that still concern human trafficking?

Answer. Bahrain has made progress in addressing human trafficking within its borders by developing a national referral mechanism, promoting a national anti-trafficking strategy, investigating potential trafficking cases, and taking steps to

amend elements of the sponsorship system that increases workers' vulnerability to forced labor and debt bondage.

There is more that can be done, as indicated in the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report. If confirmed, I will urge the Government to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, particularly cases involving forced labor or allegedly complicit officials. I will also urge the Government of Bahrain to implement procedures to identify trafficking victims among vulnerable groups, such as domestic workers and women in prostitution, and make efforts to ensure identified trafficking victims are not punished for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking, such as illegal migration or prostitution.

Question 12. How do you plan to work with the Department of Labor, and nongovernment organizations, to assess Bahrain's compliance with the labor protection provisions of the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue working with the Department of Labor and U.S. Trade Representative on engaging the Government of Bahrain on its labor commitments under our Free Trade Agreement. I will welcome the contributions of civil society throughout this process.

Question 13. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. My career in the Foreign Service has taught me the value of a diverse workforce. If confirmed, I will work to advance equal employment opportunity and ensure each member of our workforce, regardless of background, has the opportunity to grow professionally and pursue positions of leadership in the State Department and throughout the U.S. Government.

Question 14. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that all supervisors take mandatory EEO training and strictly adhere to related laws and policies. I will emphasize the necessity of transparency, fairness, and inclusivity when making hiring decisions, my assessment of my subordinates' performance will include evaluation of their commitment to diversity, and I will take immediate corrective action if I learn of any incident that does not reflect the value the United States and the State Department place on diversity and respect for all.

Question 15. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 16. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 17. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Bahrain?

Answer. No.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JUSTIN SIBERELL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. Over the past year, the Bahraini Government has continued and escalated its crackdown on freedom of expression, particularly against human rights defenders and peaceful opposition leaders. This administration has seemed to indicate that human rights will not remain a priority for the United States, in Bahrain in particular. Will you actively engage with civil society leaders in Bahrain? Will you continue to stress the importance of respecting fundamental human rights and democratic values in Bahrain? Will you engage with the Bahraini Government about

its ban of opposition parties and stress the importance of democratic institutions, particularly as Bahrain heads into parliamentary elections next year?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's engagement with government, civil society, and nonviolent opposition actors to encourage the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, while working specifically towards inclusive 2018 parliamentary elections. U.S. Government actions in support of these aims reflect our strong belief that political reform and promotion of human rights protections are in Bahrain's long-term security interest and consistent with our mutual interest in regional stability.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JUSTIN SIBERELL BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. Bahrain has been one of our country's closest defense partners in the Gulf, home of the Fifth Fleet and thousands of American men and women in uniform. Yet Bahrain's response to the uprising in 2011 and subsequent crackdown has complicated relations between our two nations.

While the country began to make slow progress through implementation of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, according to Amnesty International and others, the progress has severely reversed in the last year.

Amnesty International's recent report documents in horrific detail the steps Bahraini authorities have taken to crush any independent voices, closing down political parties, jailing well-known human rights activists, and backtracking on promised reforms.

- How do you think we should balance our strategic priorities with our commitment to human rights?

Answer. Enhancing our security cooperation with Bahrain does not diminish the consistent emphasis we place on human rights issues. Indeed, our counterterrorism and military cooperation with Bahrain is paired with a clear understanding that Bahrain's own long-term stability and security depend on the country achieving political reconciliation and upholding its commitments to universal human rights. We continue to be concerned with government actions against nonviolent political and human rights actors, and will continue to urge the Government of Bahrain to take steps to ensure inclusive elections in 2018 and to advance reform efforts for the benefit of Bahrain's long-term security and our mutual interests in regional stability. 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.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO J. STEVEN DOWD BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. In 2016, U.S. firms accounted for only .4 percent of African Development Bank procurement contracts. Would you commit to working with the U.S. business community and the African Development Bank to expand opportunities for U.S. firms?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, this will be one of my top priorities.

Question 2. In 2016, the World Bank provided roughly four times as much financing in Africa as the African Development Bank. How can the African Development Bank differentiate itself from other multilateral lenders and donors in Africa?

Answer. In recent years, the AfDB has developed a strong track record in infrastructure and fragile and conflict-affected states. Approximately half of the AfDB's financing has been to infrastructure, and the Bank has emerged as a leader in its approach to addressing the underlying drivers of instability in fragile states (e.g., weak governance, food insecurity). Given Africa's infrastructure gap and fragility challenges, the AfDB should continue to focus on and enhance its work in these areas.

Question 3. What do you see as the most important challenges facing the African Development Bank? On which areas of the Bank's agenda would you like to concentrate your efforts during your term?

Answer. I believe some of the AfDB's most important challenges surround President Adesina's ambitious institutional reforms. These include his "High 5" strategic

priorities (energy, agriculture, industrialization, regional integration, and quality of life) and his significant organizational reforms. Reforms of this scale are difficult to execute but have the potential to markedly enhance efficiency and impact. If confirmed, my top priorities will include: ensuring effective implementation of the AfDB's reform agenda; further enhancing the AfDB's efforts to reduce instability and create jobs in fragile and conflict-affected states; and increasing opportunities for U.S. businesses at the AfDB and in Africa, including by strengthening the investment climate in African countries.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO J. STEVEN DOWD BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Having worked only in private industry, issues of human rights and democracy generally do not arise directly. However, I can say that, no matter where or with whom I conducted business, the ethical treatment of employees, contractors, and others was always the highest priority.

Question 2. If confirmed, how will you take into account labor rights, land rights, and other relevant human rights considerations when financing and supporting ADF's development projects?

Answer. If confirmed, I will also use my position on the Board of Executive Directors to try and ensure that all projects meet the AfDB's safeguards policies, which address labor rights, land rights, and other considerations. I will also work closely with the Treasury Department to follow all relevant legislative mandates.

Diversity

Question 3. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. If confirmed, I will promote, mentor and support my staff who come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups, consistent with fair management practices and relevant AfDB policies.

Question 4. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the ADF are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use my oversight role on the AfDB's Board of Executive Directors to try and ensure that AfDB management fosters an environment that is diverse and inclusive. I will also advocate for these issues to be considered, as appropriate, in the development and review of policies in the AfDB's human resources committee. The United States will sit on this committee in the coming year.

Conflicts of Interest

Question 5. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to carrying out my duties consistent with applicable conflict of interest laws and policies, and to reporting any potential misconduct of which I become aware to the appropriate authorities.

Question 6. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to carrying out my duties consistent with applicable conflict of interest laws and policies, and to reporting any potential misconduct of which I become aware to the appropriate authorities.

Question 7. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Africa?

Answer. Neither I nor any member of my family has any financial interests in Africa.

Growing New Markets

Question 8. What is your evaluation of the capital needs of the region?

Answer. Africa indeed faces significant capital needs. According to a recent World Bank report, the region's annual infrastructure needs are around $90 billion, of which only half is currently being met. African businesses also need capital if they are to serve as engines of growth and job creation for the continent. Foreign investment and donor resources are an important source of capital, but Africans are also working to mobilize domestic resources more effectively. Improved domestic resource mobilization by governments and deeper, stronger capital markets will be important to address the continent's investment gaps.

Question 9. When we look at these rapidly growing economies, what role do you see for U.S. foreign assistance in opening new markets for American businesses?

Answer. I believe that U.S. foreign assistance can play a critical role in opening markets for American businesses. The AfDB can increase opportunities for American businesses in Africa in a number of ways, including by: strengthening government transparency and procurement procedures, pro-business policies, and rule of law; helping develop critical infrastructure; and supporting the development of a robust African private sector, thereby boosting potential demand for U.S. goods and services.

Question 10. Please evaluate the differences in the AfDB's approaches in North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, and in oil-exporting and oil-importing countries.

Answer. In the last few years, the AfDB's approach in North Africa has focused on strengthening governance, developing infrastructure, and supporting private sector growth. The AfDB has taken a broader approach in Sub-Saharan Africa, supporting various types of projects across the AfDB's "High 5" strategic priority areas (energy, agriculture, industrialization, regional integration, and quality of life), and placing a particular emphasis on addressing the underlying drivers of fragility.

Recent economic developments since the downturn in commodity prices, including oil, have shown that more diversified African economies have withstood these shocks better and seen stronger, sustained growth. The AfDB's approach in oil-exporting and oil-importing countries in Sub-Saharan African differs mostly in the starting point of each country. The AfDB is working to support private sector growth and diversification in all its countries of operation. In countries that have relied solely on oil exports to generate growth and government revenue, this may require the AfDB to support more fundamental reforms to the general business climate and other policies.

Question 11. What is your evaluation of China's development finance efforts in Africa and increased engagement in the AfDB? Should this be a source of concern to U.S. policymakers?

Answer. While China has ramped up its investment in Africa, this has not been matched by a significant increase in its contribution to the AfDB. China will provide less than three percent of donor contributions to the fourteenth replenishment of the African Development Fund. This should be a source of concern. AfDB financing meets high standards in areas such as environmental and social safeguards and procurement, while Chinese financing through other means may not achieve these standards.

I am also concerned that Chinese financing may contribute to or exacerbate debt sustainability issues in certain African countries. The AfDB has a number of mechanisms to ensure its projects do not contribute to debt distress—most notably, countries that are at high-risk of debt distress are only eligible to receive grants, while countries at moderate risk are only eligible for a mix of grants and zero-interest loans. Chinese financing may not take these risks into account.

Question 12. What is your assessment of President Adesina's "high 5" agenda and his presidency to date?

Answer. I believe that President Adesina has an ambitious vision for the AfDB that has significant potential. His "High 5" priorities help narrow the AfDB's strategic focus, and his ongoing institutional reforms are designed to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. The key is effective implementation of this agenda. Among other things, this requires focusing on the AfDB's comparative advantages in areas such as infrastructure and fragile states, as well as the achievement of development results.

Question 13. How do you see the division of labor between the World Bank and the African Development Bank? What further measures, if any, could be undertaken to increase coordination and reduce redundancies?

Answer. While the World Bank has expertise across a broad range of areas, the AfDB is smaller, with specific areas of expertise and comparative advantage. The AfDB should narrowly focus on its High 5 strategic priorities (energy, agriculture, industrialization, regional integration, and quality of life). It should place particular emphasis on infrastructure and fragile and conflict-affected states, two areas where it has a strong track record. I understand that the World Bank and AfDB coordinate closely on their engagement in many African countries, though the exact level of coordination varies by country. If confirmed, I will seek to further enhance and systematize this coordination.

Post Conflict Role of the African Development Bank

Question 14. What role do you see for the African Development Back to play in post conflict reconstruction and peace building?

Answer. I see the AfDB playing a significant role. Twenty of the AfDB's client countries are fragile and conflict-affected states, and the AfDB has been a leader in addressing the underlying drivers of instability in these countries (e.g., weak governance, food insecurity). I believe that the AfDB should continue its efforts to strengthen the public and private sectors in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Corruption

Question 15. What will you do to continue the progress towards combatting corruption both within the Bank and in member countries?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use my oversight role on the AfDB's Board of Executive Directors to ensure that AfDB projects meet high procurement and anti-corruption standards. I will also seek to further strengthen the AfDB's anti-corruption investigation unit and independent accountability mechanism, so that any potential misuse of AfDB funding is promptly investigated. The AfDB has a number of programs to strengthen governance and reduce corruption in its member countries, and I will be a strong supporter of these efforts.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO J. STEVEN DOWD BYSENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question 1. When reviewing projects at the African Development Bank, what criterion will you use in determining whether the United States will support energy development projects?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Treasury Department to review energy projects against the new, broader, objectives recently set forth by Treasury. This includes supporting energy projects that go to the core of supporting a country's development. This can and should include helping countries access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently. By pursuing projects that employ a mix of energy sources, the AfDB can support the development of robust, efficient, competitive, and integrated global markets for energy.

Support for a project will also depend on its consistency with legislative mandates and administration policies.

Question 2. Do you believe the African Development Bank should support all types of energy resources in order to provide Sub-Saharan Africa with the electricity it needs to grow their way out of poverty?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consider a broad range of power projects that help African countries have a diversified mix of energy sources. I believe that Treasury's new energy guidance provides the flexibility to approve projects designed to meet developing economies' energy needs, ensure energy security, and promote economic growth.

Question 3. Will you vote in support of energy development projects that include oil, coal and natural gas at the African Development Bank?

Answer. My understanding is that Treasury's newly revised energy guidance provides U.S. Executive Directors with the flexibility to approve a broad range of power projects, including those that support countries to use fossil fuels. If confirmed, I will consider a broad range of power projects to promote access to affordable and reliable energy that will contribute to raising living standards across Africa.

Question 4. Coal provides an affordable and reliable energy source which is important to countries looking for assistance in poverty alleviation and economic development. Do you agree with this statement? If not, why not?

Answer. I believe that it is important for countries to have affordable and reliable access to energy. If confirmed, I will evaluate each AfDB energy project on an individual basis, weighing various factors including the project's potential poverty alleviation and economic development benefits. Helping countries access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently is a key objective of Treasury's revised energy guidance. It is my expectation that this includes support for coal-fired power projects.

Question 5. Do you believe economic feasibility and the potential to provide maximum access to energy with maximum efficiency must be the biggest factors when evaluating projects?

Answer. If confirmed, I'm committed to using the U.S. voice and vote at AfDB to grow economies on the African continent, which ultimately will reduce poverty and raise living standards. A key consideration for each project should be the economic and development impact likely to be realized, including for energy projects. Treasury's revised energy guidance allows the U.S. additional flexibility in pursuing those projects at the AfDB that make the most sense for the country of operation.

Question 6. What proportion of procurement contracts at the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund is awarded to U.S. businesses? What proportion of these contracts is awarded to Chinese businesses? What specific steps would you advocate for at the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund to increase the percentage of contracts awarded to U.S. companies?

Answer. The AfDB estimates that in 2016, 0.4 percent of AfDB and AfDF contracts were awarded to U.S. firms, and 22.1 percent were awarded to Chinese firms. It is my understanding that there are serious difficulties in tracking procurement awards by country of origin, including accounting for intermediate jurisdictions or contracts that are implemented through sub-contractors, so the data may underreport U.S. procurement. In 2016, with strong U.S. support, the AfDB introduced a revised procurement policy that better takes into account the principles of "value-for-money" and "fit-for-purpose." This policy should increase opportunities for U.S. firms, which have a competitive advantage in higher-value, long-term procurement contracts, as opposed to those that focus on the lowest cost. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be ensuring this revised policy is effectively implemented.

Question 7. What do you believe is an appropriate role for China to play at the African Development Bank and African Development Fund?

Answer. I believe it is appropriate for China to co-finance AfDB projects and increase its contribution to the AfDF to a level that is more consistent with its economic status. China will provide less than three percent of donor contributions to the fourteenth replenishment of the African Development Fund. Chinese financing that occurs through the AfDB or in the form of co-financing is held to high standards in areas such as environmental and social safeguards and procurement, and takes into account the recipient country's risk of debt distress. Chinese financing through other means may not achieve these standards.

Question 8. What is your view of China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Chinese investment efforts in Africa? How do these efforts compliment or duplicate efforts at the African Development Bank?

Answer. Africa has a significant infrastructure gap, and the AIIB and Chinese investment in Africa can play an important role in infrastructure finance. It is important, however, that this finance meets high standards in areas such as environmental and social safeguards and procurement, and takes into account the recipient country's risk of debt distress. Given Africa's infrastructure needs I believe Chinese investment can certainly complement the AfDB's efforts, especially if done through co-financing and close partnership with the AfDB on individual projects.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO J. STEVEN DOWD BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. One of the Obama administration's main initiatives on the continent was Power Africa, an effort led by USAID to help significantly increase power generation across Africa. I would point out that this initiative has not only helped to bring thousands of megawatts of electricity online in countries across Africa but has also led to hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. exports.

In a speech last year, the AfDB's Senior Vice-President stated that Africa's most important challenge was the lack of electricity, with some 645 million people with-

out access. As a result, the AfDB is investing $12 billion in the energy sector over the next five years and hopes to leverage tens of billions more.

- Can you speak about where you think the lack of electricity ranks among the continent's biggest development challenges and how you think the AfDB and Power Africa can collaborate to address this critical problem?

Answer. I believe that electricity is one of the continent's largest development challenges and offers significant opportunities for U.S. businesses. Lack of electricity is cited frequently as a top constraint for businesses in Africa, and Congress emphasized the importance of this issue in the bipartisan Electrify Africa Act of 2015. It is appropriate for energy to be one of the AfDB's "High 5" strategic priorities. I understand that the AfDB is a Power Africa partner, and the two parties are collaborating closely on specific investments and policy reforms. If confirmed, I will work to support this joint effort to address one of the continent's greatest needs in ways that leverage the expertise and financing of U.S. businesses.

Question 2. Africa today contains 7 out of 13 of the world's fastest growing economies including the Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Senegal, Rwanda, and Kenya, which are all growing at or above 6 percent of their GDP. As you no doubt know well, China has been increasing its investments and diplomatic engagement across Africa at a ferocious speed. While it is a member and has a smaller share than us in the African Development Bank, its own financing mechanisms and initiatives have made it a top partner of many governments on the continent and recently the continent's largest trading partner. I am concerned that we are unwittingly ceding strategic partnerships and opportunities in Africa to China.

- How do you view the United States' engagement through the AfDB as part of our economic statecraft with Africa and how do you plan to work with colleagues at OPIC, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the World Bank, and elsewhere in pursuit of a coordinated U.S. strategy?

Answer. I believe U.S. engagement at the AfDB plays an important role in our economic approach to Africa. Working through the AfDB, we create opportunities for U.S. businesses by strengthening the investment climate in African countries. We also ensure that projects meet international best practices in areas such as environmental and social safeguards and procurement, and take into account the recipient country's risk of debt distress. If confirmed, I will work closely with my interagency colleagues to coordinate closely, with each party, as appropriate, focusing on its areas of comparative advantage. This will allow us to maximize our effectiveness.

Question 3. Africa's youth population has been increasing faster than in any other part of the world. A young population can be a resource that leads to innovation and supports governance and political reforms. However, a large youth population that is not gainfully employed can also be a liability, further undermining growth prospects. Africa's youth present a formidable challenge that requires careful interventions.

- How do you think that the African Development Bank can contribute to stability and economic growth by tapping into the youth bulge in Africa?

Answer. I agree that Africa's youth bulge represents both a significant opportunity and potential risk, and I believe the AfDB can play a key role in ensuring it has a positive impact. By strengthening the investment climate in African countries and supporting private sector growth, the AfDB can help to ensure there are job opportunities. At the same time, it can help provide the youth with the skills to match these opportunities through its education and training programs. I note that creating jobs for youth is a core focus of one of the AfDB's "High 5" strategic priority areas.

Letter to President Donald J. Trump from the Wyoming Congressional Delegation Opposing the Return of the Bells of Balangiga to the Philippines

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 6, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We have received press reports that the US Ambassador to the Philippines has pledged to dismantle a Wyoming war memorial and move the Bells of Balangiga from F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming, to the Philippines. On behalf of Wyoming's veterans, we strongly oppose any efforts to deconstruct or disturb this veteran's memorial that honors America's fallen soldiers.

On September 28, 1901, the Bells of Balangiga were used by Filipino insurgents to launch the massacre of Company C, 9th Infantry, at Balangiga, Samar, Philippines. Of the seventy-five soldiers present during the attack, forty-eight members, including all officers, were killed, died of wounds or listed as missing and presumed dead. The Bells were legally brought back by the 9th Infantry to Fort D. A. Russell to honor the troops of Company C who were lost in the massacre.

The majority of our veterans oppose removing the Bells from the memorial. In 2012, the Wyoming American Legion passed a resolution opposing any and all attempts to move the Bells of Balangiga from F.E. Warren Air Force Base. The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in August 2016 passed Resolution No. 56: Protection, Preservation and Retention of Federal and Military Monuments in the United States. This national resolution urges Congress to pass legislation that would preserve and protect all federal and military monuments within the United States. Congress has in fact passed legislation that protects memorials and the House Fiscal Year 2018 defense authorization bill includes a provision to protect veteran memorials.

While we have great respect for the strong relationship between the United States and the Government of the Philippines, we believe that moving the Bells establishes a dangerous precedent for future veteran and war memorials. During Secretary Tillerson's confirmation process, he committed to include Congress and veterans when evaluating veteran and war memorials including the Bells of Balangiga. The Ambassador's recent public comments are inconsistent with and in direct contradiction of the commitment we received from Secretary Tillerson.

In Wyoming, we have a strong tradition of never forgetting the sacrifices of our brave men and women. Based on this tradition, we oppose any efforts by the United States Government to move these bells to the Philippines.

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We are using our voices for the lost soldiers that have no voice to oppose any efforts to use veteran's memorials as a bargaining chip with a foreign government. We ask you to direct the Department of Defense and Department of State to cease any efforts to deconstruct existing war and veteran's memorials.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and look forward to working with you to protect our veteran's memorials.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Enzi
U.S. Senator

John Barrasso, M.D.
U.S. Senator

Liz Cheney
U.S. Representative

CC: Secretary Rex Tillerson

○

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Flake, Gardner, Young, Barrasso, Isakson, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, and Booker.

Also Present: Senators Cornyn, Manchin, and Lee.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We have an unusual procedure today. As usual, we will defer to the outstanding Senators who are here to introduce others. And we thank them for being here. It is an honor to have you here in our committee. But we will let them go first, so that they can go on to their other business.

We will then adjourn and convene the business meeting for just a moment, and hopefully pass some nominees out and pass some bills out. Then we will resume with the great testimony that we know we will hear from our nominees.

So with that, again, we welcome you. If I remember the seniority order, I know that Senator Cornyn is first in seniority. We thank you for being back here again with another great Texan. I do not know whether it is Senator Lee or Senator Manchin who came next. I think I will let you guys arm wrestle over that while Senator Cornyn gives his comments.

But, again, thank you so much for being willing to come and make good comments about outstanding nominees. We thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN CORNYN, U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS

Senator CORNYN. Thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin. Thanks for holding this hearing.

I am here primarily to introduce Wess Mitchell, but I have to comment on the great willingness of Jon Huntsman to serve his country once again, this time in another peaceful, placid sort of setting, in Moscow this time. [Laughter.]

Senator CORNYN. But Wess Mitchell has been nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, and it is an honor to introduce him. He was born in Lubbock, Texas. He is a sixth generation Texan, and I am confident that he will bring his Texas can-do attitude to the State Department.

He is joined here today by his wife, Elizabeth, and their two children, Wesley and Charlotte, as well as other relatives.

Outside from being a Texan, Wess has made a name for himself as the cofounder of the Center for European Policy Analysis, or CEPA, which he created with Larry Hirsch for the purpose of strengthening the economic and military ties between the United States and Europe.

His nomination cannot come at a more critical time. Russia, as we know, is using both military and cyber capabilities to intimidate and pressure Western nations while terrorist groups infiltrate their people. As we sit here today, Russia, of course, is conducting its largest military exercise in the years in the Baltics.

Also troubling is the news that Russia sold sophisticated antiaircraft weaponry to Turkey in a clear attempt to try to drive a wedge in our NATO alliance.

Through his work at CEPA, Wess has advocated a strong U.S. position in Europe to include U.S. leadership and participation in NATO. Along with Ambassador Nikki Haley, Wess will bring deep institutional background and leadership to a region threatened by both conventional and nonconventional forces.

I recently had the chance to travel with some of our colleagues to the Balkans and met with their leaders who unanimously expressed their growing concern over Russian influence and the destabilizing effect of the refugee crisis in Europe. As recent additions to the NATO family, these countries look to the West for leadership, security, and trade. And I cannot think of a better place for them to look, rather than to fall into the tender mercies of Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation.

Wess has created one of the largest NATO brain trusts in the United States and I think is just the kind of person we need to send to Europe to reassert U.S. leadership following years of neglect.

That is why I wholeheartedly support his nomination and encourage the committee to do the same. I look forward to working with him, Secretary Tillerson, and the rest of the administration as we work to reestablish U.S. global leadership in the promotion of the democratic values in the region.

So thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin, for having me here today, and to the entire committee. And I commend this nominee for your support.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

It is going to be Senator Manchin, it looks like. Go ahead.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOE MANCHIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA

Senator MANCHIN. I have 1-month seniority on Senator Lee. [Laughter.]

Senator MANCHIN. Let me just say what a pleasure it is to be here before you, Mr. Chairman, allowing me to come and truly in a bipartisan way, because the person that we are here to speak on behalf of is truly a bipartisan person wanting to get things done. So I want to thank Senator Lee for being here also, because I know they have been great friends. But Governor Huntsman is a dear friend of mine, a personal friend of mine.

And Governors have a bond unlike most other bonds in political life. We all have the same problems. We have the same concerns for our constituents. And we try to share our successes that we have, and help each other not to repeat the same mistakes that we have made. So it is a really unusual bond.

But Mary Kaye, his wife, and Gayle and I and Jon have done things together, and we have enjoyed being with each other and have become fast friends.

They have six of their seven children here with them today. They have two grandchildren and many more on the way, I am sure, as we talk.

But with that being said, Jon has a resume that is unbelievable. And when you think about what Jon has done in the past—Ambassador to both China and Singapore, Deputy United States Trade Representative, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for trade development. But Jon is known most for his two terms as Governor for Utah. And the people overwhelmingly have supported Jon and voted for him.

But Jon left the State in such great shape financially. And we had a lot in common during the difficult times when the crash happened in 2007–2008.

What I know about Jon Huntsman is this, the compassion he has. And I have said this before. We have both gone through mining tragedies. The mining tragedies we had in our States were devastating to not just the families involved but to all of us. And I watched Jon rise up. And the compassion he had for each and every one of them, making sure it never repeated itself again, I have seen that.

I have worked with Jon in a group called No Labels. He and I were the first cochairs of No Labels, trying to bring people together in a bipartisan way, looking for a solution, not trying to exacerbate the problems and identify the weaknesses of both sides. I have watched Jon.

We have a troubled world that we live in. And at this time, we are the greatest superpower, the only superpower in the world. But superpower means more than having super-military might. It means having super-diplomatic might also. That is going to take a person with skills unlike anything we have ever seen before.

Russia is a challenge to us, but it is one that we have to face and we have to work with and try to find a pathway forward. There is only one person that I know of, and truly I mean this from the bottom of my heart, that I believe can go to Russia, try to find a pathway, open up a dialogue, find a pathway forward, and find agreements that we may have, disagreements where we respect each other and move forward in a troubled world, trying to keep it less violent.

I come here with great pleasure for the opportunity to say to my friend thank you for wanting to step up and serve again. Jon is a tremendous patriot and a tremendous American, but he is also a great friend, and I appreciate him very much.

So I would encourage all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote unanimously for this outstanding nominee that we have before us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for being here. We appreciate the comments.

Senator Lee.

STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE LEE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM UTAH

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

I am not going to repeat all of the resume items mentioned by Senator Manchin, but I am definitely going to echo Senator Manchin's conclusion: I cannot imagine anyone as well-qualified to take this post as U.S. Ambassador to Russia as my friend and former boss, Governor Jon Huntsman. [Laughter.]

Senator LEE. I served as his general counsel while he was Governor of the State of Utah. So needless to say, I saw him in every imaginable circumstance as he worked through decisions. [Laughter.]

Senator LEE. Not every imaginable circumstance. That one could plausibly deal with as Governor.

And in every circumstance, he had one objective, which was to serve the people, to find the right outcome, and to make sure that families throughout Utah, particularly the poor and middle class, were left in a better position than he found them. And he succeeded.

It is no coincidence that this man to my right became the most popular Governor in America at the time. His approval ratings soared to a record 90 percent. Now I never met a member of that 10 percent group that apparently did not approve of him. I am not sure they exist.

But the fact that he was able to do all that he did as a policy reformer, as a change agent for government in Utah, while still remaining as the most popular Governor in America, is itself remarkable.

Also, what is remarkable is the fact that this is someone who has served in every Republican administration since the Reagan administration. In addition to that, he was tapped, of course, by President Obama to serve as the Ambassador to China. One interesting side note here is the fact that I think it is worth mentioning separately that he will have served as the U.S. Ambassador both

for the world's most populous Nation, China, and, if confirmed to this position, the Nation bearing the world's largest footprint. I think that is significant.

In addition to this, he has served in a variety of capacities in corporate America as an executive in the Huntsman Corporation. He serves on the board of Ford Motor Corporation.

Then there is, of course, his most cherished and important position, that of being chairman of the board, I believe it is, or perhaps chief operating officer, with Mary Kaye serving as the chief executive officer, of the Huntsman family. Jon and his lovely wife Mary Kaye have seven amazing children. That is no exaggeration here. I would encourage each of you to get to know them.

In short, this is someone who will represent the interests of the United States in every moment and in every circumstance. Regardless of where you fall on the ideological spectrum, you will be pleased with the service this man will perform, if he is confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Russia.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Lee.

Thank you all for your comments and for taking the time to be here. We appreciate that very much.

You all are welcome to leave. We are going to move into a very boring business meeting. It would indicate that you do not have anything else to do, if you stayed. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. So the committee hearing is adjourned briefly, and we will move to the business meeting. [Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. We will reconvene our hearing.

I want to thank everybody for their cooperation in moving through that. It is very much appreciated.

I will give a very brief opening statement. I am sure Senator Cardin will do the same.

Europe and Eurasia are home to some of the closest partners, and also some of our greatest challenges. Formed in 1949 to defend the free people of the West from Soviet threat, NATO remains vital to the security of Europe and the United States. The European Union is also a critical partner in trade, politics, and global humanitarian efforts. Additionally, the United States' oldest and best allies, France and the United Kingdom, are European countries.

We look to the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs to manage these relationships as the United States reasserts itself all the world stage. Yet Russia's bad acts complicate much of the good that the United States tries to do.

The Russian Federation possesses not only the second most powerful military in the world but also a seat on the United Nations Security Council, where its veto protects war criminals, such as Bashar Assad.

In the last several years, Russia has twice invaded Ukraine, where it continues to illegally occupy Crimea and aggravate the war in Donbass.

Vladimir Putin entered the Syrian war on the side of the regime and has repeatedly used chemical weapons on civilians. Last year, Russian efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. election fundamentally damaged our bilateral relationship.

If that were not enough, Russia is in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. It is in violation and it is failing to meet its obligations under the Treaty on Open Skies.

On the other hand, we have many issues of common interest, and figuring out a way to move between these issues successfully is going to be a great challenge for our next Ambassador.

Today's nominees will need to perform some of the most important diplomatic work that our country could require to preserve our interests throughout Europe and guard against further Russian aggression. We thank them for their willingness to serve, and welcome them to the committee today.

Senator Cardin.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Let me welcome both of our witnesses. It really is a pleasure to have the two nominees before us.

I cannot think of two more important positions that this committee will consider than the two positions that we are considering today. They are that consequential.

I had a chance to meet with both of our nominees, and I found the discussions to be extremely helpful and very encouraging as to the amount of agreement, as to the importance of the assignment and the manner in which our nominees will carry out that responsibility, if confirmed.

Governor Huntsman, it is a pleasure to have you back. You just cannot seem to avoid the desire to serve the community. And we thank you for that. You are entitled to a little time off, but you seem not to want a lot of time off from public service.

But we thank you for your willingness. I particularly want to thank your family, because this is a family commitment.

It will be interesting, your observations as to whether Russia was more challenging or less challenging than China. I mean, you really have taken on some of the most difficult challenges in our country.

You started with Singapore. You put Utah in there someplace, and then decided to go on. So we thank you for that.

As the chairman pointed out, Russia is really a challenged relationship that we have. They attacked us and our democracy in 2016. They invaded Ukraine, and they still illegally occupy Crimea. They are supporting the Assad regime in Syria.

So that is why Congress passed the sanctions act against Russia, to make it clear that that type of behavior will not go unchallenged. We will look forward to you in implementing that legislation.

Our goal is to change Russia's behavior, particularly as it reflects U.S. interests. It is not to have a chummy relationship with Russia without a change in behavior. Yes, we always want to have constructive relationships with all countries. But for us to have that bond, we need to have a country that respects our independence and respects universal values. Today, Russia has done neither.

I hope that for Russians fighting for freedom in their country, that Spaso House will continue to be welcomed for civil society, which has been the tradition of the U.S. representation and mis-

sion. I appreciate your commitment to continue that tradition, and I hope there will be regular dialogues sponsored by the United States on human rights.

Boris Nemtsov, the slain opposition leader, called the Magnitsky Act the most pro-Russian legislation ever enacted. So we will be looking to you to help us implement that pro-Russian people legislation known as the Magnitsky Act.

So we look forward to a good discussion today. Again, we thank you for your willingness to serve.

To Mr. Mitchell, thank you for your willingness to serve.

I also acknowledge your family. It is a family sacrifice.

I cannot think of a more important region of the world. The transatlantic partnership is critically important to the United States and our security. And the defense of our democratic values are stronger when we are United with Europe.

We saw that with Iran. When the sanctions were applied with Europe's support, we were able to get Iran's attention. Before that, we really were not able to do that.

The same thing is going to be true with Russia. We had been any unity with Europe on Russia. We now believe we have to take it to the next plateau. Your responsibility will be to meet with our European partners to maintain that unity.

We need to build resiliency in our democratic institutions across Europe. Russia's aggression is not, obviously, aimed just at the United States. Its principal targets are in Europe. We welcome working with our European partners to strengthen that resiliency and to work with regional organizations, such as the OSCE. Another hat I wear is the ranking Democrat on the OSCE Helsinki Commission.

There are many challenges. In addition to Russia, you have Brexit. You have Turkey and how we are dealing with Turkey. You have the migration issues. You have unity against ISIL. You have concerns of erosion in the democratic process of some of our European countries that are members of EU and NATO.

So you have a full plate, and we look forward to that discussion. And we thank you for your willingness to be here and to take on this responsibility.

The CHAIRMAN. Governor, we thank you so much for being here. I want to join in with Senator Cardin in thanking you for many years of service, both in your State but on behalf of us here in our country, but in China and in other places also.

I had a great meeting with you yesterday and strongly support your nomination. I am glad that your family is willing to do this. We had some conversations about your wonderful spouse and why she would do this. Maybe you will speak to that in a moment.

But we do hope you will introduce them. We thank you for bringing them with you. We know that it is a partnership.

We are anxious to hear your testimony. If you could summarize in about 5 minutes any other materials that you want to enter into the record, we are glad to do so. But again, thank you for your distinguished past service, and thank you for your willingness to serve our country in this way.

With that, if you would begin, we would appreciate it.

STATEMENT OF HON. JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR., OF UTAH, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION STATE

Governor HUNTSMAN. Thank you, Chairman Corker.

Ranking Member Cardin, thank you for your comments as well, for your kind and encouraging words about our return to public service, and also fitting in my time as Governor of the great State of Utah.

In reflecting on those years, I have to say that I never once invaded one of my surrounding States. [Laughter.]

Governor HUNTSMAN. Came very close in the case of Nevada from time to time, but all was well.

And I want to thank all members of this committee. It is truly an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Russian Federation.

I want to thank the President for his confidence in me and for this opportunity, with your approval, to represent the American people during what is, we all know, a critical period in U.S.-Russian relations.

Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for his support as well.

Most important to all of this are the people who are sitting behind me.

Senator Corker, thank you for pointing that out.

A wonderful family, and I want to start by thanking my wife, Mary Kaye, without whom, we would not be here today, and all our children. Six of seven are here: Daughter Mary Anne, who is here with husband Evan Morgan; daughter Abby, who is here with Jeff Livingston. I never called them deadbeat sons-in-law, mind you. They are all the best in the world.

Our daughter Liddy, who is here with Eduardo Hernandez.

Our son John, otherwise known as Lieutenant J.G. Huntsman at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, who is part of VAQ–129, a Growler pilot in the Growler squadron, is here with lovely wife Morgan.

Our son Will, who is also a naval officer in the EOD training pipeline, is not with us, unfortunately. The training, apparently, is so strict he could not get a few hours off. So we will have to consult with the Armed Services Committee on that one next time.

And our daughters Gracie, who has served the last couple months as my foreign policy adviser, and daughter Asha, is here as well.

Their love and support has absolutely sustained me through many phases of my life and the different hats that I have had the pleasure of wearing, both in the public and the private sectors. Obviously, we could not undertake this new challenge, with your support, without the complete endorsement of our family.

I have had the privilege of serving as Ambassador three times, including to China and to Singapore. I am fully cognizant of the profound responsibilities a Chief of Mission must assume.

During my previous service, including as Governor of the great State of Utah, and in the private sector, I have always prided myself on leading dynamic teams and achieving important goals by

bringing individuals together from different backgrounds and different points of view.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with colleagues from the State Department and all other U.S. Government agencies to advance the interests of the American people.

While I am confident that my previous experiences does prepare me for this sensitive diplomatic mission, I am under no illusion that serving as the U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation will be easy or simple.

Our relationship with Russia is among the most consequential and complex foreign policy challenges we face. As a nuclear superpower, a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, we have no choice but to deal with Russia on a range of issues touching on global stability and security.

Yet we also need to recognize that today, contrary to Helsinki Final Act principles and international law, Russia continues to threaten stability in Europe, including by violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors. Russia also restricts the human rights of its own people.

There is no question—underline "no question"—that the Russian Government interfered in the U.S. election last year, and Moscow continues to meddle in the democratic processes of our friends and allies.

Finally, Russia is disregarding its arms-control obligations and commitments. As we work to balance these multiple challenges, I appreciate the leadership and insight that this committee has demonstrated on Russia. And, if confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with all of you in the months and years ahead.

In short, if confirmed, I will focus on four primary approaches.

First, I will engage Russian Government officials, from the highest tiers to the local level, to advance American interests. Key among our goals are defeating ISIS, countering terrorism, upholding arms control and non-proliferation obligations and commitments, finding a political solution to the conflict in Syria, and resolving the crisis in Ukraine in a way that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and restores its territorial integrity.

I will also not hesitate to remind Government officials that they are accountable for their actions. Exhibit A is the fact that interference in the U.S. election has led directly to the current low level of trust in the relationship.

The views of Congress were heard loud and clear on this point with the near-unanimous passage, as Senator Cardin mentioned, of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

Second, I will work to protect the interests of the American people, to include U.S. business, scholars, tourists, and other American visitors who spend time in Russia and engage its good citizens. I believe people-to-people exchanges and private interactions are an important way to show that our disagreements are with the Government of Russia, not with its people.

Third, I will seek out Russian people from across all walks of life to share perspectives, to relay American values, and to deepen my long-held appreciation for Russia's rich and fascinating history and culture. As I have done in previous assignments, I look forward to

meeting with civil society leaders, including those in the religious and human rights communities.

While the Russian Government has sought to limit U.S. public diplomacy, our diplomatic mission in Russia continues to engage ordinary Russians and thought leaders, and maintains a diverse outreach program. I plan to take part in that effort, as I strongly believe cultural understanding is enriched by an open and respectful exchange of ideas and thoughts. I look forward to meeting as many Russian citizens as possible during my travels throughout the great country.

Fourth, but certainly not last in importance, I will work to ensure the safety and security of my team, America's team, who work tirelessly on behalf of our Nation. Despite Russia's actions against U.S. mission diplomatic staffing, the team, both the American and the Russian staff, continues to serve with professionalism and an unwavering commitment under difficult conditions.

In particular, I want to pay tribute to outgoing Ambassador John Teft, one of the Foreign Service's finest, for his dedicated leadership and courage under challenging times.

I will be honored to work side by side with the mission team to ensure the continued critical work of the U.S. diplomatic and consular mission.

I also want to extend my personal appreciation for those Americans and Russians who serve at the U.S. mission and have since left because our staff has been cut short by the Russian Government's unfortunate decision.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. I welcome your comments and your questions.

[Governor Huntsman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JON HUNTSMAN

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Russian Federation. I want to thank the President for his confidence in me and for the opportunity—with your approval—to represent the American people during a critical period in U.S.-Russian relations. In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for supporting my nomination.

I also want to take a moment to thank my family—my wife, Mary Kaye, and my children Mary Anne, Abby, Liddy, Jon, Will, Gracie and Asha. Their love and support has sustained me through the many phases of my life and the different hats I have worn in both the public and the private sector. I could not undertake this journey without them. At our family's core lies the belief that service is the price we pay for citizenship in this great country.

I have had the privilege of serving as Ambassador before—to China and to Singapore. I am fully cognizant of the profound responsibilities a Chief of Mission must assume. During my previous service, including as Governor of the great state of Utah, and in the private sector, I have prided myself on leading dynamic teams and achieving important goals by bringing together individuals from different backgrounds and different viewpoints. If confirmed, I look forward to working with colleagues from the State Department and all other U.S. Government agencies to advance the interests of the American people.

While I am confident my previous experiences prepare me for this sensitive diplomatic mission, I am under no illusion that serving as the U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation will be easy or simple. Our relationship with Russia is among the most consequential and complex foreign-policy challenges we face. As a nuclear superpower and permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, we have no choice but to deal with Russia on a range of issues touching on global stability and secu-

rity. Yet we also need to recognize that today, contrary to Helsinki Final Act principles and international law, Russia continues to threaten stability in Europe, including by violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors. Russia also restricts the human rights of its people. There is no question that the Russian Government interfered in the U.S. election last year and Moscow continues to meddle in the democratic processes of our friends and allies. Finally, Russia is disregarding its arms-control obligations and commitments.

As we work to balance these multiple challenges, I appreciate the leadership and insight that this committee has demonstrated on Russia and, if confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with all of you in the months and years ahead.

If confirmed, I will focus on four primary approaches.

First, I will engage Russian Government officials, from the highest tiers to the local level, to advance American interests. Key among our goals are defeating ISIS, countering terrorism, upholding arms control and non-proliferation obligations and commitments, finding a political solution to the conflict in Syria, and resolving the crisis in Ukraine in a way that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and restores its territorial integrity.

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Second, I will work to protect the interests of the American people, to include the U.S. business community, scholars, tourists and other American visitors who spend time in Russia and engage its citizens. I believe people-to-people exchanges and private interactions are an important way to show that our disagreements are with the Government of Russia, not with its people.

Third, I will seek out Russian people from across all walks of life to share perspectives, to relay American values, and to deepen my already growing appreciation for Russia's rich and fascinating history and culture. As I have done in previous assignments, I look forward to meeting with civil society leaders, including those in the religious and human rights community.

While the Russian Government has sought to limit U.S. public diplomacy, our diplomatic mission in Russia continues to engage ordinary Russians and thought leaders and maintains a diverse outreach program. I plan to take part in that effort, as I strongly believe cultural understanding is enriched by an open and respectful exchange of thoughts and ideas. I look forward to meeting as many Russian citizens as possible during my travels throughout the country.

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Despite Russia's actions against U.S. mission diplomatic staffing, the team—both the American and the Russian staff—continues to serve with professionalism and an unwavering commitment under difficult conditions.

I will be honored to work side by side with the mission team to ensure the continued stellar work of the U.S. diplomatic and consular mission. I also want to extend my personal appreciation for those Americans and Russians whose service at the U.S. Mission in Russia have been cut short by the Russian Government's unfortunate decision.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your comments and questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Governor Huntsman, I must tell you, I have listened to a lot of statements made by nominees. I thought your statement was as clear and as direct on the major issues, and I applaud you for that. And I appreciate your candor with the committee, and the manner in which you have presented the challenges that you would have, if confirmed as Ambassador.

I will tell you, our staffs always give us a series of areas that they want us to question on, to make sure that there is clarity. In each of those cases, you have already provided clarity in your opening statement. But that will not prevent me from asking a couple questions anyway.

Let me just move on to the human rights issues that you and I talked about that you mentioned in your statement.

Our concern is not with the Russian people. The Russian people are good people that want basic freedom. Our issue is with the Russian Government that has denied basic rights to its own citizens and has interfered with the sovereignty of other countries. You mentioned that you will be meeting with leaders in the civil society and be a platform for that type of discussion.

How do you intend to use people-to-people contact between Russians and Americans, and using our Embassy, in order to further the hopes?

In answering that question, let me just tell you that I am impressed when I meet with Russians, and I have met with a lot of Russians, where they really do look at the United States as their hope for their future, and giving them an avenue in order to be able to keep hope alive in Russia.

How do you intend to use the position as Ambassador and our Embassy in Moscow to further those objectives?

Governor HUNTSMAN. Thank you for that question, Senator Cardin. And I very much enjoyed the conversation that we were able to have together in your office.

For me, the United States mission, whether the Embassy or consulates—in this case, three throughout Russia—should be seen as beacons of hope, aspirational for the Russian people, as I know they were for the Chinese people when I served there.

The term or title of Ambassador, although it might get you in a couple doors that otherwise you might not get in, should also be seen as aspirational and tied to U.S. values.

I have worn this title before. I have seen when you actually express those values and go to the aid of those who are under assault from their governments, they find that there is hope in what America does.

And I found that to be, Senator, our most powerful weapon at the end of the day. I hope to use it effectively. I hope to use it tactically. I hope to use it tastefully.

But there is one certainty. And I will be out, and I will be active in promoting America's values. It is part of who I am. It is part of my family. It is part of my upbringing. And I think it is part of the American tradition.

And I will never forget visiting one case in China, if you would allow me the reflection, a young woman who had been beaten because her home had been torn down by the Chinese authorities. There was no petitioning of government. There was no appeal process. It was just gone. She took up the issue herself, and was beaten for it, and paid a price.

I went to visit her one day and her humble little apartment, the Ambassador's car driving through the back alleyways where an ambassador's car should not be. And I walked into her little room. She had been cut off from the Internet and a lot of other things, and she had a tear in her eye. And I know it was not because Mr. Huntsman arrived, but rather because the United States had arrived.

I could tell just by being with her that that meant the world, where nobody else would show up, nobody else would stand behind

people who do not have that kind of support locally. And it meant the world.

It is reflections like that that I carry with me every day of my life. And I am reminded of the values that we stand for, whether Republican or Democrat. And I will ensure that our Embassy and our missions shine that light in a way that is aspirational, that is positive, and that does represent the best of the United States.

Senator CARDIN. And I can assure you have this committee that stands with you in these struggles. Please feel comfortable in working directly with us on advancing those issues.

I want to raise just one more issue to let you know that we are deeply concerned about the security of our mission in Russia. We know that there have been efforts made to deal with the safety of our personnel in an appropriate way. There have been, of course, incursions and listening devices in different places to try to compromise the U.S. mission.

So we invite your assessment. You mentioned the safety of your personnel. We want you to know that we hope that you will be very candid with Congress as to needs, so that we can work together to make sure those who are on the frontline of diplomacy have the protections that they need.

Governor HUNTSMAN. Thank you, Senator. The unfortunate decision by the Russian Government to cut our staff significantly will impact our ability to carry on anything representing a normal relationship. Although I have every confidence that those who remain, the 455, now that we have met what the Russians have demanded to be a sense of parity, that they, being among the best and brightest in the Foreign Service and other departments and agencies, will carry out the mission in a flawless way. I have no doubt about that. I have seen it happen before.

For me, as chief of mission, mission security and mission integrity will be top of the list. With your support and endorsement, once I arrive at mission, the first order of business really is to assess what the cutbacks in personnel have meant in terms of overall security, because security has an impact on our ability to do the work, which has an impact on overall operating morale of any Embassy.

And I have seen, over the years, when missions can operate at a high level of morale, things get done, and the work of the American people gets accomplished.

So mission safety will be top of mind for me. It always has been. I know we have some challenges, particularly as it relates to the harassment of some of our diplomats, which, unfortunately, continues.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good.

Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ambassador Huntsman, for being here. And thank you to the family as well. We have had the privilege to know the Huntsmans for quite a while. We lived near them in Vienna, Virginia, back in 1992, or 1990 to 1992, I believe. My wife, Cheryl, even taught one of the girls piano.

So anyway, it is just a pleasure to be here and a pleasure to have you, and I just want to thank you for your willingness to serve, and thank the family for their willingness to sacrifice not just this time but many times in the past as well for your public service. It is a family sacrifice, certainly, and that is appreciated.

Let me just ask one question. What can Congress do to help you succeed in your mission on behalf of the United States in Russia?

Governor HUNTSMAN. Thank you, Senator Flake. It is a pleasure to see you again. And thank you for the musical legacy that your family left with my own family, which continues to live on, as our daughter Mary Anne just returned from performing Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 2 in China.

Senator FLAKE. I think she did that in the second lesson. [Laughter.]

Governor HUNTSMAN. It is a far cry from what her dad used to play.

You know, I think allowing me the opportunity to return and report on the key issues, whether they be Ukraine, Syria, DPRK, arms control, human rights, the Magnitsky Act, because I think we are all going to have to be together, this is executive and legislative, with respect to the last round of sanctions, because you will have a significant role in how that goes.

You are then going to have to base your decisions on input from the ground, from somebody onsite. You will get all the information you need to read, but having somebody at post who can maybe help provide a different perspective will be important.

So just the very thought, Senator, that we could work together going forward and maintain an open dialogue with you and your staffs on whether there is progress on these issues, because if there is progress, we need to move the relationship to a bit of a higher altitude. Right now, we are at a low point.

It reminds me a little bit of 1986, and I remember that year. We cannot stay at the 1986 level forever. It does not serve the purposes of the region or the world well, nor does it serve the purposes of people in both countries.

So working on those issues together, allowing me a fair hearing when I return to report on progress so that we can see if, in fact, there is reason to move the relationship to a different level, I think that has to be done as a joint effort between executive and legislative branches.

Senator FLAKE. In terms of congressional travel to Russia, delegations from the Senate and the House, is that helpful?

Governor HUNTSMAN. I will just share one experience I had in China, where very few codels travel, because it was a tough gig, a tough assignment. And it was not easy always to explain to your constituents why you had gone to China.

I brought forward to some of your colleagues the idea that maybe we could organize a large bipartisan, Republicans and Democrats, codel. And they spent 3 days.

Senator Johnny Isakson was part of that. I just discussed it with him the other day. He still remembers that trip. In 3 days, they were able to articulate at the highest elected levels of the United States some of our concerns around these issues in ways that the

Chinese really understood in new and profoundly important ways. And it left a lasting impression on both sides.

I would say that maybe if we could organize some such mission, bipartisan, we have some very important messages to send and to receive. I would very much welcome that opportunity as well.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. [Presiding.] Thank you so much.

Nobody has to convince me of your ability to serve. You and I worked together when you were in China, and you helped us in Idaho considerably.

Let me say that probably one of the most confounding things for the American people to understand is that, in the position that you are in with Russia, we have some issues with Russia, which would be an understatement, to say the least. Having said that, we also have to deal with Russia.

I think probably the biggest challenge that you are going to be facing, that we are all going to be facing, is to muster them to assist with the North Korean situation. The world has to turn against North Korea in a very united fashion, and it is going to take both Russia and China. They have already indicated at least willingness to help. But there are a lot of people who think this cannot end well on the trajectory it is on, so we are going to need everybody together.

Do you have some thoughts on that, as you move into this position?

Governor HUNTSMAN. Specific to DPRK?

Senator RISCH. Specifically to DPRK.

Governor HUNTSMAN. This falls into the side of the balance sheet that represents issues where we have some overlapping and common interests, and I think we should always take the time to explore where we have overlapping and common interests.

I think one is DPRK. We take different approaches, and we have different attitudes about denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, but I think, ultimately, we want greater safety in that region. And I think both countries share real concerns around proliferation. So that brings us together with Russia for purposes of addressing DPRK.

I think the last round of sanctions was an expression of the United Nations Security Council coming together with the most aggressive approach to North Korea I think in history, and that included Russia and it included China. It is targeting areas of North Korea's economy that I think are most lucrative for them. And if the sanctions are actually implemented, and that will be part of our work once we are on the ground, it will take a toll on things like trade in textiles, which is maybe an $800 million category for North Korea; trade in raw materials of gas and oil, which is a large money category as well; and the remittances from workers, in the case of Russia maybe 50,000 or 60,000, which is another large cash flow item for North Korea.

So I am heartened by the support on the last round of sanctions just September 11th, just a few weeks ago. We will see if that is not a start where we can really come together more and more in addressing this significant threat not just in Northeast Asia but, indeed, to the world.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I appreciate your thoughts on that. We are all hopeful that the sanctions will be helpful in that regard.

Certainly, they are as about as strict sanctions as you can get. The difficulty is, of course, you have a regime that really does not care much about the people that they govern. So the question is, how effective are the sanctions going to be on leadership versus on the people?

Unfortunately, they have shown in the past that the sanctions have not been a good conduct-changer, as it would be in other civilized nations. So although we are hopeful, I think we have to think about what the next step is going to be. And that is not going to be pretty. There is no question about that.

Thank you very much for coming.

Are there any further questions? Well, I see none.

Governor HUNTSMAN. I hope we didn't scare everyone away.

Senator RISCH. We are just starting a vote on the floor of the Senate, so I am going to adjourn this hearing, excuse you and your beautiful family and those who have come here to hear this.

Again, we sincerely appreciate your willingness to serve, Jon. Thank you so much.

With that, the committee be at ease, subject to the call of the chair. [Recess.]

Senator RISCH. The committee will come back to order, and we will finish up with the Honorable Jon Huntsman's hearing.

And I understand, Senator Shaheen, you have a comment, a question?

Senator SHAHEEN. Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I would like to thank Governor Huntsman for his willingness to continue to serve the country, and also for taking a few minutes to meet with me. I very much appreciated our conversation.

I know that one of the things that we discussed a little bit was the challenges given Russia's attempts to influence our elections in 2016, their occupation of Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, some of the other challenges facing Russian aggression in the Baltics and Eastern Europe, and the need to counter those efforts, and, at the same time, the need to look at places where we can work with Russia because we have mutual interests.

So can you talk about how, as Ambassador, you will try and balance those two needs and the kinds of efforts that you think are helpful in responding to Russian aggression versus the kinds of efforts that you would employ to try to engage with them on areas of mutual interest?

Governor HUNTSMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. It was a pleasure most recently to see you.

I think we have to convince Russia, both bilaterally and multilaterally through our friends and allies, particularly NATO, that aggression does not pay, and there will be a response. We have already seen that in the case of Crimea in 2014; in the case of Ukraine in the eastern provinces of Donbass; and, of course, we do not need to go back too far previous to that, 2008, in the case of Georgia with South Ossetia.

So we have the challenges of the constant pushing that is taking place in Europe. We have friends and allies who we support and

whose sovereignty we stand behind, from a security standpoint. And I think we have to live up and respect those commitments, which I think is the case.

So we have that going on. At the same time, we have areas of overlapping and common interests. I think, as with any challenging relationship—and I would say that, in the case of Russia, it is a challenging but necessary relationship. We have to be at the table together. We have to find common ground. We have to solve problems. We have to move to a higher altitude. No question about it.

But part of that effort is to show that we can succeed in what we do together. And there may be some early signs of success, for example, in Syria with the attempt to disarm and quiet the southwestern region just south of Damascus. It is still early days, but there may be some successes from there.

I think DPRK is another area where we can find that there are successes.

In the case of Ukraine, we are nowhere. And I would have to say that the main highway that leads to an improvement in U.S.-Russia relations I think goes right through Ukraine, and that is living up and respecting the Minsk accord through the Normandy process that right now is being actively worked by Ambassador Volker, our Special Representative for Ukraine Affairs.

It is a critically important issue not just for Ukraine, for the region, but for people here in the United States. So that will be an important area.

Then we have issues such as space, which, for example, it must be the level of oxygen when you are at that level, maybe no oxygen at all, that keeps us together in a collaborative fashion. That has been a great success between the United States and Russia.

The Arctic, for example, lies out there as another issue that I think we are going to have to come together on, and maybe in ways that are positive.

So I see the balance sheet. I see the need to come up with a very clear and crisp list of priorities that we can meet on, we can hopefully make some progress on, and I can return to you and report on.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ambassador, can you talk about whether you are going to be willing to continue to meet with opposition figures in Russia and dissidents who may not agree with the Putin reign?

Governor HUNTSMAN. That has always been my practice at every other post I have managed, and it will continue to be my practice. Yes, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Jeanne.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Ambassador, Governor, I really just wanted to come back to this restarted hearing to compliment you as one of the very highest quality nominees for an ambassadorial post I have seen in my 7 years on the Foreign Relations Committee.

In our personal meeting and then in your opening statement, I think you represent the very best of public service and of leader-

ship at home and abroad. And you have answered clearly, forcefully, and directly a whole series of questions I had for you about your willingness to continue meeting with opposition figures, standing up for human rights, the value of our Western European allies, and many others.

So to you and to Mary Kaye, to your beautiful family, thank you for your dedication to public service.

Let me ask two or three questions, but I look forward to supporting your nomination, in any event.

How do you think we could more successfully counter Russian disinformation campaigns in Western Europe? As we talked about in my office, our core challenge here is raising the costs for Russia of their continued inference and of their continued illegal actions in Ukraine and in other places in the world.

And do you think it is critical that we maintain sanctions on Russia until they end their destabilizing actions in Ukraine and end meddling in European elections? Or could you imagine a path where we would lighten some sanctions and not others?

Obviously, given the actions of this committee, we would have a hand in any decision on that front.

Governor HUNTSMAN. My sense, Senator—and thank you so very much for those warm comments that you previously made.

I think Ukraine becomes very much a centerpiece here when we look at sanctions. We have maybe five rungs of sanctions when you count the Magnitsky Act as well.

I think a lot of the barometer on where the relationship goes will be based on Ukraine and the kind of success we have in the Donbass area, living up to the Minsk accord.

So when I think about the different sanctions that are there, some from Crimea, some from Eastern Ukraine, some a result of meddling in our election, some tied to Magnitsky and more human rights-focused, I really do see the Ukraine issue as being critically important as a barometer of whether or not we can make progress in our bilateral relationship.

With respect to the kind of hybrid warfare that we are seeing, which includes malign activity, goes well beyond conventional warfare that my generation was accustomed to, as was yours growing up, where you put equipment on the field and you practice, you train, and you hopefully never have to go to war, to what we see today, which is very different, and it includes disinformation campaigns, networks that are dedicated to the dissemination of news of different sources, where we see the support of political movements on the extreme end, for example, all kind of in the category of malign activities that are now focused on Europe and, specifically, the periphery just adjacent to Russia's western border.

I think the first order of business, Senator, is to recognize that it does exist and not to be delusional about it. And then to say, what is the nature of this hybrid campaign? What toll or what cost is it taking on the very survivability of maybe a nascent democracy?

I think that is the target, to undercut the credibility of the political system, which is the most nefarious approach that one can take to another nation-state.

Then I think we have to say, what are the options in terms of the tools that one might have? There may be some options on the technology side with the private sector that would be worth looking at, and I think that we always ought to be exploring private-sector technology approaches.

But then I think the work that you are doing with others, including Senator Murphy, on really funding some efforts that would maybe produce a counternarrative is really important. And I know it may seem to be a drop in the bucket or a start as compared to what we are up against, but it is a start. And I think that is important, to begin to work our way through what ultimately a longer term solution might look like.

Senator COONS. I appreciate in your written statement, in your opening statement, and in our private conversation, the clarity and forcefulness of your view about Russia's malign actions in our election, in the region against our alliances in Western Europe, the ongoing threat they pose to human rights both at home and around the world, and your commitment to join with us in working to advance American values in this context.

So I very much look forward to working with you. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I always appreciate my name being name-dropped in answer to another Senator's question. I appreciate that.

Senator RISCH. That is called pandering in politics. It will get you everywhere. [Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Governor, for taking on this responsibility. I really enjoyed the conversation that we had.

And I do appreciate your commitment to the Global Engagement Center. Senator Portman and I are very pleased that the administration, after some question, has now transferred $40 million to help set up that capacity to help young nations build independent and objective media. I think that you will be instrumental in helping figure out how that plays out going forward.

With that being said, let me ask a little thornier question here.

I really appreciated your clear statement regarding Russian interference in the U.S. election, but I want to put the sort of elephant out on the table here. You are going to be working for a President who has done the opposite, who has very intentionally over and over again cast doubt on whether the Russians interfered in this election. He said, "It's all a big Dem hoax." "It's all a big Dem scam."

When he was in Poland earlier this year, he said it could have been Russia, but it could have been a lot of other people.

And the results are real. The latest poll suggests that 43 percent of Americans do not believe that Russia interfered in the U.S. election. Importantly, only about 9 percent of Republicans believe that Russia interfered.

So just let me ask you that, because everybody is wondering, how do you represent to the Russians your belief, and all of our belief, that they unquestionably interfered in the U.S. election when your boss, the President of the United States, is engaged in a fairly in-

tentional campaign to, at the very least, cloud the issue? How do you manage that?

Governor HUNTSMAN. I think it is a fair question, Senator.

I think it is important to note that the ODNI has spoken, the Director of National Intelligence. It is a powerful symbol when you get the Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the CIA, the head of the NSA, the head of the FBI, who come together in unison behind their findings.

As a consumer of their material for some years, I very rarely see them come together in such a coordinated fashion of one mind and one conclusion. So I think that expresses where the facts are with respect to Russia's involvement in our election.

But I have to say that, for me as a former Governor, as Governor Kaine was, you are tasked with the integrity of your election system, sometimes as Lieutenant Governor, sometimes as Secretary of State. You have nothing more important than the integrity of your election process at the localist of levels. And to work to undercut or subvert or sow seeds of doubt or distrust about that system is the highest level of injury that I think can be laid on any local election system.

So I will speak to it not just as a U.S. Ambassador to Russia but also as a somebody who had responsibility for the integrity of elections in my State.

Senator MURPHY. I thank you for that answer. I just do not want us to normalize this moment. I think your job will be made very difficult by the fact that you will put pressure on the Russians to stop interfering in our elections and others while you have a President of the United States who is actively—actively—trying to cloud this question and often uses his personal communication device to call it a hoax.

I just do not want us to normalize what is happening today, where our diplomats are toeing one line and the President is toeing a completely different one on his Twitter feed.

And I greatly appreciate that people of your capacity are willing to do these jobs, but your job is made uniquely hard in a very unprecedented way.

In my last 30 seconds, if I can just get a commitment from you to follow up on something we talked about in my office. Senator Shaheen and I, Senator Cardin, Senator Risch, and others, we talk about the Balkans a lot here, but not a lot of other people do, globally.

This is where wars have started. It is a place that remains very unstable. And in the last 6 months since this President took office and signaled that we were sort of exiting the diplomatic playing field, Russia has gone into the Balkans with gangbusters. They have started buying up all sorts of media sources. They have started paying off new and interesting people.

I just wanted to have you reiterate your commitment amongst all the things you are going to be paying attention to in Moscow to make sure to keep an eye on, for us, increased Russian interference in the Balkans. It is a very destabilized place that could be made much more unstable if we do not check that interference.

Governor HUNTSMAN. You have my commitment, Senator. The Balkans is an example of what we have described earlier, specifically when you point to Serbia and Kosovo.

When we leave a vacuum behind, things happen. And I think this is an example of what has happened in that vacuum. I will watch it. I have taken note of it, and it will certainly be part of my discussions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Governor, welcome. You are superbly qualified for this position. I look forward to supporting your nomination. It is a very tough job. I am glad the President asked you to do it.

So I was involved in some of the circumstances that Senator Murphy was asking you about. I will switch and tell you an interesting irony.

While I was a candidate in an election that has been much discussed for these reasons, my son was deployed in the European Reassurance Initiative. His entire Marine battalion was deployed between the Black and the Baltic to try to help reassure our allies on the border with Russia that the United States was still there for them and would help protect them against Russia. I want to ask you about that, because I am going to be following up with the next nominee on similar questions.

In your capacity as Ambassador to Russia, should you be confirmed, you will also have the opportunity to dialogue with other European nations' ambassadors in Russia. And I think an important part of your job is going to be working as you can with the Russian Government to make sure that we advance and protect nations on their border that are currently under serious assault in many domains by Russia.

I wonder if you could just address that aspect, how you might approach that aspect of your job.

Governor HUNTSMAN. My approach, Senator, will be to work with our friends and allies in Europe, specifically the G5, who I think are very dedicated to the issues that are prominently on our security agenda.

We all know the vulnerable states. They are right on the periphery. And they need the help and support that NATO and, specifically, the United States can provide.

I think we are better and stronger when we are coordinating with those who are regionally focused and on the ground and maybe have a slightly different perspective. And I learned this while serving in China and working with the G5 in other contexts, including North Korea, including the South China Sea.

And I would fully expect to consult on a regular basis with my G5 colleagues to make sure that we are plugged into the work of the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Scaparrotti, along with NATO command as well. I very much want to make visits to both those areas to ensure that we are all of one mind as it relates to, for example, understanding the last training exercise that is playing out in Belarus even as we sit here that will go on through September 20th.

I am not sure that they have invoked the Vienna documents that are required, as far as transparency is concerned. But it may be that they should have. Nobody quite knows exactly the numbers of troops involved, or exactly how this is likely to play out.

That is not good. That does not serve the interests of security and stability in Europe.

So I think that we are together on the issues that will matter most, and I look forward to working with our friends and allies on these very issues.

Senator KAINE. You also will have a very unique perspective, having been Ambassador to China, China and Russia both being such critical nations, and both nations where we have many points of disagreement, but there are areas where we need to work together.

For example, we had a briefing recently. Though it was classified, this portion of it was not. It was about North Korea. And the Trump administration national security officials said over and over again: We are pursuing diplomacy, if we can. If it is a 10 percent chance or 5 percent chance or 3 percent chance, we need to pursue diplomacy and a diplomatic resolution of the situation with North Korea.

I assume you share that view. Would you also share my view that pursuing a diplomatic resolution with North Korea would likely involve having Russia and China involved in those discussions?

Governor HUNTSMAN. Russia and China were both, of course, original members of the six-party talks, discussions that I participated in while in Beijing. They are both critical members of that process.

China, of course, is absolutely indispensable, in terms of delivering messages and controlling the flow of goods in and out of North Korea. They have influence and clout that no other nation-state has in Pyongyang.

I think second to that would be Moscow. And, therefore, the dialogue with Russia on DPRK, on denuclearization, on calming the region down, is absolutely critical.

And to think that we were able to get a United Nations Security Council resolution on September 11.

Senator KAINE. Without a veto.

Governor HUNTSMAN. Without a veto. That speaks to textiles and apparel, an $800 million category; gas and oil; remittances of 50,000 to 60,000 North Koreas in Russia, which is worth hundreds of millions of dollars. These are big deals.

So for us, it really comes down to, are the sanctions going to be implemented? That is where we have had difficulties in the past. Will China do what they signed up to do? Will Russia do what they have signed up to do?

That is where you roll up your sleeves and you get to work.

Senator KAINE. Might I ask one more question, Mr. Chair? Or do I need to wait for second round?

Senator RISCH. Well, please be brief, because we do have another nominee that we have to wrap up.

Senator KAINE. I will be very brief.

Senator RISCH. We are going to have questions for the record.

Senator KAINE. I will be very brief.

Having acknowledged that China and Russia would be critical, if there was an ability to find a nuclear deal of some kind with North Korea, you would also agree, would you not, that their belief about whether or not the U.S. would follow a deal, if we reached it, that could be important to them in determining how much they wanted to work with us to press for a deal?

Governor HUNTSMAN. Well, obviously, there are trust issues all around.

Senator KAINE. Right.

Governor HUNTSMAN. And they constantly have to be worked on to shore up that trust deficit. The deployment of THAAD, for example, most recently, among other things, is causing consternation with both China and Russia.

But we have worked together successfully in the six-party context, so I have seen examples of where three of us can, in fact, take on an issue, share information, work from a common sheet, a common playbook, and try to get things done.

Senator KAINE. Right. Thanks for your continued willingness to serve.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Governor, Ambassador, thank you so much for taking this big responsibility on.

Thank you to your family, who is also willing to undertake those sacrifices.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank the Governor also.

On one thing that Senator Kaine said, enforcement of the sanctions on North Korea, very important; enforcement of the sanctions against Russia, very important. So we are going to need your help in enforcing the sanctions. We are already seeing, in regard to a sale with Turkey, that the sanctions may be, in fact, being violated.

So we are going to need your attention, if we are going to be effective in the messaging and action against Russia.

Senator RISCH. Tough balancing act.

For members of the committee, we will keep the record open until the close of business on Thursday. That includes members' ability to submit questions for the record.

So again, thank you so much. You and your family are free to go. Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell, would you care to join us?

Mr. Mitchell, thank you so much for joining us. The position that you have been nominated for is certainly an important position. I apologize for our time today. We are going to be on a bit of a short string, since we have a vote that starts shortly this afternoon.

So instead of making an opening statement—I do not want to preach on about Europe and how important it is to us. I am going to pass on that and get to your opening statement.

Senator CARDIN. I have already commented a little bit earlier, so we can get right to the witness.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

So, Mr. Mitchell, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF A. WESS MITCHELL OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you, Senator Risch. Let me also say how much I appreciated earlier Senator Cornyn from my home State of Texas giving me a very warm introduction, and I am honored to have his backing.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, it is a real privilege to appear before you today as nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. I am thankful to President Trump and also Secretary Tillerson for the confidence that they have placed in me to undertake this important role.

I am proud to have here with me today a support battalion of my family members: my wife, Elizabeth; our children Wesley and Charlotte, who I think are terrorizing folks in the hallway, so I apologize to anyone who has experienced that today; my mom, Dessa Mitchell; my aunt, Cindy Harris; and my father- and mother-in-law, Ed and Linda Leon.

As Senator Cornyn said, I am a sixth-generation Texan. I am the first person in my family in more than 150 years to pursue a career north of the Red River. Like my wife, who is a 13-year veteran of the Department of Defense, I came to Washington to serve my country.

Twelve years ago, I co-founded the Center for European Policy Analysis, a think-tank that is now widely recognized for the quality its research and analysis on Central Europe. As president and CEO, I have overseen CEPA's growth into a truly transatlantic organization, with offices in Washington and Warsaw, and personnel in several European countries.

In this role, I have built close and effective relationships with senior leaders across the NATO Alliance. I have had the honor of working with previous Assistant Secretaries and seeing the skill, dedication, and patriotism of the men and women of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.

And I have worked closely with many of you and your staffs on this committee on some of the most important recent pieces of legislation affecting America's relations with Europe and Russia.

What animates my work is the belief that America's alliances are the backbone of our strength and influence as a great power. Seventy years ago, Americans helped to create a new Western order, grounded in Atlantic cooperation. They did so because they understood that America has an enduring strategic interest in removing what an earlier generation of U.S. policymakers called the "firetrap" of geopolitics in the western Rimland of Eurasia. This region was the birthplace of three global wars in the 20th Century, two hot and one cold.

The alliance that we built after 1945 and expanded after 1989 laid the foundation for unprecedented freedom, stability, and prosperity in much of the world.

As President Trump said in Warsaw, "There is nothing like this community of nations. We must have the courage and desire to preserve" it.

If confirmed, I will view as my central task the preservation and strengthening of the Western alliance to ensure that my young children are able to enjoy the benefits of peace and abundance that we have known in our lifetimes.

If confirmed, my first priority will be to give weight and substance to the administration's affirmation of America's commitment to Article 5 of NATO. Our allies, especially frontline states between the Baltic and Black Seas, must know that the defense of the West rests on an unwavering commitment and covenant.

To be credible, it requires a strong forward posture and a willingness by all allies, including the largest and wealthiest European states, to bear their full share in defense spending.

The fight against ISIS must also be an urgent priority. We need all allies to assist robustly in defeating ISIS, to share information on terrorist threats, and address the sources of migration and extremism in North Africa. We must work closely with Europe on Syria, Iran, and North Korea, and rally support for the new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan.

And we must work to keep Turkey, long the linchpin of NATO's southern flank, firmly anchored in the transatlantic community.

In both the east and south, we must be sober-minded about Russia. It is in the interests of the American and Russian peoples to lower tensions between the world's two largest nuclear powers. At the same time, the Russian Government must understand that a return to normal relations will be impossible as long as it attacks its neighbors, abuses its people, and attempts to undermine confidence in America's institutions and those of our allies.

If confirmed, I will urge Moscow to cease its destabilizing activities in Ukraine, and to end its support for hostile regimes in Syria and Iran.

America is greatest when our alliances are strong and our trade is vibrant. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the trillion-dollar transatlantic economy that gives jobs to millions of Americans. I will build on the administration's efforts to help Europe enhance its energy security through diversification of energy sources and routes, and highlight the viability of American LNG as an option for these efforts.

In all of these areas, we must be clear about what we stand for as an alliance. The glue that holds us together is greater than a treaty or a set of institutional rules. It is the glue of a common civilization, the West, grounded in freedom, democracy, and rule-of-law, and united by bonds of culture and shared sacrifice.

As Secretary Tillerson said, "American leadership requires moral clarity." We are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned, and when we hold our rivals accountable for human rights abuses at home.

If confirmed, I will use the relationships I have forged in Europe, among the talented staff of the State Department and here on the Hill to advance U.S. interests, values, and prosperity in Europe. And I will use the leadership skills gained at CEPA to help realize Secretary Tillerson's vision of making every State Department dollar count for the American taxpayer.

I am humbled to be considered for this position. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you

for the opportunity to be here. I welcome your comments and questions.

[Mr. Mitchell's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF A. WESS MITCHELL

Thank you for your kind introduction, Senator Cornyn. I am honored to have the backing of the Senator from my home state of Texas.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. I am thankful to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence they have placed in me to undertake this important role.

I am proud to have sitting behind me today my wife Elizabeth Mitchell, my mother Dessa Mitchell, my aunt Cindy Harris, and my father- and mother-in-law Ed and Linda Leon.

I am a sixth-generation Texan—the first person in my family in more than 150 years to leave the state of Texas and pursue a career north of the Red River. Like my wife, who is a 13-year veteran of the Department of Defense, I came to Washington for one reason: to serve my country.

My experience in Europe goes back two decades. I have lived in Europe, studied its languages, history and geopolitics, and completed my doctorate at a German university. Twelve years ago, I co-founded the Center for European Policy Analysis, a leading think-tank widely recognized for the quality and breadth of its research on Central Europe. As President and CEO, I have overseen CEPA's growth into a truly transatlantic organization, with offices in Washington and Warsaw and personnel in several European countries. In this role, I have built close and effective relationships with senior leaders across the NATO Alliance. I have had the honor of working with three previous Assistant Secretaries and seeing the skill, dedication and patriotism of the men and women of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs in action, both here and in our embassies abroad. And I have worked closely with many of you and your staffs on this committee on some of the most important recent pieces of legislation affecting America's relations with Europe and Russia.

What animates my work is the belief that America's alliances are the backbone of our strength and influence as a Great Power. Seventy years ago, Americans helped to create a new Western order, grounded in Atlantic cooperation. They did so not out of charity, but because they understood that America has an enduring strategic interest in removing what an earlier generation of U.S. policymakers called the "firetrap" of geopolitics in the western rimlands of Eurasia. This region was the birthplace of three global wars in the 20th Century-two hot and one cold. The alliance that we built together after 1945 and expanded after 1989 has been a guarantee against the return of that old cycle of bloodshed. It has laid the foundation for unprecedented freedom, stability and prosperity in much of the world. As President Trump said in Warsaw, "there is nothing like this community of nations. The world has never known anything like it . . . [and] we must have the courage and desire to preserve" it.

If confirmed, I will do exactly that. I will view as my central task the preservation and strengthening of the Western alliance to ensure that my young children are able to enjoy the benefits of peace and abundance that we have known in our lifetimes.

Succeeding in that task will require us to confront the pressures bearing down upon Europe from the east and south, as well as the crisis of confidence inside Western societies.

If confirmed, my first priority will be to give weight and substance to the statements that the President, Vice President and Secretaries of State and Defense have made affirming America's commitment to NATO Article 5. Our allies, especially frontline states between the Baltic and Black Seas, must know that the defense of the West rests on an unwavering covenant. To be credible, it requires a strong forward posture. And a willingness by all allies, including the largest and wealthiest European states, to bear their full share in defense spending.The fight against ISIS must also be an urgent priority for U.S. diplomacy in Europe. Since 2014, there have been more than 150 attacks plotted or carried out on European soil. We must do more to stop this insidious threat. We need all allies to assist robustly in defeating ISIS, share information on terrorist threats, and address the sources of migration and extremism in North Africa. We must maintain a common approach with the European Union as a global partner, work closely with allies on Syria, Iran and North Korea, and rally support for the new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan. And we

must work to keep Turkey, long the linchpin of NATO's southern flank, firmly anchored in the transatlantic community.

In both the east and south, we must be sober-minded about Russia. It is in the interests of the American and Russian peoples to lower tensions between the world's two largest nuclear powers. At the same time, the Russian government must understand that a return to normal relations will be impossible as long as it attacks its neighbors, abuses its people and attempts to undermine confidence in America's institutions and those of our allies. If confirmed, I will urge Moscow to cease its destabilizing activities in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and the Balkans and to end its support for hostile regimes in Syria and Iran. I will also support efforts to reduce the vulnerabilities of our allies and partners to corruption, disinformation, and other forms of malign influence that Russia uses to weaken their institutions and civil societies.

America is greatest when our alliances are strong and our trade is vibrant. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the trillion-dollar transatlantic economy that gives jobs to millions of Americans. I will build on the administration's efforts to help Europe enhance its energy security through diversification of energy sources and routes. And I will highlight the viability of American LNG as an option for these diversification efforts.

In all of these areas, we must be clear about what we stand for as an alliance. The glue that holds us together is greater than a treaty or set of institutional "rules." It is the glue of a common civilization—the West—grounded in freedom, democracy, and rule-of-law, and united by bonds of memory, culture and shared sacrifice. As Secretary Tillerson has said, "American leadership requires moral clarity." We are open and free societies, and we welcome those who wish to join our alliance. We are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned, and when we hold our rivals accountable for human rights abuses at home.

Whatever America seeks to do in the world, we are more apt to succeed when the West acts together. If confirmed, I will use the relationships I have forged over the past decade throughout Europe, among the talented staff of the State Department and here on the Hill to advance U.S. interests, values and prosperity in Europe. And I will use the executive leadership skills I have gained at CEPA to help realizeSecretary Tillerson's vision of making every State Department dollar count for the American taxpayer.

I am humbled to be considered for this position. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I welcome your comments and questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Mitchell.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Mitchell, welcome. Again, as I told you, I very much appreciate your willingness to serve our country.

The Obama administration takes pride that they were able to get Europe to have consistent sanctions against Iran that the United States initially brought forward. And they have a right to have that pride, because that was the effective leverage on Iran to get them to sit down and negotiate. No question about it.

But I want to take you back a little bit in history in this committee, when Congress passed the enhanced sanctions against Iran. The administration was not quite as excited as we were taking up that sanction legislation, because it took away some of the flexibility that any administration likes to have.

After it passed, they recognized that it gave them additional strength in dealing with our European partners to get tough sections against Iran that ultimately led to negotiations.

My point is, with Russia, we are in a very similar situation. This Congress has spoken with a very, very strong voice, 98–2 in the United States Senate.

These are tough sanctions. And it gives the President a much stronger hand. But he has to play the hand.

You are going to be the key person in the administration working with our European partners to get consistency in the sanctions im-

posed by the United States and Europe against Russia, so they know that the impact on their economy will be much stronger if they do not change course in their behavior against Europe and the United States.

Do we have your commitment that you are going to carry out not only the law but carry out with enthusiasm these tools that are available to get Europe consistent with the United States in imposing additional sanctions against Russia?

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you for that question, Senator. And I enjoyed the time that we had together. I want to thank you for your leadership, particularly on human rights issues and Helsinki Commission.

The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, as you say, this was a 98–2 vote and reflected the will of the American people. I think the Secretary has been clear that he views it in that light, and President Trump said in Warsaw of Russia that this is a country that tests our will, undermines our confidence, and challenges our interests.

If I am confirmed, you have my commitment to executing and implementing the terms of this legislation as it was intended, obviously in close coordination with the Secretary.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for that answer, but I want you to go further than that. I want you to work with European allies so that they have consistent sanctions. One of the things that we frequently hear about is that, the same thing with North Korea, if we do not get consistency on sanctions, you can drive a truck through the economic penalties.

So we need Europe, which is closer with Russia on economic activity, to follow U.S. leadership. That is where I need your help. I should not say that I need your help. It is the country that needs your commitment.

Mr. MITCHELL. Let me say that I agree fundamentally that our sanctions are most effective when we have unity with the Europeans.

I think, in recent years, we have seen, through both Republican and Democratic administrations, a recognition that the utility of our sanctions increases in direct proportion to the scale of our diplomatic engagement with European allies. The tools that Congress has made available are very important tools for raising the costs vis-a-vis the Russian Government. And I think a clear message has been sent through that legislation.

I take your point, and I particularly want to emphasize the role that U.S. diplomacy will play with our allies in addressing the concerns that have been raised specifically about Section 232 involving European energy infrastructure, and also Section 231 on defense contracts.

I think these are immediate sources of concern where U.S. diplomacy will need to be very focused on working closely with our European allies to help them understand the nature of legislation. And as the legislation explicitly states, to be effective, we want this to be coordinated with our allies.

If confirmed, that will be my approach.

Senator CARDIN. Of course, we made concessions in both of those areas to deal with European concerns. The European ministers

were in our office, Senator Corker's and my office, asking for modifications, which we put into the bill to take care of their concerns. They may very well be saying something differently to a different audience, but there was clearly an effort made for that to happen.

In reviewing the legislation, we found areas where Europe, in some cases, had stronger sanctions than the United States. We have toughened our sanctions to equal what Europe has done.

I still tell you that you are going to hear accounts that, "We cannot do this. We cannot do this." And then after we all do it, they take credit for saying that we finally got unity and we are making a difference.

It takes leadership. It takes leadership to make this work. The stakes could never be higher, in what Russia is doing today.

You are going to be the key person, because you are going to be the conduit through to all of the different embassies in Europe. And you are going to have ambassadors who are not going to want to be bothered with another thing on their plate. And yet, I do not know of a higher priority than what Russia is doing against our interests and getting an effective way for sanctions to work.

My last point would be, we expect you to work very closely with this committee on this issue. This is not a partisan issue. As you know, this is clearly and overwhelming support.

We need your commitment that you will work with us and keep us informed as to the progress that we are making with Europe and the sanctions against Russia.

The last point I would ask is that you mentioned the Helsinki Commission. On behalf of Senator Wicker, it is the regional commission that is directly involved in your portfolio. We would ask that you cooperate with the Helsinki Commission, you actually have representation there, but that you would work with the Helsinki Commission on these issues.

I would ask, in both of those cases, that you would work with our committee and work with the Helsinki Commission.

Mr. MITCHELL. Well, I take that to heart. Let me say that I have worked a lot with folks on this committee in the past and their staff. I have also spent time with some of my predecessors in this post, understanding how they have approached Congress. And you can expect to see, if I am confirmed, my full engagement.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mitchell, congratulations on your nomination. And thank you for your willingness to consider service in this post.

And I appreciate the time that you spent with me talking about the challenges facing our international diplomatic efforts, and the State Department itself.

You will have a large public diplomacy shop, and the office is charged with implementing Russian policies, as you have testified to, including our efforts to counter Russian disinformation.

How do you expect the European Bureau to work with the newly constituted Global Engagement Center to address the disinformation that is coming from Russia?

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you, Senator, for that question. And I appreciated having the opportunity to spend time with you recently. I want to thank you for the leadership that you have shown on so many of the issues that are close to CEPA's heart and the work that we have done, and also for your work on the subcommittee, specifically on the State Department.

I think we have to start by recognizing that, in the field of disinformation, the Russian Government takes a whole-of-government approach. It is overt and covert activities, malign influence, both among European allies and also in the United States.

CEPA, in our work, I would like to say that we were a pioneer in calling attention both to the types of methods, strategies for addressing them, and the scale of the detriment that this can do to the fundament of the West.

We also helped with engaging with some of the offices here. As the legislation on the GEC process was being crafted, we provided briefings from our analysts and fellows from both here and those we have in the region. And we have worked very closely with NATO StratCom to understand the approach that they are taking, and obviously with the new Hybrid Fusion Cell that the European Union is setting up.

I would simply say that for us to be effective in the disinformation space, we have to have a whole-of-government approach. And I think what the legislation provides, that Senators Portman and Murphy have put forward, is a basis for that, for synchronizing our efforts.

And if I am confirmed, I will work very closely to ensure that the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs coordinates closely with the GEC as it turns its focus more toward Russia.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do you think we have a whole-of-government approach at this point?

Mr. MITCHELL. I think we have an awareness that we did not have in the past. I think we have also learned a lot in the last couple years, including from our European allies, who have pioneered areas that we can explore for combating this.

I think we are moving toward a whole-of-government approach, but I think there is no shortage for that tool and capacity that prompts coordination. And I think that my understanding of the mandate given to the GEC and its resources is that it provides that instrument.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do you think that it is currently doing that?

Mr. MITCHELL. Well, my understanding of the GEC in its current role, until this mandate was put forward and the resources were put forward, is that it is doing very good work, including on areas other than Russia. I think it looks at ISIS and other parts of the globe. But I think the new direction and the new resources will increase its capacity to do that more effectively.

Senator SHAHEEN. We had a hearing last week in the Helsinki Commission on this very issue, on disinformation. It focused mostly on Russia but also on the challenge that that presents to America, the fact that we have a lot of people who really do not question the accuracy of media reports, who get news from social media that may not provide a filter for how accurate that news is.

And we talked about the issue of who is in charge. And the consensus of the people who testified there is that we do not currently have someone in charge of heading up these efforts.

So not only do we not have a whole-of-government approach, we do not have somebody charged with doing this, and we do not have somebody currently named to do that.

So I guess I would ask, do you agree with that? And who should take that role?

I have had a chance to ask in the Armed Services Committee members of our military whether this is something that they should have a hand in. They used to. Russia has just set up a new unit in their military that is responsible for information and cyber information. So what I was told is that that is not the role of the military.

As you know, after the Cold War, we disbanded the U.S. Information Agency and so much of the apparatus that was designed to counter disinformation.

So from your perspective, what is the role of the State Department? Who should lead this effort? And how do we get to that whole-of-government approach?

Mr. MITCHELL. Well, I think that is a very important question. I think we have allies both at the NATO level, at the nation-state level, and at the EU level, who are grappling with similar questions, in part because, as pluralistic societies who value an open media discussion, we have to balance security and privacy. So I do not think that we are unique or alone in realizing the magnitude of this problem and seeking to understand how we use our tools.

Even before the new direction and legislation on GEC, the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs has been active on this issue, providing resources for media training in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, working to increase cyber defenses in the period since the interference in the elections.

I would say that, moving forward, what is important is that, now that it has been made clear that the Global Engagement Center will have this as an invigorated mandate, that as the resources come into place and leadership comes into place for GEC, I think coordination within the department, obviously with the bureau because of the vast reservoir of expertise on the situation on the ground—which I think will be indispensable for the GEC to be able to do its job will, but also in the interagency process.

Beyond that, not being privy to where the administration wants to take that specific set of issues, I would not want to speculate further. But I will say that I strongly support the new direction of the GEC and would be committed, if I am confirmed, to ensuring its close coordination with the Bureau.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Mitchell, for your willingness to serve.

I thank your family as well for your willingness to support Mr. Mitchell in his service.

Let me ask you two questions, if I might.

First, I have not had a chance to review all of President Trump's remarks today at the United Nations, but I understand he continued to express opposition to the Iran deal, the JCPOA, something that took a great deal of work and coordination to pull together, both our European allies and our partners in that deal, but adversaries in other means, Russia and China, and to provide some constraint for Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Are you concerned that, if President Trump fails to certify Iranian compliance with the nuclear deal, absent any credible evidence of Iranian cheating within the four corners of the deal, that that will deeply strain our relations with our European partners? And if we do so, they will then refuse to agree to the snapback sanctions provided for in the JCPOA, and it will be even harder for us to craft a meaningful sanctions regime to force North Korea to back off its nuclear ambitions?

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you for that question, Senator. I think it is an absolutely crucial question and issue.

The administration is currently undertaking a review of not only JCPOA but our broader approach to Iran. I have not seen the latest comments that were made in New York, but I do know that Secretary Tillerson has been clear that what we want to take account of is the broader array of Iranian activities, including its ballistic missile programs, its support for terrorists in the region. And I think that bigger picture gives us a better sense of where the Iranians are at than just the terms of the JCPOA.

My understanding is that a review is underway that, while that review is underway, we are emphasizing the strict implementation of JCPOA.

Obviously, whatever direction things take with Iran, unity with our European allies will be absolutely crucial. And I do know that there are possible points of daylight between the United States and some of our allies and some of our allies in Europe on the future of JCPOA.

I cannot speculate on the direction that the administration's review of this is going to take, but I can assure you that, if I am confirmed, it will be a very high priority to ensure that we have a high degree of coordination with our European allies and with the European Union in ensuring the effectiveness both of JCPOA and the broader Iranian strategy.

Senator COONS. You said in your opening statement that we must work to keep Turkey, long the linchpin of NATO's southern flank, firmly anchored in the transatlantic community. That will be a challenging task.

How would you recommend we proceed in retaining some relationship with Turkey, given all the different tensions that have really led to significant degradation in our relationship with Turkey?

Mr. MITCHELL. Well, it is an important question. Thank you for that.

I will start by saying Turkey is an absolutely indispensable NATO ally of the United States. I do not think there is a country in the region or in NATO that could provide for U.S. national security what Turkey is currently providing not only in supporting our efforts, in the efforts to defeat ISIS, but in the broader regional

strategic equation vis-a-vis Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, the Black Sea littorals, the relationship with Russia.

So at the strategic level, I think it is absolutely critical that we sustain engagement with the Turkish Government. At the same time, in the period since the attempted coup, the department has raised very sincere concerns about the state of rule of law, human rights, and religious minority issues inside Turkey. And there have been developments that are very concerning.

I think we have to balance our approach in continuing to work closely with the Turks as a strategic partner in the region. But I do not think that we should be shy about raising our concerns in these areas. And I think, if I am confirmed, in coordination with the Secretary, my approach would be to emphasize the common interests that we have in expanding our strategic engagement, but in an appropriate manner to continue to raise those concerns, to look for ways to work closely with Turkish civil society, to expand our people-to-people contacts. I think there is a lot more that could be done in those areas.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Mr. Mitchell, I believe that we are safest and strongest when we lead with our values. Our values do not always make our allies happy, because they often do not share them. But I think an analysis of our interests has to include our values, particularly with regards to human rights and open society.

So I thank you for that answer. I look forward to working with you. Thank you.

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Senator Murphy.

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

It is good to see you, Mr. Mitchell. Thank you for stepping up and being willing to serve. I look forward to supporting your nomination when it comes before the United States Senate, and working very closely with you as the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Europe.

But as I did with Governor Huntsman, I want to just acknowledge some underlying realities with you for a moment, and get your take on them.

This administration has opened up a pretty open war with the idea, concept, and funding for diplomacy. The budget proposed a 40 percent reduction in funding for the State Department. The hiring freeze seems to apply to only one agency today, which is the State Department. There has been a ban or at least a slowdown on promotions and lateral transfers within the agency.

You are going to be asked for your counsel by the Secretary and perhaps by the President as to whether to, once again, reup a request for a 40 percent reduction in funding, whether to continue the hiring freeze, and whether to slow down transfers and promotions.

Can you just share with us what your advice will be when asked whether to continue these policies that many of us see as leading to an evisceration of diplomacy abroad?

Mr. MITCHELL. Thank you for that question, Senator Murphy. And I also want to express my gratitude for the meeting that we had, and the years of cooperation that we have had with your of-

fice, and your leadership on so many issues that are close to our heart at CEPA.

The Secretary has been clear that he wants to see a better alignment of American priorities and resources at the State Department. My understanding of the redesign is that it recently completed its second phase. This was an employee-led process.

Secretary Tillerson has experience in the private sector with large-scale redesign of organizations. And my understanding is that the targeted areas in this process are areas where the Secretary would like to see greater efficiency.

I have not been privy to those discussions. I do know that the Secretary has said, as it relates to the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, that he would like to see a priority in our work on those parts of Europe that have been under pressure or duress or malign influence from the Russian Federation, and those parts of Europe that we are working most closely with to defeat ISIS.

I think those priorities are correct. I do not know what direction or final form the budget discussion will take. If I am confirmed, I will make best and highest use of the resources at my disposal. I certainly agree with the priorities the Secretary has outlined. And I think, in some of these areas, it is not a moment when we want to decelerate.

So I have a lot of respect for the talented people in the bureau. I would like to, if confirmed, get my feet on the ground, have a listening tour, talk to people in the bureau, understand their priorities and concerns. And until I have done that, I would not be willing to really speculate.

Senator MURPHY. You know how much respect I have for you, and how enthusiastic I am for your willingness to take this position. But just, with all due respect, it is not an employee-driven redesign. It is a top-down-driven redesign. I would be challenged to find a single employee who thinks that many of these policies are in the best interest of the State Department.

But you will have something to do with that. You will be able, once you are in this position, to be able to make sure that the people who work under you have something to say about this. But that is not what is happening right now.

One last question on trade policy. We spent a lot of time in this committee over the past 4 years talking about a bilateral trade agreement with the European Union. I heard the Trade Representative say the other day that that is essentially on hold, as we all knew. But the danger is that it is going to be substituted by replacement bilateral trade agreements, in particular, one that the President has floated with England, with the United Kingdom.

As you know, that would help the fragmentation of Europe. That would be a big win for those who want Europe to fall apart, the idea that the U.S. will not do a deal with the EU and instead will pursue deals with countries that withdraw from the EU.

What is our current position? Are you going to be asked to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement with Great Britain, should they withdraw? Or are you going to be asked to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement with the European Union?

Mr. MITCHELL. Well, this is obviously a very important issue. I have been on the record in the past strongly in support of robust transatlantic trade agenda, of T–TIP.

The relationship that we have with the United Kingdom is a very old and very special relationship. This is a relationship that, in strategic terms, is vital to us. But also, economically, the United Kingdom is our largest single source of foreign direct investment, a conduit for a major swath of our trade with Europe.

And I think our priority is to ensure an amicable divorce. And our goal is to see that we end the process of Brexit both with a strong strategic and economic relationship with the EU and a strong strategic and economic relationship with the U.K.

President Trump has been clear that he wants to see a vibrant bilateral trade agreement with the United Kingdom. My understanding is that we are in informal talks, the scoping exercises that are underway with the U.S.-U.K. trade and investment working group.

I think we have to strike a balance here between allowing the EU and U.K. to flesh out the substance of their own deal, not least because whatever arrangements we come to the British will be contingent on the deal, but also sending a signal to American businesses and to the British as our allies that there is a process underway for establishing some groundwork or some principles for the deal that will eventually be done between the United States and the U.K.

The lead on this is obviously USTR. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the folks at USTR and other relevant agencies to ensure that we end this process with a strong trade relationship both with the EU and with the U.K.

Senator MURPHY. I just want to go on the record one more time saying I think that would be an enormous strategic mistake. If Europe is to disintegrate, the responsibility for it will lie at the feet of this administration, if it pursues a bilateral trade agreement with Great Britain at the expense of a trade agreement with the European Union. And I would hope that you would counsel against it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Mitchell, thank you, again, for your willingness to serve. And thank you to your family for the sacrifice I know that they are going to undertake with this.

With that, we are going to close the hearing.

I would state for the record that the record will be open until Thursday, to close of business on Thursday. That will include questions for the record.

Senator RISCH. With that, again, thank you, Mr. Mitchell.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:23 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO GOVERNOR JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR. BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have a strong commitment to promoting human rights and democracy, which reflect long-standing American values, and values I have worked and lived by my whole life.

As Governor of Utah, I have worked tirelessly on the behalf of all the state's residents to ensure their protections and rights. As Ambassador to Singapore and to China, I met with individuals from all walks of life, particularly those from the human rights community, to exchange views and to share America's values. Additionally, I have chaired the Atlantic Council, which has been a leading NGO/think tank noted for its active and innovative promotion of democracy and democratic values.

As I noted in my testimony, my visit with a young woman whose home had been torn down by the Chinese authorities, and who was beaten when she advocated on her own behalf, is but one example of how important I believe it is for the United States to shine a light on human rights issues. This experience has stayed with me and is a daily reminder of the values that the American people hold dear.

I believe that the Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, provides transparent and accountable governance, guarantees equal treatment under the law, and secures for all citizens the ability to exercise their rights without fear of persecution or retribution.

If confirmed, I will lead the United States mission to Russia in continuing to support our longstanding efforts to ensure the rights of all Russians are protected, and promote values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Russia today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Russia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners to continue to call on the U.S. Government of Russia to uphold its international obligations and commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Despite its promises, the U.S. Government has failed to take adequate steps to prosecute or punish the majority of officials who commit human rights abuses, resulting in a climate of impunity, especially for those who attack journalists, activists, and members of the political opposition.

Currently, the most acute human rights situation in Russia is in Chechnya, where under republic head Ramzan Kadyrov, torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances have been the norm for many years. Media have reported that on January 26, 2017, Chechen authorities summarily executed several dozen men without charging them of any crime. Since March 2017, local Chechen authorities have been involved in an "anti-gay purge." According to credible NGO and media reports, at least 100 men suspected of being gay have been detained and tortured. Several of those detained were reportedly killed, sparking widespread international outrage.

In addition, the U.S. Government has passed repressive laws and selectively employed existing ones to harass, discredit, prosecute, imprison, detain, fine, and suppress individuals and organizations critical of the government. Authorities stymie the work of NGOs through the "foreign agents" and "undesirable foreign organization" laws. Authorities use the new "Yarovaya" anti-terrorism law to harass, prohibit the activities, and even prosecute members of civil society, independent media, the political opposition, and religious and ethnic minorities. These laws are also used to restrict "missionary activity," including preaching, proselytizing, disseminating religious materials, or engaging in inter-faith discussion; authorities regularly use it to harass religious minorities. As an example, the government used these laws to ban Jehovah's Witnesses this year. Authorities wield the law prohibiting "propaganda" of nontraditional sexual relations to minors to harass the LGBTI community.

Russian authorities restricted citizens' ability to choose their government through free and fair elections and increasingly instituted a range of measures to suppress dissent. State Duma elections during 2016 and the presidential election in 2012, in

particular, were marked by accusations of government interference and manipulation of the electoral process.

Authorities conduct politically motivated arrests, detentions, and trials of those who dissent from government policies or perspectives. Dozens of Ukrainian citizens have also been targeted for baseless prosecution.

Other grave problems reported in the press include allegations of torture and excessive force by law enforcement officials that sometimes led to deaths; prison overcrowding, substandard/life-threatening prison conditions; executive branch pressure on the judiciary; lack of due process in politically motivated cases; electoral irregularities; extensive official corruption; violence against women; limits on women's rights; trafficking in persons; discrimination against persons with disabilities; social stigma against persons with HIV/AIDS; and limitations on workers' rights.

Question 3. 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 Russia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Since Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, he has initiated a crackdown on dissenting voices that many have characterized as a return to Soviet-era repressive practices. His government has gutted independent institutions, turned the parliament into a rubber stamp, eliminated judicial independence, and taken control of all television media. The government has subjected hundreds of dissenters to politically-motivated prosecution, launched a crackdown on independent civil society through laws that label NGOs "undesirable foreign organizations" and "foreign agents," prevented the political opposition from appearing on the ballot, and targeted unpopular minorities for harassment and discrimination. Recent new laws and prosecutions designed to clamp down on internet freedom threaten the one remaining bastion of free speech.

Authorities routinely deprive LGBTI individuals and their supporters of free assembly rights. A 2013 law prohibiting so-called propaganda of homosexuality to minors has provided grounds to deny LGBTI activists and their supporters the right of assembly and has been used on multiple occasions to interrupt public demonstrations by LGBTI activists. Hate crimes against LGBTI persons are common and rarely investigated. State-controlled propaganda is openly homophobic, contributing to heightened societal stigma and discrimination.

Authorities have used extremism charges to suppress many forms of dissent and difference, including to revoke the legal status of some minority religious organizations and individuals. The "Yarovaya" amendments to antiterrorism legislation further undermined freedoms of religion, expression, and assembly by banning the sharing of religion outside of officially sanctioned religious buildings, banning in practice prayer in private homes, private conversations between co-religionists, dissemination of religious materials, preaching, and inter-faith discussion.

Nevertheless, if confirmed, I promise to work with allies and partners to continue to call on the U.S. Government, in both public statements and private discussions, to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting regularly with human rights activists, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to meet regularly with a broad spectrum of Russian society, including human rights activists, civil society, and religious minorities.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the U.S. Government to address cases of notable political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly detained in Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge Russian authorities to take steps to ensure the release of victims of politically-motivated prosecution, conduct independent and credible investigations into reported human rights violations, and hold any perpetrators responsible.

I will lead Mission Russia in continuing to support longstanding efforts to ensure the rights of all Russians are protected, and to promote values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity.

Question 6. Will you engage with the U.S. Government on matters of human rights, civil rights and accountable governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Although the bilateral relationship has been strained by other issues, I believe it is important to continue to express our concerns about our longstanding American values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. As Secretary Tillerson has said, "promoting human rights and democratic governance is a core element of U.S. foreign policy." The Russian people deserve a government

which supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution.

I agree it is important to raise issues of civil society and human rights with the Russian authorities at all levels on a regular basis. If confirmed, I will lead Mission Russia in continuing to call on the U.S. Government, in both public statements and private discussions, to uphold its international obligations and commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 7. What will you do to build people-to-people ties between Americans and Russians and to support Russian civil society, human rights activists, and independent media? What do you need from Washington-based U.S. officials on this?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support throughout the country public diplomacy and other programs which allow for exchanges of ideas through press briefings, dialogue with reporters, social media, and face to face interaction with the Russian people. Mission Russia runs a wide-ranging public diplomacy operation, including exchange programs, under difficult circumstances

Despite less than optimal circumstances, Russians still seek professional and academic exchanges with U.S. counterparts. English-language and speakers programs, which provide an entree into communities outside of Moscow, continue to be popular. Embassy Moscow's American Center continues to attract a significant audience for its events despite its having to be relocated onto the Embassy compound.

Although the space for civil society and free media in Russia has become increasingly restricted, Russian organizations and individuals continue to express a desire to engage with the United States. As long as this continues to be the case, we will continue to support opportunities for direct interactions between Russians and Americans, including through peer-to-peer, educational, cultural, and other regional programs that provide exchanges of best practices and ideas on themes of mutual interest.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will aim to foster a diverse and inclusive team. I will ensure the U.S. Mission in the Russian Federation continually strives to promote equal opportunity for our officers, including women and those from historically disadvantaged groups.

Question 9. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, U.S. Mission Russia under my leadership will reflect our whole-of-mission commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. I will make certain each of the supervisors at the U.S. Mission has the opportunity to receive proper formal training and regular guidance to ensure that he or she is helping to foster a work environment that is diverse and inclusive.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Russian Federation?

Answer. Neither I, nor any member of my immediate family (spouse, children or their families), has any financial interests in the Russian Federation.

Question 13. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. I know of no significant change in my financial affairs since I filed my report.

Question 14. The decline in the U.S.-Russia relationship could generate pressure on you to smooth over bilateral relations wherever possible. But the reasons for this decline lie squarely with the Kremlin, because of its aggression in Ukraine, Syria, and against the United States and our allies. What will be your diplomatic posture in Russia, given these factors? How will you approach the implementation of Russia sanctions, including the Magnitsky Act?

Answer. The United States is open to pragmatic cooperation with Russia in areas that benefit the American people. At the same time, we will hold Russia accountable for meeting its international obligations and commitments and will deter Russia from actions that would undermine international security.

I am committed to upholding the rights of individuals in Russia and elsewhere, and if confirmed, I will support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable. I am committed contributing to the implementation of all Russia sanctions, including the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which Congress recently passed. These sanctions have been carefully coordinated with our allies, and I will maintain this collaborative approach. The goal of the sanctions, however, remains the same: to impose costs on Russia, sufficient to change the U.S. Government's behavior.

Chechnya/LGBTQ Rights

Question 15. Global attention was focused this year on Chechnya, where hundreds of gay and bisexual men were rounded up and detained. Many were tortured and some were killed, either as a result of torture or in so-called honor killings. Reports indicate that new detentions continue to happen and that the Chechen authorities are using new tactics to try to keep these cases out of the public eye. What would you do to address this situation, and the broader human rights crisis in Chechnya?

Answer. I also share your concern about the violence against the LGBTQ community in Chechnya that was brought to light by brave journalists at Novaya Gazeta and researchers at Human Rights Watch. There have been multiple reports of mass illegal detentions, systematic torture of hundreds of LGBTQ persons, and extrajudicial killings.

Through public statements and a letter from Secretary Tillerson to Foreign Minister Lavrov, the State Department has requested from the U.S. Government a full investigation of the reports of abuse against LGBTQ persons in Chechnya and accountability for those found to be responsible.

If confirmed, I will support the use of various fora and mechanisms to shed light on the situation for LGBTQ persons in Russia, and will stand in solidarity with civil society organizations and journalists working to respond to the crisis.

Question 16. The anti-LGBT violence in Chechnya takes place against a backdrop of homophobic laws and homophobic violence throughout Russia. How do you plan to raise the human rights concerns of Russia's LGBTQ community with U.S. Government counterparts?

Answer. I believe the Department of State's mission is at all times guided by longstanding American values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. I also believe the Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution. I am concerned the space for civil society and free expression in Russia has become increasingly restricted, in particular for LGBTQ individuals.

I am also committed to upholding the rights of individuals, including LGBTQ persons, in Russia and elsewhere and will support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable.

If confirmed, I will work with Allies and partners to continue to call on the Government of Russia, in both public statements and private discussions, to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 17. Countering U.S. Government aggression will be more effective when it is done in a coordinated fashion with our allies. How will you coordinate closely with European counterparts and other partners in Moscow to deter the Kremlin's aggressive foreign policy and support human rights and democratic values?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign to undermine core institutions of the West and to weaken faith in the democratic and free-market systems. This campaign is aggressive, coordinated, and involves the entire U.S. Government. The United States should continue to work closely with its Allies and partners to en-

hance collective resilience against these threats. Given the nature and breadth of Russia's campaign, it is important for the United States to pursue a whole-of-government approach and work closely with Allies to expose and counter these campaigns.

At the Warsaw Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government committed, in keeping with the intent of Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, to enhancing individual and collective resilience against a full spectrum of threats, including cyber-attacks and hybrid threats, from any direction.

In Europe, the United States is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate corruption, and diversify energy supplies. The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in the neighboring states of Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those countries. The Western Balkans are also increasingly a target, as Russia is trying to block the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. It is important our assistance deter Russian aggression against these countries as well as encourage reforms in them to eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

If confirmed, I will promote cooperation with our Allies to build resilience in all NATO countries and in others around the world as well. I will push for the continuation of programs that promote the protection of human rights, build and reinforce the rule of law, support democratic institutions, and promote economic development in vulnerable countries in Europe. Furthermore, I will work closely with our Allies on implementation of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act to maintain unity on implementation of sanctions in order to further exert economic pressure on Russia to modify their aggressive behavior.

Question 18. What steps will you take to ensure the safety of embassy personnel who conduct their work under frequent harassment by the U.S. Government?

Answer. As I said in my testimony, the safety of Mission Russia and its personnel will always be at the top of my priority list. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to ensure the protection, safety, and wellbeing of our staff in Russia.

The pattern of harassment conducted against our staff in Russia is unacceptable, and I will not hesitate to raise concerns directly with senior Russian officials and stress that the United States will not tolerate actions that put American citizen security or the United States' national security at risk.

Question 19. If confirmed, what are your thoughts on how to best deal with Moscow on North Korea? Are there any lessons from your time in Beijing that you think might be useful?

Answer. The international community is united in condemning North Korea's continued violations of its international obligations and commitments and demanding that North Korea give up its prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The administration's goal is to seek Russian agreement to increase pressure on North Korea through the full implementation of DPRK related UN sanctions, employing all economic and diplomatic levers available in order to press the Kim Jong-Un regime to change its course. Russia has repeatedly called for restraint and dialogue with North Korea, but has resisted strengthening sanctions against the Kim Jong-Un regime.

The Russian Government, however, must be made to realize that North Korea shows no interest in multilateral discussions to halt or reduce their nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Furthermore, the regime rejected the Russian and Chinese dialogue proposal known as "freeze-for-freeze," where the U.S. would suspend U.S.-ROK joint exercises in exchange for a suspension of DPRK missile and nuclear testing.

This administration remains steadfast in working with our allies to sanction individuals and entities, including those in Russia, who violate standing United Nations or United States sanctions by participating in proscribed activities with North Korea. We continue to press Russia to recognize that any existing economic relationship with the DPRK enables Kim Jong-Un's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program in defiance of international law. This administration will continue to increase pressure on North Korea, including by pressing the Russians to reduce their economic relationship with North Korea, until Kim Jong-Un halts his destabilizing weapons programs and returns to international dialogue.

From my time as Ambassador to China, I understand the pivotal role of China in any effort to halt North Korea's prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Both Russia and China have publically committed to the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. China, Russia, and the United States participated in the

six-party format; this example proves the three nations are capable of working from a common playbook to get things done.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO GOVERNOR JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR. BYSENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. This month, the Russian Government poured tens of thousands of troops into its Zapad military exercises. What do you think the significance of these exercises with these kinds of troop levels means for American security posture in Europe?

Answer. The ZAPAD 2017 exercise has raised regional tensions within Europe. Russia's disregard for the territorial integrity of its neighbors has caused significant concern among NATO Allies and partners about potential threats to their security.

Russia has the right to exercise its forces; the United States and its NATO Allies conduct military exercises as well. However, we adhere scrupulously to all of our commitments with regard to military transparency under the OSCE's Vienna Document and have been careful to meet all relevant arms control obligations. Russia's lack of transparency regarding some of its large military activities has heightened tension and increased the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation. Russia's neighbors are particularly concerned about Russia's so-called "snap" military exercises where Russia fails to inform its neighbors in advance.

It is important the U.S. and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. If confirmed, I am committed to working with State Department Leadership, other agencies, and our Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats that we face.

In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies and partners. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. NATO's unity is critical to an effective deterrent.

Question 2. How much of a military threat does Russia pose to our European neighbors?

Answer. Russia has demonstrated a willingness to use military force against its neighbors, most recently in Ukraine, and to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against these threats. It is important for the United States to pursue a whole-of-government approach to address this problem set.

In Europe, the United States is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate corruption, and diversify energy supplies. The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in the frontline states of Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these neighbors. In response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Departments of State and Defense have committed over $750 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Balkans are also increasingly a target of Russian malign influence. It is important that our assistance seek to deter Russian aggression as well as encourage reforms in these countries that eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

Question 3. What are the administration's plans to continue to reassure our European allies that the United States remains committed to transatlantic security?

Answer. NATO's unity and U.S. leadership are both critical to an effective deterrent against aggression. In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. It represents a significant commitment by Allies and is a tangible reminder that an attack on one is an attack on all.

It's important that the U.S and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. I'm committed to working with Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats we face today.

One of the steps the administration has taken to bolster our military presence in Europe is the European Defense Initiative (EDI), which includes $4.8 billion re-

quested for FY 2018. EDI provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

As part of Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR)—the United States' contribution to the Alliance's persistent, rotational air, land, and sea presence in NATO's East—the U.S. has also deployed a rotational armored brigade combat team (ABCT) to European soil to concretely demonstrate action to back up our commitments.

If confirmed, I will continue to reaffirm the unshakeable U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, while calling upon all Allies to fulfill their commitments on defense spending and capabilities so that we can together meet all future threats effectively.

Question 4. The Russian military continues its illegal occupation of Ukraine and continues to violate the Minsk agreement and take further destabilizing steps including recognizing passports issued by Ukrainian separatists. What steps will you take to pressure Russia to comply with the terms of the agreement?

Answer. By maintaining Trans-Atlantic unity on sanctions, transforming Ukraine's military into a capable fighting force, and backing Ukraine's reform agenda, we have made clear to Moscow that the invasion of eastern Ukraine is an increasingly losing proposition. We must keep up the pressure, and if confirmed, I will make it one of my highest priorities.

As Secretary Tillerson has said, U.S. sanctions will stay in place until Russia fulfills its Minsk commitments. The separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain until Moscow returns the peninsula to Ukraine. I believe the existing sanctions regimes, in coordination with G7 and EU sanctions, provide us with leverage to compel Moscow to fulfill its commitments. The administration has also been clear with Russia that its aggression in Ukraine is the key obstacle to the improvement of our bilateral relationship.

In response to Russian aggression, the United States has committed more than $750 million in security assistance to provide training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, better monitor and secure its borders, and deploy its forces more safely and effectively. The Department is closely examining how to best use security assistance funding going forward to bolster Ukraine's ability to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In addition to support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, the United States is implementing a robust assistance program to build democratic institutions, promote economic development, combat corruption, and strengthen Euro-Atlantic integration. The more Ukraine builds its economy and strengthens its democratic institutions, the more Russia fails in its effort to destabilize the country by continuing the conflict in the Donbas.

Question 5. How will you engage with Russia and Ukraine to push back further efforts by Russia to increase its occupation and influence of Ukraine?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson reenergized our engagement to end Russia's aggression in eastern Ukraine by appointing Kurt Volker as Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations—the U.S. Government's point person on Ukraine negotiations. Volker has clearly delineated our key goals: the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and the safety and security of all Ukrainians, regardless of language, nationality, religion, or ethnicity. Since his appointment in early July, Volker has closely coordinated with the Normandy Quartet (including France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine) and has engaged with other allies and stakeholders in an effort to break the logjam in the Minsk process. I have every confidence in Special Representative Volker's ability to succeed and, if confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau fully supports his efforts.

The United States has been clear with Russia that its aggression in Ukraine is the key obstacle to improving our bilateral relationship. Russian aggression is not limited to eastern Ukraine. If confirmed, I will work to counter Russian aggression more broadly, including in Crimea, and elsewhere in Europe.

Question 6. Congress recently authorized lethal assistance to Ukraine, do you support that effort? What steps do you believe we should take to more effectively support Ukraine as it battles Russian hybrid warfare?

Answer. The United States has neither provided defensive weapons nor ruled out the option of doing so, but the administration will continue to examine how best to use U.S. security assistance going forward to bolster Ukraine's ability to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. As Secretary Tillerson stated previously,

Ukraine has a right to defend itself against Russian aggression. The United States continues to focus on finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine through the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Russian aggression in Ukraine includes the use of hybrid warfare to include disinformation and malign influence. Ukraine was the target of cyber-attacks in December 2015 and 2016, and in June 2017. On September 29, an interagency team will visit Kyiv for meetings with Ukrainian officials to discuss policy and incident response to cyber-attacks. Countering hybrid warfare requires a broad whole of government approach in order to build national resiliency.

In response to Russian aggression, the United States has committed more than $750 million in security assistance to provide training and equipment to help Ukraine better monitor and secure its borders while deploying its forces more safely and effectively. The United States and allies established a Multinational Joint Commission and training group to coordinate international efforts and build Ukraine's defense capacity to deter further Russian aggression. Sanctions, too, remain a valuable tool in this effort. As Secretary Tillerson told his Russian counterpart directly, Minsk-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia fully implements its commitments, and separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns the peninsula to Ukraine.

More broadly, the United States, along with our European Allies and partners, has assisted and encouraged Ukraine to pursue broad reforms that will reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, and reduce corruption. Reform across sectors such as energy, the economy, land, pension, education, healthcare, defense, and most importantly judicial, will help to build a stronger and more resilient Ukraine. Continuing Kyiv's democratic and economic transformation, coupled with more capable Ukrainian Armed Forces, contributes directly to Ukraine's resilience in the face of continued Russian aggression, and in particular, Moscow's hybrid warfare tactics.

Question 7. While we must focus on Russia's ongoing military aggression, as you stated in your hearing, Russia is increasingly engaged in hybrid warfare including effective strategic communications. Do you believe the United States should maintain investments into public diplomacy efforts in Eastern Europe?

Answer. Yes. Public diplomacy efforts that invest in people through exchanges, media literacy programs, and English-language trainings are indispensable as the United States seeks to advance its national interests in the face of a rising tide of Russian disinformation. Initiatives such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the Fulbright Program, and other people-to-people exchanges build enduring relationships that cannot be perfectly measured but rank among our most effective investments. This is particularly true in countries such as Ukraine and Moldova, where Russian disinformation threatens to turn citizens away from the Euro-Atlantic community. Many U.S. exchange program alumni become leaders in their home countries; by investing in a country's most promising youth through short exchanges, we invest in a shared vision for the future. Media-focused exchanges, such as Ukraine's Media Partnership Program that pairs independent Ukrainian media outlets with U.S. media outlets in a long-term mentorship relationship, are equally impactful and result in better quality information for the Ukrainian public. Empowering the public with facts advances the U.S. goal of a democratic, prosperous, and secure Ukraine.

To inoculate foreign publics against disinformation, our embassies work with European partners to build media literacy skills in audiences vulnerable to disinformation and fake news. By training citizens to more carefully scrutinize news items for simple markers such as source, author, and byline, we can empower countless people to protect themselves against disinformation and mitigate the firehose of falsehood, particularly in critical regions such as eastern Ukraine. This moves the needle forward on the U.S. strategic goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If confirmed, I will ensure this work continues.

English-language programs enable foreign publics to consume alternate news and obtain a more balanced perspective of the world. Ukrainian President Poroshenko announced 2016 as the Year of English and promoted English learning as a way to make Ukraine's workforce more competitive as Ukraine pursues its chosen European trajectory. U.S. public diplomacy programs are essential to fulfilling this goal. English-language programs not only provide skills that help Eastern Europeans pursue a Euro-Atlantic path but also build lasting people-to-people relationships in even the most challenging context.

Question 8. What programs do you believe are most effective to countering Russian propaganda?

Answer. Russia rejects the post-Cold War order in Europe and increasingly seeks to undermine U.S. influence with our Allies and partners with an eye to fragmenting the transatlantic alliance. Russia's campaigns use traditional diplomatic, military, and economic tools, as well as "active measures," a major component of which is propaganda and misinformation. The State Department's public outreach strategy is based on the recognition that both the message and the messenger are important for effective communication with audiences. When making public statements as the United States Government, the number one goal should be to empower our embassies with materials the local press across the region can carry, both in print and in digital form. This applies both to debunking myths, but more importantly, priming the information environment with positive messages about the United States and the transatlantic alliance. However, the fight against misinformation is bigger than us, and the U.S. Government cannot be as effective if it fights alone. Those most vulnerable to malign information campaigns could become our strongest messaging allies through systematic support. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our partners who are on the frontlines of the war of misinformation and arm them with the core competencies necessary to not only counter disinformation but advance positive, accurate, and responsible messaging. Specifically, I will aim to help governments communicate more effectively through the European Digital Diplomacy Exchange, empower journalists and other non-governmental communicators to uncover and publicize important stories through the Digital Communicators Network, and strengthen civil society through trainings and networking opportunities through a number of regional programs.

Question 9. Do you believe the Global Engagement Center can play an important and constructive role in promoting American national security interests?

Answer. Yes. Both extremist messaging and state-sponsored disinformation operations represent a critical national security threat to the United States. The Global Engagement Center (GEC) was mandated in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act to lead and coordinate Federal Government efforts to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation that undermine U.S. national security interests. The GEC's role in this effort is essential to the effective coordination of the multitude of U.S. Government efforts to counter these national security threats.

The GEC has a proven track record of playing an important and constructive role in promoting American national security interests with the work it continues to perform with regard to its original counterterrorism mission. The GEC has been pivotal in U.S. effort to counter the recruitment of terrorist groups such as ISIS and exposing and countering their warped and perverse ideology, and the GEC will continue to advance this effort.

I hope that the GEC will employ the learned skills and successful aspects of its counterterrorism mission towards its expanded mission to counter propaganda and disinformation emanating from foreign states. Congress expanded the GEC's mission and granted it new legal authorities out of growing concern about the adverse effects of state-sponsored propaganda and disinformation, which have emerged as a clear national security concern that is increasing in overall size and sophistication. State-sponsored disinformation operations impact United States foreign policy objectives and create a lack of confidence in foreign populations and sow seeds of doubt in the susceptible populations living in our allied and partner nations.

As stated in the Director of National Intelligence's January 2017 report, countries and entities involved in spreading disinformation during election campaigns in Western democracies will apply what they have learned "to future influence efforts worldwide, including against US allies and their election processes."

Question 10. Most analysts and USG officials believe that Russia violated the INF treaty this year. Do you share this assessment? How should the United States respond?

Answer. Yes, I share the assessment that Russia remains in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, as it has been for several years. In July 2014, the United States declared Russia in violation of its obligations under the INF Treaty not to possess, produce, or flight test a ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) with a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. This finding was made public in the 2014 Report on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments, and reaffirmed in the 2015 and 2016 editions.

The administration has made very clear to Russia its concerns about Russia's violation of the INF Treaty and the risks it poses to European and Asian security. I believe the INF Treaty is in the national security interest of the United States and of Russia—but only if Russia returns to full compliance with its treaty obligations.

If confirmed, I will certainly take every opportunity to raise this in Moscow, as this is a significant issue in the bilateral relationship.

The administration is taking additional steps to pressure Russia to return to compliance and ensure Russia will not gain a significant military advantage from its decision to violate the Treaty. If confirmed, I will work closely with our Allies as we develop proportionate responses to Russia's ongoing violation and make very clear to Russian officials U.S. concerns about Russia's violation of the INF Treaty and the risks it poses to European and Asian security.

Question 11. We have seen Russia build an increasingly cooperative relationship with Iran, particularly vis-a-vis Syria, but also Afghanistan and elsewhere. How should the United States respond?

Answer. Recent Russian actions in Syria and ongoing cooperation with Iran across a range of issues are concerning. The region is complex, and U.S. efforts to defeat ISIS must factor in our interest in ending the conflict in Syria and containing Iran's influence.

If confirmed, I will remain clear-eyed about Russia's actions in Syria and its relationship with Iran, and I will be frank in our dialogue with Russia. I will be resolute in calling out Russia's bad behavior as it arises, and will consider our full range of sanctions, as well as military, diplomatic, and law-enforcement tools to protect U.S. interests.

If confirmed, I will urge Russia to fully support the Afghan Government through coordinated international efforts aimed at ensuring an Afghanistan that is stable, prosperous, and not a threat to the United States and others. To date, cooperation between the United States and Russia on Afghanistan has been limited. The United States has offered bilateral consultations with Russia to discuss how we might cooperate to support Afghanistan and to foster a peace process between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, though it remains to be seen whether Russia is interested in playing a productive role in this process, or rather that of a spoiler.

Question 12. We have seen Russia build an increasingly cooperative relationship with Iran, particularly vis a vis Syria, but also Afghanistan and elsewhere. What do you assess to be Russia's long term interest in building a relationship with the world's leading sponsor of terrorism?

Answer. Russia views Iran as a key partner in addressing common threats: impeding Western interests in its region of influence, maintaining stability in Central Asia, retaining influence in Afghanistan and Syria, and blocking U.S. goals in the Middle East.

Moscow and Tehran have cooperated to bolster the Assad regime since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, with Russia dramatically increasing its support in September 2015. Iranian-supported militias backed by Russian air support enabled pro-regime forces to seize and hold key terrain from opposition forces. In turn, Russia offered Iran legitimization by giving it a seat at the table in international discussions about the Syrian conflict. At the same time, Moscow and Tehran are jockeying for the role of top influencer on the Assad regime.

Russian official rhetoric shows it is keen to expand its economic and trade relationship with Iran. However, Russia and Iran are both highly dependent on energy exports. While trade volumes between Russia and Iran grew to $2.2 billion in 2016 from $1.3 billion in 2015, Iran is only Russia's 42nd-largest trading partner. Virtually the entire increase in Russian exports to Iran from 2015–2016 came in military procurements and civil aviation.

Question 13. How can the United States and its allies, particularly in the NATO, work to confront this alliance?

Answer. Countering traditional military threats remains as central to NATO as it was when the Alliance was created in 1949. But today's security environment involves a broader array of challenges, including asymmetric warfare. Iran is developing ballistic missiles that threaten NATO Allies. Russian disinformation and malign influence campaigns seek to undermine Western democratic institutions and principles, sow disunity within Europe, and weaken our transatlantic bonds.

NATO is already responding. Under the leadership of Secretary General Stoltenberg all Allies agreed, by the end of 2017, to outline concrete plans for reaching their 2 percent defense spending goal. In June 2017, Allies also individually agreed to take on the full set of military capabilities assigned to them by NATO—the first time this has ever occurred. The President has proposed spending $4.8 billion on the European Deterrence Initiative as a concrete demonstration of the U.S. will and capability to defend our Allies. In July 2016, Allies declared Initial Operational Capability of a NATO ballistic missile defense capability, which defends Alli-

ance populations, territory, and forces against a potential ballistic missile attack from regional threats like Iran.

As Allies said at the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit, Russia's aggressive actions are a source of regional instability that fundamentally challenge the Alliance, have damaged Euro-Atlantic security, and threaten our long-standing goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. NATO has responded to this changed security environment by enhancing its deterrence and defense posture, including by placing a forward presence in the eastern part of the Alliance.

On July 7, the President stated in his speech in Warsaw, a strong alliance of free, sovereign and independent nations is the best defense for our freedoms and for our interests. The United States has demonstrated not merely with words but with its actions that we stand firmly behind Article 5, the mutual defense commitment.

Question 14. How will you work with Russia to ensure it lives up to international agreements to impose sanctions on state sponsors of terrorism and human rights abusers, particularly in Iran and North Korea? According to the latest TIP Report, the Russian Government contracts with the North Korean Government to allow North Korea to operate force labor camps on Russian soil.

Answer. I am committed to holding Russia accountable for meeting its international obligations and commitments. If confirmed, I will work to deter Russia from actions that would undermine international security or violate human rights.

I will support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable. I will also strive to effectively contribute to implementing all Russia sanctions, including the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which Congress recently passed. The U.S. Government has carefully coordinated with our allies on Russia/Ukraine sanctions since 2014, and I will work with my colleagues to maintain this collaborative approach as we implement our new sanctions. The goal of the sanctions, however, remains the same: to impose costs on Russia sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior.

On DPRK, the United States hopes that along with U.S. allies and partners around the world, Russia will press with the DPRK that the only path to a secure, economically-prosperous future is to abandon its unlawful weapons programs that endanger international peace and security.

If confirmed, I will seek Russia's cooperation to ensure the full implementation of all UN sanctions pertaining to recent UN Security Council resolutions in response to DPRK provocations. Secretary Tillerson has discussed directly with President Putin the need for the Russians to join us in the pressure campaign on North Korea.

Russia and China represent the two largest markets for North Koreans working abroad, a significant revenue source for the DPRK regime. In March this year, the DPRK and Russia concluded an agreement to expand the number of North Korean workers in Russia. Russia (along with China) has watered down all the sanctions measures the United States and partners have proposed. Russia needs to downgrade its DPRK guest worker program as their wages are siphoned off by the regime to fund the banned weapons programs. If confirmed, I will urge Russia to increase diplomatic and economic pressure on the regime.

Addressing Iran's continued support for terrorism, and violations and abuses of the human rights of its citizens remains a priority for the United States. The United States regularly targets for financial and visa sanctions those who abuse or violate human rights in Iran, and I will make every effort to work with Russia, as we do with our like-minded partners, to ensure it lives up to its agreements in bringing Iran to task for its malign and destabilizing activities.

Entities or individuals from any nation, including Russia, that transfer conventional weapons or controlled items to Iran, North Korea, or Syria may be sanctioned under the Iran North Korea Syria Nonproliferation Act Sanctions Act (INKSNA). In the past two years, the Department sanctioned 19 Russian entities under INKSNA.

Question 15. According to the latest TIP Report, the Russian Government contracts with the North Korean Government to allow North Korea to operate force labor camps on Russian soil. As Ambassador to Russia, would you consider addressing this issue? In general, how would you engage the Russian Government on human trafficking concerns?

Answer. Russia remains a Tier 3 country in the 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report. The report cites the Russian Government's contracts with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) under which the DPRK operates labor camps on Russian soil and subjects thousands of North Korean workers to forced labor. The report also notes that Russia lacks a national action plan to combat trafficking and offers no funding for victim rehabilitation.

The United States remains concerned over Russia's low political will to address human trafficking. If confirmed, I will engage Russian officials at all levels to encourage them to take concrete steps to prevent trafficking, protect the victims, and prosecute the offenders.

Question 16. Venezuela's state-owned oil company PdVSA, (Pedevesa) and its subsidiary Citgo—which has energy infrastructure in the United States—are under extreme financial pressure. Under a deal last year, 49.9 percent of Citgo was mortgaged to Rosneft, the Russian Government-owned oil company run by Vladimir Putin crony Igor Sechin. It is also possible that Rosneft acquired other PdVSA bonds on the open market what could bring their ownership potential to over 50 percent. If Citgo defaults on its debts, Rosneft, an entity currently under American sanctions because of Russia's belligerent behavior, could come to own a majority stake in strategic US energy infrastructure including 3 refineries and several pipelines.

- Does this potential deal concern you?

Answer. Russian state-controlled oil company Rosneft has extended a number of loans to Venezuelan state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A (PDVSA). Some of these loans are secured by PDVSA assets located in the United States, specifically PDVSA-owned U.S.-based petroleum company Citgo. At this time, PDVSA is not in default on loan payments to Rosneft and there are no plans to transfer Citgo ownership to Rosneft.

Question 17. Do you believe the United States Committee on Foreign Investment (CFIUS) should be reviewing this case?

Answer. Should a change in the foreign ownership of Citgo occur in the future, the transaction would be closely scrutinized by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. (CFIUS).

Question 18. Are you concerned about other efforts of the Russian Government to meddle in the American energy market?

Answer. This CFIUS review process allows the U.S. Government to impose mitigation measures or block any ownership changes which could negatively impact U.S. national security.

Question 19. Three respected international tribunals have concluded in unanimous decisions that Russia violated international laws and norms by expropriating Yukos oil company and must compensate shareholders. Additionally, in 2014, the European Court of Human Rights concluded that Russia's actions against Yukos violated Russia's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights and awarded Yukos shareholders more than $2.5 billion in compensation. However, thousands of U.S. investors have lost an estimated $14 billion and have received no compensation.

- Will you engage with the Russian Government and advocate for the U.S. investors who have yet to receive compensation?

Answer. We are currently awaiting the outcome of two cases in front of U.S. Federal and Dutch courts involving the U.S. investors in Yukos. If I am confirmed, I will monitor these cases closely and, if necessary, will advocate to the Russian Government on behalf of the U.S investors in Yukos for compensation.

Question 20. As you know, the situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in Russia can be extremely challenging. They often face violence and government crackdowns, with a strict ″anti-propaganda″ law that potentially criminalizes any discussion of homosexuality. And the Russian republic of Chechnya has lately conducted an anti-gay purge that really beggars description, with witch hunts, torture, and summary executions.

- Unfortunately, the Trump administration's response to these attacks on this vulnerable community has been weak. Secretary Tillerson and the President have not raised Chechnya publicly even once and Secretary Tillerson has stated that he does not view protecting human rights as a priority of his department. This could have dangerous implications for security and stability in the region.
- How do you plan to raise human rights concerns with your Russian counterparts, and especially with regards to the LGBTQ community?

Answer. I believe the Department of State's mission is at all times guided by longstanding American values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. I also believe the Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution—and am concerned the space for civil society and free media in Russia has become increasingly restricted.

I also share your concern about the violence against the LGBT community in Chechnya that was brought to light by brave journalists at Novaya Gazeta and researchers at Human Rights Watch. There have been multiple reports of mass illegal detentions, systematic torture of hundreds of LGBT persons, and extrajudicial killings.

Through public statements and a letter from Secretary Tillerson to Foreign Minister Lavrov, the State Department has requested from the Russian Government a full investigation of the reports of abuse against LGBT persons in Chechnya and accountability for those found to be responsible.

I am also committed to upholding the rights of individuals in Russia and elsewhere and will support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable.

If confirmed, I will work with State Department colleagues, Allies, and partners to continue to call on the Government of Russia, in both public statements and private discussions, to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 21. I was pleased that you definitively stated in your hearing that there was "no question Russia meddled in our elections." Unfortunately, President Trump has not been as clear and definitive in his statements and I am concerned that in our eagerness to work with Russia we lose sight of the importance of holding Russia accountable for their interference.

- As U.S. Ambassador to Russia, how will you continue to hold the Russian Government accountable for their actions in interfering with the U.S. election process?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to press Russian officials against further Russian intrusion in the democratic processes of the United States, and those of any other countries. Furthermore, I am committed to contributing to the swift implementation of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which represents the will of the Congress, and American people, in responding to Russian election interference in the United States.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO GOVERNOR JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR. BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. As you know, the situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in Russia can be extremely challenging. They often face violence and government crackdowns, with a strict "anti-propaganda" law that potentially criminalizes any discussion of homosexuality.

Senator Toomey and I have a resolution pending before this committee condemning the abuses in Chechnya, calling on the Russian Government to protect its citizens, calling on our government to demand the release of individuals wrongfully detained, and also to hold perpetrators accountable through sanctions under the Magnitsky Act.

- How do you plan to raise human rights concerns with your Russian counterparts, and especially with regards to the LGBTQ community, particularly with respect to Chechnya?

Answer. I share your concern about the violence against the LGBTI community in Chechnya that was brought to light by brave journalists at Novaya Gazeta and researchers at Human Rights Watch. There have been multiple reports of mass illegal detentions, systematic torture of hundreds of LGBTI persons, and extrajudicial killings.

Through public statements and a letter from Secretary Tillerson to Foreign Minister Lavrov, the State Department has pressed the Russian Government to fully investigate the reports of abuse and to prosecute those responsible.

If confirmed, I will work with Allies and partners press the Government of Russia, to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I am committed to upholding the rights of individuals in Russia and elsewhere and will support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable.

Question 2. Given Russia's increasingly aggressive behavior in Europe and in light of the President's lackluster public support for NATO, how will you communicate

to Russia that the United States remains strongly committed to NATO and defending our European allies?

Answer. The United States is committed under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty to the collective defense of any and all NATO Allies. Collective defense under Article 5 is a bedrock principle of NATO, which underpins the transatlantic relationship. President Trump has publicly reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to Article 5, as have Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis.

The United States' commitment to Article 5 is ironclad, and the United States backs up this commitment though a broad set of actions, including deterrence and reassurance. This includes leading a rotational multinational battle group in Poland as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence. In addition, the United States supports deterrence and defense activities in Europe through the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). This administration's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget request included $4.8 billion—a $1.4 billion increase from last year—to fund ERI.

The ERI provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises. These activities also support Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which focuses on individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Question 3. Russia is also currently out of compliance with the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and is developing ground-launched cruise missiles prohibited under the Treaty.

What can we do to bring Russia back into compliance with the INF Treaty? Will you commit to raising this issue with the appropriate contacts if appointed as Ambassador to Russia? What is your perspective about the trajectory that strategic arms reduction dialogue should take, between Russia and the United States and also China?

Answer. The administration has made very clear to Russia its concerns about Russia's violation of the INF Treaty and the risks it poses to European and Asian security. I believe the INF Treaty is in the national security interest of the United States and of Russia—but only if Russia returns to full compliance with its treaty obligations. If confirmed, I will certainly take every opportunity to raise this in Moscow, as this is a significant issue in the bilateral relationship.

Ultimately, it is up to the decision-makers at the highest levels of the Russian Government to make the political decision to return to compliance with its obligations under the INF Treaty. For several years, the U.S. has pressed russia to do so; thusfar Moscow has refused to substantively engage at either the political or technical expert level. I understand that the administration is taking additional steps to pressure Russia to return to compliance, and to ensure Russia will not gain a significant military advantage from its decision to violate the Treaty. If confirmed, I will work closely with State Department Leadership and our Allies to develop proportionate responses to Russia's ongoing violation, including sharing available information on Russia's intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missile production and flight-testing.

Regarding the trajectory of the strategic arms reduction dialogue, the administration is focused on ensuring the United States and Russia reach the central limits of the New START Treaty on Feburary 5, 2018 before assessing next steps on strategic arms control.

Question 4. If confirmed, what would you do to persuade Russia to work with the United States and China to peacefully denuclearize the Korean Peninsula? Did you gain any insights as Ambassador to China about how we might work with China and also with Russia to develop a coordinated, multilateral diplomatic strategy to dealing with North Korea?

Answer. Both Russia and China have publicly committed to the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The international community is united in condemning North Korea's continued violations of its international obligations and commitments and demanding that North Korea give up its prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The administration's goal is to seek Russian agreement to increase pressure on North Korea through the full implementation of DPRK related U.N. sanctions, employing all economic and diplomatic levers available in order to press the Kim Jong-Un regime to change course. Russia has repeatedly called for restraint and dialogue with North Korea, but has resisted strengthening sanctions against the Kim Jong-Un regime.

The Russian Government, however, must be made to realize that North Korea shows no interest in multilateral discussions to halt or reduce their nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Furthermore, the regime rejected the Russian and Chinese dialogue proposal known as "freeze-for-freeze," where the U.S. would suspend U.S.-ROK joint exercises in exchange for a suspension of DPRK missile and nuclear testing.

This administration remains steadfast in working with our allies to sanction individuals and entities, including those in Russia, who violate standing United Nations or United States sanctions by participating in proscribed activities with North Korea. We continue to press Russia to recognize that any existing economic relationship with the DPRK enables Kim Jong-Un's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program in defiance of international law. This administration will continue to increase pressure on North Korea, including by pressing the Russians to reduce their economic relationship with North Korea, until Kim Jong-Un halts his destabilizing weapons programs and returns to international dialogue.

From my time as Ambassador to China, I understand the pivotal role of China plays in any effort to halt North Korea's prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile programs. China, Russia and the United States participated in the six-party format; this example proves that the three nations are capable of working from a common playbook to get things done.

Question 5. The President's recalcitrance to accept the unified conclusion of the U.S. intelligence community that Russia actively meddled in the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections is extremely troubling. Even more troubling are the ongoing investigations by former FBI Director Mueller and the U.S. Congress into the President's ties to Russia, whether there was any collusion between his campaign and the Russia Government during the 2016 elections, and the possibility that he attempted to obstruct investigations into these ties.

- I was pleased by your unequivocal statement that there is no question about Russia interference in our election. How will you communicate to Russia that this behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the future?

Answer. The U.S. intelligence community's assessment, as reported in October 2016 and January 2017, made clear the Russian Government directed the compromise and subsequent release of emails in advance of the November 8, 2016 U.S. general election with the intent to influence the election, erode faith in U.S. democratic institutions, sow doubt about the integrity of our electoral process, and undermine confidence in the institutions of the U.S. Government. This is unacceptable; confidence in the integrity of our election process is the bedrock of our democracy. If confirmed, I will continue to press Russian officials against further Russian intrusion in the democratic processes of the United States, and those of any other countries.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO GOVERNOR JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR. BY BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. I was recently in Poland, where I visited our troops in Powidz, which serves as an important deterrent against Russian aggression, and Ukraine, which is at the front line of Russia's destabilizing efforts.

- How do you assess Russia's actions in Eastern Europe?
- What do you believe are their aims?
- What do you think we need to do reassure our Eastern European allies?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign to undermine core Western institutions and weaken faith in the democratic and free-market system. This campaign is aggressive and coordinated. Russia has consistently demonstrated a willingness to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against these threats. It is also important the United States pursue a whole-of-government approach to address this problem set.

At the Warsaw Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government committed to enhancing individual and collective resilience against a full spectrum of threats, including hybrid and cyber-attacks, from any direction, in keeping with the intent of Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

In Europe, the United States is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate corruption, and diversify energy supplies. The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in the frontline states of Ukraine

and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these neighbors. In response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Departments of State and Defense have committed over $750 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Balkans are also increasingly a target of Russian malign influence. It is important our assistance seek to deter Russian aggression as well as encourage reforms in these countries that eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

The European Defense Initiative (EDI), including the $4.8 billion requested for FY 2018, provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

Further on the military side, NATO will continue to prepare for, deter and defend against attacks that employ chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear material; to invest in robust, flexible, and interoperable military capabilities; and to protect our military supply chains and work to address, as appropriate, existing dependencies on Russian-sourced legacy military equipment through national efforts and multinational cooperation.

If confirmed, I will continue to press these core U.S. national security interests at all levels within the Russian government.

Question 2. LGBT rights have been a strong interest of mine both before coming to the Senate and here in the Senate. These rights have been under acute pressure in Russia, particularly in certain provinces such as Chechnya. What do you plan to do, if confirmed, to help protect LGBT rights in Russia?

Answer. I believe the Department of State's mission is at all times guided by longstanding American values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. I also believe the Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution—and am concerned the space for civil society and free media in Russia has become increasingly restricted.

I also share your concern about the violence against the LGBT community in Chechnya that was brought to light by brave journalists at Novaya Gazeta and researchers at Human Rights Watch. There have been multiple reports of mass illegal detentions, systematic torture of hundreds of LGBT persons, and extrajudicial killings.

Through public statements and a letter from Secretary Tillerson to Foreign Minister Lavrov, the State Department has requested from the Russian government a full investigation of the reports of abuse against LGBT persons in Chechnya and accountability for those found to be responsible.

I am also committed to upholding the rights of individuals in Russia and elsewhere and will continue to support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable.

If confirmed, I will work with Allies and partners to continue to call on the Government of Russia, in both public statements and private discussions, to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO A. WESS MITCHELL BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have advanced the cause of democracy by helping to create the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), whose mission is to promote an economically vibrant, geopolitically secure and politically free Central and Eastern Europe with close and enduring ties to the United States. CEPA's programs and analysis have advocated for Europe's new democracies to solidify the gains of the post-Communist period and to act beacons to the countries to their east. An important component of these efforts is close engagement with both senior government leaders and civil

society. A prominent example is the work that CEPA has done to highlight the progress of anti-corruption efforts in Romania, and how this progress has strengthened Romania's role as a security ally in the Black Sea region. The institute has also encouraged partners in the Balkans and NATO's eastern neighborhood to remain committed to the path of reform amid mounting geopolitical pressure. These efforts have served to reinforce U.S. and NATO public diplomacy and expand people-to-people contacts on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the field of human rights, CEPA has worked to engage civil society and call attention to the plight of dissidents in, Belarus, Moldova and Russia. CEPA continued to raise concerns about democracy and human rights in Russia even in the period of the "Reset." A notable project was the CEPA Belarus Working Group, co-chaired with Freedom House, which used reports, open letters, seminars in Washington and at the OSCE, and trips for Belarusian opposition figures to the United States to raise public awareness about the plight of political prisoners in Belarus and to inform Congressional and Executive policymaking at a pivotal moment in the country's political development. If confirmed I will remain committed to promoting human rights and democracy in all of the countries of Europe and Eurasia.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Europe and Eurasia today?

- What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Europe and Eurasia?
- What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?
- 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 Europe and Eurasia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The myriad of human rights issues currently facing Europe and Eurasia have my full attention. These concerns are not limited to any country or region. They range from torture, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings in Chechnya to abuse of the political opposition in Russia, attacks on Roma and anti-Semitism in various parts of Europe, and the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in Turkey. Respect for human rights is a core American value. There should be no room for hate crimes against members of vulnerable communities such as LGBTI individuals, migrants, or persons with disabilities. If confirmed, I will strongly support the Department of State's ongoing work with our European partners to combat all forms of intolerance and to strengthen respect for human rights.

America's alliances are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned. The United States has been diligent in encouraging its allies, especially in Central Europe, to remain firmly committed to the democratic principles and rule of law upon which the NATO Alliance was founded. If confirmed, I will speak up against restrictions on civil society and free expression, discrimination against minority groups, and steps that undermine the independence of the judiciary or otherwise threaten the foundations of constitutional order while continuing to build communication and trust with all allies.

In addition to diplomatic engagement, I will continue to support U.S. foreign assistance in Europe and Eurasia that supports civil society and strengthening of democratic institutions. This assistance provides legal and financial support to human rights defenders persecuted for their work, supports civil society's efforts to monitor and investigate human rights violations and hold perpetrators accountable, and sustains programs that increase citizens' knowledge of their rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 3. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to sustaining engagement with a broad spectrum of society among European publics, including human rights activists, civil society, religious groups, and the organizations that represent them.

Question 4. Will you and your bureau actively engage with relevant governments in Europe and Eurasia to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly detained in their states?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage European authorities and call on them to ensure the resolution of cases involving victims of politically-motivated prosecution in a fair and timely manner, respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including all the protections and fair trial guarantees necessary for their defense. I

will urge them to conduct independent and credible investigations into reported human rights violations, and bring those responsible to justice.

In particular, I will continue to advocate for consular access to all U.S. citizens and swift due process for all detained or incarcerated U.S. citizens in Europe.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to thoroughly vet all individuals and units nominated to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities, in accordance with the Leahy law. If there are findings of credible information regarding gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training and will assist their respective governments to bring them to justice.

Question 6. Will you direct U.S. embassies in Europe and Eurasia to engage on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring our Embassies in Europe and Eurasia remain engaged on these issues. As Secretary Tillerson has said, American leadership requires moral clarity. We are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned, and when we hold our rivals accountable for human rights abuses at home. If confirmed, I will ensure that engagement on combatting democratic backsliding, civil rights, and human rights violations remain integral components of our mission.

Question 7. What will you do to build people-to-people ties between Americans and Europeans, and to support European and Eurasian civil societies, human rights activists, and independent media? What do you need from Washington-based U.S. officials on this?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support the Bureau's broad range of public diplomacy, media training and literacy, civil society engagement and other programs that support the goals of sharing and amplifying American values on independent media, human rights, and fostering robust civil society dialogue. Continued congressional engagement and support of professional and academic exchange programs, peer-to-peer engagement, as well as educational, cultural, and other regional programs that provide exchanges of ideas and best practices will be key to the continued success of those efforts.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I am committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a diverse and inclusive team in the European and Eurasian Affairs Bureau, across all of its missions, and communicate this is a priority for me as the Assistant Secretary. If confirmed, I will urge the Bureau to reflect our whole-of-mission commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, I will ensure all supervisors, at all of our missions, have access to and avail themselves of opportunities to receive regular formal training and regular guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion to sensitize them to these important issues and maximize diverse talents in our workforce.

Question 9. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds that may have investments in Europe and Eurasia; however, investments in diversified mutual funds are exempt from the conflicts of interest rules. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. I will divest my interests in any future investments the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the countries of Europe or Eurasia?

Answer. Neither I, nor any member of my immediate family has any financial interests in Europe or Eurasia.

Question 13. Did Russia interfere in the 2016 U.S. election?

Answer. The U.S. intelligence community's assessment, as reported in October 2016 and January 2017, found that there was a Russian effort to influence the November 8, 2016 U.S. general election. The objective of these efforts was to erode faith in U.S. democratic institutions, sow doubt about the integrity of our electoral process, and undermine confidence in the institutions of the U.S. Government. The administration has been clear that it takes this issue seriously; Secretary Tillerson has raised it with Minister Lavrov and stated that there will not be an improvement in the bilateral relationship until it has been dealt with.

Confidence in the integrity of our election process is the bedrock of our democracy. If confirmed, I will continue to press Russian officials against further intrusion in the democratic processes of the United States, and those of our Allies. I am committed to swift implementation of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which represents the will of the American people, in responding to Russian election interference in the United States.

Question 14. Unity with Europe on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within Europe for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to working closely with our European Allies and partners to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. Government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach on sanctions, and I will continue to seek feedback from our allies, who have been steadfast partners on Russia sanctions.

My goal is to ensure these sanctions support our important, common work in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, restoring control of Crimea to Ukraine, and preventing future meddling by Russia in foreign elections-while also remaining vigilant against unintended consequences for our partners. I will likewise remain mindful of our many foreign policy priorities related to Europe as we implement these sanctions, including our commitment to promoting European energy security and encouraging interoperability in NATO weapons systems. Close coordination with our allies is crucial to enabling the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal: imposing costs on Russia, sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior.

Question 15. Victoria Nuland played a central role in engaging directly with Russia and European counterparts regarding the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Kurt Volker is the Special "Envoy" in charge of that portfolio now and has been deeply engaged in the region. What will your role be with respect to diplomacy on the Minsk Process?

Answer. Special Representative Volker is the U.S. Government's point person on Ukraine negotiations. His appointment by Secretary Tillerson has reenergized engagement on the negotiations to end Russia's aggression in eastern Ukraine. Volker's role is focused on negotiations to resolve the conflict in keeping with the terms of the Minsk Agreement and, specifically, to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity and ensure the safety and security of all Ukrainian citizens, regardless of language, ethnicity, or religion.

This is one important component in the Department's wider approach to countering Russian aggression in, and strengthening, the state of Ukraine. Russian aggression is not limited to eastern Ukraine, and our relationship with Ukraine is not limited to negotiations to resolve the conflict in the east. If confirmed, I will lead the State Department effort to counter Russian aggression more broadly, including in Crimea, and elsewhere in Europe. While its military defends the nation in the east, Ukraine simultaneously faces another fierce engagement—what Ukrainian Prime Minister Groysman and others have described as the "war on corruption"—the outcome of which will define Ukraine's future. While Ukraine has accomplished much since the heady days of its 2014 Euromaidan revolution, there is still much to be done to ensure Ukraine fulfills its European, democratic ambitions. This transition away from Russian influence, requiring difficult, but necessary political and

economic reforms, is arguably even more critical in the long-run than the conflict in the east.

My role, if confirmed, will be to lead in the development and implementation of the overall U.S. approach to Ukraine while coordinating closely with Special Representative Volker on negotiations with Russia. I have every confidence in Volker's ability to succeed and, if confirmed, will work to ensure frequent and effective communication between him, myself and the Secretary so that his work and the Bureau's wider approach to Ukraine are coordinated.

Question 16. Russia has also deployed its military and other influence tools to support the breakaway of territories in Georgia and Moldova. What will you do to counter Russian aggression in these states and address the "frozen conflict" situations in them? How will you promote democratic, accountable governance and the rule of law in Georgia and Moldova, critical antidotes to Russia's attempts to undermine their sovereignty and stability?

Answer. The U.S. supports Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally-recognized borders and reject Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. I support the continuation of active U.S. participation in the Geneva International Discussions, the only forum that brings together Georgia, Russia, the United States, and de facto officials from Abkhazia and South Ossetia and addresses the security and humanitarian consequences of the 2008 conflict. The United States counters Russian influence in Georgia by supporting democracy and governance, promoting economic growth through targeted economic opportunities, and increasing access to objective sources of information for populations vulnerable to Russian influence, including in communities bordering the Russian occupied Georgian territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. U.S. policies and corresponding assistance programs in Georgia strengthen institutional checks and balances and the rule of law. U.S. assistance builds the capacity of law enforcement authorities and encourages reform in criminal justice sector institutions, strengthening Georgia's ability to prosecute transnational organized crime and maintain the country's low levels of corruption. If confirmed, I will continue to support these important priorities in Georgia.

Concerning Moldova, the United States supports the country's chosen European trajectory by building resiliency in Moldovan institutions so they are better able to withstand Russian malign influence. I will continue our bilateral coordination in a number of key areas, including efforts to modernize and increase the capacity of Moldovan law enforcement and criminal justice institutions to counter corruption, combat trafficking in persons, and support essential reforms in the justice and law enforcement sectors. I will continue to focus on building the capacity of Moldova's internal security institutions to effectively and appropriately respond to destabilizing activities. I will also continue to ensure our assistance increases Moldova's energy security by advancing renewable energy opportunities and promoting interregional connectivity to reduce reliance on Russian resources. Moreover, I will work to strengthen Moldova's economic growth by continuing programming that improves the business environment. Such assistance will foster investment opportunities for American businesses, as well as counter Russian malign influence by reducing Russia's economic leverage over Moldova. I will actively participate in the 5+2 negotiations, which seek to provide for a true special status for Transnistria while guaranteeing Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States supports the full implementation of the 1999 Istanbul summit commitments.

Question 17. The recent Russia sanctions legislation was signed into law on August 2 and includes a robust authorization for assistance to counter malign Russian Government influence across Europe and Eurasia. In contrast, the administration's FY18 budget request called for significant cuts across Europe, at a time when Russia is aggressively attacking democratic institutions and exerting its influence across the continent. What is your plan for implementing the intent of this legislation with respect to building resilience in democratic institutions in Europe?

Answer. Russia uses a constellation of approaches, overt and covert, to influence the policies of other governments and undermine domestic stability in Europe. Russia seeks to weaken European unity and erode faith in democratic institutions. A Europe whole, free, and at peace is in the interests of the United States. Efforts to disrupt democratic processes and weaken unity directly and negatively affect U.S. interests and security, while institutionalized respect for human rights, good governance, and rule of law contributes to long-term stability. By promoting our shared democratic values, and by holding our European partners accountable to their commitments and the rule of law, the United States strengthens our partners' capabilities to mitigate vulnerabilities to malign influences and counter threats to their security and sovereignty. The approach to this must be comprehensive and whole-of-

government, and the Department of State has a critical role to play in addressing this threat.

If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to build the resilience of our European partners against Russia's efforts to undermine these democratic processes, including through exchanges of information and best practices, as well as programming for European publics. Secretary Tillerson has been clear that he views as the highest priorities for U.S. assistance those areas of Central and Eastern Europe affected by pressure from the Russian Federation. We will continue ongoing assistance efforts and engagements that seek to build and reinforce the rule of law, support democratic institutions, promote human rights, and drive economic development in vulnerable countries in Europe.

Question 18. Some have criticized the current Serbian Government for rolling back democratic reforms and press freedom, and Belgrade also continues to maintain close ties with Moscow while seeking to join the EU. How will you manage relations with Belgrade? What can we do to keep Serbia on its stated path to Europe, at the same time supporting the democratic change that is needed there and, of course, urging Serbia to recognize Kosovo as an independent state?

Answer. A democratic, prosperous Serbia that takes a positive role in the region is fundamentally important to the stability of the Western Balkans. Given its historic, economic, ethnic, and political ties to its neighbors, Serbia is often described as the linchpin of the Western Balkans. If confirmed, I will prioritize integrating Serbia into the rest of Europe and the West in order to cement it and the region on a path towards development and stability—in line with the national security interests of the United States.

Serbia is also an important security partner for the United States. It is a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, has a robust State partnership program with the Ohio National Guard, and keeps an average of 330 service members in UN and EU peacekeeping operations in places such as the Central African Republic, Cyprus, and Lebanon.

I recognize that Serbia often seeks to balance its relationship with the West and Russia. Serbia sometimes takes actions the United States does not support, such as observing Russian military maneuvers in Crimea or sending humanitarian supplies to Syria via Russian planes, instead of through the United Nations.

However, I firmly believe Serbia's future lies with Europe and the West, and that the goal of the United States should be to help it get there. To do so, Serbia will have to harmonize its foreign policy with that of the European Union, including on Russia and other issues such as normalizing relations with Kosovo. If confirmed, I will reiterate U.S. support for the EU-facilitated Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue process. I will also prioritize continued U.S. assistance to help Serbia implement the economic, democratic, and rule of law reforms that are critical to Serbia's EU aspirations.

U.S. support for Serbia to develop itself democratically and economically will have long-term implications on the region. Serbia's success will help enable the success of the entire Western Balkans and United States foreign policy in the region.

Question 19. Bosnian political leaders seem to have become more entrenched in their ethnic camps, which has held back much needed reform. The EU has emphasized economic reforms in Bosnia over dealing with thorny political issues. I understand that State has pushed for more political reform—what are your views on this? What is the right approach on Bosnia?

Answer. The U.S. believes political reform is necessary to improve the functionality and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Political reforms undertaken by Bosnia and Herzegovina should complement, and not compete with, the economic reforms needed to fulfill the European Union's Reform Agenda. The United States is working with its European partners to support Bosnia and Herzegovina as it undertakes the necessary economic and political reforms to join the European Union and pursue its goals for further Euro-Atlantic integration. It is only through concerted action that we will achieve our goals.

I understand that the administration believes an agreement on reforms that would bring the electoral system into line with rulings by the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights before 2018 elections is possible. Bosnia's political parties need the help of the international community (particularly the EU and United States) to reach a timely agreement on electoral reforms. I support the administration position that the United States will support reforms only if they are consistent with the Dayton framework of one state, two entities, and three constituent peoples. Also, any reform agreement will require the support or at least the acceptance of parties representing all three peoples. It is important the reforms be both agreed and implemented in time for the October 2018 elections.

Question 20. How will you respond to the separatist efforts of Republika Srpska, or efforts by some Bosnian Croats to carve out an ethnic entity of their own? Do you see any opportunities for substantial reform in Bosnia, including coming into compliance with the European Court of Human Rights ruling that ethnic criteria for seats in the collective presidency and parliament are discriminatory?

Answer. The United States supports the provisions of the Dayton Accords, including a unified Bosnia and Herzegovina comprised of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. The United States and our European Allies are committed to working with our Bosnian partners in a spirit of dialogue to pass election law amendments that enjoy broad political support. Any changes to the election law must move Bosnia and Herzegovina closer to European standards by addressing European Court of Human Rights rulings. If confirmed, I will actively oppose changes that run counter to European Court of Human Rights rulings, make the rulings harder to implement, or strengthen divisions among the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I agree with the administration that it is important to make progress on electoral reform prior to the October 2018 elections, and will hold accountable Bosnian politicians who undermine efforts to build consensus.

Question 21. The Helsinki Final Act and subsequent OSCE agreements have established that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are a "direct and legitimate concern" of OSCE participating states, not simply an internal matter. Can you outline your views on the OSCE and give us your vision on how the United States can best use this organization to promote U.S. objectives in Europe? Do you think that raising concerns about human rights violations and promoting democratic development is imposing our values on others, or represents a strategic part of advancing U.S. security interests in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. Although Europe has made enormous strides since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, serious challenges to human rights, the rule of law and democracy persist, with implications for U.S. security interests and universal human values. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), its institutions, and participants address these challenges through the most highly-developed body of human rights commitments of any regional organization. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to press all OSCE participating States to meet their commitments.

I fully support the continued close cooperation between the United States and the OSCE to advance comprehensive political-military, economic and environmental, and human dimension security and stability throughout Europe and Central Asia. In particular, if confirmed, I will continue to promote U.S. leadership and robust engagement in the OSCE to advance democratic reform, prevent and resolve conflicts, support civil society, promote tolerance and non-discrimination, and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 22. Among the OSCE region's protracted conflicts, where do you see the greatest possibility for the United States to help achieve a positive resolution?

Answer. The OSCE plays an important role toward resolving the protracted conflicts in Europe. If confirmed I will support the United States' continued active participation in the relevant negotiating bodies—including the Geneva International Discussions addressing the conflict in Georgia, the Minsk Group on Nagorno-Karabakh, and the 5+2 talks on a settlement of the Transnistrian conflict—and will continue to encourage dialogue and engagement at the OSCE on these protracted conflicts. As a co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States fully supports efforts to help Azerbaijan and Armenia find a lasting settlement based on international law, the UN Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act, including the principles of non-use of force, territorial integrity, and the rights to self-determination of peoples. The Geneva International Discussions—in which the United States is a participant—provide an important forum for dialogue on security, stability, and humanitarian issues in Georgia. As an observer of the 5+2 Talks on the Transnistrian Settlement Process, the United States seeks a comprehensive, peaceful, and sustainable settlement of the conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders with a special status for Transnistria that fully guarantees the human, political, economic, and social rights of its population. The United States also heads the OSCE field Mission in Moldova, which works on a full range of political, social, economic and other issues in Moldova, as well as conflict settlement and implementation of OSCE Summit commitments on withdrawal of Russian forces from the territory of Moldova.

Question 23. How can the OSCE help to push back against Russian disinformation and aggression across Europe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the OSCE continuing to play a pivotal role in addressing Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea. I will support implementation of the Minsk agreements through the Normandy format process and the Trilateral Contact Group. The United States is the largest single contributor of financing and personnel to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), which provides critical information on the security situation in eastern Ukraine and efforts by the sides to implement the Minsk agreements. The United States will continue to support the OSCE's independent Representative on Freedom of the Media, who promotes freedom of expression, including a vibrant, investigative media that is one key to exposing disinformation. If confirmed, I will also ensure that the United States continues to regularly counter Russian disinformation within the OSCE Permanent Council and in other OSCE fora.

Question 24. Hungary and Poland are both engaged in democratic backsliding that threatens their judicial independence, press freedom, and the functioning of their civil societies. EU efforts to hold both of these governments accountable for assaults on their countries' democratic institutions have failed to yield positive results. How will you seek to curtail this democratic backsliding in two of our NATO allies, given the democratic values to which NATO members have ascribed and the risks to the alliance if these values are abandoned?

Answer. The United States works closely with with Poland and Hungary as NATO Allies. The United States relies on our allies to be strong inside and out, with robust democratic institutions, economies, and defense capabilities. As the President, Vice President, and Secretary of State have made clear, we expect our allies to meet their commitments. This means upholding the values enshrined in the Washington Treaty of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law, and spending at least two percent of GDP on defense. If confirmed, I will express our concerns when our allies fall short of their commitments in any of these areas, whether on defense spending or threats to rule of law and democratic institutions.

The United States raises concerns with allies privately and publicly. Divided societies are more likely to be targeted by malign influence, and strengthening Europe's frontier states must be a priority in Europe. If confirmed, I will express concerns about measures in Poland, Hungary or any other ally that weaken the separation of powers or any other component of a sound constitutional order. I will reinforce the importance the United States places on media freedom and a level playing field for U.S. companies abroad. At the same time, in both countries, I will work to strengthen bilateral ties, interpersonal relationships and cooperation in the security, energy and other realms that advance U.S. interests.

If confirmed, I will also seek ways, in partnership with others, to support civil society, civic education, and independent media. The region's transformation still requires U.S. attention and commitment if democratic gains are to be sustained. If confirmed, I will continue to stress the importance of strong democratic institutions in ongoing efforts to build and maintain prosperous economies, attract investment and resist malign influences.

Question 25. Since last year's failed coup, the government-directed crackdown in Turkey has been massive, with some fifty thousand individuals reportedly detained, including human rights workers, journalists, teachers, judges, opposition politicians, and U.S. citizens. I was shocked to see that two senior Amnesty International officials were arrested and remanded to pretrial detention this summer. Regarding last year's failed coup, what are the implications for our relationship with Turkey if Turkish democracy continues to erode, or Turkey veers toward a one-party state? How should the United States respond?

Answer. Turkey remains a key NATO Ally and critical partner in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Its strategic location and regional clout give Ankara significant influence on issues of core interest to the United States, including Iraq, Syria, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Afghanistan. It is in the U.S. national interest for Turkey to be a stable, democratic, prosperous, and reliable Ally. The health and vibrancy of Turkish democracy matters and is important to the long-term stability of Turkey and the entire region.

Turkey has an obligation to bring those responsible for the attempted coup to justice, while ensuring transparency, rule of law, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, human rights, and fundamental freedoms for the entire population. These tenets are essential to the strength of democratic societies and represent the same principles the Turkish people so courageously defended last year. The prolonged state of emergency is threatening these very principles, as well as causing rifts with key allies and partners. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Turkey to end

the state of emergency and rely on its democratic institutions, which are sufficiently strong to overcome the threats and challenges Turkey faces.

The detention of U.S. citizens, Amnesty International and other human rights officials, journalists, academics, prosecutors, judges and opposition politicians is very concerning. If confirmed, I will underscore with the Turkish Government the importance of respect for due process and individual rights, as enshrined in the Turkish Constitution and consistent with Turkey's own international commitments. Non-governmental organizations, dissenting voices, and a robust civil society are essential elements of any strong democracy. If confirmed, I will remind the Turkish Government that freedom of expression, including for speech and the media- even speech which some find controversial or uncomfortable—strengthens democracy and needs to be protected. At the same time, I will continue to work to strengthen the U.S.-Turkish security relationship and to deepen Turkey's anchoring in the transatlantic alliance.

Question 26. Let us assume the United States walks away from the nuclear deal with Iran and Europe does not follow us. Do you believe that the best policy for the United States, if we walk away from the nuclear agreement with Iran, is to impose sanctions on European companies and banks that continue to do business with Iran?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners. I cannot prejudge the outcome of the administration's review in terms of sanctions implications.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with our European partners and the European Union to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.

Question 27. With increased incidents of hate at home and in Europe, concrete initiatives addressing racism and xenophobia are critical for the safety of our diplomats. I have annually supported funds to address anti-Semitism in Europe. How can we work together to establish a similar funded initiative for Europe to counter racism and xenophobia?

Answer. If confirmed, ensuring the safety of our diplomats and all Americans abroad will be my number one priority. The Department of State works with our European partners to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance, to foster inclusion, and to promote the human rights of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, including those of the Jewish faith. The Department also annually reports on anti-Semitism in European countries where threats or attacks against Jewish persons are particularly significant. In addition to diplomatic engagement, U.S. foreign assistance in Europe and Eurasia supports and empowers civil society in these areas, helping to foster increased inclusion of minority and disadvantaged groups.

As Europe grapples with a rise in xenophobic far-right parties, I look forward, if confirmed, to working with you to strengthen our diplomacy and partnerships with Europeans as well as such European institutions as the OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe to ensure we are adequately combatting racism and xenophobia. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out forcefully against racism and xenophobia.

Question 28. Anti-Semitism, harassment and discrimination against Roma and Europeans of African descent, closing borders to refugees from Africa, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere are cause for concern in Europe. As the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance, I have supported work to combat intolerance in Europe. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, what will you do to ensure that anti-Semitism, harassment and discrimination against Roma and Europeans of African descent, and closing borders to refugees from Africa, Syria, and Afghanistan remain of top priority in United States foreign policy and in our OSCE work?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democratic governance is a core element of U.S. foreign policy. These values form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies. Standing up for human rights and democracy is not just a moral imperative but is in the interest of the United States in making the world more stable and secure. As Secretary Tillerson said in the introduction to the 2016 Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, when it comes to human rights, "our values are our interests."

The United States works with European and Eurasian states to achieve common goals, engages in formal bilateral democracy and rule of law dialogues, and actively supports human rights defenders and civil society through jointly-funded programs and related efforts. Through multilateral fora and bilaterally, the United States works with governments in Europe and Eurasia to combat anti-Semitism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, foster inclusion and promote the human rights of persons belonging to vulnerable minorities, including Roma, Europeans of African descent and refugees in Europe.

If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and with the OSCE's respective Tolerance Representatives, to condemn and combat anti-Semitism, anti-Christian and anti-Muslim sentiment, racism and other forms of intolerance and hate-motivated crimes against members of vulnerable populations, including LGBTI persons, women, persons with disabilities, and migrants. At the Hamburg Ministerial, the United States supported the adoption of a working definition of anti-Semitism, and worked with Finland in support of a widely endorsed proposed decision on strengthening the OSCE's engagement on the human rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, Russia blocked consensus on both decisions.

If confirmed, I will continue to promote and speak out strongly in support of human rights, including those of the most vulnerable.

Question 29. We are dismayed by the failure of Serbian political leaders and officials to fulfill the promises they freely made to bring to justice those responsible for the murder of the Bytyqi brothers in 1999. Reports are that the leading suspect in the case has close ties to the ruling party. Given this administration's emphasis on "America First," what will you do to encourage Belgrade finally to act in this case of three U.S. citizens who were, without cause or legal proceeding, brutally executed by Serbian Interior Ministry forces and then dumped into a mass grave almost 20 years ago?

Answer. I share your disappointment with Serbia's lack of progress in the Bytyqi case. administration officials have raised the case with Serbian leaders at all levels of government, including with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic. The United States has also informed Serbian officials that these issues stand in the way of closer bilateral relations. The State Department maintains regular contact with the Bytyqi family, and, along with the family, continues to seek additional strategies to push for progress on the case. Earlier this year, Serbia appointed a new Special War Crimes Prosecutor—the position had remained vacant for almost a year and a half—and U.S. officials have asked her to make the Bytyqi case a priority in her work. I am hopeful that that the new Prosecutor will advance the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the Bytyqi murders.

Question 30. The purportedly simplified citizenship procedure in Hungary, which eases the process for ethnic Hungarians in neighboring countries to acquire citizenship, has been dogged by reports of corruption and the sale of Hungarian passports and has resulted in a roughly 10 percent increase in the number of Hungarian citizens. But the Hungarian Government's interest in expanding what it perceives as a sympathetic voting constituency before the 2018 elections may make them disinclined to remedy systemic corruption in the issuance of Hungarian passports and thus increase the likelihood that the Visa Waiver Program will be abused. How will you address these and other national security issues relating to Hungary, including Hungary's evolving relations with Russia?

Answer. We rely on our allies, including Hungary, to be strong domestically and internationally. We also look to them to uphold the spirit and letter of the Washington Treaty, including its commitments to meeting defense investment obligations and upholding our shared values of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will emphasize to Hungary the importance of these responsibilities and, if they are not met, express U.S. concerns as a close friend and ally.

Respect for rule of law and the fight against corruption are critical to ensuring the integrity of Hungary's passport issuance procedures. Hungary has a sovereign right to determine its citizenship laws; at the same time, the process through which individuals obtain citizenship and passports are of international concern, particularly as they affect our border security. Integrity of a country's identity documentation procedures is a key consideration of Visa Waiver Program's security framework. If confirmed, I expect to work closely with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs to ensure the protection of our national security.

Question 31. In many parts of the region you cover, the challenges facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people include societal violence, government crackdowns, and/or "anti-propaganda" laws that criminalize any discussion of homo-

sexuality. Unfortunately, the Trump administration has sent concerning signals that it will not prioritize promotion of human rights, particularly of LGBT persons. How do you plan to raise with your counterparts the human rights issues facing LGBT persons? Do you see these issues as relevant to security and stability in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. The Department of State remains committed to protecting the human rights of all persons, including LGBT persons. Democracy and stability are most secure when all people, including the most vulnerable, live freely without fear of violence or discrimination.

In June, Secretary Tillerson emphasized that violence and discrimination against any vulnerable group undermines collective security and American values, and has raised concerns with the Russian Government about the treatment of LGBT persons in Chechnya. U.S. Embassies—including those in hostile environments—continue to take steps to protect the human rights of LGBT persons. U.S. diplomats continue to use their convening power to bring different allies together in support of human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's special focus on the protection of vulnerable groups, including religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence, and LGBT persons.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO A. WESS MITCHELL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. This month, the Russian government poured tens of thousands of troops into its Zapad military exercises. What do you think the significance of these exercises with these kinds of troop levels means for American security posture in Europe?

Answer. The ZAPAD 2017 exercise has raised regional tensions within Europe. Russia's disregard for the territorial integrity of its neighbors has caused significant concern among NATO Allies and partners about potential threats to their security.

Russia has the right to exercise its forces; the United States and its NATO Allies conduct military exercises as well. However, we adhere scrupulously to all of our commitments with regard to military transparency under the OSCE's Vienna Document and have been careful to meet all relevant arms control obligations. Russia's lack of transparency regarding some of its large military activities has increased the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation. Russia's neighbors are particularly concerned about Russia's so-called "snap" military exercises where Russia fails to inform its neighbors in advance.

It is important the U.S. and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats confronting NATO.

In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies and partners. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. NATO's unity is critical to an effective deterrent.

Question 2. How much of a military threat does Russia pose to our European neighbors? What are the administration's plans to continue to reassure our European allies that the United States remains committed to transatlantic security?

Answer. Russia has demonstrated a willingness to use military force against its neighbors, most recently in Ukraine, and to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against these threats. It is important for the United States to pursue a whole-of-government approach to address this problem set.

The United States is committed under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty to the collective defense of all NATO Allies and has led NATO's efforts to establish a persistent, rotational air, land, and sea presence on NATO's Eastern Flank. The U.S. is leading the NATO enhanced Forward Presence multinational battle group in Poland. In addition, the United States supports deterrence and defense activities in Europe through the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI). This administration's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget request included $4.8 billion—a $1.4 billion increase from 2017—to fund EDI. The EDI funds Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR), which is the

U.S. contribution to NATO's enhanced deterrent posture. OAR increases U.S. presence across Europe (including the deployment of a rotational Armored Brigade Combat Team to NATO's east), expands U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhances prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improves infrastructure at military installations, and provides assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

The United States is also working to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate corruption, and diversify energy supplies in key European states. The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in the frontline states of Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these neighbors. In response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Departments of State and Defense have committed over $750 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Balkans are also increasingly a target of Russian malign influence. It is important that our assistance seek to deter Russian aggression as well as encourage reforms in these countries that eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

Question 3. What steps will you take to pressure Russia to comply with the terms of the agreement?

Answer. By maintaining Trans-Atlantic unity on sanctions, transforming Ukraine's military into a capable fighting force, and backing Ukraine's reform agenda, we have made clear to Moscow that the invasion of eastern Ukraine is a losing proposition. We must keep up the pressure, and if confirmed, I will make it one of my highest priorities.

As Secretary Tillerson has said, U.S. sanctions will stay in place until Russia fulfills its Minsk commitments. The separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain until Moscow returns the peninsula to Ukraine. The existing sanctions regimes, in coordination with G7 and EU sanctions, provide leverage to compel Moscow to fulfill its commitments. We must also continue to strengthen Ukraine's resiliency against Russian pressure. In response to Russian aggression, the United States has committed more than $750 million in security assistance to provide training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, better monitor and secure its borders, and deploy its forces more safely and effectively. The Department is closely examining how to best use security assistance funding going forward to bolster Ukraine's ability to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In addition to support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, the United States is implementing a robust assistance program to build democratic institutions, promote economic development, combat corruption, and strengthen Euro-Atlantic integration. The more Ukraine builds its economy and strengthens its democratic institutions, the more Russia fails in its effort to destabilize the country by continuing the conflict in the Donbas.

Question 4. How will you engage with Russia and Ukraine to push back further efforts by Russia to increase its occupation and influence of Ukraine?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson reenergized our engagement to end Russia's aggression in eastern Ukraine by appointing Kurt Volker as Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations—the U.S. government's point person on Ukraine negotiations. Volker has clearly delineated our key goals: the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and the safety and security of all Ukrainians, regardless of language, nationality, religion, or ethnicity. Since his appointment in early July, Volker has closely coordinated with the Normandy Quartet (including France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine) and has engaged with other allies and stakeholders in an effort to break the logjam in the Minsk process. I have every confidence in Special Representative Volker's ability to succeed. If confirmed, I will work to ensure frequent and effective communication between him, myself and the Secretary so that his work and the Bureau's wider approach to Ukraine are coordinated.

The United States has been clear with Russia that its aggression in Ukraine is the key obstacle to improving our bilateral relationship. Russian aggression is not limited to eastern Ukraine. If confirmed, I will work to counter Russian aggression more broadly, including in Crimea, and elsewhere in Europe.

Question 5. Congress recently authorized lethal assistance to Ukraine, do you support that effort? What steps do you believe we should take to more effectively support Ukraine as it battles Russian hybrid warfare?

Answer. To my knowledge, the United States has neither provided defensive weapons nor ruled out the option of doing so, but the administration will continue to examine how best to use U.S. security assistance going forward to bolster

Ukraine's ability to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. As Secretary Tillerson stated, Ukraine has a right to defend itself against Russian aggression. The United States continues to focus on finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine through the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Russian aggression in Ukraine includes the use of hybrid warfare to include disinformation and malign influence. Ukraine was the target of cyber-attacks in December 2015 and 2016, and in June 2017. On September 29, an interagency team will visit Kyiv for meetings with Ukrainian officials to discuss policy and incident response to cyber-attacks. Countering hybrid warfare requires a broad whole of government approach in order to build national resiliency.

In response to Russian aggression, the United States has committed more than $750 million in security assistance to provide training and equipment to help Ukraine better monitor and secure its borders while deploying its forces more safely and effectively. The United States and allies established a Multinational Joint Commission and training group to coordinate international efforts and build Ukraine's defense capacity to deter further Russian aggression. Sanctions, too, remain a valuable tool in this effort. As Secretary Tillerson told his Russian counterpart directly, Minsk-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia fully implements its commitments, and separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns the peninsula to Ukraine.

More broadly, the United States, along with our European Allies and partners, has assisted and encouraged Ukraine to pursue broad reforms that will reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, and reduce corruption. Reform across sectors such as energy, the economy, land, pension, education, healthcare, defense, and most importantly judicial, will help to build a stronger and more resilient Ukraine. Continuing Kyiv's democratic and economic transformation, coupled with more capable Ukrainian Armed Forces, contributes directly to Ukraine's resilience in the face of continued Russian aggression, and in particular, Moscow's hybrid warfare tactics.

Question 6. What would your strategy be to deal with Russian aggression in Ukraine and other Russia-related threats in Central and Eastern Europe? How do you propose addressing Russia's perceived ″spheres of influence″ or national interests versus another country's territorial integrity and national interests? What options would you employ to achieve Russia's withdrawal from lands it unlawfully controls, such as Crimea, eastern Ukraine, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign to undermine core Western institutions and weaken faith in the democratic and free-market system. This campaign is aggressive and coordinated. Russia has demonstrated a willingness to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. A Europe whole, free, and at peace is in the interests of the United States. Efforts to disrupt democratic processes and weaken European unity directly and negatively affect U.S. interests and security. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against these threats. It is important for the United States to pursue a whole-of-government approach to address this problem set.

In Europe, the United States is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate corruption, and diversify energy supplies. The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in the neighboring states of Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those countries. The Western Balkans are also increasingly a target, as Russia is trying to block the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. It is important our assistance deter Russian aggression against these countries as well as encourage reforms in them to eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure. The European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), including the $4.8 billion requested for FY 2018, provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

The administration supports a country's right to choose its own future, its own partners, without outside interference or intimidation. The administration in turn continues to support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally-recognized borders and rejects Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. If confirmed, I would support this policy by continuing to actively participate in the Geneva International Discussions—the only forum that brings together Georgia, Russia, the United States, and de facto officials from Abkhazia and South

Ossetia—and addresses the security and humanitarian consequences of the 2008 conflict. Within Georgia, I would continue to support efforts to counter Russian influence by strengthening democracy and governance, promoting economic growth by targeting economic opportunities, and increasing access to objective sources of information for populations vulnerable to Russian influence, including in communities bordering the Russian occupied Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

With regard to Ukraine, transatlantic unity on sanctions, support for the Ukrainian military's transformation into a capable fighting force, and strong encouragement of Ukraine's reform agenda all serve to combat Russia's influence and aggression. As Secretary Tillerson has said, U.S. sanctions will stay in place until Russia meets its Minsk commitments. Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns the peninsula to Ukraine.

Concerning Moldova, the United States supports the country's chosen European trajectory by helping build resiliency in Moldova's governance institutions so they are better able to withstand Russian malign influence. If confirmed, I would encourage active Department participation in the 5+2 negotiations, which seek to provide for a true special status for Transnistria while guaranteeing Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Question 7. In recent months, Erdo?an has undertaken an intense crackdown on perceived opponents—what many are calling a witch hunt in retaliation for the July 2016 coup attempt. This has included the firing more than 100,000 state employees including soldiers, police officers, members of the military, judges, and even midwives; imprisonment of tens of thousands, including journalists, human rights defenders, and activists, many of whom have alleged torture and brutal mistreatment while in custody; restrictions on internet and social media access; and the shuttering of media and civil society organizations.

What implications has the "purge" since last summer's attempted coup had on domestic institutions in Turkey, particularly the judicial system and police?

Answer. The 2016 coup attempt has had far-reaching impacts on Turkey. The dismissal or suspension of nearly 150,000 state employees, including police officers, prosecutors, and judges, and detention of tens of thousands, including human rights activists, journalists, academics, opposition politicians, and U.S. citizens, is of deep concern. The prolonged state of emergency runs contrary to democratic principles and undermines domestic institutions. If confirmed, I will underscore to the Turkish government the importance of respect for due process and individual rights, as enshrined in the Turkish Constitution and consistent with Turkey's own international commitments. At the same time, I will continue to work to strengthen the U.S.-Turkish security relationship and to deepen Turkey's anchoring in the transatlantic alliance.

Question 8. In recent months, Erdo?an has undertaken an intense crackdown on perceived opponents—what many are calling a witch hunt in retaliation for the July 2016 coup attempt. This has included the firing more than 100,000 state employees including soldiers, police officers, members of the military, judges, and even midwives; imprisonment of tens of thousands, including journalists, human rights defenders, and activists, many of whom have alleged torture and brutal mistreatment while in custody; restrictions on internet and social media access; and the shuttering of media and civil society organizations.

What implications has the "purge" since last summer's attempted coup had on international institutions including Turkish delegations to NATO and the U.N.?

Answer. Turkey remains an active U.N. member working on a number of issues of core interest to the United States, including the international responses to the crisis in Syria, North Korean nuclear provocations, and Russian aggression in Crimea. Turkey also remains a key NATO Ally and critical partner in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. After the July 2016 attempted coup, the Government of Turkey recalled some Turkish military officials serving at multiple NATO military headquarters, but the Turks have continued to provide officers for NATO assignments. Since the attempted coup, Turkey has maintained its participation in NATO operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

Question 9. Turkish security guards violently assaulting peaceful protestors in Sheridan Circle in Washington, D.C. in May of this year during President Erdogan's visit. Do you believe the administration has taken the appropriate steps to fully condemn this assault on American values and fundamental freedoms of free speech and assembly?

Answer. I share Secretary Tillerson's opinion that the conduct of some Turkish security personnel during President Erdogan's visit to the United States was deeply disturbing.

I have not been privy to discussions with Turkish officials, but I can assure you that if confirmed, I will always strive to protect the interests, safety, and security of the United States and the American people. I will work to ensure that we have a relationship with Turkey that protects, promotes, and defends those interests.

Question 10. Turkish security guards violently assaulting peaceful protestors in Sheridan Circle in Washington, D.C. in May of this year during President Erdogan's visit. Will you continue to raise this issue with the Turkish government?

Answer. I share Secretary Tillerson's opinion that the conduct of some Turkish security personnel during President Erdogan's visit to the United States was deeply disturbing.

I have not been privy to discussions with Turkish officials, but I can assure you that if confirmed, I will always strive to protect the interests, safety, and security of the United States and the American people. I will work to ensure that we have a relationship with Turkey that protects, promotes, and defends those interests.

Question 11. Are you concerned about increasing Turkish-Russian military cooperation?

Answer. Turkey is an important NATO ally that supports U.S. national security interests in a number of crucial areas, notably in the effort to defeat ISIS. With regard to Turkish-Russian military technical cooperation, Turkey's expression of interest in purchasing Russian S-400 air defense missiles is concerning, and potentially constitutes a violation of recent U.S. sanctions. If confirmed, I will continue to make clear to Turkish officials the importance of the commitment NATO Allies, including Turkey, made at the Warsaw Summit in 2016, to enhance resilience by working to address existing dependencies on Russian-sourced legacy military equipment through national efforts. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen U.S.-Turkish security cooperation and will encourage all Allies to abide by their NATO commitments and procure military equipment interoperable with NATO systems.

Question 12. Unfortunately, the negotiation process over the Cyprus question is currently stalled, as U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres concluded the latest round in Crans-Montana in July 2017 after the parties failed to reach agreement. U.N. Special Envoy Espen Barth Eide has left his position. Will the United States maintain high level engagement on this issue?

Answer. The United States will maintain high-level engagement on this issue. Although it did not participate formally in the UN-facilitated, leader led negotiations, the United States has played a critical role. The administration has sought to be helpful in facilitating communication between the sides throughout the negotiations maintaining a strong relationship with both leaders, and the UN. The U.S. remains ready to assist with the resumption of negotiations in ways the sides deem helpful and we remain committed to the framework for reuniting Cyprus as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation based on political equality and continues to urge the sides to take advantage of the work achieved thus far. Senior American officials are prepared to travel to Cyprus to support efforts to return to negotiations.

Question 13. Unfortunately, the negotiation process over the Cyprus question is currently stalled, as U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres concluded the latest round in Crans-Montana in July 2017 after the parties failed to reach agreement. U.N. Special Envoy Espen Barth Eide has left his position. What implications does Erdogan's narrow victory in the referendum have on the ongoing negotiations of the Cyprus question?

Answer. We are hopeful that, after the period of reflection, all parties will engage in the effort to reach a negotiated settlement. The Cyprus issue did not feature prominently in the 2017 referendum campaign. If confirmed I will continue to encourage all parties to find common ground.

Question 14. Unfortunately, the negotiation process over the Cyprus question is currently stalled, as U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres concluded the latest round in Crans-Montana in July 2017 after the parties failed to reach agreement. U.N. Special Envoy Espen Barth Eide has left his position. Do you believe that Erdogan will be willing to agree to a withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus?

Answer. Turkey's troop presence is one question on which the parties will need to reach mutual agreement in the context of a final settlement. We urge all parties to make the tough compromises necessary for a solution.

Question 15. How will you work with European countries to ensure they live up to international agreements to impose sanctions on state sponsors of terrorism and human rights abusers, particularly in Iran and North Korea?

Answer. The United States continues to work very closely with the European Union (EU) and European countries to counter the increased threats posed by Iran and North Korea (DPRK). Transatlantic unity on sanctions reinforces their impact.

On DPRK, the EU is in the process of transposing all U.N. designations and restrictions related to DPRK sanctions into EU law. If confirmed, I will continue to coordinate with European partners and the international community to expand sanctions and increase diplomatic and economic pressure on the Kim regime to compel the DPRK to return to negotiations, with an ultimate goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and a dismantling of the regime's ballistic-missile programs.

The United States conducts regular consultations with our EU counterparts on human rights in North Korea. The EU is a key partner in our efforts to implement the recommendations of the 2014 U.N. Commission of Inquiry and to promote accountability for those responsible for human rights abuses in the DPRK, including through the annual U.N. Third Committee and Human Rights Council resolutions on the situation in the DPRK.

Addressing Iran's continued support for terrorism, and violations and abuses of the human rights of its citizens remains a priority for the United States and requires use of all tools at the U.S. government's disposal, including all non-nuclear related existing sanctions, to hold the Iranian government accountable for its actions. The United States works with like-minded partners multilaterally, such as in the U.N. Human Rights Council and U.N. General Assembly, to increase international pressure on Iran for its human rights violations and abuses. The U.S. government also regularly targets for financial and visa sanctions those who abuse or violate human rights in Iran. The Departments of State and Treasury continue to review new targets for financial sanctions in consultation with partners.

If confirmed, it will be a high priority for me to ensure continued unity with European allies on DPRK, Iran and other international issues.

Question 16. How do you expect to rally Europe in favor of more economic pressure on Russia? Will you encourage the President to engage with European leaders in support of this legislation as well?

Answer. I am aware many of our European allies have reservations about the new sanctions law, and if confirmed, I will be committed to working closely with them to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach on sanctions implementation, and I will continue to seek feedback from U.S. allies, who have been steadfast partners on Russia sanctions.

My goal is to ensure these sanctions support our important, common work in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, restoring control of Crimea to Ukraine, and preventing future meddling by Russia in foreign elections—while also remaining vigilant against unintended consequences for our partners. I will likewise remain mindful of our many foreign policy priorities related to Europe as the U.S. government and the EU implement these sanctions, including our commitment to promoting European energy security. Close coordination with our allies is crucial to enabling the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal: imposing costs on Russia, sufficient to change the Russian government's behavior.

Question 17. Do you believe the United States should maintain investments into public diplomacy efforts in Eastern Europe?

Answer. Yes. Public diplomacy efforts that invest in people through exchanges, media literacy programs, and English-language trainings are indispensable as the United States seeks to advance its national interests in the face of a rising tide of Russian disinformation. Initiatives such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the Fulbright Program, and other people-to-people exchanges build enduring relationships that cannot be perfectly measured but rank among our most effective investments. This is particularly true in countries such as Ukraine and Moldova, where Russian disinformation threatens to turn citizens away from the Euro-Atlantic community. Many U.S. exchange program alumni become leaders in their home countries; by investing in a country's most promising youth through short exchanges, we invest in a shared vision for the future. Media-focused exchanges, such as Ukraine's Media Partnership Program that pairs independent Ukrainian media outlets with U.S. media outlets in a long-term mentorship relationship, are equally impactful and result in better quality information for the Ukrainian public. Empowering the public with facts advances the U.S. goal of a democratic, prosperous, and secure Ukraine.

To inoculate foreign publics against disinformation, our embassies work with European partners to build media literacy skills in audiences vulnerable to disinformation and fake news. By training citizens to more carefully scrutinize news

items, we can empower people to protect themselves against disinformation, particularly in critical regions such as eastern Ukraine. This moves the needle forward on the U.S. strategic goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If confirmed, I will ensure this work continues.

English-language programs enable foreign publics to consume alternate news and obtain a more balanced perspective of the world. Ukrainian President Poroshenko announced 2016 as the Year of English and promoted English learning as a way to make Ukraine's workforce more competitive as Ukraine pursues its chosen European trajectory. U.S. public diplomacy programs are essential to fulfilling this goal. English-language programs not only provide skills that help Eastern Europeans pursue a Euro-Atlantic path but also build lasting people-to-people relationships in even the most challenging context.

Question 18. What programs do you believe are most effective to countering Russian propaganda?

Answer. Russia rejects the post-Cold War order in Europe and increasingly seeks to undermine U.S. influence with our Allies and partners with an eye to fragmenting the transatlantic alliance. Russia's campaigns use traditional diplomatic, military, and economic tools, as well as "active measures," a major component of which is propaganda and misinformation. The State Department's public outreach strategy is based on the recognition that both the message and the messenger are important for effective communication with audiences.

When making public statements as the United States government, the number one goal should be to empower our embassies with materials and messaging that the local press can carry, both in print and in digital form. This applies both to debunking myths, but more importantly, priming the information environment with positive messages about the United States and the transatlantic alliance. However, the fight against misinformation is bigger than any one country, and the U.S. government cannot be as effective if it fights alone. Those most vulnerable to malign information campaigns could become our strongest messaging allies through systematic support. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our allies and partners who are on the frontlines of the war of misinformation and arm them with the core competencies necessary to not only counter disinformation but advance positive, accurate, and responsible messaging. Specifically, I will seek to help governments communicate more effectively through the European Digital Diplomacy Exchange, empower journalists and other non-governmental communicators to uncover and publicize important stories through the Digital Communicators Network, and strengthen civil society through trainings and networking opportunities through a number of regional programs. I will also work to ensure close and effective collaboration between the Bureau of European and Eurasian affairs and the Global Engagement Center.

Question 19. Do you believe the Global Engagement Center can play an important and constructive role in promoting American national security interests?

Answer. Yes. Both extremist messaging and state-sponsored disinformation operations represent a critical national security threat to the United States. The Global Engagement Center (GEC) was mandated in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act to lead and coordinate Federal Government efforts to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation that undermine U.S. national security interests. The GEC's role in this effort is essential to the effective coordination of the multitude of U.S. government efforts to counter these national security threats.

The GEC has a proven track record of playing an important and constructive role in promoting American national security interests with the work it continues to perform with regard to its original counterterrorism mission. The GEC has been pivotal in U.S. effort to counter the recruitment of terrorist groups such as ISIS and exposing and countering their warped and perverse ideology, and the GEC will continue to advance this effort.

I hope that the GEC will employ the learned skills and successful aspects of its counterterrorism mission towards its expanded mission to counter propaganda and disinformation emanating from foreign states. Congress expanded the GEC's mission and granted it new legal authorities out of growing concern about the adverse effects of state-sponsored propaganda and disinformation, which have emerged as a clear national security concern that is increasing in overall size and sophistication. State-sponsored disinformation operations impact United States foreign policy objectives and create a lack of confidence in foreign populations and sow seeds of doubt in the susceptible populations living in our allied and partner nations. If confirmed I will work to ensure close and effective collaboration between the Bureau of European and Eurasian affairs and the GEC.

Question 20. Many European countries have experienced an alarming uptick in far right wing political movements that are anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, and anti-globalist. Many of these political parties reject cooperation with the United States and the wider global community. How will you engage with governments that are increasingly espousing these beliefs? Will you continue to promote the values of democracy, tolerance, and the post-war international order?

In many parts of the region you cover, the situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people can be extremely challenging. They often face violence and government crackdowns, and in several countries they face ″anti-propaganda″ laws that potentially criminalizes any discussion of homosexuality.

- Unfortunately, the Trump administration's response to all of this has been weak and Secretary Tillerson has stated that he does not view human rights as a priority of his department. This could have dangerous implications for security and stability in the region.

Answer. Promoting human rights and democratic governance is a core element of U.S. foreign policy. These values form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies. Standing up for human rights and democracy is not just a moral imperative but is in the interest of the United States in making the world more stable and secure. As Secretary Tillerson said in the introduction to the 2016 Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, when it comes to human rights, "our values are our interests."

The United States works with European and Eurasian states to achieve common goals, engages in formal bilateral democracy and rule of law dialogues, and actively supports human rights defenders and civil society through jointly-funded programs and related efforts. Through multilateral fora and bilaterally, the United States works with governments in Europe and Eurasia to combat anti-Semitism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, foster inclusion, and promote the human rights of persons belonging to vulnerable minorities, including LGBTI persons. If confirmed, I will continue to promote and speak out strongly in support of democracy and human rights, including those of the most vulnerable.

Question 21. How do you plan to raise human rights concerns with your counterparts, and especially with regards to the LGBTQ community?

Answer. The Department of State remains committed to protecting and promoting the human rights of all persons, including the LGBTQ community. Democracy and stability are most secure when all people, including the most vulnerable, live freely without fear of violence or discrimination. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's special focus on the protection of vulnerable groups, including religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence, and LGBTQ persons.

In June, Secretary Tillerson issued a statement emphasizing that violence and discrimination against any vulnerable group undermines collective security and American values. U.S. Embassies—including those in hostile environments—continue to take steps to protect the human rights of LGBTQ persons. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out in support of human rights, including those of LGBTQ persons.

Responses to Additional Questions for the Record Submitted to A. Wess Mitchell by Senator Todd Young

Question 1. What do you believe are Putin's grand strategic objectives with respect to the U.S., the EU, and NATO? How should the U.S. respond to those objectives?

Answer. Russia does not accept the post-Cold War settlement in Europe and is pushing back against it. The Russian objective is to restrict the sovereign choices of the countries on Russia's periphery, in particular to prevent those countries from building new relationships with NATO and the EU, and to exercise veto power over the foreign and security policies of those countries. As the United States experienced during the 2016 election, Russia also actively interferes in the democratic processes and institutions of Western governments, including those of NATO Allies, Partners, and EU member states. It does so in order to sow chaos, dilute the support for countries on the Russian periphery, and weaken the overall attraction of the democratic values that threaten Putin's system of government in Russia.

I believe our response should be twofold. We must be clear-eyed about Russia's transgressions, frank in our dialogue with Russia, and resolute in raising the costs of their behavior, including the use of military, diplomatic, and law enforcement

tools. We must also continue to build the resilience of U.S. allies on NATO eastern flank, including through the strengthening of military capabilities and through a whole-of-government approach that works with NATO and the EU to improves the defenses of allies and partners against disinformation and malign influence. Both areas will be major priorities for me if confirmed.

Question 2. Based on your experience and your preparation for the hearing, what is the difference between the U.S. military posture we have in Europe and the U.S. military posture we need? Do you believe the U.S. should have a larger and more capable military presence in Eastern Europe? Can you provide specifics? Do you believe we should have permanently stationed U.S. military units in the Baltics?

Answer. It is important that the U.S and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats we face today.

In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. It represents a significant commitment by Allies and is a tangible reminder that an attack on one is an attack on all.

One of the steps the administration has taken to bolster our military presence in Europe is the European Defense Initiative (EDI), which includes $4.8 billion requested for FY 2018. EDI provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

In addition to Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR)—the United States' contribution to the Alliance's persistent, rotational air, land, and sea presence in NATO's East—the U.S. has also deployed a rotational armored brigade combat team (ABCT) to European soil to concretely demonstrate action to back up our commitments.

If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to consult early and often with our NATO Allies to review the state of forward defenses in relation to Russian force levels and military behavior. Through these consultations and in coordination with colleagues at the Department of Defense, I will examine our posture and plans to determine whether additional steps are needed, with a particular emphasis on determining the right mix of rotational and permanently stationed forces to meet deterrence and defense needs.

Question 3. Russia has used energy as a tool of coercion against our allies and partners in Europe. Specifically what more can we do to help our allies and partners in Europe reduce their dependence on Russian energy?

Answer. The administration is committed to working with our European partners to enhance European energy security, and if confirmed, I would continue this engagement. Energy security derives from a diversity of energy type, supply sources, and delivery routes, as well as an integrated and efficient regional energy market. An energy secure Europe serves as a strong partner for the United States in meeting global challenges, and the United States supports European energy projects in several sectors. We use both diplomatic engagement and assistance programming in support of our European allies and partners' efforts to enhance their energy security. Since FY 2014, the United States has provided over $92 million toward energy programs in Europe and Eurasia.

In the electricity sector, the United States government engages in technical cooperation as the European Union strengthens its electricity market regulator, the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER). The United States supports the Baltic states as they work with the European Commission to complete the integration of the Baltic power network into the EU electricity grid via Poland. The United States also supports key gas projects that will diversify supply sources, including the Southern Gas Corridor, the Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria, the Interconnector Bulgaria-Serbia, and the Finland-Estonia Baltic Connector. Additionally, U.S. support for infrastructure for LNG imports, particularly in Croatia, Greece, and Southern Europe, will allow Europe to import gas from anywhere in the world. In addition to infrastructure, the United States supports the EU's implementation of its own market liberalization rules and laws, in particular the Third Energy Package, designed to ensure the proper functioning of Europe's gas system. The U.S. also supports measures to ensure our partners can get the resources they need to be energy secure, such as the recent contract between American company Xcoal and Ukrainian firm Centrenergo to supply Ukraine with 700,000 tons of anthracite coal

by the end of 2017, which will ensure Ukraine's power plants have sufficient feedstock for power generation.

Russia has and continues to use Europe's reliance on its natural gas exports to achieve political and economic objectives that run counter to Europe's larger economic and political interests. Russia aims to build two new major pipelines, Nord Stream 2 and a multiline Turk Stream, which would enable it to largely circumvent Ukraine as a transit country while increasing Europe's reliance on its gas exports. Russia has an established energy relationship with Europe and it is neither possible nor desirable to exclude Russian gas from the European market. However, Russia should play by the same rules as others; Russia should not be able to use its market position to either exert geopolitical leverage on its European neighbors or engage in anti-competitive practices. I know our European interlocutors share these apprehensions, and if confirmed, I will continue close consultation with them on this important issue.

Question 4. Ambassador Huntsman argued in his statement that we should not hesitate to remind government officials that they are accountable for their actions. It is well known that Russia is violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Consistent with your statement, how should NATO and the United States specifically hold Russia accountable for its violation of the INF Treaty?

Answer. Reciprocal transparency is the foundation of effective U.S.-Russian arms control. Russia appears to have been in a state of non-compliance with the INF Treaty for some time now, and has undertaken an expansion and modernization of both its conventional forces and nuclear triad. This represents a serious source of concern for both the United States and its Allies.

The administration is currently undertaking a review of INF and the U.S.-Russian arms control agenda more broadly. If confirmed, I will build on the administration's efforts to pressure Russia to return to compliance while working with Allies to ensure they have the tools needed to raise the costs of agression and thus ensure Russia will not gain a significant military advantage from its decision to violate the Treaty. If confirmed, I will work closely with NATO as we develop proportionate responses to Russia's ongoing violation and make clear to Russian officials U.S. concerns about Russia's violation of the INF Treaty and the risks it poses to European and Asian security.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO A. WESS MITCHELL BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. As you know, the situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in Russia can be extremely challenging. They often face violence and government crackdowns, with a strict "anti-propaganda" law that potentially criminalizes any discussion of homosexuality.

Senator Toomey and I have a resolution pending before this committee condemning the abuses in Chechnya, calling on the Russian Government to protect its citizens, calling on our government to demand the release of individuals wrongfully detained, and also to hold perpetrators accountable through sanctions under the Magnitsky Act.

How do you develop a strategy to address human rights concerns in Russia, and especially with regards to the LGBTQ community in Chechnya?

Answer. I share your concern about the violence against the LGBTI community in Chechnya. There have been multiple reports of mass illegal detentions, systematic torture of hundreds of LGBTI persons, and extrajudicial killings. Through public statements and a letter from Secretary Tillerson to Foreign Minister Lavrov, the State Department has pressed the Russian Government to fully investigate the reports of abuse and to prosecute those responsible.

If confirmed, I will work with Allies and partners to continue to call on the Government of Russia to uphold its international obligations and OSCE commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. I am committed to upholding the rights of individuals in Russia and elsewhere and will continue to support and uphold laws enacted by Congress such as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act to hold human rights abusers in Russia accountable.

Question 2. Mr. Mitchell, it appears that neither Moscow nor Kyiv thinks the "Minsk-2" agreements can be implemented. On September 7 former Swedish Prime Minister Bildt published a piece in the Washington Post saying that the Kremlin may be softening its opposition to an impartial U.N. peacekeeping force as part of a renewed settlement.

What are the prospects for achieving a resolution to the conflict in Ukraine? Is there any other route for a settlement? What might be the impact on U.S. interests if a resolution could only permit some continued Russian presence in eastern Ukraine?

Answer. The United States continues to support Ukraine, along with our French and German allies, in pushing for full implementation of the Minsk agreements. Russia and the forces it arms, leads, trains, and fights alongside in eastern Ukraine are the primary obstacle to Minsk implementation. Moscow will only choose to implement the Minsk agreements if it believes continued conflict in eastern Ukraine is no longer in Russia's interest, and this is why the United States must continue to work with our European and G-7 partners to change Russia's calculations on Ukraine. Transatlantic unity on sanctions, support for the Ukrainian military's transformation into a capable fighting force, and strong encouragement of Ukraine's reform agenda have turned the invasion of eastern Ukraine into an increasingly losing proposition for Moscow. If confirmed, I pledge to keep up the pressure, as this presents our best strategy to change Russia's behavior.

The United States will not accept anything less than the full restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity. As Secretary Tillerson has said, U.S. sanctions will stay in place until Russia meets its Minsk commitments. This means Russia must withdraw its forces from eastern Ukraine and restore control of the contested area to Ukrainian authorities, up to and including Ukraine's internationally recognized border with Russia. Separate Crimea-related U.S. sanctions will remain until Moscow returns the peninsula to Ukraine. Existing sanctions regimes, in coordination with G7 and EU sanctions, provide leverage to compel Moscow to fulfill its commitments. In addition, the United States and its allies must continue to provide all forms of support necessary for ensuring Ukrainian resiliency in the face of Russian pressure.

Russia's proposal for a U.N. force in eastern Ukraine is a possible indication that Moscow is becoming more amenable to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and should be explored. However, as proposed, the measure would fall short of restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity. Secretary Tillerson has been clear that any resolution must provide a path to achieving the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and the safety and security for all its citizens, regardless of language, ethnicity, or religion. As such, any U.N. force would have to have a broad mandate for peace and security throughout the entire area of conflict, including international supervision of the Ukrainian side of the Russia-Ukraine border, to avoid deepening or institutionalizing the externally imposed divisions inside Ukraine.September 19, 2017

Question 3. What are the administration's plans for continuing to reassure allies and partners and to deter Russian aggressive activity in Europe?

Answer. Russia threatens U.S. allies and partners both militarily and through an aggressive, coordinated campaign to undermine Western democratic institutions. Russia has consistently demonstrated a willingness to employ active measures of various forms including hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and malign influence activities. The United States should continue to work closely with its allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against this full spectrum of threats.

The administration has made a priority of strengthening the European Defense Initiative (EDI). This includes the $4.8 billion requested for FY 2018,µwhich provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

NATO will continue to prepare for, deter and defend against attacks that employ chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear material; to invest in robust,µflexible, and interoperable military capabilities; and to protect our military supply chains and work to address, as appropriate, existing dependencies on Russian-sourced legacy military equipment through national efforts and multinational cooperation.

The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these neighbors. In response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Departments of State and Defense have committed over $750 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Balkans are also increasingly a target of Russian malign influence. It is important our assistance seek to deter Russian aggression as well as encourage reforms in these countries that eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, I will treat the need to reassure allies as one of my highest priorities, and will press these core U.S. national security interests at all levels within the Russian Government.

Question 4. European leaders think that the JCPOA has significantly increased European and Middle Eastern security and have talked about trying to continue the Iran deal even if the U.S. pulls out. But European leaders have made clear that in such a scenario, Europe would actually give Iran more economic and diplomatic concessions to make up for the U.S. ending sanctions relief. How would it be in the U.S. interest to see Iran actually get more concessions out of Europe to stay in the JCPOA because the U.S. has begun to pull out?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with our European partners and the European Union to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.

Question 5. One of your early tasks, if you are confirmed, will be to rally European support for the new Russia sanctions law that this Congress passed in late July. How do you expect to rally Europe in favor of more economic pressure on Russia at the same time that the Trump administration is discussing ending U.S. participation in the JCPOA and increasing sanctions on Iran?µ

Answer. I am aware many of our European allies have reservations about the new sanctions law, and if confirmed, I will be committed to working closely with them to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. Government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach on sanctions, and I will continue to seek feedback from our allies, who have been steadfast partners on Russia sanctions.

My goal is to ensure these sanctions support our important, common work in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, restoring control of Crimea to Ukraine, and preventing future meddling by Russia in foreign elections—while also remaining vigilant against unintended consequences for our partners. I will likewise remain mindful of our many foreign policy priorities related to Europe as we implement these sanctions, including our commitment to promoting European energy security. Close coordination with our allies is crucial to enabling the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal: imposing costs on Russia, sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior.

Question 6. I understand that Trump administration is concerned about Iran's ability to expand its nuclear program after the first 10 years of the JCPOA, when the JCPOA's strictest limits begin to expire. But why should we risk alienating our allies by trying to beach the deal over that issue now, rather than waiting until closer to the end of the JCPOA and seeing then if we need to re-negotiate terms to address Iran's potential threat? Wouldn't it make more sense to keep the deal in place now and address concerns about the out years in the future, if Iran continues to be a malign actor a decade from now?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and its broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners.

Secretary Tillerson has expressed particular concern about the provisions of the JCPOA under which certain restrictions on Iran's nuclear program progressively expire over time. It is important the United States, working closely with its partners, begins to discuss these concerns so they can be addressed well before these restrictions begin to cease.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial, and if confirmed, I will work closely with our European partners on these issues.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO A. WESS MITCHELL BY SENATOR JEFFERY A. MERKLEY

Question 1. Despite the fact that the United States, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and our European counterparts all certify that Iran is in compliance with the nuclear deal, it appears the Trump administration is looking for a way out. This would pose a threat to the United States and regional security, in addition to undermining U.S. credibility and influence on the world stage. If the United States abandons our European allies on this issue, do you believe the Europeans will back up the United Sates on other grave international security issues?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and its broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. Europe remains key to addressing any number of other pressing international issues, including combatting terrorism and addressing the threat from North Korea. Our European partners want to work with us to address these challenges, and if confirmed, I will focus on ensuring the United States and Europe remain in lockstep on these issues.

Question 2. European leaders think that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has significantly increased European and Middle Eastern security and have talked about trying to continue the Iran deal even if the United States pulls out. But European leaders have also made clear that in such a scenario, Europe would give Iran more economic and diplomatic concessions to make up for the United States ending sanctions relief. How would it be in the U.S. interest to see Iran get more concessions out of Europe to stay in the JCPOA because the U.S. has begun to pull out?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with our European partners and the European Union to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.

Question 3. Russia's hybrid warfare encompasses a range of actions from propaganda and misinformation; to coercive economic measures; cyberattacks; and corruption. You have written that Russia tests alliances within the West by destabilizing small- and medium-size American allies on the periphery. One tool of deterrence is to ensure that European countries have strong and democratic institutions, strong rule of law, and are accountable to their citizens. How will you ensure that we are clear to allies and partners that they are expected to live up to their commitments on democratic governance and anti-corruption? How will you support these efforts in countries that are more vulnerable?

Answer. Russia uses a constellation of approaches, overt and covert, to influence the policies of other governments and undermine domestic stability in Europe. Russia seeks to weaken European unity and erode faith in democratic institutions. A Europe whole, free, and at peace is in the interests of the United States. Efforts to disrupt democratic processes and weaken unity directly and negatively affect U.S. interests and security, while institutionalized respect for human rights, good governance, and rule of law contributes to long-term stability. By promoting our shared democratic values, and by holding our European partners accountable to their commitments and the rule of law, the United States strengthens our partners' capabilities to mitigate vulnerabilities to malign influences and counter threats to their security and sovereignty. The approach to this must be comprehensive and whole-of-government, and the Department of State has a critical role to play in addressing this threat.

If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to build the resilience of our European partners against Russia's efforts to undermine these democratic processes, including through exchanges of information and best practices, as well as programming for European publics. We will continue ongoing assistance efforts and engagements that

seek to build and reinforce the rule of law, support democratic institutions, promote human rights, and drive economic development in vulnerable countries in Europe.

Question 4. As a Central Europe expert, how will you address concerns about the spread of "illiberal democratic" politics that threaten the foundation of shared values that form the basis of our post-Cold War relationships with Europe?

Answer. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has led international efforts to strengthen democratic and free-market institutions and defense capabilities in Central Europe, and the region as a whole has made great strides. The United States relies on our allies to be strong inside and out, with strong democratic institutions, economies, and defense capabilities. As the President, Vice President, and Secretary of State have made clear, we expect our allies to meet their commitments. This means upholding the values enshrined in the Washington Treaty of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law, and spending at least two percent of GDP on defense. If confirmed, I will express our concerns when our allies fall short of their commitments, whether on defense spending or threats to rule of law and democratic institutions.

The United States raises concerns with allies privately and publicly. Divided societies are more likely to be targeted by malign influence, and strengthening frontier states must be a priority in Europe. If confirmed, I will express concerns about measures in any NATO ally that weaken the separation of powers or any other component of a sound constitutional order. I will reinforce the importance the United States places on media freedom and a level playing field for U.S. companies abroad. At the same time, I will work to strengthen bilateral ties, interpersonal relationships and cooperation in the security, energy and other realms that advance U.S. interests.

If confirmed, I will also seek ways, in partnership with others, to support civil society, civic education, and independent media. The region's transformation still requires U.S. attention and commitment if democratic gains are to be sustained. If confirmed, I will continue to stress the importance of strong democratic institutions in ongoing efforts to build and maintain prosperous economies, attract investment and resist malign influences.

Question 5. In many parts of the region you would cover as Assistant Secretary the situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people can be extremely challenging. They often face violence, government crackdowns, and even ″anti-propaganda″ laws that criminalize any discussion of homosexuality. What specific steps will you take to advance LGBTQ rights with your European counterparts?

Answer. The Department of State remains committed to protecting and promoting the human rights of all persons, including the LGBTQ community. Democracy and stability are most secure when all people, including the most vulnerable, live freely without fear of violence or discrimination. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's special focus on the protection of vulnerable groups, including religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence, and LGBTQ persons.

In June, Secretary Tillerson issued a statement emphasizing that violence and discrimination against any vulnerable group undermines collective security and American values. U.S. Embassies—including those in hostile environments—continue to take steps to protect the human rights of LGBTQ persons. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out in support of human rights, including those of LGBTQ persons.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO A. WESS MITCHELL BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. The administration seems to be signaling that it may not certify Iranian compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The President has on numerous occasions indicated that he would want a better deal, which is also what U.N. Ambassador Nicki Haley seemed to indicate in a recent speech at the American Enterprise Institute.

But the only reason we were able so successfully build pressure on Iran was through a unified international response that led to unified sanctions regime that isolated Iran. It is quite apparent from both public statements and private discussions that our European partners, who were our closest allies in negotiating the JCPOA, do not support walking away and renegotiating.

- How exactly does the administration plan to negotiate a better deal without international unity and a leaky sanctions regime?
- How does the administration plan to build consensus in Europe where unanimity amongst all of the EU countries is needed to impose certain EU-wide sanctions?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our European partners.

priorities to ensure we closely coordinate with our European partners and the European Union to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.

Question 2. At his confirmation hearing, Secretary Tillerson stated, "We must also be clear-eyed about our relationship with Russia. Russia today poses a danger. But it is not unpredictable in advancing its own interest. It has invaded the Ukraine, including the taking of Crimea, and supported Syrian forces that brutally violates the laws of war. Our NATO allies are right to be alarmed at a resurgent Russia."

- If confirmed, what do you intend to do to reassure our NATO allies regarding Russia?

Answer. NATO's unity and U.S. leadership are both critical to an effective deterrent against aggression. In the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and provocative behavior elsewhere, we are taking prudent, concrete measures to support the security of NATO Allies. The U.S. and NATO posture in the region is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. It represents a significant commitment by Allies and is a tangible reminder that an attack on one is an attack on all.

It is important that the U.S and our NATO Allies continually review our military posture and military activities and exercises in Europe. I am committed to working with Allies to ensure our posture is capable of meeting the full range of threats we face today.

One of the steps the administration has taken to bolster our military presence in Europe is the European Defense Initiative (EDI), which includes $4.8 billion requested for FY 2018. EDI provides funding to increase U.S. presence across Europe, expand U.S. participation in exercises and training activities with NATO Allies and partners, enhance prepositioning of U.S. military equipment in Europe, improve infrastructure at military installations, and provide assistance to build the capacity of our allies and partners to defend themselves and enable their full participation as operational partners in responding to crises.

As part of Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR)—the United States' contribution to the Alliance's persistent, rotational air, land, and sea presence in NATO's East—the U.S. has also deployed a rotational armored brigade combat team (ABCT) to European soil to concretely demonstrate action to back up our commitments.

If confirmed, I will continue to reaffirm the unshakeable U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, while calling upon all Allies to fulfill their commitments on defense spending and capabilities so that we can together meet all future threats effectively.

Question 3. According to the figures I have seen, the European NATO allies have approximately 5,200 troops in Afghanistan. In the administration's new strategy, what role do you see for Europe in stabilizing Afghanistan going forward?

Answer. Non-U.S. NATO troops play a crucial role in Afghanistan. Through troop contributions, security assistance, and development assistance, our European Allies and partners have been essential in achieving the progress we've seen since 2001. Europeans are not only contributing forces to the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM), but they also pledged in 2016 at the Warsaw Summit to give approximately $900 million annually to help financially sustain the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) through 2020. Europeans also give a substantial amount of development assistance to Afghanistan. In October 2016, our European Allies pledged approximately $5.5 billion at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan to support Afghanistan's development through 2020.

The President's new South Asia strategy will give our Allies and partners more predicability in understanding U.S. planning in Afghanistan. With this new strategy, the administration will shift from a time-based drawdown plan to a conditions-based drawdown plan. For too long, slow decision-making by the U.S. Government has forced Allies to scramble to adjust their troop contributions to Afghanistan to

align with U.S. plans. Giving Allies and partners more predictability on U.S. plans will help guide their own planning. Our Allies have responded positively to this change.

The United States will continue to ask its European Allies to contribute forces for RSM and to help close critical mission shortfalls. Allies will be asked to continue and enhance their security presence and development assistance to Afghanistan. The administration is currently finalizing the details of these requests. If confirmed, I will work closely with Ambassador Hutchison and our Allies to ensure that commitments at the Warsaw Summit and Brussels Conference are met, and that NATO contributes robustly to the success of the new U.S. strategy.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017 (a.m.)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:55 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Cory Gardner, presiding.

Present: Senators Gardner [presiding], Risch, Markey, Murphy, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORY GARDNER, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator GARDNER. This hearing will come to order.

Let me welcome you all to today's Senate Foreign Relations hearing for nominations.

I apologize for being late. I was introducing a fellow Coloradan to head the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Boulder, Colorado right before this committee hearing. So thank you for the indulgence and I apologize for being late.

The nations of Vietnam and Timor-Leste are important partners for the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific region. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1995, Vietnam and the United States have enjoyed a robust and fast-growing relationship. The United States is now Vietnam's second largest bilateral trading partner. Common security challenges in the region have allowed for steady growth of our security partnership. President Trump and Prime Minister Nguyen reaffirmed and committed to strengthen these ties during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington on May 31st. Vietnam will host the 2017 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC, leaders summit in November, a momentous occasion for the country.

The White House has announced that President Trump plans to attend the APEC summit, which will be a critical show of leadership from the United States. I sincerely hope that the President's trip will go as planned.

Timor-Leste is one of the youngest nations in the world, having gained its independence only in 2002. It is an emerging democracy, and in 2017, they held presidential and parliamentary elections that were widely recognized as free and fair and encouraging development.

It is my hope that the nominees before us today, if confirmed, could advance these partnerships to benefit U.S. national and economic security.

And with that, I will turn it over to my colleague and ranking member, Senator Markey.

STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. Thank you for having this hearing.

Today we are considering the nominations of two outstanding diplomats to represent the United States in Timor-Leste and Vietnam. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Kritenbrink, we thank you and your families for your years of service representing America abroad as members of the Foreign Service.

If confirmed, you will embark on diplomatic missions to two very important emerging countries. In 2002, Timor-Leste became the first new sovereign state of the 21st century and joined the United Nations and the community of Portuguese language countries. Today it seeks full economic integration into the Southeast Asia region as it continues its economic and political growth. It is very important that the United States continue to support it on this path.

The Vietnam-United States relationship has a difficult history, as we are reminded this week by Ken Burns' documentary broadcast on PBS. But remarkably, just over 40 years after the end of the Vietnam War, we have not only normalized relations, but have developed an expanding relationship that includes economic, political, and security cooperation. It is critical that we continue to build this relationship for the mutual benefit of both the American and Vietnamese people. At the same time, we must continue to strongly urge the Vietnam Government to meet international standards with respect to human rights and democratic governance.

I have every confidence that, if confirmed, each of you will perform your mission with distinction. Please do not question whether or not we appreciate the service that career diplomats play in the representation of our country.

We thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much and I yield back the balance of my time.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Markey.

Our first nominee is Mr. Daniel Kritenbrink of Virginia. Mr. Kritenbrink is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service Class of Minister-Counselor and has served as an American diplomat since 1994. He currently serves as the Senior Advisor at the State Department. Mr. Kritenbrink has previously served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Beijing and has also served as a Senior Director at the National Security Council. Thank you, you and your family, for your willingness to serve, and we will begin with your testimony first.

And our next nominee, who we will turn to after that, of course, is Kathleen Fitzpatrick of the District of Columbia. Ms. Fitzpatrick is also a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, and has served as an American diplomat since 1983. She currently serves as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the Department of State. Thank you, you and your family, for your willingness to serve.

Mr. Kritenbrink, we will begin with you.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Markey, and members of the committee, for the honor of allowing me to testify before you and for considering my nomination by the President to be the next United States Ambassador to Vietnam. I am deeply grateful for the confidence that President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have shown in me.

I would also like to thank my wife Nami and my children, Mia and Joseph, who are sitting right behind me, for joining me today. Their love has been a constant source of support and encouragement, without which I would not be here.

It has always been my dream to serve my country, and I have been privileged to do so as a Foreign Service officer since 1994. I have spent most of my career in Asia. I know how critical this dynamic region is to U.S. interests. Few countries highlight the impact of consistent, creative, U.S. engagement more than Vietnam. That is something I have witnessed firsthand, including during three official trips to Vietnam and during my overseeing the negotiation of two bilateral joint statements with Vietnam in 2015 and 2016.

Over the last 40 years, the U.S.-Vietnam relationship has undergone a profound transformation. Thanks to the efforts of successive U.S. administrations, the Congress, veterans, the business community, and members from among the more than 2 million Vietnamese Americans, Vietnam has become a valuable and strategic partner. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Senate to advance American interests and build upon the already strong ties between the United States and Vietnam, including in the following areas.

First, security. Our two countries have expanded security cooperation, including U.S. support to strengthen Vietnam's maritime security capabilities, as part of our shared interest in upholding international law and resisting coercion in the South China Sea. We are also helping Vietnam build capacity to become a more active contributor on the regional and global stage. We are encouraging Vietnam to continues its active role within ASEAN, and we support Vietnam's planned contributions to UN peacekeeping missions. The United States and Vietnam have also increased collaboration on preventing North Korea from threatening the region through its nuclear and missile programs. If confirmed, I will continue this vital work.

Second, trade and investment. Bilateral trade with Vietnam has grown exponentially, increasing from $451 million in 1995 to $52 billion in 2016. Last year, Vietnam was America's fastest growing export market. U.S. investment in Vietnam has grown to $1.5 billion. Yet challenges obviously remain. If confirmed, I will work to boost U.S. exports and expand trade and investment ties. I will

also advocate for a level playing field for U.S. companies and investors.

Third, human rights. There has been some progress in Vietnam on human rights and religious freedom, due in no small part to congressional engagement and a productive bilateral dialogue on these issues. However, the trend over the past 18 months of increased arrests, convictions, and harsh sentences of activists is deeply troubling. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for human rights and religious freedom and for the need to make progress in combating trafficking in persons. I will stress to Vietnam's leadership that progress on these issues is critical to enabling our partnership and Vietnam itself to reach its fullest potential.

Fourth, people-to-people ties. The bonds between the American and Vietnamese people are strong and growing. More than 21,000 Vietnamese now study in the United States. Over 80,000 Vietnamese visited the United States last year, and over half a million Americans visited Vietnam. The new Fulbright University Vietnam and the Peace Corps program in Vietnam will serve as the bridge to our brighter future together.

Fifth, humanitarian and war legacy issues. Providing the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel missing from the Vietnam War era remains our solemn obligation, and we must not stop until that work is complete. Since 1993, the United States has contributed over $103 million to mitigate threats posed by unexploded ordnance. We have invested nearly $115 million in the remediation of dioxin contamination in Danang. Our cooperation on these issues continues to build a foundation of trust to expand our relationship.

And this is just the beginning. Vietnam is an increasingly important partner on other regional and global challenges, including pandemic disease, wildlife and drug trafficking, and transnational crime.

If confirmed, I will work with our exceptional U.S. mission staff to strengthen our partnerships with Vietnam and the Vietnamese people. I will also make the safety and welfare of mission personnel a top priority, including by ensuring they have appropriate facilities in Vietnam from which to do their important work. Our goal remains to advance American interests across the board and support the development of a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam that contributes to international security, engages in mutually beneficial trade, and respects human rights and the rule of law.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[Mr. Kritenbrink's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK

Thank you Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Markey, and members of the committee for the honor of allowing me to testify before you, and for considering my nomination by the President to be the next United States Ambassador to Vietnam. I am deeply grateful for the confidence that President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have shown in me. I would also like to thank my wife Nami, and my children, Mia and Joseph, for joining me today. Their love has been a constant source of support and encouragement, without which I would not be here.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Senate to advance American interests and build upon the already strong ties between the United States and Vietnam.

It has always been my dream to serve my country, and I have been privileged to do so as a State Department Foreign Service Officer since 1994. I have spent most of my career in Asia, including in a variety of leadership positions. I know how critical this dynamic region is to U.S. interests. Few countries highlight the impact of consistent, creative U.S. engagement in Asia more than Vietnam. That is something I witnessed firsthand during my previous work with the Vietnamese, including three official trips to Vietnam, and my overseeing the negotiation of two bilateral Joint Statements with Vietnam in 2015 and 2016.

Over the last 40 years, the U.S.-Vietnam relationship has undergone a profound transformation. Thanks to the efforts of successive U.S. administrations, the Congress, and others, such as veterans, the business community, and members from among the more than two million Vietnamese-Americans, Vietnam has become a valuable and strategic partner. If confirmed, I will work to continue developing the U.S.-Vietnam relationship in support of a wide range of shared interests, including in the following areas.

First, security. Our two countries have significantly expanded security cooperation, including through U.S. support to strengthen Vietnam's maritime security capabilities, as part of our shared interest in upholding international law and resisting coercion in the South China Sea, a region vital to our respective security and commercial interests as Asia-Pacific nations. We are also helping Vietnam build capacity to become a more responsible and active contributor on the regional and global stage. We are encouraging Vietnam to continue its active role within ASEAN, and we support Vietnam's planned contributions to U.N. peacekeeping missions. The United States and Vietnam have also increased collaboration on preventing North Korea from threatening the region through its nuclear and missile programs. If confirmed, I will continue this vital work.

Second, trade and investment. Bilateral trade with Vietnam has grown exponentially, increasing from $451 million in 1995 to $52 billion in 2016. Last year, Vietnam was America's fastest growing export market. U.S. investment in Vietnam has grown to $1.5 billion. Yet challenges obviously remain. If confirmed, I will work to boost U.S. exports and expand trade and investment ties. I will also advocate for a level playing field for U.S. companies and investors, including by urging Vietnam to improve labor and environmental standards, transparency for state-owned enterprises, and intellectual property protection, so that our two countries enjoy a strong trade relationship that is free and fair.

Third, human rights. There has been some progress in Vietnam on human rights and religious freedom in recent years, due in no small part to Congressional engagement and a productive bilateral dialogue on these issues. However, the trend over the past 18 months of increased arrests, convictions, and harsh sentences of activists is deeply troubling. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for human rights and religious freedom, and for the need to make further progress in combating trafficking in persons, while stressing to Vietnam's leadership that progress on these issues remains a top priority for the United States, and is critical to enabling our partnership—and Vietnam itself—to reach its fullest potential.

Fourth, people-to-people ties. The bonds between the American and Vietnamese people are strong and growing. More than 21,000 Vietnamese now study in the United States, placing Vietnam in the top six source countries for foreign students. These students not only build mutual understanding, but they also contributed nearly $700 million to the U.S. economy in 2015. Over 80,000 Vietnamese visited the United States last year, supporting American jobs in every state, and over half a million Americans visited Vietnam. The new Fulbright University Vietnam and the Peace Corps program in Vietnam will further deepen these ties that will serve as the bridge to our brighter future together.

Fifth, humanitarian and war legacy issues. Providing the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel missing from the Vietnam War era remains our solemn obligation, and we must not stop until that work is complete. Vietnam has provided critical assistance to those efforts for decades. Since 1993, the United States has contributed over $103 million to mitigate lingering threats posed by unexploded ordnance. We have invested nearly $115 million in the remediation of dioxin contamination in Danang, which is scheduled to be completed later this year, and we have committed to doing more. Our cooperation on these issues continues to build a foundation of trust to expand our relationship.

This is just the beginning. In addition to the many issues I have mentioned, Vietnam is an increasingly important partner on other regional and global challenges, including pandemic disease, wildlife and drug trafficking, and transnational crime.

With a booming economy and a young and energetic population that holds overwhelmingly positive views of the United States, Vietnam has the potential to emerge as one of our strongest partners in the Asia-Pacific.

If confirmed, I will work with our exceptional U.S. Mission staff in Hanoi and in Ho Chi Minh City to strengthen our partnership with Vietnam and the Vietnamese people. I will also make the safety and welfare of Mission personnel a top priority, including by ensuring they have appropriate facilities in Vietnam from which to do their important work. Our goal remains to advance American interests across the board and support the development of a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam that contributes to international security, engages in mutually beneficial trade, and respects human rights and the rule of law.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Ms. Fitzpatrick?

STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN M. FITZPATRICK, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR–LESTE

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to become the next U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for placing their confidence in me to serve the United States in Timor-Leste, a young and promising democracy and friend of the United States.

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to welcome my family whose support and encouragement has brought me where I am today. With me, is my husband, a retired Foreign Service officer, Richard Figueroa. I would also like to acknowledge our wonderful daughters, Elizabeth and Alexandra Figueroa. Elizabeth is here today. Alexandra is away at school. Also with me are my brothers, Michael and Tom Fitzpatrick, and my sister-in-law, Terry Fitzpatrick.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, both of my parents passed away 6 years ago, but they would have been so proud of this moment. And if I note, my mother's love is always still with us and my father is a hero in our family. He is a World War II veteran, navigator on B–17's. His plane was shot down coming back from a mission. He was a POW for a year and a half. But his service to country and devotion to family really is a shining example to all of us.

If I also may take a moment to send our love to the Figueroa side of the family who are in Puerto Rico and St. Thomas, with gratitude that they are safe as they face the aftermath of the hurricane.

Mr. Chairman, Timor-Leste has shown that it is possible for a new country to emerge from years of conflict as a nation succeeding on the foundations of democratic principles.

Timor-Leste and the United States share a friendship based on those common values, and our bilateral relations are anchored in mutual respect and admiration.

As Secretary Tillerson said in a message on Timor-Leste's independence day, 15 years of independence is a remarkable milestone, reflecting the resolve and the commitment of the Timorese people to build a new democracy based on respect for human rights and

the rule of law. We are committed to deepening ties between the American and Timorese people in the years to come.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work to fulfill our commitment to deepen ties with a country that has earned our respect and set its own path as a democratic and resilient state. And this has been exemplified in the last several months as Timor-Leste held peaceful, credible, and fair presidential and parliamentary elections, the first without UN peacekeepers.

As a democratic country in a strategic neighborhood, Timor-Leste is an increasingly important voice for human rights and democracy regionally and globally. It is a founding member of the G–7 Plus fragile states group, sharing best practices on how societies rebuild after conflict. Timor-Leste has also been an important voice on regional issues, including calling for North Korea to abide by UN Security Council resolutions, which they did at the ASEAN regional forum in August when Timor-Leste made a statement in that regard.

Timor-Leste has also applied to join ASEAN and the World Trade Organization.

Our cooperation, whether through USAID, our military-to-military engagement, our Peace Corps volunteers, or a new Millennium Challenge Corporation threshold program, will build capacity for stronger democratic institutions, inclusive economic growth, and better security. We have supported Timor-Leste in diversifying its economy, bolstering the country's ability to work with the United States on issues of common concern. For example, a coffee cooperative, established and developed with U.S. assistance, now provides sustainable income for 22,000 of its members.

Our growing security partnership with Timor-Leste builds capacity to respond to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, strengthens maritime security, and it deepens the professionalism of the Timorese military and law enforcement.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with our team in Dili and Washington, our Timorese hosts, and other international partners to further strengthen our cooperation with Timor-Leste and to advance U.S. interests. I will also work to deepen our outreach to the Timorese people, particularly the large youth population, so that our future ties are built on a strong foundation.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and other Members of Congress as we continue to promote our interests in Timor-Leste and the broader East Asia and Pacific region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to appear before you today, and I am honored to take your questions.

[Ms. Fitzpatrick's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN M. FITZPATRICK

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to become the next U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for placing their confidence in me to serve the United States in Timor-Leste, a young and promising democracy and friend of the United States.

I would like to introduce my family, whose support and encouragement has brought me to where I am today. With me today is my husband, retired Foreign Service Officer Richard Figueroa. I would also like to acknowledge our wonderful daughters, Elizabeth and Alexandra Figueroa; Elizabeth is here today, while Alex-

andra is away at college. My brothers Michael and Tom Fitzpatrick and sister-in-law Terry have also joined us today. Both of my parents passed away six years ago but they would have been very proud of this moment. My Mom's love still surrounds us. And, my father, a WWII veteran—who flew as a navigator on B-17s, and when his plane was shot down, was a POW for a year and a half—serves as a shining example of service to country and devotion to family. I would also like to send my love to the Figueroa side of our family who live in Puerto Rico and St. Thomas, with gratitude that they are safe as they endure the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Finally Mr. Chairman, I also thank my many mentors and colleagues who have supported me throughout my career.

Mr. Chairman, Timor-Leste has shown that it is possible for a new country to emerge from years of conflict as a nation succeeding on the foundations of democratic principles and respect for human rights.

Timor-Leste and the United States share a friendship based on those common values, and our bilateral relations are anchored in mutual respect and admiration. We respect the tremendous struggles Timor-Leste has endured to become the newest country in Asia, and we commend the vibrant and developing democracy Timor-Leste has built to respond to the aspirations of its diverse people. As President Trump said in a message on Timor-Leste's 15th independence day this year, the progress of this young country reflects the national spirit and determination of the Timorese people.

Secretary Tillerson echoed the President's comments in his own message when he said: "Fifteen years of independence is a remarkable milestone, reflecting the resolve and commitment of the Timorese people to build a new democracy based on respect for human rights and the rule of law. We are committed to deepening ties between the American and Timorese peoples in the years to come." Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work to fulfill our commitment to deepen ties with a country that has earned our respect, a country that has set its own path—symbolized by the star the Timorese chose to adorn their nation's flag—as a democratic, resilient and stable state.

Timor-Leste has held peaceful, credible and fair presidential and parliamentary elections in 2017, the first without U.N. peacekeepers, reflecting the diversity of emerging political views, especially among young people voting for the first time, and with an impressively high turnout.

As a young country in a large and strategic neighborhood, Timor-Leste faces economic, security, and environmental challenges. Timor-Leste is actively addressing some of these concerns. Its leaders are working with Australia in a conciliation process to resolve peacefully a maritime boundary dispute in accordance with international law using a mechanism that could be a model for other countries seeking to solve such differences. It has applied to join ASEAN and the World Trade Organization. Timor-Leste is an increasingly important voice for human rights and democracy globally. It is a founding member of the g7+ fragile states group and shares experiences and best practices on how societies rebuild after conflict. Timor-Leste has also been an important voice on regional issues of mutual concern, including calling for North Korea to abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions at the ASEAN Regional Forum in August.

Our cooperation, whether through USAID, military-to-military engagement, Peace Corps, or a new Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Program, will build capacity for inclusive economic growth, maritime security, and stronger governance. Much of our collaboration assists Timor-Leste in diversifying its economy for more sustainable development, bolstering Timor-Leste's ability to work with the United States on issues of common concern. A coffee cooperative established and developed with USAID and USDA assistance, for example, now provides sustainable income and access to rural health clinics for its 22,000 members.

Our growing security partnership with Timor-Leste builds capacity to respond to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, strengthens maritime security, and deepens the professionalism of the Timorese military. Our armed forces conduct regular bilateral exercises, and a rotating U.S. Navy Seabees detachment provides critical humanitarian assistance and infrastructure support to the Timorese people. To support Timor-Leste's efforts to strengthen rule of law, we also train Timorese law enforcement personnel at the regional International Law Enforcement Academy. We have also worked with Timor-Leste as it strengthens its ability to combat trafficking in persons.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with our team in Dili and Washington, our Timorese hosts, and other international partners to further strengthen our bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Timor-Leste and advance U.S. interests there and in the region. I will also work to deepen our outreach to the Timorese people,

particularly the large youth population, so that our future ties are built on a strong foundation.

Mr. Chairman, during my Foreign Service career, I have proudly served the United States both in Washington and abroad. If confirmed, I will use my experience to guide our mission in Dili to strengthen our relationship with the region's newest nation. Over the years, members of the U.S. Congress have shown particular interest in Timor-Leste's development and success, having played an important role in the country's independence. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and other members of Congress, whether here in Washington or in the region, as we continue to promote our interests in Timor-Leste and the broader East Asia and Pacific region.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to take your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you both for your time and testimony. And congratulations again on your nominations, and to your families, again welcome to the Foreign Relations Committee.

I will begin briefly with questions.

Broadly speaking in Asia, we seem to have had over the past several decades policies that may reflect the 4-year or 8-year tenure of a presidency, but rarely do we have policies that last 10 or 20 years when it comes to an Asia strategy writ-large.

I have been developing legislation known as the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, which would focus on three areas talking about economic opportunities and enhancing trade throughout Southeast Asia in particular, talking about the security challenges that we face, Asia-Pacific security initiative, counterterrorism activities, maritime capabilities, training opportunities. And then, of course, the third leg of the stool would be promoting U.S. values, human rights, democracy components.

Both of you in the region, what do you think the most important sort of elements of the U.S.-Asia policy to be? Ms. Fitzpatrick?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that question and for your commitment to the Asia-Pacific region.

In that regard, Mr. Chairman, in a new democracy such as Timor-Leste, the newest country in Asia, we will continue—if confirmed, I will continue to build on our efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, to build sustainable development and economic diversification, as well as to further strengthen our very vibrant military-to-military engagement with Timor-Leste. So those would be my top priorities, as well as to advance our public diplomacy and our outreach to the Timorese people.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Kritenbrink?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your question and also your commitment and support to our interests in the Asia-Pacific.

I think you have summed it up quite well, Mr. Chairman. And when I look at the Asia-Pacific, I guess basically I would say we have an enduring national interest in a secure, open, and free Asia-Pacific, and I think those are the fundamental interests that animate our policies. And building on your comments, I would say in Vietnam, I think that means we continue to advance policies that support our common interests. We both share an interest in a peaceful, secure, stable Asia-Pacific where differences are resolved peacefully in accordance with international law. If confirmed, I would work aggressively on those issues, similarly on the economic and trade side, and as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, certainly our

values have to remain central to our engagement with the region and with Vietnam in particular.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you to you both.

Mr. Kritenbrink, we had an opportunity to talk about North Korea in the office. And of course, both of your opening statements referenced North Korea. Could you talk a little bit about your experience, that is, your background on North Korea but also your experience as it relates to working with Vietnam to further isolate the North Korean regime using Vietnam's leadership as a way to cut off trade and isolate further trade with North Korea?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Certainly the issue of North Korea and the threat that its nuclear weapons and missile programs present to the region and to the world is a grave national security threat and perhaps the most serious national security threat the United States faces today. Under President Trump, the United States has made clear that we will not stand idly by in the face of this threat and that we will use all elements of American national power to combat this threat, together with our allies and partners in the region.

I think particularly in the context of Vietnam, Mr. Chairman, I would say that as part of our global pressure campaign to, as you said, isolate North Korea, or restrict its sources of funding, we have had a very constructive and productive dialogue with Vietnam, and together we share an interest in curbing the threat posed by North Korea. And if confirmed, I would certainly advance that dialogue further and make it one of my top priorities.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

The State Department's 2017 Trafficking in Persons, the TIP Report, ranked Vietnam as a tier 2 country. The report described challenges in Vietnam's implementation of some relatively new anti-trafficking laws, including challenges they have facing limited resources, interagency coordination, and victim referral systems.

Do you think Vietnam deserved the tier 2 ranking for the seventh year in a row? And if confirmed, how would you engage the Government of Vietnam to address these ongoing anti-trafficking challenges?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for raising that issue.

I think the issue of trafficking in persons or modern day slavery is a critically important issue, and it is with all countries in the region and around the world. And certainly, if confirmed, I would make it a top priority with Vietnam.

I think the assessment that the U.S. Government has made in our Trafficking in Persons Report of tier 2 is accurate for Vietnam. In other words, I think Vietnam has demonstrated a real commitment to tackling this problem, recognizes the seriousness of it and the importance of it, but candidly speaking, they fall short of doing the things necessary to actually achieve those goals.

I think you have outlined well some of the deficiencies regarding lack of interagency cooperation, lack of resources, lack of capacity, and a lack of convictions to date, as well as the delay in implementing their own domestic legislation related to trafficking in persons.

If I were confirmed, Mr. Chairman, again I would make it a top priority. It would be a topic of frequent engagement both at my level and at more senior levels, and also I would continue to support the various U.S. assistance programs that are also designed to improve Vietnam's capabilities to tackle this challenge.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Senator Markey?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just following up on the chairman's comments, Human Rights Watch has now said that Vietnam's human rights record remains dire in all areas. And in July, a Vietnamese court sentenced a blogger activist to 9 years in prison, followed by 5 years under house arrest, for spreading, quote, anti-state propaganda.

So this question of human rights, this question of religious freedom is clearly something that is still a big part of the culture of Vietnam. So we thank you for the commitments that you have made to the chairman to be there as a voice for freedom in that country.

Let me follow up. Vietnam has mounted a series of challenges to China's claims in the South China Sea. Vietnam has been critical of China's reclamation project and has challenged China's maritime claims as well. After the Chinese protested, Vietnam in June suspended a gas drilling project in its exclusive economic zone. The administration's wavering on a South China Sea policy has left Vietnam feeling alone.

Mr. Kritenbrink, while the United States and Vietnam are not treaty allies, what more can we do to reassure Vietnam that we will continue to provide diplomatic support as they legally dispute China's territorial claims?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Senator, for that very important question.

I do think that the issues in the South China Sea—the maritime issues in the South China Sea, the territorial disputes, and the behavior of various states in the region are a critical national interest of the United States, and our interests include preserving freedom of navigation and overflight, the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, and also free, unfettered, and legal commerce.

I think, Senator, the most effective approach that the United States can have engaging with Vietnam would be to continue diplomatically to engage with Vietnam to advance the interests that we share in common. Vietnam shares the same interests that we do in ensuring peace and stability and preserving the principles that I have just outlined in the South China Sea. They have stated repeatedly so publicly and privately.

Secondly, Senator, I think it is in our interest to continue building the capacity of Vietnam's coast guard and other forces so that Vietnam has the ability to maintain domain awareness and advocate its own positions and claims. And I think through both our diplomatic engagement, I think our assistance to further Vietnam's own capacity, and then I think, Senator, by maintaining our constant presence, our regular and frequent freedom of navigation operations, we can best support Vietnam and other likeminded partners.

Senator MARKEY. How much does Vietnam see the United States now as a counterbalance to China? Do you see that as an increasing and continuingly increasing part of our relationship with them?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. I think, Senator, that Vietnam maintains its own very complicated but important relationship with China. I think Vietnam, like most countries in the region, is looking for a diversified and balanced set of relationships in its foreign policy. And I think Vietnam and others in the region look to the United States for leadership, for leadership on critical maritime issues, for contributing to peace and stability, and also for promoting economic prosperity. I think the demand signals coming from our Vietnamese friends and other likeminded partners throughout the region are very strong.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. Fitzpatrick, Timor-Leste's first president and former Prime Minister Gusmao was in Massachusetts last week to discuss the challenges Timor-Leste faces with respect to achieving full sovereignty. One of the lingering issues he has sought to resolve is the maritime boundary between Timor-Leste and Australia. On September 1st, the Permanent Court of Arbitration brought Timor-Leste and Australia one step closer to a permanent agreement. Once this deal is concluded, it will require significant ongoing coordination and cooperation between Timor-Leste and Australia.

How do you see the United States helping this process so that a final agreement can be reached and implemented?

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Senator.

We do commend Timor-Leste and Australia for entering into the compulsory compliance mechanism under the UN Convention of Law of the Sea. We support international law and peaceful resolution of disputes, and we also were pleased that Timor-Leste and Australia did announce that they had reached a core of an agreement.

While we do not take positions on maritime boundary disputes, we do see this first use of this mechanism as a possible tool for other countries with similar issues. And if confirmed, Senator, I will continue to monitor the agreement and support efforts to comply and to adhere to international law and peaceful resolution of disputes.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GARDNER. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And congratulations to each of you for your nominations but also for your long service to the country. These are not easy positions. I think folks who do not do them think there is a lot of glamour involved, and occasionally that is the case. But there are a lot of moves sometimes to places you want to go and sometimes to places that are tough. Sometimes your family can be with you. Sometimes they cannot. I think the Nation does a good job of thanking those who are in military service. We have grown to be able to do that, and that is smart. And we do not often have the same expression of appreciation to the many other Americans who serve abroad and to their families. I am glad your families are here with you and I congratulate you.

My colleagues have asked questions. I was interested in too. So as a member of the Armed Services Committee as well, I want to ask you about the mil-to-mil relationships with each country. One of the most powerful photos that I have ever seen in my political life was the docking of the USS John McCain in Danang Harbor in August of 2010 with the entire Vietnamese military brass there saluting, that sign of respect following a war that cost 60,000 American lives and somewhere between a million and a half and 3 million Vietnamese lives that we would back with a relationship that, while it has got its differences, is a thriving one, is powerful.

And then the Timorese military and the United States Navy participated in an annual CARA exercise that is focused primarily on maritime issues, maritime training.

That is the only question I am going to ask. If you could each talk a little bit about the mil-to-mil relationships and what you think you might be able to do if confirmed to enhance joint security between our nations.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Senator Kaine, thank you so much for your question and thank you for your comments. They mean a great deal to me.

I think that the U.S.-Vietnam mil-mil relationship has grown, together with the rest of the bilateral relationship. And as you mentioned, Senator, I think it is particularly gratifying to see that progress given our painful history.

When I think of the bilateral mil-mil relationship, I think of the following three or four priorities.

I think first would be related to the maritime domain, and I think the U.S. military continues to play an important role in helping the Vietnamese coast guard and military develop its own capabilities both to achieve maritime domain awareness and other capabilities.

I would also add, Senator, that it was gratifying, indeed, to see the USS John McCain there, and I know over the last year, our two sides have announced they were working towards the visit of a U.S. aircraft carrier to Vietnam. And I think that would be an equally momentous event.

And the work on maritime includes both training, provision of assistance, and the like, and I think that has to continue going forward.

I think related to that, Senator, the U.S. military continues to play an important role engaging with the Vietnamese military to address legacy of war issues, whether that be the continued contamination by unexploded ordnance or remaining dioxin in the country. This is a U.S. government-wide effort, but certainly the Department of Defense is involved and plays a role there and then also I think benefits—our mil-mil relationship benefits a great deal from the work that we do there and the trust that we build as a result.

And the final point that I would mention, Senator, would be the humanitarian work, the humanitarian assistance, disaster relief kind of cooperation and training that the U.S. military does with the Vietnamese military.

I think those are probably the three key pillars going forward. I think related to that would be the training we are doing to help

Vietnam to be able to deploy in support of UN peacekeeping operations. So again, I think it is a robust relationship. If confirmed, those would be the first priorities that I would promote, if confirmed. Thank you.

Ms. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

The United States and Timor-Leste share an interest in promoting regional peace, stability, and security. And in that regard, we have a very vibrant mil-to-mil relationship. It includes ship visits. It includes several annual exercises a year. It includes annual defense discussions. It includes training toward the professionalization of the Timorese military, as well as to enhance their expertise in various areas.

And there is also another area. You mentioned the U.S. Navy. The U.S. Navy Seabees are present in Timor-Leste. They have been there since 2009 on regular rotations every 6 months. And as part of our humanitarian outreach effort, in conjunction with our mil-to-mil engagement, they engage in infrastructure projects. They have completed about 109 projects, including constructing a hospital maternity ward and other facilities, a new classroom for public schools, repairing water and sanitation facilities, and other projects in that regard. The work of the Navy Seabees is sort of a great representative of the United States in Timor-Leste.

And although it is not quite mil-to-mil, I do want to mention our Peace Corps volunteers who are there and, of course, our embassy colleagues who are doing an active effort in public diplomacy, as well as our USAID colleagues.

So, sir, those would be the areas that I would very much welcome continuing to support and advance, consistent with the work that I have done throughout my career advancing humanitarian assistance, human rights, as well as security and military-to-military policy.

Senator KAINE. Thanks so much.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Mr. Kritenbrink, a couple more questions.

The U.S. in 2017—in May, the U.S.-Vietnam joint statement did not mention negotiating a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam. That was following the U.S. decision to withdraw from the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership. Do you think the administration will be able to pursue a bilateral agreement with Vietnam, or should pursue an agreement? And if so, when and what do you think our top trade priorities will be with Vietnam going forward?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that question.

I would like to emphasize, Mr. Chairman, that we continue to have an exceptionally important and broad and dynamic trade and economic relationship with Vietnam. Given the decision that we have made on TPP, the focus of our efforts now with Vietnam comes under the rubric of our TIFA, our trade and investment framework agreement. On a bilateral basis, we are continuing to engage proactively with Vietnam on a broad number of areas related to the economic and trade relationship. As I mentioned in my statement, there are many economic opportunities in Vietnam. Trade continues to grow exponentially. But there are also many challenges that remain as well.

So primarily under the TIFA framework, our two sides are proactively addressing several priorities that we think need to be addressed so as to level the playing field, increase market access in a fair manner for U.S. and other foreign firms.

I think two issues that I would mention in particular, Mr. Chairman, would be protection of intellectual property rights, which remains a real focus for the administration and a top priority.

And the other issue that I would mention would be labor issues. I think Vietnam has made some progress on labor. I think Vietnam recognizes that it also needs to carry out certain reforms if it wants to be the kind of economy and country that it wants to be. But these issues are not related just to Vietnam's international obligations on labor. They also play an important part in the trade relationship.

So those would be two specific areas.

And then, of course, there are a whole number of specific issues that we as the U.S. Government as a whole of government, but also our friends at the U.S. Trade Representative in particular are focused on. Some of those have to do with electronic payments, other market access issues related to some of the agricultural exports to Vietnam. But those would be the priorities. And again, Mr. Chairman, I would just say our focus now is on working those issues bilaterally under the TIFA.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Senator Markey, any additional questions?

Senator MARKEY. No, thank you.

Senator GARDNER. Well, I want to thank you both for your time and testimony today. If there are no other questions from the panel here, of course, I will announce that the record will remain open until the close of business on Friday, including for members to submit questions for the record. This is the homework assignment time, so I kindly ask the witnesses to respond as promptly as possible and your responses will be made a part of the record.

Thank you to all of you for your service today and your nominations. I wish you the best of luck.

Senator MARKEY. Mr. Chairman?

Senator GARDNER. Yes, absolutely, please.

Senator MARKEY. Can I just say these are two outstanding candidates, career, and necessary in terms of ensuring that our country is well represented overseas. Thank you and thanks to your families as well for your service as well.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Markey.

And with that, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have placed the utmost importance on promoting human rights and democracy. During multiple assignments at the U.S. Embassy Beijing Political Section and later as Deputy Chief of Mission, and during my assignments as China Desk Director at the State Department and as Senior Director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council, I prioritized human rights as a key pillar of our engagement with China, and had frequent and frank conversations on human rights issues as well as individual human rights cases with China's officials and leaders. For example, I participated in and helped organize multiple rounds of the U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue, met frequently with civil society activists, organized meetings of activists with the U.S. Ambassador and various U.S. senior officials, oversaw U.S. Government funding designed to support some activists' work, and supported negotiations over the release and travel to the United States of a high-profile human rights advocate.

As NSC Senior Director, I advocated for human rights issues and activists in other Asia-Pacific countries as well, including Vietnam. For example, in 2015 and 2016, I organized and participated in meetings at the NSC with representatives of the Vietnamese-American and Vietnam human rights/civil society communities to explain our approach to Vietnam, hear their concerns, and receive their advice. In 2015 and 2016, I oversaw the negotiation of two bilateral Joint Statements with the Vietnamese, both of which included strong human rights language, and in 2016 I helped organize a meeting in Hanoi for the President with Vietnamese civil society representatives.

If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, I will continue to emphasize to the Vietnamese Government the importance of human rights and will meet with Vietnamese civil society representatives. Demonstrable progress on human rights is critical to enabling the bilateral relationship- and Vietnam itself—to reach its fullest potential. I am committed to engaging Vietnam at the highest levels to press for progress on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression, and respect for the rule of law.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The harassment, arrest, conviction, and excessive sentencing of individuals in Vietnam for exercising their human rights and fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, is deeply troubling. The continuing arbitrary detention of prisoners of conscience, including lengthy pretrial detentions and restrictions on individuals' ability to worship and practice their faith, are other pressing human rights concerns. If confirmed, I will advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience. I will press the Government of Vietnam to bring its laws into conformity with Vietnam's constitution and international human rights obligations and commitments, including by removing burdensome restrictions on civil society organizations. I will meet with representatives of Vietnamese civil society. And I will continue to stress to Vietnam's leadership that progress on human rights is critical to enabling our partnership to reach its full potential to the mutual benefit of our peoples.

Question 3. 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 the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Despite some progress, the human rights situation in Vietnam remains challenging. Vietnam needs to unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience, and allow all persons to express their views and practice their religious beliefs without intimidation or harassment. Capacity building for civil society and rights organizations will continue to be instrumental to advancing human rights in Vietnam. Promoting respect for the rule of law will also require engagement, training, and technical assistance. I will continue to advocate for USG technical assistance to

Vietnam's National Assembly and judicial sector to promote legislative and judicial reform.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will meet with human rights, civil society, and other NGOs in Vietnam as well as in the United States. I look forward to continuing the positive interactions and collaboration Mission Vietnam has already forged with established NGOs, while also reaching out to newer and smaller advocacy groups to ensure that all voices are heard.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to call for the immediate and unconditional release of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the Government, and my team will do the same under my leadership.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will proactively support the Leahy Law by ensuring our Mission maintains its stringent vetting processes for any Vietnamese security force members and units nominated for training. Mission Vietnam will maintain up-to-date Standard Operating Procedures for Leahy vetting and will continue to take a whole-of-mission approach to this process. I will also ensure that we take into account human rights and governance principles as we plan our security assistance and cooperation activities. I will also continually highlight the importance of professionalism, rule of law, and human rights in our engagements with Vietnam's police, military, and other law enforcement counterparts.

Question 7. Will you engage with Vietnamese on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, human rights, civil rights, and governance will continue to be top priorities for Mission Vietnam.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. Throughout my career, including in several leadership positions, I have had multiple opportunities to build high-functioning teams that represented America in all its diversity. If confirmed, I will ensure Mission Vietnam continually strives to promote equal opportunity for our officers, including women and those from historically marginalized groups.

Question 9. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, and as I have done throughout my career, I will make clear to U.S. Mission staff that diversity, equal opportunity, and respect for all employees are top priorities. I will also encourage all supervisors to take available courses on equal employment opportunity principles, diversity, and related issues. I will urge them to address unconscious bias and similar topics when they mentor junior colleagues. I will direct supervisors to transparently and fairly provide opportunities to all entry- and mid-level professionals. Through my words and actions, and by providing time for professional development discussions to address diversity, I will highlight that this is a priority for me as Ambassador, if confirmed.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam?

Answer. No.

Question 13. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. No.

Question 14. Fulbright University Vietnam (FUV) and its predecessor entities in Vietnam have received steady funding from both State and USAID for almost two decades. FUV is the first-private, fully independent Vietnamese university founded on the principles of accountability, meritocracy, transparency, self-governance, mutual respect, and open inquiry. It is a prime example of the soft power assets in the region that the U.S. Government has historically invested in and should continue to invest in. If confirmed, how do you plan on supporting soft power tools such as the Fulbright University Vietnam as they prepare to welcome their first undergraduate class in the next year?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Mission's full support for FUV and the Peace Corps program, as well as other education and youth programs. FUV is poised to matriculate the first class of 50–60 students in its Master's Degree in Public Policy Program in October 2017. The United States continues to support FUV's capacity to recruit, enroll, and retain up to 1,000 future undergraduate students. I also look forward to supporting the Peace Corps' recruitment and placement of volunteers on the ground.

If confirmed, I will ensure that Mission Vietnam continues to strongly promote increased understanding between the people of the United States and Vietnam through its support for a range of programs, including exchange programs. Such programs include the Fulbright Student and Scholar Program, the International Visitor Leadership Program, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and the U.S. Speaker Program, to name a few. Our current engagement with Vietnam and the Vietnamese people is robust and has the potential to deepen and further expand to the benefit of our people-to-people ties. This will be one of my priorities as Ambassador, if confirmed.

Question 15. Three war legacy issues remain a serious concern for Vietnam-the environmental and health effects of Agent Orange/dioxin; unexploded ordnance; and U.S. assistance in recovering Vietnamese missing-in-action (MIAs). In the past the U.S. Government has shown a willingness to assist in the environmental remediation of land contaminated by the dioxin in Agent Orange and other defoliants sprayed on Vietnam during the war, but some reluctance to provide support for Vietnamese nationals with medical conditions attributed to exposure to dioxin. If confirmed as ambassador what forms of U.S. assistance would you recommend to address these war legacy issues? What would you recommend that the United States can or should do to provide assistance to Vietnamese nationals with medical and health conditions associated with dioxin exposure?

Answer. Addressing legacies of the Vietnam War continues to be one of the means by which our government strengthens U.S. ties with Vietnam and promotes goodwill between our peoples, building a foundation of trust that has enabled the U.S.-Vietnam partnership to move forward. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting our joint humanitarian efforts to account for personnel still missing from the war, as I believe providing the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel missing from the Vietnam War era remains our solemn obligation, and we must not stop until that work is complete.

If confirmed, I will also support continued efforts to mitigate the threats posed by unexploded ordnance, as well as exploring the best ways for the United States to continue our support for dioxin remediation in Vietnam.

We have been working hard with Vietnam to clean up a dioxin hotspot in Danang, which is on track to conclude this year. The President's FY 2018 budget request includes up to $15 million for Agent Orange/dioxin cleanup. The United States and Vietnamese Governments are now reviewing potential remediation alternatives and plans regarding dioxin remediation at Bien Hoa.

We also support continued assistance for Vietnamese with disabilities, regardless of cause, and have contributed to programs in support of people with disabilities across the country. We are also helping to build the capacity of the Vietnamese Government to provide medical and social services to all of their citizens with disabilities.

If confirmed, I will continue Mission Vietnam's vital work in all these areas.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. The U.S.-Vietnam partnership has many dimensions, including trade and economic ties as well as mutual security interests. As these elements of our partnership expand-they cannot come at the expense of speaking candidly with the Vietnamese Government about its violations of the rights of its own citizens.

According to Freedom Houses' Freedom of the World Report 2017, Vietnam received a score of ″Not Free.″ Basic freedoms, such as freedom of religion and freedom of expression are heavily restricted in Vietnam, most independent candidates are not allowed to run in legislative elections, and the Government has continued to crackdown on social media and the internet.

If confirmed, how do you plan to raise these issues with the Vietnamese Government?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have placed the utmost importance on promoting human rights and democracy. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, I will press the Government of Vietnam to bring its laws into conformity with Vietnam's constitution and international human rights obligations and commitments, including by removing burdensome restrictions on civil society organizations. I will continue to stress to Vietnam's leadership that progress on human rights, including religious freedom, is critical to enabling our partnership to reach its full potential to the mutual benefit of our peoples.

Question 2. Do you commit to urge them to respect the basic human rights of their citizens and make sincere political reforms?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to urge the Government of Vietnam to respect human rights, and to implement reforms to bring its laws into conformity with Vietnam's constitution and international human rights obligations and commitments. I am committed to engaging Vietnam at the highest levels to press for progress on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of religion or belief and the freedom of expression, as well as respect for the rule of law.

Question 3. If confirmed, would you urge the Government to release specific political prisoners, such as human rights and pro-democracy lawyer Nguyen Van Dai?

Answer. Yes. Vietnam should unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience. If confirmed, I will continue to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly detained by the Government—including Nguyen Van Dai, among others—and my team will do the same under my leadership.

Question 4. In its 2017 Annual Report, the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) again recommended that Vietnam be designated a Country of Particular Concern, and documented severe religious freedom violations, especially against ethnic minority communities.

- Do you believe the U.S. should being doing more to push for religious freedom in Vietnam?

Answer. Human rights, including religious freedom, remain an important pillar of our engagement with Vietnam. Despite some positive steps, removing restrictions on religious freedom in Vietnam remains a key concern and priority for the United States. Vietnam should allow all persons to express their views and practice their religious beliefs without intimidation or harassment. Vietnam also should lift onerous restrictions on the recognition and registration of religious organizations. If confirmed, I will urge Vietnam to make significant and sustained progress on protections for religious freedom for all of its people, including members of both registered and unregistered religious groups and ethnic minority communities. If I am confirmed, the U.S. Mission in Vietnam under my leadership will continue to monitor the situation closely and regularly raise our ongoing concerns as we continue to urge the Government to make significant progress on religious freedom.

Question 5. If confirmed, would you commit to working with USCIRF and the broader religious freedom community to urge the Vietnamese Governments to make improvements in their religious freedom record?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with USCIRF and the broader religious freedom communities in Vietnam and the United States to urge the Vietnamese Government to improve its record on religious freedom and do more to protect the religious freedom of all its citizens.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KATHLEEN M. FITZPATRICK BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy has been a top priority for me throughout my career. In particular, when I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, I was very proud to lead efforts to advance our human rights priorities, including for religious freedom, in the Western Hemisphere, the Middle East, and in East Asia. Working with colleagues in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, I helped organize a U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue in 2010 and traveled to Vietnam for discussions with Vietnamese officials emphasizing the importance of religious freedom.

When I served as Chief of Staff for the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, I worked closely with the Office for Combatting Trafficking in Persons. I helped manage the Annual Combatting Trafficking in Persons report process to ensure it effectively targeted trafficking issues and raised public awareness about trafficking issues.

Many of my most rewarding Foreign Service experiences have been engagements with civil society leaders, hearing their stories and finding ways for our programs and diplomatic outreach could support their work. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with the Timorese civil society in the same way.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The people of Timor-Leste have built a new country on the foundations of democracy and human rights, where there is respect for diversity and protections for individuals of different faiths, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Timor-Leste's civil society is vibrant and active, and there is a free and developing media. Timor-Leste has made significant progress in many areas involving human rights. In 2017 Timor-Leste passed quality trafficking-in-persons (TIP) legislation and significantly increased the number of TIP investigations and prosecutions.

Yet, as a young, post-conflict country, many challenges remain. The Timor-Leste Government continues to consult with the Government of Indonesia to reconcile their difficult past and promote transitional justice. More can be done to address gender-based violence. If confirmed, I pledge to draw on all of my experience advancing democracy and human rights to continue the diligent work of Embassy Dili in supporting our Timorese hosts in tackling these challenges. If confirmed, I will raise these issues with the Timor-Leste Government, engage with civil society to hear about their concerns, and continue to support programs that build capacity in Timor-Leste's justice sector, empower women, and enable civil society.

Question 3. 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 the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The most significant challenge to addressing human rights concerns in Timor-Leste is developing the institutional capacity to effectively tackle the social and legal complexity of these issues. Timor-Leste has been independent for just 15 years, and its institutions are nascent. If confirmed, I will lead our embassy team in prioritizing programs and outreach that can build capacity in Timor-Leste to support the democracy, governance, and rule of law that I know the Timorese people prioritize.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Some of my most rewarding experiences when serving as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor were meetings with civil society in countries in various regions of the world to hear their concerns and to demonstrate U.S. commitment to supporting human rights and democracy.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste?

Answer. Should there be cases of persons unjustly targeted or imprisoned by the Government of Timor-Leste for political purposes, I affirm that, if confirmed, I and the embassy team would actively engage with government officials to address such cases.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to proactively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. The Department of State takes the Leahy Law very seriously and, if confirmed, I will ensure we carefully vet recipients of our security assistance, in accordance with the Leahy Law. I will also continually highlight the importance of professionalism, rule of law, and human rights in our engagements with Timor-Leste's policy-makers and military and law enforcement counterparts.

Question 7. Will you engage with Timorese on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will consider it an integral part of my job to engage with the Timorese on matters of human rights, including civil rights, and governance as part of our bilateral mission and annual reporting requirements, such as the Human Rights Report.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I will continue to be committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive team, as I have throughout my career, including as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research where I have emphasized diversity, leadership, and professional development for all of our team. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Mission in Timor-Leste continually strives to promote equal opportunities for our officers, particularly those from diverse backgrounds or historically marginalized or underrepresented groups. I will also actively engage the other leaders at the Mission to prioritize mentoring and ensure that we are developing a new generation of diplomats to represent our country effectively.

Question 9. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. My experience has given me many opportunities to build high-functioning teams with diverse members. I remain committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a work environment that recognizes the contributions of all employees, and will make sure they have information available about the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, foreign affairs affinity organizations, and opportunities specific to various groups.

If confirmed, I will encourage all supervisors to take available courses on EEO principles, diversity, and related issues. I will urge them to include unconscious bias and similar topics when they mentor junior colleagues. I will direct supervisors to transparently and fairly provide opportunities to all entry- and mid-level professionals. If confirmed, I will highlight that this is a priority for me as the Ambassador by providing time for professional development discussions that address diversity.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste?

Answer. No.

Question 13. Have there been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. No.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017 (p.m.)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:20 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson, presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson [presiding], Risch, Flake, Gardner, Murphy, Shaheen, Kaine, and Markey.

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

Senator JOHNSON. This hearing will come to order.

I want to welcome our nominees. And before moving to opening statements, I would like to welcome our two esteemed colleagues, Senator Stabenow, and I will include Senator Graham in the esteemed column as well.

Senator Stabenow will introduce our nominee to be Ambassador to The Netherlands, Peter Hoekstra, and Senator, if you would like to give your opening introduction.

STATEMENT OF HON. DEBBIE STABENOW, U.S. SENATOR FROM MICHIGAN

Senator STABENOW. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And it is really a great honor and pleasure to be here today to introduce a former colleague. We have worked together on many issues. We have also been on the other side of the table versus each other, and yet, through all of that, I know that Congressman Pete Hoekstra proudly represented Michigan's second congressional district for 18 years.

And I think it is fair to say that there are few people more suited to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to The Netherlands than Pete Hoekstra. You could even say it is a job he was born to do. Pete was born in The Netherlands. When he was 3, his family moved to—and you guessed it—Holland, Michigan where he still lives with his wife Diane.

And like all good Dutchmen, Pete loves biking. While campaigning for Governor of Michigan, he rode 1,000 miles around our very beautiful State.

His Dutch background is not the only qualification Pete would bring to the job of Ambassador. Before he was elected to Congress, Pete earned an MBA from the University of Michigan and rose through the ranks at Michigan's own Herman Miller, eventually

serving as Vice President of Marketing. And while in Congress, Pete was chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, which gave him foreign policy experience that will serve him well as Ambassador.

And as former Michigan Senator Arthur Vandenberg famously said—and his picture we are proud to have in the reception room in the United States Senate—he said politics stops at the water's edge. And they also stop at the shores of our Great Lakes.

It is true that Pete Hoekstra and I do not always agree, but we feel the same way about our wonderful State of Michigan, about invasive species that we have tackled together, and about our country. Pete cares deeply about Michigan. He cares deeply about The Netherlands, and he cares deeply about America.

I have no doubt he will use his experience and connections to strengthen the already strong ties between our two great countries. And it will be good for our State to have him serving in this prominent international role.

I look forward to supporting his nomination, and I hope that he will get he chance to do some biking around The Hague. I am honored to introduce Congressman Pete Hoekstra. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Stabenow.

Now we are pleased to have Senator Graham, Lindsay Graham, who will introduce the President's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Mr. Edward McMullen.

STATEMENT OF HON. LINDSAY GRAHAM, U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH CAROLINA

Senator GRAHAM. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member. And I want to echo everything that Senator Stabenow said about Pete. I have known him a long time and it is really a compliment to you that the President would choose you for such an important post.

Ed McMullen I have known ever since I have been in politics. If you can survive South Carolina politics, you can handle Switzerland. [Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. To the people of Switzerland, I can tell you that the President has picked one of his closest advisors, the chairman of his South Carolina campaign, somebody who jumped on the Trump train early and has done it with class and style. So when Mr. McMullen speaks, the President will listen, and I think that is a compliment to the people of Switzerland.

To Ed himself, he was an advisor to Senator McCain when he first ran for President. He has been enormously helpful to me, and he helped President Trump. I doubt if many people can say those three things. And he has done it with class, loyalty. And one of the greatest attributes of any Ambassador I think is loyalty and understanding and the ability to get people to work together. He will be a great representative for our Nation to one of our most important allies.

He has been in business for over 30 years, McMullen Public Affairs. He worked for The Heritage Foundation in Washington, the South Carolina Policy Council. He is an alumnus of the American-Swiss Foundation young leaders conference and has traveled exten-

sively in Switzerland and Italy. And he will be a good representative for the two countries that you have just mentioned, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

He was in charge of Governor McMaster's transition team. He was the Vice Chairman of the Presidential Inaugural Committee. He has received numerous awards in South Carolina. He has been a great conservative. But I want to tell my friends on the Democratic side that everyone respects Ed McMullen. He is someone who enjoys a lot of sport in our State. His lovely wife, Margaret Ann, is here today. Thomas and Katherine are very proud, his two children. He is a graduate of Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, Senator Kaine. He now serves as Vice Chairman and Chairman-elect of the National Alumni Association.

And just in conclusion, I want to thank President Trump for allowing Ed to serve in a capacity that he is incredibly qualified for. And for the people of South Carolina, this is a real treat for us, a small State, having someone recognized by the President for such an important position. So I cannot recommend to you more strongly Mr. McMullen. He is ready for this job.

And thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. The committee wants to thank the Senators for those kind introductions. I know you have busy schedules. So you are welcome to stay, but you just cannot stay there because we need those seats. [Laughter.]

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you very much.

So the committee gathers today to consider the nominations of ambassadorships to Spain, Germany, France, The Netherlands, and Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The United States has close relations with these countries based on enduring political, economic, defense, and cultural ties.

Spain, Germany, France, and The Netherlands represent four of the European Union's top six economies. Together they account for approximately half of the EU's economic strength. Switzerland has Europe's ninth largest economy as a member of the European Free Trade Association. All five are among the top 30 trading partners of the United States, and collectively they have direct investments in the U.S. economy worth $1.1 trillion. So you can see these are important relationships.

Our security ties are no less significant. France, Spain, Germany, and The Netherlands are leading members of NATO. Switzerland is a vital counterterrorism partner, helping the United States dismantle terrorist financial support networks. The strengths of these partnerships have helped forge an unprecedented era of peace and stability on a continent long ravaged by the great power of conflict.

As the highest representative of the United States to these countries, you will be tasked with maintaining and strengthening these crucial relationships.

Again, I want to thank all the nominees for accepting this responsibility, being willing to serve. It is a sacrifice. It is going to be a sacrifice for you and your family. And having spoken and met with all of you, I am sure you will represent this Nation well.

Before I introduce the nominees for their opening statements, I would like to recognize the distinguished ranking member of this committee, Senator Murphy.

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

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

I look forward to hearing your testimony and getting to questions and answers.

Let me reiterate the chairman's thanks to you and to your families for your willingness to serve. When there is a problem in the world that needs United States leadership to solve it, the first place we turn is to Europe. This is a bond forged both by enduring values and interests around the world. And you are going to help, we hope, solidify a transatlantic partnership that has helped lead to an era of relative world stability that we hope can endure.

You are going to face challenges. You will be working for an administration that cheered Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, that pulled the United States out of the Paris Climate Accord, that now threatens to pull the United States out of the U.S.-EU led Iran nuclear agreement. This is a very perilous moment for the transatlantic relationship because of the policies of this administration. You are going to both have the responsibility of soothing those tensions and reporting back accurately to this administration what people in Europe think about the President's policies.

But we are very glad that you have chosen to take this responsibility, and we look forward to your testimony today.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Again, we welcome the nominees, and we certainly welcome their family. I encourage you, in your opening statements, to introduce family members that are in the audience.

Our first nominee is the Honorable Peter Hoekstra. Peter is the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to The Netherlands. Mr. Hoekstra is a politician and business executive who served in Congress from 1993 to 2011, representing Michigan's second district. He was chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence from 2004 to 2007 and the ranking Republican on the committee until 2011. Mr. Hoekstra continues to be active on public policy issues and in business affairs as a consultant, researcher, and writer. Mr. Hoekstra?

STATEMENT OF HON. PETER HOEKSTRA, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Thank you, Chairman Johnson, and good to be with you Ranking Member Murphy and other distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to be with you today.

I am deeply appreciative of the nomination that President Trump has provided to me to be the Ambassador to the Kingdom of The Netherlands. Obviously, with your concurrence and approval, I look forward to beginning my work in The Netherlands and once again serving the people of the United States of America.

As all of us who have served in public office know, we could never get there without the support of many other people. Today I am joined by my wife of 42 years, Diane, right here. And also, we have had the support of my children and my daughter-in-law for the 18 years that I spent in Congress. We all know the frustra-

tions and the joys that a family can go through when their father or their mother is called Congressman or Senator. But for our family, it has been a richly rewarding experience, and we look forward to the opportunity to serve again.

I am also deeply appreciative of the kind words from Senator Stabenow and the support that I am also receiving from Gary Peters. I maybe could stop right now and say I cannot add anything more. I can only do damage to the very, very kind words that Senator Stabenow provided. As she said, in Michigan, we know that politics stops at the water's edge. Whether that is Lake Michigan or whether that is the Atlantic, that is how we always thought, and we always had the opportunity to work together. And when we disagreed, it was never on a personal basis, and we always remained friends and respected each other.

Obviously, this is a special opportunity for me. I am a native-born Dutchman. I was born in The Netherlands in 1953. My parents immigrated in 1956. My parents were liberated by American and Canadian troops during World War II. So they had that fondness and appreciation for America. But packing up three kids and moving to this country was a wonderful opportunity and it was a leap of faith.

My parents made the commitment that they would become Americans. They actually changed the name of one of their kids because they wanted to make sure that he would be fully able to integrate into American society and become an American.

We lived the American dream. My dad ran a small bakery. My mom was a stay-at-home mom. Their kids all had the opportunity to go to college. And 36 years after emigrating to the United States, they had the opportunity to see their son get sworn into Congress. America was all that they had hoped for, and for all of us, it has become our home.

The opportunity to go back and represent the United States—it is a humbling opportunity. The Netherlands was the second country to formally recognize this newly born country in 1782. So this is truly a unique and unbroken relationship.

The Dutch have continued their strong economic ties. They are one of the top foreign investors in the United States. We have a trade surplus with them of roughly $24 billion per year.

They are a strong military ally. They supported us in our war for independence. They supported us in the war in Afghanistan. 25 Dutch soldiers have sacrificed their lives in Afghanistan. And obviously, that is an important relationship with the threats that we face today, whether it is terrorism, the threat from Russia and other unnamed threats that we may face in the future. It is hard to find an ally that has been more dedicated and consistent than what the Dutch have been.

Obviously, if provided with the opportunity, it will be my job to manage that relationship and leave it stronger and better than what we have inherited. We stand on the work of hundreds and thousands of people that have built this relationship over 200 years, the proud professionals of our Foreign Service. I had the opportunity to meet with many of them when I was on the Intelligence Committee. I respect their work. I have relied on their for-

eign intelligence experience, and I will in the future. They are truly amazing people.

I recognize the obligation of implementing the strategies and policies of the United States. These policies are established in Washington, D.C. I recognize the responsibility to the President. I recognize my responsibility to the Secretary of State. But as a person of the House, I also recognize my responsibility to the Congress of the United States, and I pledge that I will work faithfully and hopefully effectively with both the House and the Senate.

With your approval, I look forward to once again having the opportunity to serve this great country. Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[Mr. Hoekstra's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER HOEKSTRA

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished committee members, it is an honor to be with you today.

I am deeply appreciative of President Trump for the nomination to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. With your concurrence and approval, I look forward to beginning my work in the Netherlands and once again serving the people of the United States of America.

As those who have been a part of public service know, there are many individuals that have helped us achieve these opportunities. I would like to recognize Diane, my wife of more than 42 years, for her unconditional love and support. Our children, Erin, Allison, and Bryan, and daughter-in-law Rebecca, have been supportive throughout the joys and frustrations of having a congressman as a father. The time in public service was a special and rewarding time for all of us.

I'm also deeply appreciative of the support that Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters have expressed. As a Michigan delegation, we always knew when to set aside partisan considerations and support our State and each other. As they have stated, in America politics stops at the water's edge. Thank you Senators Stabenow and Peters.

This is a special opportunity. I am a native Dutchman. I was born in the Netherlands in 1953. In 1956 my parents immigrated to the United States with their three young children. For them it was the beginning of an adventure in "the land of opportunity." They had some previous experience with Americans, as it was American and Canadian troops who liberated them and an occupied Netherlands in 1945, but this was a leap of faith.

My parents made the commitment that they would become "Americans," even changing the name of one of their children so that he would fit in.

We lived the American dream. My dad operated a small bakery. My mom was a stay-at-home mother. Their kids all graduated from college and 36 years later they saw their son sworn into the United States Congress. America has been all they had hoped for. For all of us, it became our new home.

The opportunity to go back and represent the United States to the Netherlands is a humbling opportunity. The Netherlands was the second country to formally recognize this newly born country in 1782. It supported the struggle for independence, supplying weapons and ammunition. The United States and the Netherlands have had an unbroken record of friendship going back more than 240 years. This is truly a unique and unbroken relationship.

The Dutch have and continue to be a strong economic partner. They are one of the largest foreign direct investors in the United States. The U.S. also enjoys the largest trade surplus in any bilateral relationship with the Netherlands, roughly $24 billion. I recognize the strength of this relationship and will look at ways to build the economic ties even stronger for the benefit of both countries.

The Dutch have also been a strong military ally of the United States. In Margraten, a small Dutch town, the citizens have adopted the graves of 8,301 U.S. military personnel who paid the ultimate price in helping liberate the Netherlands and defeat the Nazi's in World War II. The Dutch have also been a full partner in the efforts to defeat the threat from terrorism. Twenty-five Dutch soldiers have died in the Afghan war. From the founding of our country, through many conflicts including today's, the two countries have always stood shoulder to shoulder, never against

each other. That needs to continue as we face the threats of terrorism, Russia, and other unnamed future challenges.

Economically and militarily, it is difficult to find any ally who has stood by our side, hand in hand, for such a long period of time. As such, I recognize that the work of the men and women of the U.S. embassy in The Hague is a part of this long relationship with the Dutch. We will stand on the foundation laid by those who have served so effectively and diligently for the last 200 plus years. We will be entrusted to manage this relationship today and must leave it stronger and better than what we have been given.

We walk and work in the footsteps of the first U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands, John Adams, and the thousands of individuals who have built this strong and special relationship through the years.

Personally, I look forward to working with those who have dedicated their lives to the foreign service. In my eighteen years in Congress, and especially my ten years on the Intelligence Committee, I observed the talents and the skills of our State Department professionals firsthand. Their knowledge of how to conduct foreign policy is something that I have relied on in the past and will continue to rely on in the future. They are truly amazing people.

As a Congressman, I have interacted frequently with the Dutch on trade, military and intelligence, and cultural issues. This position will enable me to build on that experience.

As an ambassador, I recognize the obligation of implementing the strategies and policies of the United States. These policies are established in Washington, D.C. I recognize the responsibilities that I have to the President and Secretary of State Tillerson; and as a man of the House, the responsibility to the Congress of the United States.

With your approval, I look forward to once again having the opportunity to serve this great country. Thank you very much for your time today. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Congressman Hoekstra.

Our next nominee is Mr. Richard Duke Buchan, and Mr. Buchan is the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Spain. Mr. Buchan is the founder and CEO of Hunter Global Investors LP. He and his family own and manage farms that grow over 100 varieties of heirloom vegetables and raise horses. He is active in a number of educational and philanthropic causes. Mr. Buchan established the University of North Carolina's largest single endowment focused on Spanish languages, literature, and culture. Mr. Buchan?

STATEMENT OF RICHARD DUKE BUCHAN III, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN

Mr. BUCHAN. Thank you, and thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee.

A special thanks to Senator Johnson again for your introduction and support.

It is a great honor to appear before this distinguished committee. I am deeply grateful to President Trump and humbled to be his nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and the Principality of Andorra. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to represent the interests of the United States of America and to further enhance our strong partnerships with these two great nations.

Each of us has followed a unique path to public service. As a 10th generation North Carolinian who grew up on a tobacco and cattle farm, I know that I am here because of the people and the land that nurtured me. I would like to recognize those in attendance today from my family: my amazing wife, Hannah—they are

all behind me—my three dear children, Cate, Beau, and John; and my charming and insightful mother Betty. My father is here in spirit. I would also like to take a moment to remember my grandmother who taught me that I have two ears and I have one mouth and that I should use them accordingly. And that lesson has served me well in life so far.

If confirmed, I look forward to joining the extraordinary team from the State Department led by Secretary Tillerson. The talented staff of the U.S. mission to Spain works diligently to serve our great Nation. I want to recognize their families who serve alongside them with equal honor, dedication, and commitment. My career in international finance has focused on building bridges often between diverse individuals and groups to bring out the best in others to solve problems. I hope to apply those skills leading Mission Spain.

Global engagement is vital to America's success. My 3 decades of work in Spain, other European countries, Latin America, and Asia have taught me the importance of listening to and learning from others to forge solutions. If confirmed, this experience and international perspective will be vital to my role as the U.S. Ambassador.

This opportunity to serve my country is a dream come true. I have loved Spain since my childhood when I first read about that faraway land of Don Quixote and Picasso in the World Book Encyclopedia. In 1980, as an eager and curious high school student, I first convinced my parents to let me study abroad in Valencia, Spain.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I double majored in Spanish and economics, studying an entire academic year in Seville, Spain. In the years since, my family has worked to strengthen ties to Spain and Latin American countries by establishing The Buchan Excellence Fund, which was previously mentioned. It is UNC's single largest endowment focused on Spanish languages, literature, and culture. It embodies my conviction that knowledge, understanding and, above all, human connections are the keys to success in business, diplomacy, and life. As a family, we have a deep appreciation and respect and love for the Spanish people and culture. It is only surpassed by our love for the United States of America.

Sadly, Spain like America has faced terror attacks at home, most recently in Barcelona. As we share their grief, we deeply admire their resolve in the face of evil. Spain also understands this is a global conflict, bravely committing blood and treasure to combat terror around the world. It is a significant contributor to NATO, EU, and U.N. peacekeeping missions. For over 60 years, Spain has been a welcoming host to our military. Rota Naval Station and Moron Air Base are essential for major coalition operations in the fight against terrorism. We thank the Spanish Government and people for their support. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen these historic ties as we confront our common enemies.

As I know firsthand from my years as a global investor, Spain is a vital economic partner. The United States and Spain generated $24 billion in two-way trade in 2016. Spain is our ninth largest source of foreign direct investment. U.S. subsidiaries of Spanish firms employ more than 80,000 U.S. workers. My career has been

built on finding and pursuing opportunities. If confirmed, I will strive to increase Spanish investment in the U.S. and to increase opportunities for U.S. businesses in Spain.

Our human connections to Spain are deep and meaningful, stretching back to before the founding of our republic. Over 2 million Americans traveled to Spain last year to explore its rich culture and beautiful landscape. Approximately 770,000 Spaniards visit the U.S. each year, spending about $1.7 billion. More than 200,000 Americans live in Spain. If confirmed, the safety and security of these American citizens will be a top priority.

We can also rely on Spain to share our broader geopolitical interests. Spain has been a reliable backer of EU sanctions against Russia and North Korea. Spain is also an important partner in seeking democratic reforms in Venezuela. If confirmed, I will vigorously represent our policies to ensure that the United States and Spain continue to work together closely.

While I have spoken much of Spain, if confirmed, I will also represent the United States before the Principality of Andorra. Situated in the Pyrenees Mountains, this breathtaking country is also rich with history and culture. Andorra has been a reliable partner in key votes at the United Nations and other important international fora. It has taken great strides in diversifying its economy. The embassy works closely with our Andorran partners on educational exchanges and trade promotion. If confirmed, I will be honored to represent U.S. interests in the Principality of Andorra and to build our long friendship and close bilateral cooperation.

Distinguished Senators, I would like to thank you again for your time. I began by talking about our shared journey. My family and I have been blessed in so many ways. We owe so much to America. If you will honor me, I pledge to give my all to strengthen and advance the partnership with our long-term and unwavering friends, Spain and Andorra. I welcome your comments, questions, and a continued relationship. Thank you. And God bless America.

[Mr. Buchan's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD DUKE BUCHAN III

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy and distinguished members of the committee. And another special thanks to you, Chairman Johnson for your personal introduction and for your support.

It is a great honor to appear before this distinguished committee. I am humbled to be President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and the Principality of Andorra. I am deeply grateful to President Trump for his confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to represent the interests of the United States of America, and to further enhance our strong partnerships with these two great nations.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy and distinguished members of the committee, I want to start by thanking each of you for your service to our great nation. We need public service now more than ever, and as an American I want to say how much I appreciate all that you do for this country that we love.

Each of us has followed a unique path to public service. As a 10th generation North Carolinian who grew up on a tobacco and cattle farm, I know that I am here because of the people and the land that nurtured me. I would like to recognize those in attendance here today: my amazing wife Hannah; my three dear children Cate, Beau and John; and my charming and insightful mother Betty. My father is here in spirit. I would also like to take a moment to remember my grandmother who taught me that I have two ears and one mouth and that I should use them accordingly. The lessons my family and community have taught me—including the importance of hard work, of listening to and respecting others, of dreaming big—will con-

tinue to guide and inspire me if I am allowed to represent the United States of America overseas.

If confirmed, I look forward to joining the extraordinary team from the State Department led by Secretary Tillerson and the many other U.S. agencies that work together to represent our nation around the globe. The staff of the U.S. Mission to Spain works diligently to serve American citizens, promote American business and advance U.S. interests. I am awed by the talent of these patriots. I also want to recognize their families who serve alongside them with equal honor, dedication and commitment. My career in international finance has focused on building bridges often between diverse individuals and groups to bring out the best in others to solve problems. I hope to apply those skills leading Mission Spain.

Global engagement is vital to America's success. Our international relationships impact all levels of our economy, our national security and our shared responsibility to address the world's toughest problems. My three decades of work in Spain, other European countries, Latin America and Asia have taught me the importance of listening to and learning from others to forge solutions. If confirmed, this experience and international perspective will be vital to my role as a U.S, Ambassador.

The opportunity to serve my country as U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and the Principality of Andorra is a dream come true. I have loved Spain since my childhood, when I first read about that faraway land of Don Quixote and Picasso in the World Book Encyclopedia. In 1980, as an eager and curious high school student, I first convinced my parents to let me study abroad at La Universidad de Valencia.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I double majored in Spanish and economics, studying an entire academic year at La Universidad de Sevilla. In the years since, my family has worked to strengthen ties to Spain and Latin American countries by establishing The Buchan Excellence Fund, which is UNC's single largest endowment focused on Spanish languages, literature and culture. It embodies my conviction that knowledge, understanding and, above all, human connections, are the keys to success in business, diplomacy and life. One of our Fund's hallmark projects is 21st Century Pen Pals, a video exchange program between American and Spanish schoolchildren. As a family we have a deep appreciation, respect and love for the Spanish people and culture. It is only surpassed by our love for the United States.

Few countries are as united in history and culture as Spain and the United States. These centuriesold ties have only strengthened in recent years as Spain has become one of our chief allies in the fight against terrorism, and the broader effort to uphold democracy and to promote prosperity around the globe. We could not ask for a better partner. It is an alliance based on shared values, respect and collaboration.

Sadly, Spain, like America, has faced terror attacks at home, most recently in Barcelona. As we share their grief, we deeply admire their resolve in the face of evil. And just as we do, Spain understands this is a global conflict, bravely committing blood and treasure to combat terror around the world. It is a significant contributor to NATO, EU and U.N. peacekeeping missions. There are currently 3,000 Spanish troops deployed overseas, including in the Baltics, Turkey and West Africa. For over 60 years Spain has been a welcoming host to our military, and today, we have more than 4,000 personnel based there. Rota Naval Station and Morθn Air Base are essential for major coalition operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and West Africa. We thank the Spanish government and people for their support. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen these historic ties as we confront our common enemies.

The Trump administration is keenly aware that these efforts involve not just the military but law enforcement as well; and it is appreciative of Spain's work. We rely on Spain to help us track and apprehend foreign fighters. Spanish authorities have also worked closely with the DEA to battle the scourge of drugs. If confirmed, I will enhance this robust cooperation.

As I know first-hand from my years as a global investor, Spain is a vital economic partner. The United States and Spain generated $24 billion in two-way goods trade in 2016. Spain is our 9th largest source of foreign direct investment. Its total capital investment in the U.S. exceeds $72 billion; U.S. subsidiaries of Spanish firms employ more than 80,000 U.S. workers in financial services, construction, alternative energy, tourism and consumables. My career has been built on finding and pursuing opportunities. With Spain's economy predicted to grow at over three percent this year, if confirmed, I will strive to increase Spanish investment in the U.S. and to increase opportunities for U.S. businesses in Spain.

Our human connections to Spain are deep and meaningful, stretching back to before the founding of our Republic. They remain strong today because of our shared values and interests. Over two million Americans traveled to Spain last year to ex-

plore its rich culture and beautiful landscape. Approximately 770,000 Spaniards visit the U.S. each year, spending about $1.7 billion. Over 28,000 Americans study in Spain each year and around 6,600 Spaniards study in the U.S. More than 200,000 Americans live in Spain. If confirmed, the safety and security of these American citizens will be a top priority.

We can also rely on Spain to share our broader geopolitical interests. Spain has been a reliable backer of EU sanctions against Russia and supports implementation of the Minsk agreement even as it shares our desire to find areas of common ground with Russia where appropriate. Spain is a strong supporter of tough, effective sanctions enforcement, and recently took action to enhance pressure on North Korea. Spain is also an important partner in seeking democratic reforms in Venezuela, and remains a strong voice within the EU for sanctions and other measures. If confirmed, I will vigorously represent our policies to insure that the United States and Spain continue to work together closely.

While I have spoken much of Spain, if confirmed, I will also represent the United States before the Principality of Andorra. Situated in the Pyrenees Mountains, this breathtaking country is also rich with history and culture. Andorra has been a reliable partner in key votes at the United Nations and other important international fora. It has also advanced its fight against money laundering and is diversifying its economy. These steps have already borne fruit in a revitalized and increasingly outward-looking market. The Embassy works closely with our Andorran partners on educational exchanges and trade promotion. If confirmed, I will be honored to represent U.S. interests in the Principality of Andorra and to build on our long friendship and close bilateral cooperation.

Distinguished Senators, I would like again to thank you for your time. I began by talking about our shared journey. My family and I have been blessed in so many ways. We owe so much to America. If you will honor me, I pledge to give my all to strengthen and advance the partnership with our long-term and unwavering friends, Spain and Andorra. I welcome your comments, questions and a continued relationship. Thank you. And God bless America.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Buchan. We would all do well to heed your grandmother's advice.

Our next nominee is Mr. Richard Grenell, and Mr. Grenell is the President's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Germany. Mr. Grenell is a foreign policy writer and commentator. He founded the international consulting firm, Capital Media Partners, in 2010. For nearly 2 decades, he has served as the primary communications advisor for public officials at the local, State, federal, and international levels, as well as for a Fortune 200 company. Mr. Grenell is the longest-serving United States spokesman of the United States having served four U.S. Ambassadors. Mr. Grenell?

STATEMENT OF RICHARD GRENELL, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Mr. GRENELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and members of the committee.

First, let me say that I greatly appreciate the time and commitment you all have made to serve the American people. I am thankful for the sacrifices you and your families have made throughout your tenure in public office.

I would also like to express my gratitude to President Trump for his confidence in me. I am honored and humbled to be here today.

The United States truly is the land of opportunity. The fact that I sit before you all today is a testament to this country's outstanding potential. This country has provided me with every opportunity, from my days growing up in western Michigan to the life I have built with my partner in California. I owe so much to our great Nation.

With your consent, I pledge to return the favor. I pledge to serve this country and its interests with honor and distinction. I pledge to respect its Constitution, and I pledge to uphold its values, spreading our deeply-held commitment to democracy, freedom, and human rights. With your consent, I will commit myself to the interests of this great Nation on behalf of all Americans as the Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany.

All of us owe a great deal to those who helped us along the way. I am here today with my partner of 15 years, Matt Lashey. I want to publicly thank Matt for his many sacrifices, but most of all, for his incredible love and support. Throughout every challenge and opportunity that I have faced, including cancer, Matt has supported and encouraged me every step of the way. I would not be able to serve the President nor the American people without Matt's commitment by my side. Thank you.

I must also add a thank you to my father, who would have been sitting right next to Matt if he were alive today, and to my mom watching from Michigan.

If confirmed, I would be honored to once again have the opportunity to serve at the State Department. For 8 years, I served on the Executive Management Team at the United States Mission to the Europe, serving at the pleasure of four different—in fact, very different—U.S. Ambassadors.

I know personally how stressful the arrival of a new ambassador can be for embassy and consulate staff. With your consent, I look forward to making that transition a smooth and enjoyable process for the many courageous and patriotic Americans serving their country throughout Germany.

If confirmed, I will seek to deepen and strengthen the historic relationship between Washington and Berlin. Our two great nations share an unbreakable bond, and I look forward to strengthening these ties while championing the values of diversity, transparency, and fairness. In addition to the embassy in Berlin and the five consular offices, Germany is home to more than 30,000 American men and women serving in the U.S. military. If confirmed, I will make their safety and security a top priority.

This past Sunday, the German people went to the polls and exercised their right to a representative government in a free and fair election. Chancellor Merkel is now negotiating to form a new government. Whatever the makeup of the new German governing coalition, I look forward to representing the American people as we deepen our powerful and unbreakable bond with the German people.

If confirmed, I commit to broadening cooperation surrounding our shared goals of security and prosperity. As we seek to remain competitive and safe in an ever-changing world, we must look to strengthen those elements of friendship which have so greatly benefited both nations. We must increase our trade and economic relationships, expand our information sharing, and find new, innovative ways to strengthen our alliance and further the interests of peace around the world.

But knowing that freedom is not free, I will also commit to working with the Chancellor and the new governing coalition to increase the pace at which Germany moves to meet its commitments to

NATO. But in doing so, I will reinforce to the German people our Nation's commitment to a strong, united West. No other nation will disrupt this important bond that we share.

I am honored to be here today at the pleasure of the President, and I look forward to answering your questions and hearing your suggestions.

[Mr. Grenell's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD GRENELL

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, first, let me say that I greatly appreciate the time and commitment you all have made to serve the American people. I am thankful for the sacrifices you and your families have made throughout your tenure in public office.

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With your consent, I pledge to return the favor. I pledge to serve this country and its interests with honor and distinction; I pledge to respect its constitution; and I pledge to uphold its values, spreading our deeply-held commitment to democracy, freedom, and human rights. With your consent, I will commit myself to the interests of this great nation, on behalf of all Americans, as the Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany.

All of us owe a great deal to those who helped us along the way. I am here today with my partner of 15 years, Matt Lashey. I want to publicly thank Matt for his many sacrifices, but most of all, for his incredible love and support. Throughout every challenge and opportunity, Matt has supported and encouraged me every step of the way. I would not be able to serve the President and the American people without Matt's commitment and help.

I must also add a thank you to my father, who would have been here sitting right next to Matt if he were alive today. I am so thankful for all my loving family members, who are watching today's proceedings from Michigan, California, Minnesota, and New Jersey.

If confirmed, I would be honored to once again have the opportunity to serve at the State Department. For eight years, I served on the Executive Management Team at the United States Mission to the United Nations, serving at the pleasure of four different—in fact, very different— U.S. Ambassadors.

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But, knowing that freedom is not free, I will commit to working with the Chancellor and the new governing coalition to increase the pace at which Germany moves to meet its commitments to NATO.

But in doing so, I will reinforce to the German people our nation's commitment to a strong, united West. No other nation will disrupt the important bond we share with one of our strongest, most dependable global allies.

I am honored to be here today at the pleasure of the President, and I thank you for your time. I look forward to answering your questions and hearing your suggestions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Grenell.

Our next nominee is Ms. Jamie McCort. Ms. McCourt is the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to France. Ms. McCourt is an entrepreneur, an attorney, and has founded leading entrepreneurial enterprises in Los Angles and Boston. She is a former co-owner, President and CEO of the Los Angeles Dodgers. She also serves as an adjunct professor at the UCLA Anderson School of Management. Ms. McCourt possesses a unique global perspective, having lived and worked both domestically and abroad in numerous industries, including sports, law, finance, education, and real estate. Ms. McCourt?

STATEMENT OF JAMIE McCOURT, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO

Ms. MCCOURT. Thank you, Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee. It is my great honor to be here today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to France and Monaco. I am extraordinarily grateful to the President for this opportunity to serve the American people as his envoy to our oldest and certainly one of our closest allies.

Knowing I have not made this journey alone, I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to my parents who are first-generation Americans, born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, as was I, and to my four best start-ups, my four boys, Drew, Travis, Casey, and Gavin, two of whom are here today.

As the first person in my family to attend college, I received a B.S. in French here at Georgetown University with a year at La Sorbonne in Paris, a J.D. from University of Maryland School of Law and ultimately an M.S. in management from the MIT/Sloan School of Management. And as you said, I have been an adjunct professor teaching leadership at UCLA/Anderson Business School of Management. I obviously believe education is the great equalizer.

I believe in the opportunity to succeed through hard work, determination, and initiative. In other words, I believe in the American dream. Therefore, I am deeply honored to be here and incredibly touched to have the opportunity, if confirmed, to give back to and serve my country.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into World War I. Beginning in 1917, American and French soldiers

fought side by side and died together in defense of a free and peaceful Europe.

President Trump's visit to Paris in July as President Macron's guest of honor during the National Day celebrations, commemorating the centennial anniversary of this U.S. entry into the war, was a vivid reminder of that sacrifice in defense of our common values.

A few decades later, in 1941, the United States went to war again, and Americans once more fought and died to defend and liberate European allies. One of those soldiers was my uncle, killed in action at the age of 27, leaving behind two young babies.

Having grown up listening to my mostly stoic father tearfully reminisce whenever he spoke of his older brother, and having been extremely close to my grandmother, I have always felt a special connection to Europe and to the purpose for which my uncle gave his life. The thought of serving as an ambassador in Europe, therefore, is particularly personal for me and my family, and it would be the greatest honor of my life if confirmed for this position.

Following World War I and World War II, America's alliance with France has only grown stronger as we, together with France and our other allies, founded NATO to ensure a secure, free, and prosperous future for our descendants.

If confirmed, I pledge to do everything in my power to continue to nurture our crucial alliance with France, and together we will address challenges to our global security, including ensuring a strong and capable NATO alliance, combating terrorism, hastening the defeat of ISIS, countering Russian malign influence, stepping up pressure on North Korea, and improving nuclear security.

In fact, France is our most capable and willing ally in support of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in Syria and Iraq through air strikes, aircraft carrier deployments, and training of operational forces on the ground; through Defeat-ISIS efforts in Libya; and through its lead in sub-Saharan Africa where it combats violent extremism and illicit trafficking through Operation Barkhane.

France is in support of countering Iran's malign activities including development of nuclear weapons capabilities and advocates for security policy reform at the EU level, leading efforts to tighten boarder security and promote better information sharing among member states to meet evolving terrorist threats. France, along with Germany, participates in the Normandy format to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

As well, France is a key partner in America's prosperity, and if confirmed, I will work assiduously to promote American exports to France and French investments in the United States.

Today, France is the fifth largest investor in the U.S. and our eighth largest trading partner. French investment in the U.S. supports approximately 574,000 jobs. Over $1 billion in commercial transactions take place every single day between our two countries.

As someone who has long been involved in business ventures myself, including as the co-owner, President and CEO of the Los Angeles Dodgers, as well as through my investments in high-value real estate, biotech ventures, technology start-ups, and even art, I would like to further expand this relationship to provide new business opportunities.

Additionally, if confirmed, I look forward to nurturing our relationship with the Principality of Monaco and working together with His Serene Highness Prince Albert and his government to further our joint objectives. Monaco has been a trusted partner for the United States in advancing our shared interest in a secure and prosperous world.

Moreover, the Department of State's highest calling is to protect U.S. citizens abroad. The horrific terror attacks in France that claimed the lives of innocent people and injured countless others, including Americans, are a stark reminder of our overarching duty to protect our citizens.

If confirmed, I will consider my primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the embassy community and of all U.S. citizens in France and Monaco. I assure you our mission and its staff will have no higher priority.

If confirmed, I will lead the mission to do everything possible to support French efforts to prevent another tragedy. To this end, I will seek to deepen U.S.-French counterterrorism cooperation and information sharing so that violent extremists in Europe will not be able to threaten the U.S. homeland.

In closing, the U.S. partnership and alliance with France is a cornerstone of our cooperation with Europe.

Drawing on the strength of the entire U.S. Government, including the dedicated officers of our U.S. Foreign Service and the many talented individuals representing multiple agencies of our government in France, I would, if confirmed, work every day to advance our mutual interests in a secure and prosperous world.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with all of you to further enhance the relationship between the United States and France and Monaco.

[Ms. McCourt's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMIE MCCOURT

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, it is my great honor to be here today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to France and Monaco. I am extraordinarily grateful to the President for this opportunity to serve the American people as his envoy to our oldest and certainly one of our closest allies.

Knowing I have not made this journey alone, I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to my parents, who are first-generation Americans, born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, as was I, and to my four best start-ups, my four boys, Drew, Travis, Casey, and Gavin.

As the first person in my family to attend college, I received a B.S. in French at Georgetown University, with a year at La Sorbonne in Paris, a J.D. from University of Maryland School of Law and ultimately a M.S. in Management from the MIT/Sloan School of Management and having been an adjunct professor teaching leadership at UCLA/Anderson School of Management, I obviously believe education is the great equalizer.

I believe in the opportunity to succeed through hard work, determination and initiative; in other words, I believe in the American Dream. Therefore, I am deeply honored to be here and incredibly touched to have the opportunity, if confirmed, to give back to and serve my country.

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As someone who has long been involved in business ventures myself, including as the Co-Owner, President and CEO of the Los Angeles Dodgers, as well as through my investments in high-value real estate, biotechnology ventures, technology startups, and even art, I would like to further expand this relationship to provide new business opportunities.

Additionally, if confirmed, I look forward to nurturing our relationship with the Principality of Monaco, and working together with His Serene Highness Prince Albert and his government to further our joint objectives. Monaco has been a trusted partner for the United States in advancing our shared interest in a secure and prosperous world.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with all

of you to further enhance the relationships between the United States and France and Monaco.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. McCourt.

Last but not least, our final nominee is Mr. Edward McMullen, Jr. Mr. McMullen is the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Mr. McMullen has served in public policy, political, and business positions for over 30 years. He is currently President of McMullen Public Affairs, a full-service advertising and corporate public affairs company. His firm's clients have included several Fortune 100 companies. Mr. McMullen has been appointed to serve on key South Carolina statewide boards and commissions. Mr. McMullen?

STATEMENT OF EDWARD T. McMULLEN, JR., OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SWISS CONFEDERATION, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

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

I would also like to thank Senator Graham for his kind introduction. He is a good friend and I am thankful he took the time to be here.

It is an honor and quite humbling to be with you today as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Thank you for this opportunity to offer my thoughts and to answer any questions that you may have.

There are many who have joined me in this journey, and I would like to express my love and thanks to my wife of 28 years, Margaret Ann, who is here today; our two children, Thomas and Katherine are in Charleston and Los Angeles with career and college commitments; and my parents, in-laws, extended family and friends, including my Hampden-Sydney College professors, all of whom selflessly inspired me in ways that made today possible.

I consider it a great privilege, if confirmed by the Senate, to represent our country in Switzerland and Liechtenstein to articulate the President's and Congress' positions on pressing international issues, and foster, at every opportunity, improved diplomatic relations and deeper economic and cultural connections. Happily, in the case of Switzerland and Liechtenstein, we build on a very strong foundation.

In 1995, I visited Switzerland for the second time, after being selected to be a part of the American-Swiss Foundation's young leaders program. I joined an accomplished group of young Americans and Swiss business and political leaders who inspired my interest and love for this impressive country and her people. The program was comprehensive, and participants interacted directly with Swiss businesses and government, from the highest level CEOs to important government officials.

Please allow me to offer a few observations about Switzerland. Since I come from the private sector, I will start with a private sector fact that I hope you will find as impressive as I do.

Switzerland is the seventh largest direct investor in the United States, this from a country the size of Maryland and a population of 8 million people. This one fact tells us a lot about Switzerland, not least of all that the Swiss have found a great formula for success. But this also tells us that Swiss companies are creating jobs in the United States and that there is extensive and mutually beneficial economic activity between our countries, and I look forward to having the opportunity to build on that, if confirmed by the Senate.

However, our ties are not only economic. Switzerland is a constitutional republic. Its constitution is modeled on ours. We share common values, including respect for rule of law and the notion that government is responsible to the people. Switzerland is neutral, but it is a natural friend because of the values and constitutional principles that we share. To the extent there are areas of dispute and conflict, we share a common vocabulary for its resolution.

This is an area where the Swiss excel. In international relations, Swiss good offices have proved vitally important over and over. It is important that the U.S. work closely with Switzerland in addressing a wide variety of international challenges.

One final observation. Switzerland is an acknowledged superpower in both applied and basic research. It is not an accident that European nuclear research entity, CERN, and its Hadron collider are located in Switzerland, or that the Swiss have shrewdly placed a research-centric consulate literally halfway between Harvard and MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. If confirmed, I will work to build ever closer ties between the United States, Swiss, and Liechtensteiner communities, particularly in the research area, particularly in promoting also apprenticeships between our three countries.

I recognize that a key role for the U.S. Ambassador is to explain American foreign policy as it is defined by the President. Part of doing that, if confirmed, will be to reach out and directly communicate with Swiss officials, business people, and citizens. I am confident my prior experience in public relations and communications will prove helpful, and I commit to you that I will devote the time and energy necessary to mastering the details of my job. I also commit to ensure that, if confirmed, the concerns of this committee will be heard and respected.

Before closing, I would like to note that, if confirmed, I will eagerly draw on the strength of the entire U.S. Government, including the devoted officers of our U.S. Foreign Service and the many talented individuals representing multiple agencies of our federal government. While serving as part of our mission in Switzerland, I would, if confirmed as Ambassador, endeavor to deepen our partnership so as to respond effectively to regional and global challenges.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve our great country in a new and demanding capacity. Mr. Chairman, members

of the committee, thank you, and I would be very pleased to answer any questions.

[Mr. McMullen's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EDWARD T. MCMULLEN, JR.

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, It is an honor and quite humbling to be with you today as the President's nominee to be the US Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Thank your for this opportunity to offer my thoughts and to answer any questions you may have.

There are many who have joined me in this journey and I would like to express my love and thanks to my wife of 28 years, Margaret Ann, who is here today—our two children, Thomas and Katherine are in Charleston and Los Angeles with career and college commitments, and my parents, in-laws, extended family and friends including my Hampden-Sydney College professors, all of whom selflessly inspired me in ways that made today possible.

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One final observation—Switzerland is an acknowledged superpower in both applied and basic research. It's not an accident that the European nuclear research entity, CERN, and its Hadron collider, are located in Switzerland-or that the Swiss have shrewdly placed a research-centric consulate literally halfway between Harvard and MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. If confirmed, I will work to build ever closer ties between the U.S./Swiss and Liechtensteiner research communities, particularly in promoting apprenticeships between our countries.

I recognize that a key role for the U.S. Ambassador is to explain American foreign policy as it is defined by the President. Part of doing that, if confirmed, will be to reach out and directly communicate with Swiss officials, business people, and citizens. I am confident my prior experience in public relations and communications will prove helpful and I commit to you that I will devote the time and energy necessary to mastering the details of my job. I also commit to ensure that, if confirmed, the concerns of this committee will be heard and respected.

Before closing, I would like to note that if confirmed, I will eagerly draw on the strength of the entire U.S. government, including the devoted officers of our U.S. Foreign Service and the many talented individuals representing multiple agencies of our federal government. While serving as part of our Mission in Switzerland, I would, if confirmed as Ambassador, endeavor to deepen our partnership so as to respond effectively to regional and global challenges.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve our great country in a new (and demanding) capacity. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. McMullen.

I want to thank all of you for your opening statements.

I have got just kind of a basic opening question here, and I will start with Congressman Hoekstra. If confirmed for this position, can you tell me really what your top priority will be as Ambassador to the country you will be representing?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The top priority would be making sure that the post in The Hague is a very effective, functioning team, to make sure that the other priorities that we are working on, whether it is economic cooperation and development between us and The Netherlands, national security cooperation, and those types of things, fighting the war on extremism, that we can effectively execute each of those three missions. But the bottom line is we need an effective team working together in The Hague.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Buchan?

Mr. BUCHAN. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

As we all know, Spain has been a tremendous ally for a very long time to America.

My priorities would be, first and foremost, to protect American people in Spain. Then security and economic prosperity are two areas I would like to work on, as well as cultural and arts. But I do think there is a lot to do in both security and particularly economic prosperity, and those would be my two primary focuses, as well as anything else the administration would ask me to do.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Grenell?

Mr. GRENELL. Thank you, Senator.

My top priority is going to be security and safety for embassy and consular staff, first and foremost. After that, I think the German-U.S. relationship is so strong that I want to further the ties in every area, whether it be economic prosperity, information sharing, human rights. I think I am lucky in that this bond that we have with the Germans is very strong, and I want to make sure that we make it even stronger.

Senator JOHNSON. Ms. McCourt?

Ms. MCCOURT. For certain, the very top priority is to ensure the safety of those in the mission and then all Americans in all of France, and also to prevent, to the extent possible, and to work towards preventing anything happening to the U.S. homeland.

That said, it is obvious counterterrorism and countering global security issues is of the utmost importance, including supporting NATO, and thereafter promoting trade and investment, which I know is high on the administration's agenda.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. McMullen?

Mr. MCMULLEN. Senator, I think continuing to build on the Swiss-Liechtenstein-U.S. relationship is critical. And in doing that, if you look at the economic side with jobs, the President has made job creation a major component of his administration. Swiss investment in the U.S. with 480,000 jobs, many of which are high tech, great jobs that pay well over $100,000 in salary—I think this is an area that we really can expand. And I look forward to Swiss busi-

ness, Liechtensteiner business, and investing in the U.S., continuing that investment and building on it.

Senator JOHNSON. So let us go down the line again in terms of what is the top area of cooperation economically with those countries? Congressman Hoekstra?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Well, the Dutch cooperate with us on a number of areas, in terms of the economy, whether it is agricultural issues, technology issues, water management, and those types of things. Those are the areas where we have cooperated and I think provide an opportunity for additional investment, additional exploration.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Buchan?

Mr. BUCHAN. Thank you, Senator.

You know, the Spaniards have been very active investing in banking, construction, consumables, et cetera. It would be my goal to continue to work along those industries. And I think in particular there is an opportunity in energy, and that is an area that I would really like to pursue.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Grenell?

Mr. GRENELL. I would say the first two are energy, specifically liquid natural gas, and expand the auto trade. As you know, Senator, there is an enormous German trade surplus, and I look forward to the Commerce Department coming out with a report later on that trade deficit report, which would give us a lot more information.

Senator JOHNSON. Ms. McCourt?

Ms. MCCOURT. France has a broad goods and services reach, and I would say that certainly it reaches into the air space and the military space, the IT space, the pharma space, and definitely increasingly in the energy space.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. McMullen?

Mr. MCMULLEN. Mr. Chairman, I think trade with Switzerland, for a small country the size of Maryland, is pretty impressive. And when you look at the types of trade, it is pharmaceuticals, aerospace, gold, chemicals, and something that Americans seem to enjoy, their Rolex and their Patek Philippes. So I think that is one of the great Swiss assets that we have got, and it is a major trading opportunity for the U.S.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, thank you. I have efficiently used my time. Senator Murphy?

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

I enjoyed all of your opening comments. Again, I appreciate your willingness to serve.

Ms. McCourt, let me start with you. Russia used very familiar cyber espionage tactics to try to manipulate France's recent national election, tactics that we saw employed here in the United States in 2016. Unfortunately, nearly half of U.S. voters today do not believe that Russia interfered in the 2016 election, largely because our President regularly calls reports of that interference a hoax.

So I wanted to ask you two questions. One, what is your personal view of the extent of Russia's interference in the 2016 election? Do you believe it happened? And if so, what do you think that we can do with France to make sure that it does not happen again either here or in France?

Ms. MCCOURT. Thank you for your question, Senator.

By all accounts from multiple intelligence agencies, it appears that Russia attempted to interfere with our elections. That is my personal view.

As to what can be done about it in terms of working with France, I believe we need to leverage our information sharing. We need to share watch lists. We need to deal with anything that comes across our way that further enhances relationships so that we can figure out where these things are coming from. And the cyber issue is a huge issue.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you for that response.

I would add to that having a coordinated strategy of repercussions for Russian individuals and Russian entities that have tried to interfere in both of our elections. I think that will be a key point of cooperation with the French as well.

Mr. Grenell, you and I had the chance to talk about this subject, and I want to bring it up in open session. You have had a lot of experience that prepares you for this very important role of being Ambassador to one of the United States' key transatlantic allies. But there are few professions that probably prepare you worse for being a diplomat than being a cable news commentator. You, in that role or connected to that role, have said some very inflammatory things that will be brought with you, whether you like it or not, as you seek to represent the United States of America in Germany.

In particular, there is a litany of very derogatory comments about women's personal appearances in your portfolio. I am not going to read through them, but they include derogatory comments about personal appearances of Hillary Clinton, Madeleine Albright, Calista Gingrich, Rachel Maddow.

Do you regret making these statements? And do you understand the concern some of us have about these inflammatory statements coming with you as you seek to represent the United States as a whole in Germany?

Mr. GRENELL. Thank you, Senator, for that question and for the chance and opportunity to speak to it.

First of all, let me say I never want to be mean. I am not that guy. It is certainly never my intentions to hurt anyone's feelings. Anybody who knows me knows that I am a very caring person and very sensitive person. And I also appreciate good humor. Unfortunately, there are times where what was intended to be humorous turned out to be not so humorous.

Again, that was never my intention, and I regret that and want to make sure that you understand that I view my career in two different phases: one, for almost 16 years as a U.S. official working for State and local in international work. That includes 8 years at the UN. In that capacity, I understood that when you are speaking as a U.S. official, it is not your opinion that you are pushing, but it is a well thought-out U.S. policy. I can simply say that going back into the State Department, I look forward to taking on that role again where it is a well thought-out U.S. policy not my personal opinion.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Grenell.

Permit me to ask one quick question of Mr. Buchan.

You rightly referenced the important counterterrorism work that we have to do with Spain. Do you have any thoughts in your preparation for this role about the importance of information sharing within Europe with respect to terrorist threats and the importance of the United States pressing the Europeans to talk to each other in a much more coordinated way to make sure that the information that we are ultimately getting is the result of a collaborative process. The bilateral relationship is important, but pressing our European partners to work better in coordination, especially those like Spain that are under a direct counterterrorism threat, seems important as well. I wanted to raise that issue with you to see if you had considered it.

Mr. BUCHAN. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

What I do know is that the information sharing between Spain and the United States is quite strong. Again, they have been a tremendous ally and friend. So I believe that relationship is there. Certainly in all situations, there is room for improvement.

To the extent that the administration or Senators such as yourself view this as a high priority, of course, I will do my best to execute on that.

As far as specifics between Spain and the rest of Europe, candidly I have not had privy to that information at this point in time. But if it is important to people in the administration and people in this room, we certainly will make it a top priority.

And again, thank you for that question.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And congratulations to each of the nominees. Not only is it a real honor to carry the title of ambassador, should you be confirmed, but you are also going to work with great people.

And I will tell you something that I always do when I travel. I go to missions and I ask to meet with first and second tour Foreign Service officers without the Ambassador present. So these are people who are new in their career at the State Department. This is what I say to them. I say congratulations. You have gotten a job that is really hard to get. What will make the difference between you staying at this job and making a career out of it or leaving after a few years? And then I do not have to say anything more, and we have about a 2-hour discussion that is fascinating. Not anybody has yet said you got to change out my ambassador. That is going to be make or break.

They instead bring up all kinds of issues. And a lot of them kind of go to an issue that I hope you will all be mindful of if you are confirmed, and that is they say to me some version of this. It was really hard to get this job, and I had to go through pretty intense security vetting to do it. And now I am in the job but I get micromanaged. So like to order five pencils, I have to take a lie detector test. If you trusted me enough to vet me to do the job, trust me enough to do the job. And I think you have this great group of people. The sky is the limit in terms of of what they can do and the effectiveness, and they sometimes feel really weighted down by the kinds of things that often happen in large organizations. So just

please recognize the quality of the people you have in your various posts and let them be all they can be.

I am going to confine my question to Mr. Buchan because this U.S.-Spain relationship is really important to me too, and you have a really great background for this position. There is a 501(c)(3) organization called the U.S.-Spain Council that was created in the 1990s, and the tradition is that the U.S. chair is a Senator and the Spanish chair is an industrialist. Currently I am the U.S. chair, completing my fourth and final year as chair. The Spanish chair, Jose Manuel Entrecanales, is the CEO of Acciona, which is a large Spanish infrastructure firm.

It was created at a time when the relationship had challenges. Spain was having fairly common street protests and riots about whether they should stay in NATO. And over the course of the 25 years of the organization, it has really built up to be a very effective organization. We just had our annual meeting this past weekend in Williamsburg, and we had Secretary Mattis talking about the future of NATO. We had the Spanish American chef Jose Andres talking about shared culture. It has really turned into something strong.

The U.S. Ambassador to Spain always participates. The King and Queen of Spain often participate. And so I would just hope to see you in your capacity as Ambassador, Mr. Buchan, should you be confirmed, in future years' meetings.

And then really just one question. I think it is an opportunity, a really important one, for the U.S. and Spain right now. I know Prime Minister Rajoy was with the President yesterday in the Oval Office. By all accounts, that meeting went well.

And the opportunity that I think is a shared one is Puerto Rico. So obviously, Spain and the United States both have deep, deep historical connections to Puerto Rico. Spain—through the settlement in the 1530s, Puerto Ricans are Americans and have been since the early 1900s. Puerto Ricans volunteer and serve in our military to a degree virtually more than just about any other State, patriotic Americans who are suffering one of the worst humanitarian crises in any part of this country probably in our history.

There is going to be a tremendous need to rebuild Puerto Rico, infrastructure, hospitals, electricity, ports, airports, roads. Spaniards are excellent at infrastructure. The chair of the U.S.-Spain Council is an infrastructure guy. One of the three topics that we had this weekend in Williamsburg was about infrastructure. Virginia does public-private partnerships in a really interesting way. I did it when I was Governor. And often it was the Spaniards who were the contracting firms and the Australians who would figure out how to finance the deals, and we would do these projects in Virginia.

I think there is a critical humanitarian need to really be firm in our commitment to the Americans in Puerto Rico and to help rebuild. And I think the Spaniards not only have expertise but have a real deep cultural interest in this, and there might be some wonderful opportunities right out of the gate for a U.S. Ambassador to work together to help forge partnerships to do it. And I just wanted to put that on the table and say I think there is going to be a great

opportunity immediately, and I would love to work together with you on a matter like that, should you be confirmed.

Mr. BUCHAN. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

I too agree that there is a great opportunity here. We can certainly address the human needs. It is all about building bridges in opinion and making the human connection. And this sounds like a great idea. We know that some of the largest construction and infrastructure firms in the world are based in Spain. We also know that some of those are based in the United States. So I look forward to working with you and whomever else on this fantastic idea. And thank you for that.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you so much.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Markey?

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

And congratulations to each of you on this nomination.

Jamie McCourt I have known for decades and her background is very diverse. She brings a life of very, very interesting and I think instructive life experience that can help her be a very good Ambassador for our country to France. One of her sons—she talked about her four sons, her start-ups. One of them was an intern in my office 10 years ago. So I have known the family for a long time.

So I guess my first question I will just throw to you because you are arriving just as President Macron is really beginning his presidency and saying that he wants to reinvigorate the EU, that he wants to reexamine its institutions. People on this committee do believe in a strong EU–American partnership. It has been basically the cornerstone of civilization since World War II.

Can you talk about what you think the role of the United States can be in partnering with France to strengthen the EU in the years ahead?

Ms. MCCOURT. First, Senator, thank you for those wonderful words. I hope I live up to it, should I be confirmed.

And second, yes, I would love to address your question. I think where we share a lot of value and values is with free trade, and I know that President Macron is a strong advocate of free trade within the EU and puts a lot of pressure on others in the EU in that regard, and I think that is incredibly helpful.

I think that there is a great respect for goods trade, services, capital, and all of the things that we also care about. And I think that it is very important that we work together to ensure that there is a very healthy trade between the EU and the United States.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Mr. Grenell, Russia has an increasingly aggressive military posture. They are in violation of the INF agreement. This increased tension is something that is obviously going to require U.S. and German partnership in order to deal with this changing Putin era of defense view of our relationship. Can you give us some sense of how you perceive the INF issue, what you would encourage the Germans to do in response to those violations, and how you might think that we could achieve that in a partnership between our country and the Germans?

Mr. GRENELL. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

I would first start by saying I spent 8 years at the U.N. working with the EU–3 and Germany very closely. So the Germans, the British, and the French I think are very keen on working together. Despite the issues that the EU are going through right now, I think we can rely on those three to really confront the Russia issue. I have been very encouraged by Chancellor Merkel even through this election with the possible coalition that is forming. They are all united, no matter what the coalition comes out to be, that Russia must be stopped, that the NATO alliance, that the European alliance is crucial. I look forward to working with the Germans to strengthen that. I know we have had some issues and I know Congress has some very specific issues on NATO spending, and I look forward to working with the Germans to increase that as well.

Senator MARKEY. Could you speak specifically to this INF issue, however, which is a cornerstone of security in the European theater?

Mr. GRENELL. Sure. Senator, I look forward to working with the team at the German mission. I look forward to working with the State Department on this issue. This is one issue that we have not been fully briefed on, and what I would want to do is have a very well thought-out U.S. policy on that.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Markey.

Senator Murphy does have a couple extra questions.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a few additional questions.

Congressman Hoekstra, good to see you. I would like to think that I set a trend here. I got to introduce my 2012 Senate opponent before the committee that was considering her nomination to be the Administrator of the SBA. And so I was glad to have Senator Stabenow here with you today giving you a similar ringing endorsement.

Here is my only question for you. I mentioned in my opening remarks that our unique partnership with Europe—and The Netherlands is clearly an important ally in Europe—is based on interests and values. And The Netherlands have some of the most progressive laws on LGBT rights in the world. Your personal and political views on that subject might not match up with those that are enshrined in the law there. Can you just speak to that issue and the concern that some of us may have about sending an ambassador who may bring with him or her a record on an issue that is very important your host country views you may not share?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Yes. I mean, the Dutch and the United States share a tradition of defending human rights, the value, the dignity of every individual. And so while my personal views may differ from where the Dutch have moved in terms of their public policy, the bottom line is my personal respect and value that I have for every single human being I think matches the Dutch very, very well. We may differ on some political processes or some political implementation of those values, but the fundamental respect for every individual is consistent. If confirmed, my job as the Ambassador is not to go and try to influence those. It is to respect the

decisions that they have made, that they believe are most appropriate for their country. And I will respect their decisions.

Senator MURPHY. Well said. Thank you.

Mr. Grenell, one final question on policy not on style. But one of the constant challenges in our relationship with Germany is making sure that they both walk the walk and talk the talk on the issue of energy independence. Ultimately Russia's ability to manipulate continental affairs in Europe is related to their continued ability to send large amounts of petroleum products into Europe. And one of the ways they are seeking to tighten that grip is a new pipeline called Nordstream II that would essentially allow them to circumvent Ukraine, thus frankly increasing their leverage over Ukraine, decreasing Ukraine's potential leverage over Russia.

I just want to ask if you are familiar with this product and how you see advocacy on the issue of stopping Nordstream II as part of your mission.

Mr. GRENELL. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Yes, I am familiar with this issue and I view it very much as a security issue. I think we can really make the case that having a broader energy policy for the Germans and for all of Europe is better for security. I look forward to making that case, working with the State Department. And I know the mission in Berlin is focused on it as well.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Again, I want to thank all of our witnesses, your willingness to serve, your families. Being Ambassador of the United States to these nations is a critical job. You need to represent American values to those countries, but it is also important that you recognize you have to represent their viewpoint back to the United States. It is really a two-way street.

So I was struck in my meetings with all of you—and I appreciate the time you took—that you have a great affinity for the countries that you have been nominated to represent. Many of you speak fluently the language, which is going to be extremely helpful. So I do commend President Trump on five, I think, very qualified decent human beings that are going to be America's representatives as Ambassadors to these nations. So again, thank you for your willingness to serve and sacrifice.

With that, the hearing record will remain open for 2 days until September 29th at 5:00 p.m. for the submission of statements and questions for the record.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO PETER HOEKSTRA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Human rights have been an important focus throughout my career. On my overseas trips, I would meet frequently with and advocate on behalf of those individuals and groups who face discrimination in their countries. Some of these included the Coptic Christians in Egypt and Chaldeans in Iraq. I also met secretly on occasion with these Christian communities because of the risk to them to meet with me publicly.

Since then, the conditions of Chaldeans have deteriorated significantly with the surge of ISIS in Iraq. I would like to believe that meeting with these Christians provided encouragement to them—they knew the U.S. Congress was interested in their situation.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in the Netherlands today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in the Netherlands and, working in partnership with the Dutch, to promote human rights around the globe? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Chapter 1 of the Constitution of the Netherlands codifies many human rights, and the Netherlands is signatory to all relevant international human rights instruments. In practice the Netherlands is a strong advocate of human rights globally. However, as in many countries, challenges remain.

The most significant human rights issue is increasing societal animosity and discrimination against members of certain ethnic and religious minority groups, particularly Muslim immigrants from North Africa, Turkey, and the Middle East, and rising anti-Semitism. There are also concerns about discriminatory rhetoric from far-right political party leaders and members. If confirmed, I will seek ways to cooperate with the Government of the Netherlands on these issues, as the Netherlands is also seeking ways to address these challenges. I will also work with my staff in our Mission to see what creative programming we can bring to bear in our outreach activities to promote religious tolerance and equality.

Question 3. 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 the Netherlands in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The Government of the Netherlands is a global leader in addressing human rights issues at home and around the world, and I commend their recent efforts such as their new national campaign featuring well-known personalities to "knock down" discrimination, and enhancements to their national action plan to counter discrimination, including stronger security for Jewish and Muslim communities. Countering societal discrimination in particular is a challenge for many countries, as it involves changing beliefs and attitudes toward other groups which are sometimes deep-rooted and often sparked by a lack of knowledge of the other. Building more communication channels and interfaith cooperation is a critical part of this, as well as economic and social integration. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the Netherland's efforts in dealing with this challenge; one that is occurring in many countries, where there has been an increase in migrants fleeing the violence and conflict in their home countries.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs from the Netherlands?

Answer. Yes. I recognize the value of meeting with civil society—not only to encourage those involved in this vital part of society but to also gain a better understanding of the dynamics, context, and environment related to a particular issue. Like many of our diplomatic missions overseas, the staff at our Mission The Hague already knows the critical role that civil society as a whole, including faith community members and leaders, plays in promoting human rights and accountability. Civil society engagement is a key part of Mission engagement with host countries around the world, and if confirmed, I would facilitate and strongly support this. As a member of the Executive Committee of the Netherlands American Foundation, I am fortunate to be in a position to reach out easily to NGOs here in the United States that may be involved or interested in the Netherlands.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the Netherlands to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted?

Answer. We are not aware of such cases in the Netherlands, but if confirmed I would engage, together with my embassy team, to address any cases of persons possibly unjustly targeted should such occasions arise.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. I will support my team in the Mission in the Netherlands in implementing the provisions outlined in the Leahy Law, which requires vetting of security force units including police and military who receive assistance from the United States. If there is credible information that a security force unit or individual committed gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible units and individuals do not receive U.S. assistance and assisting their respective governments in bringing them to justice.

Question 7. Will you engage with Dutch Government officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to ensuring our Mission remains engaged on these issues. As Secretary Tillerson has said, American leadership requires moral clarity. We are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned. No one should have to live in fear, worship in secret, or face discrimination because of his or her beliefs. If confirmed, I will ensure that engagement on human rights and good governance remains an integral component of our mission.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff members who come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the State Department?

Answer. Diversity is one of the things that makes America great. Throughout my career, both as a member of the House of Representatives and in the private sector, I have worked to ensure the organizations I led reflected the diversity of our country and upheld the principals of equal opportunity. If confirmed, I would uphold the same principles of equality and equal opportunity throughout Mission the Netherlands. As I stated in my testimony, I have a fundamental respect for every individual, and if confirmed, I will demonstrate that as Ambassador.

Question 9. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I understand the critical importance of ensuring Mission the Netherlands remains a welcoming and inclusive environment. If confirmed, I will not only lead by example, demonstrating my own commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, but I will also work with my Deputy Chief of Mission and Country Team to ensure that all Mission the Netherlands supervisors uphold equal employment opportunity principles. I will also direct our Mission managers responsible for hiring and recruitment to ensure that Embassy The Hague and Consulate General Amsterdam remain diverse and inclusive workplaces where all team members have an equal opportunity to achieve success.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Netherlands?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes companies that have a presence in the Netherlands, but I have worked closely with the State Department Ethics Office and the Office of Government Ethics and will divest my interests in those companies the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest, and I will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 13. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. I know of no significant change in my financial affairs since I filed my report. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 14. Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within the Netherlands for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to working closely with the Netherlands to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. Government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach with the Netherlands on sanctions, and I will continue to seek feedback from the Dutch, who have been reliable partners on Russia sanctions.

The Dutch are steadfast on Russian sanction issues, and we will continue to coordinate closely on these sanctions, which support our important, common work in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, opposing the Russian occupation of Crimea, and preventing future meddling by Russia in foreign elections-while also remaining vigilant against unintended consequences for our partners. Close coordination with allies such as the Netherlands is crucial for the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal of changing the Russian Government's behavior.

Question 15. How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within Dutch institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with Dutch counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign of disinformation and malign influence activities to undermine core institutions of the West and to weaken faith in the democratic and free-market systems. Given the nature and breadth of Russia's campaign, it is important for the United States not only to pursue a whole-of-government approach but also work closely with Allies to expose and counter these campaigns.

The Netherlands has first-hand experience of Russian malign influence. The Dutch intelligence service AIVD publically confirmed Russia tried to influence the March 2017 Dutch elections by spreading fake news, though Dutch intelligence found that Russia did not succeed in "substantially influencing" the election process. The Netherlands shares our concerns about ongoing Russian disinformation campaigns and malign influence activities across the region. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work to strengthen our coordination with the Netherlands to detect and counter these activities that seek to undermine democratic institutions and principles.

Question 16. If the United States withdraws from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action without evidence of a material breach, how do you anticipate that the Netherlands will respond based on statements from the past few weeks as well as EU statements?

- Do you believe that the best policy for the United States, if we walk away from the nuclear agreement with Iran, is to impose sanctions on European companies and banks that continue to do business with Iran?
- What national security priorities other than Iran could be negatively impacted by tensions in the transatlantic alliance stemming from unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States will continue to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by Netherlands and all of our European partners. I cannot prejudge the outcome of the administration's review in terms of sanctions implications or how Netherlands will respond.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, close coordination with Europe will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with the Netherlands to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, steps to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism, and other U.S. national security priorities.

Question 17. International cooperation to address climate change is a top priority for the Netherlands. The U.S. is historically, across multiple past administrations, a constructive partner with the Netherlands and other European allies on addressing climate change through multilateral forums including the UN.CCC and the Paris Agreement, the IPCC, G20, G7, the GEF and GCF. Given the President's antipathy towards international cooperation on climate change, how do you intend to approach this issue that the Netherlands' leaders care deeply about?

As one of the lowest lying nations in the world, the Netherlands is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, namely sea level rise. In light of this risk, the Dutch lead the world in engineering solutions to sea level rise and have created climate change adaptation technologies that the Dutch can export and develop around the world. How will you approach discussing climate change action and investment in a country that is experiencing the very real and present threats from climate change, as a representative of an administration that very plainly denies the existence of this threat and is actively defunding federal investments in science and technology that could help the Dutch and others better understand the threat of climate change? What lessons do you think the U.S.'s most climate vulnerable communities can learn from the Dutch's experience and investments?

Answer. The administration supports a balanced approach to climate policy that lowers emissions while promoting economic growth and ensuring energy security. The President determined the terms of our current engagement in the Paris Agreement did not balance those factors, and on June 1, he announced the intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. As the President has indicated, he is open to reengaging in the Paris Agreement if the United States can identify more favorable terms. The United States respects the efforts of those countries that continue to participate in the Paris Agreement.

At the G20 Leaders' Summit in Hamburg, Germany, the United States joined the other G20 members in reiterating a collective commitment to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, including through increased innovation in sustainable and clean energy and energy efficiency, and working towards low greenhouse-gas emission energy systems. The Dutch are proactively addressing rising sea levels through innovative technologies and initiatives, and they have successfully turned their expertise into opportunities for Dutch companies. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Dutch interlocutors and our European allies to seek common ground and develop a way forward on this important issue.

Finding ways to bring together Dutch engineering and water management solutions and U.S. technology and innovation presents a profound opportunity to enhance both of our countries efforts in this arena. Many state and local governments have already sought out Dutch expertise on water management, and many low lying areas in the United States could benefit from adapting Dutch solutions to mitigate the effects of sea level rise. I will make it a priority to build on existing relationships and identify new opportunities for collaboration between our countries to harness innovation and technology breakthroughs to combat climate change and its effects.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO RICHARD DUKE BUCHAN III BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. Have you employed or paid any workers (including but not limited to farmhands, housekeepers, nannies, gardeners, handymen, drivers, caretakers) that you have become aware may not have had legal documentation or for whom taxes were not properly withheld? If yes, please provide details and an explanation of the issue.

Answer. No, to the best of my knowledge.

Question 2. Have you paid all legally required employer taxes for any workers you have employed in the previous 10 years?

Answer. Yes, to the best of my knowledge.

Question 3. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Human rights and democracy are not just ideas but fundamental values that have shaped our society and my life. My family taught me to always respect the honor and dignity of everyone around me. Everybody must be treated equally. No one should face discrimination, especially not because of race, sex, religion, age, disability, national origin or any other status. I also believe in American democracy and its eight tenets: individual worth, individual freedom, equality, popular sovereignty, majority rule, minority rights and limited government. It is these democratic values that enable people to control their own lives, which is the most basic human right.

While these values are natural and self-evident, they must be nurtured. That's why I believe in inclusion. I have always promoted diversity in the businesses that I have worked for and owned. That's also why my family has long provided mean-

ingful support to educational institutions such as Harvard University that fervently promote human rights and democracy, to organizations whose good works include educating young girls in impoverished countries, and to church missions. I have also volunteered in electoral politics in an effort to get more people involved in our democratic elections.

Although it is difficult to measure the impact of my actions, I believe they have been positive. If confirmed, I will continue to advance human rights and democracy as Ambassador to Spain.

Question 4. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Spain today?

- What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Spain and Andorra?
- What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?
- 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 Spain and Andorra in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Spain and Andorra are strong partners in advancing human rights around the world. Nevertheless, some important challenges remain. In Andorra, issues persist regarding the rights of workers to bargain collectively. Andorran law does not provide sufficient protection from anti-union discrimination. Access for persons with disabilities is another area where improvements can be made.

In Spain, the recent European refugee and migration challenge has brought to light reports concerning the denial of access to asylum and forced returns of asylum seekers by police. Human trafficking, including labor and sex trafficking, remains a prominent concern, as well as gender-based violence and continued societal discrimination against members of racial, religious, and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and members of the LGBTI community. However, Spain's strong actions in the area of human rights have been essential in addressing these concerns. For example, the Barcelona administration launched a 28-point action plan in January 2017 to address rising anti-Muslim sentiment. Spain also earned a Tier 1 ranking in the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report, a mark of the Government's full commitment to combat human trafficking, as outlined in the report.

If confirmed, I am committed to continuing Mission Spain/Andorra's engagement with Spanish and Andorran officials to combat all forms of intolerance and to strengthen respect for human rights. I would also look forward to strengthening Mission Spain/Andorra's programs in combating human trafficking and corruption, addressing human rights abuses against refugees and migrants, and promoting good governance. If confirmed, I will strongly support the Department of State's ongoing work with these European partners.

Question 5. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Spain and Andorra?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to sustaining engagement with a broad spectrum of society among European publics, including human rights activists, civil society, religious groups, and the organizations that represent them.

Question 6. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Spain to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted?

Answer. I am not aware of such cases in Spain or Andorra, but if confirmed, I would certainly engage with Spanish and Andorran authorities to address cases of persons unjustly targeted when such occasions arise.

Question 7. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Mission continues to vet thoroughly all individuals and units nominated to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities, in accordance with the Leahy law. If there are findings of credible information regarding gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training and will assist their respective governments to bring them to justice.

Question 8. Will you engage with Spanish and Andorran officials on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring our Mission remains engaged on these issues. As Secretary Tillerson has said, American leadership requires moral clarity. We are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned, and when we

hold our rivals accountable for human rights abuses at home. If confirmed, I will ensure that engagement on human rights, civil rights, and governance remains an integral component of our Mission.

Question 9. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I am committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a diverse and inclusive team across Mission Spain, and will communicate that this is a priority for me as the Ambassador. If confirmed, I will urge the Mission to reflect our whole-of-mission commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, I will ensure all supervisors have access to and avail themselves of opportunities to receive regular formal training and regular guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion to sensitize them to these important issues and maximize diverse talents in our workforce.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Spain or Andorra?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes companies that have a presence in Spain/Andorra, but I have worked closely with the State Department Ethics Office and the Office of Government Ethics and will divest my interests in those companies the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest, and I will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 13. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. Since my OGE financial disclosure statement dated April 2017, there have not been material changes in my overall financial assets and income. In June 2017, I invested in an assisted living and memory care facility located in the Southeastern United States for the amount of $3.9 million that will have an asset value of approximately $20 million. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 14. Russia Sanctions: Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within Spain for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to working closely with Spain to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. Government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach on sanctions, and I will continue to seek feedback from Spain, which has been a steadfast partner on Russia sanctions.

My goal is to ensure these sanctions support our important, common work in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, restoring control of Crimea to Ukraine, and preventing future meddling by Russia in foreign elections-while also remaining vigilant against unintended consequences for our partners. I will likewise remain mindful of our many foreign policy priorities related to Europe as the U.S. Government and the EU implement these sanctions, including our commitment to promoting European energy security. Close coordination with our allies is crucial to enabling the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal: imposing costs on Russia sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior.

Question 15. Russian Malign Influence: How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within Spanish institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with Spanish counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign of disinformation and malign influence activities to undermine core institutions of the West and to weaken faith in the democratic and free-market systems. This campaign is aggressive, coordinated, and involves the entire Russian Government. The United States should continue to work closely with its Allies and partners, such as Spain, to enhance collective resilience against these threats. Given the nature and breadth of Russia's campaign, it is important for the United States not only to pursue a whole-of-government approach but also work closely with Allies such as Spain to expose and counter these campaigns. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Spanish Government to support this effort.

Question 16. If the United States withdraws from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action without evidence of a material breach, how do you anticipate that Spain will respond based on statements from the past few weeks as well as EU statements?

- Do you believe that the best policy for the United States, if we walk away from the nuclear agreement with Iran, is to impose sanctions on European companies and banks that continue to do business with Iran?
- What national security priorities other than Iran could be negatively impacted by tensions in the transatlantic alliance stemming from unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by Spain and all of our European partners. I cannot prejudge the outcome of the administration's review in terms of sanctions implications or how Spain will respond.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with Spain to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, steps to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism, and other U.S. national security priorities.

Question 17. International cooperation to address climate change is a top priority for Spain. The U.S. is historically, across multiple past administrations, a constructive partner with Spain and other European allies on addressing climate change through multilateral forums including the UN.CCC and the Paris Agreement, the IPCC, G20, G7, the GEF and GCF. Given the President's antipathy towards international cooperation on climate change, how do you intend to approach this issue that Spain's leaders care deeply about?

Answer. The administration supports a balanced approach to climate policy that lowers emissions while promoting economic growth and ensuring energy security. The President determined the terms of our current engagement in the Paris Agreement did not balance those factors, and on June 1, he announced the intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. As the President has indicated, he is open to reengaging in the Paris Agreement if the United States can identify more favorable terms. The United States respects the efforts of those countries that continue to participate in the Paris Agreement.

At the G20 Leaders' Summit in Hamburg, Germany, the United States joined the other G20 members in reiterating a collective commitment to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, including through increased innovation in sustainable and clean energy and energy efficiency, and working towards low greenhouse-gas emission energy systems. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Spanish interlocutors and our European allies to seek common ground and develop a way forward on this important issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO RICHARD DUKE BUCHAN III BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. If confirmed, do you commit to discuss consistently with the Spanish Government the U.S. position on the Castro regime?

- If confirmed, would you encourage the Spanish Government to consider similar measures to isolate the Castro regime?

Answer. Human rights in Cuba remain a significant concern. President Trump's new Cuba policy is an important step in the right direction to put pressure on the Government to address these troubling issues.

If confirmed, I will advocate for the official U.S. position on Cuba consistently with the Spanish Government and will encourage it to make human rights a priority issue in its dealings with the Cuban Government.

Question 2. If confirmed, do you commit to create and maintain a dialogue with the Spanish Government on the need to oppose the anti-democratic Maduro regime?

- If confirmed, would you encourage the Spanish Government to consider similar measures to isolate the Maduro regime?

Answer. Venezuela's further slide away from democracy is deeply troubling, and the July 30 Constituent Assembly elections imposed on the Venezuelan people undermine their right to self-determination. Spain is an important partner in pushing back against the Maduro regime's abuses of power. Spain has been a strong voice in Latin America and within the EU for sanctions and other measures.

If confirmed, I look forward to coordinating closely with Spain on additional steps to address the crisis in Venezuela. Already, Spain has actively worked with us and with EU partners on additional measures similar to those already implemented by the United States. If confirmed, I will encourage Spain to continue leading within the EU on this issue.

Question 3. If confirmed, do you commit to discuss consistently with the Spanish Government the U.S. position on the Castro regime?

- If confirmed, would you encourage the Spanish Government to consider similar measures to isolate the Castro regime?

Answer. Human rights in Cuba remain a significant concern. President Trump's new Cuba policy is an important step in the right direction to put pressure on the Government to address these troubling issues.

If confirmed, I will advocate for the official U.S. position on Cuba consistently with the Spanish Government and will encourage it to make human rights a priority issue in its dealings with the Cuban Government.

Question 4. If confirmed, do you commit to create and maintain a dialogue with the Spanish Government on the need to oppose the anti-democratic Maduro regime?

- If confirmed, would you encourage the Spanish Government to consider similar measures to isolate the Maduro regime?

Answer. Venezuela's further slide away from democracy is deeply troubling, and the July 30 Constituent Assembly elections imposed on the Venezuelan people undermine their right to self-determination. Spain is an important partner in pushing back against the Maduro regime's abuses of power. Spain has been a strong voice in Latin America and within the EU for sanctions and other measures.

If confirmed, I look forward to coordinating closely with Spain on additional steps to address the crisis in Venezuela. Already, Spain has actively worked with us and with EU partners on additional measures similar to those already implemented by the United States. If confirmed, I will encourage Spain to continue leading within the EU on this issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO RICHARD GRENELL BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. In the roughly eight years I spent as the Head of Press and Public Diplomacy at the United States Mission to the U.N. I consistently raised the issue of human rights, highlighted the abuses of authoritarian regimes, and advocated for the rights of gays and lesbians around the world. In particular, I sought out ways to support international organizations concerned about gay and lesbian equality in

countries throughout Africa and the Middle East who were petitioning the U.N. for greater action. I regularly met with foreign diplomats based at the U.N. or visiting the U.N. who were gay, to understand their issues and concerns and to learn from them as to what the U.N. and specifically the U.S. could do to help them. I regularly highlighted to senior State Department officials in Washington, DC the stories of violence endured by gays and lesbians in other countries and regularly requested that State Department spokespeople publicly condemn the violence. The impact of my regular and continued advocacy is still unknown. While I have seen some actions taken to condemn egregious violence, I still believe more can be done to promote equality for gays and lesbians in foreign countries. As a foreign policy commentator, I have also spoken about and written numerous articles condemning autocracies, such as Venezuela and Russia, and advocating for America to prioritize democracy promotion.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Germany today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Germany and, working in partnership with Germany, to promote human rights around the globe? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

- 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 Germany in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Germany has a strong overall record of protecting human rights at home and is a valuable partner in defending human rights around the globe. One of the most pressing human rights concerns in Germany is the integration of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants who have arrived in Germany over the past several years. The influx of such a large number of asylum seekers and refugees has exacerbated tensions within society; consequently, extremism and xenophobia have been an increasingly significant problem, including attacks on ethnic non-Germans. The German Government has taken steps to counter such extremism and xenophobia, and the authorities continue to implement measures to facilitate the integration of the recently-arrived refugees and migrants. There have also been reports of anti-Semitic and homophobic attacks, discrimination of persons with disabilities, and unfair treatment of Muslim women wearing headscarves in the workplace. We saw progress on this front when the Bundestag voted on June 30 to amend Germany's civil code to legalize same-sex marriage. Also positive is the fact that legal recourse is available to women who feel they have been treated unfairly or denied employment for their religious dress.

If confirmed, I will use every opportunity to promote the message of the importance of diversity and human rights, including the rights of LGBT individuals, migrants, minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. Germany is already a global leader in advancing human rights and democracy around the world and it regularly raises concerns both publicly and in its bilateral and multilateral engagements with foreign governments, including with Iran, Russia, China, and Venezuela. Berlin also frequently coordinates with Washington in supporting United Nations resolutions and U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC) statements that highlight human rights. If confirmed, I intend to continue this close partnership with Germany in advocating for human rights throughout Europe and the world.

Question 3. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Germany?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with human rights, civil society groups and NGOs to advance U.S. priorities, including human rights. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with experts in these areas in both the United States and Germany.

Question 4. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Germany to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with German authorities to press countries around the world to address cases of key political prisoners and persons otherwise unjustly targeted.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Embassy continues to vet thoroughly all individuals and units nominated to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities, in accordance with the Leahy law. If there are findings of credible infor-

mation regarding gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training and will assist their respective governments to bring them to justice.

Question 6. Will you engage with Germans on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Mission's strong partnership with the German Government and German civil society to engage on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance.

Question 7. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff members who come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the State Department?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to promoting, mentoring, and supporting staff members from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups. I will make it a priority to foster a diverse and inclusive team at our Mission and encourage all supervisors to take available courses on EEO principles, diversity, and related issues. I will lead by example and articulate my desire to hear diverse opinions and diverse backgrounds. I will also visibly lead public diplomacy events with outreach to gays and lesbians in Germany, including in immigrant communities.

Question 8. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 10. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Germany?

Answer. Neither I, nor any member of my immediate family, has any financial interests in Germany.

Question 11. I understand that you have written many articles and op-eds over the past eight years on foreign policy issues, including with respect to Moldova. Did you receive any payment or any other form of compensation for your writings on Moldova? If so, who provided those payments? Was any compensation you received on behalf of, or provided indirectly, by a foreign government, foreign political party, foreign organization, or foreign national?

Answer. I have written numerous personal opinion pieces on foreign policy and national security issues over the years. I have also expressed my views and opinions through television interviews. A small number of these opinion pieces and interviews have related to Moldova, primarily to highlight Russia's campaigns of misinformation, propaganda and meddling around the world. Russian interference in other countries' domestic affairs has been a consistent theme in my work, including my work to highlight examples in Turkey, Ukraine, Montenegro, Poland, Georgia, Estonia, and with Radio Free Europe and Voice of America. I did not receive any compensation for that work. I believe strongly in confronting threats to democracy, and all of those views were my own opinion.

Question 12. Did anyone request or direct you to write op-eds on Moldova? If so, who? Was any request made on behalf of a foreign government, foreign political party, foreign organization, or foreign national? If not, what motivated you to write the op-eds?

Answer. No, the op-eds that you are referring to—like all of the op-eds I have written or the personal opinions I have expressed publicly—reflect my informed views and ideas and not anyone else's. Russian meddling in Central and Eastern Europe has been a constant theme in my work; and current events have borne out my long-held views. My motivation in writing or speaking on any particular subject is because I think it is important. Additionally, I am heartened to see how impor-

tant the subject of Russian meddling has become with the U.S. media and with Americans.

Question 13. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. No. There have been no material changes to my financial assets, income, or any other information since the date I signed the OGE financial disclosure form.

Question 14. Russia Sanctions: Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within Germany for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to working closely with Germany to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. Government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach on sanctions, and I will continue to seek feedback from our allies, who have been steadfast partners on Russia sanctions.

My goal is to ensure these sanctions support our important, common work in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, restoring control of Crimea to Ukraine, and preventing future meddling by Russia in foreign elections-while also remaining vigilant against unintended consequences for our partners. I will likewise remain mindful of our many foreign policy priorities related to Germany as I contribute to the U.S. Government's implementation of these sanctions, including our commitment to promoting European energy security and encouraging interoperability in NATO weapons systems. Close coordination with our German allies is crucial to enabling the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal: imposing costs on Russia sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior.

Question 15. How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within German institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with German counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. Russia uses a constellation of approaches, overt and covert, to influence the policies of other governments and undermine domestic stability in Europe. Russia seeks to weaken European unity and erode faith in democratic institutions. A Europe whole, free, and at peace is in the interests of the United States. Efforts to disrupt democratic processes and weaken unity directly and negatively affect U.S. interests and security, while institutionalized respect for human rights, good governance, and rule of law contributes to long-term stability. By promoting our shared democratic values, and by holding our European partners accountable to their commitments and the rule of law, the United States strengthens our partners' capabilities to mitigate vulnerabilities to malign influences and counter threats to their security and sovereignty. The approach to this must be comprehensive and whole-of-government, and the Department of State has a critical role to play in addressing this threat.

The German Government has become increasingly concerned about Russian interference in its politics. If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to build and strengthen Germany's resilience against Russia's efforts to undermine these democratic processes, including through exchanges of information and best practices, as well as programming for the German public. Secretary Tillerson has been clear that he views as the highest priorities for U.S. assistance those areas of Central and Eastern Europe affected by pressure from the Russian Federation. We will work with our German partners to continue ongoing assistance efforts and engagements that seek to build and reinforce the rule of law, support democratic institutions, promote human rights, and drive economic development in vulnerable countries in Europe.

Question 16. If the United States withdraws from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action without evidence of a material breach, how do you anticipate that Germany will respond based on statements from the past few weeks as well as EU statements?

Answer. German authorities at various levels have underscored publicly the importance Germany places on the JCPOA. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States will continue to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by Germany and all of our European partners. I cannot prejudge the outcome of the administration's review in terms of sanctions implications or how Germany will respond.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, close coordination with Germany will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to en-

sure that we closely coordinate with Germany to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, steps to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism, and other U.S. national security priorities.

Question 17. Do you believe that the best policy for the United States, if we walk away from the nuclear agreement with Iran, is to impose sanctions on European companies and banks that continue to do business with Iran?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States will continue to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our German partners. I cannot prejudge the outcome of the administration's review in terms of sanctions implications.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, close coordination with Germany will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with our German partners and the European Union to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.

Question 18. What national security priorities other than Iran could be negatively impacted by tensions in the transatlantic alliance stemming from unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and its broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States will continue to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by our German partners.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, close coordination with Germany will be crucial. Germany remains key to addressing any number of other pressing international issues, including combatting terrorism and addressing the threat from North Korea. Our German partners want to work with us to address these challenges, and if confirmed, I will focus on ensuring the United States and Germany remain in lockstep on these issues.

Question 19. International cooperation to address climate change is a top priority for Germany. The U.S. is historically, across multiple past administrations, a constructive partner with Germany and other European allies on addressing climate change through multilateral forums including the UNCCC and the Paris Agreement, the IPCC, G20, G7, the GEF and GCF. Given the President's antipathy towards international cooperation on climate change, how do you intend to approach this issue that Germany's leaders care deeply about?

Answer. The administration supports a balanced approach to climate policy that lowers emissions while promoting economic growth and ensuring energy security. The President determined the terms of our current engagement in the Paris Agreement did not balance those factors, and on June 1, he announced the intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. As the President has indicated, he is open to reengaging in the Paris Agreement if the United States can identify more favorable terms. The United States respects the efforts of those countries that continue to participate in the Paris Agreement.

At the G20 Leaders' Summit in Hamburg, Germany, the United States joined the other G20 members in reiterating our collective commitment to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, including through increased innovation in sustainable and clean energy and energy efficiency, and working towards low greenhouse-gas emission energy systems. The United States has a strong record of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions through technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship. We will continue to be a world leader in innovation, particularly the development of next-generation energy technology.

The United States will send a delegation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 23rd annual Conference of the Parties (COP23) in November in Bonn and plans to continue to participate in negotiations related to the Paris Agreement—including those to develop guidance for the Paris Agreement—in order to protect U.S. interests. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Germany and our European allies to seek common ground and develop a way forward on this important issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JAMIE MCCOURT BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As a Board member of Business Executives for National Security (BENS) since 2011, I have taken several field visits to countries affected by human rights issues. In 2012, we visited Myanmar. The goal of this trip was to learn firsthand about the challenges facing the country by focusing on political reforms, Myanmar's relationship to China, and the effectiveness of U.S. sanctions on Myanmar.

Also in 2015, I joined BENS on a trip to the Republic of Korea. This trip focused on the ROK-US alliance, the security situation on the Korean Peninsula, human rights issues past and present, the Japan-Korea relationship and the ROK economy.

I have also served on UNCEF's Southern California Regional Board since 2013 and support UNCEF's National Board. I traveled with the U.S. Fund for UNCEF to the Middle East where I visited the Za'atari refugee camp in Amman, Jordan. During this visit I was able to observe UNCEF programs in action and speak directly to the refugees to see what their most pressing needs were for additional help. After Jordan, we traveled to Israel to review the status and future of UNCEF's role there as well.

I am also a supporter of AIPAC, whose mission is to strengthen, protect and promote the U.S.-Israel relationship in ways that enhance the security and protect the democracies of the United States and Israel. In 2014, I attended the AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. One of the main seminar topics was the status of the Middle East's Jewish refugees. Following the conference, I had the opportunity to travel back to D.C. for a private meeting at the AIPAC offices to further the conversation and to learn more about AIPAC's programs.

In addition, as a proud supporter of Israel and the Jewish community, I was extremely honored to receive the Scopus award in December of 2006. It is the highest humanitarian honor given by the American Friends of the Hebrew University.

In January of 2011, I traveled to Ethiopia to visit the Ethiopian Children's Fund (ECF) School in the Village of Aleltu for the groundbreaking of the Gelila Assefa Puck Vocational Training Center. Gelila and Wolfgang Puck are close friends and I was pleased to support this very worthwhile project. The vocational training center, which opened in 2013, provides those who have graduated from the ECF School with additional training toward a career.

I have supported Human Rights Watch (HRW) since being introduced to the organization by a very close friend who is the Co-Chair of the LA Committee and a member of the International Board of Directors, as well as by other friends who are officers of the organization. I have also had private conversations with Ken Roth, the Executive Director of HRW.

During the past several years, I have given a keynote address on financial self-sufficiency at many of the top graduate business schools including Harvard, Columbia and MIT. I am a strong advocate for education and a passionate supporter of financial self-sufficiency for women.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in France and Monaco today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in France and Monaco, and, working in partnership with your host government, to promote human rights around the globe? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

- 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 France and Monaco in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Respect for human rights is a core American value. There should be no room for hate crimes against members of vulnerable communities such as religious minorities, LGBTI individuals, migrants, or persons with disabilities. Although both France and Monaco have strong records on human rights, generally speaking, if confirmed, I will strongly support the Department of State's ongoing work with our French and Monegasque partners to combat all forms of intolerance and to strengthen respect for human rights.

America's alliances are strongest when our values and those of our allies are aligned. The United States has been diligent in encouraging its allies, including the French, to remain firmly committed to our shared democratic principles and rule of law. If confirmed, I will work in partnership with France to speak up against restrictions on civil society and free expression, discrimination against members of mi-

nority groups, and steps that undermine the independence of the judiciary or otherwise may threaten the foundations of constitutional order.

Question 3. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in France and Monaco?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to sustaining engagement with a broad spectrum of society in the United States, France, and Monaco, including human rights NGOs, civil society, religious groups, and the organizations that represent them.

Question 4. Will you and your Embassy actively engage with relevant governments in France and Monaco to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly detained in their states?

Answer. I am not aware of such cases in France and Monaco, but if confirmed, I would certainly engage with French and Monegasque authorities to address cases of persons unjustly targeted when such occasions arise.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Embassy continues to implement the provisions of the Leahy law. If there are findings of credible information regarding gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy.

Question 6. Will you engage with the people of France and Monaco on matters of human rights, civil rights and accountable governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring our Embassy and Consulates in France remain engaged on these issues. As Secretary Tillerson has said, American leadership requires moral clarity. If confirmed, I will ensure that engagement on human rights, including civil rights, and governance remain integral components of our mission.

Question 7. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I am committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a diverse and inclusive team within Mission France and communicate this as a priority for me as the Ambassador. If confirmed, I will urge the Mission to reflect our commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion.

Further, in keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, if confirmed, I will ensure all supervisors at all of our posts in France have access to and avail themselves of opportunities to receive regular formal training and regular guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion to sensitize them to these important issues and maximize diverse talents in our workforce.

Question 8. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 10. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in France and Monaco?

Answer. Potential conflicts involving any financial interests of mine have been addressed by the ethics officials of the Department of State and by the Office of Government Ethics and have been resolved in my ethics agreement. As for members of my immediate family, my adult sons have an interest in a professional football (soccer) team in Marseilles. I have no financial interest of any kind in the team. I will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations and am committed to ensuring that my actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest.

Question 11. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. I know of no significant change in my financial affairs since I filed my report. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Russia Sanctions

Question 12. Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within France for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. Maintaining transatlantic unity on sanctions has been a key component of U.S. policy towards Russia. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with France to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. Government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach on sanctions, and I will continue to seek feedback from France, which has been a steadfast partner on Russia sanctions.

My goal will be to ensure these sanctions support our important, common work in resolving the conflict in eastern Ukraine, restoring control of Crimea to Ukraine, and preventing future meddling by Russia in foreign elections-while also remaining vigilant against unintended consequences for our partners. I will likewise remain mindful of our many foreign policy priorities related to France as I contribute to the U.S. Government's implementation of these sanctions, including our commitment to promoting European energy security and encouraging interoperability in NATO weapons systems. Close coordination with our French allies is crucial to enabling the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal: imposing costs on Russia sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior.

Russian Malign Influence

Question 13. How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within French institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with French counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign of disinformation and malign influence activities to undermine core institutions of the West and to weaken faith in the democratic and free-market systems. This campaign is aggressive, coordinated, and involves the entire Russian Government. The United States should continue to work closely with its Allies and partners to enhance collective resilience against these threats. Given the nature and breadth of Russia's campaign, it is important for the United States not only to pursue a whole-of-government approach but also work closely with Allies to expose and counter these campaigns.

If confirmed, I will promote cooperation with our Allies to build resilience in France and all NATO countries, as well as address vulnerabilities in Ukraine, Georgia, and the Western Balkans. I will push for the continuation of programs that promote the protection of human rights, build and reinforce the rule of law, support democratic institutions, and promote economic development in France and elsewhere in Europe. Furthermore, I will work closely with France on implementation of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act to maintain unity on implementation of sanctions in order to further exert economic pressure on Russia to modify their aggressive behavior.

Question 14. If the United States withdraws from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action without evidence of a material breach, how do you anticipate that France will respond based on statements from the past few weeks as well as EU statements?

- Do you believe that the best policy for the United States, if we walk away from the nuclear agreement with Iran, is to impose sanctions on European companies and banks that continue to do business with Iran?
- What national security priorities other than Iran could be negatively impacted by tensions in the transatlantic alliance stemming from unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA?

Answer. French authorities at various levels have underscored publicly the importance France places on the JCPOA. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by France and all of our European partners.

I cannot prejudge the outcome of the administration's review in terms of sanctions implications or how France will respond.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with France will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with France to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, steps to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism, and other U.S. national security priorities.

Question 15. We've seen France make leadership on climate action a central tenet of their foreign policy. This has been exemplified through the leadership they've shown on the issue through the Paris Agreement/G20/G7. Leaders from France have not been shy about raising climate change with President Trump and have publicly expressed frustration over the U.S. retreat from leading on this issue. What will you do to reassure France that the U.S. can be counted on as a strong leader and partner on climate action?

Answer. The administration supports a balanced approach to climate policy that lowers emissions while promoting economic growth and ensuring energy security. The President determined the terms of our current engagement in the Paris Agreement did not balance those factors, and on June 1, he announced the intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. As the President indicated in his June 1 announcement and subsequently, he is open to re-engaging in the Paris Agreement if the United States can identify terms that are more favorable.

The United States respects the efforts of those countries that continue to participate in the Paris Agreement. If confirmed, I look forward to working with French interlocutors and our European allies to seek common ground and develop a way forward on this important issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO EDWARD T. MCMULLEN, JR. BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. While my career has been in business, I have dedicated much of my personal time to charitable efforts ensuring opportunities for those less fortunate. One example, relevant to human rights concerns we have around the world, is the treatment of prisoners.

I have worked for 20 years as a mentor and donor to empower young low income adolescents in need. I began teaching an entrepreneurship class to students in the South Carolina Juvenile Justice prison. Most were low income minority offenders whose families offered no direction. These students, some of our state's most serious youth offenders, were acting with rage and living a life surrounded by drugs and weapons.

I developed a curriculum specific to helping these students have a mentor and skills that would build their self-respect. I taught them basic math and investment skills and then progressed to helping them start a business, all while they were incarcerated. I spent many hours—as long as they needed—to teach them and provide a true opportunity for rehabilitation. I personally funded some of their concepts and helped them see how hard work and ideas can change their lives. The resulting benefit of this work was watching these young and angry lost children become, over time, motivated, informed and eager entrepreneurs who could leave the prison with hope and opportunity.

Question 3. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Switzerland and Liechtenstein today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, and, working in partnership with your host government, to promote human rights around the globe? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

- 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 Switzerland and Liechtenstein in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Switzerland and Liechtenstein each have a strong record on human rights and we are important partners in addressing human rights challenges around

the world based on the common values we share. The State Department's annual Human Rights Report lists challenges these countries face, including instances of discrimination against minority groups, and, if confirmed, I will continue to raise these issues. However, a larger part of our human rights work with Switzerland and Liechtenstein is our common efforts to advance human rights around the globe.

Human rights are a core value Switzerland advocated for multilaterally and bilaterally. Swiss efforts played a role in the releases of Chibok girls from Boko Haram in Nigeria in October 2016 and May 2017. Switzerland also holds regular human rights consultations with China, Russia, Iran, Vietnam, Cuba, Indonesia, and Tajikistan. In addition, the Government maintains a separate human rights strategy as part of the Foreign Ministry's wider strategic agenda.

We face numerous challenges in this work. Human rights issues around the world often seem intractable. Switzerland and the United States will sometimes have different areas of emphasis or different approaches to a problem. If confirmed, I will continue our work with Switzerland to ensure our efforts are coordinated, and that we achieve more together than we would have separately, such as with respect to major sporting organizations based in Switzerland. Ensuring that we keep lines of communication open will maximize our impact.

Question 3. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Switzerland and Liechtenstein?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to sustaining engagement with a broad spectrum of civil society in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, including human rights activists and religious groups, and the organizations that represent them.

Question 4. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Switzerland and Liechtenstein to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage Swiss and Liechtensteiner authorities and call on them to enlist their assistance in the resolution of cases involving victims of politically-motivated prosecution around the world in a fair and timely manner, respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including all the protections and fair trial guarantees necessary for their defense.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to thoroughly vet all individuals and units nominated to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities, in accordance with the Leahy law. If there are findings of credible information regarding gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training and will assist their respective governments to bring them to justice.

Question 6. Will you engage with the Swiss on matters of human rights, civil rights and accountable governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Mission's strong partnership with the Swiss Government and civil society to engage on these topics.

Question 7. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff who come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the State Department?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I am committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a diverse and inclusive team at Embassy Bern and communicate this is a priority for me as the Ambassador. If confirmed, I will also urge the Embassy to reflect our whole-of-mission commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, I will ensure all supervisors at the Embassy have access to and avail themselves of opportunities to receive regular formal training and regular guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion to sensitize them to these important issues and maximize diverse talents in our workforce.

Question 8. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 10. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Switzerland and/or Liechtenstein?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds that may have investments in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. However, investments in diversified mutual funds are exempt from the conflicts of interest rules. I will divest my interests in any future investments the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest, and I will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 11. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. I know of no significant change in my financial affairs since I filed my report. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 12. Russia Sanctions: Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within Switzerland for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to working closely with Switzerland to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. Government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach on sanctions, and I will continue to seek feedback from Switzerland, which has been a partner on ensuring Switzerland is not used to evade Russia sanctions.

The administration's goal is to ensure that sanctions support our important, common work in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, restoring control of Crimea to Ukraine, and preventing future meddling by Russia in foreign elections-while also remaining vigilant against unintended consequences for our partners. I will likewise remain mindful of our many foreign policy priorities, including our commitment to promoting European energy security, related to Europe as the U.S. Government and the EU implement these sanctions, and Switzerland works to prevent their circumvention through entities based in Switzerland. Close coordination with our partners is crucial to enabling the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal: imposing costs on Russia, sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior.

Question 13. Russian Malign Influence: How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within Swiss institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with Swiss counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. Russia is engaged in a campaign of disinformation and malign influence activities to undermine core institutions of the West and to weaken faith in the democratic and free-market systems. In Europe, the United States is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen democratic institutions, eliminate corruption, and diversify energy supplies. The effects of Russian pressure continue to be greatest in the neighboring states of Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those countries. The Western Balkans are also increasingly a target, as Russia is trying to block the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. It is important our assistance deter Russian aggression against these countries as well as encourage reforms in them to eliminate fraud and abuse and reorient their economies away from Russian economic pressure.

If confirmed, I will promote cooperation with our partners to build resilience in Switzerland. I will push for the continuation of programs that promote the protection of human rights, build and reinforce the rule of law, support democratic institutions, and promote economic development in vulnerable countries in partnership with Switzerland. Furthermore, I will work closely with Switzerland as I contribute to the U.S. Government's implementation of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act to maintain unity on implementation of sanctions in order to further exert economic pressure on Russia to modify its aggressive behavior.

Question 14. If the United States withdraws from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action without evidence of a material breach, how do you anticipate that Switzer-

land will respond based on statements from the past few weeks as well as EU statements?

- Do you believe that the best policy for the United States, if we walk away from the nuclear agreement with Iran, is to impose sanctions on European companies and banks that continue to do business with Iran?
- What national security priorities other than Iran could be negatively impacted by tensions in the transatlantic alliance stemming from unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA?

Answer. The administration is currently conducting a review of the JCPOA and our broader approach to Iran. While that review is ongoing, the United States continues to implement its JCPOA commitments, and expects Iran to do the same. In addition, the United States seeks to ensure strict implementation of the JCPOA, a goal shared by Switzerland and our European partners. I cannot prejudge the outcome of the administration's review in terms of sanctions implications or how Switzerland will respond.

Regardless of the outcome of the administration's review, unity with Europe will be crucial. If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to ensure that we closely coordinate with Switzerland to ensure the effectiveness of any measures to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, steps to combat Iran's malign activities more broadly, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism, and other U.S. national security priorities.

Question 15. International cooperation to address climate change is a top priority for Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The U.S. is historically, across multiple past administrations, a constructive partner with Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and other European allies on addressing climate change through multilateral forums including the UNCCC and the Paris Agreement, the IPCC, G20, G7, the GEF and GCF. Given the President's antipathy towards international cooperation on climate change, how do you intend to approach this issue that Switzerland's and Liechtenstein's leaders care deeply about?

Answer. The administration supports a balanced approach to climate policy that lowers emissions while promoting economic growth and ensuring energy security. The President determined the terms of our current engagement in the Paris Agreement did not balance those factors, and on June 1, he announced the intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. As the President has indicated, he is open to reengaging in the Paris Agreement if the United States can identify more favorable terms. The United States respects the efforts of those countries that continue to participate in the Paris Agreement.

At the G20 Leaders' Summit in Hamburg, Germany, the United States joined the other G20 members in reiterating a collective commitment to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, including through increased innovation in sustainable and clean energy and energy efficiency, and working towards low greenhouse-gas emission energy systems. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Swiss and Liechtensteiner interlocutors and our European allies to seek common ground and develop a way forward on this important issue.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017 (a.m.)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Gardner, Young, Portman, Cardin, Coons, Kaine, Markey, and Booker.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

There will be some Senators here in a moment to introduce our distinguished nominee, but they wanted us to go ahead and get started. We typically give them the courtesy of going first so they can move on to other business.

So, Mr. Juster, it is a pleasure to welcome you here today and we are glad that you are the nominee to be our next Ambassador to India.

As one of the two largest democracies in the world, the United States and India share a strategic interest in promoting and maintaining stability in the region.

Just last week, Secretary Mattis met with Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi, underscoring the importance of our two countries' growing security cooperation. As these talks highlighted, the United States and India continue to work closely together to promote stability and economic development in Afghanistan, confront terrorist threats, and preserve freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

In recent years, the United States and India have partnered together with regional players, including Japan and Australia, to address regional and global differences. These partnerships are critical to preserving rule of law principles that form a basis for economic and political stability throughout the region.

Nearly a decade ago, the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement was heralded as the beginning of a new era in our relationship. While there has been steady progress in relations between Washington and Delhi, the aspirational nature of the civil nuclear deal has left both countries struggling to meet unrealistic expectations. I know we talked at length about that yesterday.

In particular, I remain frustrated by the slow pace of Indian reforms in the economic sphere. American companies continue to face barriers to Indian market access, including high tariffs and strict localization policies. The companies that are able to enter the Indian market often counter compulsory licensing requirements and lax intellectual property protections. The foreign investment environment remains unpredictable and even large-scale contracts are subject to alteration or cancellation without cause. Clearly, the economic playing field is not even.

Additionally, the space for civil society in India continues to shrink as Hindu nationalism rises and international NGOs face undue scrutiny.

I also remain concerned about the scale of India's human trafficking problem, including bonded labor. The State Department's Trafficking in Persons report ranks India as a tier 2, citing the government's record of investigations and prosecutions as being disappointingly low.

Mr. Juster, you will be in a unique position to shape the U.S.-India relationship for the coming years. It will be important to continue progress on security cooperation, including in new areas like North Korea, as you seek a level playing field for American companies.

I urge you to pursue an open and candid dialogue with our Indian counterparts about the roadblocks in our relationship. The time is long overdue for breaking the cycle of expectation and disappointment, and I look forward to hearing your vision for normalizing U.S.-India relations.

Thank you.

Senator Warner, we typically ask Senators to go first as a courtesy and do our opening comments after. We went ahead and began because we understood you might be as much as 10 minutes late. So Senator Cardin will give his comments, and then we will introduce you. But typically we bend over backwards.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. And I know that Senator Warner wanted to listening to my opening comments. It is wonderful to have Senator Warner here. I know at least one of his conflicts because the Senate Finance Committee is also meeting on business taxes. So I promise to give a short opening comment.

I do want to first, Mr. Chairman, if I might, note that this is one of, I think, three hearings we are having this week on nominations. And speaking on behalf of the Democrats—and I mean this as a compliment—we are following the path that you set in the last Congress in considering President Obama's hearings in our committee. You did it in a very timely way. You facilitated those hearings as quickly as we could have them. And I have instructed our staff and particularly our ranking members of the subcommittees that will be holding two additional hearings that we want to accommodate, as quickly as possible, President Trump's nominees particularly for key positions and ambassadorships. And we have done that, and I want to thank our ranking members.

I do want to just note one disappointment if I might, and that is we were not able to proceed this week on the nominee for South Sudan, which is a career person. South Sudan is in a critical situation. I think it is important that we have a confirmed ambassador as quickly as possible for that country considering the urgency of the humanitarian crisis in the country that exists.

So we are going to continue to work very closely with you and try to get as many of these nominees' hearings as possible. We had hoped that the Trump administration would submit them to us in a more timely way. They are now bunched up, but we will do everything we can to advance these nominees.

And to Mr. Juster, it is a pleasure to have you here. I enjoyed our conversation. You bring incredible credentials, and I acknowledge that. And I had a very good meeting with you, and I very much appreciated our opportunity to talk about many of the issues that confront India.

The chairman has already mentioned that the United States and India are the two largest democracies in the world. Our relationships have grown stronger over time. But there are still challenges, and the chairman mentioned several of those challenges. He mentioned the commerce issues, which are real challenges as to how we are going to advance the commerce issues. He also mentioned trafficking, which is a significant problem in India. No question about it. There are also other human rights challenges in that country, including the registration laws that can be used inappropriately including areas of India that, because of their federalism system—and I was very impressed with your knowledge of the challenges of India as a democratic country in dealing with the problems. The central government cannot handle some of the issues in such a large country.

But we need to do better. We need to work together to deal with the human rights struggles, with the commerce issues. Security cooperation has been pretty strong. And, of course, we also have the challenges that deal with their neighbors that bring up why it is so important that we all work together.

So my plea is that work with this committee. We share the same goals. We share the same desires. And I think Congress and the mission—working together we can advance the partnership and even make it stronger.

It is a pleasure to have you here, and I thank your family for being willing to share your talent with this country.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to thank you again for being here, and certainly we are always honored to have Senators, but especially Senator Warner who we work with very, very closely. I know he has got very big demands on his time. Sorry you had to sit through our opening comments for a moment, but we do thank you for coming in to introduce our nominee who we are all very impressed with. Thank you, and if you would go ahead and say whatever it is you wish to say and leave and get on to Intelligence or Finance or some other committee. Again, thank you for being here today. We very much appreciate it.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARK WARNER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator WARNER. Thank you, sir. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the opportunity allowing me to introduce my friend, Ken Juster.

I would note, Mr. Chairman, you and I having worked together for so long, knowing your punctuality, I would reflect for the record that I did get here at 10:04. So that was still pretty good to——

The CHAIRMAN. That is about a 15-minute improvement for you. [Laughter.]

Senator WARNER. [continuing] I am here for a couple of reasons. One, as co-chair of the Senate India Caucus, this appointment is very important. My co-chair, Senator John Cornyn—he has got another meeting this morning, but he wanted to make sure that he conveyed to the committee as well his strong support for Ken's nomination. So clearly both of us from the Senate India Caucus support this.

I will also acknowledge that Ken and I went to law school together. He did slightly better than I at law school. We had different focuses. But he has had an extraordinarily distinguished career.

And as you have mentioned, this relationship between the two world's largest democracies is absolutely critical. Ken has worked on U.S.-India relations for more than 16 years. He has held leadership positions in a number of important organizations: Freedom House, where he worked on human rights works; the Asia Foundation, where he worked on development issues; the University of Pennsylvania Center for Advanced Study of India; and the U.S.-India Business Council.

He has also worked on our bilateral relations inside the Federal Government because from 2001 to 2005, Ken was the Under Secretary of Commerce for the Bureau of Industry and Security. In that capacity, he was at the intersection of business and national security issues, including strategic trade controls, imports and foreign investments that obviously affect U.S. security. During that time, he founded and chaired the U.S.-India High-Tech Cooperation Group and was a key architect in the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership.

I think both you and the ranking member have outlined some of the challenges: human trafficking, other issues around building strong democratic institutions in India. I would point out on the security side, we continue to make great strides. One of the things I think that is extraordinarily important—and Ken and I talked about this as he prepped for this meeting—we have seen the trade relationship grow from about $10 billion to $115 billion. We expect that to grow to $500 billion over the next few years.

So because of his distinguished career, I think Ken will serve our Nation well, and again, let me reiterate both my and John Cornyn's strong bipartisan support as co-chairs of the India Caucus. And I think the President could not have made a better choice.

And I appreciate again the chair and the ranking member for my opportunity to introduce who I hope you will soon confirm on a speedy basis.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, and thanks for your leadership on so many issues relative to India.

With that, Mr. Juster, I know you have some family members here that you cherish. You are welcome to introduce them and begin your testimony. If you could keep it to about 5 minutes, that would be great. Any written documents you have will be entered into the record, without objection.

STATEMENT OF HON. KENNETH IAN JUSTER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Mr. JUSTER. Thank you. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to be with you today as President Trump's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of India. I would like to express my gratitude to the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence and trust they have placed in me to take on this important position.

I would also like to thank Senator Warner for that very kind introduction.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with each of you to advance our strategic partnership with India, a relationship that is critical to promoting U.S. national security and economic interests.

I am very pleased to be joined this morning by my mother, Muriel Juster, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday; my cousins, Emily Randall and Cindy Camp; and several close friends. Other members of my family were unable to attend, but I greatly appreciate their support. I regret that my father, the late Howard Juster, is not here with us. He would have been very proud to see me testify before this committee.

Over the years, I have been fortunate to be involved in a range of matters relating to India both in government and the private sector. The remarkable evolution of U.S.-India relations truly has been a bipartisan undertaking and has benefited from strong leadership and support in the Congress.

As Under Secretary of Commerce during the first term of the Bush administration, I worked closely with officials in Washington and in New Delhi on this effort. With India's Foreign Secretary, we formed the High Technology Cooperation Group to identify and remove tariff and non-tariff barriers to commerce in this sector. Working with my colleagues in the U.S. Government, we also developed an initiative known as the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership. This initiative provided a road map for expanded cooperation with India in civil nuclear activities, civil space programs, and high technology trade. And the success of this effort laid the foundation for the civil nuclear agreement.

When I returned to the private sector in 2005, I remained involved in a variety of U.S.-India business and policy issues. If confirmed, I believe that my familiarity with government officials, business people, and academic and think tank leaders in both countries will enhance my ability to represent the United States.

From my perspective, the first priority of a U.S, Ambassador is to promote U.S. interests and be an exemplary representative of the U.S. Government and the American people. If confirmed, I will

join with the dedicated men and women who work at our mission in India in protecting our homeland and advancing the interests and welfare of nearly 800,000 American citizens present in India at any given time. I also will strive to ensure the safety and well-being of our mission employees and their families.

As has been mentioned, India and the United States share common values and a commitment to democracy, pluralism, and the rule of law. The administration firmly believes that a strong India and a strong U.S.-India relationship are in America's interest. India's role in the Indo-Pacific region and globally will be critical to international security and economic growth over the course of this century.

There are many elements of our effort to expand and enhance the strategic partnership between our countries. One key pillar is to deepen defense and security cooperation, building on the U.S. recognition of India as a major defense partner. Together, our countries seek to ensure freedom of navigation, overflight, and commerce, and advance a rules-based democratic order throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

If confirmed, I also look forward to engaging my counterparts in India to strengthen our cooperation on the most pressing challenges to regional security and global peace, from the DPRK's destabilizing pursuit of nuclear weapons to the growing threat that all forms of terrorism pose to our people. In addition, I will make it a priority to work closely with New Delhi to promote security and stability in Afghanistan, where India already has provided billions in economic support.

In the economic sphere, Prime Minister Modi has undertaken important reforms, including the landmark Goods and Services Tax, though there is more to be done. If confirmed, I look forward to identifying ways that the United States can be a partner in these reform efforts to the mutual benefit of our business communities and our citizens.

India's 1.3 billion people and its rapidly expanding middle class represent a significant market opportunity for U.S. goods and services. As the former Deputy Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs, I appreciate the imperative to expand free, fair, and balanced trade. We will pursue that goal by working with India to improve and expedite regulatory processes, ensure that technology and innovation are fostered and protected, and increase market access for U.S. firms.

A critical element in realizing the potential of our economic relationship will be to elevate our energy ties so that more natural gas, clean coal, crude oil, and renewable technologies are available to fuel India's growth and support U.S. jobs.

In addition, we will seek to strengthen our collaboration in a number of other important areas including, as mentioned by the chairman and the ranking member, human rights and trafficking in persons, law enforcement cooperation, science and technology, space, health, and agriculture.

As we move forward in these efforts, an essential foundation of our relationship is our people-to-people ties. There are nearly 4 million India Americans living in the United States, a community that exemplifies the spirit of innovation, entrepreneurship, and strong

values that our countries share. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize our public diplomacy efforts in India, including our educational and cultural exchanges.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress on the important role that you play in the U.S.-India relationship. I welcome your questions.

[Mr. Juster's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENNETH I. JUSTER

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, It is a great honor to be with you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of India. I would like to express my gratitude to the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence and trust they have placed in me to take on this important position. If confirmed, I look forward to working with each of you to advance our strategic partnership with India—a relationship that is critical to promoting U.S. national security and economic interests.

I am very pleased to be joined this morning by my mother, Muriel Juster; my cousins, Emily Randall and Cindy Camp; and several close friends. Other members of my family were unable to attend, but I greatly appreciate their support during this process. I regret that my father, the late Howard Juster, is not here with us. He would have been very proud to see me testify before this committee.

My father was an architect and avid photographer. In 1966, when I was 11 years old, my mother and he traveled to India. I still have vivid memories of the many photographs he took there. That trip sparked my interest in this vast and diverse country and its people.

In more recent years, I have been fortunate to be involved in a range of matters relating to India, in both government and the private sector. The remarkable evolution of U.S.-India relations truly has been a bipartisan undertaking, and has benefited from strong leadership and support in the Congress. Building on the trip that President Clinton took to India in March 2000, President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee committed in November 2001 to transform the relationship between our two countries—the world's oldest and largest democracies.

As Under Secretary of Commerce during the first term of the Bush administration, I worked closely with officials in Washington, D.C. and New Delhi on this effort. With India's Foreign Secretary, we formed the High Technology Cooperation Group to identify and remove tariff and non-tariff barriers to commerce in this sector. Working with my colleagues in the U.S. Government, we also developed an initiative known as the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership. This initiative provided a roadmap for expanded cooperation with India, through a series of reciprocal steps, in civil nuclear activities, civil space programs, and high-technology trade—three of the most contentious issues in our relationship at the time. The success of this effort laid the foundation for the historic civil nuclear agreement and our broader partnership.

When I returned to the private sector in 2005, first as an executive at a technology company and then as a partner at an investment firm, I remained involved in a variety of U.S.-India business and policy issues. This included serving on the Boards of the Asia Foundation, the U.S.-India Business Council, and the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Advanced Study of India, as well as participating periodically in the Aspen Institute's U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue and other relevant forums. If confirmed, I believe that my familiarity with government officials, business people, and academic and think tank leaders in both countries will enhance my ability to represent the United States in India and advance our bilateral relationship.

From my perspective, the first priority of a U.S, Ambassador is to promote U.S. national interests and be an exemplary representative of the U.S. Government and the American people. If confirmed, I will join with the dedicated men and women who work at our Mission in India in protecting our homeland and advancing the interests and welfare of the nearly 800,000 American citizens present in India at any given time—either living there or visiting. I also will strive to ensure the safety and well-being of our Mission employees and their families.

The Trump administration fully appreciates India's long and rich history. India and the United States share common values and a commitment to democracy, pluralism, and the rule of law.

The administration views India as a leading power and a true friend, whose influence internationally is important and growing. A strong India and a strong U.S.-India relationship are in America's interest. India's role in the Indo-Pacific region and globally will be critical to international security and economic growth over the course of this century. The administration will build on the excellent meeting that President Trump and Prime Minister Modi had in June of this year in seeking to deepen our partnership for the benefit of the people of both countries, and in the interest of shaping a freer, more secure, and more prosperous world.

There are many elements of our effort to expand and enhance the strategic partnership between our two countries and advance common objectives. One key pillar is to deepen defense and security cooperation, building on the U.S. recognition of India as a Major Defense Partner.Together, our countries seek to ensure freedom of navigation, overflight, and commerce, and advance a rules-based, democratic order throughout the Indo-Pacific Region.

If confirmed, I also look forward to engaging my counterparts in India to strengthen our cooperation on the most pressing challenges to regional security and global peace, from the DPRK's destabilizing pursuit of nuclear weapons to the growing threat that all forms of terrorism pose to our people. In addition, I will make it a priority to work closely with New Delhi to promote security and stability in Afghanistan, where India already has provided billions of dollars in economic support and is a longstanding partner for peace.

In the economic sphere, Prime Minister Modi has undertaken important reforms, including the landmark Goods and Services Tax. His government has liberalized foreign direct investment in several sectors and is working to improve the ease of doing business. If confirmed, I look forward to identifying ways that the United States can be a partner in these reform efforts, to the mutual benefit of our business communities and our citizens.

India's 1.3 billion people and its rapidly expanding middle class represent a significant market opportunity for U.S. goods and services. As the Deputy Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs during the first five months of the administration, I appreciate the imperative to expand free, fair, and balanced trade between the United States and India. We will pursue that goal by working with the Government of India to improve and expedite regulatory processes; ensure that technology and innovation are fostered and protected; and increase market access for U.S. firms.

A critical element in realizing the potential of our economic relationship will to elevate all aspects of our energy ties, so that more natural gas, clean coal, crude oil, and renewable resources and technologies are available to fuel India's economic growth and inclusive development, as well as to support U.S. jobs.

In addition, we will seek to strengthen our collaboration in a number of other important areas, including human rights and trafficking in persons, law enforcement, science and technology, space, health, and agriculture.

As we move forward in all of these efforts, an essential foundation of our bilateral relationship is our people-to-people ties. There are nearly four million Indian Americans living in the United States—a community that exemplifies the spirit of innovation, entrepreneurship, and strong values that our two countries share. There also are over 165,000 Indian students attending U.S. educational institutions. Collectively, they contribute more than $5 billion to the U.S. economy and support tens of thousands of American jobs. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize our public diplomacy efforts in India, including our educational and cultural exchanges. These and other outreach activities are central to strengthening our partnership with the Indian government and its people, and advancing our foreign policy goals.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress on the important role that you play in the U.S.-India relationship. I welcome your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Juster, in our conversations, I underscored the importance of the relationship, and I think it is getting stronger. There are a lot of good things we could talk about, but I am going to spend my time dealing with challenges that we have between our two countries.

First, although the chairman just walked out, in honor of our chairman, who has been the leader on trafficking issues on this committee, the largest democracy in the world—obviously, the numbers are going to reflect larger numbers. There are 18 million people in India estimated in bonded labor, slavery. That number is unacceptable. There are regions of India that have significant problems in trafficking.

How do you plan to make that a priority of our embassy to work with the Indian Government to address this issue?

Mr. JUSTER. Well, thank you very much for that question, Senator Cardin.

And I do want to emphasize that that will be a priority of mine. As you know, I have served as the head of Freedom House for 2 years and was on the board for 7 years. And so these issues are of great concern to me and of our government. And the Indians are also very concerned with this. If you read the vibrant Indian press and see civil society, they discuss these issues at great length. Nonetheless, especially at the state and local level, these problems persist, as indicated in our Trafficking in Persons report.

We at the embassy, if confirmed, will take this as a very high priority. I know a lot of work is already being done in terms of public outreach, in terms of law enforcement cooperation, and it is something that I will, if confirmed, and am on the ground try to figure out the best interlocutors to move this forward. And again, it is not just going to be at the national level, but the state, the local level. It is meeting with NGOs, providing shelter for people who are victims.

Sorry.

Senator CARDIN. Yes. I was going to say I hope you work with us on that. I agree with what you are saying.

I just really want to respond. It is a democracy. There is ample press coverage of the trafficking issues. No question about it. The government gets a little bit defensive at times on these issues, and there is a federalism problem on the trafficking issues. So I hope that you will report back to us the progress that you have made and not just wait for the annual TIP reports but to work with us because India, being the largest democracy, what they do is very reflective of our ability with other countries to be able to get the type of progress that we expect.

The other major human rights issue I just want to go into—and there is a lot we could go into—is working with NGOs, particularly those who may be restricted or prohibited by authorities under the new foreign NGO management law. It seems to me that our embassy can play a very important role in protecting the rights of civil societies and NGOs.

Mr. JUSTER. Senator, first, let me reiterate, as I indicated in my statement, that I very much look forward, if confirmed, to working with you and other members of the committee on the whole range of issues that relate to India. I welcome visits from the committee and from other Members of Congress, and I certainly, when back in Washington, will seek out you and other members as well to report on these issues. So that is a very high priority.

With regard to NGOs, there have been regulations that need to be enforced in an even and transparent way. I am concerned that

it seems that some foreign NGOs seem to be singled out at times. I will, again, if confirmed, want to get a better handle on those issues on the ground, but certainly will be meeting with members of civil society. I was very active in civil society in this country, and a vibrant civil society is critical to a well functioning democracy. So that is, again, an important priority.

Senator CARDIN. And I will be sending—I send all our missions reminder letters of what the nominees said during confirmation hearings on advancing human rights. So expect that. And we would like regular reports on the progress being made in regards to advancing our values on human rights.

Another potential problem could be the enforcement of sanctions most recently against Russia. We also, of course, have other sanction issues. And India has not been as strong as they could on enforcing sanction laws.

How do you intend to represent the U.S. interests in India's compliance with sanctions?

Mr. JUSTER. I am not familiar with what may be the specifics on the Russian sanctions and whether India is in compliance with those or not. But sanctions generally are something that are a part of U.S. law, and if that is the case, we will be seeking to enforce them very actively. I do know during the Iran process that India did comply with sanctions and did lessen its oil imports from Iran. And my understanding is they have been complying with the North Korea sanctions. But that is an issue, again, that would be something that we would take seriously. And again, on the Russian sanctions, I would need to dig in further on that, if confirmed.

Senator CARDIN. And the last area on challenges I want to just mention briefly is that during the Paris Climate negotiations, India was a partner with the United States in advancing the international agreement. Now that the U.S. position is not as clear as it was a year ago in regards to our participation on climate talks, that could be a real challenge for our India mission with the Indian Government.

Can you just explain how you will deal with the international issues on climate, recognizing that India did make certain commitments based upon the U.S.'s requests?

Mr. JUSTER. Well, even though the President has indicated that he is intending to withdraw from the climate agreement, he has also indicated his strong interest in clean air, clean technology, clean water. And the United States still has made very significant strides. And so I see working with India on this as a continued important priority. I know the Indians are very interested in expanding the role of renewables in their energy demand, and they too are very serious—Prime Minister Modi—about environmental concerns which are not insubstantial in the country. So I do not see the position we took at the climate agreement as affecting my desire, if confirmed, to be working with India on clean technology, renewables, and other efforts to improve the environment.

Senator CARDIN. I agree with that. I think India is very interested from the economic position, as well as from the environmental and international, the green energy sources. It is an economic issue in their country. A lot of this is our technology and shared technology. We have developed technologies together. So I

think there really is a path forward without getting into the politics of membership—where we are from the White House. I would encourage you to do that. I think there is strong support on both sides of the aisle for us to improve those ties with India.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, sir. Thank you. And I appreciate you bringing up the trafficking and modern slavery issue. We had a very good talk yesterday regarding that, and we understand the cultural issues that exist in India. But I know our ambassador nominee is very committed to that. But thank you for brining that up.

Senator Portman?

Senator PORTMAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I appreciate your deferring as chair since we all have three committees going on at the same time here.

The CHAIRMAN. Especially you. I think you have more committees than anyone in the Republican caucus. [Laughter.]

Senator PORTMAN. Thanks to you.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator PORTMAN. Thanks for giving me the great honor of being on this committee, which I love.

And, Ken, thank you for your willingness to step forward. You have got an amazing background, Commerce Department, National Security Council, most recently State Department, your background with the nongovernmental groups and leadership roles you have played in them.

As you know from our conversations, I am very eager to expand our relationship with India. I think it is a tremendous opportunity. When I was U.S. Trade Representative, we did start the U.S.-India trade policy dialogue. That was 2005. Since then, we have tripled our trade with India. And yet, it was from such a low starting point, that there is much more to be done.

So I agree with what you said today about fair and balanced and free trade. I do continue to have deep concerns about market access for some of our products and services, and specifically in the intellectual property area that you and I talked about.

Could you just share with the committee briefly some of your thoughts on how to level that playing field to ensure even more trade between our two great democracies?

Mr. JUSTER. Thank you very much for that question, Senator Portman.

Obviously, the economic issues have been a major concern of mine. When I was in the private sector, I was on the board of the U.S.-India Business Council. There is enormous potential in the economic sphere, but we have only begun to scratch the surface. We need to continue pressing forward, make sure that India adheres to its WTO obligations, and that we can push the range of economic issues, whether it be standards and non-tariff barriers, intellectual property. My hope is as more Indian entrepreneurs develop their own intellectual property, there will be a greater interest in the protections of it.

One of my major priorities will be to be a strong advocate for U.S. business interests in India. And ultimately I would hope that the Indian community would see the economic relationship as a strategic asset and part of what can help develop our overall stra-

tegic partnership and something that is in the interests of both countries. And I think as Prime Minister Modi moves forward with his reform programs and as he seeks to have a high level of growth, it will become increasingly clear that U.S. companies can contribute to that, and removing some of these barriers to trade would be an accelerator in that growth process.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, thank you. And I agree with you. And I think on the reforms that he is pursuing, it helps to have the U.S. relationship and we can be a constructive partner in that.

I also think from our perspective, India is an important counterweight to the influence that China has in the region, and that is not lost on this committee.

You talked about trafficking. I appreciate your commitment to combating that. As you know, the chairman and ranking member have a real commitment to work with you on that, as do I.

You mentioned in your brief testimony abduction of people. And let me raise this issue because it is a tricky one but really important. I think there are something like 80 cases right now of abductions of American kids in India. And it is part of our relationship that I think does not get enough focus. India has not yet signed the 1980 Hague Convention on International Child Abduction. By the way, there are something like 95 countries who have signed that, and India should sign it. And it basically provides an expedited mechanism to adjudicate these child custody disputes that arise and help return abducted kids to their rightful homes.

As you know from our conversation, there are a number of Ohio cases, and one recent one is very compelling. And I need your commitment here today that you are going to help us both with the policy, which is to get India to sign the Hague Convention to have this mechanism, but also on these specific cases of Ohio kids who have been abducted.

Could you speak about that briefly?

Mr. JUSTER. Thank you for that question, Senator Portman.

I cannot think of anything more heartbreaking than having a parent have their child abducted and not being able to visit them or have some resolution of the matter. I think it is also heartbreaking for the child who is involved. So this is a very serious issue.

As you have indicated, the Indian Government is not a signatory to the Hague Convention. I do not know how likely it is that they may become one, but that is certainly, if confirmed, an issue that I would pursue. But even if they are not in that convention, it is important that there be some process for addressing and trying to resolve individual cases. And I do commit to you, as I did when we discussed that, your case or any other one will be one that I will take very seriously and try my best to resolve. I want to meet with the individuals who are involved in these and understand their stories and their side of the issue. Again, it will be an important—I know it is already important—concern for the mission in India.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, thanks for your personal commitment to that. It is frustrating when a U.S. parent gets an adjudication in India that is positive and yet cannot enforce it and, as you say, heartbreaking for that family and ultimately for that child.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thanks very much for being here.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Juster, congratulations on the nomination. I look forward to supporting. You are very well qualified to do this job, this very important job.

I was just in a hearing and left to come down here, a hearing in the Armed Services Committee, Secretary Mattis and General Dunford talking about our strategy in Afghanistan. Secretary Mattis just returned from a trip to India and Afghanistan where part of the visit was to thank the Indian Government for work that they are doing, especially on development in Afghanistan, very important work.

The Indian-U.S. military-to-military relationship is a strong one now. India does more joint exercises with the United States than any other nation. And this is, obviously, primarily a mil-to-mil relationship, but talk a little bit about as Ambassador what you might be able to do to further and deepen these important security connections between our countries.

Mr. JUSTER. Thank you, Senator Kaine. And as you said, that is a very important aspect of our overall partnership. In the military sphere, 10 years ago we had no sales of military equipment to India. We now have $15 billion. There is another $30 billion up for bid over the next 7 years, and the United States would like to play a strong role in that.

One thing, therefore, that I would be doing, if confirmed as Ambassador, would be to advocate very strongly for the Indians to select U.S. manufacturers of equipment. Not only do I think it would be good for the military-to-military relationship, but it would be good for our trade balance and for our economic relationship at the same time.

As you mentioned, India does more joint exercises than anyone else—that it does with the United States than any other country. I would want to continue that process. I know they just finished a very successful trilateral exercise with Japan as well, the Malabar exercise. So continuing those opportunities will be important.

I would look to work closely with the commander in the Pacific Command, as well as the Central Command, because India straddles the border of those two commands. It is important, as you mentioned, that India play a very constructive role.

It has been a partner of ours in trying to secure stability and security in Afghanistan and make that a peaceful place and to cooperate more broadly on counterterrorism issues.

So I think there is a broad range of activities we can do, and it will be an important part of, if confirmed, my agenda overall, as I said from both a military perspective, also an economic perspective, and a broader sense of our strategic partnership.

Senator KAINE. When I was last in India—it was I think October of 2014—and Senator King, who serves on the Armed Services and Intelligence Committee, and I went to see the Indian shipbuilding operation at the Mazagon Dock in Mumbai. And I would just encourage colleagues who visit India—they are really proud to show off what they have. And then subsequently the Indian military leadership has come and toured shipyards here, including the ship-

yard in Virginia. These kinds of exchanges I think can really deepen the relationship. So encourage visiting delegations to include a mil-to-mil component. I would ask you that.

One of the areas where my constituents reach out to me occasionally about India is in the human rights area, and usually if they reach out to me, it is dealing with religious diversity and especially the treatment of religious minorities, especially Sikhs. Not being on the ground and investigating it myself, you know, I do not reach fixed conclusions about this. But talk a little bit about how you could use a position as Ambassador, if confirmed, to advance what really is and should be a shared goal of both of our great democracies of religious tolerance.

Mr. JUSTER. As you mentioned, Senator, India has a great tradition of tolerance. It is a multi-religious country, and it has the values that we have in that area. Nonetheless, there are incidents that occur from time to time in the religious area that are troubling and that I would want to, if confirmed, work with the Indians on understanding better and seeking ways to improve that situation.

I happened to run into yesterday on my way out of the meeting with Chairman Corker Senator Brownback who is going to be, if confirmed, the U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom. And I urged him to visit India. I know that his predecessor had done so, and that is certainly something that he is very cognizant of. And it is important that we have that dialogue and pursue these issues. Again, if confirmed, part of the challenge is to find out the most productive way to pursue them and to find the right interlocutors and way to make these points.

But India itself, as you know, has a very active civil society that raises these issues and discusses them. And ultimately as a democracy, they are going to have to come to grips with it. But we can play a very important role in terms of our viewpoints on them and our support in this area.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. It is a great ally and an important relationship. And I congratulate you for your nomination.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. I want to follow up on Senator Kaine's point and that is trying to find mechanisms in which we can advance some of these discussions.

India was a founding member of the Community of Democracies and the UN Democracy Fund. So they have a track record of international participation on human rights.

When I was in India, I had suggested that we should institutionalize an exchange on human rights, as we have done with other countries where we have a regularly scheduled opportunity to have bilateral discussions on the advancement of human rights.

There are many examples of countries which we have done this with. The one I think is perhaps is the most successful has been Vietnam where we have regularly scheduled human rights sessions with a country that we had significant issues with. And I think it was one of the reasons why Vietnam was selected as a country to participate in the TPP because we had made significant advance-

ments on human rights and values so that we felt confident enough that we could enter into a trade agreement with Vietnam.

India, of course, is on a different level, and it is not a comparison as to where they are on human rights. But it does show the value of having these types of scheduled exchanges. It is not one-sided. It is shared practices in which we, as the two largest democracies, could show our leadership globally on democracy and human rights issues.

Would you consider that? I know I had support from the Government of India. They were interested in it. We did not pursue it to completion. And I would just ask that you look at that as a possible way to advance this agenda.

Mr. JUSTER. Thank you, Senator Cardin. It is certainly an issue that I would be delighted, if confirmed, to look at and to explore and to understand what has occurred in terms of raising that issue with the Indians. As I mentioned, they are a democracy that grapples with these issues, and we have to figure out the most appropriate way to interact with them to be productive in advancing the perspective that we have. But I would be more than happy, if confirmed, to continue to look at that idea.

Senator CARDIN. And we will be glad to work with you on that because there are different levels on which they could be done. We are not looking at it as a challenge to India but more how we share best practices as the two largest democracies and where each of us can improve—we have concerns in our own country; they have concerns in their country—how we can support each other in advancing our global leadership on democracy and human rights. I think India has a proud history here and joining the United States would give both of us, I think, international credibility.

I thank you and again thank you for your willingness to serve our country.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin. And thank you for understanding the demands of many of us who have several different hearings to go between.

So I appreciate the opportunity to question you and thank you for your ongoing dedication to public service, Mr. Juster. I understand your mother is here with you today. Ma'am, thank you for raising a wonderful young man who is dedicated to serving his country, and to the other members of your extended family who are with you.

In April, Senator Merkley and I had an opportunity to travel to India. It was my first trip. He was returning, having been an intern in the State Department there, I think, 30 years ago. And we had an opportunity to see firsthand how our partnerships with the Indian Government help lift families and communities out of poverty and, in particular, help to empower women and girls. We also had a chance to talk about the strategic relationship between these two great, large democracies and how that might impact the strategic situation in the region. And although our strategic relationship is critical to the future of the region, we also sometimes overlook how far countries like India have come in fighting poverty and disease as a result of targeted interventions where USAID and in-

novative NGOs like CARE and the Gates Foundation and others have played a vital role.

So I have introduced a bipartisan bill that would require the U.S. Government to develop a 10-year strategy to end preventable maternal and newborn deaths by 2035 and to leverage commitments from the private sector, nonprofits, and partner countries. And in previous iterations, it has included innovative financing vehicles.

As Ambassador, how might you engage the Indian Government to help partner to prevent maternal and child deaths in India? And would you work with the private sector and innovative NGOs to try and make a significant difference in ending preventable maternal and child deaths?

Mr. JUSTER. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

By all means, that is a very important issue. My understanding is that there is an active health dialogue already with India in that in the embassy there are representatives of several of our agencies, including the Center for Disease Control, that are involved in that. But also, as you mentioned, it is critical that the civil society and the private sector be involved. And, again, if confirmed, that is something I am comfortable and used to working with and would want to advance every avenue that we can to assist and work with the Government of India at the state local level to deal with what is a tragic issue, would be deaths from childbirth and, quite frankly, to deal with other health concerns that may arise and need to be dealt with as well. I know that tuberculosis has been an area where the embassy has worked with the Government of India on and other challenges as they arise. We want to do so.

Senator COONS. Well, the very scale of India makes both, I think, morally compelling and challenging the opportunity to demonstrate interventions that can then have consequences not just on the Indian subcontinent but for the rest of the developing world. So my hope is that you will pursue that, assuming you are confirmed.

The H1B visa program allows highly skilled foreign workers to come to the United States. And there are some in Congress who have been sharply critical of it. President Trump has been critical of it. The administration temporarily suspended so-called premium processing for H1B visas in early March, which led to some concern in India. And I have heard some expressions of concern from Indian headquartered companies that also operate in the United States. When I visited our embassy in New Delhi and walked to the visa line to see the process that is followed for folks seeking to come to the United States, I saw many Indians trying to come to the United States to study at our top universities or to contribute to our economy in Silicon Valley.

But what is your opinion of the H1B program? How do you see it playing in the U.S.-India relationship? And will you work to support ongoing opportunities for highly skilled workers to come to the United States, if confirmed?

Mr. JUSTER. Well, first, I would note that the embassy or the mission in India processes I believe more visas a year than any other mission in the world. I think it is well over a million. And it is an enormous effort, and part of that is to protect our homeland. It is also to facilitate getting qualified people to come to our country.

As you know, the President in April issued an executive order for the administration to look into our overall visa policies, and that interagency process is not yet completed. So I am not really in a position to represent the administration on where they are.

Obviously, the H1B visa has been an important part of the India-U.S. relationship. I think there is a consensus that it should be directed to high quality jobs, and I think that message, from my understanding, is being heard in India, as well as in the United States. But again, the actual details on what will be the final policy on H1B remain to be determined.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you.

One last question, if I might, Mr. Juster, just a parochial concern. When it comes to addressing trade imbalances, some are familiar with a high quality source of protein called chicken, which happens to be the major agricultural export of both the States of Delaware and Maryland, among many others. And the Indian market is one from which we have been effectively excluded for a number of years, and I would hope, if you are to be confirmed, to have the opportunity to pursue further with you a discussion about how we might access the Indian market for this tasty, high quality American agricultural export.

Mr. JUSTER. Again, that is a troubling issue. Since 2006, I believe, there have not been any imports of poultry. There was a WTO case that the United States prevailed in, but in our view, India has still not complied with that. So this will be another of the trade and business issues that I, if confirmed, would be pursuing with the Indian Government.

Senator COONS. Great. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Thank you so much for being here today. You and I had ample time yesterday to talk through numbers of issues.

To your mother and two friends who have come today, typically when we have an extraordinarily well qualified person, there are very few people who come. It is usually when there is a controversial nominee that is here. So I want to second what Senator Coons said about raising a fine son. We are glad that someone of his ilk and qualifications and demeanor is going to be representing our country in India. I hope you will be swiftly confirmed.

For the record, there will be questions that will be asked. We will keep the record open until the close of business Thursday. We will have a recess period, as you know, in between. But if you could answer those questions fairly quickly, it will expedite your confirmation.

Again, thank you for your willingness to serve. Having dedicated, committed, intelligent people like you in these positions is very important to our country, and I thank you for your willingness.

Mr. JUSTER. Thank you very much, Chairman Corker, and I will do my best to get those questions back to you as quickly as possible. And again, I want to reiterate my desire to work with all members of the committee on issues and to, if confirmed, welcome you to visit India and certainly continue our dialogue.

The CHAIRMAN. I was a little too complimentary because now we have someone else. Would you like to ask a question?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief.

Mr. Chairman, this committee has structured the portfolio that we work with a little bit differently than perhaps the State Department or the Department of Defense does. India is actually in a different subcommittee in this committee than the portfolio and how it is handled at the State Department. Would it be helpful if we had sort of a realignment on those issues?

Mr. JUSTER. I do know that the State Department is looking at an overall set of organizational issues. I am not in a position to say what they will do overall. But I can tell you that I referred to the Indo-Pacific region. I certainly consider India critical to Asia, as well as to South Asia and Central Asia. I was mentioning earlier that one of the challenges is the military has a Pacific Command that goes right between the border of India and Pakistan, and part of the job of Ambassador and what I would do, if confirmed, would be to make sure I have a good relationship with both the Pacific Command and the Central Command. And I would make sure again, if confirmed, that I would be working closely with people who are involved in our Asian and East Asian policy as well as the South Asia. But as to how the Department may be organized, I am really not in a position to speak to that.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you for that. I think as the committee looks to reorganize in the next Congress, that is something that we might consider. So thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KENNETH IAN JUSTER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have participated in human rights and democracy issues for many years. When I worked at the Department of State from 1989 to 1993, I was one of the key officials involved in establishing and managing U.S. assistance programs to Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. This included working with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the American Bar Association's (ABA) legal assistance programs to advance the rule of law. I also developed the proposal that created the Citizens Democracy Corps, a nonprofit organization that mobilizes U.S. private sector expertise to assist the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to build democratic institutions and free market economies. After leaving the U.S. Government early in 1993, I served during the 1990s and 2000, on a pro bono basis, as the outside legal counsel of the NED. I also joined the Advisory Board of the ABA's Central and East European Legal Initiative (CEELI). Subsequent to my service as Under Secretary of Commerce from 2001 to 2005, I became a Board Member of Freedom House in 2009 and served as Chairman from 2014 to 2017.

While the various organizations with which I have worked on human rights and democracy issues each has had a significant impact on conditions in other countries, one program at Freedom House that I would highlight, and which I emphasized as Chairman, is the Emergency Assistance Program. This assistance reaches frontline activists at their moment of greatest need, helping them survive attacks, giving them the means to resume their critical work and, in many cases, literally saving lives. During my time on the Board of Freedom House, this program provided assistance to approximately 3,000 human rights defenders.

Question 2. 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. India has a rich heritage of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity; a vibrant civil society; strong democratic institutions; and a tradition of adherence to the rule of law. However, as with many countries, India faces pressing human rights challenges. The most significant of these, as cited in the State Department's annual Human Rights Report, include instances of security force abuses; corruption, which contributes to ineffective responses to crimes, including against women, children, and historically disadvantaged groups; and societal violence based on gender, religious affiliation, or caste or tribe. Other significant human rights issues include disappearances, hazardous prison conditions, and instances of arbitrary arrest and detention. Trafficking in persons, including bonded and forced labor and sex trafficking, also remains a serious problem, as noted in the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report.

If confirmed, I will lead Mission India's engagement on human rights issues. I will commit to engaging openly and honestly on human rights with the full range of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, representatives of the Government, civil society and NGOs, and India's many faiths, castes, and tribes. I will ensure that Mission India fulfills its obligations to monitor and report on human rights issues and collaborate with the Indian Government and civil society to share best practices and promote programs and activities to raise awareness and support individuals and groups that have been victims of abuse. By engaging directly with the Government of India, I would hope not only to strengthen our bilateral cooperation to combat human rights challenges, but also to demonstrate global leadership as two leading democracies committed to supporting civil society and upholding democratic values, transparency, and the rule of law.

Question 3. 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, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. India has a longstanding tradition of pluralism, the rule of law, and protection of minority rights. However, as in many countries, uneven enforcement of civil liberty protections, corruption, lack of political will, and lack of capacity can, at times, undermine the enforcement of laws. If confirmed, I will lead Mission India's efforts to engage with the full range of stakeholders—from the Government, to victims, to civil society—so as to better understand the barriers to achieving justice for victims and how we can effectively engage to help prevent future abuses.

Question 4. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with India to address cases of persons otherwise unjustly targeted by India?

Answer. If confirmed, I and Mission India will engage with the Indian Government on such cases, and will voice our strong support for India's constitution, adherence to the rule of law, and due process.

Question 5. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead and direct the Embassy's engagement with the Indian Government, as well as with human rights groups, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in India and in the United States. I also will ensure that the Embassy continues to vet thoroughly all individuals and units nominated for U.S.-funded security assistance, in accordance with the Leahy Law. If we identify credible information indicating a gross violation of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law to ensure that responsible parties do not receive U.S.-funded assistance. We also will work with the Indian Government, where applicable, to identify any cases of individuals who should be or have been brought to justice in the interest of remediating units restricted from receiving assistance.

Question 6. How will you approach human rights issues with the Indian Government? Will it be public, private, and will you engage local and state governments as well?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging the Government of India on human rights issues in a frank and open manner, including representatives of state and local governments as appropriate. While some of this engagement may be public, some undoubtedly will be in private government-to-government discussions. If confirmed, I intend to exercise my best judgment and discretion as Ambassador to

determine the most appropriate and effective means of engagement to advance our priority to support human rights in India.

Question 7. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. My experience in government and in the private sector, as well as my involvement with non-governmental organizations, has given me the opportunity to build and be a part of high-level teams with diverse members. I am committed to the principles of diversity and equal employment opportunity. If confirmed, I will seek to foster a work environment that recognizes the contributions of all employees, and I will make sure they have information available about the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, foreign affairs affinity organizations, and opportunities specific to various groups.

Question 8. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage all supervisors to take available courses on equal employment opportunity principles, diversity, leadership and management, and related issues. I also will urge supervisors to include unconscious bias and similar topics when they mentor junior colleagues. I will direct supervisors to provide opportunities, transparently and fairly, to all entry- and mid-level professionals. By providing time for professional development discussions to address diversity, I will highlight that this is a priority for the State Department as well as a priority for me as Ambassador.

Question 9. If confirmed, how will you defend against conflicts of interest influencing Trump administration policies, particularly the status of President Trump's multiple active real estate projects in India? Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 10. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in India?

Answer. The State Department Ethics Office and the Office of Government Ethics have reviewed my assets and determined that none of my holdings pose a substantial risk of creating a conflict of interest during my service as Ambassador to India. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. I will divest my interests in any investments the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary in the future to avoid a conflict of interest, and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 12. Please describe your role as a board member for the company Gold Reserve Inc. During your time on the board, did Gold Reserve Inc. conduct any business in Venezuela? If so, what was the nature of that business?

Answer. I served as a member of the Board of Directors of Gold Reserve Inc. from March 2015 to January 2017. Some brief background about Gold Reserve is necessary to understand my role on the Board. Gold Reserve acquired and began developing a gold and copper project in southeastern Venezuela in 1992 and, from 1992 to 2009, invested close to $300 million in acquisition, land exploration, development, equipment, and engineering costs. In April 2008, the Government of Venezuela arbitrarily revoked the previous authorization for Gold Reserve to proceed with construction of this project. Accordingly, in October 2009, Gold Reserve initiated an arbitration under the rules of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) of the World Bank to obtain compensation for the losses caused by the actions of Venezuela. In September 2014, the ICSID Tribunal unanimously granted Gold Reserve an Arbitral Award totaling (i) $713 million in damages, plus (ii) pre-Award interest, and (iii) legal costs and expenses, for a total of $740.3 million, with the Award also accruing post-Award interest. The Government of Venezuela did not comply with the Award and, instead, challenged its validity. This required Gold Reserve to initiate a series of legal actions to seek to enforce

the Award and also provide the basis, if necessary, for attaching assets of the Government of Venezuela. Shortly thereafter, the senior partner of a firm that is a large shareholder of Gold Reserve, who knows me well, including my extensive prior legal experience in international arbitrations and the enforcement of arbitral awards, asked me if I would be willing to join the Board in order to help provide advice on their legal activities. The Board subsequently invited me to become a Director in March 2015.

During my service as a Director, the Chairman of the Board, the CEO, and the President held periodic settlement discussions with representatives of the Government of Venezuela and eventually executed a settlement agreement. The settlement agreement included a schedule of payments by Venezuela for the Award plus interest and entering into an agreement for the formation of a jointly owned company to develop a gold and copper project on some of the original property plus an adjacent property. My role, and that of other members of the Board, was to advise on the settlement discussions and authorize and approve the settlement agreement. I never met with any Venezuelans during this process nor did I travel to Venezuela.

Question 13. If confirmed, how do you plan on working with Indian leaders on improving market access in India to improve U.S.-India bilateral trade?

Answer. U.S.-India bilateral trade has more than doubled in the past decade, from $45 billion in 2006 to more than $114 billion in 2016. If confirmed, I will try to continue to build on that momentum. Working with the teams at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Commerce Department, the State Department, and others in the interagency, I intend to bring all of Mission India's resources and expertise to bear on behalf of U.S. companies and their interests. It is also important to note that USTR, with participation from the State Department and the interagency, led a delegation to New Delhi on September 20 to press the India on the need for concrete outcomes at the upcoming Trade Policy Forum on October 26.

Question 14. From your perspective, what are the biggest impediments to a fuller economic relationship with India?

Answer. India embarked upon economic liberalization in 1991, and the growth that has followed has been impressive. However, further reforms are needed to sustain high growth. We have had a robust economic relationship with India for many years and have consistently engaged with the Government of India on the most significant impediments to a greater economic relationship, including tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, constraints on access for U.S. companies to the Indian market, tax and regulatory policies, and insufficient intellectual property rights protection and enforcement. Despite these challenges, we believe India offers tremendous potential for increased trade and investment, and the United States is well positioned to partner with India to advance growth and prosperity for both our countries in the years ahead.

Question 15. Please share your views on the importance of the sanctity of contracts between U.S. companies and the Indian Government. What steps will you take to ensure that contracts between U.S. companies and the Indian Government are honored?

Answer. As a lawyer, I place great value on contract sanctity, as it provides the legal certainty that companies need to engage with confidence in business transactions. Questioning the sanctity of contracts would undermine U.S. and global investor confidence and, ultimately, commercial relationships. I would note that Prime Minister Modi has made improving India's standing in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings a primary focus. The United States has consistently highlighted that the rule of law, dispute settlement, and contract enforcement are critical components of a robust, welcoming business climate. These are factors that U.S. and international companies consider when deciding whether to do business with India, and it is in India's interest to recognize and enforce contracts with the private sector. If confirmed, I will strongly advocate with the Government of India to ensure the sanctity of contracts.

Question 16. Do you believe it was the right decision to withdraw from the Paris Accords? Do you agree with the scientific consensus on climate change that humans are an overwhelming cause of global warming?

Answer. Given my understanding that the scientific literature identifies both human activity and natural variability as important influences on the climate, I believe there should be a balanced approach of being environmentally friendly and reducing emissions, while doing so in a manner that does not put at risk American prosperity. In announcing the administration's plan to exit the Paris Agreement, the President expressed concerns that this Agreement as currently written would harm the American economy and disadvantage American workers. The President also in-

dicated that he is open to re-negotiating the Paris Agreement if the terms are more favorable to the United States. Nevertheless, the administration is committed to a clean environment, including clean air and clean water, and the United States continues to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through innovation and technology breakthroughs. The United States stands ready to work with other countries, including India, to help them access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently, and help deploy renewable and other clean-energy sources, given the importance of energy access and security to global peace, security, and prosperity.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KENNETH IAN JUSTER BY SENATOR JEFF FLAKE

Question 1. In its 2017 Action Report on International Parental Child Abduction (IPCA), the State Department identified 13 countries that "demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance according to the criteria established in the law." One of the 13 countries identified is India, which is not a party to the Hague Convention. Approximately 66 percent of cases filed with the State Department remain outstanding for longer than one year, and the State Department has identified India as being "non-compliant" with efforts to resolve these kinds of cases since 2014. In Arizona, there are at least two constituents with outstanding cases involving India.

- How do you plan to address the systemic non-compliance with the Indian authorities involved with IPCA cases?

Answer. I take the issue of parental child abduction very seriously. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of India to accede to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Parental Child Abduction. I and Mission India also will advocate with the Government of India for action to resolve pending abduction cases. In addition, we will engage civil-society groups and left-behind parents, both in India and the United States, on this important issue.

Question 2. What mechanisms will you recommend the State Department employ in order to achieve resolutions to the outstanding cases?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the State Department's effort to employ a broad range of political and public diplomacy approaches to encourage India's accession to the Hague Convention and to resolve pending abduction cases. I believe consistent engagement will be needed to achieve progress in resolving abduction cases and moving toward a systemic resolution to this important issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KENNETH IAN JUSTER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. Child abduction is an issue that affects my constituents directly, and is particularly problematic when talking about India—a country that has not signed the 1980 Hague Convention, and is one of only 13 countries cited as non-compliant by the State Department in the 2017 Annual Report on International Child Abduction. Per that same report, the largest number of international abduction cases of New Jersey children involve India.

If confirmed, how will you work towards the return of the many American children abducted to India? How will you negotiate India's accession to the 1980 Hague Convention or another bilateral agreement to resolve future child abduction cases between the United States and India?

Answer. I take the issue of parental child abduction very seriously. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of India to accede to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Parental Child Abduction. I and Mission India also will advocate with the Government of India for action to resolve pending abduction cases. In addition, we will engage civil-society groups and left-behind parents, both in India and the United States, on this important issue.

Question 2. If India continues to be non-compliant, what steps would you take to hold their government accountable and continue to fight for the rights of the American Citizen parents left-behind?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's efforts to employ a broad range of political and public diplomacy approaches to encourage India's accession to the Hague Convention and to resolve pending abduction cases. I believe consistent engagement will be needed to achieve progress in resolving abduction cases and moving toward a systemic resolution of this important issue.

Question 3. India remains on the USTR's Priority Watch list in the ″Special 301″ Report in 2017. Prime Minister Modi promised to promote a more fair, competitive, and transparent regulatory framework, but we have seen little tangible progress.

- What would you do to encourage Prime Minister Modi to improve governance structures in India that are affecting our U.S. businesses on a daily base? What would you do to raise the issue of IP protection and enforcement with the Indian Government?

Answer. Strong protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights is essential to incentivizing and compensating American artists, inventors, and innovators for their ideas and creativity, and stimulating global economic growth. If confirmed, I will actively encourage Indian Government officials, in meetings and in public forums, to strengthen India's intellectual property rights regime so as to bring India's laws, regulations, and enforcement activities in line with global best practices. I would note that the U.S. Government maintains a robust dialogue with the Indian Government on intellectual property rights through the USTR-led Trade Policy Forum, among other bilateral mechanisms.

Question 4. In particular, I have been tracking closely the case of New Jersey-based MCT Dairies that mistakenly sent a payment of more than $130,000 to Punjab National Bank in India in 2014 and is still waiting for their money to be returned.

- What would you do to ensure our U.S. Embassy is representing the interest of MCT and similar U.S. companies in India?

Answer. I appreciate you bringing this matter to my attention. If confirmed, I will vigorously support and advocate for U.S. business interests abroad, including following up on this specific case.

Question 5. Since 2005, we have raised these and many other issues regarding economic and trade barriers with India at the Trade Policy Forum, but we have seen limited results. Do you believe that this mechanism has served to advance U.S. economic interests or should it be reformed and how?

Answer. U.S.-India bilateral trade has more than doubled in the past decade, from $45 billion in 2006 to more than $114 billion in 2016. If confirmed, I will try to continue to build on that momentum. Working with the teams at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Commerce Department, the State Department, and others in the interagency, I intend to bring all of Mission India's resources and expertise to bear on behalf of U.S. companies and their interests. It is also important to note that USTR, with participation from the Department and broader interagency, led a delegation to New Delhi on September 20 to press the Indian Government on the need for concrete outcomes at the upcoming Trade Policy Forum on October 26. I will be in a better position to assess the effectiveness of the Trade Policy Forum after I observe its meetings and activities.

Question 6. I am troubled by India's crackdown on foreign aid to NGOs on suspicion of engaging in religious conversions. More than 11,000 nongovernmental organizations have lost their licenses to accept foreign funds since Prime Minister Modi took office in 2014, starving important NGOs of access to financial resources. Many of these charities are American and have been providing vibrant services to the people of India for years.

- What can the US do to protect a vibrant civil society in India and respect for religious freedom?

Answer. Under the Indian constitution, protections for freedom of conscience and belief are very strong. I believe it is important for India to uphold these constitutional safeguards, particularly for members of religious minorities, in keeping with the country's democratic values and history of pluralism and tolerance. I am aware of Indian regulations that have adversely affected the operations of a number of foreign-funded NGOs. If confirmed, this is an issue that I intend to examine carefully. I believe it is imperative that the Government of India protect space for civil society, and that all parties work together in a spirit of transparency.

U.S. officials have frequently engaged with Indian Government and Indian civil society, including religious communities, to discuss religious freedom issues and to underscore the importance of religious tolerance. In December 2016, the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom visited New Delhi and discussed religious freedom, tolerance, and non-discrimination, and opportunities for greater U.S.-India collaboration. In addition, Mission India regularly organizes outreach events with the full range of minority communities and participates in reli-

gious holiday celebrations of many faiths. If confirmed, I intend to continue this active engagement.

RESPONSES TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KENNETH IAN JUSTER BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question 1. Since 2012, India has imposed an anti-dumping duty on imports of soda ash from the United States. The duty was set to expire July 3, 2017. Instead, it was extended by the Indian Government until July 2, 2018. U.S. domestic soda ash producers have expressed concern with the Indian Government's review of the legal justification for extending the soda ash duty. Specifically, U.S. soda ash producers have been troubled by the Indian Government's actions, which seem aimed at extending the duty, contrary to long-standing, standard practices.

- As the U.S. Ambassador to India, do you commit to assisting the U.S. soda ash industry to ensure the WTO-consistent application of India's anti-dumping laws and practices?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my priorities as Ambassador will be to promote U.S. exports to India and seek to ensure that India complies with its WTO obligations. I would work closely with representatives of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Department of Commerce, and others on these issues. Collectively, we would seek to assist the U.S. soda ash industry with regard to its concerns about India's application of its anti-dumping laws and practices.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KENNETH IAN JUSTER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question 1. Disputes along the India-Pakistan border represent a potential flashpoint for conflict between two nuclear-armed neighbors. In April 2017, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley told reporters that the Trump administration would seek to "find its place to be a part of" efforts to de-escalate India-Pakistan tensions. The long-standing U.S. position on this matter has been that such issues should be resolved between India and Pakistan. What is your understanding of the administration's policy with regard to this issue?

Answer. My understanding is that the administration's policy is consistent with the longstanding position that the United States supports bilateral efforts by India and Pakistan to resume dialogue and reduce tensions. With regard to Jammu and Kashmir, U.S. policy has not changed. The administration supports bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan, with the two countries to determine the pace, scope, and character of that dialogue.

Question 2. I have heard serious concerns from colleges in New Hampshire about the sudden and significant decline in student visas issued by U.S. consular officers in India beginning in 2016. Several of our schools have seen visa denial rates for their accepted students from India skyrocket to more than 90 percent. This has had a severe economic impact on these schools and their communities, and it damages America's reputation abroad. Foreign citizens who study at American colleges and universities not only make substantial contributions to local American communities, they also gain a broad understanding of our country and our people, which they bring back with them to their home countries. If confirmed, will you ensure that all visa applications received in India are carefully and appropriately adjudicated?

Answer. My understanding is that approximately 166,000 Indian students studied in the United States in 2016. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure consistent and objective visa adjudication standards for all applications received in Mission India. I agree that foreign students contribute to the diversity of our education institutions, bring valuable skills and knowledge to our classrooms, and contribute to advancements in academic and vocational fields through their work and research. I will seek to ensure that those applicants who qualify for student visas receive them promptly, consistent with our responsibility to administer U.S. immigration law and ensure the integrity and security of our country's borders.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KENNETH IAN JUSTER BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question 1. In light of the current humanitarian crisis involving the Burmese Government's campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya, there are disturbing reports that some in the Indian Government are trying to expel up to 40,000 Rohingya refugees who have lived in India for more than a decade, having fled past campaigns of persecution. As Ambassador, would you advocate for India to turn its efforts to finding options to normalize the status of the resident, law-abiding Rohingya in a manner that would permit them to remain in India without fear of expulsion?

Answer. I am aware of press reports regarding statements allegedly made by some Indian Government officials about Rohingya refugees who are currently living within India's borders. Senior U.S. Government officials have called for respect for the rights of the Rohingya people and are working closely with the United Nations, other international organizations, and the diplomatic community to try to bring an end to the crisis in Burma, which also is having a significant impact on the South Asia region. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the Rohingya refugee crisis and ensure that our Embassy supports the U.S. Government's ongoing commitment to helping the Rohingya people.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017 (p.m.)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:00 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake, presiding.

Present: Senators Flake, Gardner, Young, Booker, and Coons.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF FLAKE, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

Senator FLAKE. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today the committee will consider the nominations of seven experienced career Foreign Service officers to be U.S. Ambassadors to African nations. On the first panel, we will get to meet the Ambassador nominees to Djibouti, Cameroon, and Niger. I was pleased to meet with each of you in my offices earlier or a couple of weeks prior. Thank you for making that effort of coming in.

Now, while Djibouti faces high unemployment, poor health, and food insecurity concerns, Djibouti has stepped up as a key partner on security, countering violent extremism, regional stability, and humanitarian efforts. The United States has a base in Djibouti. My brother spent several months there just a couple of years ago. Small country, big base there. The U.S. has a base there. It is located in a country that also hosts a Chinese naval base.

Cameroon is facing domestic political strains and regional security threats. It is an important partner in the fight against Boko Haram. Cameroon faces serious challenges with democracy and governance, as was evidenced this past weekend when the government attempted to silence political opposition by banning public meetings and travel to the region where marches were scheduled to take place.

Niger faces explosive population growth that could result in food shortages. I learned in the visit to my office that I guess the birth rate there is close to seven kids per family. It almost sounds like where I grew up. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. I will tell my 10 siblings about that. But that was a surprise to hear.

This year, Niger has received about $437 million in an MCC compact, with the compact to combat food in security through improved agriculture and water access. Although Niger has increased secu-

rity threats on its borders, it has contributed to peacekeeping operations in other African countries.

I want to thank each of you for your time and for sharing your expertise. And also a big thank you to family members who are here. I hope that you will introduce them.

With that, I will turn to Senator Booker for any comments he has.

STATEMENT OF HON. CORY BOOKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator BOOKER. I want to thank the chairman of the subcommittee for his great work and really valued partnership.

I really want to thank each of you all for being here today and for your years of service to our country.

I am a little frustrated, as I have expressed already in this committee, on the subcommittee as well, about us lacking a coherent Africa policy from this administration, especially dealing with some of the worst elements of human suffering, mass human suffering, on the planet earth right now. Food insecurity continues in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia. And I would want to take a moment right now just to say something about one of the countries that is not represented by ambassadorial candidates here, but that is South Sudan.

This subcommittee, with the support and leadership of our chairman, held a hearing in July on the conflict and famine in South Sudan. I came to the conclusion that despite understandable frustration among witnesses and my colleagues with the leadership in South Sudan, frustrations borne from many legitimate reasons, but the U.S. should maintain its leadership and presence there. We can make a difference.

I understand now there is a difference of opinion on the committee about how to move forward with a U.S. Ambassador to South Sudan. But I strongly, strongly believe that the U.S. should do all it can to ease the horrifying levels of human suffering in the country and work with the international community in a substantive way to bring about an end to the political crisis and to alleviate some of the suffering that is going on there that should disturb the conscience of all in humanity.

But it is in that spirit, seeing you all before me, that I am eager to ensure that we have solid career service officers such as you who are nominated with us today and that you all are in place as quickly as possible in the field. You are the leadership, in my opinion, that we need. I want to thank you all for putting yourself forward. Your careers are extraordinary, and the posts that you are being nominated for give you the opportunity literally save lives, to literally help to influence the justice, and to bring about the values of democracy and make them real in people's lives. You are all going to countries that are important to many of our strategic priorities as a Nation in sub-Saharan Africa. Many are very, very tough postings, to countries like Cameroon and Mauritania that could either see democratic transitions or could be thrown into political crisis.

If confirmed, many of you all will go to countries that represent critical challenges. And I want to say thank you. There are ques-

tions to be asked, therefore, about how the effects and implications of our defense-led foreign policy is going to manifest itself in these fragile states. Niger, Cameroon, Mauritania face insecurities from violent extremist organizations such as Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, Islamic Maghreb, and ISIS–West Africa which pose threats to the most vulnerable populations in those countries as well as to stability in the region.

However, human rights concerns and abuses by state security forces, as well as through media and civil society crackdowns that are justified as national security prerogatives, may fuel other grievances and continue the cycle of violence.

We must consider how to balance support for security assistance with humanitarian and development aid, especially as we see funding for security sector assistance become a disproportionate piece of the funding pie in sub-Saharan Africa.

We ask that if you are confirmed, you remain in communication with us. It is critical that we have dialogue between your posts and our subcommittee. And let us know continuously about the challenges you face, what is working well, and how we can help you all be effective in your job, should you be confirmed.

I look forward to hearing your testimony today and want to thank you again. And I want to say a special thank you as well to your family, some of whom are here right now. It is a tremendous sacrifice to make not only by individuals who are taking on these difficult posts, but as well as the family members who empower, their spouses, their parents, their brothers or sisters or family members, to do this job. With that, I turn it back over to the chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker. With that, we will turn to our nominees.

The first nominee is Ambassador Larry Andre, who is currently Ambassador to Mauritania. We met 3 years ago when we went through this before. So it is nice to be here for the second round. He is an experienced Africa hand serving in Tanzania, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Guinea, Cameroon, and Nigeria. In addition, he has been director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and served as senior advisor to the Bureau of African Affairs.

Our second nominee is Peter Barlerin, who most recently served as senior bureau official at the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs. Postings include Zaire, Madagascar, Oslo, Tokyo, Paris, of course, Washington, D.C., and Mali where he was Deputy Chief of Mission.

Our third nominee, Eric Whitaker, most recently was Acting Deputy Secretary for East African Affairs. Prior assignments have included Chad, Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, Mozambique, Mali, Ethiopia, and Uganda. We are confident that he has a good understanding of Africa issues.

With that, we will recognize Mr. Andre.

STATEMENT OF HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRE, OF TEXAS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

Ambassador ANDRE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work with the committee and the Congress to advance U.S. interests.

I am supported here today by my wife, Ouroukou Andre; by my father, Larry Edward Andre, Sr., and by his wife, Claudia Andre; my daughter, Ruhiyyih Rahman Andre, could not attend due to her responsibilities working for an American firm in the renewable energy sector in Kenya. She shares my enthusiasm for all that America and Africa can do together.

Mr. Chairman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon recently presented the administration's four main policy goals for Africa at the U.S. Institute for Peace. If confirmed, I will lead our team at Embassy Djibouti to further those four goals: advancing peace and security, countering the scourge of terrorism, increasing economic growth and investment, and promoting democracy and good governance.

Since 2002, Djibouti has hosted the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, Camp Lemonnier. It is a crucial platform for our armed forces to advance security throughout the region. Serving as the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, the installation is home to over 4,000 American soldiers. Ensuring the long-term viability and maximum operational flexibility of this important security presence is a key priority. If confirmed, I look forward to a highly productive and mutually supportive relationship with the commander of the Combined Joint Task Force.

The Government of Djibouti counters terrorism beyond its borders by contributing peacekeeping troops to the African Union mission in Somalia in its fight against Al Shabaab. We help train and equip Djibouti's peacekeepers.

As for increasing economic growth, the World Economic Forum recently listed Djibouti as the sixth fastest-growing economy in the world, with a GDP growth rate of 7 percent. Despite the small size of its market, this growth and Djibouti's strategic position present opportunities for U.S. business. If confirmed, I will lead our embassy team to further those opportunities for U.S. business.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, Djibouti's security and prosperity gains can best be protected in the long term by strong democratic institutions. To that end, Djiboutians need to develop a more competitive, transparent, and accountable political system. Next year's legislative elections will give us an opportunity to encourage further progress on key democratic institutions.

Having spent my career serving at U.S. embassies in dangerous security environments, I feel deeply the responsibility of an ambassador toward all resident Americans and to all U.S. government

employees. If confirmed, I will lead our team in Djibouti to take all necessary measures to promote the security of American citizens and of U.S. government colleagues.

Finally, I close with a few words about my preparation for the great responsibility for which you are considering me. My career in Africa began 34 years ago as a fresh-out-of-college Peace Corps volunteer working and living in a small village in West Africa. As a diplomat since 1990, I have focused my career almost exclusively on Africa. As Ambassador to Mauritania since September 2014, I lead a highly productive interagency team engaged in advancing specific goals. We live up to our motto, "One Mission, One Team."

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support as I seek to build on the achievements of my predecessors and their teams in advancing an American-Djiboutian partnership based on shared values and shared interests. I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you very much for your kind consideration of my nomination.

[Ambassador Andre's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ, JR.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work with this committee and the Congress to advance U.S. interests.

I am supported here today by my wife, Ouroukou André; by my father, Larry Edward André Sr. and his wife, Claudia André; and by my friends and colleagues. My daughter, Ruhiyyih Rahman André, could not attend due to her responsibilities working for an American firm in the renewable energy sector in Kenya. She shares my enthusiasm for all that Africa and America can accomplish together.

Mr. Chairman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon recently presented the administration's four main policy goals for Africa at the U.S. Institute of Peace. If confirmed, I will lead our team at Embassy Djibouti to further those four goals: advancing peace and security, countering the scourge of terrorism, increasing economic growth and investment, and promoting democracy and good governance.

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Having spent my career serving at U.S. embassies in dangerous security environments, I feel deeply the responsibility of an ambassador toward all resident Americans and to all U.S. government employees. If confirmed, I will lead our team in Djibouti to take all necessary measures to promote the security of American citizens and of U.S. government colleagues.

Finally, I close with a few words about my preparation for the great responsibility for which you are considering me. My career in Africa began thirty-four years ago as a fresh-out-of-college Peace Corps Volunteer living and working in a small village in West Africa. As a diplomat since 1990, I have focused my career almost exclusively on Africa. As Ambassador to Mauritania since September 2014, I lead a highly productive inter-agency team engaged in advancing specific goals. We live up to our motto, "One Mission, One Team."

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support as I seek to build on the achievements of my predecessors and their teams in advancing an American-Djiboutian partnership based on shared values and shared interests. I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you very much for your kind consideration of my nomination.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Barlerin?

STATEMENT OF PETER HENRY BARLERIN, OF COLORADO, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES TO REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Mr. BARLERIN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, it is an honor to appear before you today as nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. I thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position.

Thank you to my wife, Ines Rulis Barlerin, who is with me here today, as well as our sons, Sebastien and Maximilian, and our daughter, Ines Alexandra, who are here very much in spirit.

I would also like to recognize my sister Joan and other family and friends present in this room and wish my mother and mother-in-law could be present here to have lived to see this day.

It has been an honor to have had the opportunity to serve in an interim capacity as senior official in the Bureau of African Affairs for nearly half a year. The people of the Africa Bureau, including these two gentlemen, are an extremely hardworking, dedicated, and mutually supportive family. I cherish their confidence and friendship.

Turning to Cameroon, the United States was one of the first to establish diplomatic relations with the country in 1960. Since 1962, nearly 4,000 Peace Corps volunteers have given their all there, and many I have talked to were all transformed by the experience.

Cameroon is known as Africa in miniature because of its cultural diversity and because it has nearly all of the many, varied geographic features of the entire continent: active volcanoes, rainforest jungles teaming with wildlife, broad savannahs, and a beautiful coastline.

Cameroon also faces a number of the same challenges as the rest of sub-Saharan Africa in terms of health, security, and governance. These challenges are somewhat holding back a country that is as full of potential as any other in Africa.

On health, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief provides treatment, care, and prevention to Cameroonians affected by HIV/AIDS. And as a Global Health Security Agenda Phase I country, Cameroon partners with the United States to strengthen its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases with pandemic potential. Finally, at the UN General Assembly last

month, USAID Administrator Mark Green announced Cameroon would be a new focus country of the President's Malaria Initiative.

On security, the United States is proud to support Cameroon and its Lake Chad basin neighbors in their effort to defeat Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISIS–West Africa. If confirmed, I will work to emphasize that security forces stand a much greater chance of defeating the enemy when they respect human rights and when they build trust with civilians. I would also seek to engage Cameroon to implement the Tripartite Agreement with Nigeria and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the treatment of Nigerian refugees.

My experience in Africa has taught me that good governance is the single most important factor in the success or failure of a nation and that the ends do not justify all means. If confirmed, I would encourage the government to release peaceful protesters detained in connection with the situation in the Anglophone regions and urge all parties to commit to dialogue. Violence on anybody's part is not the solution.

In spite of the challenges, Cameroon has achieved considerable progress in the brief period since its independence. If confirmed, I would seek to help build on that progress and would work with the government, the people of Cameroon, and our international partners to ensure that elections in 2018 are free, fair, and credible, as well as peaceful.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee and others in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cameroon. I would be happy to answer any questions.

[Mr. Barlerin's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY PETER HENRY BARLERIN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee: It is an honor to appear before you today as nominee to be the next U.S.Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. I thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position.

Thank you to my wife Ines Rulis Barlerin, who is here with me today, as well as our sons Sebastien and Maximilian and our daughter Ines Alexandra, who are very much here in spirit. I would also like to recognize my sister Joan and other family and friends here today and wish my mother and mother-in-law could have lived to see this day.

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Cameroon also faces a number of the same challenges as the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, in terms of health, security, and governance. These challenges are somewhat holding back a country that is as full of potential as any other in Africa. If confirmed, I would do everything I can to help the government and the people of Cameroon to realize that potential.

On health, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief provides treatment, care, and prevention to the many thousands of Cameroonians affected by HIV/AIDS. And as a Global Health Security Agenda Phase I country, Cameroon partners with the United States to strengthen its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases with pandemic potential. Finally, at the UN General Assembly last month, USAID Administrator Mark Green announced Cameroon would be a focus country of the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative.

On security, the United States is proud to support Cameroon and its Lake Chad basin neighbors in their effort to defeat Boko Haram and its off-shoot, ISIS-West Africa. If confirmed, I will work to emphasize that their soldiers stand a much greater chance of defeating the enemy when they respect human rights, and when they have the trust of civilians. I would also seek to engage Cameroon to implement the Tripartite Agreement with Nigeria and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the treatment of Nigerian refugees.

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee and others in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cameroon. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Whitaker?

STATEMENT OF ERIC P. WHITAKER, OF ILLINOIS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE REPUBLIC OF NIGER

Mr. WHITAKER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee for the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Niger. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. Thank you, members of the committee, for your consideration and for your ongoing attention to our relations with the nations of Africa. I look forward to working with Congress to advance our interests in Niger.

I am supported here today by my brother Craig and regret that my late wife, Jonita, who was also a Foreign Service officer, is not here as well.

Mr. Chairman, a former Peace Corps volunteer, I have served in 10 or our diplomatic posts in Africa, including Niamey, Niger, where I was Deputy Chief of Mission from 2008 to 2010. I also was fortunate to have the opportunity to serve as Deputy Chief of Mission in N'Djamena, Chad, to the east of Niger, and as Political Economic Chief in *Bamako, Mali to the West.

During my career, I have served throughout several major challenges in Africa, including conflicts and military coups, refugee crises, droughts and floods, while also witnessing at the same time noteworthy economic growth and an expansion of democracy. If

confirmed, I will draw upon my experience to expand the strong partnership between Niger and the United States of America as we continue to work together toward our mutual goals of combating extremism throughout the region, strengthening democratic governance and respect for fundamental freedoms, and fostering inclusive economic growth and prosperity.

As a result of Niger's progress in developing democratic institutions, it was approved in 2016 for a $437 million Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, as you mentioned. This focuses on improving water management, agricultural productivity, and market access to improve incomes for small-scale farmers and pastoralists.

Despite these achievements, however, Niger still faces great challenges. We are committed to supporting Niger's efforts to protect its borders, build capacity to interdict illicit goods, promote good governance and rule of law, and help return security and stability to northern Mali.

Niger also continues to face serious humanitarian challenges, ongoing migration issues, and persistent food insecurity.

Despite its own serious humanitarian situation, however, Niger has generously opened its door to over 57,000 Malian and 106,000 Nigerian refugees. From fiscal year 2013 to date, the United States has provided over $225 million in emergency assistance to address food insecurity and to address the needs of Malian and Nigerian refugees hosted by Niger.

The United States and Niger partner across a variety of programs to address the needs of Niger's most vulnerable people. This year USAID Administrator Green announced Niger as a new target country for the Global Food Security Strategy, and Niger also became a President's Malaria Initiative country.

In fiscal year 2017, the United States is providing $61.5 million in bilateral development assistance to Niger for programs supporting democracy, governance, health, education, nutrition, and agriculture. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Nigerien Government to implement economic reforms and develop the infrastructure needed to attract investment and promote trade, particularly with the United States.

Overall, I will work to ensure that our bilateral partnership remains firmly rooted in our shared vision of security and prosperity. I will endeavor to assist in partnering for a democratic and prosperous Niger that respects human rights and provides economic opportunities for all.

Through this partnership, I look forward to fulfilling my priorities of protecting American citizens and advancing U.S. national security interests in the Sahel.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be most pleased to answer questions that you may have.

[Mr. Whitaker's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIC P. WHITAKER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee for United States Ambassador to the Republic of Niger. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. Thank you, members of the committee for your consideration, and for your

ongoing attention to our relations with the nations of Africa. Specifically, I look forward to working with Congress to advance our interests in Niger.

Following service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines, and thereafter in municipal management in city government in California, I began my Foreign Service career as a Vice Consul in Seoul, South Korea, twenty-seven years ago. I have since had the great fortune to serve in four regions of the world, including as a Leader of a Provincial Reconstruction Team in red-zone Baghdad, as a Foreign Policy Advisor to Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa in Djibouti, and as a Refugee Coordinator in wartime Croatia. I have served in ten of our diplomatic posts in Africa, including Niamey, Niger, where I was Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires from 2008 to 2010. I have also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in N'Djamena, Chad, to the east of Niger. My most recent assignments have been as Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and as Director of East African Affairs in the Department of State's Africa Bureau.

During my career, I have served throughout several major challenges in Africa, including conflict and military coups, refugee crises, drought and famine, and floods. More importantly, I have also witnessed noteworthy growth in democracies and economies driven by human capital. If confirmed, I will draw upon my experience to expand the strong partnership between Niger and the United States of America as we continue to work together towards our mutual goals of combating extremism throughout the region, strengthening democratic governance and respect for fundamental freedoms, and fostering inclusive economic growth and prosperity.

Despite being one of the poorest countries in the world and its having some restrictions in freedom of expression, Niger has made significant progress in developing democratic institutions and combating corruption. In 2016, as a result of this progress, Niger was approved for its first Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact. MCC and the Government of Niger signed a $437 million compact focusing on improving water management and productivity, and strengthening market access, with the objective of improving the income and livelihoods of small-scale farmers and pastoralists, who make up the majority of the Nigerien population. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Nigerien government and civil society to continue this momentum for reform by promoting responsive democratic institutions, reliable government services, and the development of critical infrastructure.

Despite these achievements, Niger still faces great challenges. The collapse of security in southern Libya and conflict in Mali and northeast Nigeria have placed Niger at a dangerous crossroads, as extremist groups and international criminal networks exploit porous borders and long-used smuggling routes to move people, weapons, and other contraband across the Sahel. Niger has also been a victim of terrorism from its border along the Lake Chad basin, where roughly 40 women and children were abducted in July by Boko Haram.

The United States and Niger share the common goal of countering terrorism and denying violent extremism an environment in which to take root. We are committed to supporting Niger's efforts to protect its borders, build capacity to interdict illicit goods, promote good governance and rule of law, and help return security and stability to northern Mali.

Niger has invested its limited resources in combating the scourge of extremism, and has been a leader in the international response to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), both by providing critical support for the peaceful political process and committing a battalion of ground troops to the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) and to the follow-on U.N. Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The United States has supported these troops by providing training, equipment, and logistical support.

Niger is also a strong partner in our Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), through which we are working together to increase security sector capacity, address underlying causes of radicalization, and amplify the voices of moderate leaders to positively influence populations potentially vulnerable to radicalization. For tactical and institutional capacity building, we are working to improve crisis response capabilities (SWAT) for Nigerien law enforcement. Current initiatives also work to build community resilience in the most vulnerable regions by working with local security actors to develop and exercise crisis response plans. In response to the growing threat by Boko Haram in 2015, the United States provided significant assistance, including armored personnel vehicles and logistical support. We also train and support our Ministry of Justice counterparts as they work to bring terrorism suspects to trial.

If confirmed, I will seek to advance our already-strong security cooperation to further our shared goal of countering terrorism in the region and addressing the underlying drivers that fuel insecurity.

On top of great security threats, Niger also continues to face serious humanitarian challenges, irregular migration issues, and persistent food insecurity. As threats spill over from neighboring Mali and Nigeria, markets have been disrupted and significant numbers of people have been displaced, sometimes hurting Nigerien livelihoods. Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa continue to have a significant impact on the Lake Chad Basin, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in all four countries, including Niger. Yet, despite its own serious humanitarian situation, Niger has generously opened its doors to over 57,000 Malian refugees and 106,000 Nigerian refugees. Economic and vulnerable migrants from West and Central Africa continue to use Niger as a transit country to Europe via Libya, in an effort to reach Europe. Furthermore, from Fiscal Year 2013 to date, the United States has provided over $225 million in emergency assistance to address food insecurity and the needs of Malian and Nigerian refugees.

Recurrent shocks, including drought, flooding, and food price increases, have exacerbated deep poverty and recently resulted in food insecurity for over 1.8 million people. The United States and Niger partner across a variety of programs to address the needs of Niger's most vulnerable people. This year, USAID Administrator Green announced Niger as one of the 12 new target countries for the Global Food Security Strategy.

We also coordinate with the Nigerien government to support its innovative programs to address food security, including the ″3N Initiative″ (Nigeriens Nourishing Nigeriens) that empowers local communities to work together to improve agricultural productivity. Thanks to this initiative, Niger has made significant progress in its fight against land degradation and reduced the proportion of people suffering from hunger by 50 per cent since 2011. For its inclusive design as well as its significant achievements, the 3N Initiative was recently recognized with the 2017 Future Policy Bronze Award, awarded by the World Future Council in partnership with the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting these efforts, leveraging these investments to promote U.S. interests, and exploring new areas of cooperation.

In addition to addressing food insecurity, Niger must improve health indicators that place Niger at the bottom of most measures for wellbeing. It must generate sustainable economic growth to tackle high poverty rates. Rapid demographic growth driven by the highest fertility rate in the world threatens to overwhelm the government's ambitious plans for development. To address health indicators, USAID has selected Niger to be a Presidential Malaria Initiative country, with the aim to substantially reduce malaria's impact as the leading cause for death for children under the age of 5. In Fiscal Year 2017, the U.S. is providing $61.5 million in bilateral development- focused assistance to Niger for programs supporting democracy, governance, health and nutrition, and agriculture.

To expand economic opportunity, Niger will need to diversify the economy, invest in infrastructure, and improve education. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Nigerien government to implement the economic reforms needed to attract investment and promote trade. I will also seek to build new relationships between Nigerien and American companies to create opportunities for trade that benefit both our countries.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our bilateral relationship remains firmly rooted in our shared vision of security and prosperity. I will endeavor to assist in partnering for a democratic and prosperous Niger that respects human rights and provides economic opportunities for all. Through this partnership, I look forward to fulfilling my priorities of protecting American citizens and interests, advancing U.S. national security interests in the Sahel, and expanding mutual understanding between our citizens.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, all of you. Again, thank you to your family for being here as well.

Mr. Andre, with regard to Djibouti, this is the first country where the United States and China both have military bases. What kind of challenges does that present? And how will that go?

Ambassador ANDRE. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I note that General Waldhauser, the Commander of AFRICOM, recently pointed out that China's presence presents both opportunities and challenges. The challenge I will mention first, which is to safeguard with the Djiboutian authorities our basic rights, which

have always operated in a manner that gives us full flexibility and maximum effectiveness. From all I have heard in my briefings, from all I have seen, the Djiboutian Government is motivated for its own purposes to see that that maximum effectiveness for Camp Lemonnier remains in place. So, of course, we will be on high alert to see if there is any attempt to curtail our base rights, but everything I have seen indicates that the Djiboutians would not want to go there.

Now, General Waldhauser also mentioned opportunity. We do have shared interests, for example, in anti-piracy. Anti-piracy explains the presence of some of the other militaries there. About 10 percent of world trade, 8 percent of petroleum products move through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, 18 miles long. It is a two-lane highway. So it really forces the traffic through a narrow point, and that is exactly where Djibouti is found with Yemen on the other side. And where we have shared interests, that is opportunity. Where not, we are on very much high alert.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

With regard to Cameroon, Mr. Barlerin, U.S. forces have trained with Cameroon security forces. There have been some alleged abuses in the security forces there. How are we dealing with that?

Mr. BARLERIN. Thank you, Senator.

I have read the Amnesty International report carefully. And the embassy has interacted with the government at the highest levels to express concerns about alleged human rights violations. In the report, it also mentions that there was some awareness on the part of our forces far north of Cameroon. The commander of the Special Operations Command forward conducted an initial investigation into those allegations, did not find anything. General Waldhauser, the Commander of AFRICOM, has initiated a follow-on investigation led by a general officer, and that investigation is underway. Thus far, we have seen no evidence that any of our troops were aware of any violations of the Law of Armed Conflict.

As you know, we are prohibited from training or working with any units that have been found to be guilty of—or suspected of committing gross violations of human rights, sir.

Senator FLAKE. How important is our relationship with Cameroon with regard to the fight against Boko Haram?

Mr. BARLERIN. I would say it is extremely important. Cameroon pays a heavy price. They have approximately 2,000 troops with the multinational joint task force, with other Lake Chad Basin countries, and they have another 2,000 troops with this rapid intervention battalion in the far north fighting. And we do training and equipping. We build the capacity of the Cameroonian security forces, not just the military but also the police and the judiciary. And we have a full range of support for their effort to fight Boko Haram and ISIS–West Africa.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Whitaker, you mentioned—obviously, there is a lot of security cooperation that we have in Niger, building a base there. You mentioned in your testimony the opportunity for more commercial engagement or trade. In what sectors is that possible?

Mr. WHITAKER. Regrettably, Mr. Chairman, the level of trade and investment with Niger is coming from quite a low base.

Senator FLAKE. So anything is an improvement.

Mr. WHITAKER. Anything is an improvement and golden. And we look forward to working with representatives of the few American firms that do have agents and distributors present. That would include hosting them perhaps for quarterly business receptions to try to help them to do better business and to help them to work with Nigerien counterparts to improve the climate for trade. There may also be spin-offs with the MCC compact. There might be opportunities for U.S. firms to bid on infrastructure projects or American NGOs to bid on some of the community-level projects associated with that. So I look forward to working with them and doing consultations with the Department of Commerce, the Corporate Center for Africa, and others to try to improve the number of opportunities that we have in Niger.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. With your permission, I would like to defer my time for now to Senator Coons.

Senator FLAKE. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Flake. Thank you, Ranking Member Booker. I appreciate your accommodating my schedule.

Mr. Whitaker, good to see you again. Good to be with you, Mr. Barlerin and Mr. Andre. Thank you for your willingness to serve in three different countries on a continent where I think the U.S.-Africa relationship is critical and where developments in terms of the balance between security and economic partnership and cooperation, human rights, and the promotion of democracy is more important really than it has ever been.

Our ongoing humanitarian assistance in countries from South Sudan to Nigeria to Somalia continues to save lives, and our aid and support of democracy has helped ensure relatively peaceful democratic transfers of power in countries like Ghana and The Gambia.

Initiatives like Power Africa, the Young African Leaders Initiative, Feed the Future, PEPFAR, AGOA, all increase ties between the United States and Africans while promoting trade and investment, and are all examples of why the U.S.-Africa relationship has been and must continue to be bipartisan. These are initiatives across Republican and Democratic administrations, and we have been blessed by the engagement of Republican and Democrat leaders here in the Senate.

So let me ask just a few quick questions, if I might, in particular about the violence in Cameroon and news reports today that something on the order of 17 protesters have been killed.

As the co-chair of the Senate Human Rights Caucus, I am deeply concerned about the government's crackdown on human rights and civil liberties, especially in the Anglophone portions of Cameroon. Some of the reports from yesterday also report that there are dozens more peaceful protesters who have been arrested. I know you referenced this in your opening remarks.

Do you intend to continue the longstanding U.S. policy of supporting the rule of law, supporting self-expression and free speech? And how will you use your role, if confirmed, to strengthen the

U.S.-Cameroon relationship while also speaking for our core values?

Mr. BARLERIN. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, I will uphold our current policy of strengthening rule of law in Cameroon. As you know, the Anglophone regions—the situation started back in October or November of last year when lawyers and teachers protesting what they perceived to be unfair treatment on the part of the Francophone majority and the government in Yaounde staged stay-at-home strikes. And the government responded with force and shut down the Internet and arrested a number of leaders, as well as peaceful protesters. Partly in response to efforts from the international community, including the United States, the UN and civil society organizations, they restored the Internet after 93 days of it being closed down.

These demonstrations on Reunification Day that took place on Sunday—we deplore the loss of life. And we have expressed to the government that disproportionate use of force in these kinds of situations is not acceptable. And if confirmed, Senator, I promise you that I will carry that message forward.

We have, at the same time, called on all sides to come to dialogue, to engage in a credible dialogue because these are longstanding issues, Senator, and they cannot be resolved overnight and certainly they cannot be resolved with violence.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

In all three of the countries to which you have been nominated to serve as Ambassadors, there is a delicate balance between complex security situations, supporting and partnering effectively with regimes that have at times been our important partners in counterterrorism work or in regional stability while also advocating for openness for democracy, for human rights. The practice of the regime in Cameroon of shutting off the Internet when things are said that they do not like is the sort of thing we cannot tolerate. But by the same token, in the fight against Boko Haram or in the fight against regional sources of instability, whether in the Horn or in the Sahel, we need to sustain our partnerships.

If I could just ask briefly of all three of you, how will you balance the need to promote America's national security interests with America's core values of democracy, human rights, rule of law? If you might, Mr. Whitaker.

Mr. WHITAKER. Thank you, Senator.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my country team to address the equilibrium of which you speak. I am delighted that Niger has qualified for an MCC compact. That itself says it has met a number of criteria on the so-called scorecard. It also tells us that they have passed the bar on corruption, which is a necessary precondition to that. I look forward to this as helping with governance and the agricultural sector where 83 percent of the country works. I think policy reforms that spin off that will be helpful.

I am also delighted that the USAID program is wrapping up and that Congress has supported additional funding, $61.5 million this fiscal year just ending. It is an increase from before, of which $5 million is for democracy and governance programming alone from $2 million the year before, $1 million the year before that. So we are in a good position in terms of an increase in resources. We will,

of course, need to ensure that they are being used with accountability.

But I look forward to working with our team to ensure that these things help improve health, education, the role of civil society in a democracy, respect for human rights. I am also pleased that we have a Department of Justice resident legal advisor working with law enforcement and the judiciary, as well as a regional security office that works with law enforcement training that includes respect for human rights.

Furthermore, we have an active public diplomacy program that amplifies our message both private and public. So I look forward to helping to ensure that that balance is there, and I do take that very seriously. Thank you, Senator.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Whitaker.

I am well beyond my time, so I will leave it to the discretion of the chair whether to invite the other two nominees to finish or to move on.

Senator FLAKE. Finish, briefly I am sure. [Laughter.]

Mr. BARLERIN. I will be brief. I would say that I have always stressed in my career to African government counterparts that in the long run, the ends and the means have to converge and that in the long run, protecting human rights and the fundamental freedoms of association and expression are the best way to ensure the stability of the country. And I will continue to do that in Cameroon.

As you know, Senator, Cameroon is going to be facing elections in the fall of next year, and so I plan, if confirmed, to put together a good program with the Bureau of Democracy Rights and Labor, our Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, Africa Bureau, and the embassy team to support elections that are free, fair, and credible and peaceful.

Senator COONS. You will have a busy year. [Laughter.]

Ambassador ANDRE. Senator, that is a question that I have considered a lot in my career. What I saw in wartime Sierra Leone was how a total lack of security led to outrageous human rights violations. What I saw in Kenya during the December 2007 election and the violent aftermath was a democratic deficit leading to widespread violence and undermining security. So human rights and security are complementary. They are both required.

What I have done in Mauritania for the last 3 years is, when necessary, speaking out publicly and at other times making specific points privately, but as a friend, as the U.S. is a friend of that country, explaining how we see the necessity of maintaining both security and progress on human rights.

Djibouti will have legislative elections in 2018. That will be an opportunity to make progress in establishing democratic institutions. The American people through USAID are funding a $3 million program to develop civil society. Djibouti has an exceptionally weak civil society, and that is a necessary component of a robust democratic establishment.

In the end, all of the security and economic gains that Djibouti has achieved can only be guaranteed over the long run by democratic institutions. And that is the message that I will be making to the Djiboutians.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Senator.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. You give an inch to Coons and he takes 4 extra minutes. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. I was going to warn you when you gave that, you will never get it back.

Senator BOOKER. No. I really am grateful for not only the chairman of this committee, but Senator Coons has been a friend who was the ranking member before me on this committee and has done an extraordinary job and continues to do in his leadership.

I failed to say in my introductory remarks, Mr. Whitaker, that I am sorry we did not get a chance to meet and discuss this in person, but I understand that your wife, who was also a State Department Foreign Service officer, passed away in the field while you were here in D.C. And I just want to express not only my condolences but my deep appreciation, reverence, and honor that this country should extend to your wife. And I am sure my colleagues join me in that sentiment. Thank you very much.

So Senator Coons really hit on a tension that I have been struggling with which, Ambassador Andre, you spoke to, which is the tension between human rights and humanitarian concerns, democratic principles and ideals, and our security concerns. And really since 9/11, 2 decades, we have been ramping up our spending on security concerns in the nations that you all represent. And my concern is that the democratic stability of these countries has not improved. One would argue in many cases democracy continues to erode or is on a precipice, as we see in Cameroon, for example, of potential disastrous concerns. Senator Coons has been yanking my ear over the last 24 hours or so about the challenges in Cameroon alone. And that is sort of what I worry about is that we are, as the State Department's posture now, especially with the administration's budget request, investing less in building civil society, investing less in the kind of State Department activities that provide security.

There was a new UNDP study based on interviews with more than 500 recruits of violent extremism that found that over 70 percent of the cases of government action, including the killing or arrests of a family member or friend, was the tipping point that prompted them to an extremist organization. I have listened to some of my more senior colleagues in open committee discuss what we are seeing in Yemen right now and our participation in many ways with the Saudis in what has been—I should not say our participation—what the Saudis are doing in indiscriminate bombing in many ways and creating a more unstable environment for future acts of terrorism or future recruits for terrorist organizations. And so I really do worry about the abuses right now that some of the security forces are engaging in against civilians and how they can be a powerful recruitment tool for terrorist organizations, which is an important consideration as the executive branch thinks about continuing security assistance for countries like Cameroon whose military has been implicated in torture.

And so I want to ask—maybe, Mr. Barlerin, we will begin with you—in your position what can we be doing to ensure that U.S. se-

curity assistance does not enable much of this reprehensible abusive behavior by partner militaries who are in many ways fueling the long-term instability of their country, as well as the problems that we are trying to prevent. And what I am worried about is how the U.S. seems to be in some cases, as we have seen in Cameroon—you mentioned that you read the Amnesty International report. In some ways, it is casting a shadow over the American presence in Cameroon as well.

Mr. BARLERIN. Thank you, Senator.

I cannot give you a perfect answer and I will not purport to try. But what I will promise you is that I will carry forward the same spirit, the same concerns, the same message that you have, if confirmed, and try my best to impress upon Cameroonian interlocutors the importance of respect for human rights and basic freedoms, fundamental freedoms.

I will say that the Leahy amendment is like a vaccine for us because it prevents us from being mixed up with military units that are engaged with gross violations of human rights. So that has been, I think, a very helpful thing for us. And AFRICOM's investigations into the allegations of Amnesty International, I hope and I am confident, will clear any idea that the U.S. is somehow involved with something that is not correct.

I would also like to just note that we are doing a lot more in the far north of Cameroon. Cameroon is host to a huge number of refugees, about 225,000 from the Central African Republic, about 93,000 from Nigeria. For a population that size of a fairly small economy, that is the equivalent of having about 8-plus million refugees in the United States of America in an economy that is facing serious challenges, as you mentioned.

The USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives is working in the far north to build local capacity of opinion-makers, of expressing moderate messaging, of helping youth to resolve their differences in a peaceable manner. And then we provide a great deal of assistance. We are the leading assistance country for humanitarian assistance in that area to help the people of the far north of Cameroon get through this difficult time. So the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration provides a little over $13 million this year. USAID's Food for Peace provides about $18 million to $20 million of feeding. And then USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance provides psychosocial support and other support for these communities.

But let me stress that Cameroon has been and I hope will continue to be a good and a strong partner with us in facing these very serious challenges.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much. And again, the dialogue between us is so important, especially as we set the budget for the State Department. And some of these organizations that you rightfully mentioned and gave highlight to—their resource needs is something that is important to help form our understanding of where we should be making investments.

I am very conscious of another panel but, Mr. Whitaker, I do want to just press you a little bit, and then I will end and let Ambassador Andre escape my questioning. [Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Sorry, Mr. Whitaker. Your brother is filming this. I want to give you a chance to—[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER.—really look good on camera.

But Niger has got a really tough neighborhood, obviously, when it comes to Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, and then unrest in Mali and Libya. And so the intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities in the region are really—it is such an important mission.

But there was a CNN article that described Agadez as becoming a tinderbox packed with migrants willing to risk everything, those who have spent all they had and failed to make it to Europe, and an unemployed local population that is rapidly running out of patience. And so AFRICOM seems to recognize this. An official was noting—and I quote that official saying the stability is absolutely fragile. There is a youth bulge we have here, the median age being less than 15 for more than half the population, literacy estimated to be at 15 percent, and the humanitarian conditions very poor is going to affect how we conduct business.

And so this is why I am concerned again about us expending over $100 million in our military base there. U.S. foreign assistance, however, towards health, agriculture, good governance, and other programs totaled less than $37 million in fiscal year 2016. And the fiscal year 2018 request from the administration was $1.6 million, given all that was going on.

And so I am just curious for you entering again this extraordinary challenge and the extraordinary strategic importance of what is going on there—not only is it counterterrorism but preventing real humanitarian crises of the future. Are you concerned about the over-investment in the military or maybe it is not an over-investment in the military but not enough of an investment when it comes to things to stabilize the community, to empower locals to not only have the basic needs but also to help to stabilize democratic ideals? I am just wondering if you could give me any thoughts, as someone who has to make these policy decisions in cooperation with my colleagues about our investments or at least the mismatch that I seem to see about our investments in an important nation.

Mr. WHITAKER. Thank you, Senator. I take your question very seriously in particular because I have served in Niamey before and in neighboring Mali and Chad. And they all face the scourge of terrorism.

We are trying to help Niger as a partner by training and equipping their military, helping to build an airfield near Agadez so they can conduct surveillance over their borders and protect from gun runners, movement of foreign fighters from country to country, and other smuggling. And this is important to their own security, but it is also important that the region, through a variety of initiatives, attack regional issues jointly. We are trying to help develop that capacity. This also includes our training of Nigerien military for the MINUSMA next door in Mali where they have a battalion and we train a battalion each year. So they are well prepared to carry out the responsibilities.

I understand the importance of balance. That is why I am excited about the Millennium Challenge Corporation compact which will help with agricultural productivity because that is where people work is in the agricultural sector. Work in that area I think will

help fight terrorism and any lure that violent extremism might have.

The AID programs are going up. We are seeing an increase in funding, including in health and education, and I think these will support governance and give people hope for tomorrow.

So I see we are doing a number of things. It may not be enough. I am certainly open to suggestions, which I will take in my consultations. I will be consulting with AFRICOM as well and getting a better handle on their programs and trying to ensure we have some greater balance in our relationship. So I look forward to working with my country team, if confirmed, to ensure that this takes place.

I do share your concerns, sir.

Senator BOOKER. All right.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker and Senator Coons, it is nice to have people so knowledgeable on the subject. We have worked on this issue for a while. I was with Senator Coons and traveled with him. I am glad that he spent some time here, as well as the interests that Senator Booker shows and the experience that he has.

So with the thanks of the committee, I appreciate you testifying, and we will now call the second panel up and we will start in about 2 minutes, if that is okay. [Pause.]

Senator FLAKE. That was fast. Thank you so much. We will now start with the second panel.

The first nominee, Michael Dodman, who most recently was Executive Assistant to the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment. He served as counsel general in Karachi, as well as he was the economic officer to the European Union in Baghdad as well.

Our second nominee, Nina Fite, most recently was Principal Officer in the U.S. consulate in Montreal. She also has served as Principal Officer in our consulate in Pakistan and served a previous tour in Angola, among other assignments.

Our third nominee, Daniel Foote, most recently was Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs at State. He has been deputy chief of mission in both Santo Domingo and Port au Prince.

Our fourth nominee, David Reimer, who most recently was Director for West African Affairs, also has been Director for East African Affairs and deputy chief of mission as well.

So thank you so much. And with that, we will recognize Mr. Dodman.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL JAMES DODMAN, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

Mr. DODMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic

of Mauritania. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence.

I am thrilled to be joined today by my wife Joan. Joan and I first met as freshman at Georgetown, and she has been an inspiration and support to me ever since then.

One of our four children——

Senator BOOKER. Family members have to raise their hand. We got to know who you are talking about here. [Laughter.]

Mr. DODMAN [continuing]. Thank you. And since Senator Booker has jumped in, I will also say she is a proud daughter of New Jersey.

Senator BOOKER. You did not tell me. I recognize a Jersey girl. [Laughter.]

Mr. DODMAN. Thank you.

Our daughter Claire, the youngest of our four kids, is also here. Our other three children and my parents are here in spirit. But I can just say for all of us, for the six of us, the 30 years that we have spent in the Foreign Service as a family has been the greatest thrill and honor for all of us to represent our country abroad.

Mr. Chairman, Mauritania is a strong U.S. partner located at the crossroads of the Maghreb and the Sahel. The country's success and stability are important to the United States, and that is why we so emphatically support Mauritanians' efforts to strengthen their democratic institutions, to end slavery and its vestiges, and to build a secure, united, and prosperous society.

Like its neighbors, Mauritania faces security threats from Al Qaeda and similar extremist groups. Thankfully, Mauritania has not experienced a terror attack on its soil since 2011. The country's leadership often cites U.S. training and assistance as a prime factor for this achievement.

Today, Mauritania's contributions to regional security include their hosting in Nouakchott the secretariat of the G5 Sahel organization. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our security cooperation with Mauritania and also with the G5 Sahel.

Mauritania is preparing for presidential elections in 2019. Many Mauritanians hope to distance their nation from a history of autocratic governance. Impartial, transparent, and accountable governance is the best means to strengthen Mauritania's national unity and to promote a prosperous future.

Mauritania has struggled to achieve a national identity that reflects its ethnic and racial diversity. If confirmed, I will support Mauritanians in this important effort, including pressing for the full implementation of laws and policies that guarantee freedom from slavery for all Mauritanians and that hold anyone accountable who infringes on the rights of others.

Like many of my colleagues before you here today, the primary focus of my career has been economic diplomacy, and this is an area where I see significant opportunities in Mauritania. Bilateral commercial relations are growing, including with an American firm's discovery of significant offshore gas deposits. I am glad that we also have a new American business forum recently established in Nouakchott. So if confirmed, I look forward to being very active in this area.

My recent tours have included some of our toughest Foreign Service posts, in particular my last assignment overseas running our consulate in Karachi. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that I take very seriously a chief of mission's responsibility to ensure the safety and security of all employees and of all resident Americans.

Mr. Chairman, I am thrilled to be participating in this hearing today with friends and colleagues who represent the very best of the Foreign Service. I am especially grateful to Ambassador Larry Andre, whose seat I appear to have taken, for his support and guidance throughout this process. If confirmed, I look forward to building on the many achievements of Ambassador Andre and the strong team at Embassy Nouakchott to further advance an American-Mauritanian partnership based on shared values and shared interests.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to any questions you may have.

[Mr. Dodman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL J. DODMAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me.

I am joined here today by my wife Joan and our daughter Claire. For us, the Foreign Service has been very much of a family venture, and all of us are looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that this nomination presents.

Mauritania is a strong U.S. partner in Africa, strategically located at the crossroads of the Maghreb and the Sahel. Mauritania's success and long-term stability are important to the United States. That is why we emphatically support the Mauritanian Government, political parties, and civil society in their efforts to strengthen the country's democratic institutions, end slavery and its vestiges, and build a secure, united, prosperous, and free society.

Mauritania suffered vicious terrorist attacks from al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb starting in 2005. While the region continues to face serious threats from al-Qaida and similar groups, Mauritania has not experienced a terrorist attack on its soil since 2011. Mauritania's civilian and military leaders often cite our security partnership as a prime factor in this success, recognizing that U.S. training and assistance have boosted the capacity of Mauritanian security forces.

Mauritania is contributing to efforts to confront regional security threats, including by hosting, in Nouakchott, the secretariat of the G5 Sahel regional organization that brings together Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad to address trans-border threats. If confirmed, I look forward to seeking ways to further strengthen our security cooperation with Mauritania, and through them with the broader region.

Mauritania supports its neighbor, Mali, as that country also confronts violent extremism. Mauritania is supporting regional stability further by deploying peacekeepers to the U.N. Mission in the Central African Republic, to whom the United States provides training support. Mauritania hosts around 52,000 refugees from Mali. The United States has provided $48 million in humanitarian assistance to Mauritania over the last five years to address food and emergency needs of Malian refugees.

Mauritania is preparing for its next presidential election in 2019. Many Mauritanians seek to distance their nation from a history of autocratic governance, and the surest path to this is a commitment to democracy, in the hands of a well-informed public who enjoy equal rights and equal recourse to the law. Impartial, transparent, and accountable governance is the best means to strengthen Mauritania's national unity to promote a prosperous future.

Mauritania has struggled to achieve a national identity that fully reflects its cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity. If confirmed, I will work to support Mauritanians in this important effort, and that includes pressing for the implementation of laws and policies that guarantee freedom from slavery for all Mauritanians and that hold accountable any individuals who infringe on the rights of others.

The focus of my three decades of work as an American diplomat has been economic diplomacy. I take great pride in the contributions I have made to build bilateral economic ties and strengthen economic development in post-communist Eastern Europe and in Turkey, Iraq, and Pakistan. This is an area where I see significant opportunities in Mauritania. Bilateral commercial relations have expanded dramatically in recent years, including with the discovery of sizeable offshore natural gas resources by an American firm. A new American business forum has just been established in Nouakchott. If confirmed, I look forward to expanding our commercial and economic partnership in a manner that will provide increased economic opportunities for all of Mauritania's citizens, while also supporting America's national interests.

My recent assignments have included some of our toughest Foreign Service posts, notably my last overseas assignment leading our consulate in Karachi, Pakistan. I take very seriously the responsibility of a Chief of Mission to protect the security and safety of all resident Americans and of all U.S. Government employees.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it has been my great privilege and honor to represent the United States over the past thirty years, and to advance the interests of the American people in every country in which I have worked. If confirmed, I look forward to building on the achievements of Ambassador Larry André and his team and further advancing an American-Mauritanian partnership based on shared values and shared interests.

I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you for your kind consideration of my nomination.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Fite?

STATEMENT OF NINA MARIA FITE, OF PENNSYLVANIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

Ms. FITE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination.

If confirmed, I will devote myself to advancing U.S. interests and values, as I have throughout my 27-year career in the Foreign Service. I will work closely with this committee and other Members of Congress on our shared interests and strengthening the partnership between the United States and Angola.

I would like to introduce my sister Tereza and her husband Peter who have traveled here from California via a week down the shore. Just putting in your New Jersey credit there. And I would also like to acknowledge my brother Richard and his wife Ruth, who were unable to be here with me today. For nearly 30 years, my path of service has meant that I have not been able see them as much as I would have liked, but their support has sustained me every step of the way, as it does today. I would like also a moment to acknowledge my deceased parents, who instilled in me a dedication to public service and a love of international affairs.

Angola is the United States' third largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa and the second largest oil producer in that region. Diplomatically, the United States has benefited from a strong and productive partnership with Angola. The Angolan Government has been an effective voice for peace in the region and has proven an excellent partner in our efforts in other African countries facing crisis, including those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and

the Central African Republic. We have a shared interest in seeing a peaceful, prosperous, and stable African continent.

15 years ago, a resource-rich Angola emerged from its civil war as a major economic power in the region. Some U.S. businesses have thrived in Angola for decades, with many commercial relationships that predate our bilateral diplomatic relationship.

While there are significant opportunities for U.S. companies, the commercial landscape remains challenging. Corruption remains widespread throughout society, and the country's economy requires diversification so that its security and prosperity are not dependent on oil prices. The U.S. supports Angola's goal of broadening its economy and creating a business climate that is more attractive and transparent for international partners. If confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. companies and the Government of Angola to advance U.S. commercial interests to create the best climate possible for American businesses. An improved business environment in Angola will also bring benefits and jobs to the United States and to our economy.

When I served in Angola a decade ago, the United States was instrumental in helping the Angolan people prepare for national elections, in which many voted for the very first time in their lives. And 2 months ago, Angola marked a milestone in its democratic progression and elected its first new president in 38 years. As President Lourenco articulates his vision for Angola, I believe it is an opportune time to deepen our relationship. We must build on our burgeoning defense cooperation and strong economic ties, while working to expand the space for democratic debate, to empower Angolan civil society and to reinforce Angola's foundations for democracy. If confirmed, I will focus my efforts on strengthening our dialogue on these important issues.

Angola has the economic means to achieve substantial improvements in health outcomes for its people, including infant mortality, a measure by which Angola has fallen tragically short of its potential. The United States has supported Angola with targeted technical assistance in the health arena, fighting malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV. We also support Angola in its goal to make the country landmine-free by 2025, an achievement that would help end one of the most painful reminders of its devastating civil war. If confirmed, I will focus on helping new models of assistance evolve as African nations like Angola mature economically and socially.

Since I was last there, Angola has continued to move forward from the effects of its long civil war. But then, as now there is more work to be done. I will bring the experiences of my State Department career, including tours in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to advance U.S. interests in Angola, and a prerequisite to advancing any of our goals is ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Americans, whether members of the embassy team or private citizens working, living, or doing business in Angola.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you again for your enduring interest and support for engagement. I look forward to your questions.

[Ms. Fite's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NINA MARIA FITE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will devote myself to advancing U.S. interests and values, as I have throughout my 27-year career in the Foreign Service. I will work closely with this committee and other Members of Congress on our shared interests in strengthening the partnership between the United States and Angola.

I would also like to introduce my sister, Tereza, and her husband, Peter who have traveled here from California; and acknowledge my brother Richard and his wife Ruth who were unable to be here today. For nearly 30 years, my path of service has meant I have not been able to see them as much as I would have liked, but their support has sustained me every step of the way, as it does today. I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge my deceased parents, who instilled in me a dedication to public service and a love of international affairs.

Angola is the United States' third-largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa, and the second-largest oil producer in that region. Diplomatically, the United States has benefited from a strong and productive partnership with Angola. The Angolan government has been an effective voice for peace in the region and has proven an excellent partner in our efforts in other African countries facing crisis, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. We have a shared interest in seeing a peaceful, prosperous, and stable African continent.

Fifteen years ago, a resource-rich Angola emerged from its civil war as a major economic power in the region. Some U.S. businesses have thrived in Angola for decades, with many commercial relationships that predate the bilateral diplomatic relationship. While there are significant opportunities for U.S. companies, the commercial landscape remains challenging. Corruption remains widespread throughout society, and the country's economy requires diversification so that its security and prosperity are not dependent on oil prices. The United States supports Angola's goal of broadening its economy and creating a business climate that is more attractive and transparent for international partners. If confirmed, I will work closely with U.S. companies and the Government of Angola to advance U.S. commercial interests to create the best climate possible for American businesses. An improved business environment in Angola will also bring benefits and jobs to the United States and our economy.

When I served in Angola a decade ago, the United States was instrumental in helping the Angolan people prepare for national elections, in which many voted for the first time in their lives. Two months ago, Angola marked a milestone in its democratic progression and elected its first new president in 38 years. As President Lourenço articulates his vision for Angola, I believe it is an opportune time to deepen our relationship. We must build on our burgeoning defense cooperation and strong economic ties, while working to expand the space for democratic debate, to empower Angolan civil society, and to reinforce Angola's foundations for democracy. If confirmed, I will focus my efforts on strengthening our dialogue on these important issues.

Angola has the economic means to achieve substantial improvements in health outcomes for its people, including infant mortality, a measure by which Angola has historically fallen tragically short of its potential. The United States has supported Angola with targeted technical assistance in the health arena, fighting malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV. We also support Angola in its goal to make the country landmine free by 2025, an achievement that would help end one of the most painful reminders of its devastating civil war. Some of this newly cleared land has returned to agricultural use, while other parcels have been used for new schools, allowing more Angolan children to receive a formal education. If confirmed, I will focus on helping new models of assistance evolve as African nations like Angola mature economically and socially.

Since I was last there, Angola has continued to move forward from the effects of its long civil war. But now, as then, there is more work to be done.Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the experiences of my State Department career, including tours in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to advance U.S. interests in Angola. A prerequisite to advancing any of our goals is ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Americans, whether members of the Embassy team or private citizens working, living, or doing business in Angola.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I thank you again for your enduring interest and support for our engagement in sub-Saharan Africa and for this opportunity today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.
Mr. Foote?

STATEMENT OF DANIEL L. FOOTE, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

Mr. FOOTE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, I think you have earned the concise version of my statement today.

I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. If confirmed by the Senate, I will work with Congress to advance American interests in Zambia.

Please allow me to thank my beloved family for their inspiration, support, and sacrifice. First and foremost is my wonderful wife Claudia, without whom none of this would be possible. I am blessed to share this special day with my daughter Cecilia and remotely and later, because I expect my son at boarding school should be on the football field right now at practice. I would also like to thank my parents, Curt and Caroline, and my outstanding friends.

My heart goes out to the victims and families of the tragic events in Las Vegas yesterday, and while not related this time to foreign policy, I am struck by the importance of diplomacy in protecting the American people.

Zambia is a strong partner, and if confirmed, I will energetically promote our citizens' shared values of diplomatic principles, greater prosperity, regional stability, and improved health and education.

While we have long appreciated Zambia's democratic history, it must remain focused on its democratic environment. Developments such as problematic media restrictions and treatment of opposition members tarnish its reputation. If confirmed, I plan to promote constructive dialogue aimed at reconciliation and the restoration of Zambia's strong democratic traditions. I will staunchly advocate for human rights and freedoms and the inclusion of all in democratic processes.

Improved economic growth is vital to create employment, to improve the lives of people, to create market opportunities for U.S. entities. And if confirmed, I will strive to boost prosperity and increase U.S. trade and investment in Zambia.

Zambia, as a dependable peacekeeping contributor and a welcoming sanctuary for refugees fleeing conflict, has the potential to be a great regional leader. If confirmed, I will cultivate Zambia's ongoing efforts to advance regional stability.

Healthy and engaged populations are critical to advancement. Our development in health programs in Zambia have saved millions of lives and educated a generation of people. I commit to officially implement our assistance programs in Zambia as a faithful steward of U.S. taxpayer funds.

Having served across the globe, including twice in Iraq, once in Afghanistan, and once in Haiti, I have developed a sense of what I think it takes to run a happy and safe embassy. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, I pledge to you to lead a produc-

tive, high-morale embassy working for the American people and fortifying the U.S. relationship with Zambia.

I thank you for the privilege of appearing today and I welcome your questions.

[Mr. Foote's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL FOOTE

Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. I am grateful for the confidence President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to advance American interests in Zambia.

I want to express deep appreciation to everyone who helped me through this incredible journey. Please allow me to recognize and thank my beloved family, as my key source of inspiration through their indispensable support and incalculable sacrifice. Foremost is my wife Claudia, to whom I owe everything. I'm blessed to share this special moment with my children, Cecilia—here today with Claudia—and, if only via C-SPAN, with Danny, who is away at school. I hope you three are a fraction as proud of me as I am of you. And to my parents, Curt and Caroline, my siblings, and many mentors. I believe my diplomatic service, in diverse and increasingly challenging jobs in ten countries and the United States, provides me with a strong foundation to serve successfully as Ambassador, if confirmed. I expect my broad experience advancing human rights, democracy, security, development, education, and health will enable me to further American interests effectively.

I have great respect for the importance of diplomacy in protecting our nation and the American people by strengthening ties and partnerships. Zambia is a strong partner with which we share democratic values and goals of development, economic growth, and regional stability. If confirmed, Senators, I pledge to protect U.S. citizens and interests by energetically promoting democratic principles, broad-based economic growth and development, regional security, and improved health and education outcomes. Additionally, I commit to secure, develop, and lead the dedicated professionals, and their families, at Embassy Lusaka, and to protect all Americans in Zambia.

While Zambia carries a record of stable democratic transitions, it needs to maintain and advance its democratic achievements. I am concerned that, in recent years, we have seen problematic media restrictions and treatment of opposition members. Such developments tarnish Zambia's democratic reputation. If confirmed, I will be a staunch advocate for human rights; the promotion of open and constructive dialogue among political parties, media, and civil society; and the equal inclusion of all citizens in democratic processes. I will also encourage Zambia to realize its potential as a regional democratic leader.

Zambia's eventual success in diversifying its economy from copper into sectors such as agriculture, energy, and tourism would create employment, reduce debt, enhance stability, and provide market opportunities for U.S. companies and investors. If confirmed, I will use all the tools of the U.S. government to enhance transparency and improve the operating environment for U.S. firms working in or with Zambia. I will work to increase U.S. trade and investment with Zambia, as the U.S. representative to the region's economic group, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA),

Reinforcing our existing partnership can help Zambia expand its role as a good neighbor in the region and as a positive, global actor. Supported by U.S. military training and assistance, Zambia has become a dependable peacekeeping contributor in the Central African Republic. Zambia has welcomed those fleeing conflict for decades, and it hosts an estimated 55,000 current and former refugees. If confirmed, I will cultivate Zambia's continuing efforts to advance regional and global stability.

Productivity and strong partnerships begin with healthy and engaged populations, and the United States' and Zambia's combined efforts have delivered impressive results. Our PEPFAR (the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) partnership investment in Zambia has saved millions of lives, and, since 2004, increased the number of Zambians with access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) from 3,500 to more than 800,000. As a result, Zambia is on track to achieve epidemic control of HIV/AIDS by 2020.

Additionally, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact with Zambia is providing $355 million to improve the lives of over 1.2 million people, and support

the government's efforts to improve water and sanitation services. If confirmed, I will continue to implement our assistance programs constructively and with accountability and ensure American taxpayers' funds are spent effectively. I will encourage increased efforts by the Zambian government to provide for its citizens.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman: if confirmed, my duty would be, first and foremost, to the American people. I promise to strive to lead an effective Embassy, protect and develop our people, and fortify U.S.-Zambia relations.

I thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today, and I welcome your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Mr. Reimer?

STATEMENT OF DAVID DALE REIMER, OF OHIO, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

Mr. REIMER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, I am honored to appear before this committee today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles. I am grateful for the confidence and trust that the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me.

I would like to introduce my wife Simonetta Romanola. Simonetta and I have been married for a grand total of 2 and a half months. Simonetta is Italian. However, she has worked for the U.S. Department of State longer than I have, over 30 years at the U.S. consulate in Milan, Italy.

I would also like to acknowledge my parents, Richard and Lois Reimer, who could not be here today, as well as my brother Paul and my sister Sue.

Democracy and trade continue to be important elements of our bilateral relationship with the Republic of Mauritius. Mauritius is politically stable, committed to democracy, ethnically diverse, and economically strong. Since its independence from the United Kingdom nearly 50 years ago, the country has gone through a remarkable economic transformation from an economy based on sugar production to a diversified economy of export-oriented manufacturing, tourism, and financial and business services. In many ways, Mauritius is a model, politically and economically, for Africa and the rest of the developing world.

A challenge in our bilateral relationship with Mauritius is its claim of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean territory, which Mauritians call the Chagos Islands. Together with the United Kingdom, we have operated Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia in these islands for the last 50 years. Mauritius has taken its sovereignty claim to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. However, we continue to strongly support the UK's longstanding territorial claim.

As a career diplomat and economic officer, I bring years of experience to the task of promoting democracy and economic prosperity for the benefit of the United States and our partners around the

world. I have visited Mauritius several times, and my service in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Middle East has prepared me for the challenges and opportunities of this post. If confirmed, I will work with the Mauritian Government and people and encourage them to embrace leadership roles to promote democracy and build economic prosperity in the region, which will also benefit the American people. I look forward to the opportunity to promote U.S. exports and investment in both Mauritius and Seychelles.

The United States Government enjoys a positive bilateral relationship with Seychelles. In the recent past, the Government of Seychelles has been a steadfast partner in fighting maritime piracy off the Horn of Africa. The near elimination of that scourge owes much to the efforts of the Seychelles. We continue to partner with the Seychelles people and government in the fight against piracy, terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal fishing.

On the economic side, Seychelles has the highest per capita income in Africa. However, income is not evenly distributed and poverty remains. Over the last 8 years, though, Seychelles has implemented needed economic reforms and the economy remains on a positive track. In the last year, Seychelles has adapted well to a political environment in which, for the first time in the country's history, the presidency and the legislature are controlled by opposing parties. If confirmed, I will encourage Seychelles to continue with its economic reforms, to continue to improve its human rights standing, and to continue its growth as a strong, fully functioning democracy. Although our embassy is located in Mauritius, if confirmed, I intend to travel frequently to the Seychelles.

My highest priority, if confirmed, will be the protection of Americans living and traveling in Mauritius and Seychelles. I commit to you to serve as an energetic advocate for U.S. business and to promote U.S. investment opportunities. I will be a careful steward of U.S. resources in Mauritius and Seychelles.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply honored to be nominated for the post of Ambassador to Mauritius and Seychelles. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working closely with you and other members of the committee. I welcome your questions.

[Mr. Reimer's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID DALE REIMER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before this committee today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles. I am grateful for the confidence and trust that the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me.

Democracy and trade continue to be important elements of our bilateral relations with the Republic of Mauritius. Mauritius is politically stable, committed to democracy, tolerant of ethnic diversity, and economically strong for nearly fifty years, since its independence from the United Kingdom. The country has gone through a remarkable economic transformation from an economy based on sugar production to a diversified economy based on export-oriented manufacturing, tourism, and the financial and business services sectors. In many ways, Mauritius is a model, politically and economically, for Africa and the rest of the developing world.

A challenge in our bilateral relationship with Mauritius is its claim of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory, which Mauritians call the Chagos Islands. Together with the United Kingdom, we have operated Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia in these islands for the last fifty years. Diego Garcia is a strategic military base for our armed forces in the region. Mauritius has taken its sovereignty claim

to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion, and we continue to strongly support the UK's long-standing territorial claim.

As a career diplomat and economic officer, I bring years of experience to the task of promoting democracy and economic prosperity for the benefit of the United States and its partners around the world. I have visited Mauritius several times, and my service in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and the Middle East has prepared me for the challenges and opportunities of this post. If confirmed, I will work with the Mauritian government and people to encourage them to embrace more strongly leadership roles that will promote democracy and build economic prosperity in the region, which will also benefit the American people. As a former Economic and Commercial Officer overseas, I look forward to the opportunity to promote U.S. exports and investment in both Mauritius and the Seychelles.

The United States Government enjoys a positive bilateral relationship with the Government of Seychelles. In the recent past, the Government of Seychelles has been a steadfast partner in fighting maritime piracy in the Horn of Africa. The near-elimination of that scourge owes much to Seychelles' efforts. We continue to partner with the Seychelles' people and government in the fight against piracy, terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal fishing.

On the economic side, Seychelles has the highest per capita income in Africa, although it is not evenly distributed, and poverty still is problematic across the country. Over the last eight years, Seychelles has achieved needed economic reforms, and the economy remains on a positive track. In the last year, Seychelles has adapted well to a political environment in which the Presidency and Legislature are controlled by opposing parties. This is the first time this has happened in the history of the country. If confirmed, I will encourage Seychelles to continue with its economic reforms, to continue to improve its human rights standing, and to continue its growth as a strong, fully-functioning democracy. Although the United States Embassy is located in Mauritius, if confirmed, I intend to travel frequently to the Seychelles.

If confirmed, my highest priority will be the protection of Americans living and traveling in Mauritius and Seychelles. I commit to you to serve as an energetic advocate for the promotion of U.S. business and investment opportunities and will be a careful steward of U.S. resources in Mauritius and Seychelles.

I am deeply honored to be nominated for the post of Ambassador to Mauritius and Seychelles. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working closely with you and other members of the committee. I welcome your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you. And might I say that is not a bad place to honeymoon too. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. I have spent time in southern Africa and a lot of people would go to Mauritius and the Seychelles, and I have not yet been there. So I look forward to being there.

Mr. Dodman, with regard to Mauritania, they have taken a step backward a bit with regard to governance. There is an upcoming 2019 presidential election that will certainly send a signal as to where they are going. How important is that? How important is our presence there in ensuring that they have proper governance? It is obviously important to our security arrangements with them.

Mr. DODMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, you are right. The presidential election is coming up in 2019. It is critical. Mauritania has a history of autocratic governance. There has not been a transition from one democratically elected government to another in Mauritania. So this upcoming election in 2019 is important. President Aziz has stated repeatedly that he intends to step down at the end of his two terms, as is required by the constitution, and certainly, if confirmed, part of my dialogue with the president and with all the figures in Nouakchott will be to continue the dialogue that Ambassador Andre has had about the importance of that transition specifically and of democracy more broadly.

Democracy is the foundation for a stable society. Mauritania, of course, is a strong partner on counterterrorism issues, but my mes-

sage will be, if confirmed, that in order to maintain the stability that is important to Mauritania and important to the United States, it is critical that human rights be respected, all human rights. I am certainly including working on slavery and actively removing slavery and all of its vestiges in Mauritania, but also that democratic transition.

Both Ms. Fite and I were in Pakistan when Pakistan also had its first democratic transition from one democratically elected government that completed its full term and went on to be replaced by another democratically elected government. So I have seen firsthand the importance that one single election can make to a country's trajectory, and that is certainly a message I will be carrying to Nouakchott, if confirmed.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

With regard to Angola, we met in my office before President Lourenco gave his inaugural address. How do you expect things to change? I am assuming the effort will be to make sure that oil wealth is spread more broadly than in the past. I think all any of us can remember after 38 years is dos Santos in that position. What is going to change there?

Ms. FITE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In his inaugural address, President Lourenco talked about diversifying the economy and developing the economy and getting it away from oil wealth because I think he is recognizing that it is a difficult time to be dependent on oil when the prices are so low. At the same time, he addressed the need to combat corruption. He also addressed a need to have multiple voices and perhaps voices that do not agree with you speaking and being heard. So he made a number of comments. He talked about education, addressing technical training for Angolans, young Angolans. He talked about his youth bulge and how to create jobs and an economy for those people.

I think the truth will be 6 months from now, a year from now, how does he deliver on those. But as a U.S. Ambassador, I would certainly encourage him to do everything he can to deliver on those promises in his inaugural speech and also in his campaign speeches.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Foote, low copper prices have really hobbled a lot of the governments around, and Zambia is pretty reliant on that. How are they going to diversify? What can they do and how can we help them?

Mr. FOOTE. Well, you are exactly right, Senator, and thank you for that question.

While prices have rebounded 35 percent so far this year and perhaps alleviated some of the urgency for structural reform, I think that is important for Zambia to undertake. Diversification into sectors such as construction, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, and tourism will be important. A focus on fiscal management, better transparent regulatory trade and other frameworks, and creating a predictable and level playing field to reduce uncertainty and attract businesses and private sector investors is going to be critical for them.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Reimer, when we spoke in my office, we talked about there is not an issue right now in Mauritius or the Seychelles with any terrorist cells or security issues like that, but strategically they are important places with regard to piracy. Seychelles is in a tough neighborhood, I guess, in that regard. What are we doing or what are they doing to combat piracy? How much of an issue is that?

Mr. REIMER. Thank you for that question, Senator.

In the recent past, Seychelles has been an outstanding partner in that area. We have provided training to government officials, and in turn, the Government of Seychelles has tried, convicted, and imprisoned more pirates than any other country in the world. Thankfully, the scourge of piracy is greatly diminished, and so we do not have that problem as we had before. But we continue with an excellent security relationship with the Seychelles. It is a very popular port of call for the U.S. Navy, and we have done a little bit of security assistance for the country as well. So we have a good record and an excellent ongoing relationship.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

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

Mr. Dodman, can I just start with you real quick because I know Mauritania, along with Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso is part of the G5 Sahel, which has proposed a multinational counterterrorism and border security force. Correct? And I guess that is why I found it sort of surprising to me that President Trump added Chad to the administration's travel ban list, prompting the Chadian Government and France, which has worked closely with Chad and with us, frankly, to counter terrorism in the Sahel. And I have been one of those people sort of questioning this as France and the Chadian Government have been asking the administration to reverse this determination.

So I guess a few questions. I will throw them out there and let you respond. But what, if any, impact do you think that the travel ban designation regarding Chad will have on the G5's operational capacity and the U.S.'s ability to provide assistance to its component of the forces? To what extent do you think the designation will make other Sahel countries more reticent to work with the United States? What factors do you think enabled Mauritania to escape the similar designation? What differentiates them from Chad? And do you believe that the criteria that the administration used to add Chad to the travel ban that maybe Mauritania is at risk of being added to a travel ban in the future? And if so, what effect will that have in our security efforts?

Mr. DODMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I will be honest up front and say I will not be able to give a full answer to it. I have not been working this issue. I have been working economic issues. I still am working economic issues. So I was not directly involved in any of the preparation of the review of all of the countries and their information sharing agreements.

What I can tell you is that Chad is a critical counterterrorism partner to the United States. That is absolutely true. They are critical to the success of the G5 as an organization that promotes not just security and counterterrorism cooperation among the five but promotes development and growth and trade and all the sorts of

things that we would like to see these five Sahelian countries work more closely to promote their own growth and stability.

What it means for the G5 and our potential assistance to the organization in terms of building up these joint forces—I do not believe that there is any direct correlation, but I would have to get back to you with a more formal answer after I have looked into that and checked into it.

As I understand the process that was announced a few weeks ago, there is a clear set of steps for each of the countries that was designated to move forward in terms of working in cooperation with the State Department and with the Department of Homeland Security on sharing of information. It is all about sharing of information.

Certainly discussions are underway. I assume discussions are underway between Chad and the U.S. Government now about how to meet those requirements.

And certainly when I get to Mauritania, should I get to Mauritania, I will be working with the Mauritanian Government to make sure that that form of cooperation on border security issues continues because the last thing any of us would want to see is to have our strong partnership on counterterrorism issues be at all harmed by any failure to provide the information requested.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Foote, in Zambia, 43 percent of the women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence. When women live in fear of violence, when girls are married too young, taken out of school, a society faces tremendous long-term development challenges, not to mention the sheer evilness to have that level of percentage of your population having experienced violence. It is abhorrent and unacceptable.

And I just wondered in your role, how are you planning on raising this as a serious concern? And how do you think you can help improve Zambia in meeting these challenges?

Mr. FOOTE. Thank you, Senator.

I agree wholeheartedly that gender-based violence and violence against vulnerable populations is a terrible drag on societies.

I will encourage and engage with the government and with civil society to empower civil society to hold its government accountable.

Additionally, I bring some experience from Afghanistan where we worked in establishing and broadening women's shelters and associated family guidance centers where we were able to sort of in the areas where we were working change the culture and make women and those who were vulnerable to or victims of gender-based violence comfortable to come in and seek help and assistance and get shelter and assistance. So that is an issue that I will take seriously, and I welcome any further guidance.

Senator BOOKER. Well, I welcome you communicating with us about evidence-based programs that address this as something that we as a Congress might want to invest in.

Mr. FOOTE. You have my commitment.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much.

Ms. Fite, a lot of talk about how much the Chinese are investing in sub-Saharan Africa, their presence there. We just talked about the base in Djibouti. It is tremendous. And I am wondering when

it comes to investment and trade, how do you assess China's role in the Angolan economy and giving us a fair shot as we continue our economic relationship?

Ms. FITE. Thank you, Senator.

I believe that China's investment and presence in Angola is not a threat to the United States. I think that their relationship with Angola has gone on for a number of years. It is very much oil-based. And China has become, I think, Angola's largest importer of oil at this point.

At the same time, I think we have some shared interests in Africa in general—the United States and China. And certainly China has helped in some humanitarian issues that we have been very concerned about. They provided I think more than $1 million to Ebola eradication and treatments in West Africa in 2014. They have also been involved in some of the other health issues.

I think one thing that can happen, though, is with the U.S. there, we can, first off, help Angola develop a better business environment because I believe fundamentally that U.S. companies will compete very well and can win contracts against Chinese competitors because U.S. companies are known for high quality training and maintenance and training of technicians. And so I think these are things that, again, I do not see China as a competitor, but another—or sorry—not as a threat but just another competitor for products and for exports in Angola.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you.

Mr. Reimer, given the time, I am not going to ask you a question, but I will make two points. The first point is that Chairman Flake is—I know how hard of a worker he is in the United States Senate. I know he visits lots of hotspots. I doubt we will be doing a CODEL during your time there, but if he should choose to and believe that it is important, I will give full consideration to joining him. [Laughter.]

Mr. REIMER. You both are very welcome, Senator.

Senator BOOKER. And then my last comment is very simply congratulations. You will have to tell me about this marriage thing, if it is something I should explore myself. And I do want to say that your wife—you did not have any connections to New Jersey, sir, but your wife is Italian and we have the highest per capita Italian population in the entire United States of America in New Jersey. So she is welcomed to visit anytime.

Mr. REIMER. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Thank you all, the witnesses in both panels today. We really benefit from your testimony. And as mentioned by Senator Booker, we hope that you will stay in touch with us and certainly interact with our offices when there are things that are needed. And hopefully we will get to visit some of you at least during the time. So we appreciate that.

The record will remain open until the close of business today, including for members to submit questions for the record. We ask you to respond as quickly as you can, and your responses will be made part of the record.

With the thanks of the committee, the hearing is now adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LARRY E. ANDRÉ BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania since 2014, I led my team to contribute toward eradicating slavery and its vestiges by working with both Mauritanian and American civil society organizations and coordinating the advocacy and programming activities of U.S. government agencies. Mauritanians closely identify the U.S. Embassy with the anti-slavery struggle. Our advocacy helped free imprisoned activists. Our programming increased funding to local organizations providing legal assistance to slaves resulting in liberation of slaves and successful prosecutions and other legal actions against slave owners.

As Director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, serving multiple and lengthy stints as Chargé d'Affaires in Juba, South Sudan, I strenuously advocated the release of imprisoned ruling party dissidents threatened with death for alleged treason, including attendance at their trials and visits to their places of detention. Once released, the dissidents were conducted directly to the Embassy, where they met with concerned members of the diplomatic community. Among only five Americans remaining at the Embassy following evacuation during factional fighting in Juba, I protested to the government the killing of civilians and threats to the United Nations-managed camp in Juba for internally displaced persons. While the government continued to complain about the camp, there were no incursions while I was present (January-April 2014).

I have advocated for human rights and democracy throughout my career, and, if confirmed, will continue to do so in Djibouti.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Djibouti? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Djibouti? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in Djibouti are the suppression of opposition political voices; the refusal to allow some groups to form legally recognized political parties; the harassment, abuse, and detention of some government critics; the government's denial of access to independent sources of information; and restrictions on freedoms of speech and assembly. I will advocate, both with the public and privately with Djibouti's leadership, for the strengthening of democratic institutions and the adoption of democratic practices as the best guarantors of long-term peace, prosperity and stability. Specifically, I will seek to influence the authorities to improve significantly the fairness and credibility of the legislative elections scheduled for 2018.

Question 3. 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 Djibouti in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Many Djiboutians see their neighbors to the south (Somalia) and to the east (Yemen) as examples of state failure, leading to collapse into violent anarchy. Djiboutian government authorities tend to fear that loosening political restrictions will increase the risk of severe instability within their country, with potentially disastrous consequences. It is our task to strongly and consistently advocate for human rights and responsive, democratic institutions as the best guarantors of peace, stability, and prosperity over the long term.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Djibouti? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to working with both U.S. and local civil society organizations to promote our human rights objectives. This has been my practice throughout my career. If confirmed, I will direct all personnel under chief of mission authority to proactively implement the Leahy Law and similar provisions. I understand that our current security cooperation includes human rights components. I commit to review those components to ensure they are clear.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Djibouti to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Djibouti?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will lead our team to engage in this area, just as I did in Mauritania and in South Sudan. Djibouti's long-term peace, stability, and prosperity requires rule of law and protections for individual citizens' political rights.

Question 6. Will you engage with Djibouti on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. A formal objective of the U.S. Mission is that Djibouti achieve progress on human rights and good governance. If confirmed, I will advance that objective.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Djibouti?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. My experience leading U.S. Missions overseas confirms the research referenced in your question. If confirmed, and as I have done at other posts, I plan to mentor and maintain a diverse, inclusive Embassy team, including consideration of aspects of diversity relevant to our Djiboutian workforce and the composition of Djiboutian society.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will speak publicly and regularly, including in Town Hall and Country Team meetings, about my own commitment to diversity and inclusion and my expectations that all members of the Embassy team will experience and sustain an inclusive and supportive workplace. I will require all supervisors to promote an inclusive, supportive, and ethical workplace. I will encourage all supervisors to include in performance evaluations a comment on the supervisor's success in valuing diversity and promoting inclusion, and will recognize and commend efforts among supervisors to value diversity and foster inclusion. I will ensure that supervisors are cognizant of EEO principles and rules, and held accountable for respecting them. I will ensure prompt engagement, and corrective action when warranted, on any expressions of concern that the Embassy workplace does not value diversity or promote inclusion.

Question 12. In the wake of President Guelleh's meeting with President Obama in 2014, the United States launched the U.S.—Djibouti Binational Forum.

- What issues were discussed as part of the Binational Forum? Will the Forum continue? What issues should be covered as part of the forum?

Answer. The Binational Forum (BNF) covers issues in political, economic development, health, and military cooperation. In the political sphere, we were successful in our efforts to encourage Djibouti to join the Counter ISIS coalition, improve conditions for refugees in Djibouti, including educational opportunities for refugee chil-

dren. Djibouti also agreed to host the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Center of Excellence for countering violent extremism (CVE). Further, we made progress in helping Djibouti improve efforts to combat trafficking in persons. In the economic development sphere, the BNF advanced USAID projects in workforce development and energy, and improved the positive economic impact of our military presence through the Djibouti First, and now Africa First, programs which aim to improve the local economy. In the military cooperation sphere, the BNF helps to deepen our military-to-military cooperation, ensure operational coordination, review security assistance, and respond to requests from the Government of Djibouti. The BNF has served, and continues to serve, as an important forum for U.S. engagement with Djibouti, which will be hosting the next BNF meeting in the spring of 2018.

Question 13. If confirmed, what would be your approach to maintaining security cooperation while advocating for accountability and transparency in government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Embassy team continues to emphasize the need for accountability and transparency in all of our engagements with the Government of Djibouti, not just in security cooperation. As I have done throughout my career, if confirmed, I will speak both publicly and privately in favor of Djiboutians developing transparent and accountable democratic institutions and instituting democratic norms as the best long-term guarantor of their nation's stability and prosperity. I will share our own nation's history of developing democratic institutions and practices.

Question 14. How much has the United States provided to Djibouti in security assistance in each of the past four fiscal years?

Answer. During Fiscal Years 2014–2017, the Department of State provided approximately $18.9 million in funding for security assistance to Djibouti. This amount includes funding from Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and multiple Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)-funded programs, including the Africa Military Education Program (AMEP), African Maritime Security (AMS), Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT), Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI—including Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) training), and Non-Proliferation, Antiterrorism, demining, and Related Programs (NADR).

In FY 2017, we provided approximately $4.236 million; in FY 2016 $4.795 million; in FY 2015 $5.559 million; and in FY 2014, $4.316 million in security assistance to Djibouti.

Question 15. What are the major programs and funding sources for our security assistance programs?

Answer. The major programs and funding sources for Department of State security assistance programs include:

- International Military Education and Training (IMET)—sending Djiboutian officers to school in America side by side with our officers and NCOs;
- Foreign Military Finance (FMF)—providing financing for the purchase of U.S.-manufactured military equipment and training;
- Various Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)-funded programs, including:
  - The Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI)—including the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program—supporting Djiboutian peacekeepers;
  - Counterterrorism programming under PREACT;
  - Africa Military Education Program (AMEP)—which is working on curriculum development at the Djiboutian military academies;
  - African Maritime Security (AMS)—working with the Djiboutian Navy and Coast Guard
  - Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) funding for the Antiterrorism Training and Assistance (ATA) program.

Question 16. How much development and humanitarian aid have we provided to Djibouti in each of the past four fiscal years, and what are the major areas of focus?

Answer. Over the last four fiscal years, the United States provided development assistance to Djibouti in the following amounts: FY 2014 $11,735,000; FY 2015 $19,904,000; FY 2016 $19,008,000; and FY 2017 (allocation) $16,900,000. Humanitarian assistance to Djibouti over the same period is as follows: FY 2014 $6,022,137; FY 2015 $5,166,137; FY 2016 $6,566,137; and FY 2017 (allocation) $5,100,000. The major focus areas of assistance are Health-HIV/AIDS, Humanitarian Assistance, Workforce Development, Basic Education, and Civil Society.

Question 17. The United States pays a reported $68 million a year to lease Camp Lemonnier. What steps did we take to ensure that the proceeds would be used to support spending on social services that benefit the poor and underserved population in Djibouti?

Answer. The U.S. encourages the Government of Djibouti to use its resources to expand economic opportunity for the poor and underserved, and to provide support for refugees, migrants, and groups vulnerable to trafficking. This advocacy has produced a notable success: This year, the government welcomed refugee youth into the national education system. The Government of Djibouti recently agreed to pay for 18 health personnel to work at the International Organization's Migration (IOM) Response Center in Obock. With trafficking, we have increasingly encouraged the Government of Djibouti to provide more social services to trafficking victims, and the Minister of Health (MOH) has requested IOM to provide training in counter trafficking in persons for MOH personnel.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO PETER HENRY BARLERIN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have been a consistent advocate for human rights throughout my Foreign Service career. In my first tour at the Consulate General in Lubumbashi, Zaire nearly 30 years ago, I conveyed our government's concern by visiting the family of a human rights lawyer who had been arrested by the Zairian government. I also met with a professor at the University of Lubumbashi who had had run-ins with government authorities. The day after Presidential Guard forces were alleged to have attacked and killed a number of University of Lubumbashi students, I went directly to my neighbor, the local commander, to protest and demand an explanation. The commander was replaced in the wake of ongoing scrutiny of the incident.

As Deputy Director in the Office of Regional and Security Affairs from 2007–2009, I oversaw Leahy vetting and Africa Bureau input into the State Department's Human Rights Reports. I also represented the United States in international contact group meetings in Conakry, Guinea, to try to convince Guinean coup leader Dadis Camara to step down, and later attended a contact group meeting in Paris, France to try to induce Mauritanian coup leader Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz to release the detained Prime Minister and organize elections. Dadis Camara was eventually replaced by democratically elected President Alpha Condé and Abdel Aziz ultimately stepped down as head of state in order to run for President in accordance with the Mauritanian constitution. He was elected President in an election that was deemed largely free, fair, and credible.

As Deputy Chief of Mission in Bamako, Mali, with the assistance of a very talented entry level officer, I succeeded in getting Mali to take the necessary concrete actions against trafficking in persons to be upgraded to Tier 2 after being on Tier 2 Watch List status for two years in a row and facing an automatic downgrade to Tier 3. Tier 3 would have entailed withholding of all non-humanitarian foreign assistance. I made multiple, high-level démarches including to the President and the Prime Minister to impress upon them the possibility of losing badly needed U.S. foreign assistance if they did not show more progress in fighting trafficking in persons. In the end, we prevailed.

After a coup overthrew the democratically elected president of Mali in March 2012, I was the first American to call coup leader Amadou Sanogo to demand that he step down and to insist that the military return to their barracks. I met regularly with civil rights groups and opposition politicians including Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who went on to be elected president of Mali. After my departure, Sanogo was detained and remains in prison.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary of State with oversight responsibility for West Africa and then as acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and finally, as Senior Official in the Africa Bureau, I consistently sought to advance human rights and democracy in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, we supported an effort by the Economic Community of West African States to convince Yahya Jammeh, a dictator who had ruled The Gambia for 23 years, that he should respect the results of the election that had ousted him. I worked with our Embassies and the team back in Washington to support free, fair, and credible elections in Burkina Faso, Niger, Ni-

geria, and Ghana, among other countries. I met with opposition leaders from the several countries and pressed government leaders in many countries to show respect for human rights and constitutional term limits.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in the Republic of Cameroon? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in the Republic of Cameroon? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Over the last year, the most significant challenges to human rights and democracy in Cameroon include the ongoing situation in the South West and North West Anglophone regions that has resulted in loss of life, restrictions on the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, and the detention of numerous peaceful demonstrators and journalists covering the events, many of whom are still awaiting trial. Reports of forced repatriation of thousands of Nigerian refugees fleeing Boko Haram, back to unsafe areas is likewise an issue of great concern. Also deeply troubling are allegations that Cameroonian security forces tortured individuals thought to be linked to Boko Haram.

If confirmed, I would continue to urge all parties to commit to dialogue in order to resolve the root causes of the conflict, and to find a mutually acceptable, peaceful resolution that will ensure Cameroon's long-term stability. I will continue to call for the release from detention peaceful protesters and political prisoners, and to press the government to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

I will directly engage senior Cameroonian government officials on upholding refugee protection within the country in accordance with international norms and ensuring that any refugee returns are voluntary and conducted safely, and with dignity. I will make the case that defeating terrorism in the long-term is possible only when security forces respect human rights and gain the trust of civilians. Torture is not acceptable under any circumstances, and I will insist that Cameroonian authorities fully investigate credible allegations that its security forces or law enforcement personnel have engaged in torture.

If confirmed, I am also committed to working with the Cameroonian people and government to increase political space and democratic participation, including among women and young people, to advance civil and political rights. With presidential elections scheduled for 2018, promoting democracy, human rights, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and the rule of law will be among my highest priorities.

Question 3. 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 the Republic of Cameroon in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. In spite of challenges, Cameroon has achieved considerable progress since its independence. If confirmed, I will seek to help build on that progress. Looking forward, the Government of Cameroon stands a much greater chance of success when it respects human rights, and when it has the trust of the people. Good governance is the single most important factor in the success or failure of any nation, and the ends do not justify all means. I will work with the government, the people of Cameroon, and our international partners to ensure that elections in 2018 are free, fair, and credible, as well as peaceful.

I will, if confirmed, encourage the government to release peaceful protesters and journalists detained in connection with the protests in the Anglophone regions, and urge all parties to commit to dialogue. In addition, I will continue to engage the Government of Cameroon to uphold its commitments in implementing the Tripartite Agreement with Nigeria and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the treatment of Nigerian refugees.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Republic of Cameroon? If confirmed, what steps will you take to proactively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will meet with U.S.-based human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations, and with local and international human rights NGOs in Cameroon. I will encourage the Cameroonian government to engage with these groups in order to open political space and to encourage the participation of civil society, particularly in the run-up to the 2018 Presidential elections. It is important to make the case that engaging with and hearing

the views of individuals from these organizations will go a long way toward demonstrating that the Government of Cameroon is serious about human rights.

The United States values Cameroon as a key partner in combating Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISIS-West Africa, in the Lake Chad Region. If confirmed, I will work closely with AFRICOM, and senior Cameroonian military officials to ensure that, in accordance with the Leahy Law, the United States does not furnish foreign assistance to any Cameroonian security force unit if the Secretary of State has credible evidence that such a unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. I will also continue to fully support the participation of appropriately vetted candidates in AFRICOM's International Military Education and Training (IMET) Expanded IMET (E-IMET) courses, which provide instruction in military law and justice, human rights, and the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) as a means to interconnect military education and the importance of respect for human rights.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the Republic of Cameroon to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the Republic of Cameroon?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, my team and I will continue the Embassy's long-standing policy of advocating for key political prisoners and individuals unjustly targeted. I am particularly concerned about cases in which targeted individuals or organizations that expressed views at odds with government policy are arbitrarily detained, as highlighted in the U.S. Department of State's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

If confirmed, I will advocate for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, in accordance with Cameroon's constitution and its commitments and obligations under international law.

Question 6. Will you engage with the Republic of Cameroon on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make the promotion of human rights, civil rights, and democracy, a key priority, and will ensure these issues are raised directly with senior officials of the government of Cameroon.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Cameroon?

Answer. No. I have not had any material changes to my financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the Office of Government Ethics financial disclosure form since the date I signed it.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As Deputy Chief of Mission in Bamako, Mali from 2009–2012 and in leadership positions in the Africa Bureau from 2013 to the present, I have made consistent and sustained efforts to increase diversity and nurture people from different backgrounds. Over the years, I have mentored and remain in close contact with entry level officers from diverse backgrounds through the State Department's formal mentoring program and have informally mentored other Foreign Service and civil service officers from diverse backgrounds and gender over the years.

First as Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, and then as Senior Official in the Bureau of African Affairs, I was responsible for making recommendations for Chief of Mission and Deputy Chief of Mission assignments, and ensured that diversity and gender were reflected on the short lists of candidates whenever possible.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will make diversity and inclusivity elements of the work requirements of all supervisors at the Embassy, including locally employed staff, and hold them accountable, just as I do with other standards of performance. I will speak regularly to the value of diversity and gender inclusivity and lead by example through my own behavior.

Security Assistance

Question 12. How much money has the United States provided to Cameroon in each of the past four fiscal years from both bilateral and regional accounts?

Answer. From FY 2014–FY 2017, the United States Congress obligated $85.349M in security assistance funding for Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) to support military professionalization, counterterrorism, peacekeeping, maritime security, and counter-poaching efforts.

- Breakdown per Year
  - FY 2014—$13.014M was obligated for Cameroon in IMET and PKO to support military professionalization, peacekeeping, and counter-poaching efforts.
  - FY 2015—$31.305M was obligated in FMF, IMET and PKO to support military professionalization, counterterrorism efforts, maritime security, and peacekeeping.
  - FY 2016—$7.503M was obligated in FMF, IMET and PKO to support military professionalization, counterterrorism efforts, maritime security, and peacekeeping.
  - FY 2017—$33.527M was obligated in FMF, IMET and PKO to support military professionalization, counterterrorism efforts, maritime security, and peacekeeping.

While Cameroon does not receive bilateral International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds for civilian security assistance, Cameroon has benefited from the centrally managed INCLE funds for the period of FY 2014—FY 2017.

- Breakdown per Year:
  - FY 2014—$915,000
  - FY 15—$1,034,000
  - FY 2016—$1,362,000
  - FY 2017—$1,490,000 (estimated)

Question 13. What is the status of AFRICOM's inquiry into whether or not American soldiers were aware of torture and abuses being carried out by Cameroonian soldiers?

Answer. A preliminary inquiry, directed by the Commander, Special Operations Command Africa (Forward), found no evidence that U.S. forces observed or received reports of the law of armed conflict (LOAC) violations allegedly committed by partner forces in Cameroon.

Nevertheless, after reviewing the findings of the preliminary inquiry, the Commander of U.S. Africa Command (US AFRICOM) appointed a general officer, assisted by various subject matter experts, to further investigate the extent to which U.S. forces had engaged with Cameroonian forces who were alleged to have committed LOAC violations. The investigation is examining the human rights and LOAC training received by U.S. forces prior to deploying, as well as any training provided by U.S. forces to Cameroonian forces. The investigation will make recommendations on the actions that the Department of Defense should take moving forward.

Question 14. Will the results of this inquiry be provided to Congress?

Answer. The provision of the results of the inquiry will be determined by AFRICOM.

Question 15. How will you, if confirmed as Ambassador, effectively message that the United States does not tolerate human rights abuses by the Cameroonian military?

Answer. If confirmed, I will reiterate to the Cameroonian Government that the United States takes gross human rights abuse allegations seriously and, in accordance with the Leahy Law, does not furnish assistance to any security force unit if the Secretary of State has credible information that such a unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.

I will urge Cameroon to uphold its commitments and obligations under international law. All allegations and reports of torture and abuses must be fully investigated in a transparent manner. If warranted, the perpetrators must be prosecuted and punished in order to meet those commitments.

We value Cameroon's partnership in combating terrorism. And as a valued partner in this fight, it is necessary to underscore that the strong partnership between the United States and Cameroon is not sustainable if Cameroonian security forces show a pattern of human rights abuses in the fight against terrorism.

Question 16. The State Department has ranked Cameroon ″Tier 2 Watchlist″ on trafficking in persons. If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and aid, if any, would you pursue to help Cameroon better tackle this problem?

Answer. The Government of Cameroon does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. There are several lines of diplomatic effort I will pursue, if confirmed, to encourage the Government of Cameroon to improve on its current Tier 2 Watchlist ranking.

I will urge the Government of Cameroon to increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers for all forms of trafficking-including complicit officials and cases referred by NGOs-under the trafficking section of the penal code. I will also encourage Cameroon to provide repatriation assistance, including travel documents, to Cameroonian trafficking victims identified abroad, expand trafficking-specific services for all victims, and increase collaboration with NGOs on identifying and protecting victims and raising awareness of trafficking.

Additionally, I will work with the Government of Cameroon to encourage efforts to protect Cameroonian women who are recruited to work abroad, especially in exploitative situations in the Middle East, by encouraging the active regulation and investigation of labor recruiters and the provision of pre-departure information to citizens on their rights as foreign workers.

Question 17. In what ways might such efforts be incorporated into existing U.S. programs that aim to help strengthen Cameroon's security sector and the rule of law?

Answer. If confirmed, I believe that there is an opportunity through AFRICOM to amplify an anti-trafficking message in their work with the Cameroon Armed Forces, specifically the Gendarmerie. As precedence, in 2016, U.S. Marines and Sailors worked with Cameroonian counterparts to increase their capabilities to combat illicit activity and improve maritime security. In accordance with the Leahy Law, the Department of State has the ability to train and increase the capacity of Cameroonian security forces so that they are more representative of and accountable to the communities they serve. In addition, the Defense Institute for International Legal Studies (DIILS) provides our foreign partners with professional development in the investigation and prosecution of criminal activity within the military. AFRICOM works closely with DIILS to sponsor numerous training events and workshops each year.

If confirmed, I would work closely with the Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT), which works specifically with partner governments to increase the effectiveness of their rule of law institutions. Such programs would help strengthen the country's judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute these crimes in a transparent and credible manner.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO ERIC P. WHITAKER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my Foreign Service career I have supported democracy and human rights, including promoting civil liberties, civil society, anti-trafficking in persons, and freedom of religious belief and practice. This has included serving as an election observer in Ethiopia, co-hosting civil society conflict prevention roundtables in Niger, promoting civic and voter education in Mali, and working with district advisory councils to improve local human services in Iraq.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in the Republic of Niger? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to pro-

mote human rights and democracy in the Republic of Niger? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most serious human rights problems include attacks by armed groups that resulted in death, disappearances, and abuse; harsh and life-threatening prison and detention center conditions; trafficking in persons, including forced labor and caste-based slavery; and restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly.

The United States government is concerned by a troubling trend in the past few years of Nigerien authorities arresting and threatening critics of the government in a series of what regime opponents and human rights organizations deem as politically driven actions. Political activists and journalists use language on social media perceived by the government as provocative or overly critical, including sometimes calling for regime change. Rather than acknowledge the right of freedom of speech, the Nigerien authorities frequently react using diverse and in many cases concerning tactics, ranging from temporarily detaining individuals for questioning, months-long detentions with threat of imprisonment, and in a few cases, convictions with suspended sentences.

If confirmed, I will continue to implement and champion programs and funding to combat violations of human rights and civil liberties, and expand respect for fundamental freedoms in Niger. I will engage proactively with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. I will speak out in the media. I will encourage the Nigerien Government to seek input from a broad range of viewpoints, including civil society. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Nigerien people, and that, in accordance with the Leahy law, units which have committed human rights violations do not receive U.S. training. I will also forcefully advocate for the protection and defense of human rights. I will press the Nigerien government to adhere to its own cconstitution and laws, and to hold accountable violators of those laws.

Through these actions, if confirmed, I will seek to reinforce with both the Government of Niger and the Nigerien public the strong stance of the U.S. government with respect to democratic progress and respect for human rights, including media freedoms, space for civil society actions, and political space for all political parties. This support will extend to judicial practices so as to minimize pre-trial detention, improve penal conditions, and improve the treatment of those in custody by law enforcement officials. Furthermore, I will seek to advocate against any abuses by security forces against civilians, infringements of labor rights, and exploitation of any element of the Nigerien public, to include slavery or servitude.

Question 3. 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 the Republic of Niger in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. There are many obstacles to improving the human rights situation in Niger. Niger's armed forces are not numerous enough and lack sufficient resources to protect all of Niger's citizens from being victimized by violent extremists. Nigerien prisons are critically underfunded, and as a result, conditions are dire. Nigerien law enforcement officials lack sufficient training on the importance of respecting fundamental freedoms, and accountability mechanisms to deter violations are not in place; as a result, these freedoms are occasionally violated.

In Niger's prisons, nutrition, sanitation, potable water, and medical care are poor. National Guard troops have acted as untrained prison guards, but a new training institute has been established, and prison officials at all levels are enrolled. Recordkeeping on prisoners is inadequate. There are no official penal or judicial alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders. Some Nigerien law enforcement officials have violated Nigeriens' freedom of expression and freedom from arbitrary detention in order to counter what the government perceives as threats to public safety.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in the Republic of Niger? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will proactively engage with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. I will encourage the Nigerien government to seek input from a broad range of viewpoints, including civil society. I will also vigorously advocate for the protection and defense of human rights.

If confirmed, I will make certain the Embassy continues to rigorously implement Leahy requirements to ensure that recipients of U.S. security assistance are subject to human rights vetting and that security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training for Nigerien peacekeepers in Mali under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, include human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in peacekeeping operations in which Niger participates. I will do the same for rule of law programs with the police. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Nigerien people, and that units which have committed human rights violations do not receive U.S. training.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with the Republic of Niger to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Niger?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will work hard to ensure that the rule of law is respected in Niger, including the Nigerien Constitution, which guarantees basic human rights.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to advocate for the respect of fundamental freedoms to include the freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, and advocate for persons unjustly detained by the government.

Question 6. Will you engage with the Republic of Niger on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consider human rights and democracy advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job and will regularly engage with the Nigerien government on these issues. I will make support for human rights, civil rights, and good governance key elements of my engagement with the Nigerien government across the full range of issues. Niger stands to benefit greatly in all areas when its people are empowered, free to express their views and engage their government without fear of retribution, and have trust in the rule of law.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Republic of Niger?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As a Foreign Service officer who has served with diverse teams throughout my career, I strongly believe in the value of workplace diversity. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Niamey has active and accessible Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Federal Women's Program (FWP) operations, programs, and outreach, and will ensure that EEO and FWP counselors are trained and afforded time at the workplace to perform their duties. I will ensure the embassy has a structured mentorship program and that each member of the embassy team has opportunities for personal growth and professional success. I will include staff from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in activities, committees and boards, working groups, visitor hosting, field travel, and other developmental assignments. I will also hold sessions to listen to their feedback regarding the mission and its undertakings.

Furthermore, in my own behavior, I will model a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. I will ensure that the employee evaluation process is rigorously followed, including formal and documented counseling sessions throughout each performance period, so that employees receive timely and constructive feedback on

their performance and have structured opportunities to raise with their supervisors any workplace concerns or impediments to success.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will speak publicly, including in Town Hall and Country Team meetings, on a regular basis regarding my commitment to diversity and inclusion, and underscore my expectations that all embassy team members will experience and sustain an inclusive and supportive workplace. I will require all supervisors to promote an inclusive, supportive, and ethical workplace, and will emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion in my oversight of section and agency heads as well as in orientation and training sessions. I will encourage that the performance evaluations of all supervisors comment on the supervisor's success in valuing diversity and promoting inclusion, and will recognize and commend efforts among supervisors to value diversity and foster inclusion. I will ensure that supervisors are cognizant of EEO principles and rules, and held accountable for respecting them. I will ensure prompt engagement, and corrective action when warranted, on any expressions of concern that the embassy workplace does not value diversity or promote inclusion.

Question 12. According to a report in the New York Times last month, the administration is considering new rules for drone strikes and raids that may well affect operations in Niger.

- What rules currently govern who is targeted drone strikes, and is that rule in fact going to be relaxed? Should we expect to see more strikes in Niger? Will such strikes be vetted and approved at the same levels within our government that they were in the Obama administration? Will rules governing "commando raids outside conventional battlefield." as the article suggest be changed?

Answer. The United States bases and operates MQ9 unmanned aerial vehicles from Niamey, Niger. In close coordination with the government of Niger, U.S. Air Force Africa (AFAFRICA) supports a range of security missions. This effort promotes regional stability in support of U.S. diplomacy and national security, and strengthens relationships with regional leaders committed to security and prosperity. The United States has not armed any of these drones, so there are no strikes. I must defer to the Department of Defense for more specifics regarding this program.

Question 13. How much money have we provided to Niger in each of the past four fiscal years in security assistance from all sources? What are the primary accounts and programs through which we have provided such assistance?

Answer. During Fiscal Years 2013–2016, the United States provided nearly $90 million in funding for security assistance to Niger. This amount includes funding from Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and related programs (NADR), counter-terrorism (TSCTP) the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF), and Peacekeeping Operation Funds.

In FY 2016, we provided $34.5 million; in FY 2015 $28.2 million; in FY 2014 $9.7 million; and in FY 2013, $18 million in security assistance to Niger.

Question 14. What are the current proposals for funding the "G-5 Sahe." (a grouping of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso) under discussion in the Security Council?

Answer. Some G-5 member states and France have attempted to persuade the U.N. Security Council to authorize the deployment of the G-5 Joint Force, under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter.

Question 15. What is the United States position on how the G-5 should be funded and what international partners should contribute?

Answer. The United States applauds the increased leadership that regional organizations have demonstrated and strongly supports the efforts of the G-5 Sahel countries to bolster regional security. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force represents a concrete opportunity to leverage resources to solve problems. The United States will continue to support the G-5 through flexible bilateral and regional support, which have proven the most pragmatic in the Sahel. Since 2012, the Department of State has provided over $600 million in security assistance to G-5 countries. Since February 2013, the United States has also provided $95 million in logistics support for French stabilization and operations to counter violent extremism in the Sahel.

Many donor nations have pledged support intended for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The European Union has pledged 50 million euros, to be disbursed through a French parastatal. Each of the five G-5 countries—Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mau-

ritania, and Chad, has pledged 10 million euros, as well as a minimum of one battalion of the troops and law enforcement personnel who will constitute the force. France has pledged to pay eight million euros by the end of 2017, and will donate helicopters to Niger by 2019. France is currently providing military staff support to Mauritania. Germany has pledged to provide ambulances, water tank trucks, construction, training, and mobility support.

Question 16. Freedom House's 2017 report stated that, "Niger's political rights rating declined from 3 to 4 due to the repressive conditions surrounding the 2016 presidential and legislative elections, including harassment of the opposition, as well as alleged irregularities in the balloting itself." The report goes on to say that the "struggle to meet the security challenges that surround Niger has served as an alibi for the government to restrict freedoms and civil liberties."

- What assistance have we provided to Niger over the past four fiscal years to support democracy and human rights?

Answer. From FY 2014—FY 2017, the United States provided approximately $9 million in bilateral foreign assistance to support democracy, governance, and human rights activities in Niger. In addition to the bilateral funding, Niger has also received approximately $40.5 million in resilience programming between FY 2014 and FY 2017 from USAID's West Africa Regional Mission, which supports programming in Niger for health and family planning, environment, agriculture, trade, and peace and governance, including countering violent extremism.

Question 17. How will you, if confirmed as Ambassador, ensure that the government in Niger understands that security challenges should not serve as an excuse to restrict freedoms and civil liberties?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure that my messaging, both public and private, to the government and people of Niger would underscore the importance that the U.S. government attaches to the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, support for effective and accountable government, and the maintenance of open political space with freedom to express peacefully views critical of the government. These elements all work to support long-term stability and deepen Niger's democratic consolidation. Furthermore, the embassy's public diplomacy, high-level visits, field trips, and programming would continuously accentuate the importance of democratic freedoms and civil liberties to a vibrant democracy that serves as a foundation for Niger's development.

Our Embassy has set up a press freedom working group to highlight concerns that protection of democratic institutions and civil liberties is critical to our partnership. We aim to advocate for, and effect actions that result in, easing of journalist harassment and safe platforms for those with opposing views. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the activities of this working group in order to promote greater freedom of expression for all Nigeriens.

If confirmed, I will make certain the embassy continues to rigorously implement Leahy requirements to ensure that recipients of U.S. security assistance are subject to human rights vetting. Furthermore, I will require that security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training to Nigerien peacekeepers in Mali under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, include specific human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in peacekeeping operations in which Niger participates. I will do the same for rule of law programs with the police. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Nigerien people, and that units which have committed human rights violations do not receive U.S. training.

The U.S. Mission in Niger is working on two levels to improve good governance. At the local level, we support multi-stakeholder dialogues, planning, budgeting, and joint action to identify and address citizen needs. At the national level, we support priority policy reform, including improvements to the Electoral Law, Young Girl Education and Protection Law, and Future Generations Law. We also continue to strengthen the capacity of the legislative branch, media, civil society, and other actors to fulfill their critical roles in society, increase public dialogue, and serve as a check and balance on the executive. If confirmed, I will continue to implement and champion similarly effective programs and funding to combat violations of human rights and civil liberties, and expand respect for fundamental freedoms in Niger.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO MICHAEL J. DODMAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting respect for human rights and democracy has been a priority in each of my Foreign Service assignments. The following examples are among my most significant actions, drawn from two very different posts.

As Consul General in Karachi, one of my top priorities was fostering dialogue among religious groups, both to build respect and tolerance for religious freedom, and to promote conditions conducive to a more democratic, stable, and prosperous society. I met regularly with religious leaders of all faiths, including direct outreach to students in madrasas, and established the Consul General's residence as a space for regular interfaith discussions. I directed that the beneficiaries of any assistance programs in our consular district include representatives from Pakistan's many religious and ethnic minorities. Likewise, I ensured that women and girls benefited from our assistance programs, and were represented in all of our public diplomacy programs. The Consulate team and I developed a close partnership with the country's leading philanthropist, and together we hosted a series of educational sessions and social events for residents of the city's largest orphanage for girls. Finally, I made sure that the U.S. Consulate was widely recognized as a model employer in the region, where qualified employees were hired and promoted regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, or social status. For instance, during my time in Karachi, we expanded the number of women hired as security guards. As the public face of our compound, this sent a visible signal to the city about U.S. values and equal employment opportunity.

As Political Counselor in Prague, my team and I exposed details regarding the plight of around 100 North Koreans working at a factory in the Czech Republic in conditions of forced labor. We assessed the scale of the workforce and their working conditions, providing the State Department with details and recommendations. We made a clear and compelling case to the Czech Government to intervene on behalf of the workers. The Government promptly responded, forcing the firm to end its contract with the North Korean government. The Czechs also put in place procedures that prevented future contracts with the North Korean regime.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Mauritania? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Mauritania? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most serious human rights concern in Mauritania is slavery. The elimination of slavery everywhere is long past due, but doing so in Mauritania has been particularly difficult. While Mauritanian law prohibits slavery, the Government has rarely prosecuted alleged slaveholders. and efforts to enforce anti-slavery legislation have been insufficient. If confirmed, I will seek to engage the Government of Mauritania in a partnership to fight slavery, and other forms of human trafficking, and identify and provide protective assistance, social services, and skills training to former slaves. If confirmed, I will seek to increase the capacity of civil society to support the reintegration of marginalized groups, including former slaves, and improve their access to justice. I will work to provide U.S. training to police, prosecutors, and judges to address the challenges of investigating and trying human trafficking cases.

Other human rights problems include incarceration of children with adult prisoners, government influence over the judiciary, arbitrary limits on freedom of assembly, public corruption, and restrictions on religious freedom. The constitution dictates that only Muslims may be citizens. Other reported human rights abuses included gender-based violence against women and girls; discrimination against women; female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C); early and forced marriage; political marginalization of sub-Saharan (non-Arab) ethnic groups and of the Arab Haratine caste of slave descendants; racial and ethnic discrimination; discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons and persons with HIV/AIDS; child labor; and inadequate and selective arbitrary enforcement of laws, including labor laws.

If confirmed, I will also continue to underscore that Mauritania's eligibility for trade benefits under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) will require continued progress on AGOA eligibility criteria, including those related to human rights and labor rights. As Mauritania strives to expand our trade and investment relationship, we should leverage AGOA eligibility criteria to encourage greater

progress in combatting slavery, holding slaveholders accountable, protecting worker rights, and ensuring civil society organizations, including anti-slavery NGOs, are able to do their work without threats or intimidation from the government.

Through steady engagement with the Mauritanian Government and civil society, I hope to affect real progress towards the goal of a more just, inclusive, and free Mauritanian society.

Question 3. 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 Mauritania in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The three courts set up to hear slavery and human trafficking cases are understaffed, underfunded and generally lack political support from the central government. Tadamoun, the Government agency mandated to address poverty and the "vestiges of slavery," does not fulfill its role to submit criminal cases on behalf of victims and represent victims in cases against their alleged traffickers or slaveholders. Government agencies charged with combating trafficking and slavery continue to lack the resources, personnel, and political will to prosecute politically connected offenders, and there remains a fundamental lack of commitment to make serious and sustained efforts to combat hereditary slavery. Many senior government officials, like many Mauritanian citizens, downplay or deny the continued existence of slavery. However, we know that significant work remains to be done if slavery is to be fully abolished from the country.

The Government of Mauritania has taken many necessary steps to create laws and a judicial framework to address and correct human rights abuses, but a major obstacle is a failure to follow through and empower these new institutions to enforce the new laws. For example, in April 2016 the Government created the National Mechanism for Prevention of Torture (MNP) as an independent governmental body charged with investigating credible allegations of torture. Yet to date, the MNP has not launched a single investigation. A major challenge is in getting the Mauritanian Government to recognize that while it has made very modest progress in combating slavery, the international community strongly feels the Government is doing enough in this realm.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Mauritania? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will meet regularly with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. The U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott has a strong record in this area, and I intend to maintain this focus.

If confirmed, I will make certain the Embassy continues to rigorously implement Leahy requirements to ensure that recipients of U.S. security assistance are subject to human rights vetting and that security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training for Mauritanian peacekeepers in the Central African Republic under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, include specific human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in peacekeeping operations in which Mauritania participates. I will do the same for rule of law programs with the police. I will be vigilant to ensure that our security cooperation is never misused to restrict the rights of the Mauritanian people, and that units which have committed human rights violations do not receive U.S. training.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Mauritania to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Mauritania?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will make it a priority to press for the rule of law to be respected in Mauritania. I am concerned by reports of cases where these rights are infringed by violations of due process and political interference, including with regard to members of the political opposition and civil society. If confirmed, I will advocate for the respect of fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, and advocate for the release of persons detained unjustly.

Question 6. Will you engage with Mauritania on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would consider human rights and democracy advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job and the embassy's mission. I will make support for human rights, civil rights, and good governance key elements of my engagements with the Mauritanian government. Mauritania stands to benefit greatly when its

people are empowered, free to express their views and engage their government without fear of retribution, and have trust in and the protection of the rule of law.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Mauritania?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I am a strong supporter of career development and mentorship for all State Department and Foreign Service employees, and agree fully that diversity is essential to a well-function public service. Likewise, as the face of the United States abroad, it is essential that the Foreign Service represent America in all of its diversity.

As Director of the State Department office managing the initial assignments of all Foreign Service personnel, I took special effort to make sure that participants in the Pickering and Rangel programs—the two programs that most directly recruit underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service—received assignments that would provide a firm basis for success in their Foreign Service careers. I have mentored and supported the applications to the Pickering and Rangel programs of several students from diverse backgrounds whom I have met through lectures and seminars I have led at local universities. In making hiring decisions for my own staff, and through my participation on the State Department committee that selects Principal Officers and candidates for Deputy Chief of Mission positions, I have always emphasized the importance of diversity.

Mentoring, career development, and respect for diversity are all personal core values, and I am confident that they will be front and center of my management of the U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott, if confirmed. In particular, given the challenges that Mauritania confronts in addressing ethnic and racial barriers, I intend to follow the practice I used successfully as Principal Officer in Karachi, Pakistan, of ensuring that the composition of our local staff fully reflects the diversity of the host nation.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. Most important is leading by example and setting the tone from the top that makes clear that our workplace will be one that embraces respect for everyone. If confirmed, I will highlight this in my first meeting with the country team, and in my first town hall with the full staff; it will be repeated in these settings at least annually, to make sure that newcomers understand my expectations. I will make diversity, tolerance, and respect for equal opportunity an element of each of my performance management discussions with my direct reports, and will take swift action to discipline staff who do not abide by these principles. Finally, I will ensure that all staff receive training on diversity and EEO rules and procedures.

Question 12. What are the current proposals for funding the "G-5 Sahel" (a grouping of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso) under discussion in the Security Council?

Answer. Some G-5 member states and France have attempted to persuade the U.N. Security Council to authorize the deployment of the G-5 Joint Force, under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter.

Question 13. What is the United States position on how the G-5 should be funded and what international partners should contribute?

Answer. The United States applauds the increased leadership that regional organizations have demonstrated and strongly supports the efforts of the G-5 Sahel countries to bolster regional security. The G-5 Sahel joint force represents a concrete opportunity to leverage resources to solve problems. The United States supports the G-5 Sahel countries through flexible bilateral and regional support. Since 2012, the United States has provided over $600 million in security assistance to G-5 countries. Since February 2013, the United States has also provided $95 million in logistics support for French stabilization and operations to counter violent extremism in the Sahel.

Many donor nations have pledged support intended for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The European Union has pledged 50 million euros, to be disbursed through a French parastatal. Each of the five G-5 countries—Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Chad, has pledged 10 million euros, as well as a minimum of one battalion of the troops and law enforcement who will constitute the force. France has pledged to pay eight million euros by the end of 2017, and will donate helicopters to Niger by 2019. France is currently providing military staff support to Mauritania. Germany has pledged to provide ambulances, water tank trucks, construction, training, and mobility support.

Question 14. What will be your role in in terms of U.S. cooperation with the G-5 if confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Mauritania given the "permanent secretariat" is based in Nouakchott?

Answer. I anticipate that the State Department will formally request that the G-5 Sahel Secretariat in Nouakchott recognize our U.S. Ambassador in Mauritania as the official U.S. diplomatic representative to the G-5 Sahel. Having our Ambassador to Mauritania designated as our diplomatic representative to the G-5 Sahel will give us deeper and more immediate information about and help shape our policy toward this regional organization that is emerging as a potentially influential force in West Africa.

Question .15 Recent droughts, such as the 2011 Sahel-wide drought, have impacted the resilience and coping mechanisms of Mauritanian households. The presence of Malian refugees in host communities in Mauritania, like the 50,000 Malians in Mauritania's Mbera refugee camp, have also strained the country. What should the USG's approach be to improve the level of cooperation with international relief organizations providing food aid and refugee support?

Answer. Though improving conditions in some parts of northern Mali have led some Malian refugees to return home, most refugees have been cautious, and only a small number have spontaneously returned to Mali from Mauritania. The Mauritanian Government is committed to hosting refugees despite its own challenges with food insecurity, and it has maintained open borders for refugees amidst security concerns. The Government works closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to protect and assist Malian refugees.

The U.S. Government is a major multilateral donor that supports U.N. agencies such as the UNHCR, the World Food Program (WFP), and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). We also support international and national non-governmental organizations (INGOs) to ensure that refugees have access to life-saving support. Our assistance also trains refugees and builds their skills in preparation for return to Mali. The good work that we accomplish through these organizations notwithstanding, we note a donor fatigue with regard to global assistance to the Malian refugees in the Mbera Camp. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Mauritania to encourage it and other partners to take a greater role in assisting the refugees and in designing a sustainable exit strategy.

Question 16. Mauritania is identified as a "Tier 3″ country in the 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report, meaning it does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so. In your estimation, does the Government have the political will to address human trafficking? If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance, if any, would you pursue to help Mauritania better tackle this problem?

Answer. The Mauritanian Government has taken steps that shows it has some political will to address human trafficking, but the U.S. Government would like to see it take many more, and stronger, steps, and fully implement the commitments it has already announced.

While Mauritanian law prohibits all forms of trafficking, including hereditary slavery, the Government has rarely prosecuted alleged traffickers or slaveholders, and efforts to enforce anti-slavery and anti-trafficking legislation have been otherwise insufficient. The Government has taken steps to increase public awareness of

the prohibition of slavery and in 2013 established a national agency, Tadamoun, to address poverty and the "vestiges of slavery;" however, this agency has primarily focused on general poverty-reduction efforts rather than specifically addressing slavery. In 2015, an anti-slavery law was passed following consultations with the United Nations, which strengthened the country's ability to prosecute all forms of human trafficking. The Supreme Judicial Council set up three courts in 2015 and 2016, with an exclusive mandate to hear slavery and human trafficking cases. One of the courts has convicted two slaveholders, with the convictions upheld by the Court of Appeals. Despite some positive steps, the Government has not taken adequate steps to enforce its 2003 anti-trafficking nor its 2015 Anti-Slavery laws.

The staff of the new anti-slavery courts have not received sufficient training or resources to produce the intended results in terms of convictions (only two to date, but several cases are in progress and others have been handled by civil compromise between the parties). In addition, judges and prosecutors must be trained further to support the referrals of trafficking and slavery cases to the anti-trafficking courts, thereby facilitating victims' access to justice.

One part of our encourage is to incentivize the Mauritanian Government to meet agreed-upon benchmarks in its efforts to combat slavery in order to maintain economic benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Our Embassy in Nouakchott has taken measures to increase knowledge of AGOA benefits and eligibility criteria among Mauritanians, bringing an AGOA expert to Mauritania to meet with business leaders in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. The Embassy worked with business leaders to establish the U.S.-Mauritania Business Forum to, among other purposes, persuade the Government to take actions to preserve access to AGOA benefits.

If confirmed, I will engage the Government of Mauritania in a partnership to fight slavery and other forms of human trafficking, hold slaveholders to account, and identify and provide protective assistance, social services, and skills training to former slaves. I will also work along with the embassy staff to provide training for police, prosecutors, and judges to address the challenges of investigating and trying human trafficking cases.

Question 17. Though laws have been passed criminalizing slavery in recent years, practice has been slow to change. What specific further actions will you take to support organizations attempting to address the issue of slavery in Mauritania, if confirmed?

Answer. The State Department is funding a $1.6 million, three-year program focused on the eradication of slavery and full integration of people emerging from slavery into mainstream society. The objectives of the program are to provide skills, opportunities, and support for 310 people emerging from slavery to achieve socioeconomic independence and rights, including citizenship, and to strengthen the legal system and framework to identify and prosecute perpetrators of slavery. The project uses three mutually reinforcing strategies—supporting the socioeconomic empowerment of people emerging from slavery; ensuring that the authorities more rigorously identify and pursue the prosecution of slavery cases and compensate victims; and changing societal norms and attitudes towards slavery and its victims. This program includes sub-grants to two key partners: a leading anti-slavery non-government organization (NGO) in Mauritania and a legal organization which supports the NGO. DRL is funding a second program in Mauritania for $1.9 million over four-and-a-half years that supports the reintegration of marginalized groups, with a particular focus on improving their access to justice and promoting access to legal identity documents.

Mauritania is also part of the $1 million Department of Labor-funded global BRIDGE project, which will contribute to the Mauritanian government's efforts to eliminate all forms of slavery and to provide protection and remedies to victims.

The Department of State is increasing the capacity of civil society to support the reintegration of marginalized groups, including former slaves, and improve their access to justice. If confirmed, I will remain in close communication and share information with local and international NGOs whose mission is to publicize and combat slavery and human trafficking. Whenever possible, and when a visit by such a group would not interfere in any way with U.S. foreign policy, the embassy staff and I will welcome international NGOs to Mauritania and seek to facilitate meetings for them with both government and private officials, so that they may more effectively promote our shared goals of ending slavery and human trafficking.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO NINA FITE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my career in the Foreign Service, I have sought to promote human rights and democracy. During my three years as Principal Officer in Lahore, Pakistan, I focused on increasing business and entrepreneurial training and opportunities for women through the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Business Council, enlisting Pakistani companies and business executives to commit to providing internships. In my tour in Afghanistan, I also worked extensively with programs to support business education and training for women.

In Pakistan, I emphasized religious tolerance through public visits to places of worship of all religions represented in my consular district. I championed tolerance with government officials, particularly with regard to several high-profile cases. I used a television appearance, which reached more than 30 million viewers, to talk about religious tolerance in the United States. In Pakistan, as during my previous tour in Angola, I met regularly with human rights groups, provided them access to high-level visitors, and ensured they were represented in our International Visitor Leadership Program. I lobbied the respective governments on human rights cases and the importance of following international standards in their treatment of human rights activists.

During the run-up to Angola's 2008 elections, I led our Political and Economic section in close cooperation with USAID-funded democracy programming to train election officials and citizens on democratic elections and voting. In Pakistan, during the 2013 elections, I directed the Consulate team in our election monitoring efforts, incorporating visiting U.S. election monitors. Our observations and reporting contributed directly to the U.S. government's and international community's evaluation of the election process.

As Principal Officer in Montreal, Canada, I highlighted Native American culture and achievements by arranging for the first Native American federal judge to speak directly to Canadian First Nation members in our consular district. For our 2017 national day celebration, we highlighted Native American culture, including a performance by a Hopi dance troupe, which we sponsored in Montreal. Throughout my tenure in Montreal, our Consulate promoted LGBTQ rights by operating a booth during the Pride Community Days and marching in the annual parade, the only Consulate in Montreal to do so. We used public diplomacy programming to support the Montreal Black Film Festival, and I hosted a lunch at my residence for Martin Luther King III with NGO representatives and city dignitaries.

Throughout my career, I have used my convening power to bring together representatives of religious and ethnic minorities, political parties, NGOs, and women to promote U.S. policy and tolerance.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Angola? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Angola? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The 2016 Human Rights Report notes instances of cruel, excessive, and degrading punishment, including reported cases of torture and beatings; limits on freedoms of assembly, association, speech, and press; and official corruption and impunity. Issues like these show how important it is for us to sustain high-level dialogue with governments on these issues, seek opportunities to promote civil society, and use public engagement opportunities to expand democratic space. If confirmed, I would make full use of such engagement to seek both resolution in individual cases and to address systemic issues.

Question 3. 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 Angola in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The 2016 Human Rights Report notes several potential obstacles to progress on human rights issues, including the government's obstruction of opposition parties' exercise of their right to meet. It also notes restrictions on the operation of civil society, such as 2015 regulations on NGOs, which civil society criticizes as potentially restrictive and intrusive.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Angola? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the

Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. If confirmed, I will strengthen U.S. efforts to work with the Government of Angola, as well as non-governmental organizations, to improve human rights conditions in Angola. I will also ensure that my staff fully implements and complies with the Leahy Law and similar efforts.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Angola to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Angola?

Answer. Members of Congress and the State Department have spoken publically in support of human rights defenders in Angola. If confirmed, I would continue to press these issues and include them prominently in our engagement.

Question 6. Will you engage with Angola on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. In 2010, the United States created a Strategic Partnership with Angola, agreeing to hold high-level diplomatic meetings on a regular basis, as well as separate meetings on specific issues, including human rights. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen our work on these issues and ensure we include human rights issues prominently in our engagement with Angola.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Angola?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As a leader and manager in several diplomatic posts, I know that diversity enriches our work, as it does the United States as a whole. If confirmed, I will use the diversity of my staff to benefit all at the Mission, while promoting a range of backgrounds and perspectives in the individuals whom I review for future positions.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that everyone on my team is treated professionally, that their rights are respected, that they are safe, and that they have the resources they need to perform their jobs. We are all one team working for the good of the U.S-Angola relationship and the interests of the United States and the American people.

Question 12. U.S.—Angola Relations: During the Obama administration, issues of democracy, human rights, and development were discussed with Angola through a Human Rights Dialogue held as part of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue.

- What is the status of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue?
- If confirmed, will you commit to ensure that human rights and democracy are put on the agenda of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue?

Answer. The U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue remains active, and has given us a platform to raise a variety of issues to the highest levels of government. Most recently, in May 2017, the Defense Minister, now the President of Angola, came to Washington to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on security coopera-

tion with Secretary of Defense Mattis. This was regarded as a milestone in our partnership, and shows another facet of our continuing dialogue that our Embassy in Luanda pursues every day.

If confirmed, I will commit to ensuring that human rights and democracy issues are discussed within the framework of the U.S.-Angola Strategic Partnership dialogue. I believe it is important to keep open and frank communication with countries like Angola, and maintaining dialogue on the state of civil society and human rights is vital to U.S. interests. I am confident our strategic partnership will continue to grow in the coming years and deepen and strengthen our countries' ties.

Question 13. Angola's Regional Role: Angola currently holds the presidency of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). Given the administration's [decision] not to name a Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, much of the responsibility for engaging Angola on regional issues will fall to you for the duration of Angola's term as President.

- What do you see as the most significant issues related to peace and security in the Great Lakes, and what actions will you advocate Angola take as President of the ICGLR related to issues such as the political crisis in Burundi, the political, security and the humanitarian crisis in DRC?
- What diplomatic support will you provide to Angola as they attempt to have the ICGLR address these issues?

Answer. Angola provides stabilizing leadership in the region and exercises considerable regional influence. Under its ICGLR Presidency, Angola has chaired summits on issues in the DRC, for example. We expect Angola to continue to play an influential role in the ICGLR, and we will continue to engage through both Luanda and Brazzaville as the Republic of Congo assumes the Presidency imminently. In addition, Angola has participated in diplomatic plenaries, including the June International Contact Group meeting the State Department hosted here in Washington, to find a common way forward on key issues impacting the Great Lakes Region, including the crisis in Burundi. Most recently, Angola, along with the United States, participated in a high-level event on the margins of the UN General Assembly hosted by France and the United Kingdom to discuss the DRC's ongoing political impasse.

Resolving the political impasse in the DRC, which we believe can be achieved only by the holding of credible elections and a peaceful, democratic transfer of power, is critical given its implications for stability in the DRC and the broader region. Regional leaders, and in particular Angola, can have considerable influence on and access to President Kabila; messages from the region are often better received than those of the United States or western partners. We have therefore worked closely to coordinate our messaging with Angola, which we believe increases the impact of our efforts.

If confirmed, I would work with the Angolan government to strengthen its role as a steadying anchor in a turbulent region, in order to further mutual political and economic interests.

Question 14. Corruption: Angola is a country regarded as one of the world's most corrupt—ranked 164th of 176 by Transparency International.

- In what sectors is most official corruption found in Angola?
- To what degree are former President José Eduardo dos Santos and his family implicated in ongoing corruption?
- If confirmed, what tools do you have at your disposal to help address corruption and what actions will you take as Ambassador to advocate for improvement in transparency and good governance with relevant Angolan stakeholders?

Answer. Corruption impacts all facets of Angola's economy and society, and limits Angola's ability to grow and produce wealth for its people. It also contributes to a difficult business environment for U.S. companies. A culture of corruption with impunity was allowed to flourish during President José Eduardo dos Santos' 38 years in power. Transparency International also cited former President dos Santos for nepotism in appointing his daughter to head the state oil company Sonangol and his son to head the country's Sovereign Wealth Fund.

Angola is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), a technical working body tasked with promoting and enforcing the Financial Action Task Force's anti-money laundering/counter terrorism financing (AML/CFT) standards in the Southern Africa region. These standards include mandates for transparency and beneficial ownership, regulation of sectors prone to money laundering and counter terrorism financing, and politically exposed persons. If confirmed, I will advocate for Angola's adherence to its ESAAMLG commitments, as well as advocate for changes in the current regulatory environment that allows

proceeds from corruption and other illicit acts to move freely. I would also leverage Angola's upcoming mutual evaluation review of its AML/CFT regime and national AML/CFT risk assessment as an opportunity to advocate for lasting improvements in Angola's financial and other regulated sectors, prone to abuse by corrupt officials.

If confirmed, I will strengthen U.S. efforts to work with the Government of Angola, as well as non-governmental organizations, to increase transparency and promote good governance to combat corruption and impunity better. This will take a coordinated, whole-of-government approach, and commitment from Angola's new government.

Question 14. Trafficking in Persons: The State Department has ranked Angola "Tier 2 Watchlist" on trafficking in persons.

- If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance, if any, would you pursue to help Angola better tackle this problem?
- In what ways might such efforts be incorporated into existing U.S. programs that aim to help strengthen Angola's security sector and the rule of law?

Answer. Angola moved up from the Tier 2 Watchlist designation in the 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, and has remained off the Watchlist in the most recent 2017 report. The Government of Angola does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but it is making significant efforts to do so.

If confirmed, I will emphasize the critical importance of strengthening law enforcement efforts to detect and interdict suspected traffickers, particularly those involved in sex trafficking and forced labor. I will press the Angolan government to prosecute these individuals to demonstrate to perpetrators that strict penalties exist for these crimes and are enforced under Angolan. I will also work closely with the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to implement U.S. foreign assistance devoted to combatting trafficking in persons and protecting victims, and incorporate anti-trafficking initiatives into other aspects of the Embassy's work.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DANIEL FOOTE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promotion of human rights and democracy has been an important part of my career. In Colombia, I oversaw a comprehensive, joint review of the curricula used by the Colombian National Police (CNP) by all officers. A critical impact of the review's recommendations was the successful inclusion of human rights modules at every level of CNP professional development training, and a marked decrease in reported human rights irregularities. In Afghanistan, I led the expansion of U.S. support to shelters, and associated family guidance centers, for women and children who suffer from, or are vulnerable to, gender-based violence or trafficking-in-persons. The impact was a significant increase in the number of at-risk Afghans receiving protection and support.

While serving in the Dominican Republic, I initiated programs to monitor and improve the human rights conditions of Haitian immigrants whom sugar barons mistreated. Working together with the Department of Labor and the Dominican Government, we enhanced Dominican capacity to address broad human rights issues and particularly the worst forms of child labor, leading to improved working conditions. In Haiti, I recruited the regional Department of Homeland Security Investigations office to investigate a large human-smuggling ring with ties to Major League Baseball.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Zambia? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Zambia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. In the lead-up to the 2016 Zambian election, we unfortunately saw increasing levels of intolerance and even some acts of violence that members of both parties committed, along with the incumbent party leveraging the resources of the state to its advantage. Despite these problems, the U.S. Government believed the 2016 election reflected the will of the Zambian people. However, since President Lungu's re-election, we have seen continued conflict between the political parties, culminating in opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema's arrest in April 2017 on

charges of treason. Although Hichilema was released in August, we continue to see government attempts to limit political space for the opposition, civil society, and the media, including an ongoing ″threatened″ state of emergency, which we hope will lapse in the coming days.

The continued restrictions on freedoms of assembly and speech we have witnessed in Zambia remain a concern. If confirmed, I would continue to engage the Government of Zambia and advocate for respect for the rule of law and the need to enhance further Zambia's reputation for political pluralism. I strongly believe that Zambia's continued democratic success, which includes respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the long-term peace and stability that it provides, is in Zambia's own interests as well as the interests of its people and the U.S. Government.

Question 3. 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 Zambia in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The political tensions in Zambia continue to serve as potential obstacles to addressing human rights in Zambia, particularly in regard to respecting fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of assembly and press. However, recent developments, particularly the release of opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema in August and the offer by the Commonwealth's Secretary General (SG) to facilitate dialogue between the two sides on the issues dividing the country, are promising. The Commonwealth's SG has appointed an envoy to promote constructive dialogue and reconciliation involving Zambia's political parties and civil society, designed to develop reforms that will help lead the country forward. If confirmed, as Ambassador, I will continue to encourage both sides to embrace the dialogue process and work with Zambian civil society and the Commonwealth's envoy.

Furthermore, taking a broader view on the issue of advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy, I will advocate for human rights and the role of civil society in working with government to promote democracy. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen our work on these issues and ensure we include human rights issues prominently in our engagement with Zambia, ensuring that all Zambians have a voice in their society.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Zambia? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations because I recognize that it is important that I meet with Zambians from all walks of life, especially representatives from civil society and NGOs. I will absolutely meet with human rights defenders as well as with U.S., local, and international NGOs. If confirmed, as Ambassador, I will direct my staff to ensure all security assistance and security cooperation activities receive Leahy and other vetting to reinforce human rights.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Zambia to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Zambia?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will work hard to ensure that the rule of law is respected in Zambia. I will continue to urge the Government of Zambia to exercise restraint in addressing differences, to respect the rule of law, and to follow the due process that we would expect from a country like Zambia that historically has had a reputation for political pluralism and peaceful conflict resolution. I will ensure my team actively engages with the Government of Zambia on political prisoners and others unjustly targeted. I will continue to advocate for the respect of fundamental human rights, to include the freedoms of speech and peaceful assembly, and advocate for all persons to receive timely, fair, equitable access to justice.

Question 6. Will you engage with Zambia on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. I consider human rights and democracy advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job and if confirmed, I will engage with the Zambian Government on these issues. I will make support for human rights, civil rights, and good governance a key element of my engagement with the Government of Zambia.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I might have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I might have through appropriate channels

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Zambia?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. Per the Secretary's statement on diversity and equal employment opportunity, the Department of State is committed to having a workforce that reflects the diversity of the people whom we represent.

As a career Foreign Service Officer specializing in management, former Assignments Officer for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and two-time Deputy Chief of Mission, I have spent much of my career recruiting and supporting staff with diverse backgrounds and talents to maximize productivity and reflect the richness of American society. From staffing 88 posts between Rekjavik and Vladivostok, to working in tents on a Forward Operating Base in the hinterlands of Iraq, to supporting multi-billion-dollar assistance programs in Washington, I have developed an intense appreciation for the exceptional value of a diverse team. I took great pride in establishing effective, career-development mentorship programs at Embassies Port-au-Prince and Santo Domingo. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will require diversity as a key element in recruitment, model ample and productive mentorship, and support relevant organizations that assist and advocate for employees diversity.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. An Embassy environment reflects the attitudes of its leadership. As Ambassador, I will actively set an example of inclusiveness and fairness for my subordinates, direct them to maintain inclusive environments in their sections and agencies, and will counsel accordingly if these standards are not adhered to rigidly.

Democracy Promotion

Question 12. In your confirmation hearing you made a commitment to promote a dialogue aimed at reconciliation and to advocate for respect for human rights.

- How will a reconciliation dialogue help support democracy? Will such a dialogue address such issues as what was deemed the politically motivated arrest and detention of opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema, or the removal of civil servants alleged to support the United Party for National Development opposition party? Will it address the closing media space?

Answer. Democracy flourishes when citizens can voice diverse opinions about their government, including critical views, without fear of harassment or persecution. The environment for speaking freely in Zambia has been constricted, and a reconciliation dialogue will provide a formalized structure for all parties to air issues and seek redress or improvements to current processes and institutions. The Commonwealth Secretary General's offer to facilitate constructive dialogue and reconciliation provides all parties the opportunity to move Zambia forward.

If confirmed, as Ambassador, I would continue to encourage both sides to embrace the dialogue process. I believe, in order such a dialogue to be successful, there needs to be a frank discussion of the political environment leading to last year's August general election and the related events that have since occurred. I anticipate these issues will naturally include concerns around restrictions on freedoms of the press, assembly, and expression and respect for rule of law and human rights. I would robustly engage with, and encourage, civil society and journalists to take appropriate steps to hold political leaders accountable for constitutional and democratic principles.

Question 13. How much has the United States invested in Human Rights and Democracy programs in Zambia over each of the past four fiscal years? What types of programs would be beneficial in Zambia?

Answer. The U.S. Government has been a stalwart supporter of human rights and democracy in Zambia for years. We have advocated for civil society strengthening, political pluralism, and human rights. In support of our policy approaches, we have supported complementary projects at various points from Fiscal Year 2014 through Fiscal Year 2017 with a total value of approximately $9,200,000. Our investment in democracy and governance has increased over the past four years from no Development Assistance (DA) Funds provided for this area in 2014, $1 million in 2015, $2 million in 2016, and $4 million in 2017. In addition, $1.8 million from the Elections and Political Process Fund and $400,000 in Economic Support Funds were designated for Zambia in 2015. These investments supported national and international civil society organizations to advance productive citizen participation in civic events, as well as technical assistance for the Government of Zambia to reduce corruption, increase efficiency and accountability, and promote the protection of human rights.

Looking forward, Zambia is a country where our investments in human rights and democracy programming can have continued impact. Despite current challenges, the Government is willing and open to engagement, and civil society is poised to play an increasingly important role as watchdog and citizen advocate. If confirmed, I will support national champions of responsive democratic governance within the Zambian Government, in addition to activities to: promote productive engagement by women and youth, buttress the Human Rights Commission, increase respect for fundamental freedoms, and support advocates of reform within relevant parliamentary committees.

Corruption

Question 14. Zambia has made considerable progress in the fight against corruption in the last decade, as reflected by major improvements recorded in main governance indicators. However, corruption remains a serious issue in Zambia, affecting the lives of ordinary citizens and their access to public services.

- How effective is the Anti-Corruption Commission? Does it prosecute high-level government officials? Has the United States provided funding to the Commission? Why or why not?

Answer. The Anti-Corruption Commission has had a reputation for being an independent institution that pursued allegations and developed cases based on their merits, unbiased with respect to the prominence of the person or transaction under review. In recent years, however, that reputation has weakened, with the Commission succumbing to increasing political pressure, i.e., pressure to investigate political opponents or government critics selectively or to prematurely halt investigations of politically connected individuals.

By law, the Commission has no prosecutorial power. Based on the results of its findings, if the Commission believes a case has merit, it must turn the file over to the Zambia Police Service to act on the information and refer the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Commission has referred cases of high-level government officials with decreasing regularity over the last half dozen years.

The U.S. Government last provided funding to the Commission over a decade ago, judging, at the time, that the Commission was among the stronger institutions in Zambia and was worth receiving limited U.S. resources. Currently, given the political pressures on the Commission, U.S. Government resources likely would be more effective in reducing corruption within specific government structures that interface with citizens, such as the sectoral line ministries and the Office of the Auditor General.

Question 15. If confirmed, what specific actions will you take in your first year as Ambassador to highlight the need to effectively fight corruption, and how will you support anti-corruption advocates?

Answer. If confirmed, I will leverage my experience leading anti-corruption efforts in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. I intend to meet with anti-corruption advocates, such as Transparency International—Zambia and the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption, to understand the nature of corruption allegations better and learn about Zambians' efforts to address concerns about malfeasance by their own government. If confirmed, I anticipate working in collaboration with civil society partners to bring additional attention to these issues and raise concerns directly with government leaders. I will also work to buttress the role of anti-corruption champions within the Government of Zambia, such as the Office of Auditor General and relevant parliamentary oversight committees. I also plan to undertake efforts to encourage Zambian citizens to hold their

own government accountable, such as continuing a series of dialogues between youth leaders and government officials the Embassy has recently initiated.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO DANIEL FOOTE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy has been an important part of my work in the State Department. As Director of the Office of West African Affairs, I met regularly with Cabinet-level African officials and Washington-based Ambassadors to press them to ensure their countries respect human rights. On several occasions I brought specific cases to their attention where we believed human rights had been violated. I was part of the Department of State team that led the response to the attempt by The Gambian President Jammeh to remain in power after he lost the election in December 2016. We worked with the international community, especially neighboring African countries, to force President Jammeh to respect the results of the election and give up power peacefully.

As Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires in Mauritania, I met regularly with anti-slavery activists and spoke out publicly, including at an anti-slavery event, in order to raise awareness of the issue and demonstrate U.S. support for the activists.

As Refugee Coordinator in Baghdad, Iraq, I advocated with the Iraqi Government on behalf of the displaced and persecuted religious minorities. In Geneva, Switzerland, I advocated bilaterally and in the multilateral arena for other countries to increase their efforts and to match what the United States was doing to assist the displaced.

I believe that my efforts, working in partnership with others, contributed to changes in policies and assistance and support levels. Although the nature of human rights work often does not lead to immediately apparent results, I still believe it is important as a representative of the United States to speak up in support of human rights and democracy and will, if confirmed continue to do so, as I have throughout my career.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Mauritius and Seychelles? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Mauritius and Seychelles? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Both Mauritius and Seychelles have generally good records on democracy and human rights, though challenges remain. In Mauritius, freedom of speech is a challenge, as the Government owns the sole television station, and has engaged in censorship. Also, violence against women is a societal problem. If confirmed, I expect to engage with the national leadership to expand opportunities for private ownership of media communications and also to call for justice for the victims of domestic violence.

Likewise, in Seychelles, the Government owns the sole television station and one of the country's only two radio stations. Viewpoints at odds with the Government are rarely broadcast, and opportunities to engage in free speech are therefore limited. Domestic violence against women is underreported, and police rarely respond to domestic disputes. If confirmed, I plan to encourage the licensing of additional broadcast stations, and seek effective prosecutions of domestic violence cases.

Question 3. 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 Mauritius and Seychelles in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Both Mauritius and Seychelles have expressed interest in continuing to improve their respective human rights records, and I do not see lack of willingness as an obstacle. I would expect that either country or both, may ask for additional training or resources to do so. Civil society and democratic institutions are healthy, as demonstrated by the two countries' high standing in various international indices, including the Ibrahim Index of African Governance.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Mauritius and Seychelles? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-

actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Yes, in the course of my career, I have met with a variety of human rights and civil society groups in the United States and abroad and, if confirmed, will continue to do so in my new assignment. In previous postings, I have insisted upon strict adherence with Leahy vetting rules, prohibiting human rights violators from participating in U.S. security programs, and explaining, our legal requirements. If confirmed, I will continue to do so in Mauritius and Seychelles.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Mauritius and Seychelles to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Mauritius and Seychelles?

Answer. At the moment, we are unaware of any political prisoners or persons unjustly targeted by either government. But yes, if it becomes necessary, this will be one of the country team's key responsibilities, and if confirmed, I will vigorously engage with the host government.

Answer.

Question 6. Will you engage with Mauritius and Seychelles on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, this is imperative, and central to the Mission's goals and objectives.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Mauritius or Seychelles?

Answer. No, neither I, nor members of my immediate family, have any such interests.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As I have done throughout my Foreign Service career, I will continue to mentor, promote, and support all members of the Mission staff through one-on-one consultations, group training, and counseling, where appropriate. I will pay particular attention to those staff members who come from diverse backgrounds or are from underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will make sure that this goal is reflected in the stated mission of the Embassy, and that we periodically review as a country team and as individuals how we are meeting these standards. To the extent that I find we are insufficient in fostering such an environment, we will take targeted steps to remedy it.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:35 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio presiding.

Present: Senators Rubio [presiding], Risch, Gardner, Kaine, Cardin, and Shaheen.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

Senator RUBIO. This is the Senate Foreign Relations Committee nominations hearing for Governor Sam Brownback to be the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and Ms. Michele Sison to be the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti.

Thank you both for being here with us today and for your willingness to serve.

As I told the nominees earlier, I am going to abbreviate my opening statement, because we do have votes scheduled in the Senate at 11. These are important nominations, and I want to make sure everybody has time to answer questions.

I would also encourage the nominees, as your opening statements will be in the record, make sure you say what you need to say, but I know our members are looking forward to engaging with you, and we want to make sure that they have the full opportunity to do that.

On international religious freedom, I just think any sort of cursory glance around the globe will reveal daily assaults on religious freedom. In Burma, we have nearly half a million Rohingya Muslims that have been forced to flee their homes due to horrific violence. In Iraq and Syria, ancient Christian communities, Yazidi, and other religious minorities are on the verge of extinction. In Iran, the Baha'i minority is ruthlessly persecuted. In Pakistan, draconian blasphemy laws sentence innocent people to death. In China, the Government shuts down underground churches, bulldozes Tibetan Buddhist centers. In Cuba, the Castro regime regularly arrests the Ladies in White on their way to mass every Sunday, including this past Sunday. In Saudi Arabia, the official textbooks teach hate and intolerance toward religious minorities.

So sadly, there is no corner of the map that is untouched. That is why a robust American engagement on behalf of the beleaguered

faith communities is an urgent need and, I think, international security interest. So the hearing could not be timelier.

As I said, Governor Brownback has been a long-time champion of the issue of religious freedom globally and sought to ensure that America's first freedom is infused into our U.S. foreign policy.

Among other things, he was the driving force in passing the original International Religious Freedom Act in 1998, which created the position he is now nominated to fill.

In Haiti yesterday, Ms. Sison and I spoke about the challenges and opportunities in Haiti. Florida, my home State, has the largest Haitian-American diaspora, and I remain engaged in the community and in many challenges facing their nation of birth.

One of the major areas of concern is the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, known as MINUSTAH, is scheduled to withdraw on October 15, just a few days from now. The new security mission is smaller than the original mission. So it is vital that the United States support international efforts to enhance and maintain security in Haiti.

Ongoing natural disasters, global health challenges like HIV/AIDS, malaria, and cholera have also undermined Haiti's ability to meet its full potential.

I personally have seen firsthand the potential of the Haitian community when they have been given the opportunity, as they have in Florida. And I am committed to supporting U.S. initiatives that promote good governance and security, and, hopefully, our foreign policy will remain committed in that direction.

I will now introduce Senator Kaine. And then, obviously, also our ranking member, Senator Cardin, joins us, and he may have some comments that he would like to make at the opening. And then, hopefully, we can proceed to brief introductory statements and get right into the questions.

Again, we apologize. But as Governor Brownback knows, the Senate does things this way. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. So, anyway, Senator Kaine?

STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have enjoyed working with you on religious liberty issues.

The day I got back from a wild 105-day ride in November 2016, you and I introduced a bill about combating anti-Semitism around the globe through the State Department, and I have appreciated your partnership.

I also am really thrilled to have both of these nominees who have strong public service track records, but also my friend and a great champion of religious liberty, Frank Wolf, here.

I am not going to give an opening comment, except to say that it is important that we have Governor Brownback's hearing on the same day we are going to follow up with a substantive hearing about the situation of minorities, including religious minorities, in Iraq. So I am glad that we are doing both of these together.

And that will be all opening comments that I will make.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. And the ranking member, Senator Cardin, is here. He and I have worked together now on countless

human rights issues, so much so that people are starting to say that we look alike. I do not know. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. That would be good for me.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. That is a great compliment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

Senator Rubio has been a great champion on human rights. I think he would agree with me that we are all students of Frank Wolf.

Frank, we thank you for your long commitment to human rights. It was a real honor to serve with you in the House of Representatives. It is always good to see you. You are a great friend, a great role model for all of us. So thank you for being here.

It is Senator Brownback, not Governor. We take the higher title. [Laughter.]

Senator CARDIN. The Senator was a great leader on the Helsinki Commission. We worked together on many human rights issues. A great record, he has an excellent record of working across party lines to get things done in the United States Senate. We very much admire your continued interest to serve the public.

And we thank you and your family for being willing to serve our country. It is a tremendous sacrifice.

And to Ms. Sison, I understand that you are a Marylander, and you have served a career in diplomatic service. We thank you for your willingness to continue to serve our country.

Again, we thank you and your family.

You had the best sense to live in the State of Maryland, so we appreciate that very much.

Senator RUBIO. All right, Ms. Sison, we will begin with you, for your opening.

STATEMENT OF MICHELE JEANNE SISON, OF MARYLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI

Ambassador SISON. Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti. I am grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me.

For the past 3 decades, I have been honored to represent our country as a career Foreign Service Officer.

I want to give a shout-out today to my daughters, Allie and Jessica, U.S. Foreign Service kids who traveled the world with me.

I have been privileged to lead our embassies in the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka as U.S. Ambassador, and currently serve as the U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to work closely with the Congress to advance America's interests in Haiti.

The U.S. and Haiti share a long history. We are close neighbors and are linked through a sizable Haitian-American diaspora.

Over the years, Haiti has suffered periods of violence and political instability that slowed its economic growth. I first served in Haiti in the early 1980s, my first tour with the State Department. Then, as now, it was clear that Haiti needed to strengthen governmental institutions, good governance, and transparency, if it was to prosper and lift its citizens from deep poverty.

Today, after 2 years of political impasse, Haiti has a democratically elected government in place. The United States and the international community now have a long-term partner with whom we can engage. The United States has worked in partnership with the Haitian-led process to help the country build a more promising future.

Thanks to broad bipartisan support in Congress, U.S. assistance has helped advance economic opportunities for Haitians, develop a comprehensive food security strategy, provide access to basic health care and water and sanitation services, and improve educational opportunities for youth. This strong U.S. engagement helps encourage Haitians to live and work in Haiti rather than embark on often dangerous and illegal migration, including to the United States, which in turn supports U.S. efforts to secure our borders.

Since 2010, U.S. assistance has seen notable successes. For example, $8 million in investment capital from the private sector and other sources has been mobilized through a USAID project to assist small- and medium-sized enterprises creating jobs for over 13,000 Haitians, about a third of whom are women. In addition, almost 13,000 jobs have been created in northern Haiti's industrial park with U.S. support. And some 70,000 farmers have increased incomes while the U.S. Government has also introduced new technologies, including improved seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, to another 118,000 farming households.

The Haitian national police is now a stronger, better trained force with U.S. support.

And many health indicators continue to improve through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the USAID programming. We have provided more than $100 million to prevent and respond to cholera as well.

But Haiti's long-term development will require the Government of Haiti to continue to institutionalize rule of law and anticorruption efforts, uphold more transparent and accountable institutions to improve the future of Haitian citizens, and address the factors contributing to migration and trafficking in persons.

Our rule of law assistance, as I mentioned, supports the Haitian national police in supporting its capacity. We are also working to support judicial independence, reduce pretrial detention levels, and support legislative reforms.

As you mentioned, Senator, recently, the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to withdraw the military component of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti, a mission that had been deployed since 2004. This U.N. vote reflected recognition of the progress Haiti had made toward stabilization and return to democratic quarter.

A smaller police-only U.N. successor mission will launch on October 16 and will focus on police development, strengthening the rule of law, and protecting human rights. If confirmed, I will work to ensure strong coordination between the Haitian Government and U.N. rule-of-law efforts, and our own U.S. programming in this critical sector.

Finally, while continuing to take into account the challenges in Haiti, we must not lose sight of the factors working in Haiti's favor, including its vibrant civil society and media, and, of course, our strong and engaged Haitian-American population here at home.

Of course, the most important of these factors is the continued support of congressional committees and staff. What happens in Haiti is important to the United States. Haiti is a neighbor whose stability and success bolsters our own security and that of the region.

A Haiti that takes full responsibility for its own prosperous and democratic future is certainly in our interests. And if confirmed, I will do my best to promote the U.S.-Haitian partnership and lead our talented U.S. interagency team at Embassy Port-au-Prince.

I appreciate your consideration of my nomination, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Ambassador Sison's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHELE J. SISON

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti. I am grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me.

For the past three decades, I've been honored to represent our country as a career Foreign Service officer. I've been privileged to lead our Embassies in the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka as U.S. Ambassador, and currently serve as U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to work closely with the Congress to advance America's interests in Haiti.

The U.S. and Haiti share a long history. We are close neighbors and are linked through a sizable Haitian-American diaspora. Over the years, Haiti has suffered periods of violence and political instability that slowed its economic growth.

I first served in Haiti in the early 1980's—my first tour with the State Department. Then, as now, it was clear that Haiti needed to strengthen governmental institutions, good governance, and transparency if it was to prosper and lift its citizens from deep poverty. Today, after two years of political impasse, Haiti has a democratically-elected government in place; the United States and the international community now have a long-term partner with whom we can engage.

The United States has worked in partnership with a Haitian-led process to help the country build a more promising future. Thanks to broad bipartisan support in Congress, U.S. assistance has helped advance economic opportunities for Haitians; develop a comprehensive food security strategy; provide access to basic health care and water and sanitation services; and improve educational opportunities for youth.

This strong engagement helps encourage Haitians to live and work in Haiti, rather than embark on dangerous and illegal migration to the United States, and supports U.S. efforts to secure our borders.

Since 2010, U.S. assistance of $8 million in investment capital from the Haitian private sector and other sources has been mobilized to assist small-and medium-sized enterprises—creating jobs for over 13,000 Haitians, about one-third of whom are women. In addition, almost 13,000 jobs have been created in northern Haiti's industrial park. Some 70,000 farmers have increased incomes and the U.S. Government has also introduced improved seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, and other new technologies to over 118,000 farmers. And the Haitian National Police is now a stronger, better-trained force. Many health indicators continue to improve, and through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Agency for Inter-

national Development, the United States has provided more than $100 million to prevent and respond to cholera.

But Haiti's long-term development will require the Government of Haiti to continue to institutionalize rule of law and uphold more transparent, accountable institutions to improve the future of Haitian citizens and address the factors contributing to migration and trafficking in persons. U.S. rule of law assistance in Haiti supports the Haitian National Police in improving its capacity and growing its ranks to better serve and protect the Haitian people. The Haitian National Police has made significant progress with U.S. support, including increasing its community policing, counter-narcotics and anti-kidnapping capabilities. Our assistance is also aimed at strengthening judicial independence, reducing pre-trial detention levels, and supporting legislative reforms.

Recently, the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to withdraw the military component of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti, a mission that had been deployed since 2004. The U.N. vote reflected recognition of the progress Haiti had made towards stabilization and return to democratic order. A smaller, police-only U.N. successor mission will launch on October 16, 2017, and will focus on police development, strengthening the rule of law, and protecting human rights. If confirmed, I will work to ensure strong coordination between Haitian Government and U.N. rule of law efforts and our U.S. programming in this crucial sector.

Finally, while continuing to take into account the challenges in Haiti, we must not lose sight of the factors working in Haiti's favor, including its vibrant civil society and media. Of course, one of the most important of these factors is the continued support of Congressional committees and staff. What happens in Haiti is important to the United States; Haiti is a neighbor whose stability and success bolsters our own security and that of the region. A Haiti that takes full responsibility for its own prosperous and democratic future is certainly in our interest. If confirmed, I will do my best to promote the U.S.-Haitian partnership and lead our talented U.S. interagency team at Embassy Port-au-Prince.

I appreciate your consideration of my nomination, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me.

Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you very much.

The Honorable Frank Wolf is here. We welcome him to the committee. He is here to introduce the President's nominee to be Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

STATEMENT OF FRANK R. WOLF, DISTINGUISHED SENIOR FELLOW, 21ST CENTURY WILBERFORCE INITIATIVE, FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Senators. I will be very brief.

It is an honor to be here with Governor and Senator Brownback today.

I have watched the Governor involved in international religious freedom, advocacy for the bill, trafficking in victims and persons, Sudan Peace Act, North Korea Human Rights Act.

Senator Brownback was the first Senator to go to Sudan, Darfur, during the genocide. I was with him on that trip. I watched him in action. We were in a village when the Janjaweed were doing things to women. And I watched Sam, and I just have to tell you, he will be an outstanding Ambassador for us.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Governor or Senator?

Governor BROWNBACK. Governor, please.

Senator RUBIO. All right, Governor.

STATEMENT OF HON. SAMUEL DALE BROWNBACK, OF KANSAS, TO BE AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Governor BROWNBACK. I am currently occupied but interested and hopeful to be confirmed for this position to be able to move into the role of Ambassador.

I have to say, Frank Wolf, he is a mentor of mine. I think he is probably the mentor of several of us. He just has taught me so much on how you do these issues and the passion that you need to do them with. Because to me, you have to have a passion about these things to be able to stick with it the length of time it takes to get them done. And he has done that, and I am honored that he would be here to introduce me.

I also would like to recognize Ambassador Rabbi David Saperstein, who is the most recent occupant of this position, who I have consulted with a couple times already on the phone. I worked with him previously. When I was in the Senate, he was on the commission, not the Ambassador himself. And I found him great to work with.

And I would like to say to my former colleagues here, this is a position that this body created. We did it in 1998, and then you renewed it last year under the Frank Wolf Act. It is one of those topics that this place has worked very hard to keep bipartisan. And because of that, it has had a strength that I think some other issues tend not to have.

I pledge to you to continue that bipartisan effort on it. I have worked in this town over a number of years in different capacities and in different ways. The way you get things done is often to really try to build that coalition. And often, there are people who do not agree on different pieces of the topic. But if you can build the coalition and you can sustain it, you can have something that has longevity, and you can have something that will have impact. And I believe that is what that position can and will be able to do.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with a number of you on specific international religious freedom issues. And Lord knows, there are enough of them around the world, whether it is Rohingya that is taking place now, whether it is the Nineveh plains. You could probably go around the world and list a bunch.

I have read through these reports recently, because I have been serving as Governor recently. But going back through it, the situation just keeps getting worse. Until, I think, we really engage this topic of international religious freedom and say that, look, this is a fundamental right that you have, to do with your own soul what you choose. This is your right. You need to be able to do it without interference by government or groups. This is a right that we will stand up and defend wherever you are, whoever you are, whatever you believe, or no belief at all. We will stand for you. And we are going to stand committed for you to be able to practice what you see fit.

I think this is one of these fundamental human rights that, if we start to get it right, and it starts to penetrate further around the world, you are going to see more peace breakout in places. And you are going to see the rest of a number of human rights continue to, hopefully, grow and flourish.

If we do not get it right, if we do not have religious freedom around the world, you are going to see a continuation of many more conflicts like we have today, and probably growing and accelerating taking place.

I think this issue is just so critical. It is foundational to our Constitution. It is foundational to the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. It was started by this body. It is continued by this body. This position was created here in the Congress.

And I really look forward, if confirmed, to working with a number of you, because if we do not, we are going to miss an opportunity. And if we miss this opportunity, there is going to be far more difficulty in the world. That is what it is going to be like.

And, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit my full statement for the record.

Senator RUBIO. Absolutely. There will be no objection to that.

[Governor Brownback's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GOVERNOR SAM BROWNBACK

Good Morning Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Kaine, and members of the committee, It is an honor to appear before the committee as the President's nominee for the position of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. I thank the President, Vice President, and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me in making this nomination.

Religious freedom is a fundamental right of every human no matter where they live, who they are, or what they believe. It is the right to do with your own Soul what you choose, without the interference of any government or group.

So declares Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. So states our Constitution. So say our hearts in our universal yearning to be free.

Freedom begins on the inside. It is the nature of our hearts to chaff against bondage. Yet millions in the world live in countries where they are not free to worship and indeed risk their lives to pursue their faith. This administration will not tolerate the continued assault on of religious freedom.

Promotion of international religious freedom is in our national interest, and it directly supports national security priorities including the defeat of ISIS and other violent extremist groups. When Secretary Tillerson released the 2016 International Religious Freedom Report recently, he noted that, "Where religious freedom is not protected, instability, human rights abuses and violent extremism have a greater opportunity to take root," and, "no one should have to live in fear, worship in fear or face discrimination for his or her beliefs."

Further, the Secretary emphasized that protection of the rights of religious minorities and other victims of violent extremism is a human rights priority for the Trump administration, and that the administration will "continue working with our regional partners to protect religious minority communities from terrorist attacks and to preserve their cultural heritage."

The Congress is to be commended for focusing the federal government on this alarming deterioration of freedom with the groundbreaking International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, an Act I was honored to sponsor. During my fourteen years serving in the United States Senate, I was involved in a diverse range of issues related to religious freedom. I spoke out against atrocities committed against Christians in the Sudan, and pushed passage of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act in 2005, to expand peacekeeping and logistical support for the region. In 2009, I cosponsored a resolution condemning the state sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority in Iran. In 2000, I was instrumental in enacting the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Human trafficking of individuals is often associated with religious persecution.

As a Senator serving on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for eight years, I presided over hearings, Senate oversight hearings of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. I fully understand the important role of the Commission in informing United States decision makers and other world leaders about religious freedom. Last year, you passed, and President Obama signed into law, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act to further address and focus the U.S. Government on the dire plight of religious minorities around the world.

This position of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is integral to our priority foreign policy goals, and if confirmed I pledge to use my energies and the range of diplomatic tools to strengthen international religious freedom issues and concerns in U.S. foreign policy. As called for in the International Religious Freedom Act, I pledge to: "[Stand] for liberty and [stand] with the persecuted, to use and implement appropriate tools in the United States foreign policy apparatus, including diplomatic, political, commercial, charitable, educational, and cultural channels, to promote respect for religious freedom by all governments and peoples."

You have spoken with clarity and conviction of the commitment of our people to this most basic right. It is now incumbent on the Executive Branch to fully implement the law. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to implement the law to its fullest by working with Department bureaus, posts and missions to elevate and fully integrate international religious freedom into security strategies and strategic planning, and will work with other government agencies to develop a comprehensive whole-of-government approach.

Further, if confirmed, I will press the leaders of other countries for the release of religious prisoners and for needed reforms, and be on alert for bilateral and multilateral opportunities to protect religious freedom victims and advance international religious freedom. I will also review diplomatic training to ensure that there is a strong curriculum that sensitizes all Ambassadors, Chiefs of Mission, officers departing for overseas posts, and all entry-level officers, and ensures that international religious freedom is fully integrated into policy, programs, casework and other initiatives.

Finally, if I am confirmed I will reach out to USCIRF in order to optimize our cooperation, and will meet with religious leaders, people of faith, and civil society groups to pursue our religious freedom goals. And I pledge to look to Congress for wisdom and help, as I know first-hand of the long-standing dedication you have to this cause, and I value your advice.

Time is short. Every passing day finds more people persecuted, imprisoned, tortured and even killed for simply practicing their innermost convictions.

We cannot let this dire situation continue without an aggressive response. We as Americans must stand strong for this first freedom or we will see the world spin into increasing conflicts and violence. We must act to protect and preserve this most basic right for all people.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

Senator RUBIO. I am going to defer my opening questions. I know members have votes, and I am going to be here a while.

So Senator Gardner, by order of attendance.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thanks to both of you for your willingness to serve our country. I appreciate your willingness to serve.

And, certainly, thanks to your families as well for this commitment.

Governor Brownback, we had a great conversation and opportunity to visit in the office. One of the things that we did not get into too much—well, a little bit—was water. So the Colorado-Kansas water issues we will defer to another day, although it may take a religious perspective at some point between our two States. [Laughter.]

Governor BROWNBACK. Yes, you have to quit doing what you guys are doing. [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. Unfortunately, you had better lawyers than we have had. [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. Governor Brownback, during our conversation in the office, we talked a little bit about some of the unfortunate situation that has occurred, the incidents in India with a Christian organization called Compassion International. It is based out of Colorado Springs. Many people are familiar with it.

Compassion International has been in India since 1968. But in March last year, it was forced to shut down because of the Government's spurious objections over its activities.

Compassion provided health, nutrition, medical services, tutoring to over 145,000 children. Now, these children are left to their own devices. This organization situation raises overall concerns about religious freedom issues in India.

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, in 2015, religious tolerance deteriorated and religious freedom violations increased in India. Minority communities experience numerous incidents of intimidation, harassment, violence.

Furthermore, there seems to be a real crackdown on religious NGOs by the Indian Government in the last year. According to the same report, in April 2015, the Ministry of Home Affairs revoked the licenses of nearly 9,000 charitable organizations.

Now I think India is an incredibly great nation, and I have the utmost respect for that nation. But I want to make sure that it is not taking a direction for the worse and make sure that we are aware of what is happening there. So could you talk about maybe some of the root causes of this religious intolerance and what we can help do to change that situation?

Governor BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Senator, for the question. I am familiar with the issue that has arisen. I have not gotten internal briefs on what all has taken place, because I am not confirmed for the position, so I do not know any more than what I have been reading that is available publicly on it.

I have worked with the Indian Government previously. When I started on this committee at a chair over here at the end, I was the subcommittee chairman that dealt with India, and I worked with the Government a great deal, the former BJP Government, not the current one. I am familiar with India.

I think this is something we have to press them on, and we have to press hard. India has, in the past, had a very good track record, overall, of dealing with a lot of religious tolerance. It is a very religiously diverse Nation.

I do not know what is causing this, but I pledge to you my work to press the Government of India to be a government that honors religious freedom for everybody. And we will look into the issue of what has taken place with Compassion International.

I hope to be able to work with your office on it, too.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you very much, Governor. Obviously, my work on the East Asia Subcommittee has brought greater attention to the plight of persecution in Myanmar and the plight of the Rohingya there, and what we need to be doing to make sure that we provide guidance, leadership, and objection to the activities and the treatment that is taking place there, but also concern in China as well toward the Christian minority in China and what we can be doing around the globe.

So thank you for your willingness to serve, both of you, again. And I will go back my time.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, to the witnesses, I congratulate you for your nominations.

Governor Brownback, you are supported by a number of people I really care about and respect, and you are suited for this position in many ways. I do have a couple concerns, so let me just jump right to them.

In 2015, you issued an executive order retracting an 8-year executive order in Kansas that provided protection in the State work force against adverse employment action on the grounds of sexual orientation. Describe why you did that.

Governor BROWNBACK. That was an order that created a right by the executive branch that was not available to other people, and it was not passed by the legislative branch. I believe those sorts of issues should be passed by a legislative branch.

Senator KAINE. Do you commonly issue executive orders?

Governor BROWNBACK. What is that?

Senator KAINE. Do you commonly issue, as Governor, executive orders?

Governor BROWNBACK. Some, but not a huge number.

Senator KAINE. Isn't that kind of the point of an executive order? You issue an executive order on something that the legislature has not passed. If it was clearly in statute, you would not need to issue an executive order.

Governor BROWNBACK. Yes, but this is a foundational issue that you are creating a right for State employees that was not available to the rest of the people in the State.

Senator KAINE. Was it bad to give State employees that right?

Governor BROWNBACK. I believe these sorts of things ought to be passed by the body. I am one who feels like you ought to create and have the law passed itself. So that answers why we did that, why I did that.

Senator KAINE. As the Governor, do you appoint cabinet secretaries?

Governor BROWNBACK. I do.

Senator KAINE. Do you appoint agency heads?

Governor BROWNBACK. Most, not all, but I do.

Senator KAINE. And do you take those appointments seriously, interview people to make sure they are competent, honest, that they can do the job well?

Governor BROWNBACK. To the best of my ability.

Senator KAINE. Do you feel like you have high standards in the people that you appoint?

Governor BROWNBACK. Yes.

Senator KAINE. Wouldn't it be appropriate, in terms of setting a standard for your work force, for your cabinet secretaries and agency heads, for you to say to them, "I do not think you should discriminate against people on the grounds of their sexual orientation?" If you are hiring for honesty, if you are hiring for competence, wouldn't that be an appropriate thing that the Governor, as the chief of a State personnel operation, would want to know about leaders in State Government?

Governor BROWNBACK. I think that would be a rational thing. I just do not think it is a right that the executive branch should create without the legislative branch.

Senator KAINE. When I was Governor, the first day, I did an executive order that protected people in a variety of ways, including

on the grounds of sexual orientation. The first order I signed, about 10 minutes after I was inaugurated in Williamsburg.

And I had an attorney general who made the same point to me. He said, well, the legislature didn't do this. And I said, but I am hiring agency heads and cabinet secretaries who are administering State Government. And I think, as the chief executive, one of the things I want to know about them is that they will not discriminate against employees.

Can't you see that the retraction of an executive order like this that had been in place for 8 years sends a message that that is not a value, nondiscrimination against folks on the grounds of sexual orientation, that is not a value that you share?

Governor BROWNBACK. I do not think it sends that message. And furthermore, as being the Ambassador on Religious Freedom, I look forward to working with people, working with you, working with everybody, regardless of their ideas or views, on how we can advance the agenda of religious freedom.

There may be differences on other topics. There are differences that Ambassador Saperstein and I have on other topics.

Senator KAINE. Let me connect it to religious freedom.

Governor BROWNBACK. But the beauty of this topic has been that people, we tend to focus on what bipartisan things there are that we agree upon. And I pledge to you to do that in this role as Ambassador for Religious Freedom——

Senator KAINE. Let me connect——

Governor BROWNBACK [continuing]. And continue the work that Ambassador Saperstein has done on this as well.

Senator KAINE. Let me connect this to religious freedom.

Are you aware that there are countries around the world where you can be imprisoned, and even executed, if you are LGBT?

Governor BROWNBACK. I believe that is correct.

Senator KAINE. And are you also aware that, in some of those countries, the asserted justification for criminal treatment of people based on LGBT status is a religious justification? That is what is cited as the justification for the criminal punishment for people who are LGBT.

Governor BROWNBACK. I had a lengthy conversation yesterday with Randy Berry, who worked with Ambassador Saperstein in the prior administration, who has Kansas roots, as you do some as well.

We had a good conversation about how these two offices work together. And I do not see doing anything any different than what they worked together on, as far as the topics.

Senator KAINE. That was not really my question.

Governor BROWNBACK. But that really is the point of the job.

Senator KAINE. Is there any circumstance under which religious freedom can justify criminalizing, imprisoning, or executing people based on their LGBT status?

Governor BROWNBACK. Well, I agree with what Randy Berry did around the world on that topic. I am not fully briefed on the various and the specifics. But what he basically did and described to me yesterday, the work they did back and forth with Ambassador Saperstein, I wouldn't see changing.

Senator KAINE. Okay, but I am going to close just with this question. I would like an answer to this question.

Is there any circumstance under which criminalizing, imprisoning, or executing somebody based on their LGBT status could be deemed acceptable because somebody asserts that they are religiously motivated in doing so?

Governor BROWNBACK. I do not know what that would be, in what circumstance, but I would continue the policies that have been done in the prior administration in working on these international issues.

Senator KAINE. I really would expect an unequivocal answer on that.

But my time is up.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congratulations, Governor Brownback, Ambassador Sison. Thank you both for your willingness to serve.

Ambassador Sison, I am especially appreciative that you are taking on the role in Haiti. I know that you have had other challenging roles in Lebanon and other places as Ambassador. So thank you for your willingness to do that.

Governor Brownback, I want to ask you about your thoughts about what message it sends to the rest of the world with respect to religious persecution, because I agree, one of our first lessons as children in school is learning that the United States was founded because people were fleeing religious persecution. We have a group of Indonesians in New Hampshire who have been here fleeing persecution from Indonesia, religious persecution. They are Christians. And they are now under threat of deportation, even though they are not criminals.

They are being sent back to Indonesia, where the record of religious persecution of Christians has gotten worse in the last several years.

So what kind of message do you think that sends to the rest of the world, as we are holding the United States up as a model for trying to make sure that people of all faiths can be treated fairly here, to send back to a country where they are certainly going to be persecuted again because of their religion?

Governor BROWNBACK. I do not know the specific circumstances of what you are talking about, Senator. I will be happy to look into it, because it does not sound appropriate.

Senator SHAHEEN. My question was really, what kind of a message does that send to the rest of the world when we are not willing to accept people fleeing religious persecution in the United States?

Governor BROWNBACK. Well, I think we should accept people that are fleeing religious persecution.

I used to do a lot of this work, on helping people that were persecuted for their faith in various countries to get to the United States and help them when they would resettle in my State. And then there are often a lot of different circumstances engaged, other than just the one. The one is important, and it should not be one that causes them not to come. But often, there is just a series of

what I found issues. And I am very sympathetic to people fleeing a plight because of the religious persecution.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I appreciate the work you did in the Senate to address religious persecution. My concern is that sometimes that support has come at the expense of other groups, women, in particular. I think women's health is sometimes put at risk because of suggestions of ensuring individual's religious freedom.

So how do you address that, for women who have been denied access to health care, even women who are victims of rape and incest who are not able to access abortion services? Why is that okay in the name of religious freedom for certain individuals?

Governor BROWNBACK. I am going to answer a broader question and then drill into your point here.

The beauty of what this job has been I think under the prior administration and this one is that there are contentious issues that people do not agree upon, and this position has tried to stay in its lane on religious freedom. And we could veer off into a lot of other debate points and lose the support of the Congress, and lose support around the world.

But I think the key piece is to stay in the lane of religious freedom. And those things that start to pull you out of it, you should not go there, whether it is the issue you are talking about or others, just because this one is so critical and difficult enough as it is without trying to venture into the difficult abortion debate or other debates domestically. And the focus is on international and the places we agree upon.

That is how I did the original bills working on this, on human trafficking with Paul Wellstone. There were differences of opinion on what all should be included in that. But the ones that he was pursuing from his side of the aisle that I could not agree on, he dropped. The ones that I was pursuing on my side of the aisle that he wouldn't agree on, I dropped. And we ended up with a pretty decent bill.

That is why I think this is an important position not to get into a number of these more difficult debate points that we are in, in the United States. And I pledge to you to stay there in this lane on a bipartisan basis.

Senator SHAHEEN. So will you commit to this committee that you will work with civil society organizations who are defending human rights, not just for religious minorities but for women and for people in the LGBTQ communities?

Governor BROWNBACK. I will work with anybody that I can on the topic of religious freedom and not veer out of that lane, because I think if you start to veer out of that lane, you get pulled to other topics that other people are charged with doing. You are going to lose the bipartisan support for the position, which is critical to have.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

So Senator Kaine went to vote. When he gets here, he will assume the gavel until I get a chance to get over there and get back.

So in the interim, I will just use that time to try to get my questions in.

Just to bring further clarity, because a number of questions have pulled you in that direction, Governor Brownback, I want to kind of refocus a little bit on the job that you will have.

The job of the Ambassador-at-Large is to advocate for religious liberty, which is oftentimes challenged or invariably challenged in places where either the population of that particular religious view is a minority in numbers, or even if they are a majority, the Government is of a different persuasion and targets those individuals for persecution.

So the job that you have been nominated to do is basically to advocate for the religious liberty of all religious entities and denominations and views around the world, irrespective of the size, their theology, their views on one particular issue versus another. If there is persecution on the basis of religion, or oppression on the basis of religion, or the denial of liberty on the basis of religion, your job would be to advocate for that freedom for them to practice in peace.

That is the scope of the job that you have been nominated to, is that correct, not to litigate theological points or policy differences beyond the scope of that liberty?

Governor BROWNBACK. That is. And I also think that is the strength of the position, is to stay in that lane that is bipartisan agreed to, that has seen these bills pass by large majorities or by unanimous consent on international religious freedom.

If you start to veer into these more difficult issues and discussions, you will lose support for the job. You will lose support for the position. And the position will be less effective, if effective at all.

Senator RUBIO. Now in terms of the position itself, last year, the Congress passed the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, which, among other things, elevated the position you have been nominated to internally within the State Department, so that it now is, by statute, required to report directly to the Secretary, which was designed to combat years of the position and the issue being relegated to a sort of secondary concern rather than being fully integrated into U.S. foreign policy.

Secretary Tillerson has informed the Senate of his intent to have this role report to the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. And I want to state clearly here and on the record, that runs contrary to the legislative intent of the law the Congress passed, and it is something that we object to.

I am not asking you to opine on it, but I do want to use this opportunity to make clear that that is not the intent of that law, and we would view that as in direct violation and contradiction of the law that was passed.

That said, I want to hear more about how you intend, obviously recognizing the limitations we have before us here today, what would you do, that you could share with us, to elevate the international religious freedom issues within the U.S. foreign policy at large and within the ranks of the U.S. State Department? Because that was the intent of this law, not just to require direct report but

to elevate the importance of this as a critical component of our broader foreign policy.

Governor BROWNBACK. As one of the original sponsors of the 1998 act, I thought the Frank Wolf act really improved on what took place in the 1998 act. The 1998 act was groundbreaking, but I think it had some limitations to it that a number of people saw.

One of the big things I think needs to take place is what you put in the act of having a cross-agency, cross-section group that meets to advise and work on international religious freedom issues, so it is not just within the State Department. It is also a security apparatus and the aid organizations.

And I look forward to working with that and bringing that multi-agency approach to this task of religious freedom. I think that is the effectiveness that Congress is looking for that I certainly want to implement in this particular bill and this particular area.

As I said at the outset, I am just firmly convinced, we have to get more focus on this by a broader cross-section, or we will not be effective in this. And if we are not effective on religious freedom, you are going to see violence continue to grow in many places around the world.

So I look forward to implementing the Frank Wolf act.

Senator RUBIO. Just as an aside, and perhaps an editorial moment here for me, and you can agree if you would like, in fact, I would prefer if you did—[Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. With that what I am about to say, but I think you will because we spoke about this yesterday.

You see the plight of the Rohingya Muslims that are facing persecution in Burma, and I would argue that has a direct national security implication for the United States. To their credit, the leaders of that community have been very resistant to, and they have rejected, efforts by radical elements to reach out and sort of take advantage of the situation.

That said, when a population of people anywhere in the world is being persecuted, mistreated and, in this case, even killed, they become vulnerable to outside actors showing up and trying to take advantage of those circumstances. It is yet another example beyond the humanitarian concerns of why it is in the national security interest of the United States to ensure that people around the world have an opportunity to live in peace and prosperity.

It is the right thing to do morally. It is also the pragmatic thing to do, because that instability, that suffering, that violence, those humanitarian catastrophes all create the conditions within which radical elements and bad actors around the world—that is their playground. That is what they took advantage of in Syria, with regard to the sectarian abuses occurring on behalf of the Assad regime. So, again, this is another example of why that is so important.

I want to now turn to Haiti for a moment, obviously a very important part of this nomination. I always tell nominees, if you are not getting a lot of questions in a hearing, that is a good thing.

But I do want to ask, because it is so important to Florida. Haiti has such a difficult history. We know the struggles they have had. On the issue of Haiti, one of the decisions the White House and the

administration will have to make soon is about whether or not to continue to extend temporary protective status.

I am not asking you to opine on what they should do. I am asking you to give us insight as to what the implications would be if, in fact, TPS is not extended and Haiti is asked to assume a significant number of people over a short period of time.

In your view, what would the implications of that be for the Haitian Government, in terms of absorbing this reentry? What would the implications be for them, if TPS was not extended and people were forced to return? What would it mean to the Haitian Government, to their capacity and to their ability to handle that?

Ambassador SISON. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

As we know, TPS was extended for an additional 6 months and is set to expire January 22, 2018. So the process is, of course, that under the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Department of Homeland Security Secretary has the authority to designate a foreign state for temporary protective status. But before a decision is made for what will happen in January 2018, of course, DHS will consult all relevant government agencies, including the Department of State, in determining whether conditions for TPS continue to be met in Haiti.

Senator RUBIO. I apologize. I understand the process for making the decision. My question is, what, in your view, would it mean? I am not asking you to tell me whether they should or should not extend it. I am just curious about your views on what it would mean for Haiti if, in fact, TPS is not extended.

Ambassador SISON. Exactly, Senator. The Embassy in Port-au-Prince is part of this process. They are contributing to a country conditions assessment that looks at infrastructure, health, sanitation services, continued ability to respond to disasters. So, if confirmed, I am going to want to keep the lines of communication open with you, Senators, and the staff.

In terms of the implications for the U.S. partnership on the ground and what we are doing with Haiti, I believe that a number of the programs that we actually have in place now in terms of assisting with economic livelihoods, assisting with agricultural and food security, these economic growth programs, these educational programs, these health programs all help build a resilience with our Haitian partners in order to respond not only to the natural disasters—of course, the TPS was put into place after the earthquake in 2010—but also building the resilience for the eventual return, if this is determined, of approximately——

Senator RUBIO. I apologize. I have to go vote. My time has expired, and I know Senator Kaine has questions about Haiti as well. I would just say I understand, as a nominee, why you do not want to delve into, "This is what it would mean to Haiti."

So I just want to say this. I think it would be difficult for them to absorb it, if that is the decision the administration makes, which I hope they do not. But if they did, my view is that the Embassy will have a lot of work on its hands, and the Government of Haiti will require a lot of assistance.

So it is my advice that, if and when confirmed, as I anticipate you will be, that you make that argument, that, in essence, you guys make the decision you need to make, but if you decide to ter-

minate TPS, we better step up our presence and our operations here, because the Haitian Government is already struggling with the people who are there now. Any large influx of returnees will strain that, and we will need to have greater capacity to help them meet that demand.

Again, unsolicited advice, but I think it is good advice, but it is my advice, so——

Ambassador SISON. I look forward to continuing to work with you, Senator. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. I second that emotion. I think that is very good advice.

Ambassador Sison, April 2017, the U.N. Security Council decided that the U.N. stabilization mission in Haiti, which was established in 2004, would come to an end later this year. I think on October 15, we are coming up on the date. That would include a full withdrawal of the mission's military component, which is about 2,000 personnel.

Talk about this transition and what it might mean in Haiti. And is the Haitian Government sort of prepared to take on these responsibilities? And things that you might be able to do in your capacity, should you be confirmed, to help in this next chapter?

Ambassador SISON. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, MINUSTAH, U.N. stabilization force, winds down October 15. And the very next day, October 16, MINUJUSTH, the justice sector support force, police only, stands up.

And I am up at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations now tracking this very issue. And in conversations with the Department of Peacekeeping up at the U.N., I am well aware that the U.N. is on track, both for the timing of this transition, for the budgeting of this new police-only justice sector support mission that will focus on police development, and rule of law, and human rights. The locations are spread throughout the country appropriately, standing up civilian staff corrections officers, 38, to cover countrywide some of these pretrial detention issues that I mentioned in my opening statement. Individual police officers and formed police units, seven formed police units, the total number of police there between the IPOs and the foreign police units, 1,275. The support, the medical, aviation, legal, all of this package is on track.

Combined with that, we continue our own U.S. bilateral rule of law and police development support. And that is also an important factor here.

That U.N. vote that you mentioned, of course, was unanimous. And it was recognition of the success that Haiti has had in returning in their democratic transition after the elections, the recent elections, and also to the fact that the Haitian national police is much stronger today. And again, a lot of that is thanks to U.S. bilateral support that we have provided to stand up the force that will be up to 15,000 by the end of this year. We have provided, through U.S. support, training, equipping, and we have really partnered with the other donors, including the U.N., to enhance law and order on the ground, but also Haiti's ability to combat the scourge of narcotics, for example, which has become a transnational threat.

So short answer to your question is that our U.S. partnership, but also the role that we play at the U.N., is I think setting this up to be a successful transition later on this month.

Senator KAINE. [Presiding.] Thank you for that thorough answer. I appreciate that.

Governor Brownback, quickly, you have taken some steps, or Kansas has during your tenure as Governor, that have been perceived as anti-Muslim, pulling out of the Federal refugee resettlement program, voicing support for the Muslim ban first announced by President Trump in January, signing an anti-Sharia law bill.

I would like to give you the opportunity to talk about, because you clearly have a track record of battling for religious minorities in this body and elsewhere, I would like to have you talk about your commitment, actions in the past, your commitment to battle for Muslims when they are in minority status around the world.

The chair's opening comments talked about the deplorable situation with Rohingya Muslims in Burma. The situation of Shia in some nations like Bahrain have raised human rights about their minority religious status.

I suspect this is something that you have worked on in the past, and I want to give you a chance to address that issue.

Governor BROWNBACK. It is something I have worked on in the past, and I will work on it in this job, if confirmed for it, as well.

I believe in the fundamental right to practice religion as you see fit, whoever you are, whatever your belief, if it is a Muslim group, if it is a Christian group, if it is Buddhist, Hindu, Baha'i, any, Jewish group. Whatever it is, you have that right. And I will fight for protection so that you will be able to exercise your religious freedom in peace from any government or group, period. That is what I have done in the past.

The Rohingya is a terrible situation. I pushed back against the Government in Burma before when I was here. They were persecuting a tribe of people in the north that were being trafficked into Bangkok into a number of prostitution places.

I worked on the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act. That was a Muslim, generally, population that was being persecuted there, and I was one of the original carriers of that bill.

You read the International Religious Freedom report, and you see how much persecution there is of Muslims around the world, to your specific point. That is wrong. It should not take place. I will stand up and fight for those communities, as I have in the past. I will do that in the future.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that answer. I agree with you. This is foundational. It is in our First Amendment for a reason.

We have a little bit of Virginia pride in Jefferson's authorship of the Statute for Religious Freedom that became the basis of the First Amendment that was drafted by another Virginian, Madison. And it could have been put in the Fourth or Fifth Amendment, but it was put up front for a reason, and it is so very important. And I appreciate that answer.

And I think, with that, I think the chair gave me the permission to close this portion of the hearing. Other members may ask questions in writing. If they do, I would appreciate you all responding promptly. We will leave the record open until 5 o'clock tomorrow

afternoon for members to submit questions. Try to respond promptly, if you can.

And thank you again for appearing today. Congratulations on your nominations.

With that, this portion of the hearing is adjourned. And we will wait until the return of our chair, and start a second hearing about the treatment of minorities in Iraq.

[Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO MICHELE J. SISON BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations since 2014, I have negotiated a number of key resolutions relating to the protection of human rights in the U.N. General Assembly, including spearheading successful passage of human rights resolutions critical of both Iran and Syria. I also led negotiations on behalf of the United States that led to the U.N. General Assembly voting to establish the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism to support the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses in Syria. In addition, I worked to secure U.N. accreditation for the U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists, which had repeatedly been denied such accreditation due to the efforts of undemocratic U.N. member states.

I have promoted human rights and democracy throughout my 35-year career as a Foreign Service officer, and have listed a number of additional examples below.

Sri Lanka

As the U.S. Ambassador 2012–2014, I led our Embassy's work related to investigating and documenting allegations of war crimes and other abuses and to supporting civil society in the face of a ban by the former government on NGO press conferences and workshops. When government-sanctioned mob and police actions limited the right of peaceful assembly, we successfully countered the closing space for civil society through U.S. Embassy social media activities and a WiFi-enabled bus to bring ″citizen journalist″ outreach to remote areas. Our Embassy's extensive documentation of human rights defender intimidation, targeting of members of Christian and Muslim minority communities, and restrictions on media freedom was credited with contributing to the successful passage of successive U.N. Human Rights Council resolutions on Sri Lanka and the creation of a U.N. fact-finding mission.

Iraq

As Assistant Chief Mission for Rule of Law Assistance 2011–2012, I oversaw a $500 million program aimed at improving access to justice, providing police and corrections training, and strengthening an independent judiciary. Our trainers integrated instruction on protection of human rights and counter-trafficking in persons into Iraq law enforcement development programs. The programs I oversaw also supported local NGOs and law schools in providing legal aid to underserved and disadvantaged populations across Iraq, including women, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, and minorities.

Lebanon

As the U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon 2008–2010, I oversaw U.S. Government programming that supported the development and strengthening of civil society (including, notably in areas controlled by terrorist group Hizballah). Our programming also strengthened the independence of the judiciary and access to justice for members of vulnerable populations (including legal aid clinics for refugees), as well as inaugurated a first-ever police training program. We built Lebanon's judicial training institute's curriculum and infrastructure, and, working with Lebanese authorities, sup-

ported improvements to the recruitment/selection process for judicial candidates and judicial ethics reform.

United Arab Emirates

During my tenure as U.S. Ambassador to the UAE 2004–2008, my sustained advocacy led to UAE Government action to rescue and shelter more than 800 child victims of human trafficking, repatriate hundreds of trafficking victims, and pass a law criminalizing the exploitation of child camel jockeys. The Department of State's Office of Trafficking in Persons named me the 2005 ″Abolitionist Ambassador of the Year″ in recognition of these efforts.

Earlier Tours

As Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the South Asia Bureau, I argued successfully for increased democracy funding and programing for Pakistan and Afghanistan. In Cote D'Ivoire as political counselor in the 1990's, I brought in new U.S. elections assistance programming and lobbied successfully for the first-ever international elections observers. As a young desk officer for Nicaragua in the 1980's, I developed a reliable data base on the country's human rights record. And in my first Foreign Service tour—Haiti—I was responsible for the Embassy's human rights reporting 1982–1984. This included visiting activists under house arrest and reporting on their conditions in order to show visible support for the important work of these human rights defenders.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Haiti today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Haiti? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in Haiti include the trafficking issues related to an estimated 286,000 children working in domestic service; the chronic prolonged pretrial detention problem; squalid prison conditions; corruption; weak rule of law; and violence against women.

If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Haiti, civil society, international partners, and religious leaders to institutionalize the rule of law and uphold more transparent, accountable institutions to improve the future of Haitian citizens. Our U.S. Embassy team will continue to build the capacity of Haiti's National Anti-Trafficking Committee and Child Welfare Agency to prevent child exploitation. I will also work to create public messaging about the benefits of children being raised at home with their families. We will continue to support an innovative three-year alliance with the Government of Haiti for the protection of children, to reduce violence against children, mitigate human trafficking, including forced labor of children, protect unaccompanied and separated children, and explore alternative care and protection services for children through pilot interventions. We will also continue to work with local NGOs and the Government of Haiti to raise awareness about trafficking risks in Haitian orphanages.

In addition, through the justice system strengthening program our USAID colleagues will continue to be a partner to Haitians building a professional, accountable, and modern justice system. I will support USAID programs that support justice and legal aid. Since 2011, USAID interventions have helped provide legal aid for over 24,000 individuals. Our State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) has spent decades working with the Haitian National Police, and is helping make badly-needed administrative and organizational reforms to improve conditions for Haiti's prison population. In addition, through our PEPFAR, INL, and USAID programs, we are training law enforcement officials to better investigate gender-based violence, improving women's access to medical treatment, and empowering women to play a larger role in government and civil society to raise the national profile of the challenges they face.

Question 3. 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 Haiti advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Political instability, corruption, and weak rule of law are all major challenges to sustained human rights improvements in Haiti. Today, after two years of political impasse, Haiti has a democratically-elected government and a window of opportunity to implement democratic reforms to ensure that constant political crises no longer threaten to derail Haiti's future. Yet only 20 percent of Haitians turned out for the most recent Presidential elections. After years of political strife, the trust between Haiti's Government and its people must be restored.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Haiti?

Answer. I am absolutely committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other NGOs both in the United States and in Haiti.October 5, 2017

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Haiti to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Haiti?

Answer. While Haiti does not at present have high-profile cases of political prisoners, our U.S. Embassy team will remain vigilant and engaged with the Government of Haiti, civil society, and human rights-defenders to protect members of Haiti's vulnerable populations.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure all agencies at the U.S. Embassy continue to adhere to the Department's Leahy policy to ensure that U.S. security assistance programs promote and advance human rights.

Question 7. Will you engage with the people of Haiti on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will indeed engage personally with Haitian civil society on matters of human rights, including civil rights, and governance. I will also ensure Embassy Port-au-Prince continues to engage with Haitian civil society on matters of human rights, including civil rights, and good governance. Embassy Port-au-Prince has created an internal interagency democracy, human rights, and governance working group to ensure that all of our U.S. Embassy efforts work to incorporate these key U.S. values, and I intend to keep the working group's responsibilities a key U.S. Embassy priority.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff who come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Civil and Foreign Service?

Answer. I firmly believe that diversity of experience and background enhances our diplomatic and representational work as Department of State employees. Throughout my career, including as Director for Career Development and Assignments in State's Bureau of Human Resources (HR/CDA), I have focused on the need to promote and support diversity. I also worked to foster a work environment free of discrimination by maintaining an affirmative outreach program as HR/CDA director (2010–2011) and served as the mentor for a number of the Department's affinity group employee organizations to help strengthen and support diversity during that tour. If confirmed, I will build upon this experience to promote diversity at Embassy Port-au-Prince through personal mentoring and serving as a role model for the Embassy with respect to fairness, equity, and inclusion.

Question 9. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure a diverse, inclusive, nondiscriminatory workplace environment, making sure that any Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints or harassment inquiries are appropriately investigated and handled. I will ensure that EEO liaisons are provided for both U.S. and Locally Employed Staff to coordinate EEO counseling and training. I will also ensure that EEO refresher training for the mission-wide U.S. and locally employed staff and their EEO liaisons is available. In doing so, I will emphasize EEO and diversity training is mandatory for all managers and supervisors.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Haiti?

Answer. No.

Question 13. Please provide your assessment of current U.N. efforts to address the cholera in Haiti, U.S. investments and response to addressing the cholera epidemic in Haiti, and your goals as Ambassador, if confirmed, in addressing the issue going forward.

Answer. The United States remains deeply concerned by Haiti's tragic cholera epidemic and its impact. If confirmed, my goal will be to support the Haitian Government in its efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to cholera, among other diseases. To ensure sustained focus on this disease, the U.S. Government, through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is helping Haiti to improve cholera surveillance and laboratory testing capacity. Additionally, CDC and USAID support investments to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure and related behavior change. The U.S. Government team works closely with the Haitian Government and partners to ensure U.S. Government activities complement the Government of Haiti's Medium-Term Plan for the Elimination of Cholera in Haiti. Over the last seven years, the United States has provided more than $100 million for cholera detection, treatment, and prevention efforts in Haiti. This assistance has promoted improved water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities; supported the establishment and operation of cholera treatment centers; provided training for Haitian health care workers in preventing, diagnosing, and treating cholera; supported the establishment of a national cholera surveillance system; and provided cholera treatment and prevention materials.

If confirmed, I will seek to coordinate continued U.S. bilateral assistance to Haiti to prevent, detect, and treat cholera among other communicable diseases, as well as to continue the U.S. Mission's work side-by-side with the Government of Haiti and other partners on the public promotion of safe health and hygiene practices and support to Haiti's overall health system. Of course, the United States recognizes the international community must do more, and we recognize and commend the United Nation's ongoing efforts to design and implement an assistance package for those most affected by cholera. If confirmed, I commit to addressing these issues directly with U.N. leadership, including regular contact with the U.N. Secretary General's recently-named special envoy for Haiti, Josette Sheeran, and her team. This is an issue in which I have engaged as the Deputy Permanent U.S. Representative to the United Nations, and I look forward to continuing to work with the United Nations to ensure that its approach is tailored in a manner that best addresses the unique and pressing situation in Haiti.

Question 14. Do you believe that conditions in Haiti have improved to the point where TPS is no longer needed for Haitian nationals in the United States?

Answer. Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act gives the Secretary of Homeland Security the authority to designate a foreign state for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) after consultation with appropriate agencies of the U.S. Government, which typically includes the Department of State. As the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) works to review Haiti's TPS designation prior to its expiration, the Department of State will contribute to DHS's review process. This input will draw upon the State Department's country and regional expertise to evaluate country conditions against the criteria set out in the TPS statute, as well as any relevant foreign policy considerations.

Question 15. Do you assess that the Haitian Government has sufficient capacity and the needed policies and programs to repatriate more than 50,000 individuals in an orderly manner that ensures people's health and safety?

Answer. Following two years of political impasse and stalled elections, Haiti now has a new government in place with an elected president, a confirmed cabinet, and a full parliament. We are encouraged by this progress in Haiti and believe the post-election stability, combined with President Moise's private sector experience, should lead to more effective development. The Government of Haiti is focused on reforms to bolster economic opportunities that will allow Haitian citizens to help build their country. In addition, the Haitian Government affirmed its commitment to ensuring that those Haitian citizens, who may be affected in the event that TPS is not extended, return to Haiti safely, with dignity, and to opportunities.

Question 16. If the repatriation of the 50,000 Haitian TPS beneficiaries did not proceed in an orderly manner, what could be the potential negative outcome; how would it affect the people and government of Haiti; and how would such an outcome affect U.S. national interests?

Answer. The U.S. Government through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues to work with the Government of Haiti to ensure that repatriations occur in the most humane manner possible. As a long standing partner of Haiti, the U.S Government remains committed to the country's long-term security, democratic development, and economic growth.

DHS consults all relevant government agencies to review the conditions of the country in question to determine whether conditions for the TPS designation continue to be met. There is no requirement in statute that the Secretary of State provide the Department's recommendation to the Secretary of DHS, although the Secretary has traditionally done so for countries for which there are significant Department of State foreign policy or national security equities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMUEL DALE BROWNBACK BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I was honored to help pass the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 while serving in the United States Senate. This important piece of legislation was significant both in its means and its ends. Working with a thoroughly bi-partisan group of advocates and elected officials, we passed a bill that helped push back on the rising epidemic of human trafficking. There is much work still to be done, but this important early step allowed us to prove that Americans of all backgrounds and political affiliations could come together to promote human rights and human dignity. It helped show that we can, and still do, stand in united opposition to the scourge of human trafficking.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private.

While my focus will be on religious freedom, if confirmed, I will work closely with my colleagues across the State Department to promote respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights and democratic governance. It is my firm belief that protecting the panoply of rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and in the ICCPR begins with the protection of religious freedom which often serves as a bellwether for those other rights.

Question 3. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I have a deep respect for the institution of the Foreign Service and recognize the important efforts within the State Department to ensure that these representatives of the United States at our diplomatic missions abroad reflect the diversity of America. The Office of International Religious Freedom should, like the rest of the Department, foster an atmosphere of diversity and inclusion. If confirmed, I will take seriously my role to promote, mentor, and support the employees in our office as I have throughout my career.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests abroad?

Answer. No.

Engaging with Diverse Religious Communities

Question 7. Given that the position of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is responsible for promoting freedom and respect for all religions as a fundamental human right, how will you build trust, respect, and acceptance across all faiths, including in the Muslim communities around the world?

Answer. Religious freedom is a universal human right of every individual, regardless of creed, and should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government. If confirmed, I will pursue all means to engage governments and civil society leaders to promote every individual's right to freedom of religion or belief. To be effective, I will directly consult with individuals of varying religious beliefs and communities to intimately understand their experiences, the challenges they endure, as well as their policy concerns. This includes Muslims, many of whom face heavy restrictions on their ability to freely practice their faith in many countries around the world. I would rely on my own professional and personal contacts, in addition to those established by my colleagues, to reach out to these communities, continue to build and maintain strong and lasting relationships, and collectively work towards promoting and protecting religious freedom for all individuals, regardless of their faith or beliefs.

Building trust and respect with members of vulnerable religious communities will be critical to my success as Ambassador-at-Large, and if confirmed, I will prioritize this responsibility.

Interpretation of "Religious Freedom"

Question 8. As Governor, you supported the passage of the Campus Religious Freedom Bill, which became law in March 2016, which requires public colleges and universities in Kansas to recognize and fund religious student associations, even those that discriminate in their membership against LGBT individuals, women, African Americans, students with disabilities, or anyone else, so long as the student group's discrimination is rooted in a religious belief.

- Do you believe that a religious belief should allow a person, business, or government entity to discriminate against another person based on his religion, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, or disability? Do you believe that funding can be granted to entities that discriminate as long as that discrimination is based on religious conviction?

Answer. I respect the fundamental right of people to hold whatever religious beliefs they hold; and that extends to those who hold no beliefs at all. But that respect cannot extend to condoning violence or persecution in the name of religion towards of any minority or group. Violence or persecution in the name of religion against members of the LGBT community is wrong, as is persecution or violence based on gender, race, faith, age, heritage, national origin, or disability.

Refugees

Question 9. As Governor you banned state agencies in 2016 from assisting in the resettlement of Syrian refugees to Kansas and later suspended Kansas' refugee resettlement program entirely citing security concerns in vetting as the reason for the suspension, although we know the vetting procedure is stricter than any other class of those who seek entry into the United States, including immigrants and tourists.

- With over 65 million refugees worldwide how will you support and defend the rights of refugees fleeing religious persecution and oppression in the world?

Answer. The global refugee crisis should be a concern for all of us. In many cases, these refugees—and internally displaced persons—are fleeing religious persecution and discrimination or conflict born of repression on the basis of religious identity or association. Notably, however, the repression of religious freedom may not end simply because a refugee has left their country. If confirmed, I will use all means at my disposal to address the causes of forced displacement as they relate to the repression of religious freedom. I will also work to ensure that the religious freedom of refugees is fully protected. Doing so will require that I and my office engage the United Nations, governments, and civil society leaders to promote every individual's right to freedom of religion or belief, wherever they are. Given the enormity of this crisis, a focus on refugees will be a priority for my work.

Minorities in the Middle East

Question 10. ISIS' brutal treatment of religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East has drawn a great degree of attention over the last few years, including towards Yezidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims in areas it controlled. ISIS is also responsible for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing directed at these same groups, and in some cases against Sunni Muslims, Kurds, and other minorities.

- How do you plan on defending the rights of all groups including religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East from being persecuted in the Middle East?
- In your view, should the U.S. be working towards ensuring that religious minorities have a place in their home country or should we instead focus on resettlement of these communities in other countries?

Answer. The right to exercise one's freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is a universal human right for all people. It is enshrined in our Constitution's First Amendment and remains a core American value along with the interconnected freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. If confirmed, I intend to advocate both publically and privately on behalf of all those seeking to live their lives peacefully in accordance with their conscience. While limitations vary widely from country to country, I expect to utilize all diplomatic and programmatic tools available to encourage foreign governments to respect the religious freedom of everyone within their borders, including responding vigorously to persecution or victimization of members of any group, providing emergency assistance, encouraging and facilitating accountability for violations of such freedoms, promoting equality and diversity, and building coalitions with our international partners to do the same.

I am committed to cultivating the conditions where all individuals—including members of religious and ethnic minorities—have a secure future in their countries. When needed, we should also assist members of all religions, ethnicities, and nationalities who are fleeing persecution, consistent with U.S. refugee law.

I am deeply concerned about the plight of vulnerable religious minorities in Iraq, including Christians, Yezidis, and other groups. If confirmed, I will engage regularly with representatives of these groups in addition to officials in Baghdad and Erbil to hear their views and ideas. I will work with colleagues to help address the myriad issues—such as security, services, governance, employment, education, and justice important to members of minority groups, and indeed to all Iraqis. Our comprehensive response to assist the victims of atrocities and related crimes is reflected in the recently-passed ISIS accountability United Nations Security Council Resolution, but must also include provisions to strengthen the rule of law, and provide humanitarian, stabilization, and recovery assistance to all conflict-affected individuals, including members of religious and ethnic minority groups in Iraq. The U.S. government has supported demining operations, human rights programs, and other across Iraq, but has especially focused on traditional minority enclaves in newly liberated areas, including Sinjar and the Ninewa Plains. Though a significant amount of need-based contributions have benefitted conflict-affected members of minority communities, more remains to be done to enable their safe and voluntary return to their homes.

Rohingya

Question 11. The brutal violence we've seen over the past month in Burma has left nearly 800,000 Rohingya refugees fleeing for their lives. The Rohingya who are a Muslim minority group in Burma have been persecuted for decades and this latest crisis demonstrates the unfortunate, but predictable, consequence of oppressing a religious minority denying them citizenship or options for livelihoods.

- How will you engage the government of Burma in urging them to end their persecution of the ethnic Rohingya Muslims and push for the recommendations offered in the Kofi Annan Commission report on Rakhine?

Answer. I am deeply disturbed by the recent reports of violence and human rights abuses in Rakhine State in Burma, including allegations of extrajudicial killings, burning of villages, massacres, and rape, by security forces and by vigilante groups acting alongside security forces.

Rohingya Muslims in Burma have long faced discrimination and harsh treatment by the government, including severe restrictions on freedom of movement and access to citizenship, and coercive population control measures, including forced abortion. Since 1999, Burma has been designated by the U.S. government as a Country of Particular Concern for "systematic, ongoing, egregious" violations of religious freedom.

I understand that the State Department welcomed the release of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State on August 24, and also welcomed the Government of Burma's commitment to review and carry out the recommendations

as quickly as possible. The continuing violence underlines the importance and need to implement the report recommendations. The United States has offered its support to the government as it works to address the long-term challenges addressed in the Commission's report, including poverty, underdevelopment, shortcomings in government services, as well as the need for security sector reform and accountability to address human rights violations and abuses, and better treatment of local populations, including ensuring a credible, transparent citizenship process for all people in Rakhine and lifting restrictions on freedom of movement.

If confirmed, I intend to work to ensure that Burma's Government and military acts consistently with to their human rights commitments, to press for access for humanitarian organizations so that the survival and needs of those displaced by violence are being met, to hold Burma to its commitment that those who fled to Bangladesh are able to voluntarily and safely return, and to seek justice and accountability on behalf of the victims of these mass atrocities.

On Protection of the LGBT Community

Question 12. In many parts of the world, we continue to see widespread violence and discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender—or LGBT—community. Unfortunately, some of the attacks against this population come from actors, both governmental and non-governmental, who cite religion as the basis for their abusive actions. At the same time, we see religious leaders who are positively engaged in pushing back against such mistreatment and who are exhibiting leadership in support of this marginalized population.

- How will you work to ensure that the LGBT individuals are as worthy of protection by religious communities, and how would you use your position to help foster positive movement forward?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to cooperate and coordinate the United States efforts to protect the rights of persecuted groups and minorities. The office of International Religious Freedom has prioritized working with State Department partners to protect the rights of persecuted minorities, including the LGBT community. I have had several productive conversations with fellow Kansan Randy Berry, the former Special Envoy for Human rights of LGBTI Persons. I am confident in our ability to work cooperatively to foster positive international movement.

Question 13. After the June 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling making same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states, you issues a 'religious objection' executive order in July 2015 allowing taxpayer-funded social service organizations to deny services to LGBT citizens, and specifically exempting all religiously affiliated organizations from having to recognize legal same-sex marriages or accommodate them in any way. Your opposition was so extreme, a federal judge put the state on probation and Kansas is being monitored for every aspect of the state's implementation of same-sex marriage for the next three years.

- Do you believe that religious conviction allows individuals or governments to discriminate or deny rights to someone based on his sexual orientation? What is your view on Uganda's "Kill the Gays" law?

Answer. I will respect the fundamental right of people to hold whatever religious beliefs they hold; and that extends to those who hold no beliefs at all. But that respect cannot extend to condoning violence or persecution in the name of religion towards of any minority or group. Violence or persecution in the name of religion against members of the LGBT community is wrong, as is persecution or violence based on gender, race, faith, age, heritage, national origin, or disability.

Women's Health

Question 14. The Trump administration has stated that women's economic empowerment is a critical goal for our foreign aid programs. Access to health care, especially reproductive health care, is essential to ensuring women are able to participate and contribute to the growth of local economies.

- How will you work with colleagues in the office of Global Women's Issues and Bureau of Democracy, Rights, and Labor to combat religious traditions that discriminate against women and undermine their full human rights and economic empowerment?

Answer. As Secretary Tillerson said during his confirmation, investing in women produces a multiplier effect—women reinvest a large portion of their income in their families and communities, which also furthers economic growth and stability. Around the world, there are restrictions that prevent women from fully participating in in the economy as workers, entrepreneurs, and consumers. Such barriers range from inheritance rights to early and forced marriage. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and the of-

fice of Global Women's Issues to ensure that women are able to fully exercise their religious freedom around the world.

Anti-Semitism on the Rise in Europe

Question 15. In the last several years, there has been a steady and disturbing increase in attacks and acts rooted in antisemitism in Europe, including Jews murdered in Paris and Copenhagen, synagogues attacked by mobs and firebombed, and increasing Jewish emigration attributed to fear of more attacks.

- How will you address this disturbing trend and work within the inter-faith communities in Europe to help them tackle and reverse this trend and build a more secure and tolerant environment or all those who reside in these communities?

Answer. Combating anti-Semitism internationally is a priority for the Trump administration. If confirmed, I would denounce anti-Semitism and would urge governments in Europe and around the world to condemn anti-Semitism and to provide security for Jewish communities. I would work to encourage other governments and organizations to adopt a common working definition of anti-Semitism that covers contemporary as well as classical anti-Semitic acts and rhetoric. I understand that the Office of International Religious Freedom currently devotes significant resources to combatting anti-Semitism, and I am a strong supporter of such efforts. I would also work closely with other key officials, including the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism to strengthen and advance our collective policy and programming initiatives in combatting anti-Semitism globally.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMUEL DALE BROWNBACK BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER A. COONS

Question 1. LGBTQ people often face persecution in the same countries where religious minorities face persecution, so you will need to work colleagues in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) to create a comprehensive human rights agenda that takes all human rights concerns into account.

- How will you work with your DRL colleagues who focus on promoting the human rights of LGBTQ people abroad?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private.

As Secretary Tillerson said in June, the Department affirms its support for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons. Dignity and equality are core American values underpinned by our Constitution. If confirmed as Ambassador-at-Large, I will stand up for the religious freedom of all persons, including LGBTI persons, and will work with other relevant officials throughout the Department of State to ensure protection for the human rights of all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Question 2. LGBTQ people often face persecution in the same countries where religious minorities face persecution, so you will need to work colleagues in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) to create a comprehensive human rights agenda that takes all human rights concerns into account.

- Are you committed to working with your colleagues on promoting the human rights of all people, and not just religious minorities?

Answer. Yes. The protection of the human rights of all persons is a priority of the Trump administration. President Trump has stated that the United States looks forward to a day when, "people of all faiths, Christians and Muslims and Jewish and Hindu, can follow their hearts and worship according to their conscience." And Vice-President Pence has said, "Since the founding of our nation, America has stood for the proposition that the right to believe and the right to act on one's beliefs is the right of all peoples at all times. … Under President Trump, America will continue to stand for religious freedom of all people, of all faiths, across the world."

Freedom of religion or belief goes hand in hand with other universal human rights. If confirmed, as I work to promote freedom of religion and conscience throughout the world, I will welcome opportunities to work with my colleagues in support of the United States government's broader human rights agenda.

Question 3. LGBTQ people often face persecution in the same countries where religious minorities face persecution, so you will need to work colleagues in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) to create a comprehensive human rights agenda that takes all human rights concerns into account.

- How will you ensure that countries and development aid implementers do not use "religious freedom" as a cover for discriminating against LGBTQ people?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private.

While my focus will be on religious freedom, if confirmed, I will work closely with my colleagues across the State Department to promote respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights and democratic governance, for all people, including LGBTI persons. As Secretary Tillerson said in June, the Department affirms its support for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons. The State Department's global policy is to oppose violence and discrimination targeting LGBTI persons, including from governments, and non-state actors such as some civil society organizations and some religious groups.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMUEL DALE BROWNBACK BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Chechnya LGBTQ

Question 1. The situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in Russia can be extremely challenging. They often face violence and government crackdowns, with a strict "anti-propaganda" law that potentially criminalizes any discussion of homosexuality.

The Trump administration's response to these attacks on this vulnerable community has been weak. This could have dangerous implications for security and stability in the region. In my experience, raising this issue, in this committee, and with our Russian interlocutors sends an important signal that the United States is watching.

Senator Toomey and I have a resolution pending before this committee condemning the abuses in Chechnya, calling on the Russian Government to protect its citizens, calling on our Government to demand the release of individuals wrongfully detained, and also to hold perpetrators accountable through sanctions under the Magnitsky Act.

- How do you plan to raise human rights concerns with your Russian counterparts, and especially with regards to the LGBTQ community, particularly with respect to Chechnya?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private.

The situation for religious freedom in Russia is of significant concern, particularly on account of authorities' broad use of anti-extremism legislation to harass and target members of religious minorities, including the Government's efforts to dissolve the Jehovah's Witnesses community.

While my focus will be on religious freedom, if confirmed, I will work closely with my colleagues across the State Department to promote respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights and democratic governance, for all people, including LGBTI persons. As Secretary Tillerson said in June, the Department affirms its support for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons. The State Department's global policy is to oppose violence and discrimination targeting LGBTI persons, including from governments, and non-state actors such as some civil society organizations and some religious groups.

We continue to follow the human rights situation in Chechnya very closely, including the allegations of widespread extrajudicial detentions and torture, and in

some cases killings of LGBTI persons. In July, Secretary Tillerson sent a letter to Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov encouraging swift and independent investigations into these troubling allegations and urging that any perpetrators of violations be held accountable under Russian law. The letter from Secretary Tillerson followed multiple U.S. statements condemning the violence in Chechnya, including from U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley, the U.S. representative to the OSCE, and the State Department Spokesperson in Washington. We were also proud to sign on to a joint statement of the Equal Rights Coalition—the first such statement from this new, like-minded group of governments committed to equality and dignity for all—and that statement called for a stop to the violence in Chechnya and an immediate investigation

Question 2. The situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in Russia can be extremely challenging. They often face violence and government crackdowns, with a strict "anti-propaganda" law that potentially criminalizes any discussion of homosexuality.

The Trump administration's response to these attacks on this vulnerable community has been weak. This could have dangerous implications for security and stability in the region. In my experience, raising this issue, in this committee, and with our Russian interlocutors sends an important signal that the United States is watching.

Senator Toomey and I have a resolution pending before this committee condemning the abuses in Chechnya, calling on the Russian Government to protect its citizens, calling on our Government to demand the release of individuals wrongfully detained, and also to hold perpetrators accountable through sanctions under the Magnitsky Act.

- If confirmed, will you commit to raising a comprehensive human rights agenda that includes the concerns of the LGBTQ community with your interlocutors in Russia and around the globe?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private.

While my focus will be on religious freedom, if confirmed, I will work closely with my colleagues across the State Department to promote respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights and democratic governance, for all people, including LGBTI persons. As Secretary Tillerson said in June, the Department affirms its support for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons. The State Department's global policy is to oppose violence and discrimination targeting LGBTI persons, including from governments, and non-state actors such as some civil society organizations and some religious groups.

Engaging with Muslim Communities

*Question 3.*As noted in a recent letter from Secretary Tillerson to Senator Corker, the Office of International Religious Freedom will assume the functions of the U.S. Special Representative to Muslim Communities. The Special Representative is responsible for driving the Secretary of State's engagement with Muslim communities around the world.

In 2012, as the Governor of Kansas, you supported so-called "anti-sharia" legislation prohibiting state courts and agencies from using foreign law. These laws are rooted in false and hateful conspiracy theories that sharia law will overtake U.S. law. They advance the divisive, distorted, and fear-based narrative that Islam is incompatible with American values, which serves to demonize Muslims.

- What message do you think this sends to Muslim communities around the world? What impact do you think your prior support of this legislation will have on your ability to engage these communities?

Answer. The American legal tradition rests on the idea that there is one law for everyone. It is just as important to recognize the autonomy of the law from any particular religious tradition as it is to recognize the freedom of religious organizations and religious people to conduct their lives according to their own beliefs, within the framework provided by our laws. I signed the Kansas bill with the goal of limiting the ability of decisions of foreign jurisdictions to restrict of undermine rights protected by the Kansas and United States constitutions.

Overall, I believe in the fundamental freedom to practice religion as ones sees fit, whoever one is, whatever one's belief. If confirmed, I will vigorously advocate for the

right to be able to exercise one's religious freedom without interference from the Government. I have a track record to support that commitment. While in the Senate, I supported sanctions against the Government of Burma to uphold the religious freedom of members of religious minority communities, including Muslims. The U.S. Department of State's International Religious Freedom report demonstrates the extent of persecution of Muslims around the world. I believe that persecution is wrong and should not take place, and I will stand up and fight for members of those communities in the future, as I have in the past.

I also believe that religious leaders, institutions, and communities—including the approximately 1.6 billion Muslims in the world—can be critical interlocutors on many issues central to U.S. foreign policy. There is the potential to engage with religious groups as powerful civil society actors, influencers, and catalysts for positive social change and as potential partners in key areas of mutual concern—including advancing international religious freedom or other policy objectives.

*Question 4.*As noted in a recent letter from Secretary Tillerson to Senator Corker, the Office of International Religious Freedom will assume the functions of the U.S. Special Representative to Muslim Communities. The Special Representative is responsible for driving the Secretary of State's engagement with Muslim communities around the world.

In 2012, as the Governor of Kansas, you supported so-called "anti-sharia" legislation prohibiting state courts and agencies from using foreign law. These laws are rooted in false and hateful conspiracy theories that sharia law will overtake U.S. law. They advance the divisive, distorted, and fear-based narrative that Islam is incompatible with American values, which serves to demonize Muslims.

- Given that the position of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is responsible for promoting freedom and respect for all religions as a fundamental human right, how will you build trust, respect, and acceptance across all faiths?

Answer. Religious freedom is a universal human right of every individual, regardless of creed, and should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government. If confirmed, I will pursue all means to engage governments and civil society leaders to promote every individual's right to freedom of religion or belief. I will directly consult with individuals of various religious communities, and those of no faith, to understand their experiences, the challenges they endure, and their policy concerns. I would rely on my own professional and personal contacts, in addition to those established by my colleagues, to reach out to these communities, continue to build and maintain strong and lasting relationships, and collectively work towards promoting and protecting religious freedom for all individuals, regardless of their faith or beliefs. Building trust and respect with members of vulnerable religious communities will be critical to my success as Ambassador-at-Large, and if confirmed, I will prioritize this responsibility.

Religious Freedom and Reproductive Rights

*Question 5.*As the Ambassador-at-Large for the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, you would be charged with safeguarding the ability for individuals to make their own decisions about religion and the role it plays in their lives. This includes reproductive choice. However, of the 95 votes you took during your time in Congress related to reproductive choice, you cast 94 against protecting a woman's right to make her own decisions about reproductive health care.

- Do you agree that religious freedom includes individual choices about reproductive health?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private.

My role as Ambassador-at-Large would not concern policies related reproductive health. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all individuals, including women, are able to fully exercise their religious freedom around the world.

*Question 6.*As the Ambassador-at-Large for the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, you would be charged with safeguarding the ability for individuals to make their own decisions about religion and the role it plays in their lives. This includes reproductive choice. However, of the 95 votes you took during your time in Congress related to reproductive choice, you cast 94 against protecting a woman's right to make her own decisions about reproductive health care.

- If confirmed, will you protect the rights of individuals to make personal decisions that you may not agree with?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure all individuals are able to fully exercise their religious freedom around the world.

*Question 7.*As the Ambassador-at-Large for the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, you would be charged with safeguarding the ability for individuals to make their own decisions about religion and the role it plays in their lives. This includes reproductive choice. However, of the 95 votes you took during your time in Congress related to reproductive choice, you cast 94 against protecting a woman's right to make her own decisions about reproductive health care.

- If confirmed, will you protect the right of women to make their own choices about their reproductive health care, including protecting access to comprehensive reproductive health care services?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all individuals, including women, are able to fully exercise their religious freedom around the world.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMUEL DALE BROWNBACK BY SENATOR JEFF MERKEY

Question 1. The State Department's Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is charged with monitoring global cases of religious discrimination, recommending policies to protect religious minorities around the world, and developing and implementing programs that promote religious freedom for all. This should include a responsibility to protect individuals' right to make their own decisions about religion and the role it plays in their lives, including when making reproductive choices. Do you pledge to protect individual's rights to make reproductive choices in your role, should you be confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private. My role as Ambassador-at-Large would not concern policies related to abortion or other questions of reproductive health. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all individuals, including women, are able to fully exercise their religious freedom around the world.

Question 2. LGBTQ people often face persecution in the same countries where religious minorities face persecution, necessitating a comprehensive human rights agenda, one which takes all human rights concerns into account, not just religious freedom. As Secretary of State Tillerson has said, the United States supports "the fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons to live with dignity and freedom."

- How will you work with your colleagues at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) who focus on promoting the human rights of LGBTQ people abroad?
- How will you ensure that countries and development aid implementers do not use "religious freedom" as a cover for discriminating against LGBTQ people?

Answer. If confirmed, my role as Ambassador-at-Large will be to promote the rights enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which broadly encompass the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of one's choosing, the freedom

to change one's beliefs, to speak about one's beliefs, teach one's beliefs to one's children, and to worship, individually or in community with others, in public or in private.

While my focus will be on religious freedom, if confirmed, I will work closely with my colleagues across the State Department to promote respect for all other fundamental freedoms, human rights and democratic governance, for all persons, including LGBTI individuals. As Secretary Tillerson said in June, the Department affirms its support for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI persons. The State Department's global policy is to oppose violence and discrimination targeting LGBTI persons, including from governments, and non-state actors such as civil society organizations and faith groups.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson [presiding], Murphy, Shaheen, and Kaine.

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

Senator JOHNSON. Good afternoon. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order. This has to be one of the first times one of these started actually ahead of schedule.

I want to welcome the witnesses, and their friends and family. We certainly thank you for your willingness to serve in this capacity.

We gather today to consider the nominations of ambassadorships to Denmark and Croatia. These two European countries are important relationships for the United States, presenting both opportunities and challenges.

Denmark and the U.S. have long had a close relationship. Like the U.S., Denmark is one of the founding members of NATO and has been a strong supporter of expanding the alliance. The Danish people, like many of our European allies, stood by America's side following the terror attacks of September 11th, and have made significant contributions and sacrifices to the war on terror in Afghanistan.

Croatia is a success story of post-Cold War Europe. Emerging from the breakup of Yugoslavia and the wars that followed, Croatia's tremendous progress led it to join NATO in 2009 and the EU in 2013. United States was a forceful advocate for Croatia's accession.

As the highest representative of the United States to these countries, you will be tasked with maintaining and strengthening these crucial relationships.

Before I introduce the nominees, I would like to recognize the distinguished ranking member for his comments.

Senator Murphy?

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Johnson.

Welcome, both of you, to the committee. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

Let me just reinforce the comments of Senator Johnson.

This is a trying time for the United States and Europe. Clearly, the bonds are not as strong in this administration as they were in the past. Yet, whenever we have a big problem anywhere around the world that needs to be solved, the first place we turn is to Europe, to old legacy partners like Denmark, and to newer members, of at least the European Union community, in Croatia.

So I am really eager to hear a little bit more about you and your background and your vision to take up these important posts. You will serve with some truly, truly amazing Americans who have chosen to dedicate their entire lives to a very, very difficult job of traveling the world representing our country.

And I look forward to your testimony.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Again, I encourage the nominees to introduce their family and friends when you make your opening statement.

Our first nominee is Ms. Carla Sands. Ms. Sands is the President's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador of Denmark. Since 2015, Ms. Sands has been the chairman of Vintage Capital Group, a highly successful real estate firm in Los Angeles. She is also a doctor of chiropractic and has been a television and film actress.

Ms. Sands is a leader in the nonprofit sector, working with organizations to improve the lives of children and others in need. She has served as a board member of Pepperdine University and on the boards of numerous organizations supporting the arts and culture.

While she now resides in California, I understand that Ms. Sands is a proud daughter of Pennsylvania, having grown up there and still returning frequently to visit family.

Ms. Sands?

STATEMENT OF CARLA SANDS OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK

Ms. SANDS. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark.

I am humbled that the President has charged me with this opportunity to work with the White House, Secretary Tillerson, and our gifted and hardworking officers at the State Department and Mission Denmark to lead our engagement with such a longtime and trustworthy ally.

I also want to take a moment to thank my family: my daughter, Allie Sands; my two sisters, who are with me today, Dr. Rhonda Carver and Deborah Sicchitano; and my parents. Their love and support has sustained me through the many phases of my life and the diverse hats I have worn in both the public and the private sector. I take this journey knowing I have their enthusiastic support.

Though now a resident of California, I am a native of Pennsylvania and come from a long line of patriots and supporters of the United States. My ancestors fought in the Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War II, and more recently have served in the Air Force, Marine Corps, and U.S. Navy.

It is with their legacy in mind that I approach my own government service. And if confirmed, I can assure you that I will carry this history with me to Denmark as well.

If confirmed, I bring to the job of chief of mission experience in the business sector and the nonprofit world, as I have practiced as a doctor of chiropractic, and raised funds for abused and neglected children, the arts, the police, homeless rehabilitation, and many other deserving causes.

In my younger years, I was a working actress. And since my husband's death in 2015, I have been the chairman of Vintage Capital Group.

If I am confirmed, these varied leadership roles will serve me well in the different facets of chief of mission in Denmark, and I could not be more excited about the opportunity to lead this team.

Denmark is a key ally, contributing troops and equipment to international operations, including the coalition to defeat ISIS; U.N. operations in the Middle East, Africa, and South Korea; and enhancing NATO's presence in the Baltic.

Our relationship is supported by many men and women right here in Washington, whether it is our Denmark desk at the State Department or the many departments and agencies that work with their counterparts at Mission Denmark every day.

This is an important time for Europe and Denmark. The aftershocks of Brexit combined with the threats of terrorism and Russia's aggressive actions make clear that we must work with our allies like Denmark to face these challenges together in a united way.

Of course, there may be issues on which our two countries do not totally agree. However, our shared appreciation for freedom, security, and opportunity give us a mutual destination guiding us in our relationship moving forward.

If confirmed, my first priority will always be the welfare and security of U.S. citizens and our mission staff. Beyond that, I will work with our outstanding leadership at Mission Denmark to fulfill three primary goals.

First, I will endeavor to promote bilateral trade and economic prosperity. There are more than 700 subsidiaries of Danish companies in the United States employing over 70,000 people. The United States is Denmark's largest trading partner outside of Europe, and I believe we can increase our sales of military aircraft and equipment, machinery, medical and technical equipment, and other outstanding American products.

Second, Denmark is a trusted and dependable ally in an increasingly unstable and unpredictable world. It is the only Nordic country that is both a member of the EU and NATO, and our alliance with Denmark is crucial for peace and stability in the Nordic, Baltic, and Arctic regions.

If confirmed, I will work with the regional commander to further our close military alliance with Denmark to deter aggressors in the region and promote stability worldwide.

Third, and if confirmed, my goal is for our public diplomacy to engage with as many of the almost 6 million Danes as I can, including citizens in the kingdom's self-governing areas of Greenland the Faroe Islands.

I hope to promote the people-to-people partnerships between Danes and Americans through study abroad and exchange programs, cultural programming, and community outreach. I plan to do so by blending classical engagement with new and innovative ways to reach all, especially young people, to continue to foster a close and deep mutual respect and appreciation between our two countries.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I will do my very best on behalf of our Nation, and I welcome any questions you may have.

[Ms. Sands's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARLA SANDS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark. I am humbled that the President has charged me with this opportunity to work with the White House, Secretary Tillerson, and our gifted and hardworking officers at the State Department and Mission Denmark to lead our engagement with such a longtime and trustworthy ally.

I also want to take a moment to thank my family—my daughter Allie Sands, my sisters who are with me today, Dr. Rhonda Carver and Deborah Sicchitano, and my parents. Their love and support has sustained me through the many phases of my life and the diverse hats I have worn in both the public and the private sector. I take this journey knowing I have their enthusiastic support.

Though now a resident of California, I am a native of Pennsylvania and come from a long line of patriots and supporters of the United States. My ancestors fought in the Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War II and more recently have served in the Air Force, Marine Corps and U.S. Navy. It is with their legacy in mind that I approach my own government service. And, if confirmed, I can assure you that I will carry this history with me to Denmark as well.

If confirmed, I will bring to the job of Chief of Mission experience in the business sector and the nonprofit world as I have practiced as a Doctor of Chiropractic, raised funds for abused and neglected children, the arts, the police and homeless rehabilitation and many other deserving causes. In my younger years, I was a working actress and since my husband's death in 2015 I have been the Chairman of Vintage Capital Group. If I am confirmed, these varied leadership roles will serve me well in the different facets of Chief of Mission in Denmark and I could not be more excited about the opportunity to lead this team.

The Trump administration has made it clear in words and actions the high-priority it places on our alliance, partnership and friendship with Denmark. The President hosted Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen at the White House just two months after his inauguration. His early engagement with Denmark underscores the strength and importance of our security alliance and overall bilateral relationship.

Denmark is a key ally, contributing troops and equipment to international operations including the Coalition to Defeat ISIS, U.N. operations in the Middle East, Africa, and South Korea, and enhancing NATO's presence in the Baltic. Our Embassy in Copenhagen supports one of our nation's closest and most mutually supportive relationships, and I could not be more excited about the opportunity to lead this team, if confirmed. Our relationship is supported by many men and women right here in Washington, whether it is our Denmark desk at the State Department or the many departments and agencies that work with their counterparts at Mission Denmark every day.

This is an important time for Europe and Denmark. The aftershocks of Brexit combined with the threats of terrorism and Russia's aggressive actions make clear that we must work with our allies like Denmark to face these challenges together in a united way.

Of course, there may be issues on which our two countries do not totally agree. However, our shared appreciation for freedom, security, and opportunity give us a mutual destination guiding us in our relationship moving forward.

If confirmed, my first priority will always be the welfare and security of U.S. citizens and our Mission staff. Beyond that, I will work with the outstanding leadership at Mission Denmark to fulfill three primary goals:

First, I will endeavor to promote bilateral trade and economic prosperity. There are more than 700 subsidiaries of Danish companies in the United States employing over 70,000 people. The United States is Denmark's largest trading partner outside of Europe and I believe we can increase our sales of military aircraft and equipment, machinery, medical and technical equipment and other outstanding American products.

Second, Denmark is a trusted and dependable ally in an increasingly unstable and unpredictable world. It is the only Nordic country that is both a member of the EU and NATO and our alliance with Denmark is crucial for peace and stability in the Nordic, Baltic, and Arctic regions. If confirmed, I will work with the regional commander to further our close military alliance with Denmark to deter aggressors in the region and promote stability worldwide.

Third, and if confirmed, my goal for our public diplomacy is to engage with as many of the almost six million Danes as I can, including citizens in the Kingdom's self-governing areas of Greenland and the Faroe Islands. I hope to promote the people to people partnerships between Danes and Americans, through study abroad and exchange programs, cultural programming, and community outreach. I plan to do so by blending classical engagement with new and innovative ways to reach all, especially young people, to continue to foster a close and deep mutual respect and appreciation between our two countries.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I will do my very best on behalf of our nation and I welcome any questions you may have.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. Sands.

Our next nominee is Mr. Robert "Bob" Kohorst. Mr. Kohorst is the President's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Croatia. Mr. Kohorst is a prominent American businessman with expertise in law, real estate, and finance. He is President and founder of Everest Properties, a large commercial enterprise that purchases and operates properties throughout the United States.

Mr. Kohorst has contributed to public service organizations and educational institutions, including as director and chairman of the Young Presidents' Organization and regent of Loyola Marymount University.

Mr. Kohorst currently lives in California, but has strong Midwest ties, having earned a bachelor of science degree from the University of Dayton and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School.

Mr. Kohorst, pay no attention to the 2-minute mark. You can read your full opening statement.

STATEMENT OF W. ROBERT KOHORST OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Mr. KOHORST. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, it is a pleasure and a privilege to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia.

I am honored by the confidence placed in me by the President and the Secretary of State.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and the Congress in advancing the interests of the United States in Croatia.

I would like to introduce my wife, Shelley; our son Kevin and his wife, Kate; and our other son Matt. Two of our grandchildren, William and Charlotte, unfortunately, are too young to be here today, but we miss them.

I am humbled at the opportunity to appear before this historic committee, and I look forward to starting an ongoing dialogue with all of you.

Although I do not have any recent government or Foreign Service experience, I have enjoyed business and personal successes that will suit me well, if I am confirmed to represent the United States in Croatia. I have practiced law, worked for a large public company, and started my own business more than 20 years ago. I have learned how to manage people, transactions, and money in both large and small settings. I have been actively involved in a number of philanthropic organizations.

All of this requires hard work, good judgment, strong moral values, and the ability to work with others. If confirmed, I am prepared to bring all of these skills to my new responsibilities. And maybe best of all, I will be supported by my wife, Shelley, who may be the real asset the United States Government is getting in this deal.

Last summer, Shelley and I and a group of friends traveled throughout Croatia. We first visited the Dalmatian coast, from Kotor to Split. We then travelled to Zagreb, with a side trip to Plitvice Park, one of the truly amazing wilderness settings in the world. We were thrilled with the beauty of the country and the friendliness of the people.

I look forward to the opportunity to spend time working with everyone in Croatia and building an even better relationship between our two nations.

In preparing for today's hearing, I have been truly impressed with how well our bilateral relationship with Croatia has been managed. Ambassador Noyes has been a terrific steward of the office, and it is clear that she has a great support team in Zagreb.

I look forward to working with the Embassy staff in an open, friendly, and cooperative manner to achieve common goals. My management style is to respect everyone for their contributions to the effort, help each employee succeed, promote good moral values, and insist on great work.

If confirmed, my foremost priority as Ambassador will be promoting the United States' interests in Croatia and support a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

Of course, our interests can best be achieved if they are compatible with Croatian interests. I intend to work hard to identify areas where we can mutually support each other.

My team and I will focus on: strengthening the capabilities of a willing NATO ally; supporting Croatia's role in promoting regional stability, cooperation, and Euro-Atlantic integration; encouraging Croatia's contribution to regional energy security, while opening

new markets to U.S. gas exports; and, finally, bolstering Croatia's economic recovery to make it a more attractive partner for American businesses and exporters.

Croatia has been a strong supporter of NATO, including providing troops for the NATO mission in Afghanistan. I look forward to strengthening our support of Croatia's military and making sure the working relationship between the United States and the Republic of Croatia is a model for the region and the world.

I am particularly excited for Croatia as it expands on its opportunities within the European Union. The country has made great strides since it entered the European Union in 2013, and I intend to do my best to assist in maintaining that progress. Croatia's planned accession to the Schengen Area will only help deepen its integration to the European community and expand opportunities, especially in tourism.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to hosting your visit to Croatia and to working closely with you all to advance the interests of the United States.

[Mr. Kohorst's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF W. ROBERT KOHORST

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, it is a pleasure and a privilege to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia. I am honored by the confidence placed in me by the President and the Secretary of State.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and the Congress in advancing the interests of the United States in Croatia.

I would like to introduce my wife, Shelley Allen, our son, Kevin, and his wife, Kate, and our other son, Matt. Two of our grandchildren, William and Charlotte, unfortunately are too young to fly here and sit through these hearings, but I miss having them here with us.

I am humbled at the opportunity to appear before this historic committee, and I look forward to starting an ongoing dialogue with all of you. Although I do not have any recent government or Foreign Service experience, I have enjoyed business and personal successes that will suit me well if I am confirmed to represent the United States in Croatia. I have practiced law, worked for a large public company, and started my own business more than 20 years ago. I have learned how to manage people, transactions and money in both large and small settings. I have been actively involved in a number of philanthropic organizations. All of this requires hard work, good judgement, strong moral values, and the ability to work with others. If confirmed, I am prepared to bring all of these skills to my new responsibilities. And, maybe best of all, I will be supported by my wife, Shelley, who may be the real asset the United States Government is getting in this deal.

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If confirmed, my foremost priority as Ambassador will be promoting the United States' interests in Croatia and support a Europe whole, free and at peace. Of course, our interests can best be achieved if they are compatible with Croatian in-

terests. I intend to work hard to identify areas where we can mutually support each other.

My team and I will focus on:

- Strengthening the capabilities of a willing NATO ally.
- Supporting Croatia's role in promoting regional stability, cooperation, and Euro-Atlantic integration.
- Encouraging Croatia's contribution to regional energy security, while opening new markets to U.S. gas exports.
- Bolstering Croatia's economic recovery to make it a more attractive partner for American businesses and exporters.

Croatia has been a strong supporter of NATO, including providing troops for the NATO mission in Afghanistan. I look forward to strengthening our support of Croatia's military and making sure the working relationship between the United States and the Republic of Croatia is a model for the region, and the world.

I am particularly excited for Croatia as it expands on its opportunities within the European Union. The country has made great strides since it entered the European Union in 2013, and I intend to do my best to assist in maintaining that progress. Croatia's planned accession to the Schengen Area will only help deepen its integration to the European community and expand opportunities, especially for tourism.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to hosting your visit to Croatia and to working closely with you all to advance the interests of the United States.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Kohorst.

Let me just start out, for both nominees, you both mentioned, in some way, shape, or form, talking about bolstering economic ties. Can you talk about, in each particular country, Croatia and Denmark, what are the greatest opportunities, in terms of economic relations between our two countries?

Mr. Kohorst, I will let you go first.

Mr. KOHORST. Thank you, Senator, for that very important question.

There is a tremendous opportunity in Croatia to build a natural gas terminal off the Island of Krk in the Adriatic. That program is currently in process, with an expected opening in 2019.

That is an economic program that will provide three terrific benefits. One is it will expand the economic benefits and economy in Croatia. Second, it will have the potential to deliver energy supplies to Southeastern Europe, which has the potential of reducing the Russian energy influence in the area. And third, it is a source of export for the United States delivering natural gas to Southeastern Europe.

Senator JOHNSON. Ms. Sands?

Ms. SANDS. Thank you, Senator, for that important question.

My understanding is that our trade is very important to the present administration. Some of my goals regarding trade will be to open new markets to American products and to receive more investment in the United States from Denmark.

So I believe that we do have a trade deficit with Denmark. One of my goals is to reduce that deficit through great American products finding their way to Denmark.

Senator JOHNSON. Ms. Sands, when you were in our office, we were talking a little bit about the 2 percent goal, which neither country is meeting currently. One of the things you pointed out, and I think is true, and I do not think we do enough of this, is pointing out the fact that Denmark has also sacrificed its sons and daughters as a strong ally.

Can you just talk about how we need to make that point, in your role as future Ambassador?

Ms. SANDS. Yes. Definitely, the President and Secretary Tillerson feel strongly about the member commitment to NATO of 2 percent. While it is true that Denmark is not there yet, my understanding is that the Prime Minister is intending to increase the defense budget in the new budget from 2018 to 2022. Of course, that is an important piece.

But Denmark also is small but mighty. They punch above their weight. They give blood and treasure right alongside Americans. They have one of the highest rates per capita of not only troops but also loss of life in defending freedom and prosperity in the world. They have also given funds to Afghanistan and other countries in the world to help restore these countries.

So I believe that while it is important that they give more, Denmark is definitely a great ally to the United States and to NATO, and a very close partner in defense in the world.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Mr. Kohorst, Senator Murphy and I met with Serbian President Vucic a couple months ago. I was just in Serbia and Kosovo about a month ago. I think our sense was that President Vucic is somebody who is willing to take some risks to help stabilize that region.

I was a little disappointed to hear that the meeting between Serbia and Croatia was called off, I guess just yesterday, because of increased tension.

Can you just kind of speak to, first of all, the imperative of trying to stabilize the Southeast European region, and particularly the crucial role that Croatia and Serbia play in that?

Mr. KOHORST. Thank you, Senator.

Croatia has been a longtime ally of the United States, a very strong supporter of NATO, and a source of stability in Southeast Asia. It is very important that the United States continues to encourage Croatia to work on bilateral issues of conflict with their neighbors, so that stability can be achieved for all parties.

I was aware that the Presidents decided not to meet, but I have not yet been read in to any specifics of that, so I, unfortunately, cannot comment about why that meeting was canceled.

But Croatia has shown a willingness to meet and talk with Serbia on the outstanding issues. There are several. There are legacy war issues. There are property rights issues. And there are some border issues that need to be resolved.

In addition, Croatia needs to continue to support the population in Bosnia, and Bosnia's accession into the European Union. And they need to continue to work on areas where they can agree, so that we truly have stability in that part of the world.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Kohorst.

Senator Kaine has to go to the same budget hearing markup that I am going to have to leave for shortly, so, Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you. And thank you to my ranking member, Senator Murphy, for letting me jump ahead.

I just wanted to come briefly to congratulate you for your nomination and to hear your statements. These are both important countries, and our relationships with them have been strong. And their membership in NATO, their commitment of troops in Afghan-

istan, the Danish commitment recently to put more troops in Estonia to help us deal with issues on the Russian border, these are important relationships.

I will only just offer one piece of advice. I do not have questions.

One of the things I do when I travel and go to embassies is I tell the Ambassador to depart the room, and I sit down with first- and second-tour of FSOs, and I congratulate them for having a great job and for getting through the difficult vetting and being selected for such an important position. Then I say, "Tell me what will make the difference between you making this a career and maybe just doing it for a few years."

That is usually all I have to say to have about a 1.5 hour-long discussion. You will be glad to know that the deal-breakers are never, "I don't like by Ambassador." But they do talk a little more freely sometimes when the Ambassador is out of the room. A lot of it is about paperwork and organizational structure that they feel inhibits their natural creativity and ability to do a good job.

So when you come in new and they do not have any history with you and any complaints yet, I would encourage, especially with some of the younger members of the Foreign Service in each of your embassies, to really let them know what a wonderful thing it is that they have these jobs, and obviously express appreciation for doing them, but just ask them to share with you candidly the joys and frustrations of the life.

Some of the frustrations they are volunteers for, the challenging travel, and sometimes being assigned to a place they like and sometimes not, and family sacrifices. There are huge challenges and frustrations, and we need to all give them our appreciation for that.

But you will probably learn some things if you talk to the newbies especially that will help you work well and serve them well and serve the mission well during the course of the time that you are there, should you be confirmed.

So congratulations.

And I will hand it back. Thanks.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you. I am going to have to go to the same budget hearing markup as Senator Kaine, so I am going to have to leave now.

Again, I want to congratulate you for your nominations. Thank you for your service. Thank your families for their service.

I will turn it over to Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. [Presiding.] Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I should have done a little bit of research about what power I now have as the holder of the gavel as a minority party member. [Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY. Let me just add my thanks to both of you for your willingness to serve. This is not easy, and you are good to do it.

Just a few additional questions. Senator Johnson really picked out some of the priorities for me as well.

Mr. Kohorst, you are, for all intents and purposes, going to be the first political Ambassador, political appointee to Croatia. Historically, this has been a career Foreign Service post, the exception

being the first Ambassador, Peter Galbraith, who had a long history of experience in foreign policy and international affairs.

So I just say that because I think the burden will be greater on you to get up to speed very quickly, because, as Senator Johnson referenced, the Balkans are a place where many global conflicts start. And it is still, in many ways, a tinderbox of ethnic and nationalist tensions.

He referenced this cancellation of an important meeting between the Croatians and the Serbs, but the Croatians have also been a real thorn in the side of Serbia's desire to eventually join the European Union. One of the things that holds that region together is the aspiration of many countries there, particularly in the Western Balkans, to eventually be members of the EU.

You may not have the answer to this question, but I will ask it anyway. President Trump cheered on Britain as they left the European Union and has put a U.S.-EU trade deal on ice. Do you know, going into Croatia, being in the middle of a region with many EU aspirants, what the administration's policy is as to EU enlargement, whether we are going to be asking Ambassadors such as yourself to work in a manner that would allow countries to join the EU? You are obviously going to an EU country, but they are often trying to stop other countries from joining.

I wonder whether, in your preparation for this, you have been given any indication as to whether you are going to be going to Europe to try to help grow Europe or you are going to Europe to try to cheer on, not its disintegration, but those who might wish to leave.

Mr. KOHORST. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

First of all, I am aware that the Serbians and the Bosnians are interested in joining the European Union, and that there is some dispute about that. But I have not yet been briefed about any specific aspects about our position on that issue.

Senator MURPHY. Again, I know you well. You have been successful in everything you have done in your life, so I trust you will be successful in this endeavor as well. But I think you will have to be a very quick study, again, building on the work of some great career diplomats who have been there. So I wish you luck.

Ms. Sands, let me ask you a question about that trade agreement that I referenced. Denmark was maybe one of the strongest supporters of T–TIP. This is the U.S.-EU bilateral trade agreement that was being negotiated in the Obama administration that, from what we understand, is now not moving forward. There is one poll showing public support at about 71 percent.

You were part of the President's economic council, so you have been in a position to give him advice. What is your position on the prospects of a future U.S.-EU trade agreement? You are going to be going to a country that is a big fan of that agreement and is very nervous that the prospects for that agreement are pretty dim today.

Ms. SANDS. Thank you, Senator, for that very important question.

As you know, both the United States and Denmark hold trade very high. We are both trading nations and innovative countries.

While it is true that this trade agreement has been paused, my understanding is that the administration is working through how they are going to proceed. And if I am confirmed to serve in Denmark, I will wait to hear what the President and Secretary Tillerson, what agreement they come to. And I will implement the policies of the administration.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you. I hope you are right, that we are going to get that trade agreement restarted. There are still plenty of nontariff barriers that hurt companies in the United States.

Just one more question for you, Ms. Sands, on the Danes relationship with Russia. They have to be talking to the Russians, in particular because of their concerns with respect to the Arctic, but they have been partners with us in continuing sanctions against Russia with respect to their action in Ukraine.

I expect that you will have orders to continue to work with the Danes on Russia sanctions, but I just wonder if you might speak for a moment about the work that you expect to be doing to try to make sure that Denmark and the U.S. are working in concert to make sure that Russia continues to pay a price for their invasion of Ukraine while also trying to find ways that we can work together, the Arctic being a good example of it.

Ms. SANDS. Thank you, Senator.

This is a very complicated issue. While I know the administration is working through how this is going to go forward, the Russian sanctions, they are going to be very serious. And I look forward, if I am confirmed, to being at post and being fully briefed on the issues regarding the Russian sanctions and how it will impact both Denmark and the United States.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Kohorst, let me ask you the same question. Croatia, obviously, is an important country with respect to holding European and U.S. sanctions against Russia together. How do you expect to work with the Croats on making sure that they continue to be part of a coalition that holds Ukraine-related sanctions together against the Russians?

Mr. KOHORST. Thank you, Senator.

Croatia has been a strong and important ally of the United States for 25-plus years. I expect that relationship to continue. And if confirmed, I will do my best to maintain a positive relationship with the Croatian Government and its people.

Croatia has been fully supportive of the U.S. sanctions against Russia and the Ukraine. From what I understand, they will continue to do so.

Senator MURPHY. I was vamping, waiting for Senator Shaheen. So now that Senator Shaheen is here, I will let her settle herself and turn it over to her for a few final questions.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Senator Murphy, for keeping the hearing open so that I could come over and get my questions in.

Congratulations to both of you on your nominations and on your willingness to serve the country.

As you know, both Croatia and Denmark are very important to the United States. I am sure you covered many of the questions that I had, but I really wanted to ask you about energy, because as we look at the proposals for Nord Stream II pipeline, obviously,

there are concerns in both Croatia and Denmark about that pipeline and what that would mean in the countries.

So as you are thinking about your role as Ambassador, should you be confirmed, how do you view being able to support your host country as they continue to keep that pipeline from being built and continue to address the energy issues that they have in each country?

I will ask you, Mr. Kohorst, if you would like to go first on that.

Mr. KOHORST. Thank you, Senator.

Energy is a critical issue in Croatia, in the past few years and going forward. They are currently in the process of building and LNG terminal off the Island of Krk, which will have the potential, with the pipeline being built through to Hungary, has the potential to deliver substantial energy to Southeastern Europe, which will dramatically reduce the Russians' influence in that area. It provides economic benefits to the country of Croatia, reduces Russian influence, and has the potential to allow American companies to export liquefied natural gas to the area.

Senator SHAHEEN. Ms. Sands?

Ms. SANDS. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

The pipeline is a very important topic. Denmark is concerned, and so is the United States. The pipeline would go through Danish territorial waters. And I believe that, of course, I will look forward, if I am confirmed, to learning more about this at post, but Denmark is very progressive in their energy. They are, actually, I think the only EU net exporter of energy. And I believe that they are so innovative that they, along with the United States, are finding new ways to power Denmark.

But as far as the Nord II, it is a complicated issue, and I look forward to learning more about it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

I want to go back to Croatia, because Croatia has been very helpful to its neighbors in the Western Balkans, in terms of encouraging them in their efforts to join the EU and to look west and continue to support those values. I think it is probably more important now than it has been in the last several decades, perhaps since Yugoslavia broke apart, to have countries in the Western Balkans who are offsetting some of the influence from Russia.

I noticed recently that Serbia, we have seen a big change in public opinion in Serbia about their interest in joining the EU and in their support for the West versus support for Russia.

So as you think about your role as Ambassador, what can you do to continue to support Croatian efforts to work with their neighbors on continued EU integration?

Mr. KOHORST. Thank you, Senator.

Croatia joined the EU in 2013 after 10 years of going through the process. It is a very difficult process, but they were able to make changes in their society and their economy to satisfy the requirements for joining. I believe their neighboring countries, Serbia and Bosnia, are attempting to make those changes. To the extent that we can help that process, I believe that is in the United States' interests.

So I would encourage Croatia, without interfering with the bilateral relationships between those two countries, to support the EU whenever possible.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Shaheen.

We do not have an ambassador to Hungary yet, but when we do, you will get to know them very well, because at the heart of these energy issues in the region is one of the most complicated energy relationships in Europe between Croatia and Hungary.

We look forward to working with you to try to settle some of those issues around reverse gas flows, because if we put that LNG terminal into Croatia, it does not do much good if we cannot then turn that around and help out neighboring countries that today are dependent on Russian oil.

Thank you both for providing us with your testimony and responses. The hearing record is going to remain open, Senator Johnson tells me to report, for 2 days until October 7 at 5 p.m. So if you do get any questions from members of the committee who were not here or who were here, we hope that you will turn those around as fast as possible.

Senator MURPHY. And with that, as I reach for his gavel, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:05 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CARLA SANDS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have worked in my local community to benefit and advance the rights of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, such as at risk-youth. These efforts have been a commitment of my entire family as we have raised funds and personally volunteered to benefit local groups that provide support and healing for abused and neglected children and homeless populations.

If confirmed, I will continue my commitment to assisting these and other vulnerable populations as a firm advocate for those without a voice, particularly women and children who have been victims of human trafficking.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Denmark today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Denmark and, working in partnership with Denmark, to promote human rights around the globe? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

- 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 Denmark advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?
- Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Denmark?

Answer. Denmark is an important and active ally on democratic values and the rule of law upon which the NATO Alliance was founded, supporting the United States' efforts to strengthen human rights around the globe. Denmark is among the most generous donor nations in the world, providing $2.8 billion—the equivalent of nearly one percent of its GDP—each year in official development aid, which is allo-

cated (in part) to promoting human rights and democracy. Respect for human rights is a core Danish value. At the same time, Denmark, in recent years, has drawn international criticism for the treatment of irregular migrants from outside Europe, and tough immigration rules and legislation to deter asylum seekers. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage Denmark to remain firmly committed to protecting human rights at home and abroad. And if confirmed, I will regularly engage with representatives from government, political parties, and nongovernmental organizations to stress the importance of tolerance and diversity and to share best practices and new ideas promoting human rights, including programs, at the local level.

Question 3. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Denmark to address the unjust targeting of key political prisoners and other persons around the world?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Danish Government to call out cases involving victims of politically-motivated prosecution and encourage their resolution in a manner that respects human rights and the rule of law.

Question 4. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts to ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that staff have access to training on Leahy Law restrictions on providing assistance to foreign military units that violate human rights and will ensure Embassy Copenhagen thoroughly vets individuals and units that it nominates to participate in U.S.—funded security assistance activities.

Question 5. Will you engage with the people of Denmark on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening the people to people partnerships between Danes and Americans, whether through study abroad or exchange programs, cultural programming, or community outreach. I plan to do so by blending traditional engagement with new and innovative ways to reach a diverse audience, especially youth, to continue to foster a close and deep mutual respect and appreciation between our two countries and to emphasize areas of shared values including human rights, civil rights, and governance.

Question 6. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff members who come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the State Department?

- What steps will you take to ensure that supervisors at the Embassy foster an environment that is diverse and inclusive, including in terms of gender, ethnicity, and other characteristics?

Answer. As a business executive, I appreciate the importance of fostering diverse and inclusive teams, and understand the value of having minorities in leadership positions. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, if confirmed, I will develop an inclusive work environment at Embassy Copenhagen that encourages different perspectives, and I will ensure that all supervisors receive regular formal training and guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Denmark?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes companies that have a presence in Denmark. I am committed to ensuring my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. I will divest my interests in those companies that the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question 10. Have there been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since

the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. I know of no significant change in my financial affairs since I filed my report. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regards to my ethics obligations.

Question 11. Russia Sanctions: Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within Denmark for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. Denmark has been a steadfast supporter of EU sanctions against Russia, which are designed to impose costs on Russia sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior. Denmark also remains committed to challenging Russian influence campaigns in Europe and has taken part in and supported international efforts to restore Ukraine's integrity. If confirmed, I will work to ensure U.S. and Danish policies towards Russia remain closely coordinated. Close coordination with allies, like Denmark, is vital to ensure the sanctions effectively support our work in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, and to push back against Russian efforts to influence the domestic affairs of other countries.

Question 12. Russian Malign Influence: How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within Danish institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with Danish counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support a larger effort to build the resilience of European partners against Russia's whole-of-government efforts to undermine democratic processes through programs like media messaging, bilateral exchanges (e.g. student outreach in Denmark and Greenland), cultural programs, and regional networks. I will encourage direct government-to-government collaboration to address and push back on Russian influence campaigns through grant assistance, training, and exchange programs.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO ROBERT KOHORST BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Over the course of my career, I have been active with a number of charitable organizations that focus on youth, education and health care.

I was a long-term board member and a 2 term President of the San Gabriel Valley Chapter, Boy Scouts of America, which serves thousands of young men. During my tenure, I was an advocate for the Boy Scouts to change their policies to be more inclusive.

My wife and I have also been active supporters of Dolores Mission School, a Catholic grade school that supports education in the Hispanic community, which includes a significant immigrant population. Dolores Mission School has made a noticeable advancement in the number of youth in the community that graduate high school and go on to college. I have also been a long-term Trustee for La Salle High School, which has a mission under the Christian Brothers to provide education for an inclusive demographic, with a particular focus on the educating the poor and disadvantaged community.

My wife and I have also been significant contributors to Huntington Hospital, which provides key services to all members of our community and is the main critical care facility in our area.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Croatia today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Croatia and, working in partnership with Croatia, to promote human rights in the Europe and Eurasia region? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Croatia is still addressing issues related to the wars that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Some of these legacy issues continue to have human rights implications. Although the government generally tries to address these issues, relations with members of ethnic minorities-most notably the Serb community-could be better. Isolated instances of anti-Serb protests and the vandalizing of Serb churches and monuments have occurred. Some extreme elements of Croatian society have engaged in sporadic anti-Semitism or Holocaust revisionism.

The recent controversy surrounding the placement of a veteran's group plaque bearing an Ustasha-era slogan near the World War II-era Jasenovac concentration camp and a lack of progress in resolving the property restitution claims of Croatian Jews or their descendants highlight the need for more resolute, timely action by the government.

Promoting human rights and democratic governance is a core element of U.S. foreign policy. Fortunately, we have a willing partner in the current Croatian Government, although our priorities in Croatia and the region may, at times, differ. As a party to a number of UN human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, and having met human rights-related criteria during its accession to the European Union, Croatia has undertaken obligations to uphold human rights and democratic ideals.

If confirmed, I will remind the Croatian Government of such obligations when needed. I will also cooperate with the Government in the promotion of human rights and democracy in the region, notably in constructively supporting democratic and electoral reform efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and resolving war legacy and other contentious issues with Serbia. Through these actions I hope to contribute to regional stabilization and respect for human rights and democracy, and to the deepening of European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Question 3. 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 Croatia advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. As I mentioned, some of the human rights-related issues in the Balkans are linked to historical events, going back in some cases to the Second World War. These deep-seated legacy issues often require cultural, and even generational, change to fully resolve. If confirmed, I may encounter some resistance when addressing these issues in my public role as Ambassador to Croatia, but addressing such issues is something I intend to do.

If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with the young people of Croatia, whose youth was not shaped by war and who look forward to Croatia's bright future in the European Union. I will leverage cultural and educational exchange programs, person-to-person ties and our outstanding relationship with the Croatian government to further promote human rights and respect for democracy.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Croatia?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to meeting with and supporting civil society organizations who work in the promotion of democracy and human rights in both the U.S. and in Croatia.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Croatia to address the unjust targeting of key political prisoners and other persons around the world?

Answer. If confirmed, I will address such practices in my role as U.S. Ambassador to Croatia, and my Embassy team will continue to execute U.S. Government policy to help resolve significant cases of political persecution.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts to ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. As our security cooperation with Croatia has expanded over recent years, our Embassy has executed a significant International Military Education and Training (IMET) program ($1.1 million last year, $850K for FY 2018). This means they send security force personnel from the Croatian military to mutually-beneficial training programs in the U.S. and elsewhere. As part of the nomination process for such training, candidates are vetted by several offices in the Embassy to ensure that no assistance is provided to members of security force units credibly implicated in gross human rights violations, in accordance with the Leahy Law. Several past courses executed through the IMET program focused on human rights and international humanitarian law; these courses supported the spirit of the Leahy Law by promoting human rights in our security partnerships. If confirmed, I will ensure the Embassy continues properly vetting candidates per existing Department policy, in close coordination with the Department's Office of Democracy Human Rights and Labor. I will continue to include the subject of human rights in the dialogue of our security partnership.

Question 7 Will you engage with the people of Croatia on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to meeting with and supporting civil society organizations and Croatian citizens who work in the promotion of democracy and human rights in both the U.S. and in Croatia.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff members who come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the State Department?

Answer. Embassy Zagreb already works actively to promote and support staff members from diverse backgrounds, and if confirmed I intend to continue those efforts. The first step in promoting diversity in the State Department is recruitment; building a workforce that reflects our nation's broad diversity is a top priority of the Department and one I share. In accordance with this guidance, Embassy Zagreb recruits from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of society. The mission welcomes and recruits diversity in all forms, including gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Senior leaders in the embassy mentor and support staff members through various means. Embassy Zagreb also promotes diversity and inclusion through its active First and Second Tour Officer group and Federal Women's Program. If confirmed, I pledge to continued support of these efforts.

Question 9. What steps will you take to ensure that supervisors at the Embassy foster an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will ensure Embassy Zagreb continues to cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness. Transparency in decision-making is an essential part of ensuring diversity and inclusion. I understand the mission likewise promotes a diverse and inclusive environment that attracts new talent from diverse backgrounds, enhances professional development, and encourages supervisors to value and respect unique perspectives. If confirmed, I will continue to honor those principles.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Croatia?

Answer. No.

Question 13. Have there been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. My financial condition, income and other information requested by OGE has not changed in a material way since that date I signed my financial disclosure form. Although I would not characterize these changes as material to my overall financial condition, please note that I have sold a significant number of the assets requested to be sold by the Ethics Agreement I signed. All of the proceeds of such sales have been deposited in money market accounts. Upon confirmation, I will sell the remaining assets requested to be sold pursuant to the terms of the Ethics Agreement.

Question 14. Croatia's relations with neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina have always been delicate, and in recent weeks have taken a downturn. While formally respecting its neighbor's territorial integrity, Zagreb is not as helpful as it could be in countering the unhelpful positions of Bosnian Croat political leaders that block needed reforms to improve effective government, to remove ethnicity as dominant and discriminatory forces in politics to fight corruption. The stability and sovereignty of Bosnia, of course, has been a priority of concern for the United States

and for Europe. What plan of action do you have to encourage Croatia to be a more positive partner in helping to bring about change in Bosnia?

Answer. If confirmed, most immediately, I will urge Croatian leaders to use their influence with Bosnian Croats to gain support for electoral reforms consistent with the Dayton framework of one state, two entities, and three constituent peoples (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs), and with European Court of Human Rights decisions which Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) must implement. Longer term, Croatia can play an important role by supporting the accession of BiH to the EU and NATO—steps which would have a stabilizing effect on the entire region. I will encourage Croatia to continue to work with BiH on the technical aspects of EU and NATO accession, including sharing its own lessons learned, and to support political reforms that move BiH further along the path toward accession.

Question 15. Croatia, like many countries in Europe, has a Romani population that faces various and widespread forms of discrimination, in particular in regard to education. The State Department also reports a rise in anti-Serb and anti-Semitic incidents in recent years. As Ambassador, how will you engage in outreach to Roma and other minority groups in Croatia to determine how the United States can actively assist in supporting tolerance and non-discrimination efforts across the country, including improving conditions and living standards for the Roma?

Answer. As in many other European states, Roma face challenges in Croatia. Discrimination occurs and Roma are generally disadvantaged in their access to education, housing, employment and even documentation of citizenship. According to the Council of Europe, as few as 6.5 percent of Roma in Croatia are in formal employment. Full equality for Roma will remain a challenge, but as the Department reported in previous years' Annual Human Rights Reports, the Government of Croatia has taken positive steps forward. For instance, the Government has financially supported Romani integration initiatives, applying state and EU funding to educational, occupational, linguistic and housing programs, and subsidizing businesses that formally employed Roma.

Isolated instances of anti-Serb protests and the vandalizing of Serb churches and monuments have also occurred. Some extreme elements of Croatian society have engaged in sporadic anti-Semitism or Holocaust revisionism. The recent controversy surrounding the placement of a veteran's group plaque bearing an Ustasha-era slogan near the World War II-era Jasenovac concentration camp and a lack of progress in addressing the property restitution claims of Croatian Jews or their descendants highlight the need for more resolute, timely government action.

Promoting human rights and democratic governance is a core element of U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will engage directly with the leaders of minority communities to hear about their concerns and the status of the groups they lead. I will ensure embassy outreach, programs, and exchanges include representatives from minority communities. And, I will encourage the Croatian Government to continue, or expand, initiatives that work towards the integration of Romani communities and the improvement of relations with other minority groups in Croatian society.

Russia Sanctions

Question 16. Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within Croatia for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to working closely with the Government of Croatia to maintain unity on Russia sanctions and their implementation. The U.S. Government has employed a collaborative and consultative approach on sanctions, which Croatia has strongly supported. Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic was an outspoken critic of Russia's occupation of Crimea during his time in the European Parliament, and his second official foreign visit was to Ukraine, drawing intense Russian criticism. I will engage high-level Croatian officials to ensure they understand they must fully implement existing sanctions and maintain strong EU support for sanctions, including the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act recently passed by Congress. As a NATO and EU member, and a country that strongly supports the transatlantic relationship, Croatia can play a more active role in ensuring the EU responds decisively to Russian influence and aggression in the region. Close coordination with our allies is crucial to enabling the sanctions to achieve their ultimate goal: imposing costs on Russia sufficient to change the Russian Government's behavior.

Russian Malign Influence

Question 17. How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within Croatian institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with Croatian counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue and expand exchange programs that highlight the importance of a vibrant civil society, independent press, and government transparency. As an EU member, Croatia is not eligible for most U.S. foreign assistance, but Croatia is a recipient and also a co-leader in our regional rule of law training program, which brings prosecutors and judges from around the region together to learn how to fight corruption and protect human rights. If confirmed, I will push to continue this program and maximize Croatia's participation. I will explore opportunities to provide targeted assistance that helps mitigate Croatia's vulnerabilities to Russian pressure, as is evident in the $1,000,000 in technical support we are providing to facilitate the development of a planned liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal at Krk Island. This assistance will address key components of the terminal's pre-development phase, helping to ensure its timely completion and, in doing so, enabling greater European energy security through diversified gas supplies. I will also work with Croatian leaders to accelerate their transition to NATO-interoperable weapons systems, in order to reduce Croatia's dependence on Russia-maintained equipment. Finally, I will encourage Croatian officials and institutions to share their successful EU integration experience with their neighbors, by growing as a donor and by partnering with the United States through mechanisms such as the Emerging Donors Challenge Program.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:00 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Johnny Isakson, presiding.

Present: Senators Isakson [presiding], Gardner, Young, Shaheen, Murphy, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHNNY ISAKSON, U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Senator ISAKSON. I call this meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing together.

And we welcome our testimony today from those who are here to give it.

And I want to welcome Jeanne Shaheen, who will be serving as my co-chair of this hearing.

I appreciate the other members that are here and that will come.

This is a very important hearing, particularly the people in front of us because we are talking about all of you, and we are going to give you a chance to talk about yourself. But it is important to the country as well because you have been nominated for positions that are extremely important to represent the United States of America as principal legal adviser to the U.S. Department of State on legal matters, U.S. economic, political, and security interests of international economic policies that mandate open markets, and ensuring safety and security of our diplomats in 275 United States posts.

Our first nominee today is Thomas L. Carter of South Carolina, next to my home State of Georgia. We welcome you, Mr. Carter. He will be representing the United States on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization with the rank of Ambassador. A tremendous post. And Mr. Carter has tremendous experience as a pilot in the military, a pilot commercially, and a private pilot as well. And we welcome you here and your family that are here today.

Ms. Jennifer Newstead has been nominated for Legal Adviser of the Department of State. Ms. Newstead is a partner in the law firm of Davis Polk and Wardwell where she has a global practice representing clients in cross-border regulatory enforcement and litigation matters. It sounds like you are well qualified for the State Department.

Ms. Newstead previously served as General Counsel of the Office of Management and Budget, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Justice Department Office of Legal Policy, and Associate Counsel to the President. She also clerked for Justice William Breyer, United States Supreme Court, and is a graduate of Yale University and Harvard University, two pretty well known schools in the Northeast that do not just let you out easy.

Ms. Manisha Singh is nominated to be Assistant Secretary of State for Business Affairs and Economic Affairs. Ms. Singh is Chief Counsel and Senior Policy Advisor to the U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan. Is Dan here? I will make sure and introduce him when he gets here. Dan is a tremendous member of the United States Senate representing the State of Alaska, and she worked with him. She worked with a fine Senator, and she must have done a fine job because he is pretty temperamental about stuff like this. I will call on him when he gets here for sure, I promise.

She earned an LLM in international legal studies from American University College of Law and a juris doctorate from the University of Florida College of Law and bachelors of administration from the University of Miami.

Mr. Michael Evanoff is nominated to be Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security. Mr. Evanoff is Vice President of Asset Protection and Security in international stores of Walmart stores, a position he has held since 2014. And if anybody has had experience in security in retail, it would be somebody representing Walmart. He has already told me that he helped them open a store in Nigeria, a place if any of you have ever been, you understand how important security is. Nigeria is a place you really need to have security. So we welcome you being here today and look forward to hearing your testimony.

Mr. Evanoff is Vice President of Asset Protection and Security at International Walmart stores, and he has held that position for the last 5 years.

Previously he served as Chief Security Office at Coca-Cola, an Atlanta company which I am very proud of, in Switzerland and Greece and a Special Agent in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security from 1985 to 2011, holding senior posts with the Overseas Security Advisory Council, NATO Office of Security position, the State Department, and details of eight United States missions overseas.

He also was a diplomatic security officer for the United States European Command in Germany.

It is a pleasure for me to recognize my ranking member, who will co-chair this hearing with me, Ms. Jeanne Shaheen from New Hampshire, for any remarks you may have.

STATEMENT OF HON. JEANNE SHAHEEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senator SHAHEEN. Just to thank all of you for your willingness to serve. Congratulations on your nominations, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator ISAKSON. In the introduction, I have pretty much introduced all of you and your backgrounds. So I am going to leave the rest of it for you to say about yourself except to tell you the fol-

lowing. You will have up to 5 minutes to tell us your story. Your prepared remarks will be submitted for the record and made permanent, as will any responses you have to make today. We thank you for your willingness to serve your country.

After your opening testimony, we will open it the floor for the members of the committee to ask any questions that they might have.

We will start with you, Mr. Carter. Welcome.

And by the way, please introduce any family members that are here or acknowledge them if they are here.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS CARTER, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, FOR THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Mr. CARTER. Yes, sir. Well, I am very honored today to have Ms. Mary Graham from Charleston, South Carolina, joining me here and the leading lady of my life.

Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, it is truly an honor for me to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for United States Representative to the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, or ICAO as it is commonly known. I am very grateful to the President, Secretary Tillerson, and Ambassador Haley for their confidence and support. And I must admit that I have attended many hearings like this over the years, but it is truly humbling to finally be the nominee at the table.

Mr. Chairman, since its creation at the Chicago Convention in 1944, ICAO has been a critical partner of the United States in efforts to promote the development of our crucial aviation industry and keep pace with the evolution of its safety and security requirements. Throughout its existence, ICAO has served as an effective forum in which the nations of the world can find common approaches to complex aviation challenges, such as emerging technologies, airspace management and air navigation, and environmental issues including aircraft noise and engine emissions.

Unfortunately, over the past decades, we have witnessed an increase in terrorism, cyber attacks, and the rapid spread of pandemic disease, all of which have emerged to threaten civil aviation. ICAO is working to mitigate these threats but it can and must do more. ICAO's member states look to the United States for leadership on these and other aviation-related issues, and if confirmed, I will reinforce that leadership to promote American national security and strengthen aviation safety.

Certainly, if anyone ever nominated for this position could fully appreciate the value of such a concept, I hope that it might be me. My life of 65 years has been a unique combination of military and civilian flying, key positions dealing with national security policy, and private sector experience relating to aviation-related products.

I had the incredible experience as an Air Force pilot to command heavy jets internationally wile flying both numerous peacetime humanitarian missions, as well as into an active combat zone with dozens of paratroopers aboard. Later, when realizing my Air Force

Reserve flying career might be coming to an end, I signed on to USAirways where I flew three separate aircraft types and eventually upgraded to captain of the Boeing 737.

Interspersed with this flying, I had the incredible experience to serve Republican Leader Bob Dole as a staffer dealing with national security issues. Those Senate years were absolutely some of the most rewarding of my life, and I coordinated critically important issues between the Senate leadership, Armed Services, Appropriations, and yes, this very committee chaired by Senator Pell.

In my most recent work, I was very active with the major associations dealing with international and domestic aviation issues and, due to my personal flying experiences mentioned earlier, was frequently sought out for expertise on policy positions.

All of this to say is that, if confirmed by this committee, I hope that my life's work has prepared me to represent this great country and all of you in a very dignified and knowledgeable manner.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to answer any questions your committee members might have. Thank you.

[Mr. Carter's prepared statementy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS L. CARTER

Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Shaheen and members of the committee, it's truly an honor for me to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for United States Representative to the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization or ICAO as it's commonly known. I'm very grateful to the President, Secretary Tillerson, and Ambassador Haley for their confidence and support, and I must admit that I've attended many hearings like this over the years but it's truly humbling to be an actual nominee.

I'm accompanied today by some very significant people to me personally and none is more important than the leading lady in life, Mary Graham, of Charleston, SC. I also have three other particularly dear friends from my Senate days of old who, although we're evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, we have remained close friends and confidants for over 30 years. They're very special to me so I'd like to introduce Ann Sauer, Charlie Smith and Jane Mattias. They, along with Mary, are my most reliable friends and advisors.

Since its creation at the Chicago Convention in 1944, ICAO has been a critical partner of the United States in efforts to promote the development of this crucial industry and keep pace with the evolution of its safety and security requirements. Throughout its existence, ICAO has served as an effective forum in which the nations of the world can find common approaches to complex aviation challenges, such as emerging technologies, airspace management and air navigation, and environmental issues including aircraft noise and engine emissions. Over the past decades, we have witnessed an increase in terrorism, cyberattacks, and the rapid spread of pandemic disease, all of which have emerged to threaten civil aviation and our national safety and security. ICAO is working to mitigate these threats but it can and must do more. ICAO's member states look to the United States for leadership on these and other aviation related issues, and if confirmed, I will reinforce that leadership to promote American national security, strengthen aviation safety and security, and enhance protections for travelers.

ICAO's breadth and purpose is best illustrated through the preamble written to establish the ICAO during the Chicago Convention of late 1944, the member states quoted "it is desirable to avoid friction and to promote that co-operation between nations and peoples upon which the peace of the world depends."

Certainly, if anyone ever nominated for this position could fully appreciate the value of such a concept, I hope that it might be me. My life of 65 years has been a unique combination of military and civilian flying, key positions dealing with national security policy and private sector experience relating to aviation- related products and capabilities.

I had the incredible experience as an Air Force pilot to command heavy jets internationally while flying both numerous peacetime humanitarian missions as well as into an active combat zone with dozens of paratroopers aboard. My special operations experience included dropping Delta Team members from altitudes in excess

of 20,000 feet and Navy Seals in the water at night off the coast of foreign countries. These were some of the most important flights of my aviation career. Later, when realizing that my Air Force Reserve flying career might be coming to an end, I signed on to USAirways where I flew three separate aircraft types and eventually upgraded to Captain on the Boeing 737.

Interspersed with this flying, I also had the incredible experience to have served Republican Leader Bob Dole as a staffer dealing with national security issues. Those Senate years were absolutely some of my most rewarding of my life as I coordinated critically important issues between the leadership, Armed Services, Appropriations and yes, this very committee, then lead by Senator Pell.

Ironically, I then lead Chairman Pell, Ranking Member Helms and many other of your committee members to the Persian Gulf one month after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August of 1990 as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. Getting off a helicopter in the middle of the afternoon in the Saudi desert where the temperature was 125 degrees is forever seared into my memory, and I would add, the soles of the penny loafers I was wearing as well.

In my most recent work in the private sector, I was very active with the major associations dealing with international and domestic aviation issues and due to my personal flying experiences mentioned earlier, was frequently sought out for expertise on policy positions.

All of this is to say that, if confirmed by this committee, I hope that my life's work since leaving Memphis, Tennessee in 1975 as a first-generation high school and college graduate has prepared me to represent this great country and all of you in a dignified and knowledgeable manner.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to answer any questions your committee members might have of me.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Carter.

Ms. Newstead?

STATEMENT OF JENNIFER GILLIAN NEWSTEAD, OF NEW YORK, TO BE LEGAL ADVISER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Well, thank you, Chairman Isakson and Ranking Member Shaheen and members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as Legal Adviser to the Department of State. I want to thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me.

Several members of my family are here today: my husband, Alexander Mishkin; our children, Henry and Charlotte Mishkin, of whom we are both very proud.

Senator ISAKSON. A good looking group. [Laughter.]

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And my parents, Dr. Gillian Maclaine Newstead and Dr. Graham Newstead, and my sister, Dr. Caroline Maclaine, are all here as well.

As a personal introduction, I was born on an Army base where my father was stationed as a doctor during the Vietnam War. My mother has spent her medical career pioneering new technologies to diagnose cancer in women. And though I am the first lawyer in my family, I am actually the third generation of women to pursue a professional career. My grandmother, who was born in 1914, was also a doctor. So my family's example has inspired me to seek out opportunities for public service throughout my career.

If confirmed, it would be my honor to lead the team of more than 250 career lawyers and professionals who make up the Office of the Legal Adviser, a group that is deservedly recognized as the most talented collection of international lawyers in the world. The mission of the office is simple but critical: to provide rigorous and ob-

jective legal advice to the Secretary of State and other officials as they carry out the foreign policy of the United States.

The office also plays a unique role, supporting the Department's mission to promote our values, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy around the world.

In the 23 years since I graduated from Yale Law School, I have served as a law clerk to two distinguished jurists, Judge Laurence Silberman and Justice Steven Breyer, and in senior positions at the Department of Justice and in the White House Counsel's Office. I also served, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, as General Counsel of the Office of Management and Budget where I worked closely with the general counsels of agencies across the government on a range of initiatives impacting national security and foreign policy. Through that role, I gained insight into the broad scope of the State Department's operations and worked on treaty issues and humanitarian relief efforts. And in my 20 years of practice at a global law firm, I have acted as a counselor, a litigator, and a negotiator on a range of international issues. If confirmed, those experiences should serve me well in carrying out the Legal Adviser's role in the negotiation and ratification of treaties and international agreements and in representing the United States before international tribunals.

But most importantly, each of these roles has strengthened my conviction that a lawyer advising a critical function of government must have an unwavering commitment to integrity and independence. The most effective lawyers are pragmatic problem-solvers who identify the range of lawful options available to policymakers. But at the same time, a lawyer must be willing to speak hard truths and identify limits where law and circumstances require.

If confirmed, I would seek at all times to act with fidelity to the Constitution and the rule of law, and I would also be guided by the wisdom, articulated by one of my mentors, that the demands of honor have special application to government service.

I thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[Ms. Newstead's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JENNIFER GILLIAN NEWSTEAD

Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as Legal Adviser to the Department of State. I thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me. I would also like to thank the members of the committee and their staff for the courtesies you have shown me since my nomination.

Several members of my family are here today: my husband, Alexander Mishkin; and our children, Henry and Charlotte Mishkin, of whom we are both very proud. Also with us are my parents, Dr. Gillian Maclaine Newstead and Dr. Graham Newstead, and my sister, Dr. Caroline Maclaine.

I am privileged to come from a family that instilled in me respect for public service. I was born on an Army base at Fort Dix, New Jersey, where my father was stationed during the Vietnam War. My mother, a naturalized citizen, came to the United States from the United Kingdom and has spent her career developing new technologies to diagnose and treat cancer in women.

Though the first lawyer in my family, I am actually the third generation of women to have pursued a professional career. My grandmother, born in 1914, was also a doctor who treated patients injured in bombing raids in World War II. A pioneer for her time, who sought no such recognition, she exemplified the values of hard work, personal responsibility, and strength in adversity. My family's example has inspired me to seek out opportunities for public service throughout my career.

If confirmed, it would be my honor to lead the team of more than 250 career lawyers and professionals who make up the Office of the Legal Adviser—a group that is deservedly recognized as the most talented collection of international lawyers in the world. The mission of the office is simple, but critical: to provide rigorous and objective legal advice to the Secretary of State, other Department officials, and policymakers across the Federal government as they formulate and implement the foreign policy of the United States.

The Office of the Legal Adviser provides counsel and represents the United States on a broad array of issues affecting our vital national interests. These include counterterrorism and nuclear non-proliferation; economic sanctions and law enforcement efforts; the protection of U.S. citizens abroad; expanding U.S. trade and investment and promoting U.S. businesses overseas. The office also plays a unique role supporting the Department's critical mission to promote our values, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy around the world.

On a personal note, the career path that led me here today began more than thirty years ago, when I first had the privilege of serving in the State Department as an intern. I was assigned to a delegation in Vienna negotiating confidence and security-building measures to support the reduction of conventional armed forces in Europe. The experience left an indelible impression of the dedication and skill of the foreign service officers and civil servants who perform critical missions every day on behalf of the United States.

That early experience also shaped my path in the law, and my desire to combine an international legal practice with opportunities for public service. In the 23 years since I graduated from Yale Law School, I have served as a law clerk to two distinguished jurists, Judge Laurence Silberman and Justice Stephen Breyer; in senior positions at the Department of Justice and the White House Counsel's Office; and as General Counsel of the Office of Management and Budget.

I joined the Justice Department several months before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In the aftermath of those terrible events, I worked with a dedicated team of attorneys at the Department, and with the bi-partisan staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee, to develop legislation to modernize longstanding law enforcement tools to better equip our government to fight terrorism.

In the White House Counsel's Office and as General Counsel of OMB, I worked closely with the General Counsels of agencies across the government, including the Departments of Defense, State and the Treasury, on a range of initiatives impacting our national security and international relations. In leading the legal function at OMB, I gained insight into the broad scope of the State Department's operations, and worked on regulatory issues involving treaty implementation and humanitarian efforts such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

In my twenty years of private practice at a global law firm, I have acted as a counselor, litigator and negotiator on a range of international issues. I have advised clients on compliance with U.S. laws aimed at preventing corruption and money laundering; imposing economic sanctions; and protecting the integrity of the financial markets. If confirmed, those experiences should serve me well in carrying out the Legal Adviser's role in the negotiation and ratification of treaties and international agreements, and in representing the United States before international tribunals.

Most importantly, each of these roles has strengthened my conviction that a lawyer advising a critical function of government must have an unwavering commitment to integrity and independence. The lawyer's role is always to provide her client with the highest-quality advice. The most effective lawyers are pragmatic problem-solvers, who identify the range of lawful options available to policymakers.

At the same time, a lawyer must be willing to speak hard truths and identify limits where law and circumstances require. A lawyer must also be prepared to provide her best judgment on the wisdom of proposed actions, as well as their legality.

If confirmed, I would at all times seek to act with integrity, independence, and fidelity to the Constitution and the rule of law. I would also be guided by the wisdom, articulated by one of my mentors, that the demands of honor have special application to government service.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Ms. Newstead.

Ms. Singh?

STATEMENT OF MANISHA SINGH, OF FLORIDA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Ms. SINGH. Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, thank you for your time today. I am humbled and grateful to be considered to serve as the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

I want to express my gratitude to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence and trust they have placed in me.

I am particularly honored to appear before this committee. I had the privilege of being on the staff for several years.

I want to thank my friends for being here today. My family was not able to make it here for the hearing, but they are watching from home and I would like to tell you about them. My parents both grew up in small rural villages in India. Neither set of my grandparents were able to read or write. My mom and dad knew that an education was the key to moving forward. We moved from India to Florida where my father earned a Ph.D. at the University of Florida. I was 2 years old when I came here. My parents impressed on me and my sister how lucky we were to be immigrants to this great country. Here in America, a young girl could grow up to be anything she wanted. Never have I believed this more than as I sit before you today.

If confirmed, I would be the first woman installed to lead this bureau. I have experience there, previously managing a division as a Deputy Assistant Secretary. It is composed of over 200 talented men and women in Washington, as well as economic officers posted all over the world.

In an era of global competition, we have to make sure that U.S. companies have every opportunity to succeed. The bureau plays a key role in a healthy American economy by ensuring a level playing field for our companies. We have to make sure that economic resources are fully employed as carrots and sticks in the interest of American stability and prosperity.

I would utilize both my government and private sector experience to successfully lead this bureau. My legislative service has afforded me the privilege of hearing the concerns of everyday Americans. If confirmed, I will work to make sure that everyone in the bureau is proud to be a member of my team and to make sure that we put the interests of the American people first.

I thank you again, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[Ms. Singh's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MANISHA SINGH

Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Shaheen and members of the committee, thank you for your time today. I am humbled and grateful to be considered to serve as the next Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

I want to express my gratitude to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence and trust they have placed in me to take on this important role.

I am particularly honored to appear before this committee—I had the privilege of being on the staff for several years.

I want to thank my friends for being here today. My family was not able to make it to the hearing, but they are watching from home, and I'd like to tell you about

them. My parents both grew up in small rural villages in India. Neither set of my grandparents were able to read or write. My mom and dad knew that an education was the key to moving forward. We moved from India to Florida where my father completed a PhD at the University of Florida. I was two years old when I came here. My parents impressed on me and my sister how lucky we were to be immigrants to this great country. Here in America, a young girl could grow up to be anything she wanted.

My parents still live in Florida and my sister lives with her husband and their daughters in northern Georgia. I'd like to say the same thing to my nieces as my parents always said to me. Here in America, a young girl can grow up to be anything she wants. Never have I believed this more than as I sit before you today.

If confirmed, I would be the first woman installed to lead the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. I have experience in the bureau, previously managing a division as a Deputy Assistant Secretary. It's composed of over 200 talented men and women in Washington as well as economic officers posted in every U.S. mission around the world.

In an era of global competition, we have to fight unfair practices and make sure that U.S. businesses have every opportunity to succeed. If confirmed, I would ensure that small and medium size enterprises, women and minority-owned businesses are a particular focus of our work. The bureau plays a key role in a healthy American economy by ensuring a level-playing field for our companies and by encouraging foreign investors to create good jobs here in America.

If confirmed, I would work closely with my counterparts to use our full range of instruments to partner with those who work with us and to enact serious consequences against global bad actors. We must make sure that economic resources are fully employed as carrots and sticks in the interest of American prosperity and stability.

I would utilize both my government and private sector experience to lead successfully. In the private sector, it was my job to understand the real life consequences of government decisions.

My legislative service has afforded me the privilege of hearing the concerns of every day Americans. If confirmed, I will work to make sure that everyone in the bureau is proud to be a member of my team and to make sure that we put the interests of the American people first.

I thank you again, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you very much.

Mr. Evanoff.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL T. EVANOFF, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

Mr. EVANOFF. Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. I am grateful for the confidence that the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me, and I am humbled by the designation of becoming the only second DS special agent in the bureau's 101-year history to come through the ranks and to be nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary.

As a former senior DS Agent for 26 years, I want to thank you for your continuing unwavering support for both the Department and the Diplomatic Security. I am very proud to be associated with the outstanding men and women who labor tirelessly to protect America's diplomatic facilities, critical information, and most importantly, American lives. They also conduct extensive, important investigations necessary to keep our country safe.

I first want to thank my wife Kate, my soul mate Kate, my son Luke, who could not be with us today because he would tear the place apart if he was here. He is 2 and a half. I would also like to introduce to you my sister-in-law Karen Evanoff; and my niece, Olivia Evanoff; and my nephew, Tommy Evanoff. I would also like

to introduce my brother-in-law, Raunt DeWinter; and his son Mack DeWinter; and my great mother-in-law, Eleanor Milner; and her friend and partner, John Casey. They all came down from North Carolina and Groton, Connecticut.

My thoughts today, though, are also with my parents, Walter and Lyle Evanoff, who first showed me the value of law enforcement service through their distinguished careers as police officers right here in the District of Columbia. So I want to thank them and know that I am with them on this special day.

I first joined Diplomatic Security 32 years ago in 1985 in the wake of the Beirut bombings and the subsequent approval of Admiral Bobby Inman's recommendations calling for the creation of a more robust and professional Diplomatic Security Service for the Department of State. The Inman report identified the need for increased funding for stronger overseas embassies and consulates and led to additional hiring of special agents, security engineers, couriers, and other key positions. Thanks in large part, Chairman, to the work of this Senate committee right here, the recommendations were formally authorized by Congress 1 year later to form the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986.

In the 3 decades since my hiring as part of the Inman tranche of DS special agents, I have served in eight overseas postings, four of which were designated as high threat. Among other things, I established the first DS liaison position for a U.S. military regional command and managed the largest spy case and damage assessment in NATO history. I also helped designing the post-9/11 informant walk-in program at our embassy in Islamabad that contributed to the capture of Khalid Sheik Muhammad.

My work with the Department, combined with my private sector experience leading international security programs for two Fortune 100 companies, has given me a unique perspective on DS's inherent strengths and challenges, as well as future security changes that may be necessary to ensure the continued conduct of American diplomacy in a safe and effective manner.

With support and continued guidance from members of this committee and Congress as a whole, one of my goals will be to enable stronger and more effective collaboration with our colleagues throughout the Department, the military, the IC community, and this body here. This enhanced collaboration needs to be both strategic and operational, and we need to establish key performance indicators to measure the value of the work with our partners in protecting our people and facilities worldwide.

In a world of rapid technological innovation and constantly evolving cyber and terrorism threats, the appropriate sharing of actionable security information also needs to remain a top priority for DS. If confirmed, I intend to closely monitor our operational and strategic planning objectives with the Department and with the intelligence community when it comes to opening and maintaining posts in high threat and potentially hostile environments. There need to be clear goals and objectives if we are to consistently and successfully operate in hostile environments with little or ineffective host government support.

I will also put special focus on continued overhaul and refinement of security training for the Department of State employees.

This includes intensified specialized training for all DS agents and the ongoing expansion of the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat, FACT, course for all government employees working overseas under the Chief of Mission authority. It also includes the completion of the Department's Foreign Affairs Security Training Center, FASTC, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Finally, if confirmed, I also hope to strengthen the organization's morale. Everyone in DS, whether part of the Foreign Service, the Civil Service, or a contractor, deserves to be recognized for the vital role they play on a daily basis. There needs to be a broader recognition and appreciation for the fact that we are one team with one mission.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.

[Mr. Evanoff's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL T. EVANOFF

Senator Isakson, Senator Shaheen, and members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and am very grateful for the confidence that the President and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me.

First, as a former senior DS Agent for 26 years, I want to thank you for your continued unwavering support for both the Department and Diplomatic Security. I am very proud to be associated with the outstanding men and women who labor tirelessly to protect America's diplomatic facilities, critical information, and, most importantly, American lives. They also conduct extensive, important investigations necessary to keep our country safe.

At any given time, there are thousands of Americans living overseas under the authority of the Chief of Mission or otherwise representing American interests. Those men, women and children deserve no less than the full commitment of the U.S. Government to do everything in our power to ensure they can live and operate safely. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, it will be my mission to honor that commitment every day.

I want to thank my wife Kate, my son Luke, and my extended family for their love and support, and for allowing me to rejoin an institution that I love. My thoughts today are also with the memory of my parents, Walter and Lyle, who first showed me the value of law enforcement service through their distinguished careers as police officers right here in the District of Columbia.

Finally, I want to thank the President and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence they have placed in me to lead DS in an increasingly complex and dangerous world. I am humbled and proud by the designation of becoming only the second DS Special Agent in the Bureau's 101-year history to come up through the ranks and be nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary.

I first joined Diplomatic Security 32 years ago, in 1985, in the wake of the Beirut bombings and the subsequent approval of Admiral Bobby Inman's recommendations calling for the creation of a more robust and professional Diplomatic Security Service for the Department of State. The Inman report identified the need for increased funding for stronger overseas embassies and consulates, and led to additional hiring for more Special Agents, Security Engineers, Couriers and other key positions. Thanks in large part to the work of this Senate committee, the report's recommendations were formally authorized by Congress one year later in the form of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986.

In the three decades since my hiring as part of the first "Inman" tranche of DS Special Agents, I have served in eight overseas postings, four of which were designated as High Threat at the time. Among other things, I established the first DS liaison position with a U.S. military regional command, managed the largest Russian spy case and damage assessment in NATO history, and designed a post-9/11 informant "walk-in" program at our Islamabad embassy that contributed to the capture of Khalid Sheik Muhammad.

My work with the Department combined with my private sector experience leading international security programs for two Fortune 100 companies has given me a unique perspective on DS's inherent strengths and challenges, as well as future

security changes that may be necessary to ensure the continued conduct of American diplomacy in a safe and effective manner.

If confirmed, I will ensure DS does its part to support the implementation of the Department's policy priorities while always remaining cognizant of our obligations to the American taxpayer. With support and continued guidance from members of this committee and Congress as a whole, one of my top goals will be to enable stronger and more effective collaboration with our colleagues throughout the Department, the military, and the intelligence community. This enhanced collaboration needs to be both strategic and operational, and we need establish key performance indicators to measure the value of our work with our partners in protecting our people and facilities worldwide.

In a world of rapid technological innovation and constantly evolving threats, the appropriate sharing of actionable security information also needs to remain a top priority for DS. If confirmed, I intend to closely monitor our operational and strategic planning objectives with the Department and the intelligence community when it comes to opening and maintaining posts in high threat and potentially hostile environments. There need to be clear goals and objectives if we are to consistently and successfully operate in hostile environments with little or ineffective host-government support.

I will also put special focus on the continued overhaul and refinement of security training for Department of State employees. This includes intensive specialized training for all DS agents and the on-going expansion of the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course for all employees working overseas under the authority of the Chief of Mission. It also includes the completion of the Department's Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC) at Fort Pickett, Virginia. Once fully up and running, this state-of-the-art facility will allow DS to provide more efficient and effective hard skills training—such firearms, explosives, antiterrorism driving techniques, and defensive tactics—for roughly 10,000 students annually.

Finally, if confirmed, I also hope to strengthen our organization's morale. Everyone in DS—whether part of the Foreign Service, the Civil Service, or a contractor—deserves to be recognized for the vital role they play on a daily basis. There needs to be a broader recognition and appreciation of the fact that we are one team with one mission.

To be considered to lead DS at this moment is the most rewarding professional opportunity of my career. If confirmed, I look forward to undertaking this responsibility and collaborating closely with the members of this committee in the months and years ahead.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Evanoff.

We will open the floor for 5-minute questions, and I am going to open real quickly.

Mr. Evanoff, you mentioned Fort Pickett.

Mr. EVANOFF. Yes, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. As a good Senator and a good politician, I cannot help but tell you there are two great facilities in Georgia called FLETC, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and the Guardian Center outside of Perry, Georgia, which are two outstanding situational training areas for law enforcement antiterrorism activities, military activities, and the like. So when you are looking at Fort Pickett and all the others, also do not forget those two. They are great facilities.

Mr. EVANOFF. Absolutely, sir. I was trained at FLETC in Georgia. So I know exactly what they provide.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you very much.

Mr. EVANOFF. Thank you, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. Mr. Carter, I am scared to death with what North Korea is doing. You and I had a conversation yesterday that scared me worse last night when I started thinking about our conversation. I had not thought about where those missiles are going between the time Kim Jong-un launches them and they fall in the South China Sea or wherever.

Will your representation on this organization of civil aviation have some voice in bringing about requirements on countries to notify civil aviation on any use of intercontinental ballistic missiles or other missiles that might be done on a testing basis?

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Chairman, this is probably one of the most sensitive top issues that is going to be handled at the council starting on the 30th of October, this month. Launching ballistic missiles into international airspace is absolutely unacceptable. It is an enormous risk to civil aviation. As a person who commanded multi-engine jets, the worst thing I can think of is to be sitting at altitude and see a ballistic missile come through your airspace. And through my research in preparation for this, it is clear that one of these ballistic missile launches did, indeed, go through the flight path of an international flight. You are supposed to issue notices to airmen anytime you are doing any type of missile testing like that in international airspace.

So I know that the mission at ICAO is working closely with the council members to deal with this issue, and they have made it a priority for the 30 October meeting. And if confirmed, I guarantee you this will be one of my top priorities and I will certainly work with you and this committee to make sure that this is being dealt with.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, thank you. That is of the utmost importance. I had not thought about that risk until we talked yesterday, but it is obviously huge and a big one.

Mr. CARTER. Yes, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. Ms. Singh, you are going to be an advisor on economic affairs. Is that not correct?

Ms. SINGH. Yes, Senator.

Senator ISAKSON. I think soft power is the most powerful tool the United States has to win friends and influence enemies around the world and certainly far better than fighting wars all the time, if you can help it.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation and other things like that have proven that good investment in foreign countries to be our friends and helping them to develop and subscribe themselves to a better way they treat their workers and better ways for them to interact with people. Are you going to promote the Millennium Challenge Corporation in your work, or will it be a part of your work at the State Department?

Ms. SINGH. Yes, absolutely, sir. The Millennium Challenge Corporation—the Economic Bureau is the link at the State Department for the MCC. And I very much believe, as you have said, that good governance, transparency in governments all around the world is of great benefit to us. I think we cannot underemphasize at all the emphasis of soft power and diplomacy to prevent conflicts. It is very much in the American interest to build up institutions such as the MCC. And I commit to you that it will be a priority of mine, if confirmed for this position, Senator.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, I think it is critically important, and I think your experience and the conversation we had yesterday encourages me of the high priority you have given to that.

The gentleman I talked about in your introduction is here now, Dan Sullivan. Senator Sullivan came and wanted to be a part of

this hearing because you work with him now. He is a big fan of yours, and I am going to let him say anything he wants to say, as long as it does not take longer than a minute and 26 seconds. [Laughter.]

STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN, U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I just want to thank the committee for an opportunity to say a few words about Manisha Singh. I think she is extremely well qualified for this position, given her vast amounts of experience.

I will just tell you a little story, Mr. Chairman. I was a marine who was coming off active duty 11 years ago. I spent a year and a half in the Middle East, and I came back and was nominated for the Assistant Secretary position that Manisha Singh is getting ready to take, if confirmed, which I am confident she will be. And when I got back, there was a Foreign Relations Committee staffer who was actually helping me prepare for my hearing, just like this hearing, 11 years ago, and it was Manisha Singh. So this is kind of karma, good karma, I would say. And then she later became my Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in charge of all trade and economic issues. So enormously important back then, maybe even more important now. So she is an expert in that area. I am sure you will get good answers from your questions about that.

And then later I had the honor of having Manisha work for me in the Senate. Right now she does as a counselor and top foreign policy official. So I think she is very well qualified.

I want to thank the President and Secretary Tillerson for the great nomination, and she will do a great job for the country. And I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity to say a few words on this committee.

Senator ISAKSON. I would never turn Ms. Singh down for any request that she makes to talk about you. [Laughter.]

Senator ISAKSON. My ranking member, Ms. Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Carter, again congratulations on your nomination, and I am delighted to know that you have agreed to be considered for this post.

In October of 2016, the International Civil Aviation Organization agreed on international carbon dioxide emission standards for aircraft beginning in 2020 and also on a system for offsetting future carbon dioxide emissions from aviation. Both U.S. airlines and the aircraft manufacturers were part of and agreed to those negotiations' resulting agreements, and the emission standards would be implemented by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations issued under the Clean Air Act.

So if confirmed, will the United States continue to proceed with actions to implement these standards?

Mr. CARTER. Well, Senator, it is always great to see you again. And I think this is a terribly important issue that you brought up because as you well know, there some EU legislation in 2012. The 2013 assembly basically outlined all of these market-based measure requirements.

So in 2016, as you stated, CORSIA, was supported. The Carbon Offsetting Reduction Scheme, was supported by the United States and all the other nations. Once again, as I just said earlier about North Korea, the standards and recommended procedures for implementing CORSIA are going to be considered by the council that is meeting on the 30th of October, this month. So basically all the nations on the council, including the United States, in 2016 approved CORSIA. Now they will be approving the actual standards and the procedures. And certainly, if confirmed, I will keep your committee and the staff that I discussed this with, Josh and those guys, completely up to speed on this because it is very, very important. And of course, as you know, Airlines for America, IATA, everyone is supporting this right now. So, yes, ma'am.

Senator SHAHEEN. It is still not clear to me. Are you saying that you will continue to take the position on the part of the United States to support these standards?

Mr. CARTER. Well, the administration itself, as I understand it—obviously, I have not been able to talk to people, but the administration has not taken a formal position yet. But as soon as I do hear about that, I will get back to you. But as of right now, I do not see why we will not be taking the standards and recommended procedures seriously.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. CARTER. Yes, ma'am.

Senator SHAHEEN. Ms. Newstead, first of all, again thank you for agreeing to be considered for this nomination. You clearly have the experience and credentials to do an excellent job.

As you know, the position of Legal Counsel in the State Department carries a very heavy burden in terms of the issues which confront you. And I want to begin with asking you about a question that I asked another nominee for a high State Department post about, and I was not adequately satisfied with the answer that I heard and that has to do with impoundment.

As I am sure you are aware, the Senate appropriations committee that deals with the State Department's budget recently passed out a budget that was much more generous than that recommended by the administration. And there has been some speculation as to whether the administration would try to just not spend that money if it came to the Department.

So can you tell me whether you think the Department could legally do that, or are you under obligation, if the Congress has passed a budget, to spend the money as directed by Congress?

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Well, Senator, thank you for that question. I would be happy to address it.

In general, Senator, of course, when Congress passes legislation that is enacted through the President's signature, there is a duty to spend those funds in accordance with the terms that Congress has specified.

I am, of course, aware, Senator, as you know, about the federal statute that provides specific situations in which the administration can notify Congress either of a need to delay or possibly a proposal to not spend funds as appropriated. And there are specific situations and standards that the statute lays out and notification procedures to the Congress. So if I am confirmed, it will be my in-

tention, Senator, to apply the law as written by the Congress, including with respect to that statute.

Senator SHAHEEN. And I am sure you are aware of the court that determined that Congress does have the responsibility to pass the budget and that agencies have a requirement to spend those dollars.

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Yes, I am. Thank you, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. I am out of time, Mr. Chairman.

Senator ISAKSON. Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman.

I want to congratulate all of our nominees.

Ms. Newstead, thanks so much for the meeting yesterday. You will not be surprised, based on our meeting, that I have a number of follow-up questions pertaining to the situation in Yemen. I explained to you my interest in the situation surrounds the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. Our relationship with Saudi Arabia, I believe, creates a real opportunity for the United States to alleviate suffering in Yemen and also stabilize the region.

I want to get some moral and legal clarity about a number of different matters. So I am going to go very quickly here. I ask that you provide clear and concise—concise—responses to my questions, please.

On July 18, I convened a subcommittee hearing on the four famines. I gave you a transcript of that hearing. Have you had an opportunity to review that?

Ms. NEWSTEAD. I have. Thank you, Senator.

Senator YOUNG. So you are familiar with many of the facts associated with this horrific situation.

I asked about the Saudi-led coalition's pattern of impeding humanitarian assistance. I asked this question of Executive Director of the World Food Programme, David Beasley. He said the United Nations—he indicated, quote, I think it is an abhorrent activity and a violation of not just humanitarian international laws. Morally it is just a terrible thing.

Now, section 620(i) of the Foreign Assistance Act prohibits the provision of security assistance or assistance under the Arms Export Control Act, quote, to any country when it is made known to the President that the government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance. Do you agree that is what the statute plainly states?

Ms. NEWSTEAD. It sounds like a correct summary to me. Yes, sir.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Based on your preparation for this position and for this hearing and based on the facts you have reviewed, is it your professional, your personal, your legal judgment that Saudi Arabia has prohibited or otherwise restricted, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance? Yes or no, please.

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Well, Senator, if I may, just before I answer that question directly, I did appreciate our conversation yesterday, and I have had an opportunity to look initially at the materials you——

Senator YOUNG. I am going to give you 10 seconds, please. Yes or no.

Ms. NEWSTEAD [continuing]. Well, Senator, in order to be able to give you a legal judgment on that, I would need to spend time consulting with the Department's experts on both the facts and legal——

Senator YOUNG. You will not be providing a personal opinion. We will pivot to the Department of State, please. You are nominated to serve as the principal Legal Adviser to the Department of State on all legal matters, domestic and international. Based on your work with the Department to prepare for this position and this hearing, what is the Department of State's current view on this question?

Ms. NEWSTEAD [continuing]. Well, Senator, I am aware that the Department has responded to some inquiries that you made before, but I believe there is more information that should be provided. And I can tell you, Senator, that if I am confirmed, I would make it a priority to study the issue and consult with the Department in order to provide additional information to you.

Senator YOUNG. So it is well known and broadly understood by those who immerse themselves in the facts that the Saudi-led coalition has deliberately and precisely bombed U.S.-funded cranes that were supposed to be delivered to the major port of Hodeidah. That port was to receive humanitarian supplies, again, in part funded by U.S. taxpayers. The Saudi-led coalition also bombed a World Food Programme warehouse I mentioned to you yesterday in Hodeidah. The Saudi-led coalition continues to delay shipments going into Hodeidah for days that would end up going to vulnerable Yemenis, which has created the largest humanitarian crisis in the world or certainly exacerbated it. And according to the UN, the Saudi-led coalition continues to delay commercial vessels going into Yemen's Red Sea port.

So in light of these facts, assuming they are correct, how can you or the Department—would you defend a judgment that there would be no violation of the Foreign Assistance Act?

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Well, Senator, I think with the facts that you have identified and the facts that we discussed yesterday, they certainly raise a very meaningful question in my mind whether the responsibilities under that provision have been triggered. And let me explain, if I could, Senator, because I believe as we discussed, what that statute provides is that if the President or the Secretary become aware or it is made known to them that a recipient of federal foreign assistance is essentially delaying or obstructing the delivery of assistance, then there is an obligation to prohibit providing further assistance to that government. And as we discussed, an exception that the President can find it in the national interest to waive that, in which case notification to the committee is required. And, Senator, in our discussion, we discussed many factors which would suggest——

Senator YOUNG. Let me interject respectfully because my time is running out. I commend you. You do seem to have a command of other provisions of the law, indicating that the President can, under certain circumstances, waive. They would have to notify Congress. Is there any evidence the President has notified Congress?

Ms. NEWSTEAD [continuing]. Well, Senator, that is one of the questions I have been trying to look into since we discussed this yesterday. I am not aware that a notification has been made. And I agree with you from our discussion yesterday that that raises an implication as to what determination has the Department made. So I certainly, Senator, can commit to follow up on this question and try to get back to you with more information.

Senator YOUNG. Okay.

Well, I am a little over my time. I thank the chairman for his indulgence.

I will be submitting some more fulsome questions for you to answer on the record, also one pertaining to violation of Customary International Humanitarian Law rule 55. I for one am going to need clear and unambiguous responses to these questions from you and the Department before we vote on your confirmation on the floor. Thank you so much, and I am sorry for the rush.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Senator.

I want to keep the committee open for a few more minutes for a couple of follow-up questions. I have one. I think there may be another one or two. So if it is okay with you all. We have six votes coming up beginning at 3 o'clock. So we will have to adjourn by then. I know you all want to get to your markup as soon as we can in the next week or so. So we will make sure we get this finished today.

But I have a question. Mr. Evanoff, back when the Benghazi attack took place and we had the tragic loss of the U.S. Ambassador and two CIA personnel and other personnel representing the United States of America, Secretary Clinton, then Secretary of State, and President Obama had an accountability review board that reviewed everything that was done in Benghazi for security and protection and backup, et cetera and ended up making recommendations that we were $2.2 billion short having enough security improvements in our embassies around the world to truly protect our individuals on duty.

Have you seen that report?

Mr. EVANOFF. I have.

Senator ISAKSON. Do you know if anything is being done post-Benghazi in the Department to build up and beef up the security diplomatically and ambassador-wise around the world?

Mr. EVANOFF. Sir, it is an excellent question. I thank you for the question.

Yes, having been in the private sector at that time, I too was a little concerned about what was happening to the Department security-wise. So when I was given this opportunity, the first thing I read was the unclassified ARB report, but also I read the best practices report that came out of it and also what DS has done. And two major things have really struck me and something I wish I had when I was in Pakistan in 9/11, during that time.

One is that we have a high threat post division now that focuses on the 32 posts that need assistance at any given time. We did not have that back in 2001. That gives us a 911 call to allow the division to answer anything that the RSO would want or need for that

high threat posting. So there is dedicated people that would go and help them for that.

The second thing is that we put together an operations planning group where we look at why we are going into a country that has hostile intention before we even get there. Why do we even need to be there at that point? Can we build the security around it? So we made it transparent, and we allowed all stakeholders to come around the table and give their thoughts and views on why we should go to country X and why we need the national security agenda to make that. If there is a risk, there should be a reward. If there is no reward and you have a high risk, then that venue will capture it.

So those two things are the most important ones I have seen, to include also the training centers that will open up in Virginia. So I believe those three things is what we did not have when I was there.

Senator ISAKSON. We always want to have our country in a position to protect those who represent us diplomatically around the world. And what happened in Benghazi was something we should react to and make sure it does not happen again to the maximum extent possible.

Ms. Shaheen, do you have a question?

Senator SHAHEEN. I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to follow up, Mr. Evanoff, because one of the things that we have seen recently is the Russians have harassed our embassy officials who are stationed in Russia. Do you have strategies for how you think we could respond to those kinds of activities on the part of a host country?

Mr. EVANOFF. Senator, it is a good question, and I thank you for it.

We have seen this to the point where Russian intelligence services have broken into our residences in Moscow. They have actually poisoned our pets. They have harassed, left nasty notes.

I look at it this way not to lower ourselves to that. But I know that the FBI monitors this here domestically, and we do not do anything at all to them like that. That is not who we are. But at that point, I think it should be known more publicly that this is happening. Before it used to be a closed secret that our diplomats get harassed in Moscow and St. Pete and nobody really knew about that except the Foreign Service families themselves. If this became transparent and the general public knew that there are hostile intelligence services going into our residences on diplomatic grounds, then I believe we would get more pressure from Russia to back off. I think we have got to shine the light on this situation more.

Senator SHAHEEN. And so is that something that you would expect the Secretary of State to do, or who would do that, shining the light?

Mr. EVANOFF. Sure. I think the Secretary has already demonstrated that with Cuba, the fact that we identified 15 people to leave, what they have done to us in Havana, then we will then push them out of Washington, D.C. I think this Secretary has an appetite to bring it to Secretary Lavrov and tell him to cut that out, that this is something that is not something that a first-rate

country should do to another country like that. I do believe the Secretary has the ability and would want to do that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ms. Newstead, President Trump has used language on multiple occasions that threaten North Korea with the use of military force. Specific legislative authority to use military force against North Korea has not been enacted. In your opinion, does the President have the authority to use military force to prevent North Korea from advancing its nuclear weapons program without a North Korean attack?

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Well, Senator, thank you for that important question.

It is my view the law generally provides the President may act to defend the United States, and that includes in some circumstances acting preemptively when there is an imminent threat, military threat for example. That is certainly one scenario that could arise in the case of North Korea.

So in answer to your question, I would say my starting point would be to consider those authorities, those constitutional authorities, and as a matter of international law.

Senator SHAHEEN. Ms. Singh, finally, I had the opportunity, when I was Governor, to take several trade missions overseas, and one of the biggest helps to us was the commercial service within the Department of State in terms of identifying partners to do business with and helping us. So can you talk about how you would approach that role of economic statecraft and how you would coordinate with the Department of Commerce in working with businesses abroad who want to improve their bottom line?

Ms. SINGH. Thank you, Senator. That is such an important issue right now because, as you know, we need to provide American companies with every opportunity to succeed and prosper globally. And I have been lucky to be able to take part in the trade missions such as the one you are mentioning when you were Governor. I think it is critically important that we continue these.

I would closely with my counterparts at the Department of Commerce to identify markets not only in which our companies are doing well, but in which our companies are having problems. If there is a particular country where their companies are able to come into the United States and invest freely and our companies are suffering from regulatory barriers or restrictive approval processes that are prohibiting them from prospering in those markets, I would work with my counterparts at the Department of Commerce to take trade missions which would involve speaking to commercial officials in these governments at the highest levels, introducing them to our companies, and saying our companies are having difficulty getting through your approval process, what can we do to help them.

And then I would also find partners that might be interested in partnering with our companies over there. In the cases of joint ventures, sometimes it is easiest to navigate commercial markets when you are doing so with a company who knows the landscape there.

I thank you for that question. I think it is critically important.

Senator SHAHEEN. Me too. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator ISAKSON. It is a good thing we are dealing with diplomacy because I have a diplomatic challenge. Mr. Young would be next to be called on in a second round, but Mr. Kaine has arrived and he has not asked any questions yet. So I tell you what I am going to do, with the concurrence of everybody in the room up here—and if any of you all have an opinion, you can let me know—I am going to recognize Senator Kaine for 5 minutes and then go to Senator Young for another 5 minutes. And if my timing is right, that will put us right at the time we got to get out of here to go vote anyway. Does that sound all right with you?

Senator ISAKSON. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Very diplomatic.

So I appreciate you all and thank you for your service and congratulations on your nominations by the President.

If I can start with Mr. Evanoff, I understand, before I came in, you talked a little bit about the FASTC facility under construction. I look forward to working with you on that.

I wanted to talk to you about the FASTC. It was responsive to one of the ARB, accountability review board, recommendations following Benghazi. There were 29 recommendations. 26 have been closed out. And the outstanding recommendations are ongoing upgrades in construction to embassy facilities. Talk a little bit about, to the extent you understand it, the Department's timeline for completing these last three ARB recommendations so that they can be closed out as well.

Mr. EVANOFF. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

I am told that basically out of the three, both of them have been—two of them have been closed. One is still hanging because it belongs into the classified realm. And of course, I have not had access to that. But I am pretty much sure we are going to be closing that out very soon.

Senator KAINE. Well, that is something, should you be confirmed, that I would want to come back to you on. I have been worried about the overall budget cuts to the State Department as they might impact this most important function. I mean, of all the folks at the State Department, you are the one they should get a life insurance policy on because I think it is really, really critical that folks be protected, especially given the increases, as you are describing, whether it is Cuba or Russia—the increases in some of the security challenges our folks face. So I want to reach back out to you about the last three.

Mr. EVANOFF. I would welcome that, Senator. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that.

To Ms. Singh, congratulations to you. And I wanted to ask you a question about cyber. Is the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs in an appropriate position right now, do you think, to advance State Department equities around cyber threats in consultation with other departments in the interagency process? Is this where some of sort of the interagency work—is your department where this would take place?

Ms. SINGH. Well, thank you, Senator.

I think you might be referring to the Secretary's plans for reorganization——

Senator KAINE. Yes.

Ms. SINGH [continuing]. In which it has been indicated that the cyber function will be moved to the Economic and Business Affairs Bureau.

And I would answer your question to say I think that it is. There are complementary capabilities within the bureau currently. For instance, as you may know, the International Telecommunications Office is managed by the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. We have a very strong component that deals with international telecommunications issues. Cyber fits hand in hand with that. We deal with Internet issues, commercial issues. Many of those functions already exist within the bureau. I think adding cyber would be very complementary, and we would make sure to keep cybersecurity at the highest level of the utmost importance.

Senator KAINE. Can you see organizationally—if that is added within your section, are there additional resources or kinds of personnel that you would need that you do not currently have?

Ms. SINGH. Well, Senator, speaking from outside the department, I think I would have to reevaluate that if I was confirmed for the position. But at this time, it is my understanding that positions are being reallocated from the Cybersecurity Office to combine in the Bureau of Economic Affairs. And we might have to create a separate section to look at where those capabilities would best fit. And I would review the existing resources, what could be reallocated and reprogrammed specifically devoted to a new cyber office. If I felt that the resources were insufficient, I would certainly consult with the bureau staff to figure out what we needed, whether it is personnel, monetary resources, or other sorts of things. And I would certainly request that from the Secretary.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that.

Ms. Newstead, one of my passions on this committee is the question of authorized use of military force, to sort of follow up a little bit on Senator Shaheen. I am on the Armed Services Committee too. And it is interesting that the authority over AUMF questions is in this committee, and often we are talking about sort of the issues that pertain to it more in the Armed Services Committee. Senator Shaheen and I serve on both.

One of the things that has been frustrating—and I just really want your commitment to cooperation—is in this administration, we have heard over and over again from key officials, Secretary Mattis, General Dunford, we would really like to work with Congress on a new authorization. But anytime there is any draft of anything put on the table, no, we like what we have just fine. So there is sort of lip service paid to the idea we would like to cooperate on a new authorization after 16 years, but when it gets down to any proposal, instead of saying, well, could you adjust this or that, instead what we hear from the administration is, well, we like what we have just fine. And then we are not really given a response.

I am going to continue to push this committee to tackle this issue. And I would like to be able to have a dialogue with both State, DOD, the White House about if we put proposals on the table, what is good, what is bad. In the what is bad category, you could make it more acceptable to at least the administration. It is

our prerogative ultimately, but it would be more acceptable if you did the following.

Would you commit to having that kind of back-and-forth dialogue and giving us your best advice on behalf of the administration on these questions?

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Senator, I would be happy to commit to that. I am aware of the work that you and other members of the committee have done on this issue, and I certainly would be eager to be helpful on behalf of the Department, if confirmed.

Senator KAINE. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator ISAKSON. Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for a second round here.

I do not think I will have to go quite as quickly this go-around, Ms. Newstead. But let me turn to something I had mentioned I was curious about, and it pertains to Customary International Humanitarian Law rule 55, which says the parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, which is impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinctions, subject to the right of control. That is it in its entirety.

On June 28, at my direction, my staff asked the Department of State whether the Saudi refusal to permit the delivery of U.S.-funded cranes to the port of Hodeidah constitute a violation of this rule. What is your personal professional answer to this question?

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Well, Senator, first of all, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to that, and it is an important point. We did discuss it briefly.

I certainly agree with you that it is extremely important that we promote compliance with the law of armed conflict by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen for all the reasons that you have identified, sir, and at the prior hearing as well.

I do think that the standard that you described raises many of the same questions as we were talking about in our prior round in relation to the Foreign Assistance Act. And I would only say that it would be my expectation, if confirmed, that I would be able to dig into this issue with the benefit of more consultation with the Department to be more specific in talking to you about the ways in which those standards are implicated here.

Senator YOUNG. I guess your answer would be the same as it relates to Saudi Arabia's compliance or noncompliance based on the same fact pattern. I am referring to in Yemen compliance with article 14 of the Additional Protocol 2 of the Geneva Conventions.

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Yes, Senator. In order to give you a legal view that would really take account of all the factors, legal and factual and otherwise, I would want to have the opportunity to study that and consult more with the Department. But again, I can certainly say that I understand and agree with your focus on the issue.

Senator YOUNG. So if I do not appear frustrated, I am a bit frustrated. It took almost 3 months after my staff asked that question pertaining both to Customary International Humanitarian Law rule 55 and article 14 of the Additional Protocol 2 of the Geneva Conventions—3 months for me to get an answer. And the answer

that we received was, quote, the Department of State is not able to provide Senator Young with an advisory legal opinion. Unquote.

As a member of the Department of State's oversight committee and based on Congress' Article I constitutional authorities, what do you think? Do you believe that is an acceptable answer?

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Well, Senator, of course, I was not part of the discussions in the Department, as you know. But I would say that it would be my hope that if I am confirmed, we could provide answers to you more quickly. And while I would certainly want to consult on where the Department's practices have been in terms of any limits the Department feels it needs to maintain, I would also seek to engage with you and your staff closely in discussing the legal standards and issues. And I know from our discussion yesterday, you had a number of particular questions about implications of what the Department had and had not done. It would be my expectation to work as closely with you as I could on those issues.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I do not think it is acceptable. Period. But thank you.

Let me lastly return to one final matter. Will you please tell me how you define the term "assistance" in the Foreign Assistance Act, specifically telling me whether the definition of security assistance as defined in 22 U.S.C. 2304 applies to section 2378–1? If you would like me to say those numbers again, I am happy to. That is why I gave you the hearing transcript so you could familiarize yourself. And you seem quite conversant in the law. So I am impressed with that.

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Thank you, Senator.

Well, the definition, as I understand it, Senator, is quite broad under the act. It is a question of law that, if possible, I would prefer to come back to you on with the benefit of more consideration. But I believe that the stated principle is quite broad, and its application to the facts here, as I said, is something that I would like, if possible, to have the opportunity to discuss with the Department.

Senator YOUNG. I believe it is broad as well. And so I will just provide that and some other written questions to you for your response. Thank you so much.

Ms. NEWSTEAD. Thank you, Senator.

Senator YOUNG. I yield back.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Senator.

Thank you for your attendance today. Congratulations on your nomination. To your siblings, mothers, fathers, significant others that all came, thank you all for coming. Kids. Do not forget the kids. That is right.

And I want to thank the members for being here.

We will report to the committee soon. You will be hearing shortly on a markup and hopefully a vote on the floor shortly after that. We appreciate your commitment to the country and your willingness to accept this nomination.

We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:00 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO THOMAS L. CARTER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What important actions have you taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have demonstrated a commitment to defending and promoting human rights and democracy. Specifically, I have personally commanded United States Air Force C-141s on numerous international humanitarian missions throughout the world in support of U.S. objectives towards creating stability and saving lives. I've also flown in support of deploying U.S. forces in many other engagements wherein the United States leadership felt it necessary to defend democratic peoples in their respective countries. I was decorated for flying into an active combat zone in October 1983 inserting the 82nd Airborne Division into Grenada to rescue U.S. students endangered there.

Further, I had the honor of monitoring Ukraine's very first parliamentary elections in 2006. It was truly an inspiration to see the Ukrainian's enthusiasm when we introduced ourselves as Americans, and to also watch entire voting locations work for over 24 hours straight to count the many paper ballots. These unique people really inspired me to continue my own polling manager duties back in South Carolina.

Question 2. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the representatives to ICAO foster an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. USICAO is a small mission with only five employees, and one supervisor other than myself. I will share my strong commitment to equal opportunity and to ensuring that each and every employee is treated with respect and dignity, and will maintain an open door policy to ensure that all in the mission know that they can reach out to me.

Question 3. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 4. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. Neither I nor any members of my immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JENNIFER NEWSTEAD BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Over the course of my career, I have worked in various capacities on issues relating to the promotion of human rights and democracy. Beginning in college and law school and continuing during my prior government service, I have devoted time to pro bono and other legal matters relating to combating violence against women. While serving as a Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Legal Policy at the Department of Justice in 2001, I worked on policy and regulatory actions relating to the implementation of the Trafficking Victims Protection

Act of 2000 (TVPA), including the issuance of regulations in July 2001 providing protections for and assistance to human trafficking victims as their cases were investigated and prosecuted. Those regulatory actions, which DOJ issued jointly with the Department of State shortly after the release of the State Department's first Trafficking in Persons Report in July 2001, were part of the first wave of efforts to implement the TVPA, which were a priority of the Justice Department during my tenure there. In the years since my time at DOJ, there have been further legislative and regulatory enforcement efforts on these critical issues, and today those efforts, and the State Department's annual TIP Report, remains a principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking issues.

During my time as General Counsel of OMB, I had the opportunity to work on various legal issues which impacted humanitarian assistance efforts, including implementation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. In private practice, I have worked on pro bono matters on various issues relating to orders of protection for victims of domestic violence, resentencing of criminal defendants, and promotion of civics education.

If confirmed as Legal Adviser, it would be my privilege to support the Department's ongoing efforts to promote human rights and democracy.

Question 2. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I recognize the important efforts within the State Department to promote a workforce that reflects the diversity of the American people. Like the rest of the Department, the Office of the Legal Adviser should foster an atmosphere of diversity and inclusion. If confirmed, I will take seriously the role of mentor to the employees in the office and will be personally committed to supporting the goals of diversity and inclusion.

Question 3. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Office of the Legal Adviser are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I am firmly committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will work with the supervisors in the Office to foster a work environment that recognizes the contributions of all employees and will encourage all supervisors to take available courses on equal employment opportunity principles, diversity, and related issues and to promote an atmosphere of transparency by providing opportunities to all employees. I will also urge supervisors to underscore the importance of valuing and respecting diversity when they mentor junior colleagues.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, to exercise leadership within the Department to promote compliance with those laws and rules and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, to exercise leadership within the Department to promote compliance with those laws and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. No.

Question 7. What legal frameworks govern the U.S. use of lethal force abroad, including through the use of armed drones? How should the U.S. determine if it is in an armed conflict such that international humanitarian law applies?

Answer. There is no legal question that is more consequential, or more serious, than the question of when and under what circumstances the United States may use force. If confirmed, I will be committed to providing the best possible legal advice to the Secretary and the U.S. Government concerning these legal questions.

With respect to your first question, I generally understand that the President's principal current domestic law authorities to use military force abroad include his constitutional powers as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, the Authorization for Use of Military Force of 2001, and the Authorization for Use of Military

Force against Iraq Resolution of 2002. In addition to considering domestic legal issues, if confirmed I would also want to give careful consideration to whether any proposed use of military force abroad would be consistent with applicable international law, including the body of international law that governs the resort to the use of force (the jus ad bellum) and the law governing the conduct of hostilities (the law of armed conflict, international humanitarian law, or jus in bello).

With respect to your second question, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 essentially refer to two categories of conflict: "cases of declared war or any other armed conflict which may arise between two or more of the High Contracting Parties" (sometimes referred to as international armed conflicts) and conflicts "not of an international character." The question of whether an armed conflict exists in any particular situation is highly fact-dependent, and the applicable standards under international law will vary depending on the category of conflict. If confirmed, when assessing whether any particular situation constitutes an armed conflict, I would take into account the jurisprudence of U.S. courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as the legal positions articulated by the United States in the past. I would also want to consider, as appropriate to the circumstances, the practice and statements of other States, international tribunals, and qualified commentators on international law.

Finally, if confirmed, I would also expect to consult with my colleagues in the Office of the Legal Adviser as well as with my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel, on these issues, including whenever the United States is faced with the need to consider the use of force, whether through the use of armed drones or otherwise.

Question 8. Should the U.S. accept the conclusion of the U.N. Human Rights Committee that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights applies extraterritorially? If not, what international law applies to U.S. officials and forces operating abroad outside of armed conflict situations? More specifically, what international law applies to U.S. drone strikes conducted outside of armed conflict situations?

Answer. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) contains express language setting forth the territorial scope of its application. Article 2(1) of the ICCPR states that each State Party undertakes obligations with respect to "individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction." I understand that the United States' position is that the ICCPR applies only to individuals who are both within the territory of a State Party and within that State Party's jurisdiction. The United States has stated that this position is based on the text of the treaty, an application of longstanding international legal principles of treaty interpretation, and the treaty's negotiating history.

I understand that the Human Rights Committee has expressed a contrary view that a State Party's ICCPR obligations should apply not only to individuals who are within its territory, but also to individuals located outside its territory who are subject to its jurisdiction under certain circumstances. I also understand that the observations, recommendations and general comments adopted by the Human Rights Committee are not binding on the States Parties and do not represent authoritative interpretation of State Party obligations.

As your question suggests, I recognize that there are divergent views among the U.N. Human Rights Committee, human rights organizations, and among governments, on international law questions related to ongoing counter-terrorism operations against groups like Al Qa'eda and ISIS, and that a key point of potential divergence is on the question of whether the United States or one of its Coalition Partners is or is not operating in the context of an ongoing armed conflict when it takes a particular military action. If confirmed, I will consult my colleagues at the Department of State and my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies to ensure that I provide the best possible legal advice to the Department and to the U.S. Government concerning the international obligations of the United States applicable to U.S. officials and forces involved in counter-terrorism operations abroad, including by ensuring that the United States determines whether a particular action falls inside or outside of armed conflict situations.

Question 9. Do you support U.S. ratification of Protocols I and II to the Geneva Conventions of 1949? If not, why not?

Answer. I am aware that President Reagan submitted Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which would establish additional treaty obligations in relation to armed conflicts not of an international character, to the Senate for advice and consent to ratification in 1987, and that President Obama, following an interagency review, urged the Senate to act on that Protocol in 2011. I am also aware that the United States has historically had significant concerns with several

aspects of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which establishes additional treaty obligations in relation armed conflicts of an international nature. For these reasons, President Reagan informed the Senate in 1987 of his decision not to submit that Protocol to the Senate, and no subsequent President has sought the Senate's advice and consent to the Protocol.

I have not yet had the opportunity to form a considered legal view with respect to these matters, and if confirmed I would consult my colleagues at the Department of State and my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Defense, before providing advice to policymakers. Given the strong support that Additional Protocol II has received from Presidents in both parties for the past thirty years, and given the predominance of current non-international conflicts of the sort that are the subject of Additional Protocol II, if confirmed I would make it a priority to review the current administration's views on the ratification of Additional Protocol II with any necessary reservations, understandings and declarations. If confirmed, I would look forward to engaging with my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies and with interested Members of this committee and staff on this topic.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JENNIFER NEWSTEAD BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. In *Sokolow* v. *PLO,* the Second Circuit surprisingly held that it was unconstitutional to apply the Anti-Terrorism Act in the exact fact pattern that the statute was designed to address: American citizens murdered by terrorists-in this case, Palestinian terrorists-acting overseas. *Sokolow* plaintiffs include Florida constituents Mr. Oz Joseph Guetta and his mother, Ms. Varda Guetta, and other American victims of Palestinian terrorism. In June 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court asked for the administration's views on this case. It is clearly a vital U.S. national security interest to combat international terrorism in all its forms. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the Anti-Terrorism Act statute as written by Congress? If confirmed, do you commit to following up with me both to explain what the State Department's view is on *Sokolow* v. *PLO, and to ensure that the State Department expeditiously provides its view on the matter to the Solicitor General?*

Answer. I sympathize deeply with the injuries suffered by the Guetta family, and other families participating in this case, and condemn the acts of terrorism that caused their injuries. I share your concern and commitment to combating international terrorism and protecting American citizens abroad. I also recognize the important purpose of the Antiterrorism Act in providing a federal forum for U.S. victims of international terrorism.

If confirmed, I would be committed to providing the best possible legal advice to the Secretary and our policymakers, including with respect to defending the integrity of the Antiterrorism Act and applying that statute as written by Congress and in light of relevant judicial decisions. I understand that on June 26, the Supreme Court asked for the views of the U.S. Government on the petition for certiorari in Sokolow v. Palestine Liberation Organization, No. 16–1071 (S. Ct.), which seeks review of the decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit holding that the District Court lacked personal jurisdiction over the defendants. The Office of the Solicitor General at the Department of Justice has the lead in developing, with inputs from other interested agencies, U.S. Government views on the petition. Upon filing, this will become the view of record for the U.S. Government. If confirmed, I will ensure that the State Department continues to provide its views on this case and all other cases implicating State Department equities to the Solicitor General as expeditiously as possible, and remains in close and effective coordination with the Department of Justice on such matters. If confirmed, I would also welcome the opportunity to follow up with your office on this matter, consistent with my professional responsibilities when providing legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 2. The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act is an important tool to combat corruption abroad. It holds American businesses accountable for aiding the most oppressive regimes in the world from plundering their people's wealth. Ms. Newstead, you've advised clients on complying with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Is the FCPA effective? Are there areas where it can be improved? What could Congress do to tighten it?

Answer. As your question reflects, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) is a powerful tool for combatting corruption abroad, and its vigorous enforcement over several decades has substantially contributed to reducing corrupt activities and in-

creasing domestic anti-corruption enforcement by other countries. As Congress recognized when it passed the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), corruption imposes enormous costs both at home and abroad, leading to market inefficiencies and instability and an unfair playing field for honest businesses. Even more fundamentally, corrupt activities alienate citizens from their political leaders and institutions, and undermine political stability and economic development.. By enacting a strong foreign bribery statute, Congress sought to help U.S. companies resist corrupt demands and to hold them accountable when they failed to do so, while also addressing the destructive foreign policy ramifications of transnational bribery.

Enforcement of the FCPA has been effective by many objective measures, including the deterrent effect of the sheer number of resolutions reached by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) with companies subject to FCPA enforcement, and the significant fines paid by many of those companies. Perhaps more important, the statute has been effective in encouraging U.S. and global businesses to adopt vigorous compliance regimes and internal controls designed to deter and prevent corrupt activities.

Although the responsibility for enforcing the FCPA rests with the DOJ and SEC, I understand that the Department of State plays an important complementary role in working to address corruption abroad and to level the playing field for U.S. businesses. In particular, the Department of State has focused on the implementation of international commitments relating to anti-corruption, including through its leadership role during the negotiation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Anti-Bribery Convention, which effectively "internationalized" the FCPA by requiring all parties to pass their own similar transnational bribery statutes; and by participating in the Working Group on Bribery, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation and enforcement of the Convention by its parties.

The FCPA is an important and effective tool for combating corruption abroad, but it can be particularly effective as one piece of an ever-increasing global network of transnational bribery statutes enforced with an emphasis on international cooperation, as recently demonstrated by the landmark global settlements reached with Odebrecht and VimpelCom. Congress can therefore help support the effective enforcement of the FCPA by supporting the Department of State's global anti-corruption and good governance promotion efforts, but we ultimately defer to DOJ as the U.S. Government's lead enforcement agency regarding the need for any legislative reforms to the FCPA.

Question 3. In March 2010, the Government of Macau revoked the air operating certificate of an American-owned airline-Viva Macau-on baseless grounds, which essentially destroyed the value of the company. There is strong evidence that the revocation was motivated by the desire of Chinese state-owned enterprises to remove competition from the market. For the last seven years, the State Department, Commerce Department and to a lesser extent USTR have been requested to take action. For the last four years, the Viva Macau expropriation case has been in the hands of the Legal Advisor. Are you familiar with the case? If so, do you believe it was inappropriate or illegal for China to expropriate an American-owned company? If confirmed, do you commit to examining the case?

Answer. In my current position as a nominee, I have not had the opportunity to familiarize myself with the details of this particular matter. But, it is my understanding that the Department's review of the Viva Macau espousal request has been completed and that the investors' representative is being informed of the Department's decision. I also understand that a telephone briefing has been offered to Senate staff concerning the case?. If confirmed, I commit that I will examine this matter closely, and will ensure that all requests for espousal before my office are considered carefully.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JENNIFER NEWSTEAD BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question 1. Ms. Newstead, are you aware of the following facts?:

- The Saudi-led coalition deliberately and precisely bombed the cranes at the port of Hodeidah that were used to offload humanitarian supplies.
- The Saudi-led coalition bombed a World Food Programme warehouse in Hodeidah.
- Despite the establishment of the U.N. Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM) created to obviate the need for Saudi-led coalition inspec-

tions, the Saudi-led coalition continues to delay shipments going into Hodeidah for days. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) can provide monthly data confirming this fact.

- In January, when the World Food Programme tried to deliver the four USAID-funded cranes to Hodeidah to offload humanitarian supplies to replace the capacity destroyed by the Saudi-led coalition, the Saudi's would not permit the replacement cranes to be delivered, literally forcing the vessel carrying the cranes to turn around.
- The Saudi-led coalition has diverted, on several occasions, vessels to ports they or their allies' control, more concerned about who control the port than which Yemenis most need the aid.
- On June 27, the World Food Programme asked the Saudis again for permission to deliver the four cranes. The Saudis continue to be unresponsive on the cranes.
- When asked why they won't permit the delivery of the cranes, Saudi officials consistently cite the fact that the Houthis control the port as a leading excuse.

Answer. I have reviewed the factual statements set forth above. Although as a nominee, I have not had the opportunity to consult with experts on the facts of this situation within the Department, I appreciate your raising these specific concerns and have read reports that reflect concerns about the grave humanitarian situation in Yemen. I agree that this situation warrants a strong response by the United States, including a focus on concrete actions which can be taken to alleviate the suffering.

I understand that the Department is committed to helping alleviate these conditions and to reaching a political resolution between the parties. Secretary Tillerson stated on October 22 during his joint press conference with Saudi FM al-Jubeir in Riyadh that he had discussed the Yemen conflict with Saudi counterparts during his meetings in Riyadh. I understand the Department continues to actively work on this issue, and will also be providing its official views on the factual and legal issues raised by your question in a letter to be conveyed separately alongside these QFR responses. I also understand that the Department also stands ready to brief you further on the issues you raise in this question.

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to ensure that we are considering all available tools to support policies to help improve the situation in Yemen. I commit to consulting with the Department's experts to ensure that I and my legal team can, based on a complete understanding of the available facts, provide legal advice to policymakers concerning courses of action to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Yemen, including on the question of whether activities by the Saudi-led Coalition are inconsistent with any provision of applicable domestic or international law. As I mentioned during the hearing, I would also welcome the opportunity to engage with interested Members of this committee and staff to discuss these issues, mindful of my professional responsibilities regarding legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 2. On October 19, the Acting Director of USAID's Office of Food For Peace, Mr. Matthew Nims, testified that the Saudi-led coalition is using food as a weapon of war in Yemen. Please review the transcript of my exchange with Mr. Nims on October 19 and provide your response.

Answer. I have reviewed the transcript of your exchange with Mr. Matthew Nims. Although I have not had an opportunity to consult with the experts at the State Department about these issues, I share your concerns about the grave humanitarian situation in Yemen, and I appreciate how important the port of Hudaydah is to mitigating that situation. I understand the Department is committed to helping alleviate the humanitarian situation in Yemen as well. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to ensure that we are considering all available tools to support policies to help improve this situation.

If confirmed, I commit to consulting with experts in the Department of State and other departments and agencies in order to ensure that I and my legal team can, based on a complete understanding of the available facts, provide legal advice to policymakers concerning courses of action to alleviate the situation in Yemen, including on the question of whether activities by the Saudi-led Coalition are inconsistent with any provision of applicable domestic or international law. I believe that it is critically important to promote compliance with the law of armed conflict by members of the Saudi-led coalition and by all of our partners, and if confirmed I will be a strong advocate for this view within the Department and with colleagues in other agencies.

Question 3. Section 620-i of the Foreign Assistance Act (22 U.S. Code § 2378–1(a)) states the following: "No assistance shall be furnished under this chapter or the Arms Export Control Act [22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.] to any country when it is made

known to the President that the Government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance." If the facts above are correct, would it be your professional, personal, and legal judgment that Saudi Arabia has "prohibit[ed] or otherwise restrict[ed], directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance"? Please provide a detailed justification for your answer.

Answer. As noted in my answer to the previous questions, I am very concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Yemen. I share your concern that this situation warrants a strong response by the United States, including a focus on concrete actions which can be taken to alleviate the suffering.

As your question indicates, the ultimate determination whether this provision of the Foreign Assistance Act has been triggered is a highly fact-specific inquiry. As a nominee I have not had the opportunity to consider the full range of classified and unclassified information available to the Department on this issue, or to consider how the Department has previously interpreted and applied Section 620I. Based only on the facts listed above, which include descriptions of actions which have to date prevented delivery of the four replacement cranes to Hudaydah, and the plain language of the provision, it is my judgment that there is a substantial question whether the responsible parties have "prohibited" or "restricted" the delivery of United States humanitarian assistance under the statute. If confirmed as Legal Adviser, I would want to consider additional information before reaching a final legal view and providing advice to policymakers on this issue. Relevant considerations could include, among other things, whether legitimate concerns exist regarding the control of the Hudaydah port by the Houthis and related security risks, or risks that delivery of aid through the port would be compromised. It would also be relevant in my view to consider the broader circumstances involving the provision of U.S. foreign assistance to Yemen, such as whether the act of preventing delivery of the cranes has effectively prevented the delivery of all U.S. foreign assistance to address the crisis, or whether other means of delivering such aid are operating; and the role of the Saudi Government in such efforts.

Finally, I would wish to consider the reasoning of any prior interpretations by the Office of the Legal Adviser on the application of Section 620I, to ensure that any conclusions reached by the Office on the application of the statute in this circumstance is consistent with the interpretations that the Office has provided to the provision over time. This is particularly relevant here because, based on my limited research to date, there do not appear to be prior judicial decisions providing guidance on the interpretation or application of Section 6201.

If confirmed, I would make it a priority to study this issue in greater depth. I would consult with relevant U.S. Government and non-governmental experts in order to provide legal guidance to State Department decision-makers on the legal standard under section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) as they continue, in this context, to assess the application of that standard to the facts before them.

As I mentioned during the hearing, I would also welcome the opportunity to engage with interested Members of this committee and staff to discuss these issues, mindful of my professional responsibilities regarding legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 4. If Saudi Arabia has restricted directly or indirectly the transport or delivery of U.S. assistance, do you believe this statute would require-absent a Presidential determination that an exception is the national security interest of the United States-that no U.S. assistance shall be furnished under this chapter or the Arms Export Control Act [22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.] to Saudi Arabia?

Answer. Section 620I prohibits provision of assistance under the FAA or the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) to a country when it is made known to the President (or the Secretary, under delegated authority) that the Government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance. If Saudi Arabia has directly or indirectly restricted the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance, absent a determination under the statute, then U.S. assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act or the Arms Export Control Act would be restricted under this provision. As you have noted, the provision includes a waiver authority by which assistance may be provided to the country under such circumstances if there is a determination that to do so is in the national interest, and that determination is notified to the appropriate Congressional committees.

Question 5. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring within 30 days that your office provides a determination to the Secretary of State whether Saudi Arabia has

prohibited or otherwise restricted, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance to Yemen?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with the staff of the Office of the Legal Adviser and consulting with relevant experts across the Department and the U.S. Government, in order to provide views to the Secretary of State or other decision makers within the Department on that question within 30 days.

Question 6. If confirmed, do you commit to doing all that you can within 45 days to encourage the Department of State to provide its determination to the President and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations—consistent with 22 U.S. Code § 2378–1—whether Saudi Arabia has prohibited or otherwise restricted, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance in Yemen?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with the staff of the Office of the Legal Adviser and decision makers within the Department to encourage the Department to convey its official views on this question to the committee within 45 days.

Question 7. If Saudi Arabia has not allowed or facilitated the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians through the port of Hodeidah due to the fact that they or their allies do not control the port, do you believe that would be a violation of, or be inconsistent with, Rule 55 of Customary International Humanitarian Law?

Answer. It is critically important in my view to promote compliance with the law of armed conflict by members of the Saudi-led coalition and by all of our partners. If confirmed, I will be a strong proponent of this view within the Department and with colleagues in other departments and agencies, as well as an advocate for the rule of law and respect for international law.

The starting point for my analysis in response to this question would be to consider the status of the Rule 55 of the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) Study on Customary International Law as a source of authority under international law. Although, as a nominee, I have not had the opportunity to consult with the Department on this important legal issue, I am aware that the Department of State, through its former Legal Adviser, John Bellinger, and the Department of Defense, through its prior General Counsel, William J. Haynes, have in the past raised concerns about the substance and underlying methodology of this study, which were initially set forth in a 2006 letter to the ICRC on this topic.

If confirmed, I would make it a priority to engage with my colleagues in the Office of the Legal Adviser on these important issues. As I mentioned during the hearing I would also welcome the opportunity to engage with interested Members of this committee and staff to discuss these issues, mindful of my professional responsibilities regarding legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 8. Article 14 of the Additional Protocol Two of the Geneva Conventions says the following: "Starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited. It is therefore prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless, for that purpose, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works." If Saudi Arabia has attacked, destroyed, removed, or rendered useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, including objects to help prevent starvation, would that represent a violation of Article 14 by Saudi Arabia?

Answer. As mentioned in my answer to your previous question, I believe that it is critically important to promote compliance with the law of armed conflict by members of the Saudi-led coalition and by all of our partners, and if confirmed I will be a strong proponent of this view within the Department and with colleagues in other departments and agencies, as well as an advocate for the rule of law and respect for international law.

If confirmed, I commit to working with experts in the Department of State and other Departments in order to assess relevant facts and law and provide legal guidance to U.S. Government officials on issues related to the ongoing conflict in Yemen, including the possible application of Article 14 of Additional Protocol II to the Saudi-led coalition's actions. In the situation posed by your question, I would generally agree that if Saudi Arabia or any other state which is a party to Articles 14 of Additional Protocol II has taken actions in an armed conflict to which its Additional Protocol II obligations apply, to "destroy, remove or render useless for that purpose [i.e., for the purpose of starvation of civilians] objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population," that state would be in violation of its obligations under that provision. In order to reach a legal conclusion whether any violation of these principles has occurred in relation to the situation in Yemen, I would, if confirmed, un-

dertake a thorough legal analysis with benefit of the full information available to the Department and the opportunity to consult with my colleagues in the Department on these issues. If confirmed, I would also welcome the opportunity to engage with you and interested Members of this committee and staff to discuss these issues, mindful of my professional responsibilities regarding legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 9. In a September 26, 2017, hearing, I asked Ms. Kaidanow whether she was willing to foreclose the possibility that Saudi Arabia has committed human rights violations in Yemen. She responded, "No, in fact, I think the Saudis themselves have—have indicated that in the past, that they have done some things that they find problematic, and that they are trying to address some of those issues." If Saudi Arabia has engaged "in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights", what prohibitions would be applied with respect to U.S. assistance to Saudi Arabia under 22 U.S.C. 2304?

Answer. I understand that Section 502B of the FAA (22 U.S.C. 2304) restricts security assistance, as defined in subsection (d)(2) for purposes of that provision, to any country the Government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. If Saudi Arabia or any other country has engaged in conduct within the terms of that statute, security assistance to that country would be restricted by the statute.

As I mentioned during my hearing last week, the Office of the Legal Adviser plays a unique role supporting the Department's mission to promote our values, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy around the world. In my view it is critically important to promote compliance with the law of armed conflict by members of the Saudi-led coalition and by all of our partners, and if confirmed I will be a strong proponent of this view within the Department and with colleagues in other departments and agencies, as well as an advocate for the rule of law and respect for international law.

If confirmed, as I mentioned during the hearing I would also welcome the opportunity to engage with you and interested members of this committee and staff to discuss these issues, mindful of my professional responsibilities regarding legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 10. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring within 30 days that your office provides a determination to the Secretary of State whether Saudi Arabia has engaged "in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights" and whether the provisions under 22 U.S.C. 2304 have been triggered?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with the staff of the Office of the Legal Adviser and consulting with relevant experts across the Department and the U.S. Government in order to provide views to the Secretary of State or other decision makers within the Department on these questions within 30 days.

As I mentioned during my hearing last week, the Office of the Legal Adviser plays a unique role supporting the Department's mission to promote our values, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy around the world. In my view it is critically important to promote compliance with the law of armed conflict by members of the Saudi-led coalition and by all of our partners, and if confirmed I will be a strong proponent of this view within the Department and with colleagues in other departments and agencies, as well as an advocate for the rule of law and respect for international law.

Question 11. If confirmed, do you commit to doing all that you can within 45 days to encourage the Department of State to provide this 22 U.S.C. 2304 determination with respect to Saudi Arabia's actions in Yemen to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with the staff of the Office of the Legal Adviser and decision makers within the Department to encourage the Department to convey its official views on this question to the committee within 45 days.

As I mentioned during my hearing last week, the Office of the Legal Adviser plays a unique role supporting the Department's mission to promote our values, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy around the world. In my view it is critically important to promote compliance with the law of armed conflict by members of the Saudi-led coalition and by all of our partners, and if confirmed I will be a strong proponent of this view within the Department and with colleagues in other departments and agencies, as well as an advocate for the rule of law and respect for international law.

Question 12. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring your office within 45 days examines whether Saudi Arabia has committed potential violations in Yemen of any

end-use agreements concerning the use of U.S. origin military equipment provided to Saudi Arabia pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with the staff of the Office of the Legal Adviser and experts in the Department of State and other Departments to examine both the law and facts relevant to end-use agreements concerning use of U.S. origin military equipment provided to Saudi Arabia pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act in relation to the situation in Yemen within 45 days.

Question 13. If violations are found, do you commit to doing all you can to encourage the Department of State to ensure the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is notified promptly in writing regarding those violations?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with experts in the Department of State and other Departments in order to provide legal advice on issues related to compliance with end-use agreements concerning use of U.S. origin military equipment provided to Saudi Arabia pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act and to do all I can to encourage the Department to provide appropriate information to the committee, including in accordance with provisions regarding reporting to Congress under section 3 of the Arms Export Control Act.

Question 14. How do you define the term "assistance" in 22 U.S.C. 2378–1 and does the definition for "security assistance" as defined in 22 U.S.C. 2304 apply to "assistance" in Section 2378–1?

Answer. I understand that the term "assistance" is not defined in section 620I of the FAA (22 U.S.C. 2378–1), although, as I mentioned at my hearing, that term is susceptible to a broad reading. I have not had the benefit of consultations with the Department to understand how this term has been interpreted and applied over time. In contrast, by its terms, section 502B(d) defines "security assistance" only for purposes of section 502B.

If confirmed, I would make it a priority to study this issue further in order to provide legal guidance to State Department decision-makers on these issues. As I mentioned during my hearing, I would also welcome the opportunity to engage with interested members of this committee and staff to discuss these issues, mindful of my professional responsibilities regarding legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 15. If confirmed, do you commit to maintaining an open and regular line of communication with me and my office and doing all you can to ensure the Department of State provides timely and responsive answers to my office on questions related to your responsibilities? If there is a good faith delay in responding, do you commit to keeping my office updated?

Answer. If confirmed, I can assure you that, working with my colleagues in the Office of the Legal Adviser and other colleagues at the Department of State, I would strive to ensure that the Department provides timely and responsive answers to questions raised by you or your staff related to my responsibilities, mindful of my professional responsibilities regarding legal advice to the Secretary of State. I also commit to working with my colleagues at the Department to ensure that your office is kept updated on the status of any outstanding questions from you or your staff. I thank you for your attention to matters of enormous importance to the Department and to the U.S. Government as a whole, and I will welcome the opportunity to consult on these matters with you if I am confirmed.

Follow-up Questions Submitted to Ms. Newstead by Senator Young

Question 1. In your responses to my questions for the record, you wrote the following:

> *Based only on the facts listed above, which include descriptions of actions which have to date prevented delivery of the four replacement cranes to Hudaydah, and the plain language of the provision, it is my judgment that there is a substantial question whether the responsible parties have "prohibited" or "restricted" the delivery of United States humanitarian assistance under the statute. If confirmed as Legal Adviser, I would want to consider additional information before reaching a final legal view and providing advice to policymakers on this issue. Relevant considerations could include, among other things, whether legitimate concerns exist regarding the control of the Hudaydah port by the Houthis and related security risks, or risks that delivery of aid through the port would be compromised.*

This response raises several questions. If confirmed, regarding your comment on "related security risks", I encourage you to examine the logic of an argument that says the Houthis would destroy cranes in a port they control and that are being used to facilitate the delivery of food and medicine for people in areas they control.

I believe the only material security risk to the cranes would be another attack on the port by the Saudi-led coalition.

You write that "risks that delivery of aid through the port would be compromised" would be a relevant consideration. Are you aware of the following testimony by Mr. Matthew Nims, the acting director of the Office of Food for Peace at the United States Agency for International Development on July 18? He said the following (emphasis added):

> *First off, the U.S. Government and USAID and particular in my office, you know, takes any allegations of the diversion of humanitarian activities very seriously. And this is paramount in all of our operations. You know, this humanitarian need as we—this humanitarian need is really been held off by our continued operations that are been crucial through the ports as well as our partners. In this situation we have taken this very seriously, we have investigated this through our partners, we've investigated this to a degree on our own and* **we have had no evidence of any large scale humanitarian diversions occurring at the port at all.** *We are able to say this because of the integrity of our partners and because of the methods that they use as well as our own methods of third-party monitoring and other systems that we employ to ensure that this food gets to where it's supposed to go.*

If confirmed, I encourage your office to not take assertions by the Saudis and others regarding the diversion of humanitarian aid at the port of Hodeidah at face value and instead check with the experts at USAID and the World Food Programme.

Answer. I appreciate your additional perspectives on this question and, if confirmed, I commit, with the benefit of these perspectives, to engaging closely with my colleagues at the Department and at USAID on this important issue. I also believe it is important to take account of the information and perspectives of non-governmental organizations including the World Food Programme, and would do so if confirmed. Finally, I commit to reviewing this issue in depth, if confirmed, and meeting with you within 30 days of my taking up the position of Legal Adviser to share my assessments, consistent with my professional obligations to the Department.

Question 2. You also wrote the following (emphasis added):

> *It would also be relevant in my view to consider the broader circumstances involving the provision of U.S. foreign assistance to Yemen, such as whether the act of preventing delivery of the cranes has* **effectively** *prevented the delivery of* **all** *U.S. foreign assistance to address the crisis, or whether other means of delivering such aid are operating; and the role of the Saudi Government in such efforts.*

Why is the standard "effectively prevented the delivery of all U.S. foreign assistance?" You wrote, "If Saudi Arabia has directly or indirectly restricted the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance, absent a determination under the statute, then U.S. assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act or the Arms Export Control Act would be restricted under this provision." Yet, you then establish a standard of preventing the delivery of "all U.S. foreign assistance?" How do you explain this discrepancy?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to address your concern. As indicated in my response to a previous question, and as you note above, the statutory standard is whether the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance has been directly or indirectly prohibited or restricted by any government. The statutory language does not include a requirement that "all" foreign assistance be directly or indirectly restricted. In the portion of my answer you identify above, I was addressing one of many possible factual circumstances which, if true, could be relevant to analyzing whether the statutory standard has been met. However, I did not intend to suggest that the statute could only be triggered if there was a determination that "all" humanitarian assistance has been prevented. In my view, the statute itself, in setting the standard for triggering the restriction, does not include a requirement that "all" humanitarian assistance be directly or indirectly restricted.

As indicated in my response to a prior question, an assessment whether the assistance restriction under section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act has been triggered is a highly fact-specific inquiry. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to study this issue in greater depth. I commit to reviewing this issue fully, if confirmed, and meeting with you within 30 days of my taking up the position of Legal Adviser to share my assessments, consistent with my professional obligations to the Department.

Question 3. Consistent with your initial responses and your reading of the statute, do you re-affirm that even an indirect Saudi restriction of the transport or delivery

of U.S. assistance would be enough to trigger 22 U.S. Code § 2378–1? Do you agree that the other factors you raised regarding Saudi actions will not change this initial determination and the applicability of 22 U.S. Code § 2378–1, but might inform a subsequent Presidential national security interest exception?

Answer. Yes, I re-affirm, consistent with my initial responses, that section 620I prohibits provision of assistance under the FAA or the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) to a country when it is made known to the President (or the Secretary, under delegated authority) that the Government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance. It is my view that if Saudi Arabia has directly or indirectly restricted the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance, then U.S. assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act or the Arms Export Control Act would be restricted under this provision. I also understand that the provision includes a waiver authority by which assistance may be provided to the country under such circumstances if there is a determination that to do so is in the national interest, and that determination is notified to the relevant Congressional committees. I commit to reviewing this issue fully, if confirmed, and meeting with you within 30 days of my taking up the position of Legal Adviser to share my assessments, consistent with my professional obligations to the Department.

Question 4. If the July 18, 2017, testimony by witnesses from USAID and the World Food Programme is accurate, would you agree that the Saudi-led coalition has at least indirectly restricted the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance in Yemen?

Answer. As indicated in my responses to previous questions, an assessment of whether the assistance restriction under section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act has been triggered is a highly fact-specific inquiry. In my view, certain statements made in that hearing would, if accurate, raise a substantial question whether the responsible parties have indirectly restricted the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance under the statute. As a nominee, I have not had the opportunity to consider the full range of classified and unclassified information available to the Department on this issue, or to consider how the Department has previously interpreted and applied Section 620I. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to study this issue in greater depth, and would certainly consider the testimony of the witnesses at the July 18, 2017 hearing as part of that analysis. I commit to reviewing this issue fully, if confirmed, and meeting with you within 30 days of my taking up the position of Legal Adviser to share my assessments, consistent with my professional obligations to the Department.

Additional Follow-Up Question Submitted to Ms. Newstead by Senator Young

Question 1. Thank you for your responses to my follow-up questions for the record that I received on November 7, 2017. I am grateful for your answers. Overall, I believe your answers to my follow-up questions are substantive and responsive. However, there is one sentence in your response that is concerning and that I hope to clarify.

In response to my questions, you wrote the following (emphasis added):

> *Thank you for the opportunity to address your concern. As indicated in my response to a previous question, and as you note above, the statutory standard is whether the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance has been directly or indirectly prohibited or restricted by any government. The statutory language does not include a requirement that "all" foreign assistance be directly or indirectly restricted. In the portion of my answer you identify above,* **I was addressing one of many possible factual circumstances which, if true, could be relevant to analyzing whether the statutory standard has been met.** *However, I did not intend to suggest that the statute could only be triggered if there was a determination that "all" humanitarian assistance has been prevented. In my view, the statute itself, in setting the standard for triggering the restriction, does not include a requirement that "all" humanitarian assistance be directly or indirectly restricted.*

I am also grateful for this response to my subsequent question:

> *Yes, I re-affirm, consistent with my initial responses, that section 620I prohibits provision of assistance under the FAA or the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) to a country when it is made known to the President (or the Secretary, under delegated authority) that the Government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance. It is my view that if Saudi Arabia has di-*

rectly or indirectly restricted the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance, then U.S. assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act or the Arms Export Control Act would be restricted under this provision.

With the exception of the one emphasized sentence above, I view those answers as responsive and reflective of an accurate understanding of what 22 U.S. Code § 2378–1(a) requires. However, your inclusion of that sentence underscores the concern I have raised and strikes me as inconsistent with the rest of your response. Based on your interpretation of the law, you say that even an indirect restriction of the transport or delivery by Saudi Arabia of U.S. humanitarian assistance would restrict the provision of U.S. assistance to Saudi Arabia under the Foreign Assistance Act or the Arms Export Control Act. Yet, you say that if Saudi Arabia were not restricting "all" assistance that "could be relevant to analyzing whether the statutory standard has been met." That is not consistent with a plain reading of the law, and I am not clear how that statement can be reconciled with the remainder of your responses-unless you are referring only to paragraph (b). Again, I recognize that such a consideration might inform a national security exception under paragraph (b), but it is not relevant to paragraph (a).

Pursuant to 22 U.S. Code § 2378–1(a), do you agree that a direct or indirect restriction of the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance would trigger paragraph (a) regardless of a number of other considerations, including whether "all" humanitarian assistance were being restricted or not?

Do you agree that a variety of other considerations could inform a national security interest exception under paragraph (b) but are not relevant to paragraph (a)?

Answer. I appreciate the opportunity to address your further questions on this issue. Let me first re-affirm, consistent with my prior responses, that by its terms, section 620I prohibits provision of assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act or the Arms Export Control Act to a country when it is made known to the President (or the Secretary, under delegated authority) that the Government of such country prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance. As noted in my prior responses, it is my view that if Saudi Arabia or any other country directly or indirectly prohibits or otherwise restricts the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance, then U.S. assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act and the Arms Export Control Act would be restricted under this provision.

With respect to your first question, I do agree that the direct or indirect prohibition or other restriction of the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance is the relevant question under subsection (a) of the statute; and that the statute does not require that "all" humanitarian assistance has been restricted before the prohibition in subsection (a) can be triggered. Evidence that the transport or delivery of any amount of U.S. humanitarian assistance had been blocked by a foreign government would be highly relevant in determining whether a direct or indirect prohibition or other restriction has occurred under subsection (a) of the statute. If confirmed, I would wish to consider any such evidence, along with any other relevant facts, and prior interpretations of the Department, in providing advice on the application of the statute. With respect to your second question, I also agree that a variety of considerations could inform the national security interest exception under subsection (b) that would not be relevant to determining whether a direct or indirect prohibition or other restriction exists that would trigger subsection (a).

As noted in my response to your prior questions, an assessment of whether the assistance restriction under section 620I has been triggered is a highly fact-specific inquiry. If confirmed, it would be essential for me to have a full understanding of the relevant facts, including with respect to any classified or unclassified information available to the Department on this issue which I have not had the opportunity to consider as a nominee, before reaching a final view on these statutory questions. I commit to you that, if confirmed, I will review these issues in depth, to engage closely with my colleagues at the Department and USAID on these issues, and to meet with you and your staff to share my assessments and consider your views further, consistent with my professional obligations to the Department.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JENNIFER NEWSTEAD BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER MURPHY

Question 1. Congressional authorization of new military actions: If confirmed, you will be required to provide advice and recommendations to the President and Secretary of State regarding the legal basis for potential military action. Do you believe there are situations (other than an imminent threat against the United States) in which the President may use military force against a new adversary, including a sovereign foreign government, without Congressional authorization? In what circumstances do you believe the President is required to seek Congressional authorization to use military force?

Answer. There is no legal question that is more consequential, or more serious, than the question of when and under what circumstances the President would be authorized to use military force. If confirmed, I would expect to consult with my colleagues in the Office of the Legal Adviser as well as with my counterparts in other departments and agencies, including the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel, whenever the United States is faced with the need to consider the use of force.

In general terms, I understand that the Office of Legal Counsel has opined that the President has authority pursuant to Article II of the Constitution as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive to take military action that in nature, scope, and duration does not amount to war and that furthers sufficiently important national interests. Whether a particular use of military force would fall within the President's Article II authority, however, would require a fact-specific assessment at the time the use of military force is contemplated. That said, I have great respect for the critical role played by Congress in authorizing the use of military force. While I recognize that there are times when the President may need to resort to force when necessary to confront an attack or the imminent threat of an attack, I believe that the interests of the nation are best served when the President and the Congress act together to provide a clear and unambiguous legal authorization to support the men and women of our military as they defend our national security interests.

In addition to considering domestic legal issues, if confirmed I would also give careful consideration to whether any proposed use of military force would be consistent with applicable international law, including the body of international law that governs the resort to the use of force (the jus ad bellum) and the law governing the conduct of hostilities (the law of armed conflict or jus in bello).

If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with interested Members of this committee and staff on these important legal issues, consistent with my professional responsibilities when providing legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 2. North Korea: The administration has not so subtly hinted that a major conflict with North Korea may be coming—potentially a nuclear conflict. The administration has neither sought authorization from Congress, nor provided the American public with a legal basis for engaging in a potentially catastrophic nuclear conflict with North Korea. Based on the current facts, do you believe the President has the legal authority to initiate the use of military force against North Korea? In your opinion, would the President need congressional authorization to initiate armed conflict against North Korea?

Answer. There is no legal question that is more consequential, or more serious, than the question of when and under what circumstances the President would be authorized to use military force. If confirmed, I would expect to consult with my colleagues in the Office of the Legal Adviser as well as with my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel, on both the domestic and international law issues raised by your question.

In terms of domestic law, I generally understand that the Office of Legal Counsel has opined that the President's power to employ military force abroad in the absence of specific congressional approval derives from his constitutional responsibility as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive for foreign and military affairs. In particular, the President has authority pursuant to Article II of the Constitution to take military action that in nature, scope, and duration does not amount to war and that furthers sufficiently important national interests. A determination whether any particular use of military force, whether with respect to North Korea or otherwise, would fall within the President's Article II authority would require a fact-specific assessment at the time the use of military force is contemplated. In the absence of an immediate military attack, this assessment would necessarily include whether

the United States is under the threat of an imminent armed attack and what measures would be necessary and appropriate to address that threat. That said, I have great respect for the critical role played by Congress in authorizing the use of military force. While I recognize that there are times when the President may need to resort to force when necessary to confront an attack or the imminent threat of an attack, I believe that the interests of the nation are best served when the President and the Congress act together to provide a clear and unambiguous legal authorization to support the men and women of our military as they defend our national security interests.

In addition to considering domestic legal issues, if confirmed I would also want to give careful consideration to whether any proposed use of military force would be consistent with applicable international law, including the body of international law that governs the resort to the use of force (the jus ad bellum) and the law governing the conduct of hostilities (the law of armed conflict or jus in bello).

If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with interested Members of this committee and staff on these important legal issues, consistent with my professional responsibilities when providing legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 3. Legal justification for Syria strikes: On April 6, 2017, the administration launched military strikes against the Syrian regime. Since then, it has provided no legal rationale to justify the use of force under domestic or international law. Do you believe the strikes against the Syrian regime were legally justified? What is your understanding of the legal basis for these strikes under domestic law? Do you believe these strikes were legal under international law?

Answer. I understand that the President provided a report to Congress regarding this use of force in a letter dated April 8, 2017, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. In that letter, the President explained the strikes were taken to degrade the Syrian military's ability to conduct further chemical weapons attacks and to dissuade the Syrian regime from using or proliferating chemical weapons, thereby promoting the stability of the region and averting a worsening of the region's current humanitarian catastrophe. The letter also explained that the President acted in the vital national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to his constitutional authority to conduct foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

Although, I do not at this time have access to all the information necessary to make any additional assessment of the domestic and international legal basis for the actions beyond what has been identified by the administration to date, if confirmed, I would make it a priority to study this issue further and to consult with my new colleagues at the Department of State and my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies on this matter. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with interested Members of this committee and staff on these important legal issues, consistent with my professional responsibilities when providing legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 4. Documents related to the Syria strikes: A public interest group, the Democracy Project, has filed a lawsuit against the administration to obtain the legal justification for the administration's strikes against the Syrian regime. As part of those proceedings, the federal District Court for the District of Columbia required the Government, (the Departments of Justice, State, and Defense), to expedite the plaintiff's Freedom of Information Act Requests, concluding: "if production is unduly delayed, both [plaintiff] and the public at large will be 'precluded ... from obtaining in a timely fashion information vital to the current and ongoing debate surrounding the legality of' a high-profile government action-namely, military strikes against the Syrian Government. Being closed off from such a debate is itself harm in an open democracy." Do you agree there is a legitimate public interest in disclosing the legal rationale for using military force? If confirmed, will you commit to providing this committee with a detailed and timely explanation of the legal justification for the use of military force—including the memo prepared by the Office of Legal Counsel for the purpose of advising the Attorney General regarding the legal bases for the April 6 strike against the Al Shayrat airfield in Syria?

Answer. I do agree that the public has a legitimate interest in understanding the legal rationale for the use by the United States of military force, and that providing such explanations to the extent possible is an important aspect of supporting legitimate public discussion of the issue. I also recognize that sometimes aspects of that rationale may not be able to be publicly disclosed for national security or other legitimate reasons.

With respect to the legal issues concerning the particular use of force in question, if confirmed I would make it a priority to study this issue further and to consult

with my new colleagues at the Department of State and my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies on this matter. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with interested Members of this committee and staff on these important legal issues, consistent with my professional responsibilities when providing legal advice to the Secretary of State, and mindful of the particular interests of the Department of Justice concerning the nature of legal advice provided by a component of that Department to the Attorney General.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JENNIFER NEWSTEAD BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question 1. On April 6th, President Trump ordered an airstrike on the Shayrat military airbase in Syria. Following the airstrike, Congressman Schiff and I sent a letter to the President asking for the administration's legal justification for the strike (attached). To date, I still have not received a response with the administration's legal justification. Can you please provide me with the legal justification under domestic and international law for the 59 Tomahawk missiles launched on April 6th against targets at the Shayrat airfield in Syria? If unable to answer at this time, will you commit to providing me either a written or in person response within 30 days of being confirmed?

Answer. I understand that the President provided a report to Congress regarding this use of force in a letter dated April 8, 2017, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. In that letter, the President explained the strikes were taken to degrade the Syrian military's ability to conduct further chemical weapons attacks and to dissuade the Syrian regime from using or proliferating chemical weapons, thereby promoting the stability of the region and averting a worsening of the region's current humanitarian catastrophe. The letter also explained that the President acted in the vital national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to his constitutional authority to conduct foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

Although, I do not at this time have access to all the information necessary to make any additional assessment of the domestic and international legal basis for the actions beyond what has been identified by the administration to date, if confirmed, I would make it a priority to study this issue further and to consult with my new colleagues at the Department of State and my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies on this matter. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with interested Members of this committee and staff on these important legal issues, consistent with my professional responsibilities when providing legal advice to the Secretary of State.

Question 2. Thank you for your reply referencing the President's April 8th War Powers notification to Congress. I similarly referenced the President's notification in my letter to the administration that was attached to my original question to you. This letter highlights my concern is that the April 8th War Powers notification does not provide Congress with the information it needs to exercise it constitutional responsibilities nor does it provide a detailed legal analysis or justification for the U.S. strike on Shayrat military airbase in Syria under domestic and international law.

I understand that as a nominee you may not currently have access to all the information necessary to provide an assessment of the domestic and intentional legal basis for the action that the administration undertook, which is why I asked if you would provide me a detailed or written response within 30 days of being confirmed. In your previous response, you did not commit to doing so. For clarity, will you provide me a detailed or written response within 30 days of being confirmed with the legal analysis and justification for the U.S. strike on Shayrat military airbase in Syria under domestic and international law? A yes or no response is requested.

Answer. Thank you for your follow-up question on this issue, and for your consideration in noting that as a nominee I do not currently have access to all the information necessary to provide a detailed response to your question. If I am confirmed, I would make it a priority to consult with my colleagues at the Department of State and my counterparts in other U.S. Government departments and agencies on this matter and I will commit to engaging with you in detail within 30 days. Additionally, as I mentioned during my hearing and in my response to your earlier QFR, I would also welcome the opportunity to engage with interested Members of this

committee and staff as closely as I could to discuss such legal issues, mindful of my professional responsibilities when I provide legal advice to the Secretary of State.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JENNIFER NEWSTEAD BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. I believe the President's decision not to certify Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), without providing any factual or material evidence to warrant a non-certification is extremely reckless. The signal that this move sends to countries like North Korea or other bad actors is the same signal that withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement sent. Withdrawing from these agreements because the President doesn't like them undermines our diplomatic efforts across the globe and sends a message that the United States does not uphold its end of the bargain. Undermining these agreements could do untold damage to the National Security of the United States. Is Iran in technical compliance with the negotiated terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)? If not, please identify specifically which provisions of the agreement it is violating.

Answer. With regard to your question about Iran's technical compliance with the terms of the JCPOA, I understand that the Secretary recently noted that "IAEA reports continue to indicate and confirm that Iran is in technical compliance of the agreement." I am also aware that the administration has expressed its continued concern that Iran has tried to push the limits in the JCPOA and, in the past, has exceeded some limits, such as those related to heavy water. I also understand that the administration has recently concluded, pursuant to the requirements of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (INARA), that the sanctions relief Iran received as part of the JCPOA is not "proportionate" to the specific, limited-duration measures Iran took with respect to terminating its illicit nuclear program, and therefore was unable to provide a required certification to Congress under INARA on that basis.

If confirmed, I intend to examine this issue closely with my colleagues in the Office of the Legal Adviser and across other U.S. Government departments and agencies, so that I can provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice on these matters.

Question 2. Can you explain the legal rationale for the President's recent decision not to certify Iran as complying with the terms of the Iran nuclear agreement?

Answer. It is my understanding that the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (INARA) requires the President to determine every 90 days whether he is able to certify to Congress that certain statutory criteria related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have been met. One of those criteria is that suspension of sanctions with respect to Iran under the agreement is "appropriate and proportionate to the specific and verifiable measures" that Iran has taken with respect to terminating its illicit nuclear program. I understand that the administration recently determined that it was unable to certify compliance with this criteria, because it concluded that the suspension of sanctions pursuant to the JCPOA is not "proportionate" to the specific, limited-duration measures that Iran has taken to date with respect to terminating its illicit nuclear program. If confirmed, I intend to examine this issue closely with my colleagues in the Office of the Legal Adviser and across other U.S. Government departments and agencies, so that I can provide the Secretary with the best possible legal advice on these matters.

Question 3. In your opinion, does the JCPOA provide effective obligations and verification procedures on Iran and safeguards against possible breaches of such obligations? If not, what changes to the JCPOA would provide such assurances?

Answer. I understand that the Secretary of State has made clear that he believes the JCPOA has flaws, and that the administration intends to work closely with Congress to address those concerns, as well as on a broader approach to address malign actions by Iran outside the scope of the JCPOA The Secretary has also said that while the U.S. Government works to fix the JCPOA, it intends to hold Iran strictly accountable to its existing commitments. I am aware that Department has said that, in that regard, it is essential for the IAEA to continue to monitor and verify Iran's activities to the full extent of its authorities. If confirmed, I would provide my best legal advice to the Secretary and the technical experts in the State Department as they work on ways to address those flaws, including by working with Congress on new legislation.

Question 4. What effect could presidential decertification under U.S. law have on U.S. compliance with obligations owed to Iran and the other five parties to the JCPOA, especially if no party other than the United States has found Iranian violations?

Answer. I understand that the administration's recent determination that a certification to Congress required under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (INARA) cannot be made does not mean that the United States is ending its participation in the JCPOA. It is my understanding that the President and Secretary of State have made clear that the United States is continuing to adhere to its commitments under the JCPOA, and will work with Congress to hold Iran strictly accountable to its commitments. I also understand that the administration is not encouraging Congress to pass legislation to reinstate statutory sanctions at this time, which would make it impossible for the United States to continue implementing the full range of its sanctions relief commitments under the deal. If confirmed, I would provide my best legal advice to the Secretary and the technical experts in the State Department on these issues.

Question 5. Please explain what role your office plays in ensuring that the United States continues to meet its obligations under international agreements even after U.S. foreign policy and national interests are no longer aligned with such agreements.

Answer. The role of the Legal Adviser is to provide rigorous and objective legal advice to the Secretary of State, other Department officials, and policymakers across the Federal Government as they formulate and implement the foreign policy of the United States. Providing advice on the obligations of the United States under international agreements is a critical part of that mission. As I noted during my hearing, the Office of the Legal Adviser also plays a unique role supporting the Department's mission to promote our values, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy around the world. Consistent with this role, the Legal Adviser is specifically responsible for advising on the interpretation and application of treaties and other international agreements to which the United States is a party, including the legal obligations of the United States under such agreements, and assisting Department officials in identifying means of advancing U.S. interests in a manner consistent with U.S. domestic and international legal obligations. If confirmed, I will continue the work of the Legal Adviser's Office to promote respect for international law and the rule of law more generally, and to ensure that our pursuit of U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives are informed by a complete understanding of the obligations of the United States under international agreements.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MANISHA SINGH BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. During my tenure at the Foreign Relations Committee, one of the most important pieces of legislation I managed was the 2004 renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which passed and was signed into law. AGOA provides unilateral trade preferences for eligible sub-Saharan African countries, with eligibility standards focused on democracy, human rights and the rule of law in addition to market-based economies. This legislation continues to provide a successful means of encouraging AGOA countries to take ownership of their governance, democracy and human rights. Reports evaluating AGOA have shown improvements in human rights and governance, and eligibility provides a strong incentive for AGOA countries to maintain and improve their records. I feel that country ownership is one of the most effective means of sustainable democracy and human rights.

My prior State Department service includes serving as the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs overseeing the IO human rights portfolio. In this position, I attended meetings of U.N. human rights bodies as the U.S. representative. I worked on matters such as USG supported resolutions that condemned rape as a weapon of war and demanded the release of political prisoners. My contribution was one of maintaining and amplifying the United States as a country that promotes and values human rights.

Question 2. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will foster a culture of leadership that supports professional development of staff, encourages participation in leadership development programs, and ensures that there are opportunities to apply for career-enhancing positions in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. I will encourage employees to participate in the Department's Employee Affinity Groups, such as The Council for Career Enhancement and Professionalization, Executive Women at State, Blacks in Government (Carl T. Rowan Chapter), Hispanic Employees Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies, and the South Asian-American Employee Association. Employee Affinity Groups promote internal networking and career development. They are also helpful in recruitment, retention, skill development, and training.

Question 3. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make sure that EB's supervisors appreciate the importance of ensuring a diverse slate of candidates when filling vacancies. I will highlight the importance of supervisors providing mentoring and career development counseling that helps employees develop the skills necessary for advancement. Identifying those with the potential to assume senior leadership positions five to 10 years before they are ready to assume these positions is also important so that supervisors can help them begin preparing for these roles. There is a wealth of diverse talent within the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs and if I am confirmed I will ensure a deliberate process to cultivate this talent.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. Neither I nor any members of my immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad.

Question 7. The State Department has an important voice in formulating U.S. international economic policy, but is the lead agency in only a few policy areas. Many officials have advocated greater inclusion of international economic issues into decisions on U.S. foreign policy. What is your view on this approach? Will the State Department continue to prioritize the "economic statecraft" agenda of the previous administration, which aimed to elevate economic diplomacy as a central component of U.S. foreign policy?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson has talked about how important the Department's promotion of economic prosperity is for the American people, and for our national security. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of the Bureau for Economic and Business Affairs (EB), I will work to open markets for U.S. businesses around the world and carry out the mission statement of the Bureau: "Economic Diplomacy for America."

EB strengthens U.S. national security by promoting fair and open foreign markets, advocating for U.S. businesses, and developing policies that support prosperity, stability, and security. EB promotes U.S. businesses, exports, and jobs worldwide and provides economic forecasting and analysis that benefits U.S. policymakers. EB is also responsible for developing and implementing foreign policy-related sanctions adopted to counter threats to national security posed by particular activities and countries. Embassies and economic officers worldwide ensure economics plays its proper role in foreign policy. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that economic policy plays an important role the mission of the Department.

Question 8. What is the role of the State Department in formulating and negotiating U.S. positions at the G-8 and G-20 fora?

Answer. The Department of State is a key participant in policy formulation for both the G-7 and G-20 and works closely with the NSC and Treasury in summit preparation and negotiation strategy formulation. The Department's Under Sec-

retary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment (E) has traditionally been the U.S. negotiator in Foreign Affairs Sous-Sherpa meetings for the G-7 with EB coordinating State's input into interagency discussions.

EB advocates for U.S. businesses and American workers by developing policies that support prosperity, stability, and security. These same economic priorities are the foundation for our multilateral negotiations at the G-7 and G-20.

Question 9. Some functions of the Bureau with regard to trade promotion and business advocacy seem to overlap with those of the Department of Commerce and the U.S. Commercial Service. How would you distinguish the difference between activities of the Bureau and other agencies involved in export promotion and support of U.S. interests abroad?

Answer. Along with colleagues across the State Department, EB coordinates and leads the U.S. Government's representation in foreign capitals and at a multitude of international fora to ensure a level playing field for U.S. economic interests. EB ensures that the U.S. business community's perspective is included and reflected in the broader foreign policy decision-making process. U.S. business and industry groups seek EB's and the Department's help with market intelligence to better understand commercial opportunities abroad. In addition, U.S. companies value EB's advocacy not only to promote exports of goods and services, but also to safeguard trillions of dollars of investments in global value chains.

The Foreign Commercial Service has offices in approximately 75 countries, while the State Department, primarily through EB, manages the commercial activities in the remaining diplomatic missions. Together, State and Commerce complement and amplify U.S. Government export promotion efforts overseas.

Question 10. Several major countries, including China, India, Indonesia, and Russia were designated on a "Priority Watch List" by USTR in its latest Special 301 report, which flags serious problems in IP protection and enforcement. On August 18, 2017, USTR also announced a Section 301 investigation into China's protection of U.S. intellectual property rights and forced technology transfer policies. How does the Bureau work to improve the enforcement of IPR in emerging markets like China?

Answer. EB advances U.S. economic interests by promoting intellectual property rights (IPR) around the world in support of 45 million U.S. jobs, more than 50 percent of U.S. exports, and almost 40 percent of U.S. GDP. EB works with U.S. private-sector stakeholders, U.S, Ambassadors, and the interagency to identify IPR challenges, formulate strategies that advance U.S. interests, and engage internationally. The bureau also manages the State Department's contributions to the Special 301 Report to Congress, an annual review of global IP protection and enforcement. EB works with U.S. missions in developing and emerging markets to improve weaknesses in IP enforcement regimes by developing action plans, supporting public awareness campaigns, and raising IP concerns with host governments and civil society, including in China, India, and other large markets. The bureau is also an active participant in the ongoing Section 301 China investigation to ensure the Department's contributions are incorporated in deliberations and in the final report.

Question 11. In early 2017, the United States withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the comprehensive mega-regional trade deal between the United States, Japan, and ten other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Meanwhile, several TPP members and other countries in the region, including China, are pursuing their own bilateral deals and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), an agreement that is not expected to be as high standard as the TPP. In the absence of the TPP, what should be the strategy to advance U.S. strategic and economic interests in the region?

Answer. By withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the President sent a clear signal that the United States would take a new approach to trade issues, and paved the way for potential bilateral talks with the remaining TPP countries.

The United States remains actively and vitally engaged in the Asia-Pacific region. President Trump will be travelling to the region in November, including to the APEC Leaders Meetings, to advance a range of economic and national security priorities with our partners.

Question 12. The administration plans to prioritize bilateral trade negotiations over regional or multilateral deals. What does a shift in U.S. trade policy from mega-regional agreements such as the TPP and T-TIP mean for the U.S. ability to shape global rules? What do you believe should be the balance between U.S. regional and multilateral trade efforts?

Answer. The administration's goal is to negotiate trade agreements that benefit all Americans. Vigorous enforcement of existing trade agreements—both bilateral FTAs and multilateral agreements under the WTO—is also critical to maintaining support for free and fair trade. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and other agencies to advance U.S. economic interests. I will seek to pursue any opportunity that maximizes benefits for U.S. companies and the American people.

Question 13. What are the Bureau's responsibilities with regard to combating terrorism finance? What successes have been achieved in building international cooperation in this regard?

Answer. EB works closely with the Department of Treasury to oversee a broad range of anti-money laundering and counter terrorism finance activities designed to degrade the funding of terrorist groups around the globe including ISIS. EB co-leads with Treasury a multilateral Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS Counter-ISIS Finance Working Group that brings together 39 countries to identify and counter ISIS' efforts to generate revenue and cut it off from the financial system. EB also coordinates State Department review of and provides foreign policy guidance for proposed Treasury designations of individuals and entities providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224.

EB also leads, and funds, the Department's engagement with foreign governments on Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Terrorist Financing (AML/CFT) issues through the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and FATF-style regional bodies which promote implementation of international standards and best practices on countering terror financing. The efforts to counter terrorist finances have helped degrade ISIS's capacities.

Question 14. The United States is signatory to the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, which focus on preventing and criminalizing corruption and providing cooperation among signatory countries to recover stolen assets. What does the United States do to help countries implement such conventions? Have these efforts been successful?

Answer. The Anti-Bribery Convention has helped build a coalition against foreign bribery, allowing U.S. businesses to better compete in international markets. The United States promotes the commitments of the Convention through the OECD's Working Group on Bribery (WGB), where we have shared best practices such as the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, the prohibition of the tax deductibility of bribes, and corporate liability to combat corrupt practices. U.S. implementation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act forms the basis of the Convention. Due to active U.S. engagement and leadership, the WGB has become an effective tool for pressuring other major economies to strengthen and enforce their foreign bribery laws. The WGB is especially successful in the anti-corruption area. International organizations call its tough peer review and relentless follow-up requirements the "gold standard" of anti-corruption monitoring.

The State Department leads the interagency in using the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) as leverage to encourage countries to fulfill their international anticorruption commitments. This is done in multilateral forums and bilaterally, using foreign assistance funds in some cases. The funding supports capacity building for anticorruption enforcement and development and implementation of anticorruption policies. Bilateral programs reinforce the Convention through programs and assistance focused on both preventative efforts and enforcement. On asset recovery, EB promotes the UNCAC as the global legal framework. In this context, EB supports capacity building and case coordination efforts through regional and bilateral programs.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MICHAEL T. EVANOFF BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. The Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) is the law enforcement arm of the Department of State, and as such is charged with investigating illegal passports or visas. Visa and passport fraud is often intertwined with other illegal activities, such as human smuggling, sex trafficking, terrorism, and money laundering.

In the early 1990s, while serving as a new Assistant Regional Security Officer (ARSO) in the Philippines, I was part of a successful DSS/Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) joint operation that broke a human sex trafficking ring which was using illegal visas. At the time, underage Philippine women were being lured to California and then further into the United States, where they were forced into becoming sex workers. Utilizing our overseas expertise in the Philippines, as well as our Philippine police contacts, we helped arrest the Philippine and American ring leaders. The operation ended a multimillion-dollar operation and freed the women who had been trapped.

If confirmed, I will be strongly committed to maintaining and enhancing DSS's partnership with police agencies around the world to thwart and apprehend criminals and cartels that abuse human rights via transnational crimes.

In terms of promoting democracy, as Director of Security for NATO, from 2007 to 2011, I played a lead role in uncovering a previously undetected Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) operation. I recommended the expulsion of two Russian NATO Mission Intelligence Officers. President Obama approved my recommendation, which led to the first and only expulsion of Russians from a NATO Partnership for Peace mission.

Question 2. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. Diversity among the senior ranks of Diplomatic Security (DS) has ebbed and flowed over time, and will be one of the factors considered when making assignments to leadership positions. Though perhaps not in the numbers we would hope, the leadership of DS has been made up of a diverse group of men and women from within our ranks that consistently perform admirably and often move on to prestigious positions within the Government or in private industry. Over time, the hiring practices of DS and the Department as a whole have grown to actively seek out a more diverse workforce. With an eye to the future, a Recruitment Unit, comprised of active duty DS Foreign Service members, has been established to spearhead outreach and recruitment to diversity groups. My goal is to recruit a more diverse Foreign Service cadre, and if confirmed, I will work to ensure that this goal is reflected in our future senior leadership.

If confirmed, in keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, I will ensure all DS supervisors at all of our missions have access to and avail themselves of opportunities to receive regular formal training and regular guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion to sensitize them to these important issues and maximize diverse talents in our workforce.

Question 3. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 4. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. No, we do not.

Question 6. Will the DS A/S have independent access to the Secretary of State at any time to discuss security-issues that he deems require the Secretary's immediate attention?

Answer. According to Section 103 of the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017—"The Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security shall report directly to the Secretary, without being required to obtain the approval or concurrence of any other official of the Department, as threats and circumstances require."

If confirmed, I am confident that I will have independent access to the Secretary of State when required.

Question 7. What steps has Diplomatic Security taken to ensure that its positions are filled with persons at the appropriate level of experience?

Answer. The Department of State assigns a grade level to each overseas position. As the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) contemplates assigning agents to Regional Security Officer (RSO) and other positions, it ensures to the maximum extent possible that individuals at certain grade levels are assigned to positions with corresponding grades. Prior to the assignment of any DS employee to a new position, a panel of senior officers reviews his or her qualifications to ensure that the employee is the best possible match for the position.

Question 8. What is State doing to further close the gaps in Diplomatic Security's Language Designated Positions?

Answer. As a 26-year veteran of the Department of State, I have seen firsthand the value of having certain foreign language skills while assigned overseas. While I have been absent from the Department since 2011, it is my understanding that the Department has recently created curricula in various target languages—such as Arabic, for example—designed specifically for Diplomatic Security (DS) personnel assigned to High Threat, High Risk posts overseas.

Question 9. Please discuss any impacts you believe that the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations' transition from the Standard Embassy Design to Design Excellence has had on the security of U.S. embassies. In your view, has the construction of embassies using the Design Excellence approach unnecessarily delayed the move of staff from facilities that do not meet current security standards to new, secure facilities? Please explain your reasoning.

Answer. Whether the Department utilizes Standard Embassy Design or Excellence in Diplomatic Facilities, every diplomatic facility constructed meets the Department's security requirements and those codified in law.

Embassies differ in the size and operational requirements, as well as their security needs. Each new embassy should be designed to meet these operational requirements. If confirmed I will work closely with Overseas Building Operations and ensure that the Department implements a strategy that delivers safe, secure functional facilities as quickly and cost effectively as possible.

Question 10. What steps has State taken to mitigate the risks to costs and schedules associated with the Excellence approach to building new embassies?

Answer. I am not yet aware of the specific management steps the Department may be undertaking concerning cost and schedule of new embassy projects. I do believe that, embassies differ in the size and operational requirements, as well as their security needs. Each new embassy should be designed to meet these operational requirements. Should I be confirmed as the next Assistant Secretary of Diplomatic Security, I will work with Overseas Building Operations to execute projects in the most cost effective, expedient, and risk adverse manner.

Question 11. To what extent do State's facilities have or require waivers and exceptions to security standards? What steps has State taken to address weaknesses in its waivers and exceptions program?

Answer. According to the Department's Foreign Affairs Manual, the Secretary of State may waive statutory collocation and setback requirements should it be determined that it is in the national interest of the United States.

Also, I understand that new facilities must meet all Overseas Security Policy Board security standards whether constructed or acquired by purchase or lease. Every attempt must be made to acquire sites or new facilities that meet, or can be upgraded to meet, physical security standard. If compliance with one or more standards is not possible for a specific building, an exception to this standard may be applied.

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is tasked with ensuring the security of American diplomatic missions and personnel. Should I be confirmed as the next Assistant Secretary of Diplomatic Security, I will work tirelessly every day to ensure all those serving overseas under Chief of Mission authority live and work in facilities that are built to the highest standards. In situations where a waiver or exception is needed, I'll ensure DS puts in place the necessary mitigation measures to ensure the Department's personal are safe.

Question 12. How extensively does State rely on temporary facilities that have been in place for extended periods of time? What progress has State made in creating additional guidance relating to temporary facilities?AnswerThe Department of State has one set of standards in place for its facilities in to ensure proper physical security protection for its personnel. Personnel cannot or should not occupy facilities until they are completed and there is a certification that the standards have been

met or that an appropriate waiver or exception is in place. Where waivers or exceptions are issued, appropriate mitigation strategies also need to be in place.

Question 13. To what extent has State improved its compliance with security standards at overseas residences? Have the standards implemented in July 2014 affected the number of waivers and exceptions requested?

Answer. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) continually reviews and re-evaluates the physical security posture of our missions. There have been multiple changes to security requirements in response to incidents and DS identifying the changing tactics of our adversaries and newly identified vulnerabilities. Changes to DS's policies are initiated by the bureau in collaboration with OBO and vetted through the Overseas Security Policy Board, and are then reflected in the 12 FAH-5 and 12 FAH-6. If confirmed, I will work to ensure our security standards are continually updated in order to mitigate against evolving threats faced by our residents overseas.

Given my absence from the Department since 2011, I cannot currently comment on the July 2014 standards. However, if confirmed, I look forward to engaging further with the committee on this issue.

Question 14. In your view, do recent incidents affecting U.S. diplomatic personnel at their residences in Cuba demonstrate increased risk that would-be attackers may target personnel at locations they perceive as less secure, including residences? If confirmed, what further steps, if any, would you recommend DS take to ensure diplomatic residences and other potential "soft targets" are secure? Would such steps include implementing GAO recommendations to DS to improve risk management processes in this area?

Answer. I understand the Department has reduced its diplomatic presence in Cuba to ensure the safety of its personnel in response to these health attacks. I also understand, based on public information, that the Department is currently unable to identify the source of the attacks, and believes that U.S. citizens may also be at risk if they travel to Cuba.

In general, the danger from terrorists and criminals operating outside of our facilities is best countered by well-informed individuals who conscientiously follow established personal security practices. I understand the Department makes every effort to facilitate employees' knowledge, including contractors, of best security practices through training, constant communication, and various off-compound security measures. If confirmed, I intend to thoroughly examine all current security practices pertaining to diplomatic residences and other potential "soft targets," and evaluate what additional security measures may be required.

Question 15. What steps has State taken to ensure that posts conduct residential physical security surveys and request security exceptions, when needed, in a timely manner?

Answer. According to the Foreign Affairs Manuel (FAM), the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is responsible for providing a secure environment for the residences of U.S. citizen direct-hire employees and their eligible family members sent abroad to conduct official business for the U.S. Government at Foreign Service posts. The regional security officer (RSO) or post security officer under the direction of the chief of mission, deputy chief of mission, or principal officer, has primary responsibility for inspection and validation of the suitability of housing from a security point of view.

Before a specific house or apartment is leased, a security survey must be conducted. The survey is used to determine whether the dwelling meets, or can be modified to meet Department security standards. The security survey should be a major factor in the decision lease or reject a proposed property. Surveys are required to be updated every five years if property is retained in the housing inventory.

The residential physical security survey is an important tool for the RSO that must be used in order to ensure Department personnel are housed in safe and secure facilities. Should I be confirmed as the next Assistant Secretary of Diplomatic Security, I will work to ensure DS's RSOs complete these surveys on time.

Question 16. To what extent has State adapted its Soft Targets Security Upgrade Program in light of recent public terrorist attacks?

Answer. The Department's Soft Target security upgrade program began in 2003 to provide funding to qualified overseas schools and eligible chartered employee association facilities for physical security upgrades to mitigate terrorism and violent crime. The Overseas Building Operations (OBO), in coordination with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS), evaluates and approves requested upgrades for funding. Typical upgrades include closed circuit TV systems, public address systems, perimeter wall upgrades, DS-approved shatter-resistant window film, and security light-

ing. I understand that the program does not fund upgrades to non-real property items, such as school buses, nor does it provide funding for staff or guards.

The Department also works to proactively share information through its personnel at post, the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) and Consular Affairs' Directorate of Overseas Citizen's Services. Specifically, the Department disseminates classified threat reporting and assessments to diplomatic posts that allow RSOs and Emergency Action Committee members to make informed decisions about threat mitigation, to include providing information to private American interests. OSAC's Global Support Unit obtains and provides unclassified warnings to private U.S. citizen and business interests, corporations, NGOs, and faith based groups when they are identified as targets in classified threat reporting. Finally, the Department's American Citizen Services Division drafts and disseminates unclassified language for travel warnings, alerts, and emergency messages for use by private U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad. Language in these products regularly highlights concerns regarding terrorist plots against soft targets.

Should I be confirmed as the next Assistant Secretary of Diplomatic Security, I look forward to working with OBO to leverage the Soft Target Security Upgrade program to counter potential soft target attacks in the future.

Question 17. What efforts is State taking to ensure that U.S. personnel are in compliance with all applicable security training requirements, including mandatory HTSOS and FACT training?

Answer. It is paramount that Department personnel receive the necessary security training prior to arriving at post. The Foreign Affairs Counter Threat course prepares U.S. Government personnel working at U.S. embassies and consulates for situations they may face globally and in potentially volatile regions. I understand the Department will make this course mandatory for all chief of mission personal serving overseas by January 2019. I am fully supportive of this requirement and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that every official American receives this training prior to arriving at post.

Question 18. Does State have the capacity to train the number of U.S. personnel required to take Diplomatic Security-provided FACT training?

Answer. Yes, I believe that the Department currently has the capacity to train the personnel required to take this training. I look forward to the completion of construction of the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett, Virginia, which should address the rapidly growing student population and future projected training needs.

Question 19. What steps is State taking to reinforce information covered in new arrival briefings with U.S. personnel and their families?

Answer. The Regional Security Officer sends out regular security notices that remind post members of security programs and procedures and ensures that employees are informed of changes in a post's security environment in a timely manner. Posts also conduct regular drills to reinforce emergency planning information provided during new arrival briefings.

Question 20. How much progress has State made ensuring that (1) overseas posts annually update their EAPs and (2) Diplomatic Security comprehensively reviews key EAP sections?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) continue to be created and tracked in the Crisis and Emergency Planning Application. I will ensure Diplomatic Security's Emergency Planning branch consistently monitors which posts are overdue on their EAPs and actively works with the posts and the Department's regional bureaus to ensure comprehensive annual updates to EAPs are finalized in a timely manner.

Question 21. What efforts is Diplomatic Security making to ensure that posts complete and report completion of required crisis and evacuation drills within required time frames?

Answer. Regional Security Officers (RSOs) overseas must record the completion of their drills in a SharePoint site that can be reviewed by their DS desk officers in Washington. The desk officers review drill compliance on a regular basis and work with the RSOs at post to ensure their posts are compliant with their drill requirements and appropriate emergency action officers lead drills and they receive full post participation.

Question 22. What steps is State taking to ensure that overseas posts complete required lessons learned reports following evacuations and submit those reports to State headquarters for analysis?

Answer. It is my understanding that in 2013, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) created the Operations Planning Unit. The Unit is responsible for creating comprehensive, innovative solutions to complex Bureau-level operational planning requirements. An element of this unit is the Operations Research and Analysis office, which provides global operations research and analysis support to DS while advising the bureau on the conduct and development of After Action Reviews—a version of a lessons learned document. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that DS develops and promulgates immediate lessons learned from attacks overseas and trend analysis in support of major events planning, Department of Defense (DoD) engagements, and Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports.

Question 23. To what extent is DOD postured with adequate forces and equipment to ensure support to U.S. missions in crisis situations?

Answer. The partnership between the Department of State and the Department of Defense (DOD) to ensure mission security has always been strong. It is my understanding that the relationship has grown significantly stronger in recent years. If confirmed, I will actively work with my DOD colleagues to ensure that mission security continues to stay a top priority.

Question 24. What is the progress of increasing MSG detachments at identified diplomatic facilities? What challenges exist to providing the personnel or support needed for these additional units?

Answer. Since 1948, Marine Security Guards (MSGs) have been a vital part of the protection of personnel, equipment, and classified information overseas. It is my understanding that the Department and the Marine Corps have made significant progress in increasing the size and number of MSG detachments. In my experience, the usual limiting factor to increasing a detachment's size is leasing or building housing that meets the detachment's space requirements and the Department's security standards for a Marine residence.

Question 25. What steps have been taken to ensure that recent State and DOD policy and procedure updates are institutionalized and readily available in future emergencies?

Answer. Having been absent from the Department since 2011, I am not currently in a position to effectively characterize various steps taken to ensure the most recent Department of State and DOD policy and procedure updates are institutionalized and readily available in future emergencies. If confirmed, however, I will ensure that all policy and procedures agreed upon by the Department and DOD are understood and briefed regularly to all DS personnel.

Question 26. Given State's numerous facilities worldwide and extensive use of contractors, what unique information security challenges, if any, does it face? How does it manage its global cybersecurity program?

Answer. The Department strives to maintain acceptably high employee to contractor ratios, at all of its facilities worldwide. In terms of managing the global cybersecurity program, every overseas mission and domestic bureau has a trained Information Systems Security Officer on duty, as well as Foreign Service Regional Cybersecurity Officers assigned overseas for additional subject matter expertise. All embassy systems are connected back to the United States, where cybersecurity analysts monitor the department's networks 24/7 for adversarial activity.

Question 27. Given the rapidly changing nature of technology, how does State assess and address threats to its systems and users from changing cyber threats?

Answer. The Department has a broad array of tools at its disposal to effectively assess and address constantly evolving cyber threats. It is my understanding that within DS, a new Directorate for Cyber and Technology Security (CTS) has been created and its structure builds upon the proven DS global "defense-in-depth" cybersecurity program by unifying the Department's cyber threat intelligence, incident response, and cyber forensics teams to ensure that all matters related to illegal and/or malicious cyber activity are reviewed in a fully coordinated manner. This system expedites reporting to law enforcement and intelligence consumers, delivers expert technical support for counterintelligence and data loss investigations, and ensures swift response on all cybersecurity events.

If confirmed, I will ensure that DS continues to maintain and enhance its core cyber and technology programs.

Question 28. How will the new Directorate for Cyber and Technology Security improve State's capability to address cybersecurity issues?

Answer. Having been absent from the Department since 2011, I am not currently in a position to effectively characterize this new Directorate. However, if confirmed, I commit to keeping with the recent Office of Management and Budget management

reform directives and ensuring that the Directorate for Cyber and Technology Security enables the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) to more fully leverage its advanced technology and operational security expertise and ensure that DS is poised to address cutting-edge security challenges such as insider threats while continuing to maintain a state-of-the-art cybersecurity program to detect, react, and respond to cyber-based threats targeting the Department's networks and information.

Question 29. To what extent, if any, does assigning CISO responsibilities to multiple bureaus increase State's risk for duplication, overlap, or fragmentation of information security responsibilities?

Answer. The Department is uniquely structured with a professional security and law enforcement organization that has developed a mature, robust cybersecurity program over the past three decades. While I have been absent from the Department since 2011, my understanding is that this DS cyber team provides advanced threat analysis, network monitoring, cyber investigation support, penetration testing, vulnerability analysis, and cyber risk assessment, all skills which complement the IT security and system hygiene duties performed by the CISO team. Respective roles and responsibilities are carefully delineated, unambiguous, and periodically reviewed and reaffirmed by the CIO and the Diplomatic Security Assistant Secretary. If confirmed, I am committed to strengthening the Department's cyber security efforts by continuing these periodic reviews in coordination with the CIO.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MICHAEL T. EVANOFF BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question 1. As you well know, State Department employees work tirelessly around the globe to keep America safe and secure. State Department employees don't get enough credit for the expeditionary diplomatic work they do, often operating in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions to advance America's interests. However, if our diplomats cannot leave the compound, they cannot do the important work necessary to advance American foreign policy.

- How do you balance the security of State Department employees with allowing them the access beyond embassy walls that they need to successfully accomplish America's mission?

Answer. Operating overseas presents unique security challenges. In the face of ever-evolving threats, I believe the Department strives to provide the most secure environment possible for the conduct of America's foreign policy and though there is never a complete guarantee of safety, I believe that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) makes every effort to ensure all Department of State personnel, including contractors, are aware of potential risks and trained accordingly.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Diplomatic Security Service continues to makes prudent risk management decisions that allow for effective diplomacy while still proving for the safety and security of those we are entrusted to protect.

Question 2. As you well know, State Department employees work tirelessly around the globe to keep America safe and secure. State Department employees don't get enough credit for the expeditionary diplomatic work they do, often operating in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions to advance America's interests. However, if our diplomats cannot leave the compound, they cannot do the important work necessary to advance American foreign policy.

- Do you believe that "expeditionary diplomacy" is the new normal? If so, how can you facilitate it through increasing access for State Department employees beyond the walls of our embassies?

Answer. It is paramount that the Department be able to engage diplomatically on a broad range of issues and fronts. Doing this work requires a diplomatic presence in some of the most difficult and dangerous environments in the world, including active conflict zones. While we must acknowledge the inherent risk of carrying out diplomacy in certain areas, it is important to leverage capabilities provided by the interagency that allows the Department to operate safely in such zones.

If confirmed, I am committed to working within the interagency to ensure that the foreign affairs community has a safe and secure platform to carry out the engagement required to advance our national security interests. While risk can never be completely eliminated from our diplomatic duties, regardless of the threat level, we must always work to mitigate it.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Rob Portman, presiding.

Present: Senators Portman [presiding], Gardner, Isakson, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, and Booker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROB PORTMAN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OHIO

Senator PORTMAN. This hearing is called to order.

We thank the nominees for being here, and before we turn to opening statements, I want to take just a moment to introduce these nominees, the witnesses who will be asked to fill really important roles at the State Department.

First, Steven Goldstein, the President's nominee to be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Steven comes to us from the private sector where he served as Senior Vice President of BP Global Solutions. He has been there since 2012. In addition to developing marketing communications, data science, and social media initiatives at a number of large companies, including Alliance Bernstein, Dow Jones & Company, Mr. Goldstein also served at the Department of the Interior and was a staffer in the House of Representatives.

Sean Lawler is the President's nominee to serve as Chief of Protocol. Mr. Lawler currently serves as Director for Visits, Planning, and Diplomatic Affairs at the National Security Council and prior to that had a distinguished career at the Department of Defense, including a tour as head of the Office of Visits and Protocol at U.S. Cyber Command.

Lisa Johnson is a career Foreign Service officer and the President's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Peoples Republic Namibia. Currently charge at the U.S. Embassy in Nassau, Bahamas, Ms. Johnson has served at U.S. diplomatic posts around the world including two in Africa, as well as in important national security positions in Washington including the National Security Council.

Rebecca Gonzales, also a career Foreign Service officer, has been nominated to serve as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. She too is a career Foreign Service officer with a distinguished background, currently Chief of Staff at the Bureau of Administration at

the State Department, and has also held a number of other senior roles that have developed her expertise on African issues.

Last but not least is James Randolph Evans, and I am going to ask my colleague from Georgia, who is always articulate and much better at the phone than I am.

Senator ISAKSON. What an entrance that is.

Senator PORTMAN. Yes. He is getting a phone call from the Secretary of State telling him what he should say in this introduction apparently.

Senator Isakson, the introduction is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHNNY ISAKSON, U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Senator ISAKSON. Chairman Portman and Ranking Member Coons, thank you very much. It is an honor to be here.

You know, I was asked one time when I was introduced as the senior Senator from Georgia what exactly does a senior Senator do. I said, well, when somebody important from your State comes to town and they are nominated for a position, you get to introduce them. So that is what a senior Senator does.

I have a real privilege today to introduce a Georgian who is a longtime friend of mine, a distinguished attorney from my State, a man who married way over his head in more ways than one, and is somebody I am proud today to recommend as President Trump's nominee to be Ambassador to Luxembourg.

Randy Evans is a senior partner in the firm of Dentons in their financial services and institutions practice. Dentons is the largest law firm in the world. There is no better qualification that you could ask for for somebody to go to a place like Luxembourg, which is the second largest domicile next to the United States of America, financial instruments and institutions. So it is an important country for our country in a lot of ways. And Randy is exactly the type of person you want to have in that country representing the United States of America.

I could tell you where he graduated from college. I could tell you all kinds of things about him, but I will tell you three things.

One, his wife Linda is a beautiful, talented person who is a dear friend of mine and has been for years. One of the true joys I have in public service is going to events that I have to go to because I get to go to and be around Randy, around Linda. They are a great couple.

Secondly, he has been a big help to me personally. In fact, he played the Democratic nominee for Governor, Zell Miller, when I ran for Governor of Georgia in 1990 and Zell Miller beat me, but he played Zell in the mock debates that we did. I was a real estate salesman, not a lawyer. So I was not used to taking the argumentative approach to debate. I was used to trying to always sell. But Randy taught me the tougher edge as well and made me a better man in that campaign and probably was ultimately responsible for me winning a few debates later on after I got my hat handed to me during that one. But I learned a lot from Randy and he taught me an awful lot.

But he is also a Georgia Bulldog, and I just have to say, Senator Booker, that on the day after the Georgia Bull Dogs were named

the number one football team in the country, it is important to be introducing a graduate from the University of Georgia, Randy Evans. [Laughter.]

Senator ISAKSON. So for many reasons, our football team, his talent, his gift to Georgia, his wonderful wife, and the service he gives to our State and our country, I am proud to introduce President Trump's nominee for the ambassadorship to Luxembourg, Randy Evans, distinguished attorney from the State of Georgia. Randy, welcome.

Senator PORTMAN. I thank my colleague from Georgia, as I predicted, an articulate and very personal introduction. So, again, welcome to you, Mr. Evans.

I would like to turn to my colleague, Senator Coons, for any opening remarks, after which we are going to hear briefly from our witnesses and have a chance to get into a dialogue. Senator Coons?

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to my dear, good friend, Senator Isakson, as well my colleague, Senator Booker.

Thank you to all of you and to your families for your willingness to step forward and serve our Nation. Some of you have been doing so for a career. Some of you have been doing it in other ways in your home States or communities.

I was first the chair of the Africa Subcommittee when I came 7 years ago, and so I am particularly interested in those who will serve or who may have the opportunity to serve in Namibia and in Lesotho. But all of you are stepping forward whether in Europe or in a critical position or in public diplomacy. And I just wanted to open by saying our diplomats around the world face challenging environments, face opportunities to move our values forward, and I am grateful for the chance to join Senator Portman here today and hearing your testimony and greeting and welcoming your families and thanking you for your willingness to serve.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Senator Coons.

And to our witnesses, you have all submitted written copies of your statements. Those will be included in the record. So I ask you to try to keep your remarks to a couple of minutes, and then again we will have a chance to have a little dialogue back and forth about some of the issues in some of the roles that you will be playing if you are confirmed.

I would like to start with Mr. Goldstein, then Mr. Lawler, then Ms. Johnson, then Ms. Gonzales, then Mr. Evans. I am told that is the appropriate protocol. So Lawler will appreciate that. So with that, Mr. Goldstein.

STATEMENT OF IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Chairman Portman, Ranking Member Coons, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today.

I am deeply grateful to President Trump and to Secretary Tillerson for placing their confidence in me. I have spent the bulk of my career helping senior leaders in government and the private

sector tell their stories. Now, to have the opportunity to help America tell its story to the world is the honor of a lifetime.

I am proud to say my spouse, Bill Popeleski, is here with me today, and I could not do this without his love and support.

Every day we see stories of Americans who endeavor to make the world a better place. Countless individuals across the globe benefit from our generosity and compassion. Yet, those who seek to undermine America do so by spreading misinformation about our people and our objectives. To tell the real story of America, we must speak with one voice to people where they listen. We must ensure that the State Department is harnessing the power of new technologies as they develop. We must also do everything we can to combat the radical ideologies that threaten Americans at home and abroad. I feel this deeply because I have seen firsthand the heartbreak that occurs when a malign force takes root and diplomacy fails to stop it.

In January 2002, when I led communications for Dow Jones, "Wall Street Journal" reporter, Daniel Pearl, was kidnapped in Pakistan. For weeks, we worked around the clock to bring Danny home. It fell to me to tell his parents how their son died. Danny's death was a stark example of the personal tragedy that lies in the wake of every terrorist act.

The Department's Global Engagement Center is working to win the war of ideas that underpin terrorism. That must include addressing the ecosystem of thought that justifies killing civilians for political ends, as well as engaging the technology companies to identify and intervene against those who are likely to commit violence.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues around the world to enhance America's reputation and advance America's interests. Bringing diverse ideas and people together in common purpose has been a hallmark of America for nearly 230 years, and our example can inspire hope in others.

Thank you again for inviting me to speak with you today.

[Mr. Goldstein's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN

Chairman Portman, Ranking Member Coons, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today.

I am deeply grateful to President Trump and to Secretary Tillerson for placing their confidence in me. I've spent the bulk of my career helping senior leaders in government and in the private sector tell their stories. Now, to have the opportunity to help America tell its story to the world is the honor of a lifetime.

My spouse, Bill Popeleski, is here with me today and I could not do this without his love and support. I am also grateful to my father, Bernard Goldstein, who set an example of civic engagement through his involvement in our hometown of Nashville; and my late mother, Sandra, who I'm sure is smiling down today.

I would also like to thank the men and women who have previously served as the State Department's Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. I hope to build on their successes to enhance the mission-critical work of the State Department's global public diplomacy team.

One of the benefits of a career in communications is the opportunity to speak with people from all walks of life. Every day on the news, we see stories of people who, in their own way, give back to their country and endeavor to make the world a better place. Those who seek to undermine America do so by spreading misinformation about our people and our objectives. We can fight these efforts by inspiring the world with our shared humanity and our great compassion.

Vast numbers of children are orphaned by disease and war. Their caregivers may feel a bond with Americans like Jody Thompson, a police officer in Poteau, Oklahoma, who adopted a malnourished boy named John, whom he rescued from an abusive home.

Where children with disabilities are treated as second-class citizens, their parents can find strength and hope in Americans like Sonja Robinson and Mikey Brannigan. A few years ago, Sonja, a well-respected coach, moved across the country to train Mikey, who has autism. Mikey, with Sonja's support, recently won two golds and a silver at the Para World Championships.

Sonja and Jody exemplify how we live out our ideals at home, and it's these same ideals that motivate us to be a source of hope around the world.

We need to tell this story.

We need to show how America is leading the fight against AIDS and malaria, in places where these diseases take their deadliest toll.

We need to show how America is bringing educational opportunity to girls and boys in nations where schooling is still seen as a privilege and not a right. From textbooks to scholarships to coding academies, America is empowering the world through education.

We need to show how America is often the first nation to provide aid when disaster strikes. Through government agencies such as USAID, through our robust private sector, and in our own capacity as individuals, Americans ease suffering and help rebuild lives in every corner of the globe every day.

To tell these stories, we must ensure that the State Department is using every tool available, and can harness the power of new technologies as they develop. Consistent with the President's budget and the Secretary's priorities, we should aspire to have a digital and technology profile that rivals the best companies in Silicon Valley. And in an era when people everywhere have access to vast information sources, we must speak to people where they listen.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department's very talented career officials to ensure that we are speaking with one clear, consistent, and compelling voice. Where we see evidence of success, I want to build on it and scale it to other parts of our mission. With the right structures in place, we can respond more rapidly and with greater clarity to events anywhere they unfold.

I also want to ensure that we're doing everything we can to combat the radical ideologies that threaten Americans at home and abroad. I feel this deeply, because I have seen firsthand the heartbreak that occurs when a malign force takes root and diplomacy fails to stop it.

In January 2002, when I led communications for Dow Jones, Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl was kidnapped while on assignment in Pakistan. For weeks, we worked round-the-clock to bring Danny home. It fell to me to tell his parents how their son died. Danny's death was a stark example of the personal tragedy that lies in the wake of every terrorist act.

As our diplomats and servicemembers lead the battle against extremism on the political and military fronts, the State Department's public affairs team must engage on the information front.

The Global Engagement Center is working aggressively to win the war of ideas that underpin terrorism. That must include addressing the entire eco-system of thought that justifies and supports killing civilians for political ends, as well as intervening against those people who are likely to commit violence. We need to continue working with our inter-agency colleagues and the tech companies that produce the platforms where terrorists recruit and cultivate followers. We must also remain flexible and agile as trends change and as our enemies adapt.

The State Department has a broad remit. And in all of our efforts, I look forward to continued engagement with this committee and with your colleagues in the House of Representatives. The way we conduct our affairs is itself a demonstration of the power of our ideals. Bringing diverse ideas and people together in common purpose has been a hallmark of America for nearly 230 years. It is an example that can inspire hope in others.

Thank you again for inviting me to speak with you today.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Goldstein.

Mr. Lawler?

STATEMENT OF SEAN P. LAWLER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, AND TO HAVE THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am humbled beyond words to appear before this distinguished body as President Trump's nominee for Chief of Protocol of the United States. I have deep gratitude to the President, the First Lady, Secretary Tillerson for their trust and confidence in nominating me for this position.

Knowing any accomplishments I have are shared, I would like to acknowledge my wife Grace who is with me here today, and my son Conor, who was not available to be here. He is off at school. But I owe everything to both of them for their support and inspiration.

I was born and raised on the southwest side of Chicago. Shortly to my first enlistment, I lost both of my parents. The Navy quickly became my family, and throughout my 21 years of service, I married, started my own family, and worked as hard as I could to succeed.

My military service resulted in many life lessons but none more than service before self. Throughout my career, I was fortunate enough to work under phenomenal leaders and mentors who taught me, corrected me, and groomed me for continued growth. Following retirement, I spent several years as the Chief of Protocol at U.S. Cyber Command before assuming my current position on the National Security Council working closely with the State Department colleagues and coordinating foreign engagements for the President.

The Chief of Protocol advises, assists, and supports the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State on official matters of national and international protocol, as well as serving at the President's representative to visiting foreign leaders and bilateral chiefs of mission in the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to contributing in a unique and meaningful way to advancing the principles of diplomacy and enhancing our relations with the diplomatic community by working with a team of exceptional professionals at the State Department and White House, whom I have had the pleasure of getting to work with since January. I have witnessed firsthand the selfless dedication and patriotism that is uncommon outside military service.

The Office of the Chief of Protocol is an integral and successful diplomacy and furthering the foreign policy goals of the administration.

I believe my experience for nearly 3 decades in government makes me a well qualified candidate for this position, and if confirmed, I look forward to serving our great Nation alongside the outstanding professionals at the White House and the Department of State to continue to build on the framework and foundation for fostering diplomacy.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear for your consideration.

[Mr. Lawler's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SEAN P. LAWLER

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you so very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am humbled beyond words to appear before this distinguished body as President Trump's nominee for Chief of Protocol of the United States. I have a deep gratitude to the President, the First Lady, and Secretary Tillerson for their trust and confidence in nominating me for this position. Knowing any accomplishments I have are shared, I would like to acknowledge my wife Grace, who is here with me, and my son Conor, who was not able to join. I owe everything to their support and inspiration.

Born and raised on the Southwest Side of Chicago, I enlisted in the Navy directly out of High School, and shortly into my first enlistment, I lost both my parents. My mother to breast cancer and my father a few short months later to a broken heart. The Navy quickly became my family. Throughout my 21 years of service, I married, started my own family, and worked as hard as I could to succeed—not only to better provide for my family, but with a desire to have a greater role in serving my country. My wife is an immigrant of Ireland, now a naturalized citizen, and my son is attending college and growing up entirely too fast, and I sit here as a proud and humble example of what is magnificent about this country of ours.

My military service resulted in many life lessons, but none more than service before self. Throughout my career, I was fortunate enough to work under phenomenal leaders and mentors who taught me, corrected me, and groomed me for continued growth,—and I did my best to train and lead our next generation of volunteer patriots and impart the same lessons. I learned valuable management and leadership skills as I climbed through the ranks. In my particular career field, I spent many years on the personal staffs of Flag & General Officers and senior members of our government. Among my responsibilities throughout several tours of duty were to manage administrative and personal details so they may devote a larger portion of their time to other important matters. Those duties included matters of protocol, etiquette and tradition in coordinating myriad events and ceremonies both ashore, underway and overseas. Following retirement, I spent five years as the Chief of Protocol in a dynamic and exciting sub-unified combatant command and then in my current position on the National Security Council where I currently work closely with my State Department colleagues in coordinating the foreign engagements for the President.

The Chief of Protocol advises, assists, and supports the President of the United States, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State on official matters of national and international protocol, as well as serving as the President's representative to visiting foreign leaders and bilateral chiefs of missions in the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to contributing in a unique and meaningful way to advancing the principals of diplomacy and enhancing our relations with the diplomatic community by working with a team of exceptional professionals at the State Department and White House whom I have had the pleasure of getting to work with since January. I have witnessed firsthand the selfless dedication and patriotism that is uncommon outside military service.

The many divisions of the Office of the Chief of Protocol are integral in successful diplomacy and furthering the foreign policy goals of the administration. The Protocol staff works regularly to build bridges of cooperation and goodwill domestically and across the globe. Blair House, which is an historical a treasure, provides a world-class venue in accommodating Presidential foreign guests and events hosted by Cabinet-level officials. Ceremonials is responsible for supporting events hosted by the President and Vice President, planning and executing arrangements for official functions hosted by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and the Chief of Protocol and organizing the participation of the diplomatic corps in official events. Diplomatic Affairs is responsible for the agrément process of new bilateral chiefs of mission, including presentation of credentials, coordination with the diplomatic corps and guidance, consultation and mediation of matters involving senior mission representatives and workers employed by foreign mission personnel. Diplomatic Partnerships provides outreach to the foreign diplomatic corps serving in Washington to promote greater insight and understanding of the United States and its economy, people and culture, its flagship program is Experience America. Gifts is responsible for the selection and purchase of all gifts given by the President, Vice President, Secretary, and their respective spouses to foreign leaders and processing all gifts from foreign governments given to the President, Vice President, Secretary, and other U.S. Government officials. Visits is responsible for planning and executing detailed programs for visiting chiefs of state, heads of government and other high-ranking officials hosted by the President, Vice President, and Secretary of State and supports overseas travel of the President and Vice President and their respective spouses and is also responsible

for planning and execution of foreign travel by U.S. presidential delegations as directed by the White House. And finally I would like to acknowledge the management team which administers human and financial resources and general services operations for the Office of the Chief of Protocol to accomplish all its vital and demanding work.

I believe my experience for nearly three decades in government service makes me a well-qualified candidate for this position, and if confirmed, I look forward to what I expect to be the highlight of my career-serving our great nation alongside the outstanding professionals at the White House and Department of State and liaising with the outstanding diplomatic corps here in Washington, D.C. to continue to build on the framework and foundation for fostering diplomacy.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear and for your consideration in continuing to serve my country.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Lawler.

Ms. Johnson?

STATEMENT OF LISA A. JOHNSON, OF WASHINGTON, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Ms. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Coons, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia. I would like to express my gratitude to the President and Secretary Tillerson for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the committee and with the Congress to advance our Nation's interests in Namibia.

Please permit me to acknowledge my parents who are watching online from Florida today and my brother Mike. They have supported me proudly as I have represented the United States overseas during the past 25 years. Some close friends are present here today to offer their support.

If confirmed, it would be a privilege for me to return to a familiar region. I began my Foreign Service career in Angola and South Africa, and also spent time in Namibia where I once drafted the Embassy's human rights report.

Since independence, Namibia has stood out for its strong democratic traditions, success in combating HIV/AIDS, and modeled wildlife conservation efforts.

I would like to highlight for you three priorities that, if confirmed, I would work to advance as U.S. Ambassador.

First, both the United States and Namibia seek to strengthen bilateral trade and investment. Namibia's natural resources, stable economy, and strong governance make it an attractive prospect for U.S. business. If confirmed, one of my primary goals would be to promote American business and help our trade relationship reach its full potential.

Second, through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, the United States partners closely with Namibia to provide HIV/AIDS testing, education, and treatment. With our continued help, Namibia is on track to meet U.N. AIDS targets and achieve epidemic control. Importantly, the Namibian Government shoulders two-thirds of the costs, serving as an example as we seek to shift the burden away from U.S. assistance.

Finally, if confirmed, my foremost priority will be ensuring the safety and security of American citizens, be they residing, conducting business, vacationing, or serving in the Peace Corps in Namibia.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you again and look forward to answering your questions.

[Ms. Johnson's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LISA A. JOHNSON

Chairman Portman, Ranking Member Coons, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia. I would like to express my gratitude to the President and to Secretary Tillerson for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the committee and others in Congress to advance our nation's interests in Namibia.

Please permit me to acknowledge my parents, watching online from Florida today, and my brother Mike, in Washington State. They have supported me proudly as I have represented the United States overseas during the past 25 years. A few close friends and colleagues also are present today to offer their support.

It is a privilege for me to return to a region that is familiar to me. I began my Foreign Service career in Angola and South Africa, and also spent time in Namibia, where I once drafted the Embassy's Human Rights Report.

Since independence in 1990, Namibia has stood out for its strong democratic traditions, its success in combatting HIV/AIDS, and its model wildlife conservation efforts. Namibia has a democratically elected president and parliament, an independent judiciary, and a free and open media. Though small in population, with just under 2.5 million people, Namibia offers promising trade and investment potential. The growing U.S. partnership with Namibia increases security and prosperity for both countries and serves as an example throughout the continent.

I would like to share with you three priorities that, if confirmed, I would work to advance as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia.

First, both the United States and Namibia seek to strengthen bilateral trade and build stronger and deeper economic bonds. Trade delegations to and from Namibia indicate growing opportunities for U.S. companies. Namibia's natural resources, combined with its stable economy and strong governance, make it an attractive prospect for U.S. business. If confirmed, one of my primary goals would be to promote American business opportunities and help our trade relationship reach its full potential.

Second, Namibia has struggled with one of the world's highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. Our partnership to combat the disease has brought us closer than ever to bringing it under control. Through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, the United States has partnered with Namibia to provide testing, education, care, support, and treatment to hundreds of thousands of people. Namibia is on track to meet UNAIDS targets to achieve epidemic control by 2020. Importantly, the Namibian Government is assuming funding and management responsibility for the fight against HIV/AIDS, shouldering two thirds of the financial burden. Namibia stands as a regional example as we seek to shift the burden away from U.S. assistance to host governments.

Finally, if confirmed, my foremost priority will be ensuring the safety and security of American citizens in Namibia, be they living there, conducting business, travelling on vacation, or serving in the Peace Corps.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you again for this opportunity and look forward to answering your questions.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Ms. Johnson.

Ms. Gonzales?

STATEMENT OF REBECCA ELIZA GONZALES, OF TEXAS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

Ms. GONZALES. Good morning. Chairman Portman, Ranking Member Coons, and members of the committee, I am honored to be considered for the position of United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. I am grateful for the confidence President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have shown in me by this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress in advancing U.S. interests and supporting Lesotho in its efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, reverse its HIV/AIDS epidemic, and achieve sustainable, broad-based economic growth.

I would like to take a moment to thank my parents. My father, Colonel Jose Rene Gonzales, served in the Air Force for 26 years and was buried in 2013 with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. My mother, Estella Gonzales, who is here with me today, has been a D.C. public school teacher for 30 years and is still teaching, and I must say yesterday was her birthday. So Happy Birthday, Mom.

My son, Imagine Alexander, started his studies at the University of California, so he was not able to join me today, but I am proud of him and he is in my heart.

And I would also like to thank my brother and sister-in-law, Jerome and Amanda Gonzales, who are here. And I appreciate the support of my friends and colleagues who are here as well today.

And I would also like to also say thank you to Ambassador Harrington, our Ambassador to Lesotho, and the country team who I believe is watching us as we speak here.

If confirmed, I will focus on further strengthening the relationship between our two countries. My priority will be to protect and advance U.S. interests, including ensuring the safety of Americans and advancing U.S. commercial interests in Lesotho.

I welcome the new government in Lesotho's efforts to lay the groundwork for a strong culture of accountability, rule of law, and much needed political reforms.

Lesotho is an AGOA success story. However, it will need to show continual progress on eligibility criteria. And if confirmed, I will advocate and lend my support to these efforts.

One of Lesotho's biggest challenges is that 25 percent of the adults have HIV/AIDS. This is the second highest prevalence in the world. If confirmed, I will promote continued efficient use of our health assistance dollars and ensuring our partnership and efforts continue to make a real difference. We are saving lives in Lesotho.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome any questions you may have.

[Ms. Gonzales's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REBECCA GONZALES

Chairman Portman, Ranking Member Coons, and members of the committee:

I am honored to be considered for the position of United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. I am grateful for the confidence President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have shown in me by this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and the Congress in advancing U.S. interests and supporting Lesotho in its efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, reverse its HIV/AIDS epidemic, and achieve sustainable, broad-based economic growth.

I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank my father, Jose Rene and my mother. Estella B Gonzales. My father, Colonel Jose Rene Gonzales, served in the United States Air Force for 26 years and was buried in 2013 with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. My mother, Estella, has been a D.C. public school teacher for 30 years, and, indeed, I am fortunate to have her with me today. I would also like to recognize my son, Imagine Alexander, who just started his studies at the University of California and is unable to be here today. I would also like to thank my brother and sister-in-law Jerome and Amanda Gonzales. I appreciate the support of my friends and colleagues who are here with us today.

As a military family member I lived abroad, and this gave me a great appreciation for other cultures and a desire to serve my country by joining the Foreign Service. I have had the privilege of serving my country for 25 years as a Foreign Service Officer, serving in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. It is this experience and a recognition that there is still much to learn that has prepared me, if confirmed, for the important task of advancing U.S. relations with Lesotho.

It will be an honor to continue to serve. If confirmed, I will focus on further strengthening the relationship between our two countries. My priority will be to protect and advance U.S. interests. This includes doing everything in my power to ensure the safety of Americans in Lesotho—those who will fall under Chief of Mission authority, the approximately 90 Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Lesotho, along with the approximately 600 Americans who are resident in Lesotho and those who visit the country every year.

It also includes advancing U.S. commercial interests. There are opportunities for U.S. companies to invest in Lesotho and to promote U.S. exports into Lesotho. Although Lesotho straddles the line between a lower-income and lower-middle income country, it is a largely untapped market for U.S. companies. U.S. commercial engagement can also be a powerful source of economic opportunity within Lesotho.

On the political front, we know that the steps needed in Lesotho to address the underlying causes of instability and challenges to the rule of law are difficult. Lesotho's neighbors, through the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have been actively engaged to help Lesotho move beyond its recent political difficulties. The recommendations made by a recent SADC Commission of Inquiry, if fully implemented, would lay the groundwork for a strong culture of accountability and rule of law, and much-needed political reforms. I welcome the new government's commitment to implement those recommendations and, if confirmed, I will advocate and lend my support to these regional efforts.

One of Lesotho's biggest challenges is that 25 percent of the adults in the country are living with HIV/AIDS. This is the second-highest prevalence in the world. While the pandemic has devastated Lesotho's social and economic fabric, our partnership with the Government of Lesotho on health is a strong one, that is having a substantial positive impact. If confirmed, I will promote continued efficient and accountable use of our health assistance dollars in ensuring our partnership and efforts continue to make a real difference.

Lesotho has benefitted greatly from the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA, which has spurred a vibrant textile and apparel industry in Lesotho. The textile industry is the nation's largest private-sector employer, with about 40,000 employees, mostly women. And, impressively, Lesotho is the second-largest supplier of textiles to the United States in sub-Saharan Africa. However, Lesotho will need to show continual progress on AGOA eligibility criteria, including those relating to rule of law and governance, to maintain its eligibility for AGOA trade preferences. If confirmed, I will encourage Lesotho's progress on the path of economic and political reform. Reform will foster economic growth, empower entrepreneurs, and attract foreign investment. I will continue to press for concrete actions that address concerns about impunity and the rule of law.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you may have.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Ms. Gonzales.

Mr. Evans?

STATEMENT OF JAMES RANDOLPH EVANS, OF GEORGIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO LUXEMBOURG

Mr. EVANS. Chairman Portman, Ranking Member Coons, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including a special thank you to our own home senior Senator, Johnny Isakson, a friend of mine of 30 years. Little did I know that we would come together at a place like this on a day when the Georgia Bulldogs were once again ranked number one in the country. [Laughter.]

Mr. EVANS. I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to speak with you and to answer any questions you might have. It is, indeed, an honor and a privilege to be here in our Nation's capital with you.

In addition, I thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the opportunity serve our country, if I am confirmed, as the next Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. It is an amazing place with people who understand and appreciate freedom and democracy with many connections to us Americans.

My wife Linda, who could not be with us today, without whom I would not be here, knows well those connections. Her uncle, 1st Lieutenant Richard P. LaFrance, fought to free Luxembourg in World War II in the Battle of the Bulge and was later blinded in Germany just a month before V–E Day.

As you know, Luxembourg is a relatively small country, if measured by size or population, but it is a unique mixture of citizens who are proud of their heritage but embrace their connections to so many other countries and peoples from around the world. But what Luxembourg lacks in size, it makes up for in reach. Anyone experienced in international affairs knows that Luxembourg's influence as a thought leader extends throughout the world, especially in finance and technology and most recently in space.

The world is full of challenges, and Luxembourg will, undoubtedly, be at the center of solving many of those challenges as a leader in the European Union, a loyal member of NATO, and a reliable friend to the United States of America.

Open dialogue and communication, anchored in our shared values, will enable us to build even stronger bonds sufficient to address every challenge. This includes tackling hard questions, including the myriad of issues flowing from the United Kingdom's decision in Brexit.

In short, there is much to do. I am eager to get started. I hope you will allow me to put my skill sets to work for our country to the very best of my abilities as the next Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Thank you.

[Mr. Evans's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RANDY EVANS

Chairman Portman, Ranking Member Coons, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you, to speak with you, and to answer any questions you might have. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to be here in our nation's Capital with you. I would also like to express my thanks to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me.

Last year, my mother passed away unexpectedly. It was one of those moments that forces you to stop and think about where you are and where you are going. Prior to that moment, I believed I had reach the pinnacle of my career. All that time, I had also served in a myriad of positions of public service from the bottom to the top while thinking I had done my part. Yet, at that moment, I knew then that it was time for me to do more. I did not know how or where, but I did know why.

Any doubt was erased when I received this handwritten note in the mail from my father. It said: "Randy, I thank you for your love. I appreciate the financial gift but more than the financial, I cherish our moments together more. Your mother and I spent a lot of time in prayer for you and your safety. God has blessed you with a beautiful gift. Use it wisely. God said through Paul in Romans, God through his gift is calling."

Calling? The only question then was how and where could I best answer that calling?

Against this backdrop, I am greatly thankful to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the opportunity to answer my calling and to serve our country, if I am confirmed, as the next Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. It is a beautiful place with people who understand and appreciate freedom and democracy and who have an unbelievable resiliency to overcome whatever history may throw at them.

As you know, Luxembourg is a relatively small country if measured by size or population. It is a unique mixture of citizens who are proud of their heritage but embrace their connections to so many other countries and peoples from around the world. In that way, they are much like us Americans or, in fairness, we are much like them—it really doesn't make a difference. The fact is we are both very much alike.

And, what Luxembourg lacks in size, it makes up for in punch. Anyone experienced in international affairs knows that Luxembourg is so much bigger than the number of its square miles or its citizens.

Luxembourg's influence and its leadership and its impact extends well beyond Europe to the entire world. It is a thought leader and economic engine capable of and doing great things—especially in technology and space.

It is also a country with the closest of ties to the United States, having been liberated twice from totalitarian occupation and standing steadfast with us as we together have liberated others from such unacceptable situations.

My wife—Linda, without whom I would not be here today, knows well those connections. Her uncle, First Lieutenant Richard P. LaFrance fought to free Luxembourg in World War II in the Battle of the Bulge and was later blinded in Germany a month before V-E Day.

And, next year will be the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, and I know there will be many commemorations of the sacrifices made during the Great War. If confirmed, I hope to be part of them proudly representing the United State of America—not to tout our victories but instead to signal our continued commitment toward a future free from tyrannies and full of hope.

The world is full of challenges and Luxembourg will undoubtedly be at the center of solving many of those challenges as a leader in the European Union, a loyal member of NATO, and a friend of the United States. Certainly, there will be things we will want to move closer together on like contributions to NATO; addressing the growing refugee problem and the instabilities that follow; and, leveling the playing field for American companies doing business around the world.

Open dialogue and communication, beginning with our shared values, will enable us to build even stronger bonds sufficient to weather any distractions.

From my perspective, as Singapore is the doorway to Asia, Luxembourg is rapidly becoming, if it has not already become, the doorway to the European Union. We must take advantage of such a unique ally with such great influence to work toward solving rather than debating the problems confronting the 21st century world.

This includes tackling the hard questions such as those arising out of climate change, or containing the threat of global terrorism, or stabilizing the flow of capital to avoid financial crises. And, of course, there are myriad of issues flowing from the United Kingdom's decision in the Brexit vote to leave the European Union.

In short, there is much to do. I am eager to get started. I hope you will let me put my skillsets to work for our country to the very best of my abilities.

Thank you.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Evans. With Ohio State being ranked number three in the country now, if the playoffs were tomorrow, we would be playing you. So I am trying to think of what

I should ask Johnny to provide me as an appropriate bet. I will think about that while I am hearing the questions from my colleagues.

I am going to wait and ask my questions. We have a good turnout here today, and a few have already had to leave and come. Everybody is busy. So I am going to turn to Senator Coons and then I will be coming back and asking questions of the nominees. Again, I appreciate your willingness to serve and your good testimony this morning. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Portman. I will defer to my colleague, Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I guess I could defer, but instead I will just go boldly forward. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Senator Coons, and thanks to all of you. Congratulations to each of you for your nominations and especially to those who are career. I just say being on this committee and having the chance to visit abroad has been amazing, and the staffs of our embassies abroad do such good work. I recognize what Mr. Lawler said. We have gotten pretty good. We can always be better at thanking our military for service, but we are not as good in thanking the U.S. civilians who are abroad, often in places that they get assigned to that were not their first choice, sometimes in places where they cannot bring family. We do not do as good of a job in thanking them as we should.

I will tell you one of the things that I will mention to those of you who will be ambassadors abroad is when I visit, I usually try to take first and second tour FSOs out for coffee without their ambassador to ask them, you know, you have achieved something really important because it is hard to get a job as a Foreign Service officer with the State Department. What will be the difference between staying and making a career out of it and leaving? And then they offer fascinating observations. I will tell you this. They never dis their boss, but they talk about things like paperwork and bureaucracy and things like that that are challenges. So especially if you are taking the post of ambassador for the first time, paying attention to the first and second tour FSO folks and their experiences is something that I think is good.

Let me just ask a couple of questions to you, Mr. Goldstein, about public diplomacy. I think the budget for international exchange is sort of small as a percentage of the big budget challenges we deal with, but I tend to think things like international exchanges or training foreign militaries on the defense side—I am on Armed Services too—which is also a small part of the DOD budget—these things really produce value.

There is a proposal to cut this part of the portfolio of the State Department pretty significantly in the President's proposed budget submission. You did not draft up that budget. I am not going to ask you to comment on it. But tell me about your view of the value of these international exchanges that are within the portfolio of your nomination.

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Every person with whom I have spoken in this process has impressed upon me how important the exchange and cultural programs are. I share that view.

My goal, if confirmed, is to enhance the programs by continuing the education that participants receive, which I think is vitally important. It is not enough just to participate in the program. We need to follow up with individuals throughout their career as they move forward.

We also need to create agility so that we can ensure that we quickly develop country programs when needed, and we should enhance the programs that are doing well.

In addition, Senator, I want to look closely at the American Spaces program. Many are being moved to the Embassy for security reasons, and I want to do a study to determine whether that is impacting the number of people that are actually attending these particular programs. If so, we might need to work with the private sector to provide access to the right audience in the most appropriate location.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that.

Ms. Johnson, I think Namibia is doing many things very, very well. One of the areas where I think as I look at their history there are some challenges to do better is in the area of human trafficking. They are a tier 2 nation right now in the TIP. What are some of the kinds of things that you think you might be able to do in your capacity as Ambassador to work with them and help them get even better at dealing with trafficking issues?

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you very much for that question, Senator.

In the Bahamas where I am serving currently, Bahamas was tier 2 3 years ago. We helped take them to tier 1. They are the first tier 1 country in the Caribbean. The way we did that—it was a partnership through a very strong commitment on the part of the government, political will, and close and continued engagement with the United States. So taking that track record and looking at what some of the issues are in Namibia, I believe that, if confirmed, I could help them make progress. I think the political will is there.

Some of the issues, some of the areas where they need to strengthen, more resources for victims shelters. They need to complete comprehensive legislation and pass it and implement it, as well as their national action plan. Raising awareness throughout the country, not just in the capital but in the rural areas where you have child labor, for example, and trafficking. I think those are the principal areas. They also did not have any convictions last year. So we need to strengthen the justice system component. But I think in all of those areas, they are areas where we can make progress with continued engagement and commitment.

Senator KAINE. Great.

Mr. Chair, if I could ask one more question of Mr. Lawler.

We have instances over time. Right now, we are dealing with a tough one with Russia, also Cuba. During the Obama administration, we dealt with one with India where challenges lead to the recalling of personnel, and then there is a little bit of a retaliation. If you recall ours, we will recall yours. Talk a little bit about the diplomatic skills that you already have that you would bring to the table. Sometimes these are unavoidable. If a country does something that is wrong, there is going to be a consequence. Sometimes we almost I think stumble into them a little bit by accident. Talk

a little bit about how you would approach your position and try to minimize misunderstandings of this kind.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Senator.

The Office of the Chief of Protocol is responsible for dealing directly with the chiefs of mission, the deputy chiefs of mission for the embassies in Washington. We are the liaison for the diplomatic missions. If there are any problems brought to our attention, we deal with those. Obviously, we follow the Vienna Convention ensuring that our diplomats abroad are given the same rights as theirs. So we do not discount any rule breakers or anything like that, but we will deal with those as they come up. And if we have any issues, we will go back and obviously ensure that we either ask—if there are problems, we will go back to the host nation and ask for immunity to be withdrawn. If not, we will ask for the diplomat to depart the country.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator PORTMAN. Senator Isakson?

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

Thanks to all of you and congratulations on your appointment.

I want to focus on our two ambassador nominees for Africa for just a second, if I can.

Senator Coons and I were both on the Africa Subcommittee together and traveled quite frequently to Africa over a couple of years. First of all, the biggest product in Georgia is chickens, and the biggest product in Delaware is chickens. We brought down the lock on the door in South Africa, and now there are 19,000 metric tons of Georgia and Delaware chicken going into South Africa every year. And that was in large measure because of what we did on AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Are you all familiar with that? And do you have any ideas of what you want to do in terms of promoting engagement with that? We will start with Ms. Gonzales.

Ms. GONZALES. Thank you for that question, Senator.

Lesotho has been an AGOA success story. Under this program, there have been 40,000 people who have been employed, most of them women. I have read this has had a ripple effect on 100,000 family members, as well as downstream businesses.

I think that Lesotho needs to continue its efforts to address rule of law and bring about good governance so that it will continue to be eligible under AGOA. And there are opportunities for diversification. In addition to that, there are opportunities for U.S. businesses in renewable energy, agriculture, water.

As you know, Lesotho is surrounded by South Africa. There are 600 U.S. companies operating there who could possibly expand businesses into Lesotho.

And so, if confirmed, I would work hard to identify business opportunities for U.S. companies, to ensure that they are treated fairly, and to make sure that the playing field is level, Senator.

Senator ISAKSON. Ms. Johnson?

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator.

AGOA for Namibia—eligibility is not an issue, but use of the program is. Namibia has not taken full advantage of the benefits under AGOA. In large part, I would say it is a factor of the type of economy you have in Namibia. It is a very small market. AGOA

is a trade not aid program, and it is really private sector-driven. So companies are going to make business decisions, and they have to weigh things like the high cost of transportation, of electricity in deciding what type of business makes sense in Namibia.

There has been a lot of success in other countries, as my colleague said, in the textile industry. What makes more sense probably for Namibia is agribusiness. And in fact, just last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture certified beef products from Namibia as the first African beef products to be eligible for export to the United States. So those would be eligible for AGOA benefits.

So, if confirmed, I will look to promote greater use of the AGOA program.

Senator ISAKSON. I appreciate both of your knowledge of that issue. That is an important program for the United States and important for Africa too. I have said in many a hearing that Africa is the continent of the 21st century for the United States of America. There are more mouths to feed, more opportunity, more votes in the U.N. in Africa than anywhere else in the world right now. And the better our friendships are, the better economic ties we have, the better off we are going to be.

Ms. Johnson, I want to commend you on the next-to-the-last paragraph of your printed remarks where you said, finally, "If confirmed, my foremost priority will be ensuring the safety and security of American citizens in Namibia, be they living there, conducting business there, traveling there, or serving in the Peace Corps." And for Senator Coons and I, "the serving in the Peace Corps" part is very important because we went together to Benin because of the loss of a Peace Corps volunteer, Kate Puzey, who had been murdered there. And the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act is now part of the law in the United States because of that trip that we made and because of what we tried to do to improve security for Peace Corps volunteers overseas. And Africa is the home base for the Peace Corps in terms of numbers. There are a tremendous amount of Americans there volunteering their time and helping our country a lot.

So I appreciate your voluntary commitment to that in your statement, and I hope both of you will support the Peace Corps whenever they come and visit. And Senator Coons and I will try and come to visit you as soon as we can.

Good luck to both of you—to all five of you. I am sorry. I did not want to leave you out, Randy.

Senator PORTMAN. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Well, I would like to follow up on the questioning by my colleague, Senator Isakson, if I might.

First, just an issue that was raised by Senator Kaine to Mr. Goldstein. On international exchanges, I too am concerned that there is a proposed 50 percent cut in a number of these programs. And one that we have seen have a significant positive impact across the continent of Africa is the Young African Leaders Initiative, so-called YALI, or the Mandela Fellows. It brought, in the last year a thousand young Africans to the United States. And I have hosted a fellow in my office now several years as an intern, and they spread across our country and go to 20 different colleges and universities for a terrific 6-week program of training and engage-

ment with the United States and then gather back here in Washington and return home.

And on a visit to Liberia at the height of the Ebola crisis, I had a chance to meet our former YALI fellows convened by the ambassador and hear what they were doing in the face of this challenge and to be inspired by how many of them had engaged themselves in volunteer activity either launching nonprofits or serving as volunteers in the Liberian response to Ebola.

Is this a program you are at all familiar with, Mr. Goldstein? And do you have any sense of its value or impact?

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

It is a program that I am familiar with, and I hope, if I am lucky enough to be confirmed for this role, to have the opportunity to meet many of the people that you just described. I will commit to looking very closely at this to see what we can do to possibly enhance this program.

Senator COONS. Ms. Gonzales, Ms. Johnson, is this something you have had any exposure to, have heard of, any sense of what the potential is of the YALI program in the countries to which you may well be soon serving as Ambassador?

Ms. GONZALES. Thank you, Senator. I am familiar with YALI. I think it is an enormously successful program. There are over 3,000 Young African Leaders in Lesotho who participate in the network, over a hundred alumni. I think that the value that they bring by coming here and learning about us and then going back and taking what they have seen and implementing it in Lesotho is phenomenal. And I think that they are excited. They are great partners. They serve as local voices and conduits amplifying our programs and our values and priorities. And if I were confirmed, I would certainly continue to engage and support YALI.

And in addition to that, we have an American corner at the university in Lesotho, and my understanding is that it is enormously popular and people are very excited about our public diplomacy programs.

Senator COONS. Ms. Johnson?

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator.

I am a big supporter of YALI. In Namibia, we have 59 alumni from the Mandela Fellows program, and what I understand from the Embassy is they are a real force multiplier for us. They are very accomplished in their respective fields, be it public sector management, nongovernmental, civil society, or entrepreneurship. And when they take what they have learned here and bring it back to Namibia, they are going to be the movers and shakers going forward. And it is really very important for the United States to partner with them and advance our shared interests. And we really rely on that alumni network quite strongly. I am very excited about engaging them.

Senator COONS. I will ask two quick follow-up questions about your respective nations. Then I will have additional questions in the next round, if I might.

I have been to Namibia. A number of us went there last February I believe. A very impressive country, making great progress in HIV/AIDS, terrific partner in wildlife trafficking. They could stand to make progress on their human trafficking standard.

I was concerned by some reports about relations between their military and North Korea. Can you speak to that a little bit and help me understand how we might make progress? Because I think it is emblematic of the challenge we face in a dozen countries around the world in making progress and restraining the reach of North Korea's military.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator. I am happy to talk about that.

North Korea is a global menace, and all states have a responsibility to abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions and help cut off funding to the North Korean regime.

I would say that Namibia is doing its part. Namibia does have a longstanding relationship with North Korea. It dates back to the liberation struggle prior to 1990. But countries at this stage are really force to choose. You can either have a relationship with North Korea or you can abide by the U.N. Security Council resolutions. And Namibia has made its choice. Namibia came into being under a U.N. mandate. They have great respect for the U.N. and U.N. Security Council.

So what you have seen is not military cooperation with Namibia, but rather construction activities that have been carried out by state-owned firms, including building the ministry of defense, defense ministry buildings on other bases, as well as statues.

Namibia has taken some very important steps in the last 2 years. In 2015, they expelled the remaining North Korean diplomats from Windhoek. In June of 2016, they stated that they would end their commercial relationship with North Korea, and since that time, they have been implementing that commitment and have affirmed that they have ended contracts with North Korea and, most recently, that the last North Korean workers have departed Namibia. So I think Namibia has taken great strides to distance itself from North Korea and abide by the U.N. Security Council resolutions, and if confirmed, I would keep that issue very front burner on the agenda and encourage Namibia to continue to be very transparent with the U.N. Security Council on the matter.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Ms. Johnson.

I will have additional questions.

Senator PORTMAN. Let me just interject quickly here with regard to Korea because I was concerned about that as well. North Korea works in a number of different ways, and one is through some of their companies. The Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation is one. And my understanding is that there continues to be some relationship there perhaps through a front group in Namibia.

And so I understand you are saying, Ms. Johnson, there has been progress made and commitments made, but I would hope that you would focus on this issue and perhaps have Namibia be one of those countries that becomes a model already for Korean workers, it sounds like, North Korean workers having been sent home because those remittances are part of how North Korea continues to be able to survive economically and repress its own people and develop its nuclear weapons and missile technology program. So I would just hope that that specific issue—as I understand it, that continues to be a problem that will be a focus of yours.

Ms. JOHNSON. Yes, Senator. It definitely will be a focus. I think we also have to look at banks and ensure that financial flows are no longer going to North Korea. But it is my understanding that even front companies that have been designated by the UN—that relationships in Namibia have ended with those companies.

Senator PORTMAN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congratulations to all of you on your nominations, and I look forward to working with you once confirmed in the interest of the country.

I want to begin with you, Mr. Goldstein, and thank you for taking time to meet with me yesterday. One of the things that we discussed is the whole disinformation issue that is facing this country. The Italian Government recently announced a program with private sector partners to help build digital resilience among students to help them better identify disinformation. Can you talk about whether you think a similar kind of initiative would help in the United States to address this problem?

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Thank you, Senator, for that question. And I did enjoy meeting with you yesterday.

I do believe such a program would help in the United States, but I believe we have to do more. There is no question that this disinformation campaign has been of concern to many. We need to work with the technology companies, which I believe currently is at an inflexion point, to determine how we can interdict and figure out how to stop this from occurring.

We also have to recognize, Senator, that social media accounts are just as important as financial accounts, and we have to take that seriously. We need to figure out how to disrupt and choke off the communications flows. But in addition to that, we need to work, as the State Department is doing, with Radio Free Europe, with Radio Liberty, with Current Time, with the Middle East network, and others to get our message out there. It is not just a defensive posture that we should take. We also need to be offensive as you noted they are doing in Italy in that particular program.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I appreciate that and totally agree that we do need to be not just defensive but look at outreach that we can do to address this problem.

As you know, one of the aspects of the Global Engagement Center, which is part of your portfolio, is a fund to bolster outside nongovernmental groups. Will you pledge that after your confirmation, if you are confirmed, that you will work with Congress to make sure that that fund is adequately resourced and that the funds go toward organizations and initiatives that can help build that kind of resilience that we are talking about?

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Absolutely, Senator.

While I grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, yesterday's terrorist attack in New York occurred very close to where I live. So I have seen firsthand, and I had a friend who actually watched that occur yesterday.

We have got to put extreme importance on the Global Engagement Center. We need to choke off the communications flow that extremists use to build their networks, and we also need to figure

out a way to stop the recruitment of people whose primary goal is to do harm to our citizens and the citizens of our allies.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much. And I know I speak for the whole committee in saying that we certainly offer our condolences to you and to everyone in New York on what they have suffered.

I am not going to ask you a question because I know you have addressed this, but I just wanted to weigh in, given our discussion yesterday, that I share the concerns that everybody has expressed about the importance of our educational and cultural exchanges. And I hope you will continue a robust program and that you will look at ways in which you can make sure the resources are there to support those programs. I certainly do not support the administration's proposal to get rid of many of those because I think they are so important as we look at other areas in which we can build relationships ongoing. You talked about Africa as one of those, and I certainly think that is an indication of how important those exchange programs are.

I want to ask both you and Mr. Lawler this question because we know that reorganization is going on within the State Department, and we have heard testimony before this committee about the reorganization. But so far, there has been very little information shared about exactly what is being done within the State Department and what the outcome of that might be.

So would you both agree that Senate-confirmed State Department officials should work closely with this committee on plans to reorganize the Department? Mr. Lawler?

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, that is quite important, and yes, I would agree to that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Goldstein?

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Yes, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do you pledge to work with this committee and be responsive to any requests that we have pertaining to matters relevant to your areas of responsibility, if you are confirmed? Mr. Lawler?

Mr. LAWLER. Yes, ma'am.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Goldstein?

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Yes, Senator. I look forward to meeting with you as frequently as you would like.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you both very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you.

I would like to follow up, if I could, on Senator Shaheen's questions with regard to disinformation. In your written remarks, Mr. Goldstein, you talk a little about the Global Engagement Center and focus on the important role it has in fighting back against Islamic extremism and providing a counter-narrative.

In the wake of what happened in New York yesterday, that tragedy once again, we realize that people are being radicalized even in this country, often online and often through a concerted effort to reach those most vulnerable to that information. So we need to redouble our efforts, and I appreciate your commitment to that.

And you mentioned again in your testimony the radicalization from Islamic extremism is one part of the Global Engagement Cen-

ter, but actually there is another part of it now. As you may be aware, Senator Murphy, who was here earlier, and I drafted legislation that essentially rewrote the Global Engagement Center's authorities and mandated it to include state-sponsored propaganda in addition to the counter-extremist messaging. So the issue of disinformation propaganda that we are facing not just from Russia but also other countries, China, Iran, and others, countries that make an aggressive use of propaganda and disinformation comes at the expense of us and often our allies. And I do believe they are trying to destabilize democratic countries not just ours but around the world.

I think this is one we are going to really need your help. From the cyber attacks we have seen, to the social media bots, to the Internet troll farms we now know more about, to state-sponsored media outlets, including here in Washington, D.C., they create sophisticated information campaigns essentially to sort of weaponize the modern information environment. And by the way, this did not start with the 2016 election, and it will not end there unless we are more aggressive in responding to it.

So I would ask today that you comment on that. As Under Secretary of State of Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, you are going to play a key role in this. First, do you agree that countering this foreign disinformation and propaganda is a national security priority?

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Yes, sir, I do agree.

Senator PORTMAN. Second, do you share Secretary Tillerson's public comments that support the Global Engagement Center and its mission to be able to counter this disinformation both from extremist groups like ISIS but also nation states, as required in the DOD authorization act last year?

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator PORTMAN. One of the issues we have had with the GEC is to get funding in there and to get the right people there. You mentioned Radio Free Europe earlier, and it is an important operation. So are others, but frankly for me, the focus should be more on the online communications, social media, and having the expertise to do that requires some funds both to attract the right people and to have the right technology.

I was pleased to see that Secretary Tillerson approved the GEC strategic plan, and he released some funds to execute it. They also submitted a request to DOD for $40 million that we had provided for here in Congress to support the Global Engagement Center's efforts. We are still waiting, as I understand, for the final transfer of those funds, which are critical to GEC.

I would appreciate your commitment today, if you are willing to make it, that you will be persistent in pursuing that funding from DOD to State to be able to ensure that the Global Engagement Center has the resources it needs.

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Yes, sir, Senator. I will be persistent in pursuing that funding.

I do believe we have to be very aggressive in our response. I also think we must speak to people where they listen. The world is getting younger. 50 percent of people in Africa are under 25 years old, from what I have recently been told. In Asia, the average age is

somewhere under 30. I saw a story recently that said even in the United States that there are more people 26 than any other age.

In addition, ISIS has very persuasive videos online that are directed to people who are disgruntled. We have got to make this a priority, and you have my commitment and the commitment of the people within the State Department that we will do so.

Senator PORTMAN. Will you commit today to sharing information and working closely with members of this committee to ensure that you do have the tools and resources to be able to carry out this critical mission we have talked about?

Mr. GOLDSTEIN. Yes, sir, I will.

Senator PORTMAN. I think that is a really important part of your job, and I appreciate your taking it seriously and reporting back to us on whether you think it is moving forward both with regard to the funding and resources and also the personnel.

With that, I will turn to my colleague, Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Portman.

Let me turn to Mr. Evans and Mr. Lawler, if I might.

Mr. Evans, I am from the State of Delaware. We also have a strong financial services community. As we were discussing here before, one of our challenges globally in pursuing terrorism and those who might be our opponents such as North Korea is bank transparency and better understanding what is moving in terms of capital flows around the world.

If confirmed as the Ambassador to Luxembourg, what would you be doing to help make sure that we and our law enforcement and intelligence communities have as strong and appropriate a relationship as possible with Luxembourg's fairly vigorous financial services sector?

Mr. EVANS. Senator Coons, thank you for that question. It is a critically important question because Prime Minister Bettel started the process of increasing the transparency in the banking process in Luxembourg, and I would work with him and with anyone who would work with us to try to continue that momentum toward more and more transparency. As you no doubt know, having watched many of your other hearings, sanctions have no teeth if we cannot locate the money, if we cannot find the accounts. And so our ability to do that will depend greatly on the ability to get countries like Luxembourg to continue to improve their transparency in terms of banking transactions.

Senator COONS. I think our folks in OFAC in the Department of the Treasury do an excellent job, but we need our allies, in particular some of our European allies, to be more engaged and more forthcoming.

A colleague raised with me a concern that I am going to ask you about. You served on the Georgia State Election Board from 2003 to 2011, and in 2006, the State passed a voter ID law that required a photo ID. And as I understand it, two courts, both State and federal, enjoined that law finding it unconstitutional. But the State Election Board sent out information to voters implying that they were required to have a photo ID, and then further steps were taken to provide remedial information to voters. And it seems to me from the timeline, you were probably centrally involved in this.

Help me understand your role in this, how this played out. It is a concern I know for a number of my colleagues.

Mr. EVANS. Well, first of all, thank you for letting me have the opportunity to address it. I would rather address it up front.

And when the issue first came up, I went back to try to reconstruct what happened 11 years ago. Candidly there were a lot of things going on at that particular time. So here is what I know.

In 2006, the Georgia legislature passed and then-Governor Sonny Perdue, now Secretary Perdue, signed into law a second attempt at a voter identification law. Now, that law was upheld by all of the appellate courts and is still in effect today.

Once the United States Department of Justice cleared Georgia's new photo ID law, the State began to issue free identification cards to anyone that wanted or needed one. In addition, to address concerns raised in these various judicial proceedings, the State initiated an education effort regarding how to get a free ID card.

In early September 2006, the State Election Board unanimously voted with bipartisan support, including the designee of the Democratic Party of Georgia and the Democratic Secretary of State, to approve a mailing explaining how to get a free photo ID to approximately 300,000 Georgians who had been identified as potentially not having an ID.

While those letters were in the mailing process, opponents went to court and challenged the photo ID law and sought and obtained an injunction. Although many of the letters had already gone out, some of the letters were received after the court's ruling.

The State then sent a second letter making clear that photo IDs would not be required to vote in the election.

As for my part, immediately upon learning of the injunction, I asked for a board meeting, and although I knew the State was going to appeal, I insisted that the photo ID not be applied to that election because if they sought a stay of the injunction and it was granted, you would be flip-flopping back and forth within 60 days of the election, and I felt very strongly that would create too much confusion. When you look back, you will see a number of press reports about whether or not I was, quote/unquote, going soft. But the fact of the matter was at that moment, the appropriate course of action was to let the State appeal but not apply it in that election cycle until all of the dust had settled in the various judicial proceedings.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Evans. In the background I got on this, there is a complex series of filings, court proceedings, injunctions, letters, injunctions, letters, and it is unclear to me exactly how this all played out. But photo ID voting practices are of sort of pressing concern to many of us, particularly if part of the role of an ambassador is to represent the proper functioning of democracy.

I also just want to add to the previous conversation with Mr. Goldstein. In a visit to Eastern Europe I think a year ago in August to Estonia, to Ukraine, and to the Czech Republic where Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are headquartered, it was strongly impressed on me just how important these programs are, just how important the programming and the outreach and the education is. And I urge you to work on that, and I think Senator Portman made

an important point about the combination of traditional media like radio and digital media are continuing to make sure that we are doing the best we can in being fairly cutting-edge.

Ms. Gonzales, if I might just quickly. Lesotho has benefited more from AGOA than almost any African country. Yet, they have got some significant unresolved human rights challenges and governance and security sector challenges. How do you see weighing those two going forward, and do you think there should be consequences for Lesotho in terms of their AGOA eligibility if they do not continue to make progress in human rights and in security sector reforms?

Ms. GONZALES. Thank you for that question, Senator Coons.

I think the United States—we have been very engaged with the Government of Lesotho concerning continued AGOA eligibility. As you noted, human rights is a problem in Lesotho. There is impunity, and there have been problematic soldiers. And so the security sector needs reform. Specifically there needs to be absolute civilian control of the military.

I think the United States has been very effective in engaging the Government of Lesotho with respect to continued AGOA eligibility, as well as consideration of a second MCC compact. We had our first MCC compact from 2008 to 2013. Lesotho was being considered for planning for a second MCC compact, and then that was put on hold. And we have made it very clear that for Lesotho to be eligible for a second MCC compact, it needs to have security sector, constitutional, and parliamentary reforms. And in addition to that, it needs to show that it will be able to sustain its first MCC compact. So I think that we have been very effective in leveraging our programs and pushing for democratic institutions and rule of law, and if I were confirmed, I would continue that message. Thank you.

Senator COONS. I believe in the power of MCC and, in particular, the desire of many countries to have a shot at a second compact. I have seen it work to motivate countries to make changes. So I look forward to hearing about your progress in that regard.

If I might, with the indulgence of the chair. Mr. Lawler, just help me understand what your admirable long service for the U.S. Navy and National Security Council will do to provide you with the skills and preparation necessary for a role that may at times be delicate and difficult and involves a lot of juggling and managing sometimes a very wide and disparate community here.

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Senator, for the question. It is very important.

Over my career of almost 30 years now, I have been working within the government, support to senior members of the military and our government. Most importantly, just working backwards during this administration since January, working with the President's schedule with foreign leaders—I am sorry. I am losing my train of thought.

Senator COONS. I am tempted to ask questions about the upcoming Asia trip, but I am not. [Laughter.]

Mr. LAWLER. You know, it is hard to articulate going back really almost 30 years of qualifications. Protocol has been my job, kind of my bread and butter. 5 years prior to this joining the administration on the National Security Council in January, I did protocol at

the U.S. Cyber Command, foreign engagements once or twice a week. I have lots of experience. I have lived abroad for 6 years, traveled the world, very few places I have not been.

And one of the things with protocol is obviously to do no harm. Going into this, one of my goals right off the bat is to just ensure that—put a good face and set the stage for diplomacy for the President.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Lawler.

Let me thank, if I might, Grace and Conor who I know is not here, but anyway, thank you.

And to Ms. Johnson, to your parents and brother.

To Mr. Evans, to Linda who I know is not with you but is supporting you.

To Estella, Happy Birthday, and thank you for 30 years of teaching and to your late father for his dedication and service to our Nation.

And, Mr. Goldstein, wonderful to have Bill with us, to have your husband present and the support of your family.

Thank you to all five of our nominees today. I really appreciate your testimony.

Senator PORTMAN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. I wanted to pick up, Mr. Evans, on the comments that Senator Coons made about voting because I was in Armenia in 2003 as part of an observer mission to their parliamentary elections. And I noticed some improprieties in the voting, and when I raised that with the moderator at the polling place, what his response to me was, well, you have no reason to raise this with us because you could not get your voting right in Florida in the 2000 presidential election.

So I think it is very important that we model good democratic procedures in our voting, that we denounce voter suppression efforts, and that we show the rest of the world a good model for voting. So I would just echo his comments about how important that is.

I do want to ask you about your views on both NATO and the EU because having been in Europe a number of times since the new administration began, there is great consternation in parts of Europe about what our views continue to be on the transatlantic relationship, on the importance of NATO, on the EU, and how important it is to that transatlantic relationship.

So can you tell me what your views are on the EU and NATO?

Mr. EVANS. Let me take them, if I can, one at a time.

I do not think NATO has ever been more important in the history of the NATO to be candid. I think Russia poses a greater threat today than it has at any time probably since the Cuban missile crisis. Its techniques and methods are much more aggressive, much more cyber-oriented, much more technologically oriented, but it means that it is all the more important the NATO nations all come together and have a united defense because if there is a crack, that is where they penetrate. And so as far as NATO goes and, as you know, Luxembourg is a valued member of NATO.

Now, in fairness, we have to work a little bit on their contribution. They do not meet the Wales commitment of 2 percent. They are down at .48 or .46 percent with a commitment to go to .6 per-

cent by 2024. But I have made a pretty decent living out of getting more money out of people than they wanted to give. So I am hoping that I can put those skill sets to work to get not only Luxembourg but other countries up to their commitment and the Wales commitment.

As far as the European Union, I think it is right now in a state of transformation as far as what we can tell. Our firm has 25 offices in 17 European nations. We come together once a year, and we can get firsthand reports on what is happening in the EU. Obviously, Brexit was a major blow or impact to the EU. There are other countries that have some movement about whether or not the EU is sustainable long-term. But I think as a valued trading partner, it is enormously beneficial to the United States. It is much easier to have a bilateral treaty with the EU as a single unit than it is to have bilateral agreements with each of the different European nations in the EU.

But at the end of the day, in fairness I think the member nations of the EU are going to have to decide their future. I think they are grappling with some serious questions even now as they adapt to Great Britain's departure. It appears to me most experts agree it will take about 2 to 3 years before we see those sorted out.

Senator SHAHEEN. Brexit certainly seems to be creating as many problems for Britain as it does for the EU at this point.

But given what you said and the fragility of the EU and the challenges that they are facing, how important is it for us to reaffirm our commitment to the importance of the security of Europe and the EU?

Mr. EVANS. Absolutely critically important because it makes them vulnerable. Our enemies take advantage when we are divided. That is the most vulnerable point that we have. And so unity is most important whenever you are facing such aggressive adversaries, overt aggression, making no secret of their plans. That is the moment where we have to come together because if we do not, we just render ourselves vulnerable to an enemy who is intent on defeating us.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ms. Johnson, Senator Coons and Ms. Gonzales just talked about the Millennium Challenge Corporation and how important it has been. It concluded in Namibia in 2014. Can you talk about some of the successes that resulted in Namibia from its participation in MCC?

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator, and certainly.

The compact was very successful in Namibia, in fact, so successful they worked themselves out of a job and were not eligible for a second compact because they reached upper middle income status. There were a lot of successes in the areas of tourism, infrastructure, and agriculture.

But Namibia does still face economic challenges. They have a very high unemployment rate, 34 percent, probably 50 percent for people under 35. And you have got a population that is very young. 57 percent are under the age of 25. A huge income disparity. My understanding is that the government of Namibia is working very hard on some of those problems and that they are really trying to foster inclusive growth looking at how to incentivize manufac-

turing, entrepreneurship, improve the business climate further to attract trade and investment. So while it is true that the international assistance to Namibia is going down, it is now the Government of Namibia's responsibility to continue their economic growth.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

So, first, I appreciate the testimony today and all of you have had a chance to answer questions. Mr. Lawler was left out earlier. I am glad that Senator Coons asked him a little bit about his background and what he is going to do. I will say, Mr. Lawler, you get high marks from the professional career folks I have talked to at NSC and at the White House, but also the political people for your professionalism and your integrity. You are going to need it. This is a really important job.

And one aspect of your job that we have not talked about today I would like your comments on is how you deal with the diplomatic missions here in this country. And my understanding is, having known some of your predecessors, that that is an important part of your job is to be mindful of the other diplomatic missions. And we have had some huge issues just in the last year, expelling Cuban diplomats most recently, expelling Russian diplomats. Some of these diplomats we believed were engaged in inappropriate activities. Some of it was in response, as I understand it, to broader geopolitical problems.

But my question to you would be, when tensions with the United States and these foreign countries develop and prompt us to do these expulsions or close diplomatic facilities, what role does your office have in that, and how do you feel about that?

Mr. LAWLER. Thank you, Senator. That is obviously a very important issue not just for the State Department, but also for the Nation.

Again, if confirmed, my main role in this is to be the President's liaison with the diplomatic corps in Washington, D.C. So I will deal directly with the chiefs of mission, the deputy chiefs of mission with any issues that they have that arise or any allegations that arise.

But really I would just like to put maybe a little bit of a positive spin on this question. I very much look forward to this aspect of the job. Dealing with the President and accompanying him and introducing him is a great honor.

But another big, large portion of this job is actually meeting with these ambassadors as they arrive, as they get credentialed, taking them to the White House and building relationships with them. There are programs right now in the State Department. One of them is Experience America, which when I first read about it, I was a little suspicious at the cost, but it is a wonderful, wonderful program where we take the diplomatic corps in Washington, spread them out into the United States, get them out of the Washington, D.C. bubble, meet constituents, and build exchanges.

So I think to answer your question, really it is the relationship building on the front end and meeting with all of these ambassadors and building relationships so when there are troubles, they can be candid and we will have a better relationship.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, again, thank you for your willingness to take on this new role. And I think it is a logical evolution given your background in protocol in your 30-year career in the U.S. Navy.

Ms. Johnson, Namibia. Senator Kaine asked you about human trafficking and how to get Namibia up to a tier 1 country. It is an issue that I have strong interest in but, more importantly, so does this entire Senate and this committee. And so we want to encourage you to work with them, again, to provide more of a model. The MCC program and the contract I think was effective, but we still have not made the progress we need to make on human trafficking.

But on wildlife trafficking, we also have an issue in Namibia, and it is not only in Namibia. It is, unfortunately, pervasive in many countries in Africa. It not only has devastating impacts on wildlife and ecotourism in particular but also helps to fund terrorist activities. And that link has been confirmed more probably in the last decade than prior to that and it continues to be a problem.

I guess my question is, do you have a commitment to this conservation program that Namibia has attempted to implement? There is legislation that Senator Coons actually drafted. He is the author of the End Wildlife Trafficking Act. I was one of his cosponsors, and it encourages you to provide support, particularly with community conservation efforts. So can you talk a little about that?

Senator Isakson's question about economic development was focused on AGOA, and you talked about the importance of beef exports and that is important. But I would assume—and you tell us—that ecotourism is even a bigger part of the economy in Namibia and that wildlife conservation is key to keeping that ecotourism healthy.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator.

I actually have a very strong commitment to conservation, environmental protection coming from Washington State. It is very close to my heart.

The Namibians actually brag about having enshrined environmental protection in their constitution. And they have been a model for sub-Saharan Africa in their communal conservancies. They have over 80 of them now, and that is a strong partnership between the Government of Namibia, local communities, NGOs, and the United States Government that actually provides some income for local communities from ecotourism and sport hunting.

But Namibia does still have challenges. There was a spike in rhino poaching last year. Two-thirds of the world's black rhinos are located in Namibia. I think there were 60 poached last year. It is down to 27 so far this year. They also have trouble with illicit wildlife trafficking networks, which are becoming increasingly sophisticated, as you alluded to.

So that is why we do continue to put some resources into grants with international NGOs. We are working with the Namibian Government on their draft national strategy to combat wildlife trafficking and also providing some training and technical assistance for ministry of environment and tourism park wardens and for customs officials. And we are also going to be working with them on the judicial side to ensure successful prosecutions.

I think one of the really good signs is a single animal is poached in Namibia and it is front-page news. The Namibians know how important it is for them to protect this resource.

So I definitely commitment to you that, if confirmed, I will continue to implement the intent of the End Wildlife Trafficking Act, which has really helped us, to strengthen our international partnerships and cooperation with countries to combat wildlife trafficking and poaching.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, I thank you for that answer, and I appreciate your commitment.

Let me ask you about a specific program. As you know, Namibia is engaged in a regional effort as well with other countries, Botswana, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and some conservation organizations to conserve the Okavango River delta, which is such a critical habitat for endangered species and apparently an amazingly beautiful area and critical to ecotourism in the region.

We have now invested as the U.S. Government, as I understand it, $40 million to help conserve that delta through watershed management programs and resource management programs.

I assume you are aware of that program, and if confirmed, will you commit to working with Namibia to engage deeply in this Okavango River Basin project?

Ms. JOHNSON. Absolutely, Senator. I actually had the fortune to visit the Okavango Delta when I served in South Africa. It is a beautiful area, and you have my full commitment to that effort.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, again, thank you all for being here. We appreciate all five of you being willing to serve. A few of you have done this for a long time in your career in the Foreign Service and in the military and a couple of you are coming out of the private sector. I had the opportunity at one point to serve as U.S. Trade Representative, and people asked me what was it like. I said just an amazing honor to represent our great country around the world and that is what each of you will be doing in your own ways.

We will have differences here in this committee on policy issues, but we have no differences in terms of thanking you for your willingness to serve. And once you are confirmed—and I believe you will be based on the answers you gave today—we want to be able to support you and your colleagues to best represent the United States of America throughout the world. Thank you.

This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:15 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As a communications professional, I have worked consistently to promote the values of transparency and openness reflected in the First Amendment, which is fundamental to our democracy. Working at Dow Jones, the publisher of The Wall Street Journal, I was a strong advocate for press freedom in the United States and

around the world. I was deeply involved in efforts to free reporter Daniel Pearl, who was kidnapped and subsequently murdered in Pakistan, and worked with colleagues in Pakistan and the Middle East to press for the protection of Mr. Pearl's rights both as an individual and as a journalist.

I believe that all people are entitled to human rights and, throughout my career, have worked to ensure that everyone is treated equally. I put my commitment to equality into practice, and it is core to how I do my job.

Question 2. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As an executive and manager, I have always sought to create a diverse workplace and provide opportunities for all staff members to take on additional responsibilities and advance their careers. I have tried to set an example by being open, fair, and encouraging, so others would feel they were being supported. I pledge to continue leading in this manner at the Department of State, should I be confirmed.

Question 3. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors who you oversee as Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. The Secretary of State has called for more diversity within the Department of State's ranks, and I fully support this drive and pledge to sustain and promote it. I expect any supervisor reporting to me to create an environment that is fair and equal to people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. If confirmed, I look forward to affirming my commitment to diversity and how we, as a team, live these values in how we manage. I will make clear by my own actions and conduct that fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment must be a top priority for supervisors and staff alike at all levels of the Department.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. No.

Question 7. Do you acknowledge that the Russian Government carried out an influence and disinformation campaign aimed at the 2016 U.S. presidential election? Do you acknowledge that the Russian Government subsequently has carried out similar efforts to influence elections in Western Europe?

Answer. Yes. U.S. intelligence community assessments make clear that the Russian Government undertook an influence and disinformation campaign aimed at the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Russia uses similar tactics to attempt to influence elections worldwide.

Question 8. If confirmed, do you commit to working to address Russian influence and disinformation campaigns through the full exercise of the authorities of the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, including the work of the Global Engagement Center (GEC), International Information Programs (IIP), and Bureau of Public Affairs (PA)?

Answer. Yes. Russia is engaged in a campaign to undermine core Western institutions and weaken faith in the democratic and free-market system. This campaign is aggressive and coordinated. If confirmed, countering these disinformation activities would be a priority for me, leveraging all of the capabilities under my authority, including the Global Engagement Center, the Bureau of International Information Programs, and the Bureau of Public Affairs.

Question 9. The mandate for the Global Engagement Center was altered by statute last year to also include efforts to counter foreign state propaganda against the United States.

- If confirmed, do you commit to fully implement congressional intent reflected in legislation related to the Global Engagement Center?

Anawer. Yes.

Question 10. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to ensure that the GEC fulfill its statutory mandate and which countries will you prioritize as part of that effort?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with colleagues at the Department of State and the interagency community so that the GEC can fulfill its mandate through the use of technology and an ever-growing network of on-the-ground, counter-messaging partners to conduct its counterterrorism mission. Priority nations for this effort include Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.

Question 11. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that the GEC full responds to the challenges posed by Russian disinformation and influence campaigns?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with the GEC and colleagues elsewhere to counter Russian disinformation by, in part, strengthening coordination of U.S. Government efforts in specific sub-regions; enhancing the capacity of local actors to build resiliency to disinformation in their communities; and convening anti-disinformation practitioners, journalists, and other influencers to exchange best practices, build networks, and generate support for U.S. efforts against disinformation.

Question 12. If confirmed, how do you plan on using the GEC and our Embassies to reach a larger and/or targeted audience abroad that includes cultural, religious, and country-specific considerations in achieving our CT/CVE goals?

Answer. If confirmed, I would promote the adoption by the Department of private-sector best practices in the use of information technology. This would include active and targeted use of the full range of social media platforms, including country- and region-specific platforms and advertising where appropriate, as well as online data analytics tools to measure how content is received by certain audiences, to help ensure the effectiveness of U.S. messaging abroad. Our Embassies are and will continue be a valuable part of our efforts to stay on top of how local and regional audiences obtain and consume information.

Question 13. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that the State Department accepts the full amount of funding transfers from the Defense Department for the Global Engagement Center to conduct activities to address Russian disinformation?

Answer. I understand that the Department very much appreciates the importance Congress places on combatting disinformation. Further, I understand that Secretary Tillerson has requested $40 million in funding from the Department of Defense to counter state-sponsored disinformation from Russia and other nations, commensurate with the threat each poses. If confirmed, I will carefully evaluate GEC activities to ensure the funds are being used effectively.

Question 14. The Secretary of State belatedly accepted $40 Million in DOD funds that was authorized for transfer to the use of the GEC. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure the effective use of these funds to advance the GEC's activities? Are there activities that could have been undertaken, but won't be, given that the Secretary accepted less than the full amount of DOD funds that was authorized for transfer?

Answer. I understand that the Department of State is working with the Department of Defense (DoD) to transfer funds for the GEC's mission, as authorized by the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Secretary Tillerson's request of $40 million in DoD funds came after a review process designed to ensure the funding would be used as effectively as possible. Through that process, the Department determined that the GEC could reasonably obligate, monitor, and evaluate $40 million in counter-disinformation programming this fiscal year. If confirmed, I will carefully evaluate GEC activities to ensure the funds are being used effectively.

Question 15. If confirmed, do you commit to brief this committee 60 days after taking office on the administration's strategy to address Russian disinformation in Europe and around the globe?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to brief your committee on the Department of State's efforts to address Russian disinformation in Europe and around the globe.

Question 16. What do you think the biggest challenge to countering disinformation from foreign state actors is in the United States?

Answer. I believe the biggest challenge is determining clearly and without doubt the origination of the disinformation, and in responding, we must be careful not to sacrifice our own democratic values. The United States should always present an accurate portrayal of America, its citizens, and our role in the world. We improve the prospects for success in countering disinformation when we pursue solutions that enhance our own credibility.

Question 17. You testified about the importance of working with technology companies to counter disinformation, particularly on social media. Based on what we currently know about how state actors used social media to try to influence public opinion and sow discord, if confirmed, how will you engage internet and social media companies to address the Russian Government's use of their platforms for disinformation and influence campaigns? What specific steps would you recommend that the technology companies take to prevent further attempts by the Russian Government to inappropriately influence the American electorate? What steps that technology companies have taken thus far do you applaud, and what else do you think they should do?

Answer. If confirmed, I would meet with key technology companies as soon as possible to increase their collaboration with the Department. Engaging with the technology sector, particularly internet and social media companies, is critical to addressing disinformation campaigns directed by foreign nations. While I applaud the willingness of technology companies to appear before Congress and increase their transparency with respect to election-related advertising and communications, no doubt more needs to be done. I look forward, if confirmed, to consulting with colleagues at the Department, with Congress, and others to better ensure foreign government disinformation efforts, including those aimed at the American electorate, are effectively countered. Solving this is a priority.

Question 18. As you know, five American soldiers have been killed in Africa this year in countries battling terrorism and violent extremism. The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs leads America's public diplomacy outreach, which includes messaging to counter terrorism and violent extremism. If confirmed, what specific messaging strategy would you seek to advance for Somalia and Niger to counter terrorism and violent extremism? What steps would you take to strengthen such messaging?

Answer. I understand that the Department of State already engages in some regional counterterrorism messaging in Africa, including in the Somali language. If confirmed, I would consult with colleagues at the Department to understand better what is currently being done and to identify other opportunities to use messaging to counter violent extremism in Somalia and Niger.

Question 19. Part of the mission of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs is expanding and strengthening the relationship between the people and Government of the United States and citizens of the rest of the world. How will you strengthen the relationship between Africa and the United States in the face of the administration's proposal to slash funding for one of America's signature programs for Africa-PEPFAR-which has heretofore enjoyed bipartisan support?

Answer. The relationship between Africa and the United States is of vital importance. If confirmed, I will help lead the U.S. Government's efforts to strengthen ties between the United States and foreign publics in Africa and around the world. I am a strong proponent of medical, cultural, and education diplomacy, such as the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and PEPFAR, and I plan to build on what is currently being done, within the resources that are allocated by Congress. Public Diplomacy tools are a valuable means of expanding relationships, and I commit to looking into the effectiveness of these tools and to supporting those that demonstrate success.

Question 20. What role should the State Department play through its public communications and public diplomacy initiatives to promote democratic values and human rights?

Answer. Our core American values are Freedom, Democracy, and Equality. We need to support and encourage a free press, freedom of religion, and the right to dissent. We aspire to be an example to the world. Our role, as we tell America's stories, is to inspire other countries to follow our lead. American values are the principles that have enabled us to be a beacon to the world, and Public Diplomacy is one of the best tools our government has for communicating those values directly to people overseas.

Question 21. Under previous Republican and Democratic administrations, the State Department spokesperson held a daily press briefing, a practice that has been

discontinued in 2017. How often do you think the State Department spokesperson should hold press briefings?

Answer. I am a firm believer in more, rather than less, communication. For many years, the Department of State's press briefing has been an important tool for explaining U.S. foreign policy and national security interests to American citizens and foreign audiences. If confirmed, I plan to conduct a review of the Department's media practices, including press briefings, and provide recommendations on a way forward to the Secretary.

Question 22. The public-both in the United States and across the globe-look to the spokespeople for the State Department to lay out diplomatic priorities, foreign policy goals, and explain the rationale for the actions the United States takes. How important do you think it is for an agency like the State Department, whose critical work affects people around the world, to be transparent and forthcoming in explaining U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy? How will you seek to ensure that the Department remains committed to transparency in explaining its actions to the American public and the world?

Answer. It is important for the Department of State to be transparent and forthcoming in explaining U.S. foreign policy and our diplomatic efforts. If confirmed, I will strive to be as transparent as possible in carrying out my duties. The importance we place on transparency and freedom of expression—core American values—can serve as a model for the world, and our own communications should reflect that.

Question 23. If confirmed, how will you work to broaden State Department public affairs efforts to ensure that they reach foreign audiences on the platforms where they most frequently consume news and information?

Answer. We need to speak to people using the platforms on which they listen, and that includes heavy use of social media. The majority of people in Asia and Africa are under the age of 30, and young people consume news far differently than previous generations did. The State Department already uses a wide range of analytical tools to evaluate audience preferences and more effectively deliver U.S. messaging. If confirmed, I will seek out opportunities to broaden these efforts.

Question 24. In your testimony, you talked about the importance of capitalizing on social media platforms to communicate to a broad audience. You have significant corporate communication experience; however, the audience the State Department seeks to reach is comprised of a multitude of very diverse audiences across the globe. What specific experience do you have in developing and launching digital and social media campaigns that have effectively targeted and reached a broad audience?

Answer. When I led communications at TIAA-CREF, we were industry leaders in using social media to attract new customers and respond to the needs of a diverse base of existing customers. Because the financial services industry is highly regulated, we had to calibrate carefully our social media messaging. I understand how important it is to ensure that messages are communicated in ways that resonate with diverse audiences. I also have worked with a start-up technology company that enabled me to expand my understanding of communications technology and algorithms. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the unique audience considerations at the Department of State and how I, as Under Secretary, can help the career Public Diplomacy practitioners better reach these groups.

Question 25. What more can the State Department do to improve its image, and public perception of the U.S. abroad, especially in countries where public opinion of the United States or U.S. foreign policy has declined in the past year?

Answer. The United States has a great story to tell. We do more to promote international security and economic development than any other country in the world. There is a demand for U.S. technology, education, entertainment, and tourism. This presents an opportunity for the Department of State to increase support abroad for U.S. policy priorities.

If confirmed, I would identify those countries where we need to enhance public perception of the United States and determine what we can do to improve public opinion. Strategies to consider include strengthening Department messaging on the scope of U.S. development and security support, increasing promotion of high-demand programs like U.S. education, and ensuring our diplomats abroad have timely, accurate, and compelling policy guidance for use with local audiences. We need to gain trust and respect with foreign publics by reaching people where they listen using clear language that they can understand.

Question 26. As the Department continues to engage in a reorganization effort, many senior leadership posts remain vacant, and embassies are unable to fill posts

while the hiring freeze remains in effect. This has caused some of our foreign partners to question our commitment to diplomacy and to continue to serve as a leader on the global stage. For instance, at the U.N. General Assembly earlier this year, the significant reduction of State Department senior officials in attendance adversely affected our ability to fully engage with our counterparts. If confirmed, what can you do, and what will you commit to doing to ensure that our foreign allies retain their confidence in our commitment to building relationships and remaining engaged in foreign diplomacy?

Answer. Secretary Tillerson has made it clear that the Department of State is committed to retaining America's leadership role in the world, while pursuing greater operational efficiencies. He has confidence, as do I, that the highly skilled and knowledgeable people of the Department can deliver the value that the American people deserve. They will get the job done, and the United States will continue to lead. The redesign effort aims to help accomplish this goal.

Public Diplomacy has an important role to play in building relationships and engaging foreign publics. If confirmed, I commit to fully supporting the efforts of the Department's Public Diplomacy practitioners around the world and to strengthening and enhancing the tools at their disposal.

Question 27. Government corruption and human rights abuses are drivers of radicalization and bolster the message of violent extremists. How will you use the resources of your Under Secretariat to address corrupt and abusive governments to counter violent extremism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the bureaus under my authority, with other bureaus in the Department of State, and across the interagency to ensure that the tools of Public Diplomacy are fully leveraged to help address the causes of violent extremism, including government corruption and human rights abuses.

Question 28. Greater outreach to youth audiences is something that you shared as a priority in your hearing. If confirmed, how do you plan on using both our Public Diplomacy resources in Washington and in our Embassies to reach these audiences and to ensure that these activities and outreach consider gender equities to reach an equal number of women and girls?

Answer. I believe that all Public Diplomacy programs should consider gender equity and take steps to help women and girls overcome the barriers they face in accessing information in certain areas of the world. For example, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs seeks to provide educational opportunity through a wide range of education programs to both girls and boys in nations where schooling is still seen as a privilege, not a right.

Question 29. If confirmed, how will you leverage flagship public diplomacy tools such as the International Visitor Leadership Program, and academic programs such as Fulbright to advance U.S. values and goals abroad and ensure these programs continue to be funded to support our global priorities?

Answer. I believe that international exchange programs are a vital part of Public Diplomacy efforts to advance U.S. values and goals abroad. If confirmed, I intend to review carefully the effectiveness and impact of the Department of State's exchange programs and ensure appropriate funding is assigned to those that provide the greatest value in support of global U.S. policy objectives.

Question 30. It was reported in a recent Wall Street Journal article that several State Department managed J-1 visa exchange programs—including Summer Work Travel, Au Pair, Intern, Trainee, and Camp Counselor—are under review by the Department and White House as part of the President's Buy American, Hire American Executive Order.

- If confirmed, your job would be to oversee the Department of State's regulatory agenda and ensure the proper process is followed. As you may be aware, the Senate Appropriations Committee just approved a provision in the FY18 bill that requires, if the administration is considering any changes to the J-1 program, the full notice and comment of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and consulting with the committees of jurisdiction, including this committee, is followed. Do you commit to carrying out the full APA notice and comment process, as well as to consulting with relevant congressional committees?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to adhering fully to APA requirements and consulting with the relevant congressional committees regarding any proposed regulatory changes to J-1 exchange programs. My understanding is that the Department of State is not currently proposing reductions in the number of participants in private sector-managed J-1 programs—including Summer Work Travel, Au Pair, In-

tern, Trainee, and Camp Counselor—and that any rulemaking affecting these programs already goes through a process that involves a notice in the Federal Register and an opportunity for public comment. I also understand that the Department follows regular Congressional notification procedures regarding how any proposed regulatory modifications to J-1 exchange programs would affect the Public Diplomacy goals of, and the estimated economic impact on, the United States.

Question 31. The State Department recently put forward a set of policy priorities, which include asserting U.S. leadership and influence, bolstering U.S. national security, and fostering economic growth for the American people. The State Department's diverse set of international exchange programs directly support all three of these goals. If confirmed, what steps will you take to expand and strengthen our international exchange programs? If confirmed, will you commit to continuing to support State Department exchange programs as key elements of America's diplomatic engagement with the world?

Answer. I agree that international exchange programs are a vital part of U.S. Public Diplomacy efforts, and if confirmed, I commit to helping ensure that the Department of State continues to prioritize its engagement with emerging world leaders through these programs. I believe academic, cultural, and professional exchange programs should remain significant and effective tools for achieving foreign policy goals, building ties, and establishing networks among current, and future, American and foreign leaders and policymakers.

Question 32. What impact would the funding cuts proposed by the administration have on the effectiveness and impact of State Department international exchange programs? Can you explain the rationale to cut and curtail our engagement with emerging leaders from around the world via exchange programs?

Answer. I have not yet had the opportunity to review the budget for international exchange programs, but will do so if confirmed. Further, if confirmed I look forward to participating in the full FY 2019 budget process.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy is not the spokesperson or face of the department, but in charge of critical tools for promoting American values and interests to foreign audiences. The United States has always formulated and promoted policies rooted in our values as a democratic, free, and pluralistic society, inspiring people all over the world. How would you define American values? Do you believe it is in our interest to promote those values through Public Diplomacy initiatives?

Answer. Our core American values are Freedom, Democracy, and Equality. We need to support and encourage a free press, freedom of religion, and the right to dissent. We aspire to be an example to the world. We will not impose our values on others, but our role, as we tell America's stories, is to inspire other countries to follow our lead. American values are the principles that have enabled us to be a beacon to the world, and Public Diplomacy is one of the best tools our government has for communicating those values directly to people overseas.

Question 2. What Public Diplomacy programs that would be coming under your purview do you believe are the most successful? How do you define the success of Public Diplomacy programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to leading a comprehensive analysis of all our Public Diplomacy programs. In my conversations with Members of Congress and their staffs, it was impressed upon me how valuable programs such as the Young African Leaders Initiative are because they encourage entrepreneurship, good governance, and other American values among future leaders. The American Spaces program also appears to be successful and, if confirmed, I intend to examine the impact of security arrangements on attendance levels and ways to work with the private sector to increase access to the right audiences. In addition, the Fulbright and other academic exchange programs serve an important purpose.

The success of Public Diplomacy programs should be based on their ability to advance key American interests, and adapt to the needs of foreign audiences in a constantly changing geopolitical landscape.

Question 3. Do you believe exchange programs and information programs further our foreign policy objectives?

Answer. Yes. Exchange programs send Americans abroad to study and conduct research, which expands our ability to compete in the global economy by developing the foreign-language, cross-cultural, and leadership skills U.S. employers seek. Educational exchange programs promote U.S. higher education as a favored destination of exceptional foreign students, who in turn contribute nearly $36 billion annually to our economy. International Visitor Leadership Programs connect future leaders with their U.S. counterparts, fostering long-term relationships that bolster effective diplomacy. These and other exchange and information programs seek to promote American values, enhance America's image, and strengthen support for U.S. policies, which increases our nation's ability to achieve its foreign policy goals.

Question 4. Do you believe you will have the resources necessary to fully execute your responsibilities and programs?

Answer. I do believe the administration's proposed budget provides the resources necessary to carry out the Public Diplomacy programs and activities most important to our nation's interests. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our Public Diplomacy responsibilities are carried out effectively and efficiently.

Question 5. As you pointed out during your hearing, the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) plays an important role in fighting disinformation and promoting U.S. interests overseas, but the FY 2018 budget request represents a $63.1 million decrease or 8.4 percent reduction from the prior year. How do you believe this will impact our ability to advance our security interests, including countering Russian misinformation and violent extremism?

Answer. While the administration's FY 2018 budget request includes a reduction in BBG's funding compared to FY 2017 enacted levels, the request envisions only small adjustments in funding for efforts to counter Russian misinformation and violent extremism. For instance, funding would continue for Current Time, BBG's 24/7 channel launched this year in Russian that broadcasts to former Soviet states and Russian-speaking populations. The Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN), responsible for a wide range of programming in Arabic to counter violent extremism, is slated for a relatively modest reduction ($5.3 million) from the FY 2017 level. I do not expect the request would substantially degrade the BBG's ability to combat Russian disinformation and violent extremism.

As the administration works with Congress to establish final FY 2018 funding levels for the BBG, I would certainly be mindful of the BBG's critical mission in advancing American security interests, including countering Russian misinformation and violent extremism.

Question 6. How do you define your role and responsibilities in relation to the BBG?

Answer. The Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs represents the Secretary of State on the Broadcasting Board of Governors and provides foreign policy guidance to help the BBG prioritize its activities and language services and to allocate resources accordingly. The Under Secretary also coordinates with the BBG to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy—and long-term, measurable objectives—for the use of Public Diplomacy resources.

I would note that neither the Under Secretary nor the Board are involved in making editorial decisions for the BBG networks. There is a "firewall" established by the U.S. International Broadcasting Act that prohibits interference with the objective, independent reporting of news by BBG journalists, thereby safeguarding the ability of BBG journalists to develop content that reflects the highest professional standards of journalism. The Under Secretary does, however, work with the BBG to develop appropriately identified editorials that accurately present the views of the U.S. Government.

Question 7. The BBG budget also funds the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB), which has been instrumental in combatting the repressive Castro regime, but the FY 2018 OCB request is $4.5 million below last year. How will this reduction affect our signature programming through Radio and TV Martϕ? As Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, how will you ensure that we continue to offer the people of Cuba uncensored information and support despite these reductions?

Answer. I appreciate your interest in the role that the Office of Cuba Broadcasting has played vis-a-vis the Cuban regime. I share your view that the goals of Radio and TV Marti should continue to provide uncensored information to a country lacking in the free-flow of information. As the Secretary of State's representative on the Broadcasting Board of Governors, if confirmed, I would evaluate potential budget reductions and trade-offs in light of this goal.

Question 8. I was pleased to hear you state in your hearing that the State Department has finally started to allocate funding for the Global Engagement Center and

requested a transfer from the Pentagon for the remaining funds. How will you ensure that this center funded by Congress to counter Russian disinformation and violent extremism is adequately resourced and supported?

Answer. My understanding is that the Department of State is pleased to be working with the Department of Defense (DoD) to effect a transfer of funds to the Global Engagement Center (GEC), as authorized by the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Proposed activities to be funded by the transfer include coordinating U.S. Government efforts in specific sub-regions; enhancing the capacity of local actors to build resilience against disinformation; and convening anti-disinformation practitioners, journalists, and other influencers to exchange best practices, build networks, and generate support for U.S. efforts against disinformation. Additionally, I understand that the GEC also leverages staff detailed from across the interagency—including from the intelligence community, DoD, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Broadcasting Board of Governors, as well as from within the Department of State—to coordinate U.S. Government messaging efforts to counter disinformation and ensure they are streamlined and not duplicative. If confirmed, I would work closely with leadership within the Department of State, the interagency, and the administration to ensure the GEC has the human, budgetary, and technological resources needed to accomplish its mission effectively and efficiently.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER A. COONS

Question 1. I understand that the administration is reviewing the J-1 visa category in relation to implementing the President's Executive Order on Buy American, Hire American. What role would you play in reviewing draft regulations or policy guidance that could alter J-1 programs?

Answer. I intend to review carefully any suggested changes to J-visa regulations and policy guidance, which currently facilitate Public Diplomacy engagement with approximately 300,000 participants from 200 countries and territories annually. J visas are for educational and cultural exchange programs, not work programs. Additionally, private sector-managed exchange programs are funded primarily through fees paid by participants, at virtually no cost to the U.S. Government. My understanding is that existing regulations prohibit J-visa programs with a work component from displacing American workers and that the Department of State is not currently proposing reductions in the number of participants in these programs.

Question 2. I led an amendment to the Senate's FY 2018 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill that would require any changes to the Exchange Visitor Program to go through consultation with Congress and a formal rulemaking process. If confirmed, do you commit to adhering to a transparent process that includes meaningful input from the stakeholder community if modifications to the Exchange Visitor Program are considered?

Answer. Yes. I want meaningful input from the stakeholder community and will make any decisions on the Exchange Visitor Program in a fully transparent manner.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. What is your response to calls for U.S. Public Diplomacy to adopt more propagandistic approaches to communicating with foreign publics, in order to more effectively combat disinformation about the United States and its policies?

Answer. I do not support a propagandistic approach to communicating with foreign publics. The United States needs to present an accurate portrayal of America, its citizens, and our role in the world using the diverse array of Public Diplomacy tools, including social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. By focusing on American values such as transparency, accountability through elections, and rule of law, we increase our credibility and improve prospects for success in countering disinformation.

Question 2. How can U.S. Public Diplomacy effectively reach publics deluged by a "firehose" of opposing views and disinformation from a multitude of sources?

Answer. To reach publics deluged by opposing views and disinformation effectively, U.S. Public Diplomacy must speak with one voice where people listen. This effort should use all forms of communication including, but not limited to, social media, BBG networks and programs such as Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Current Time, and any other vehicle that allows America to accurately show that its core values of democracy, equality, and freedom underpin all that it does. We also need to help enhance the capacity of local actors and other credible voices to expose false narratives and inoculate communities against disinformation

Question 3. Does U.S. Public Diplomacy risk becoming too reactive, trapped in a perpetual cycle of defensive explanation?

Answer. Yes, I do believe that U.S. Public Diplomacy risks becoming too reactive. With the stakes as high as they are, we cannot afford to be playing defense all the time. We must have a strategy to actively communicate our message and anticipate future challenges, so that the ground is well seeded with the truth before our opponents attempt to spread their misinformation.

Question 4. How can U.S. Public Diplomacy best capture the attention and trust of foreign publics in a way that durably diminishes their susceptibility to untruthful propaganda?

Answer. U.S. Public Diplomacy practitioners around the globe actively work to counter disinformation, debunk myths, and reassure allies. There is an emphasis on improving media literacy, expanding civil society capacity, and digital diplomacy outreach, but there is much more that can be done. I plan to look at all available research, meet frequently with tech companies, and develop clear and concise messages designed to diminish susceptibility to untruthful propaganda. The average age in many countries is under 30. We must reach them where they listen, and that is what I plan to do if confirmed.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. Do you believe that our partners have the will and the capability to counter efforts by ISIS, its sympathizers, or any follow-on organization that relies on spreading its extremist messages?

Answer. My understanding is that the Department of State is expanding its counter-terrorism messaging efforts through a growing network of foreign government and non-governmental partners, as people and groups closest to the battlefield of narratives are often the most credible voices in countering terrorist propaganda. Many of these groups already have the ability to counter terrorist propaganda, but other groups need more capacity.

The Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) currently works with messaging centers in the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Djibouti, among other locations. These messaging centers harness the creativity, expertise, and unique credibility of local actors to generate positive content that effectively challenges the falsehoods of ISIS and other international terrorist organizations. The GEC helps develop the capacity of these and other credible voices to reach the right audiences by sharing best practices from the private sector, including online audience analysis.

Within the next twelve to eighteen months, the GEC intends to map, assess, and coordinate U.S. training and support for foreign national and international messaging centers in East Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to better enhance their abilities and strengthen the network among the centers and the United States.

Question 2. Mr. Goldstein, in my travels to Saudi Arabia, the West Bank, Jordan, and other areas, I have been consistently told that international exchanges are one of our diplomats' best tools. People to people exchanges I believe are one the most effective ways to build long-term relationships and mutual understanding between U.S. and emerging foreign youth and leaders.

In the President's FY 2018 budget for State Department programs, however, exchanges funding received a proposed cut of over 50 percent from FY 2017 levels.

- Do you agree with the argument that exchanges funding should be cut? Are there certain exchange programs that should be expanded?

Answer. I agree that person-to-person exchanges are a vital part of America's Public Diplomacy effort, both short term and long term. If confirmed, I intend to review carefully the effectiveness and impact of the Department of State's exchange

programs and the funding assigned to each. Programs that provide great value may warrant expansion.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO SEAN P. LAWLER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my 21 years in uniform, there were many occasions where I was personally involved in promoting human rights and democracy. A few specific examples would include: non-combatant rescue operations in Tirana, Albania in which I was awarded the Humanitarian Service Medal; I served in Operation SUPPORT HOPE to provide refugee support during the Rwandan genocide; received a personal award for support operations in Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina following hostilities. Finally, I was deployed at sea in Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM. Preserving our American rights and supporting freedoms around the world has been the focal point of my career.

*Question 2.*What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. Throughout the course of my military career, I witnessed first-hand the importance of a diverse working environment that promotes teamwork and mutual respect. If confirmed, I look forward to leading the Office of the Chief of Protocol by example in the promotion of an atmosphere where discrimination has no place.

Establishing a workplace culture that promotes, encourages and is supportive of inclusion, equality and diversity is vital for growth and personal development. If confirmed, I will work together with supervisors to develop mission critical strategies for increased awareness and develop best practices to promote a culture that is built on inclusion through understanding, open dialogue, training, team exercises and mentoring opportunities.

Question 3. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 4. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. Neither I nor my immediate family have financial interests in any country aboard.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO LISA A. JOHNSON BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my Foreign Service career, I have promoted human rights and democracy around the globe in meaningful ways.

Most recently, in The Bahamas, my team and I worked closely with the Bahamian Government and its Inter-Ministerial Task Force to combat Trafficking in Persons. By undertaking extensive awareness and training campaigns, improving victim identification and care, and arresting and prosecuting traffickers, The Bahamas in

2015 became the first Tier One country in the Caribbean. With our support and close engagement, The Bahamas since has maintained its Tier One ranking.

The Bahamas has the highest incidence of rape in the Caribbean. I speak publicly about sexual and gender-based violence, and the Embassy funded an NGO grant for a training and awareness program that was implemented throughout the islands.

Corruption is a major problem in The Bahamas. At the same time, civil society is relatively weak. I convened NGOs advocating for transparency and accountability, supported participation in U.S.-funded exchange programs and a grant-writing workshop, and helped local Bahamians begin establishing a Transparency International (TI) local chapter. For the May 2017 General Elections in The Bahamas, I developed and implemented a U.S. Embassy International Observers Mission. We fielded over 30 observers and coordinated closely with OAS and Commonwealth observer missions in evaluating conduct of the election.

My greatest and most-wide ranging impact on human rights and democracy was as Office Director for Africa and the Middle East in the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL). Effective rule of law is a necessary component of any democratic system. In the wake of the Arab Spring, my team initiated a program in Tunisia to reform the Ministry of Interior and security forces, re-orienting them toward serving the Tunisian people, including through community policing programs. In Morocco, we built the capacity of an independent anti-corruption commission and assisted an NGO in creating a cell phone "app" to allow citizens to report corruption. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we worked with NGOs to deliver justice to rural victims of rape through an innovative mobile courts system. Our INL programs in over 30 countries in Africa and the Middle East, from professionalizing police forces to increasing court efficiency to improving prison conditions, all had at their core a strong human rights and democracy component.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Namibia? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Namibia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Namibia is a stable multiparty democracy with regular, free, and fair elections. It has an independent judiciary and free and open media.

The State Department's human rights report notes that the most significant human rights problems in Namibia include the slow pace of judicial proceedings and resulting lengthy pretrial detention, sometimes under poor conditions, and violence and discrimination against women and children. If confirmed, I would work with the Government of Namibia and civil society to address these problems while also highlighting Namibian successes so that they can serve as an example to the region.

Question 3. 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 Namibia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Namibia is approximately twice the size of California, with a population of just under 2.5 million. Physical travel to locations and to meet with key human rights partners throughout the country can be challenging, but if confirmed, I would place a strong focus on engagement outside of Windhoek.

Also, in order to fully engage on these issues, it is imperative that U.S.-Namibian relations continue to strengthen. Outreach and public diplomacy programs can provide Namibians with accurate information regarding U.S. efforts in the country and dispel any lingering mistrust toward U.S. intentions and foreign policy objectives. If confirmed, I will continue to work through our mission to invest in the next generation of Namibian leaders, including through programs like the Young African Leaders Initiative.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Namibia? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. If confirmed, I will also ensure that my staff fully implements and complies with the Leahy Law and similar efforts.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Namibia to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Namibia?

Answer. The Human Rights Report indicates that there were no reports of political prisoners or detainees in Namibia last year. If confirmed, I would engage with Namibia to address such cases should they arise.

Question 6. Will you engage with Namibia on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with the Government of Namibia on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance, while also highlighting Namibian successes as an example for the region.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Namibia?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. As a leader and manager in several diplomatic posts, I know that diversity enriches our work, as it does the United States as a whole. If confirmed, I will tap the diversity of my staff to benefit all at the Mission. I also pledge to promote a range of backgrounds and perspectives in the individuals whom I review for future positions.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that everyone on my team is treated professionally, that their rights are respected, that they are safe, and that they have the tools they need to perform their jobs. We are all one team working to advance U.S-Namibia relations and the interests of the United States and the American people.

Question 12. Namibia ranked 53rd of 176 on Transparency International's Corruption Index.

- In what sectors is most official corruption found in Namibia?
- If confirmed, what tools do you have at your disposal to help address corruption and what actions will you take as Ambassador to advocate for improved transparency and good governance with relevant Namibian stakeholders?

Answer. The State Department's Human Rights Report notes that Namibian law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials; however, the Government did not implement the law effectively, and officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were isolated reports of corruption by individuals in government.

If confirmed, I will use the full resources of our Mission to strengthen U.S. efforts to work with the Government of Namibia, as well as with non-governmental organizations, to increase transparency and promote good governance.

Question 13. The State Department has ranked Namibia "Tier 2" on trafficking in persons.

- If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance, if any, would you pursue to help Namibia better tackle this problem?
- In what ways might such efforts be incorporated into existing U.S. programs that aim to help strengthen Namibia's security sector and the rule of law?

Answer. Our annual trafficking in persons report designates Namibia as a "Tier Two" country. This means that, while the Government of Namibia does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, it is making significant efforts to do so.

The Government of Namibia's efforts include identifying and referring to care, more trafficking victims, drafting a national mechanism to refer victims to care, and strengthening inter-ministerial coordination on trafficking cases.

The Government did not meet minimum standards, according to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, in several key areas. While the Government did not conduct TIP awareness activities or convict any traffickers in the last reporting period, it did conduct a major awareness event in July of this year. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation as well as the Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare hosted the high-level event to mark the World Day against Trafficking in Persons.

If confirmed, I would continue the productive dialogue with the Namibian Government on this issue and include it in my engagement across the Government. For example, I would look for opportunities to provide Namibian officials with TIP-specific training, and use public diplomacy resources to amplify our messaging regarding this problem.

Question 14. Namibia is named in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Strategy for Accelerating HIV/AIDS Epidemic Control (2017–2020) as one of 13 high-burdened countries prioritized for investment during the life of the strategy to achieve the 90-90-90 targets by 2020, whereby 90 percent of people living with HIV know their status, 90 percent of people who know their status are accessing treatment and 90 percent of people on treatment are virally suppressed.

- What are the main challenges facing the country in achieving their 90-90-90 goal?
- If confirmed, what will you do to support Namibia and its communities in achieving that goal?

Answer. Approximately one in seven Namibians is HIV positive. This represents a profound and continuing challenge, but the country has made substantial progress in dealing with HIV/AIDS, and our partnership under PEPFAR has been integral to that success.

Last year, fewer than 8,000 Namibians were newly infected with HIV, less than 5 percent of babies born to HIV-positive mothers became infected, and fewer than 3,200 patients died from HIV/AIDS. Most striking, an estimated 100,000 Namibian lives—nearly 5 percent of the country's total population—have been saved.

Currently, 88 percent of Namibians with HIV know their status. Free antiretroviral (ARN) treatment is widely available across the country; 77 percent of infected adults and 90 percent of infected children are on ARVs. Namibia is extremely close to being among the first African nations to achieve the 90-90-90 goals, but significant challenges remain, including high rates of infection among youth, and, disproportionately, young women. In the years to come, it will be necessary for the United States and Namibia to continue to fund specific efforts to target at-risk populations.

The United States has played an integral role in these achievements, which have required a major investment. Of the roughly $2 billion in foreign assistance the U.S. Government has invested in Namibia since 2003, about $1.5 billion has been dedicated to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Namibia's Government directly funds two-thirds of the national HIV response. In the years to come, it will be important to continue transitioning to greater Namibian ownership of the HIV/AIDS response.

If confirmed, I will continue to partner with the Government of Namibia on this critical policy and humanitarian priority.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO LISA A. JOHNSON BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. The reported commercial and military ties between Namibia and North Korea are concerning. In 2017, U.N. sanctions monitoring experts twice reported on their investigations into the activities in Namibia of the Mansudae Overseas Project Group, a North Korean construction firm that has violated U.N. sanctions, and the Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation (KOMID), a U.N.-sanctioned North Korean entity that has engaged in prohibited financial transactions.In early 2017, the U.N. experts reported that the Namibian Government had admitted that KOMID and Mansudae had been active in building and supplying a national munitions factory between 2010 and 2015; that Mansudae had provided laborers for the project; and that Mansudae had been involved in the construction of monuments and government buildings in Namibia.Namibia has reported that it

ended its relations with the two firms, in compliance with U.N. Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2270 (2016), but such activities may have continued.

- What is the extent of reported Namibian military and commercial ties to North Korea?
- What has been the U.S. response to Namibia's ties to North Korea? Has Namibia responded adequately to U.S. outreach regarding Namibia serving as a continued source of funding for North Korea's illicit activities?
- Will you commit to pressuring the Government of Namibia to ending its commercial and military relationship with North Korea?

Answer. North Korea's stated intention to put a nuclear warhead on an ICBM poses a grave threat to the entire world. North Korea is a global menace, and in response, we need to see action from all countries to increase pressure on the DPRK to compel the regime to abandon its U.N.-proscribed nuclear and missile programs.

In response to engagement from the United States and the international community, Namibia has taken positive steps to address the threat posed by North Korea. In February 2015, the Namibian Government expelled the last of the official North Korean diplomats present in Namibia. In June 2016, the Namibian Government publicly announced an end to its commercial relationship with North Korea. Since then, Namibia has implemented that statement and affirmed that it is abiding fully by all U.N. Security Council Resolutions related to North Korea, including by ending contracts with UN-designated companies. The Namibian Government has further stated that all North Korean nationals have departed the country. Namibia has made great strides in distancing itself from North Korea and eliminating sources of foreign funding for the Kim regime's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs.

While we have been pleased with Namibia's recent cooperation, the United States will not hesitate to act unilaterally to address individuals and entities supporting the North Korean regime. On August 22, the Treasury Department designated Qingdao Construction (Namibia), a Namibian-based subsidiary of a Chinese company, for connections to the DPRK. Treasury also sanctioned a Namibia-based North Korean official linked to the Mansudae Overseas Projects, a DPRK firm also subject to U.S. sanctions. Through this action, we made clear that we will go wherever the evidence leads to cut off funding that supports Pyongyang's unlawful activities.

If confirmed, I will make engagement on North Korea a priority and continue to work with Namibia to meet its pledge to comply with all U.N. Security Council resolutions and to further curtail any relations with the North Korea.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO REBECCA GONZALEZ BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my personal and professional life I have championed human dignity, respect, inclusion, and opportunity. These guiding principles inform all my interactions. I make a proactive and concerted effort to promote human rights, equality, and democracy in my leadership, diplomatic engagement, and interactions in the work environment. As the Acting Labor Attaché in Panama, I worked on workers' rights, engaging the Government of Panama on labor conditions, formation of new unions, fair hiring practices, and collective bargaining agreements. I met regularly with a range of labor leaders, and advocated for workers' rights with an often reluctant and unresponsive Labor Ministry. As a result of my efforts and contribution, I was able to advance our efforts in promoting workers' rights with the Government of Panama and improve working conditions for workers.

As a career Foreign Service Officer with a focus on management, much of my personal effort to promote human rights and democratic principles has occurred within our Embassies and the Department. Over the course of my career, I recruited and led diverse teams and advocated and advanced issues of fairness, equity, and inclusiveness within the workplace.

For example, when serving in India I worked closely with and mentored a multiethnic staff, promoting a culture of respect and inclusion so that regardless of gender, religion, or background, women and men alike felt comfortable and valued. In my daily management of the team, I provided opportunities for personal and professional growth and ensured we made reasonable accommodations for our employees

with disabilities. I am proud that those I hired and mentored continue to thrive and are important partners contributing to our foreign policy goals in India. While serving in Saudi Arabia, there were instances when certain employees lectured and admonished third-country female employees for not being "good Muslims"—i.e. modest and wearing the abaya/veil. I engaged with all employees, spoke to the targeted females, and took corrective action to ensure these incidents stopped immediately. In both India and Saudi Arabia, I believe that my actions resulted in a positive, safe, professional environment that valued and respected the uniqueness and differences of individuals.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Lesotho? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Lesotho? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most pressing human rights issue in Lesotho is the control and conduct of the Lesotho Defense Force, which has been at the center of most incidents of political instability in Lesotho for 40 years. It must be transformed into a professional force fully subject to civilian authority if Lesotho is to move beyond recurrent patterns of political instability and grow into a more mature democracy. In addition, allegations of police abuse are common. Gender-based violence is also a major challenge. If confirmed, I would continue to press our concerns about these issues, use the full range of public diplomacy tools to shine a spotlight on them, and engage the Government of Lesotho to address them.

Question 3. 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 Lesotho in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Impunity and insufficient civilian control of the security sector remain the strongest obstacles and challenges to improving the human rights situation in Lesotho. Security sector reform is essential, a view endorsed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Commission of Inquiry, which in 2015 investigated unrest in Lesotho and provided specific recommendations. As a regional body to which Lesotho belongs, SADC will play a significant role in supporting Lesotho in this effort. I look forward to working with the Government of Lesotho and with SADC to continue to target U.S. assistance in ways that will advance reforms. I will also continue to seek out supportive voices in civil society, the business sector, the local diplomatic community, and the Government itself. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work with the Government of Lesotho, civil society, and human rights activists to increase accountability of those responsible for human rights abuses and other illegal acts.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Lesotho? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Most definitely, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will place importance on meeting with people from the full spectrum of society in Lesotho, particularly representatives of civil society and NGOs. If confirmed, I commit to meeting with U.S. and local human rights NGOs and ensuring that embassy personnel take the necessary steps for all security assistance and security cooperation activities to receive Leahy and other vetting to reinforce human rights concerns.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Lesotho to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Lesotho?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure my team actively engages with the Government of Lesotho to address allegations of abuse or unfair treatment. I will ensure that we continue to advocate with the Government of Lesotho to respect the rule of law and due process for all citizens in Lesotho.

Question 6. Will you engage with Lesotho on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will engage with Lesotho on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance. Like my predecessor, I will continue to engage actively in pressing Lesotho to improve respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, both in regular interactions with the most senior government officials, and by using the full range of public diplomacy tools and available funding for democracy and governance programming.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I might have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I might have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Lesotho?

Answer. No.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I am the person I am today because people mentored, helped, and gave me opportunities. If confirmed as Ambassador, one of my top priorities will be to mentor staff, recruit with an eye toward diversity, foster appreciation and respect for differences, and provide opportunities for employees' professional and personal growth. The support I give will not be limited solely to employees; my support would extend to our community as a whole and involve ensuring that family members are doing well, are given professional opportunities for employment when available, and feel part of the embassy community.

I will work hard to create an environment that is respectful and inclusive of different backgrounds, experiences, ideas, and perspectives. This commitment to diversity has been evident throughout my career. I have consistently gone out of my way to provide opportunities to everyone, encourage individuals from underrepresented groups, and promote a culture of trust and inclusion. I will actively engage and support relevant State Department organizations that support and advocate for employees of various backgrounds.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will set an example for those under my authority and direct them to maintain inclusive environments in their sections and agencies, and will counsel accordingly when I learn of problems.

Question 12. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. No, there have been no material changes.

Corruption

Question 13. Lesotho is ranked 83rd of 176 on Transparency International's Corruption Index.

- In what sectors is most official corruption found in Lesotho?
- If confirmed, what tools do you have at your disposal to help address corruption and what actions will you take as Ambassador to advocate for improved transparency and good governance with relevant Basotho stakeholders?

Answer. Corruption impacts multiple sectors in Lesotho; however, it is most pervasive in the public sector. This limits the country' ability to grow and produce wealth for its people. While the Government of Lesotho has shown an intention to combat corruption, steps to date have not been adequate. Anti-corruption institutions, principally the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offenses (DCEO), lack adequate capacity to address all reported cases of corruption in the country. Anti-corruption policies and accountability mechanisms are generally weak, and the public's access to information about the Government's action is limited. The general public believes the army and the police fail to hold officers accountable for various abuses, including corruption.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I would press the Government of Lesotho to take concrete steps to reduce corruption and improve transparency and good governance.

I would work with the Government of Lesotho to strengthen its efforts to address corruption through implementation of national anti-corruption laws, such as requiring public officials to disclose their assets. I would strengthen U.S. efforts to work with the Government of Lesotho, as well as with non-governmental organizations, to increase transparency and promote good governance to better combat corruption and impunity. I would ensure our Embassy provides training and exchange opportunities for government and civil society to promote transparency and good governance.

Trafficking in Persons

Question 14. The State Department has ranked Lesotho "Tier 2" on trafficking in persons.

- If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance, if any, would you pursue to help Lesotho better tackle this problem?
- In what ways might such efforts be incorporated into existing U.S. programs that aim to help strengthen Lesotho's security sector and the rule of law?

Answer. In the Department's most recent Trafficking in Persons report, Lesotho was listed as a Tier 2 country. This means that the Government of Lesotho does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so by increasing efforts compared to previous years. While Lesotho has laws against human trafficking, prosecution and enforcement efforts remain uneven. Specifically, prosecutions have been delayed due to lack of clarity over court jurisdiction. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Lesotho to continue its efforts to address these issues. I would look to raise the public's awareness of human trafficking and encourage training of law enforcement and judicial officials to investigate and prosecute these crimes.

We currently have limited military cooperation and security sector activities with Lesotho, due to documented human rights concerns related to the military. Leahy vetting standards preclude assistance to a number of key units in the Lesotho Defense Force. We will be unable to resume general assistance to the military until solders implicated in human rights abuses are held accountable, and until there is serious reform of the security sector.

We are engaging with the Government of Lesotho on programs that provide shelter and assistance for victims of Trafficking in Persons. Various local NGOs receive supplemental funding from the Government to implement these vital services. The Government of Lesotho has also established a multi-sectorial committee that is responsible for liaison with the Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU). Working together, these government entities can continue to improve enforcement of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. If confirmed, I would partner with the Government and civil society in Lesotho to increase the effectiveness of Lesotho's rule of law institutions and push for additional programs to help strengthen the country's judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute these heinous crimes.

HIV/AIDS

Question 15. Lesotho is named in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Strategy for Accelerating HIV/AIDS Epidemic Control (2017–2020) as one of 13 high-burdened countries prioritized for investment during the life of the strategy to achieve the 90-90-90 targets by 2020, whereby 90 percent of people living with HIV know their status, 90 percent of people who know their status are accessing treatment, and 90 percent of people on treatment are virally suppressed.

- What are the main challenges facing the country in achieving their 90-90-90 goal?
- If confirmed, what will you do to support Lesotho and its communities in achieving that goal?

Answer. In partnership with PEPFAR, Lesotho has made impressive progress in fighting HIV/AIDS and is on the path to reaching the 90-90-90 targets by 2020. Recent figures from Lesotho's Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (LePHIA) survey, which were released at the U.N. General Assembly in New York, showed that 77 percent of HIV-positive Basotho know their status; 90 percent of those who know their status are on treatment; and 88 percent of those who are on treatment are virally-suppressed.

Using this data, we know that we need to continue to identify those who do not know their status. This means we will need to continue to optimize HIV testing and counseling through expanded patient-initiated testing and counseling and targeted community testing. The Government of Lesotho's decisive move last year to launch a national test and treat policy, meaning those who test positive are immediately able to start treatment, can be expected to promote further progress in controlling

the epidemic.If confirmed, I will continue to work in partnership with the Government of Lesotho to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Lesotho, and build on the success achieved thus far, and find ways to maximize efficient use of our resources under PEPFAR.

Security Sector Reform

Question 16. According to the State Department's 2016 human right report, major human rights problems in Lesotho include "torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and punishment by LDF members, police torture, and societal abuse of women and children." The report also observed that "officials who committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the Government" were not prosecuted, "although the army reportedly surrendered two soldiers implicated in a murder without political implications to police. Impunity remained a significant problem."

- How can the United States most effectively help to support security sector reform, particularly regarding military justice and civilian control over the military?
- What is the status of former military chief Tlali Kamoli? And, what is being done to address the murder of his successor, Lieutenant-General Khoantle Motsomotso, in early September 2017?

Answer. The United States has been engaging and should continue to engage with the Government of Lesotho to press for security sector reform to ensure accountability in the security sector and adherence to the rule of law, as the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Commission of Inquiry recommended. The killing of Commander Motsomotso further emphasizes the need for security sector reform. The recently elected government has taken steps toward full implementation of SADC's recommendations and, if confirmed as Ambassador, I would continue to urge the Government to take concrete steps to implement SADC's recommendations fully. I would continue to reiterate that the United States takes this issue seriously and encourage the Government of Lesotho to undertake these much-needed reforms in a transparent and inclusive manner.

A national dialogue has recently begun in Lesotho, which includes the involvement of the current government, the opposition, and civil society organizations, with the intention of developing concrete and long-lasting reforms. The United States does not currently provide training to Lesotho's army due to Leahy Law concerns. However, the Embassy continues to monitor recent government steps to hold army officers accountable for past crimes. Such actions could eventually allow for the resumption of U.S. training and direct contributions to needed security sector reform.

Former Lesotho Defense Forces (LDF) Commander Kamoli is currently in police detention. He is awaiting a bail hearing and is facing 14 charges of attempted murder related to bombings in January 2014 and one charge of murder for the killing of a police official. Two senior officers implicated in former LDF Commander Mahao's 2015 murder allegedly killed General Motsomotso. Motsomotso's bodyguards subsequently killed these suspects in a confrontation. On September 14, the police also charged a third soldier in connection with the Motsomotso murder.

Following the killing of Commander Motsomotso, the Government of Lesotho requested that SADC deploy troops to Lesotho to support the Government as it moves to hold soldiers accountable for wrongdoing and in its efforts to undertake security sector reforms. A SADC force is expected to arrive in Lesotho in the coming weeks.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JAMES RANDOPLPH EVANS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have always believed that making a difference in one's community is a fundamental tool for defending human rights. At the beginning of my career, I was active in the Boy Scouts of America, serving as Member Chairman (1985–86), District Chairman (1986–1988), and receiving the National Quality District Award in 1987 & 1988. I have been continuously active in my churches, serving now on the Board of the Church of the Apostles. In addition, my wife Linda and I have supported financially and in a leadership position, with me serving as General Counsel, "Leading the Way"—a worldwide program that seeks to promote greater respect for

human rights—including freedom from torture, freedom of expression, women's rights, children's rights, and the protection of minorities around the globe.

Recently, through Leading the Way, we personally funded anti-rejection medicines for a kidney transplant refugee for almost two years until he and his family were able to emigrate from northern Iraq to Australia. Similarly, in 2004, we facilitated funds and donations in Memory of Airman 1st Class Antoine Holt, USAF through the Marine Corps—Law Enforcement Foundation to purchase a $20,000 maturity value scholastic Patriot Bond for Airman Holt's daughter Carmen. Airman Holt was a soldier from our county killed in the Iraq war.

The Georgia Bar has twice asked me to step in to help with pressing issues, including chairing the Suicide Prevention and Awareness Committee (2012–2014) and chairing the Task Force for Indigent Services (where we developed funding mechanisms for providing free legal assistance to the indigent). We also support the Salvation Army, Zoo Atlanta, various military related charities, and currently sponsor through Children's Hope Chest three children in Uganda—Agnes Asio; Benjamin Opolot; and Simon Peter Ebenu. We have previously sponsored other children through World Vision.

The impact of our collective service has been to improve the lives of others in our community, our State, and around the world in direct and personal ways for them, our country, and our world. From general support to personal involvement, we have been committed to and continue to promote human rights and democracy with both macro and individual impact on the lives of others.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Luxembourg today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Luxembourg? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg enjoys a democratic government with free and fair elections, the rule of law, and guarantees of basic rights and liberties. According to the 2016 State Department Human Rights Report, there were no reports of egregious human rights abuses in Luxembourg. In 2016, the United States downgraded Luxembourg in its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) to Tier Two. After the report came out in June 2016, the Government of Luxembourg modified its Criminal Code to facilitate the fight against TIP and developed a National Action Plan, among other steps. Due to these efforts, Luxembourg was upgraded to Tier 1 in the 2017 report. To ensure sustained progress in addressing human trafficking, if confirmed, I will ensure the Embassy continues to closely monitor Luxembourg's anti-trafficking efforts and seek ways for our governments to work together and share best practices to continue to make progress against trafficking in persons.

Question 3. 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 Luxembourg in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Luxembourg not only upholds human rights at home, but it is a leader in promoting human rights around the world. It is one of the most generous countries in the world, devoting more than one percent of its gross national income to development aid. In his 2015 speech to the U.N. General Assembly, Prime Minister Bettel said that development must be human-rights-based, and must include issues of governance, justice, peace, security, environmental protection, sustainable consumption and production patterns, as well as sustained economic growth. If confirmed, I will seek opportunities for the United States and Luxembourg to continue to work together to promote and advance human rights around the globe.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Luxembourg?

Answer. The Embassy routinely meets with NGOs in Luxembourg on issues from TIP, to religious freedom, to human rights. If confirmed, I will ensure that engagement continues. Additionally, I would be open to meeting with any NGOs in the U.S. that wished to discuss human rights, civil society, or other issues in Luxembourg.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Luxembourg to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Luxembourg?

Answer. I am not aware of any cases of political prisoners in Luxembourg.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support Embassy Luxembourg's work in implementing the provisions outlined in the Leahy Law, which requires vetting of security force units including police and military who receive assistance from the United States. If there is credible information that a security force unit or individual committed gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible units and individuals do not receive U.S. assistance and assisting their respective governments in bringing them to justice.

Question 7. Will you engage with the people of Luxembourg on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to ensuring our Mission remains engaged on these issues. Luxembourg shares our commitment to universal values such as human rights, and the Government of Luxembourg holds itself to the highest standards with regards to protecting the rights and liberties of its people. If confirmed, I will ensure that engagement on human rights and good governance remains an integral component of our mission.

Diversity

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the U.S. Embassy in Luxembourg are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?"

Answer. One of the foundational ideals of this country is the idea that all of us are created equal. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to ensuring that each and every member of my team is given the opportunities and tools needed to succeed, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, national origin or age.

If confirmed, not only will I lead by example, demonstrating my own commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, but I will also work with the Deputy Chief of Mission and Country Team to ensure that all Embassy Luxembourg supervisors uphold equal employment opportunity principles. I will also direct our Mission managers responsible for hiring and recruitment to ensure that Embassy Luxembourg remains a diverse and inclusive workplace where all team members have an equal opportunity to achieve success.

Conflicts of Interest

Question 9. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 10. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Luxembourg?

Answer. If confirmed, upon taking post, no. Currently, my law firm has an office there. If confirmed, upon taking office, I will sever all ties with my current law firm.

Voting Rights

Question 12. Have you ever supported or advanced policies that made it more difficult for eligible American citizens to exercise their right to vote?

Answer. On election issues, I have consistently supported early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, and provisional ballots. As an appointed member of the Georgia State Election Board, I worked with my fellow board members whenever possible in a bipartisan way in the implementation of the 2006 Georgia law passed that year by the Georgia legislature and signed by the Governor requiring state officials to issue, free of charge, a photo identification card to any registered voter and requiring every voter who casts a ballot in person to produce an identification card with a photograph.

The United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit upheld the constitutionality of the law when it affirmed the United States District Court for the North-

ern District of Georgia's same determination after a trial on the merits finding that any burden imposed was not undue or significant. The full opinion by the Eleventh Circuit can be found at *Common Cause/Georgia* v. *Billups,* 554 F.3d 1340 (2009). The United States Supreme Court unanimously denied certiorari in *NAACP* v. *Billups,* 129 S.Ct. 2770, 174 L. Ed. 271 (2009).

Similarly, the Georgia Supreme Court itself determined that the 2006 Georgia law was constitutional under Georgia's Constitution in *Democratic Party of Georgia, Inc.* v. *Perdue,* 288 Ga. 720 (2011) stating that: "the photo ID requirement for in-person voting is authorized by Art. II, Sec. I, Par. I [of the Georgia Constitution], as a reasonable procedure for verifying that the individual appearing to vote in person is actually the same person who registered to vote." *Id.* at 725–26. The Court stated: "As did virtually every other court that considered this issue, we find the photo ID requirement as implemented in the 2006 Act to be a minimal, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory restriction which is warranted by the important regulatory interests of preventing voter fraud." *Id.* at 730.

Question 13. In your testimony, you stated that opponents challenged Georgia's photo ID law while the State Election Board was in the process of mailing "educational" letters to approximately 300,000 voters. However, the 2006 Photo ID Act had been challenged in both federal and state court well before the letters were mailed in September of 2006. Can you clarify whether or not opponents had challenged the law before the Election Board began the process of mailing the letters?

Answer. Multiple election specific challenges were filed to the law in 2006. Yet, it was contemplated that Georgia's educational efforts would continue. The Georgia Supreme Court in *Democratic Party of Georgia, Inc.* v. *Perdue,* 288 Ga. 720, 721–22 (2011), described the federal injunction and the educational efforts in *Common Cause/Georgia* v. *Billups,* 439 F. Supp. 2d 1294, 1351 (N.D. Ga. 2006), as follows:

> The district court preliminarily enjoined enforcement of the 2006 Act, but *limited the injunction to the July 18, 2006 primary elections and corresponding primary run-off and declined to extend the injunction to future elections.* [Cite omitted.] The court so ruled after finding that efforts to educate voters concerning the statutory photo ID requirements had been insufficient in the time available prior to the 2006 primary elections and thus posed an undue burden on certain voters. [Cite omitted.] The district court noted, however:
>
> In issuing this Order, the Court **does not intend to imply that all Photo ID requirements would be invalid or overly burdensome on voters.** Certainly, the Court can conceive of ways that the State could impose and implement a Photo ID requirement without running afoul of the requirements of the Constitution. Indeed, **if the State allows sufficient time for its education efforts with respect to the 2006 Photo ID Act and if the State undertakes to inform voters of the 2006 Photo ID Act's requirements before future elections, the statute might well survive a challenge for such future.**
>
> Emphasis added.

Similarly, as noted by the District Court in *Common Cause/Georgia,* there was "a temporary restraining order issued by the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia, on July 7, 2006, enjoining the defendants in that case from enforcing the 2006 Photo ID Act during the July 18, 2006, primary election or any resulting run-off election." 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340 (citing *Lake* v. *Perdue,* Civil Action File No. 2006CV119207, slip op. at 3–4 (Fulton County Super. Ct. July 7, 2006)).

Similar actions were taken in connection with the Special Elections in 2006. Notwithstanding multiple challenges in multiple jurisdictions to specific elections, no injunction existed on the date the State Election began acting in accordance with directions from the federal court for the State to conduct an education effort as referenced above.

To comply with the directions regarding educational efforts, all members of the State Election Board (including the Democratic Designee to the State Election Board and the Secretary of State, a Democrat) approved unanimously at the beginning of September 2006 a letter explaining to voters how to get a free photo ID. As noted in the District Court's timeline in its opinion, these efforts and opponents concerns were discussed with the federal court on September 5, 2006. *See Common Cause/Georgia,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340, 1364. But, no injunction or other directive to stop the education efforts were issued. *Id.*

The bottom line was that challenges to specific elections (primary, run-off, and special elections) had been made; the injunctions were limited to those specific elections; and the federal district court was specifically made aware of opponents' concerns and did not enjoin them; the federal court eventually determined that the

overall educational efforts eliminated some of the potential bases for challenging the 2006 Photo ID law.

Question 14. The 2006 Photo ID Act was enjoined by a federal court on September 14, 2006, and it was declared unconstitutional by a Georgia state court on September 19, 2006. According to a filing by former Governor Roy Barnes, approximately 80,000 letters were sent on September 20, 2006, and approximately 116,000 letters were sent on September 25, 2006.

- In your testimony, you stated that "although many of the letters had already gone out, some of the letters were received after the court's ruling." Given the timeline above, approximately 200,000 letters were sent, not just received, after the injunction was issued. Can you clarify whether or not letters were sent after the injunction was issued?

Answer. The actual timeline is as follows. The letter was unanimously approved around the first of September, 2006. Opponents of the State's educational effort, which included the letter, raised their concerns with the federal court on September 5, 2017. In paragraph 32, the Court stated:

> On September 5, 2006, the Court held a telephone conference with the parties to address Plaintiffs' concerns with respect to the educational efforts and the application of the 2006 Photo ID Act to the September special elections.—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340–41.

Then, on September 6, 2006, the plaintiffs filed their motion for a preliminary injunction as to the September 2006 special elections. The Court chronicled this filing in paragraph 33 when the Court stated as follows:

> On September 6, 2006, Plaintiffs filed their Motion for Hearing on Plaintiffs' Second Motion for Preliminary Injunction in Advance of the September 2006 special elections.—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340–41.

Two paragraphs of the Court's actual order make the point clear. In paragraph 33, the Court stated as follows:

> On September 6, 2006, Plaintiffs filed their Motion for Hearing on Plaintiffs' Second Motion for Preliminary Injunction in Advance of the September 2006 special elections.—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340–41.

Notably, this was five (5) days after the State Election Board had unanimously approved with bipartisan support the September 1, 2006 letter at issue regarding how to get a free photo ID. It also followed the September 5, 2006 telephone conference with the federal court with respect to educational efforts.

Then, on September 14, 2006, the federal court enjoined the 2006 Photo ID Act, but only with respect to the special elections. No injunction was issued notwithstanding Plaintiffs' expressed concerns to the Court regarding the State's educational efforts which were in process. In paragraph 34, the Court specifically stated as follows:

> On September 14, 2006, the Court held its third preliminary injunction hearing in this case. At the conclusion of the September 14, 2006 hearing, the Court verbally granted Plaintiffs' request for a preliminary injunction with respect to the September 2006 special elections.—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1341 (internal citations omitted).

Hence, the bipartisan educational letter was sent pursuant to the federal court's comments urging an educational effort which was followed by a telephone conference with the federal court to hear opponents' concerns. There was no injunction as to the law generally or the general election, and the federal court had been involved regarding the educational efforts to hear opponents' concerns.

The federal court's entire timeline and notations can be found at *Common Cause/Georgia* v. *Billups,* 504 F. Supp. 1333 (N.D. Ga. 2007). On appeal, the Eleventh Circuit described the District Court's position on the educational efforts in this way:

> The district court stated that, pending education efforts initiated by the State, the requirement of photo identification might no longer be unduly burdensome in later elections, and it declined to extend the injunction to future elections. The district court also concluded that the organizations and voters did not have a likelihood of success on the merits of their complaint that the statute imposed an unconstitutional poll tax or violated the Civil Rights Act or the Voting Rights Act.—*Common Cause/ Georgia* v. *Billups,* 554 F.3d 1340, 1347 (11th Cir. 2009).

Separately, there was a state court action. In *Lake* v. *Perdue,* Civil Action File No. 2006CV119207, slip op. at 3–4 (Fulton County Super. Ct. September 19, 2006),

the state court of Fulton Court entered an order permanently enjoining the enforcement of the 2006 Act. The Georgia Supreme Court eventually vacated that Order and remanded "with the direction that it be dismissed." *Perdue* v. *Lake,* 282 Ga. 348, 350 (2007). This procedural history was also summarized by the Georgia Supreme Court in *Democratic Party of Georgia, Inc.* v. *Perdue,* 288 Ga. 720, 722 (Ga. 2011).

The State Election Board then immediately suspended its education efforts. Notably, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals stated in its opinion the following as it relates to the State's education efforts once the injunction in *Perdue* v. *Lake* was issued:

> During the pendency of this litigation, a state court permanently enjoined the enforcement of the new statute as violative of the Georgia Constitution. *See Perdue* v. *Lake,* 282 Ga. 348, 647 S.E. 2d 6 (2007). The Supreme Court of Georgia later vacated the injunction and dismissed the action ... **While the injunction by the state court was extant, Georgia suspended all educational efforts about the requirement of photo identification.**—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 554 F. 3d at 1347. (Emphasis added).

In fact, upon learning of the state court injunction in the *Lake matter,* I urged and the State Election Board agreed that the State would NOT seek a stay of the state court injunction (although the State would appeal and the Georgia Supreme Court would vacate the Order and remand the case with instructions that it be dismissed); would NOT apply the 2006 Photo ID law to the remaining 2006 elections because if the State prevailed, the rules "will have changed midstream"; would "suspend all educational efforts about the requirement of photo identification"; and would send a second letter making very clear that the photo ID would not be required in the upcoming general election. 9/23/06 AP Alert—GA 07:31:47—Westlaw

Since I was not involved in the actual administrative process of mailing letters approved on September 1, 2006, I was not involved enough to know whether the letters in process could have been stopped. But, I do know I advised immediately and then led the effort on the Board to suspend the application of the 2006 Photo ID law to the remaining 2006 elections, to suspend all educational efforts, and to insist on a second letter making clear that a photo ID would not be required.

It is why the Eleventh Circuit determined that: **"While the injunction by the state court was extant, Georgia suspended all educational efforts about the requirement of photo identification."** *Common Cause/Georgia,* 554 F. 3d at 1347. (Emphasis added). Notably, the mailing itself had been approved unanimously by both the Democratic and Republican members of the State Election Board, including the Democratic Secretary of State well in advance of the injunction.

It was also consistent with how the State had dealt with injunctions as to specific elections before. *In Common Cause/Georgia* v. *Billups,* 504 F. Supp. 2d 1333, 1340 (N.D. Ga. 2007), paragraph 31, the District Court stated as follows:

> After the Court's July 14, 2006 Order, and after the Georgia Supreme Court's refusal to stay the temporary restraining order issued in the Lake case, the State Defendants stopped all of their attempts to educate voters concerning the 2006 Photo ID Act. In early September 2006, the State Election Board voted to resume those educational efforts.

Question 15. Given the timeline above, couldn't the State Election Board have prevented those letters from being mailed?

Answer. The letters were unanimously approved well in advance of the injunction in accordance with directions to the State to engage in an education effort and a federal court, having heard opponents' concerns, took no action and did not issue an injunction to stop them.

Additionally, since I was not involved in the administrative mechanics of the actual mailing process, I do not know whether it could have been halted midstream. I do know that immediately upon learning of the injunction, I opposed applying the photo ID in the November 2006 election, supported suspending all educational efforts (which the Courts acknowledged), and supported sending a second letter making clear photo IDs would not be required in the upcoming election. It is why the federal court determined that the Board suspended all efforts once the state court injunction was issued.—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 554 F. 3d at 1347.

Question 16. Could this letter have misled Georgia voters?

Answer. Not from my perspective. Given the statements, actions, and non-application of the 2006 Photo ID requirement in the 2006 elections, together with the provisional ballot rule that voters could vote and return to address any issues, it is clear that every voter was encouraged to vote in the 2006 election. In fact, given the letter's unanimous adoption by the Democratic Secretary of State, the Democratic ap-

pointee to the State Election Board, and the remainder of the Board as well as the federal district court's decision not to stop it after hearing opponents' concerns, it appeared that the unanimously adopted letter as drafted and adopted addressed any valid concerns about it—whether by Democrats, Republicans, and the federal court.

Although not specifically addressing the September 2006 letter, in footnote 7 of the District Court decision, addressing the State's overall educational efforts, the Court in fact rejected the argument "that the voter education materials provided by the State were misleading or did not provide sufficient information."—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1378 n.7.

Of course, this letter was approved unanimously by both Democrats and Republicans on the State Election Board including the Democratic Secretary of State and the Democratic Party of Georgia's designee. The federal district court heard the concerns but took no action to stop the education effort and issued no injunction. No one thought the letter was misleading.

Question 17. Once you learned that the 2006 Photo ID Act had been enjoined, what specific steps did you take to prevent the education letter from being sent to any additional voters?

Answer. Immediately, I advised that I would oppose a stay of the injunction, I would oppose application of the photo ID law in the upcoming election, I would support a second letter to make clear that photo IDs would not be required, and I voiced to voters that the elections would go forward in accordance with the Court's ruling.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JAMES RANDOLPH EVANS BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. Mr. Evans, you served on Georgia's State Election Board and while you were a member, it sent 300,000 letters to voters just weeks before Election Day that suggested that a photo ID would be required to cast a ballot. Approximately 200,000 of those letters were sent after a judge struck down a state law requiring a photo ID to vote. While the letters were drafted prior to the judge's ruling, those letters still went out. It was well known that the law was being challenged while the letter was being prepared.

As someone who is very concerned about voter suppression efforts and who has introduced legislation to combat this administration's efforts to suppress the vote, this is a concerning incident. For decades poor people of color have been discriminated against at the ballot box and discriminatory laws, like strict voter ID laws, have kept African Americans from voting.

- If this was not an effort to suppress the voter as I am sure you contend, how do you explain this large-scale administrative foul up?

Answer. In 2006, the Georgia Legislature passed and Governor (now Secretary) Perdue signed into law Georgia's second attempt at a voter identification law. Once the United States Department of Justice cleared Georgia's new voter ID law, the State began to issue free identification cards to anyone who wanted or needed one.

Unlike other similar legislation, this legislation was upheld as Constitutional under both the United States Constitution and the Georgia Constitution. The United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit upheld the Constitutionality of the law when it affirmed the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia's same determination after a trial on the merits. The full opinion by the Eleventh Circuit can be found at *Common Cause/Georgia* v. *Billups,* 554 F.3d 1340 (2009). The United States Supreme Court unanimously denied certiorari in *NAACP* v. *Billups,* 129 S.Ct. 2770, 174 L. Ed. 271 (2009).

Similarly, the Georgia Supreme Court itself determined that the 2006 Georgia law was constitutional under Georgia's Constitution in *Democratic Party of Georgia, Inc.* v. *Perdue,* 288 Ga. 720 (2011) stating that: "the photo ID requirement for in-person voting is authorized by Art. II, Sec. I, Par. I [of the Georgia Constitution], as a reasonable procedure for verifying that the individual appearing to vote in person is actually the same person who registered to vote." *Id.* at 725–26.

The Court went on to state: "As did virtually every other court that considered this issue, we find the photo ID requirement **as implemented** in the 2006 Act to be a minimal, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory restriction which is warranted by the important regulatory interests of preventing voter fraud." *Id.* at 730 with emphasis added.

Prior to the final resolution of the Constitutional issues, multiple election specific challenges were filed to the law in 2006. For example, the Georgia Supreme Court

in *Democratic Party of Georgia, Inc.* v. *Perdue,* 288 Ga. 720, 721–22 (2011), described the initial federal injunction in *Common Cause/Georgia* v. *Billups,* 439 F. Supp. 2d 1294, 1351 (N.D. Ga. 2006), as follows:

> The district court preliminarily enjoined enforcement of the 2006 Act, but limited the injunction to the July 18, 2006 primary elections and corresponding primary run-off and **declined to extend the injunction to future elections.** [Cite omitted.] The court so ruled after finding that **efforts to educate voters concerning the statutory photo ID requirements had been insufficient in the time available prior to the 2006 primary elections and thus posed an undue burden on certain voters.** [Cite omitted.] The district court noted, however:
>
> In issuing this Order, the Court does not intend to imply that all Photo ID requirements would be invalid or overly burdensome on voters. Certainly, the Court can conceive of ways that the State could impose and implement a Photo ID requirement without running afoul of the requirements of the Constitution. Indeed, **if the State allows sufficient time for its education efforts with respect to the 2006 Photo ID Act and if the State undertakes to inform voters of the 2006 Photo ID Act's requirements before future elections, the statute might well survive a challenge for such future.** Emphasis added.

Similarly, as noted by the District Court in *Common Cause/Georgia,* there was "a temporary restraining order issued by the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia, on July 7, 2006, enjoining the defendants in that case from enforcing the 2006 Photo ID Act **during the July 18, 2006, primary election or any resulting run-off election.**" 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340 (citing *Lake* v. *Perdue,* Civil Action File No. 2006CV119207, slip op. at 3–4 (Fulton County Super. Ct. July 7, 2006)) with emphasis added.

Similar legal actions were filed in connection with the Special Elections in 2006. Notwithstanding multiple challenges in multiple jurisdictions to specific elections, no injunction existed on the date the State Election Board began acting in compliance with directions from the federal court for the State to conduct an educational effort as referenced above.

Instead, to comply with the directions regarding educational efforts, all members of the State Election Board (including the Democratic Designee to the State Election Board and the Secretary of State, a Democrat) approved unanimously at the beginning of September 2006 a letter explaining to voters how to get a free photo ID. As noted in the District Court's timeline in its opinion, these efforts and concerns about them were discussed with the federal court on September 5, 2006. *See Common Cause/Georgia,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340, 1364. But, the federal court did not enjoin or direct the State to stop the educational efforts underway. *Id.*

The actual timeline is as follows. The letter was unanimously approved around the first of September, 2006. Opponents of the State's educational effort, which included the letter, raised their concerns with the federal court on September 5, 2017. In paragraph 32, the Court stated:

> On September 5, 2006, the Court held a telephone conference with the parties to address Plaintiffs' concerns with respect to the educational efforts and the application of the 2006 Photo ID Act to the September special elections.—*Common Cause/Georgia, 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340–41.*

Then, on September 6, 2006, the plaintiffs filed their motion for a preliminary injunction as to the September 2006 special elections. The Court chronicled this filing in paragraph 33 when the Court stated as follows:

> On September 6, 2006, Plaintiffs filed their Motion for Hearing on Plaintiffs' Second Motion for Preliminary Injunction in Advance of the September 2006 special elections.—*Common Cause/Georgia, 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1340–41.*

Notably, this was five (5) days after the State Election Board had unanimously approved with bipartisan support the September 1, 2006 letter at issue regarding how to get a free photo ID. It also followed the September 5, 2006 telephone conference with the federal court with respect to concerns regarding educational efforts.

Then, on September 14, 2006, the federal court enjoined the 2006 Photo ID Act, but only with respect to the special elections. No injunction of the educational efforts including the letter was issued notwithstanding opponents' expressed concerns to the Court regarding the State's educational efforts which were in process.

In paragraph 34, the Court specifically stated as follows:

> On September 14, 2006, the Court held its third preliminary injunction hearing in this case. At the conclusion of the September 14, 2006 hearing,

> the Court verbally granted Plaintiffs' request for a preliminary injunction with respect to the September 2006 special elections.—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1341 (internal citations omitted). Again, there was no injunction to the educational effort.

The bottom line was that challenges to specific elections (primary, run-off, and special elections) had been made. The injunctions were limited to those specific elections. The federal district court was specifically made aware of opponents' concerns, but did not direct that they be stopped and did not enjoin the educational efforts including the letter. The federal court did eventually determine that the overall educational efforts were not misleading and did in fact eliminate some of the bases for challenging the law.

Hence, the process began for mailing the bipartisan unanimously approved educational letter—after the federal court's comments urging an educational effort and after a telephone conference with the federal court about concerns with the educational efforts. There was no injunction as to the law generally or the general election, and the federal court had been involved regarding the educational efforts prior to the injunction. The federal court's entire timeline and notations can be found at *Common Cause/Georgia v. Billups,* 504 F. Supp. 1333 (N.D. Ga. 2007).

On appeal, the Eleventh Circuit described the District Court's position on the educational efforts in this way:

> The district court stated that, pending education efforts initiated by the State, the requirement of photo identification might no longer be unduly burdensome in later elections, and it declined to extend the injunction to future elections. The district court also concluded that the organizations and voters did not have a likelihood of success on the merits of their complaint that the statute imposed an unconstitutional poll tax or violated the Civil Rights Act or the Voting Rights Act.—*Common Cause/ Georgia* v. *Billups,* 554 F.3d 1340, 1347 (11th Cir. 2009).

Separately, there was a state court action. In *Lake* v. *Perdue,* Civil Action File No. 2006CV119207, slip op. at 3–4 (Fulton County Super. Ct. September 19, 2006), the state court of Fulton County entered an order permanently enjoining the enforcement of the 2006 Act. The Georgia Supreme Court eventually vacated that Order and remanded "with the direction that it be dismissed." *Perdue* v. *Lake,* 282 Ga. 348, 350 (2007). This procedural history was also summarized by the Georgia Supreme Court in *Democratic Party of Georgia, Inc.* v. *Perdue,* 288 Ga. 720, 722 (Ga. 2011).

Notably, as to the actions of the State Election Board upon the issuance of the state court injunction, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals stated as follows:

> During the pendency of this litigation, a state court permanently enjoined the enforcement of the new statute as violative of the Georgia Constitution. *See Perdue* v. *Lake,* 282 Ga. 348, 647 S.E. 2d 6 (2007). The Supreme Court of Georgia later vacated the injunction and dismissed the action . . . **While the injunction by the state court was extant, Georgia suspended all educational efforts about the requirement of photo identification.**—*Common Cause/Georgia,* 554 F. 3d at 1347.

In fact, upon learning of the state court injunction in the *Lake* matter, I urged and the State Election Board agreed that the State would NOT seek a stay of the state court injunction (although the State did appeal and the injunction was vacated and the action ordered dismissed) . The State would NOT apply the 2006 Photo ID law to the 2006 general election because if the State pursued a stay and prevailed, the rules "will have changed midstream." The State would "suspend all educational efforts about the requirement of photo identification." And, the State would send a second letter making clear that the photo ID would not be required in the upcoming general election. 9/23/06 AP Alert—GA 07:31:47—Westlaw.

Since I was not involved in the actual administrative process of mailing letters approved around September 1, 2006, I was not involved enough to know whether the mailing in progress could have been stopped. But, I do know the Board immediately suspended the application of the 2006 Photo ID law to the remaining 2006 elections, suspended all educational efforts, and took additional actions to make sure voters were accurately informed including sending a second letter making clear that a photo ID would not be required for the 2006 elections.

It is why the Eleventh Circuit determined that: **"While the injunction by the state court was extant, Georgia suspended all educational efforts about the requirement of photo identification."** It was also consistent with how the State had dealt with injunctions as to specific elections before. In *Common Cause/Georgia*

v. *Billups,* 504 F. Supp. 2d 1333, 1340 (N.D. Ga. 2007), paragraph 31, the District Court stated as follows:

> After the Court's July 14, 2006 Order, and after the Georgia Supreme Court's refusal to stay the temporary restraining order issued in the *Lake* case, the State Defendants stopped all of their attempts to educate voters concerning the 2006 Photo ID Act. In early September 2006, the State Election Board voted to resume those educational efforts.

As it turned out, there were no specific allegations of any voter being misled either by the letter or the educational effort. In fact, in addressing the overall education effort, in footnote 7 of the District Court decision, addressing the State's overall educational efforts, the Court rejected the argument "that the voter education materials provided by the State were misleading or did not provide sufficient information." *Common Cause/Georgia* v. *Billups,* 504 F. Supp. 2d at 1378 n.7.

Question 2. The United States is a beacon of democracy for so many nations around the globe and you are about to represent this country in Luxembourg.

- If asked about President Trump's so-called Election Integrity Commission by government officials in Luxembourg and President's Trump's claims that millions of people voted illegally in the United States, what would you say?

Answer. Until any report is issued, I will note that the claims are the subject of various investigations including the Election Integrity Commission. Upon the issuance of a report, I will defer to the report as well as any related government materials that may be generated by the Congress, states, or other government entities investigating the claims.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio presiding.

Present: Senators Rubio [presiding], Flake, Gardner, Young, Isakson, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Murphy, Markey, and Merkley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

Senator RUBIO. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order. This is a full committee hearing on the nominations of Dr. Christopher Ashley Ford to be the Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation, and Dr. Yleem Poblete to be Assistant Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance.

I thank both of you for being here today and for your willingness to serve our country.

Ranking Member, with your permission, because I know both Senator Boozman and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen are scheduled, I was going to let them give their introductions before I gave mine.

Senator CARDIN. Absolutely. I am looking forward to hearing from our colleagues. So absolutely.

Senator RUBIO. And both because of how far she had to travel here across the Capitol to come over and her years of service to our country, if it is okay, Senator, I was going to give the Congresswoman the opportunity open with her remarks, and then I will recognize you.

Senator SHAHEEN. And she is from Florida. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. Yes, the Florida part. Actually, as I proudly tell people, I was an intern for her in 1991, so not that long ago.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. We still have high hopes for you, Senator. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. I will get there one day. But anyway, I mean, for your high hopes. I do not want anyone to read into that. The commissioner job of the NFL has been taken for now, so, anyway, I appreciate you being here. Thank you for being with the committee.

STATEMENT OF HON. ILEANA ROS–LEHTINEN, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM FLORIDA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Cardin, Senators.

And thank you, Senator Boozman, for letting me go first. That is very nice of you.

Today, I have the distinct honor and privilege to introduce to the committee Dr. Yleem Poblete, originally from Florida, now of Virginia, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

I have known Yleem since she was a precocious 8-year-old, volunteering on my first campaign for the Florida statehouse. It was clear then, as it is now, that public service was her true calling.

I can attest and promise to this committee, and to the entire Senate, that Yleem is a nominee who will make us all proud, that she will fulfill the duties and obligations of her office faithfully and vigilantly.

She has more than 2 decades' worth of experience on issues directly related to this position to which she has been nominated. Yleem has navigated, executed, and led the legislative agenda on a wide array of foreign affairs and national security matters for the House of Representatives.

During her time working for me and on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, she worked in a bipartisan manner to advance U.S. foreign policy interests in virtually every region of the world.

So it is quite fitting that Yleem as President Trump's nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary of State, Verification and Compliance, at the Department of State, would be before you today, at a time when verification and compliance are critical to U.S. national security interests. Whether for the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the INF Treaty; Syrian chemical weapons use; or to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, our Nation will be well-served to have Dr. Yleem Poblete as one of the first lines of defense.

She has dedicated her professional life to holding rogue regimes and violator's feet to the fire. My dear colleagues, many of you can attest to this, having worked with her throughout the years, and I know that Senator Menendez and Mr. Rubio, you have worked with her directly.

And thanks to her diligence and acumen, multiple bills targeting some of the most complex and dangerous proliferation threats in Iran, in Syria, in North Korea, in Russia, and elsewhere, have become law.

I can go on and on about the totality of Yleem's professional achievements, because there are so many. But instead, I will just conclude with a note about her personal character and integrity.

As a young Hispanic woman working on national security interests and all issues related to the welfare of our Nation, Yleem has rightfully earned credibility and respect in her area of expertise and from her peers, despite the odds.

And all along the way, she has made it one of her primary missions to help so many others achieve their own goals. She has been a mentor and a role model for so many staffers. Yleem has encouraged them to achieve not only their educational goals, but to surpass their potential. And I know there are countless who are grateful for the care, for the support, and for the guidance that Yleem

has given to them over the years. In the 20-years-plus of working for me, whenever I needed Yleem, she was there, and I shall forever be grateful for that. But she was there also for so many others.

And now I believe that our Nation needs her more than ever, and I know that she is proud to answer that call. Her commitment to public service is admirable, and her dedication to protecting the United States and our national security interests makes Yleem the ideal nominee for this position.

Yleem is accompanied this morning by her supportive husband, Jason Poblete, and watching the proceedings from Miami are her father, Octavio; her mother, Miriam; her sister, Giselle; her brother, Jonathan.

I fully support her nomination. And with that, I am honored to introduce Dr. Yleem Poblete.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. And thanks so much for being here. We appreciate that very much.

Senator Boozman, we recognize you to present Dr. Ford.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BOOZMAN, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARKANSAS

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you, Chairman Rubio and Ranking Member Cardin, for the honor of being here to introduce Dr. Yleem Poblete, the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance. I have known and worked with Yleem for over 15 years and enthusiastically support her confirmation to this important position.

I first got to know Yleem as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. I was always impressed by her hard work, dedication to public service, ability to quickly synthesize difficult issues, and her singular focus on developing solutions, rather than identifying problems, which is so important.

She is a consummate professional who is able to skillfully navigate competing priorities to advance U.S. national security interests and priorities. Her past successful efforts on bills targeting Iran, Syria, and North Korea are a testament, among a number of other things, but they are a testament to her skills and her determination.

In conclusion, Yleem's policy expertise and political acumen will serve the State Department and our country very, very well, and I wholeheartedly support her confirmation.

Senator RUBIO. I thank you for being here as well. And I misspoke. I apologize. I said you were representing Dr. Ford. But I appreciate two presentations, and thank you both for being here and for your time today.

And with that, I will move into my opening statements on nomination, and then we will proceed from there.

Senator CARDIN. But our two colleagues are free to leave, if they have other things to do.

Senator RUBIO. No, actually, we want you to stay and watch the whole thing, but it is on television now, so you can—[Laughter.]

Senator BOOZMAN. I am on the Budget Committee, so——

Senator RUBIO. Oh, you should go. Yes.

Senator BOOZMAN [continuing]. I have to run.

Senator RUBIO. You need to be there. But thank you again, both, for being here.

So if confirmed, the two of you will help the United States to craft and improve policies seeking to prevent the international spread of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, biological weapons, and other deadly and destructive technologies, and to verify the full compliance of countries that have entered into bilateral or multilateral agreements with the U.S. related to nonproliferation and arms control.

While most countries comply with the 1968 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other key multilateral agreements aimed at restraining nuclear proliferation, there are certain bad actors that are posing severe challenges to the international order.

In North Korea, the Kim regime poses direct threats with its nuclear warheads, ballistic missiles, and conventional military against its neighbors, including South Korea and Japan, as well as against American military forces that are forward-deployed in the Indo-Pacific. North Korea, which has a long history of cooperating with Iran on missiles, is also trying to build ICBMs capable of delivering nuclear warheads to American soil.

We should also not forget that North Korea used the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which, by the way, it left in 2003, as well as President Clinton's 1994 agreed framework as cover to gain years to overtly and covertly acquire the capabilities to build nuclear weapons.

In the Middle East, the Iranian regime's nuclear ambitions and growing missile arsenal pose long-term threats to its neighbors, which include Saudi Arabia and other gulf nations, as well as to American military forces forward-deployed in the region, not to mention, of course, the State of Israel.

While the Obama administration was hopeful that its controversial nuclear deal with Iran would lead to restraint and moderation in the Iranian regime's behavior, the opposite, clearly, is happening.

While the regime has a long-term path to getting nuclear weapons, especially when the Iran nuclear deal's key limitations expire in little more than a decade, they are aggressively expanding their missile capabilities in the near term. The regime has also used the financial windfall from this flawed deal to increase its support for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, for sectarian militancy throughout the region, and even for the Assad barbaric dictatorship in Syria.

In light of the controversial nuclear deal with Iran, one of my biggest concerns is that other Middle Eastern nations may seek to enter into a race to develop civil nuclear programs, but with also having breakout capability.

In the Europe-Eurasian region, Russia and Vladimir Putin continue to violate the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and to deny some of America's overflight requests under the Open Skies Treaty. This, of course, raises serious questions about the future viability of arms control between the United States and Putin's Russia.

I should add that, in Syria, the Assad regime, which is now backed by Putin and the Iranian regime, has repeatedly used chemical weapons against its own people. The 2013 Obama-Putin agreement clearly failed to verifiably eliminate all chemical weapons in Syria.

These are just some of the many serious challenges that the international spread of nuclear weapons and other deadly and destructive technologies pose to the United States and to our allies.

Dr. Ford and Dr. Poblete, I look forward to hearing your views on these issues and other issues today, because if you are confirmed, I cannot stress how important your positions in the State Department will be in helping our Nation's leaders chart the right path toward stopping these threats.

With that, I now recognize the ranking member.

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Well, Senator Rubio, first of all, thank you for conducting this hearing and chairing this hearing.

I want to welcome both of our nominees, Ms. Poblete and Dr. Ford. Both of you, we thank you for your willingness to serve our country. And increasingly, these are very important positions.

I also want to acknowledge your past work here in Congress.

Dr. Ford, I personally enjoyed our relationship with Senator Corker and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and your critically important work on behalf of our committee.

Ms. Poblete, your work on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, we appreciate that. And that is a plus. We want you to know that. We appreciate people who have experience here on Capitol Hill.

I also want to acknowledge your families that are here today, your spouses, and your daughter that is here, Dr. Ford. It is impressive to see the family support, because we know it is going be a family sacrifice, the work that you are going to be doing.

As I have indicated, these positions are critically important to our national security. They deal with arms control and nonproliferation, vital arms control treaties that we have with Russia. The chairman has mentioned the INF Treaty, which is, obviously, one of our most important bilateral treaty obligations dealing with arms control and nonproliferation, and the New START treaty, which is in its early stages, but a very important treaty, and its long-term implications, we would be interested in hearing today. Multilateral treaties and agreements, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, are also very much on our minds today and have been in the headlines.

The AVC Bureau produces an annual report, which we look to every year to see the compliance of our treaty partners and the obligations that they have entered into. And the ISN deals with preventing proliferation. And as the chairman pointed out, we have major issues today in North Korea and Iran that we would welcome your views on.

And, Dr. Ford, as we both learned recently, you also, if confirmed, will have the responsibility in regard to carrying out certain sanction programs, including that with Russia, particularly

military aspects to that. So we look forward to learning more about your views on these important subjects.

I am going to highlight four areas of concern that I hope we can get into during today's nomination hearing.

The first issue that requires immediate attention is the INF Treaty. Since 2014, the State Department, in its annual compliance report, has determined that Russia is in violation of its INF obligations to refrain from building ground-based missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. Russia has continued to deny it has developed a ground-based cruise missile and has, in turn, with no evidence, accused the United States of violating the treaty.

I have advocated an approach to Russia's INF violations that emphasizes defensive measures to protect ourselves and our allies from Russia's aggression, but does so in a manner that maintains the rule-based order that bolsters European and American security. I want to hear from our witnesses today how they believe the United States should be constructively approaching Russia's INF violations.

The second issue deals with New START. By February 2018, the United States and Russia must reduce their strategic nuclear forces to a level agreed to by that treaty. Assuming Russia meets these obligations, and the size of Russia's forces are verified through the U.S. onsite inspections, the United States must decide whether it wants to extend the treaty for another 5 years until 2026. The United States could decide to negotiate a new treaty or end all legal binding nuclear arms control limitations with Russia.

I am eager to hear our witness's views on how the United States should move forward on this critical issue, given the heightened tension between the United States and Russia.

The third issue is one, probably, that this committee has spent more time on than any other single issue, and that is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the JCPOA, with Iran. In October, President Trump did not make the every-90-day compliance certification outlined in the INARA act. The President indicated he wanted to work with Congress and our allies to address the JCPOA flaws, but, "In the event we are not able to reach solution working with Congress and our allies, then the agreement will be terminated." I find the President's approach extremely troubling and puzzling.

Dr. Ford, as the current senior director of WMD at NSC, I assume you were deeply involved in the administration's view of Iran policies. I hope you can shed some light on the administration's thinking on the future of the JCPOA.

Finally, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reviews and provides oversight on all civilian nuclear cooperation agreements, often referred to as 123 agreements, with other countries. We have heard credible reports that the Trump administration is considering entering into civilian nuclear cooperation with Saudi Arabia. In 2009, the United States negotiated a 123 agreement with the UAE, legally renounced its enrichment and reprocessing technologies and capabilities. This was the so-called gold standard.

It is important for this committee to know whether the United States is negotiating a nuclear cooperation with Saudi Arabia, and

whether it will insist on the same nonproliferation standards that were included in the UAE agreement.

So, Mr. Chairman, you see that we have two individuals who are willing to step forward on very important responsibilities for this country, but there are many questions that we are going to want to ask.

Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you to the ranking member.

To both nominees, your opening statements are in the record. I provide you the option of going straight to questions, but you are more than welcome to sort of provide them now. I would just encourage you, to the extent you can, to limit them to the time allotted, so that we can get to questions. I know that we have a lot of members coming in and out that do want to engage with you on some important matters.

And so with that, Dr. Poblete, we can start with you.

STATEMENT OF YLEEM D.S. POBLETE, PH.D., OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR VERIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE

Dr. POBLETE. Thank you, Senator. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of this committee, it is an honor and a privilege to be here with you today. I am truly humbled by the trust President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me via this nomination. And I wish to thank Vice President Pence for his support, and Senator Boozman, former Congressman Howard Berman, and Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for having taken the time to be here today or to weigh in on my behalf.

Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, Ilie, is more than a former boss. She is a friend. She was the key that opened the door to my almost two decades of public service on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, a trajectory which enabled me to undertake new regional or functional portfolios every few years and, as such, helped me develop a greater appreciation for the experiences of State Department personnel.

I rose through the ranks to become staff director and chief of staff, and worked with some extraordinary individuals, many of whom are in the audience here today or working on this side of the Capitol, some sitting here on the dais or behind the dais.

My committee experience enabled me to work on the threats posed by radiological weapons and the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in securing these materials; to work on nuclear cooperation agreements, such as the 123 agreement with the UAE; to exercise oversight of U.S. statutes and of compliance by foreign countries with their obligations and commitments under bilateral and international agreements or commitments; to develop policy responses to counter threats from rogue regimes seeking nuclear, chemical, biological weapons capabilities or destabilizing numbers of advanced conventional weapons; and to secure support for the U.S. agenda and priorities in international fora.

None of this, however, would have been possible were it not for the Lord's protection and for my family. Words fail me in appropriately thanking my parents and grandparents for their many sac-

rifices, in thanking my siblings and my husband, Jason, for their unconditional love and support.

I grew up in a family who experienced, firsthand, the evils of communism. When my mother arrived in the United States from Cuba, she knelt and literally kissed the ground. Gratitude and respect for this great Nation prompted my father, a young refugee, to serve in the U.S. Army.

My family, throughout, instilled in me the firm belief that this Nation is the last best hope of man on Earth, that there are actors who seek to do her harm. And I feel privileged to have the opportunity, if confirmed, to contribute to keeping her safe through the rigorous verification and enforcement of arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements or commitments.

I am fully aware and appreciate that this mandate comes from you, the Congress, when establishing the position for which I have been nominated. Turning to the committee report for guidance, it said: The Assistant Secretary will have overall oversight of policy and resources for verification and compliance regarding not only various treaties but also executive agreements and commitments, including those falling within the purview of regional bureaus when such agreements or commitments pertain to arms control, nonproliferation, or disarmament.

I recognize the Congress sought to ensure the verification and compliance mechanisms would be integrated into these agreements from their inception and be rigorously enforced.

In that vein, Senators, I commit to you today that, if confirmed, I will dutifully fulfill this mandate and pursue effective verification, seeking to detect violations well before they become a threat to our national security and interests, and before options to address these and to correct or counter the situation are limited.

Effective verification must also include detection, documentation, and accountability for patterns of marginal violations or noncompliance. Violations must be appropriately and effectively addressed. Maximizing the expertise of the bureau, of the Department of State, of our intelligence and resources from across the U.S. Government and from partner nations will be a priority, as will identifying, applying, spurring, and maximizing new technologies in order to address today's security needs while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow.

To conclude, Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Cardin, members of this committee, let me close by again thanking you for the privilege to appear before you today. I consider this appointment, if confirmed, to be the highest honor and solemn responsibility to undertake, and I relish the opportunity to serve our Nation. And once again, I am humbled by the trust and confidence of the President and the Secretary of State via this nomination.

Thank you.

[Dr. Poblete's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. YLEEM D.S. POBLETE

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee. It is an honor and privilege to be here today.I am humbled by the trust President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me via this nomination and for the opportunity, if confirmed, to join public servants at the Department of State and throughout the administration in advancing U.S. national security and interests.

I wish to thank Vice President Pence for his support; Senator Boozman, former Congressman Howard Berman and Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for taking the time to be here today or to weigh in on my behalf. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen is more than a former boss. She is a friend. She was the key that opened the door to my almost two decades of public service on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs—a trajectory which enabled me to undertake new regional or functional portfolios every two to four years and, as such, helped me develop a greater appreciation for the experiences of Foreign Service, Civil Service, and other State Department personnel.

I rose through the ranks to become Staff Director and Chief of Staff and worked with some extraordinary individuals, many of whom are now on this side of the Capitol. My committee experience enabled me:

- to work on the threat posed by radiological weapons and the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in securing these materials;
- to work on nuclear cooperation agreements;
- to exercise oversight of U.S. statutes and of compliance by foreign countries with their obligations and commitments under existing bilateral and international agreements.
- to develop policy responses to counter threats from rogue regimes seeking nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons capabilities, and/or destabilizing numbers of advanced conventional weapons; and
- to secure support for the U.S. agenda and priorities in international fora.

None of this, however, would have been possible were it not for the Lord's protection and for my family. Words fail me in appropriately thanking my parents and grandparents for their many sacrifices; in thanking my siblings and my husband, Jason, for their unconditional love and support.

I grew up in a family who experienced first-hand the evils of Communism—persecution, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention, friends and relatives killed before them. When my mother arrived in the United States as a teenager via the Peter Pan flights from Cuba, she knelt and literally kissed the ground—the soil of liberty.

Gratitude and respect for this great nation prompted my father, a young refugee, to serve in the U.S. Army.

My family instilled in me the firm belief that: "this nation is the last best hope of man on Earth"; that there are actors who seek to do her harm, and I feel privileged to have the opportunity, if confirmed, to contribute to keeping her safe through the rigorous verification and enforcement of arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements or commitments.

I am fully aware and appreciate that this mandate comes from you, the Congress, when establishing the position for which I have been nominated. Turning to the committee report for guidance, it said: the Assistant Secretary will have "overall oversight of policy and resources for verification and compliance regarding not only various treaties, but also executive agreements and commitments, including those falling within the purview of regional bureaus when such agreements or commitments pertain to arms control, nonproliferation, or disarmament."

I recognize that by combining these components in a single bureau under one assistant secretary, the Congress sought to ensure that verification and compliance mechanisms would reflect the challenges and concerns of policymakers, would be integrated into the agreements from their inception, and would be rigorously enforced.

In that vein, I commit to you today that, if confirmed, I will dutifully fulfill this mandate and pursue "effective verification"—seeking to detect violations well before they become a threat to our national security and interests and before options to address, correct or counter the situation are limited. Effective verification must also include detection, documentation, and accountability for "patterns of marginal violations" or non-compliance.

Violations must be appropriately and effectively addressed. Failure to do so, as stated in the 2017 Compliance Report produced by the Bureau I have been nominated to lead, can "perpetuate and compound the dangers [to U.S. and allies' security]."

Maximizing the expertise of the Bureau, of the Department of State, of intelligence and resources from across the U.S. government and partner nations will be a priority, as will identifying and applying new technologies to correct deficiencies which may exist, in order to address today's security needs while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, let me close by, again, thanking you for the privilege to appear before you today. I consider this appointment, if confirmed, to be the highest honor and solemn responsibility to under-

take. I relish the opportunity to serve our nation and am humbled by the trust and confidence that the President and Secretary of State have placed in me via this nomination for Assistant Secretary for Verification and Compliance.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Dr. Ford?

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY FORD, D.PHIL., OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND NON–PROLIFERATION

Dr. FORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation.

I want to thank the President for his confidence in me and for the opportunity, with your approval, of course, to help meet the formidable challenges in protecting the American people and preserving and advancing the national interests of our great Republic in the face of ongoing challenges from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, delivery systems, advanced conventional weapons, and associated materials and technologies.

I would also like to thank Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for his support for my nomination.

But I also would like to take moment to thank my family, my wife, Schuyler, and my daughter, Stella-Grace, for their love and for their support.

Almost all of my professional career has been spent in government or near it in the public policy community, and I think my record demonstrates an unstinting commitment to public service. But nevertheless, it is they, my wife and my daughter, who are really the sun around which my planet revolves. I owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude for all of their patience, their kindness, and their support, especially in the months since I joined the National Security Council staff last January, as you might imagine. And I am pleased beyond words that they are able to join me here today.

So, Schuyler and Stella-Grace, I love you, and I thank you with all of my heart.

I have been, Mr. Chairman, privileged to serve in many positions of responsibility and trust in national security affairs over more than 2 decades, as, indeed, it was always my dream to be when I was studying many years ago as an undergraduate at Harvard, getting my doctorate at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, and getting my law degree at Yale.

I have served as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve, as a Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State at what was then the Verification and Compliance Bureau, and as the U.S. Government's Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation.

In addition to that, I have worked for five different Senators on six different committee staffs here in the Senate, including at this very committee.

It has been my particular honor to serve the American people over the last 11 months on the National Security Council staff where I presently run the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Counterproliferation Directorate and serve as a special assistant to the President.

My experience with nonproliferation and related issues goes back many years now, but it is probably my time at the NSC that has best prepared me for the honor of serving, if confirmed, as the Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation.

I am proud of the role that I have played in helping this new administration find its footing in this arena and begin to build out a farsighted and resolute approach to the many challenges that we face.

Mr. Chairman, although I have never been able to imagine not being deeply involved in working on U.S. public policy and national security issues, the WMD business is not one in which I originally expected to be. My doctoral dissertation, after all, was on international relations theory and African regional relations. When I practiced law, I worked on large toxic tort class action litigation cases, and I spent years on different congressional staffs doing investigations.

My Senate career has included doing intelligence oversight work in the years just after 9/11 and during the global war on terrorism, working on appropriations legislation round about 2013 in the time of the government shutdown at the time, and has included a broad range of legislative work for this very committee.

I have also, at various points, helped an international war crimes tribunal get itself established in West Africa, produced intelligence analysis as a naval officer, clerked briefly for a Federal appellate judge, and helped with research on elephant physiology, of all things, while living in a tent in a game park in Kenya. I have trained at a Zen center in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. I have taught Japanese jujitsu at a dojo here in Washington. And I have written books on naval history and Sino-American relations.

But I have been drawn, especially, to the field of weapons of mass destruction, because of its combination of intellectual challenge and technical complexity, and because of its obvious criticality, not just to the preservation of U.S. national security, but also of international peace and security, and, indeed, potentially, of civilization itself. This admixture of challenge and criticality and urgency has made these issues, for me, an abiding passion.

Preventing the use and spread of weapons of mass destruction is clearly a vital national security interest of the United States. It is critical to slow, stop, or roll back the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, delivery systems, advanced conventional weapons, and associated materials and technologies by state and nonstate actors alike. It is critical both to prevent the use of such weapons and to hold those who do use them strictly to account. And it is critical to manage wisely the challenges of stability and deterrence that are inherent in relationships between nuclear-weapon states.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with State Department colleagues, with stakeholders from across the interagency, with diplomatic counterparts, with the private sector and civil society, and yes, of course, with congressional members and staffs in order to protect and advance the interests of the American people and of international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I do welcome your questions and your comments.

[Dr. Ford's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. CHRISTOPHER A. FORD

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation. I want to thank the President for his confidence in me, and for the opportunity—with your approval—to help meet the formidable challenges of protecting the American people and preserving and advancing the national interests of our great Republic in the face of ongoing challenges from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), delivery systems, advanced conventional weapons, and associated materials and technologies. I would also like to express my gratitude to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for supporting my nomination.

But I also want to take a moment to thank my family—my wife, Schuyler, and my daughter, Stella-Grace—for their love and support. Almost all of my professional career has been spent in government, or near it in the public policy community, and I think my record demonstrates an unstinting commitment to public service. Nevertheless, it is they, my wife and my daughter, who are really the sun around which my planet revolves. I owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude for all their patience, their kindness, and their support—especially in the months since I joined the National Security Council staff last January—and I am pleased beyond words that they have been able to join me here today. Schuyler and Stella-Grace, I love and I thank you with all my heart.

I have been privileged to serve in many positions of responsibility and trust in national security affairs over more than two decades—as indeed it was my dream to do when studying many years ago as an undergraduate at Harvard, getting my doctorate as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, and getting my law degree at Yale. I have served as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve, as a Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, and as the U.S. Government's Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation, and I have worked for five different Senators on six different committee staffs here in the U.S. Senate—including at the Foreign Relations Committee.

It has been my particular honor to serve the American people over the last 11 months on the National Security Council (NSC) staff, where I presently run the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Counterproliferation Directorate and serve as a Special Assistant to the President. My experience with nonproliferation and related national security issues goes back many years now, but it is probably my time at the NSC that has done the most to prepare me for the honor of serving—if confirmed—as Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation.

I am proud of the role I have played in helping the new administration find its footing in this arena and begin to build out a far-sighted and resolute approach to meeting the many challenges we face.

Though I have never been able to imagine not being deeply involved in working on U.S. public policy and national security issues, the WMD business is not a line of work in which I originally expected to be. My doctoral dissertation, after all, was on international relations theory and African regional relations. When I practiced law, I worked on toxic tort class action litigation, and I spent years doing Congressional investigations on multiple Senate staffs. My Senate career has also included doing intelligence oversight during the first two years of the "Global War on Terrorism," working on appropriations legislation during the tumultuous period surrounding the 2013 government shutdown, and a broad range of subsequent legislative work for this very committee just last year.

I have also, at various points, helped an international war crimes tribunal set itself up in West Africa, produced intelligence analyses as a Navy officer, clerked briefly for a federal appellate judge, and helped with research on elephant physiology while living for months in a Kenyan game park. I have trained at a Zen Center in the foothills of the Sangre De Christo Mountains, taught Japanese jujutsu at a dojo here in Washington, and written books on naval history and on Sino-American relations.

But I have been drawn to the field of WMD because of its combination of intellectual challenge and technical complexity, and because of its obvious criticality to the preservation of U.S. national security, of international peace and security, and po-

tentially even of civilization itself. This admixture of challenge and urgency has made these issues, for me, an abiding passion.

Preventing the use and spread of weapons of mass destruction is clearly a vital national security interest of the United States. It is critical to slow, stop, or roll back the acquisition of WMD, delivery systems, advanced conventional weapons, and associated materials and technologies by state and non-state adversaries alike. It is critical both to prevent the use of such weapons and to hold those who do use them strictly to account. And it is critical to manage wisely the challenges of stability and deterrence that are inherent in relationships between nuclear weapons states.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with State Department colleagues, with stakeholders from across the interagency, with diplomatic counterparts, with the private sector and civil society, and—yes, of course—with Congressional Members and staffs to protect and advance the interests of the American people and of international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome your comments and questions.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Dr. Ford. And you have already made an extraordinary contribution. My wife has an upcoming birthday, and you just made a statement about your family. I hope this is not on television, but I am going to use that in the card. The sun that my planet revolves around. That is going on the card next week. Don't tell anybody. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. Don't tell anybody where I got it. All right.

So I will begin with the same question for both of you, and then I am going defer to the ranking member of the committee. So I just want to start out with this opening question, because I think it will cover sort of the scope of the hearing, and I think maybe set you up for future questions here from other Senators.

And I will begin with you, Dr. Ford. What do you consider to be the biggest challenge that you will be facing, if and when confirmed?

Dr. FORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would say that the biggest challenge is not any particular piece of the ISN Bureau's portfolio, but rather in the aggregate challenge that we face in dealing with nonproliferation issues generally.

I think we are at a point at this juncture in world history where the global nonproliferation regime faces the accumulated stresses of many years, frankly, of failures of the international community to address proliferation challenges as quickly and effectively as they probably should. We are and have been in something of a race between the proliferators, who are trying to develop their threat systems as rapidly as possible, and the international community, which has been trying to build diplomatic and various other sorts of support to bring pressure upon those proliferators to not take such actions, to shore up, buttress, and improve the international institutions and norms and practices that help make it very difficult, if not impossible, to advance such systems. And we have not collectively been able to react to the challenge as fast as we had. The system has been placed under a very sort of slow-motion stress that it is not yet clear that it can handle.

It is part of our challenge today in the policy community to react to these challenges across a range of policy areas, including in the areas that I would, if confirmed, have the honor to help manage at the ISN Bureau.

Part of it will be shoring up those institutions to slow, stop, and, perhaps, roll back the possession of these technologies and mate-

rials, and just impede the progress of threat programs. Part of it is to improve international solidarity against those proliferators. Part of it is also, in a slightly different arena, to shore up the alliance relationships that were very important during the Cold War, and I think still remain extraordinarily important as nonproliferation tools. And fundamentally, it is to, if necessary, position ourselves for that which we cannot prevent from happening, to make sure that we are in a position to manage the challenges that proliferation presents once it has taken root.

This is a full-spectrum challenge that we have, I think, over the years hitherto not been very good collectively addressing. And it is going to be a full-court press I think across the U.S. interagency and with international partners to address it in the years ahead.

That is most formidable challenge, I think, that we face.

Senator RUBIO. Dr. Poblete, I have the same question with a slight twist on it. In addition to the broader context, if you could, a little bit, get into, as part of the question of what the biggest challenge would be, the notion or the idea or the reality of the impact that a series of smaller violations taken in their sum on any of these agreements, the cumulative effect of a pattern of smaller violations over an extended period of time, the role they might play in your job, as well as answering the broader question of what you consider the biggest challenge you will face, if confirmed.

Dr. POBLETE. Thank you, Senator.

First, I have not had the opportunity to consult with the experts in the bureau, so in response to your question about the biggest challenges, based solely on my interpretation and my observations of these issues, and consultations with my would-be predecessors, if confirmed, I would answer it simply as integration of the Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Bureau, and restoring the bureau's statutory role.

And what I mean by that is—Senator Cardin mentioned preventing proliferation. To prevent proliferation, we also need to ensure that we have rigorous verification and compliance measures incorporated from the onset. We must also ensure that there is accountability for those immediate violations as well as patterns of marginal violations.

When I referred to patterns of marginal violations in my prepared remarks, it is, again, referring to the mandate that the Congress provided to the bureau. And unfortunately, when I look at what has transpired in the last few years—I will use the example of Iran and the JCPOA.

It is my understanding that here is a seminal, by many accounts, a seminal, politically binding commitment, not a formal agreement, but a politically binding commitment, to counter the threat posed by a rogue regime such as Iran. Yet it is my understanding that neither in the negotiation nor in its implementation was the bureau that was mandated, statutorily tasked, with verification and compliance included in these negotiations in the implementation process.

I find that to be very troubling. I do not believe that that is the intent of the Congress, of this committee.

And when referring to patterns of marginal violations, again, I must revert back to the JCPOA.

In its totality, one can see a troubling response and a troubling set of actions and activities by the Iranian regime. If those go unanswered, if we allow the Iranian regime, just as in the past we have allowed Russia or North Korea or other violators to test the waters of our commitment to these legally binding agreements or politically binding commitments, we are eroding our very priorities to prevent proliferation.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

The ranking member.

Senator CARDIN. Dr. Poblete, let me ask you a question in regard to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. We are not a member of that treaty. It has never been ratified. Do you see any circumstances in which the United States would no longer maintain its ban on nuclear explosion testing?

Dr. POBLETE. Thank you, Senator.

First, I would like to clarify that the administration is undertaking a comprehensive review of all the arms-control agreements, nonproliferation agreements, that we are signatories to, parties to, that we have ratified and not ratified.

Now, I will not presume to assume what the administration will determine with respect to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. What I will say is that in the U.S. deliberations and the U.S. role and perception of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, there is value. The U.S., writ large, this administration and others, have identified certain components of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty such as——

Senator CARDIN. I am trying to get to the specific answer.

Dr. POBLETE. Sure.

Senator CARDIN. Are there any circumstances that you would support the United States giving up its moratorium on nuclear testing?

Dr. POBLETE. No, sir.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I appreciate that answer.

New START, if Russia is in compliance, if they get down to the numbers that are required, would you recommend a 5-year extension of the New START Treaty?

Dr. POBLETE. Senator, as you mentioned in your opening statement, this is still in the early stages. The Russian Federation, I understand, is on track to meet the obligations, the central tenets, of New START in February of next year. That has yet to be confirmed. That has yet to be seen. It is yet to be verified.

Senator CARDIN. We will have inspections that we will be able to determine whether, in fact, they have reached that. If, in fact, the report shows that they have reached the required limit, do you believe we should extend the New START for the 5-year provision?

Dr. POBLETE. Again, Senator, it would be premature of me to get ahead of the administration's review. However, specifically to your question, it hasn't happened yet. And again, I would be getting ahead of the facts.

Senator CARDIN. I understand you have to—and we have had nominees who have come here, given their views, and the administration has come out with different views, and they support the administration's view. I understand that.

But you are certainly aware of the New START Treaty and its obligations, et cetera. If, in fact, there is compliance, do you believe it is a useful treaty for us to continue for an additional five years? I am just asking your view on it. I understand that the administration will make the final judgments.

Dr. POBLETE. It is a useful treaty, if compliance by the Russian Federation is sustained, verifiable, and accounted for. We still have a few years before a determination needs to be made as to whether or not to extend the New START Treaty.

So all I can say to you, sir, is that I will commit to ensuring that there is the necessary information; that I put forth that information that has been verified, confirmed, and documented to the policymakers; that I will build the case one way or the other. If there are violations, I will build that case and put it forth to the policymakers. If there is compliance, I will do so as well.

Senator CARDIN. Yes, I understand. The question is not whether there is compliance or noncompliance. I am assuming there is compliance. Otherwise, obviously, we have a different issue. I was trying to assess your views as to whether this agreement should be extended if there is compliance by Russia.

And as I understand it, you are not prepared to make a statement on that at this time.

Dr. POBLETE. Sir, I think it is too early to tell since the Russian Federation has not met its central limits just yet, just yet.

There is value to intrusive inspections. There is definitely value to the data-sharing that is encompassed in the New START Treaty. However, it is too early to make a recommendation when we do not yet have a definitive conclusion on compliance by all the parties.

Senator CARDIN. Well, we do know the Russia is out of compliance with the INF. We do know that. That determination has been made. How do you believe we should proceed, in regard to Russia's violations in its GLCM missile program?

Dr. POBLETE. Senator, simply, we have a three-pronged approach. It is my understanding that the U.S. continues to engage the Russian Federation, either through the Special Verification Commission, through allies at the highest levels, to try and convince the Russian Federation to come into compliance. I also know that we are engaging our allies and partners who are directly affected by the Russian Federation's violations of the INF. And lastly, we are considering a number of countermeasures, some of which have the congressional imprimatur, such as economic countermeasures.

Our focus, however, given that our responsibilities, our international obligations to our allies and partners, must also include robust missile-defense capabilities to ensure that we are in compliance not just with our INF commitments but our global commitments to our allies and partners.

Senator CARDIN. So the National Defense Authorization Act provides authorization for defense against Russia's activities in regard to the missile program, which is something I strongly support. Do you believe we should seek compliance with the INF by Russia, not try to escalate the violations by the U.S. producing a weapon that would also be in violation of the range of the INF?

Dr. POBLETE. Well, Senator, if confirmed, what I can commit to you is that any countermeasures involving the range of U.S. Government agencies, that it will be my responsibility and my commitment to ensure that the United States is treaty-compliant and that whatever measures are undertaken do fall within the construct of a legally binding agreement, which is the INF.

I know the Russian Federation has made very false claims against the U.S., trying to create a narrative that the United States' capabilities, missile-defense platforms in Romania and Poland under the European Phased Adaptive Approach, are in violation of INF. But the U.S. position is that interceptors are not a violation of the INF, given their purely defensive capabilities.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Isakson?

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Chairman Rubio.

Thank you, both of you, for being willing to serve our country.

Mr. Ford, you made a comment, I think I took my notes right, but I want to repeat it, if I didn't, so you can correct it or amplify on it. You said we are confronting a time now where we are facing the aggregate accumulation of failures to deal with many nonproliferation issues.

I believe I got that right. Did I get that right?

Dr. FORD. That sounds correct to me, Senator.

Senator ISAKSON. I happen to think you are right. I come from the State that was represented here in Senate for years by Sam Nunn who was on this committee under Dick Lugar. Dick Lugar and Sam Nunn are the two most prominent Americans on nonproliferation that I think we have alive today in this country.

I think they would agree with you that we have accumulated some failures, and it is time for us to have some successes.

Should you be confirmed, which I believe you will, what are you going to focus on to put an end to the failures and begin some successes?

Dr. FORD. Thank you, Senator.

I think in that respect, I would identify two things that correlate, I think, to the most significant failures that we collectively, not just in the U.S., but in the international community, have had. One of the challenges, of course, most obviously is North Korea.

When I was last in the State Department, it was round about the time when we confronted them with evidence of their cheating under the so-called agreed-framework of 1994. They, in response to being caught with their hand in the proverbial cookie jar, pulled out of the NPT and have been busily building up their missile forces and their nuclear weapons ever since.

Clearly, getting a hand on that somehow has got to be an enormous priority. It is the single most horrific sort of bleeding sore on the global nonproliferation regime today.

The ISN Bureau has, in that respect, very important responsibilities related to the implementation of nonproliferation sanctions against the North Korean regime. And certainly, if confirmed, it would be a subject of enormous focus and emphasis for me as Assistant Secretary to make sure that we were doing absolutely everything that we can do in support of the President's what we call the maximum pressure strategy of using every available diplo-

matic, economic, sanctions, law enforcement, financial, and other tool to maximize the pressure upon the North Korean regime in ways that have not yet hitherto been done and to bring international partners along with us in that respect, to make sure that they face, finally, at long last, an incentive to make a different strategic choice.

So that would be the highest priority. And I would also identify the slightly longer term, but also extremely important challenge, Senator, of addressing the Iranian proliferation challenge.

One of the accumulated problems, I think, that the global nonproliferation regime faces is the legitimation of fissile material production in Iran, a country which, of course, for a long time had a very active nuclear weapons program. Managing the challenge that that presents to the nonproliferation regime is going to be an ongoing one for all of us. Negotiating a better way to approach Iranian proliferation challenges, especially over the long term in the years in which the current restrictions under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal are set to evaporate, and leave Iran in a place where they can build up essentially any size nuclear program they want, that is not an acceptable nonproliferation path, I think, from the United States' perspective. And it would be an important focus of effort, if I were confirmed to be Assistant Secretary for ISN, to help lead the diplomatic charge to bring that threat finally under control in an enduring not merely a temporary fashion.

Senator ISAKSON. I think you are exactly correct. I think Senator Nunn and Senator Lugar would have said the same thing were they sitting in this room today.

The two challenges that face us are the Iranians and the joint agreement, and the North Koreans, where we have almost been an enabler, in some sense, by looking the other way, allowing them to get away with some of the things that they have.

Ms. Poblete, you made a very interesting statement, which I also want to give you a chance to correct if I wrote it down wrong, because I was trying to write while I was listening. You said you were somewhat shocked by the non-inclusion of the Secretary's department that you are going to replace in the JCPOA.

Was there not any inclusion in the State Department of any State Department personnel during the JCPOA negotiations, as far as compliance issues are concerned?

Dr. POBLETE. Thank you, Senator.

It is my understanding, after having spoken with a range of former and current State Department officials, including the would-be predecessors, the former Assistant Secretaries for Verification and Compliance, that, no, that bureau was not engaged. And to go even further, if I may, Senator, on the Iran missile threat, for example, it turns out that the Verification and Compliance Bureau has virtually zero role in the implementation and verification of Iranian compliance with the U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231 regarding Iran's ballistic missile capabilities.

At most, the Verification and Compliance Bureau's role with respect to Iranian missile threats or North Korean missile threats is reassuring our allies, engaging, fortifying via the strategic dialogues with the Republic of Korea, with Japan, and really focusing

on ballistic missile defense to protect against those emerging threats, growing threats, from those two rogue regimes.

I hope, if confirmed and given the opportunity, to be a strong advocate for the bureau and ensuring that its role is restored to its statutory commitment, its statutory guidance, which is to be an integral part, perhaps not the lead, as regional bureaus tend to take the lead on these agreements, on these negotiations, but certainly to be at the table and make sure that verification and compliance is not set aside and is considered a priority.

We cannot have executive orders, national emergencies, with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and not have the Verification and Compliance Bureau.

If I may just indulge for one second, it has been said in the compliance report, which Senator Cardin mentioned in his opening statement, it has been said by a range of administration officials that failure to hold accountable, failure to ensure the verification and compliance is an integral part from the declarations by the target nations to the implementation of agreements and throughout negotiations will only help perpetuate the problem and will only help fuel further proliferation.

Senator ISAKSON. Mr. Chairman, I know I am over time, but I allowed her to indulge herself in her answer. I am going to indulge myself in just a little amplification on that.

Your answers were fantastic, and I appreciate both of them, because no question, North Korea and the JCPOA are the two formidable challenges we have to meet in the future.

Also, with Senator Cardin's questioning on New START, I was here when we negotiated New START, did the hearings here. And the one thing about New START, and you can correct me if I am wrong, we did some breakthroughs in the compliance area that we had never done in any treaty before. We have more ability in terms of New START to verify whether the Russians are or are not complying than we have in any other agreement, collective group of agreements combined. If the JCPOA had even a smidgen of the compliance requirements that the New START has, we would not be worried about that today.

So I just want to commend both of you on your answers and hope you will follow through on that direction in your jobs. If you do, you will go down in history as two of the best appointees this President has made.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for your past service to the country and for your willingness to be considered for these very important positions.

Dr. Ford and Dr. Poblete, Secretary Tillerson has said that Iran is complying with the JCPOA.

Dr. Poblete, I understood you to say that you think they are in violation. Did I understand that correctly? And can you describe what those violations are?

Dr. POBLETE. Thank you, Senator, for the opportunity to clarify. What I was focusing on were patterns of marginal violations.

The Secretary General, the Director General of the IAEA, as you mentioned, the Secretary of State have said that Iran is in compliance. But really what the IAEA Director General has said is that it is not in material breach. But the Director General has, in fact, mentioned marginal breaches. The President also delineated a number of marginal breaches. Several members of this committee have also done so.

Senator SHAHEEN. Okay. So that is what you were referring to when you were suggesting violations.

Dr. Poblete. Right.

Senator SHAHEEN. Dr. Ford, do you agree with Dr. Poblete relative to that concern?

Dr. FORD. Thank you, Senator.

One of the things that we have tried to do as resolutely as we can over the last 11 months or so since the new administration took office is to try to ensure that the JCPOA is interpreted as strictly as possible, and that it is enforced as rigorously as possible.

In addition to all the other work that we are trying to do with respect to addressing the Iranian proliferation challenge over the long term, one of things that we have tried to do in the Joint Commission process under the JCPOA, for instance, is to work with our European partners, in particular, to end pre-existing approaches to sort of meeting in the middle when Iran and its continual efforts to sort of push the envelope of JCPOA interpretation would ask for something that is on the margins of what it clearly should—perhaps slightly beyond where it should actually be allowed to go. There was a degree of compromise in approaching those things in the past, which one can see from the publicly released Joint Commission documents that were published I believe last December.

We are not in the meeting-in-the-middle business anymore. In working with our Joint Commission partners, from whom we have been pleased to get very good support, we have been taking a much more strict line on those things within the JCPOA since last April.

Senator SHAHEEN. I appreciate that. And I think all of us agree that we want to hold Iran accountable. But if the administration and if the State Department believes that Iran is not complying, why hasn't the administration invoked the dispute resolution provisions of the agreement? For either of you.

Dr. POBLETE. Well, Senator, I have only been part of the administration since——

Senator SHAHEEN. You can just tell me what you know. You do not have to give me the response from the administration.

Although, Dr. Ford, you were part of the NSC, so I would assume this came up on the NSC and you might have discussed whether to invoke those provisions.

Dr. Ford?

Dr. FORD. Sure. Yes, we have many times and continually over the last year or so discussed Iranian compliance. At the moment, the assessment is that Iran is complying with its obligations under the JCPOA. As I indicated, we are trying to keep them from sort of nudging up to those lines in ways that they felt free to do before.

And I should also point out that in the President's speech on October 13th, he declined to recertify under the INARA statute, not on the basis of Iranian compliance questions, but on the basis of

a different INARA certification criterion set forth in the statute, whereby he determined that, in his view, the sanctions relief given to Iran under the JCPOA was not proportional and appropriate in light of what it was that we got from Iran under that deal.

There are multiple criteria under INARA. He chose that particular one, and it has been his direction to the administration to try to work with Congress and international partners to better address these challenges going forward, but remaining for now, certainly, within the JCPOA construct in order to use that remaining within the agreement in order to leverage international support, not just in addressing long-term proliferation challenges but also the range of Iranian malign acts outside the JCPOA.

Senator SHAHEEN. Right. And I think we would all agree that Iran is engaging in those malign acts outside of the JCPOA, but they are not issues that are covered under the JCPOA. And I understood you to say that you believe that Iran is in compliance, and that is why the administration hasn't invoked the dispute resolution mechanism.

Can I ask you, Dr. Ford, if you agree, and maybe I misunderstood what you were saying, Dr. Poblete, but I understood you to say, in answer Senator Cardin's question about nuclear testing, that you believe we should continue the moratorium on nuclear testing.

Did I understand that correctly? A yes or no answer would be appreciated.

Dr. POBLETE. That is correct, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Do you agree with that, Dr. Ford? Yes or no.

Dr. FORD. I am sorry, Senator, do I agree that?

Senator SHAHEEN. That we should continue the moratorium on nuclear testing?

Dr. FORD. I see no reason to do otherwise at this time, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

I want to ask you both, one of the concerns that I have expressed, as have other members of this committee, has been relative to the proposed reorganization that is going on at the State Department. And you are both taking over very important bureaus at the State Department. Can you tell me if you have been consulted on the reorganization plan, either of you?

Dr. POBLETE. No, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Dr. Ford?

Dr. FORD. I am not privy to what the redesign will look like. I have not consulted on this, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. And if you have not been, are there any concerns or changes that you believe should be made to the bureau that you are going be heading, should you be confirmed?

Dr. POBLETE. Senator, as I mentioned previously, my goal is, if confirmed, to first meet with all the personnel that is currently in the bureau, to seek their guidance, their insight, their perspectives on what they perceive to be the challenges of the bureau and the needs of the bureau. And if confirmed, I hope to next year be actively engaged and have the opportunity to engage the Secretary directly on these redesign, budgetary, and related issues.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. That seems like a very reasonable approach to me.

Dr. Ford?

Dr. FORD. Thank you, Senator. My contact with the ISN Bureau is quite routine in my current responsibilities, but I am less familiar with the details of how it is staffed and organized internally with respect to how it meets its current challenges.

At this point, what I should point to—and that is something to which Senator Cardin alluded earlier. It has come to my understanding that relatively recently, pursuant to the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA as its acronym, I think, goes—I do not know who is responsible for the acronyms, but that is an impressive one. The Secretary has identified the ISN Bureau as having a lead responsibility for administering Section 231 of that statute, which has to do with putting sanctions of various sorts upon those who engage in what are called significant transactions with entities affiliated with the Russian defense and intelligence sectors, as set forth in the Secretary's guidance, I believe just a month ago.

This is an area with which my current NSC responsibilities have not had much to do yet, so I am learning this area as well. But it is my understanding that this now will be a part of the responsibilities of the ISN Bureau, and it is not something that the bureau has hitherto been involved in doing.

So certainly, from this vantage point, I think one of the more important initial things for me to look at, if confirmed, would be to make sure that appropriately staffing and managing these new paths of CAATSA responsibilities under Section 231 are appropriately handled in a way that allows ISN to fulfill those responsibilities well, but also to do so in a way that does not detract from the core missions of the bureau in fighting proliferation.

So that would be, I think, certainly one management challenge that is visible immediately out-of-the-box, as it were.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I certainly hope you will, like Dr. Poblete, engage with members of the bureau and respond to concerns before making any sweeping changes.

Dr. FORD. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Senator Merkley?

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to both of you.

I wanted, Dr. Poblete, to ask a follow-up question on the verification and monitoring measures that are being used in the JCPOA. We heard reference earlier that if only they were as good as some of our other agreements like New START, we would be in good shape. My impression of the IAEA protocols is that they are more prevalent, more in number, more in high-tech, in every possible way improvements on our previous arms control agreements. But can you just comment a little bit on the extensive measures that are being used for real-time monitoring?

Dr. POBLETE. Thank you, Senator.

It is my understanding, based on some of the recent statements made by the Director General of the IAEA, that it is their assessment that, currently, they have some of the most rigorous monitoring and verification capabilities that they have had in recent

years. However, as you well know, verification and compliance is an evolving process. As we develop new technology, as we look at addressing new threats and, again, trying to look at not just what is known but trying to anticipate what is the unknown.

And in the case of Iran and the JCPOA, given Iran's history, it is incumbent upon us to not just rely on the IAEA, not just provide support to the IAEA, but also spur our own efforts at identifying and developing technologies that will address the unknown, everything from trying to identify ghost particles to the lowest possible yield of nuclear material.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. And I have been very impressed by some of the new mechanisms that are being developed to do real-time monitoring of the gas flows in the enrichment location, in order to make sure that they stay below the 3.67 percent. So I know the IAEA is doing everything it can to utilize those new provisions.

Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty states that each of the parties undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith "on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control," referring to nuclear disarmament.

Is the U.S. currently undertaking such negotiations, Dr. Poblete?

Dr. POBLETE. I am not aware, Senator, of what the status is of the U.S., with respect to your question.

Senator MERKLEY. It is one of the three pillars of the NPT. Are there various ways that you think those three pillars could be strengthened?

Dr. POBLETE. Again, Senator, I would not presume to engage until I have had the opportunity to discuss this matter, if confirmed, with the legal experts, with the technical experts, the scientific experts, to ensure that I have a holistic view of what the opportunities are with respect to the NPT.

Senator MERKLEY. Those three pillars are nonproliferation, peaceful use of nuclear power, and disarmament, and they are meant to bridge the very difference between nuclear power states and non-nuclear power states. Is that bridge, which puts different responsibilities on different parties to the treaty, one which you fully support?

Dr. POBLETE. Senator, I fully support looking at the treaty in a holistic fashion. In fact, one of the concerns that I had before, during, and after, with respect to Iran or North Korea, but particularly with respect to Iran, is that, predating the JCPOA, when Iran was in violation of its safeguard agreements, when Iran was in violation of its overarching NPT obligations, that the focus was still on its "inalienable right" to peaceful, civilian nuclear energy, without taking into consideration that there are other articles of the NPT that hold parties accountable for violations of their safeguard agreements and their overarching NPT obligations.

So I definitely agree that the NPT cannot be approached from a myopic standpoint, that we must look at all of the articles of the NPT in tandem.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. I want to ask you about Article VI and our responsibilities to be engaged in conversations about complete disarmament, nuclear disarmament. You indicated that you weren't familiar with such ongoing discussions. But there has

been, in the past, a P5 process that at least constitutes a forum for such discussions, discussions at least pointing in the direction of the possibility of pursuing the responsibilities under Article VI.

Do you support reengaging a P5 process?

Dr. POBLETE. Well, sir, I believe it is always helpful to engage with our allies, particularly nuclear-weapons states. I believe that, given the current security environment, however, the focus needs to be on countering the proliferation by nonnuclear-weapons states.

The P5 have demonstrated, most of them being democracies, but they have demonstrated to be fairly responsible as stakeholders, perhaps with the exception of Russia and China. But generally, the P5 have demonstrated to be responsible stakeholders.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Poblete, Dr. Ford, great to be with each of you.

Can either of you tell me whether the IAEA inspectors have inspected the military sites in Iran since the implementation of the so-called Iran nuclear agreement?

Dr. FORD. Thank you, Senator.

The specific locations of the inspected sites are treated within the IAEA system as safeguards confidential, and they do not publicly report that.

Through various means, we have frequently some insight into what the IAEA has been able to accomplish. And according to the Director General, they have not been refused, so far, any request to visit any site at which they have had reason to believe illicit activity has been occurring or which they felt it necessary to visit in order to fulfill their monitoring and verification responsibilities under the JCPOA.

It would be easier to talk about what we think we know about IAEA activity in this respect in a closed session. But so far, the IAEA has been very clear that they do not feel that they have been rebuffed in any inappropriate way, thus far.

Senator YOUNG. So that was a very precise and much appreciated answer. The short answer is you do not know, because it is difficult to differentiate between military sites and other sites, because IAEA doesn't release that information. Is that a correct recapitulation of how you started your response?

Dr. FORD. I would say the safest way to characterize it, Senator, is that it would be a much easier conversation to have if we were in closed session, so that it would be possible to discuss information that it is not possible to discuss in public.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. That is fair.

Doctor, do you have anything to add?

Dr. POBLETE. Well, Senator, as the IAEA has said, they have not been denied requested access. Now, I believe that you might be referring to what is known as the T Section of the JCPOA.

While the IAEA may feel that it has not been denied, the question rests on whether or not, if they were to ask, whether or not they have asked for specific access to these designated military facilities, some of which were part of the possible military dimensions questions that the IAEA had prior to the JCPOA, and to whether

or not they will have the authority, if they press the Iranian regime, to gain that access. That is still a subject for discussion.

Senator YOUNG. So do we know, and can you tell me in this setting, whether the IAEA inspectors have requested access to a designated military site in Iran?

Dr. POBLETE. The IAEA Director General has said that they have not been denied access to any facilities that they have requested. As to whether or not those requests have included specific military facilities, I do not know, sir.

Senator YOUNG. Is that information that you have access to?

Dr. POBLETE. In my current role, I do not have access to certain intelligence information and——

Senator YOUNG. Dr. Ford, do you have access to that information?

I am sorry for interrupting.

Dr. FORD [continuing]. Senator, I do have insight into some of these questions, which I would be happy to talk to you in a different forum, if that is all right, sir.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. I will take you up on that. I am grateful, for volunteering that. And I just note that it is pretty difficult for us to strictly and robustly verify compliance, if we do not have answers to these questions and, more specifically, if the military sites have been designated, effectively, no-go zones for IAEA inspectors.

So I see my time is dwindling down, but I will turn very quickly to Iran's ballistic missile program.

In addition to their development over the years of WMD, their delivery systems have caused great consternation for those of us who want to keep the region and the world safe and secure. In fact, Iran is the largest ballistic missile force in the Middle East. They can hit targets up to 2,000 kilometers away, including Israel, our good friend, and the thousands of U.S. troops in the region.

Dan Coats, who, of course, is our Director of National Intelligence, reiterated that the community's assessment is that "Tehran would choose ballistic missiles as its preferred method of delivering nuclear weapons, if it builds them." He also noted progress on Iran's space program could shorten a pathway to ICBM, because space launch vehicles use similar technologies.

Dr. Ford, what is your assessment of Iran's ballistic missile program?

Dr. FORD. Well, I certainly would not gainsay anything that Director Coats has said. I think you have hit the nail on the head, Senator, in pointing to that as a focus of enormous concern.

Iran does have a very extensive missile program. It has been engaged in a very elaborate and fast-paced program of missile testing. It has been building out missiles across a range of capabilities, increasing the accuracy of those that they possess.

And I should also point out they have been involved in proliferating missile technology, supplying missiles to Lebanese Hezbollah, for example, and to Houthis in Lebanon.

This is not just a question of indigenous threats in Iran, but of the spread of such threats across the region, as a part of Iran's pattern of destabilizing behavior.

Senator YOUNG. So I would like to follow up with each of you. If you have a very brief response to the following question, I would be grateful.

The proliferation of weapons out of Iran or the proliferation of material and expertise from, say, North Korea into Iran, are there additional things that we as a Nation should be doing to address those very important issues?

Dr. POBLETE. Briefly, Senator, there are a myriad of U.S. statutes that address not just the individual proliferation by rogue regimes but the collaboration between these rogue regimes. I would only add a point of caution.

As the focus is, and rightly so, on increasing and imposing crippling pressure on the North Korean regime, it is critical that we not lose sight of Iran. It is troubling to see that many of our partners and allies who are hyper-focused on the North Korean threat, because they would be directly in the line of fire, so to speak, from Pyongyang, are also now shifting gears and are investing and engaging economically with the Iranian regime.

You cannot delink the two. What benefits one ultimately benefits the other.

Dr. FORD. Senator, to take Iran as an example, I think it is precisely those regional proliferation threats that are one of the multiple centers of focus for the new Iran strategy that the demonstration has just announced in October, and which the interagency is in the process of building out even as we speak.

It is a critical part of that strategy to try to approach the range of Iranian malign acts, including missile proliferation, support for terrorist organizations' regional destabilization, such as support for the Assad regime and the Syrian civil war and those sorts of things.

From the perspective of the ISN Bureau, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary, one of my more important roles would be to support counterproliferation work on precisely these sorts of areas.

When I joined the State Department many years ago now at the Verification and Compliance Bureau, those were the early days of what is still known as the Proliferation Security Initiative. It was an effort to bring international partners into interdicting weapons of mass destruction-related shipments worldwide.

Since those days and the very early days of PSI, the U.S. interagency has built up a very formidable interagency capability to impede progress on threat systems, using a full range of tools—diplomatic, financial, law enforcement, and so forth.

I would be a proud inheritor of all the work that has been done in that respect and would certainly look for every available way to up our game, as it were, in order to impede those systems more effectively.

Senator YOUNG. I thank our witnesses.

I thank the chairman for indulging me.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

I am very pleased to recognize my friend, the Senator from New Jersey, Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Given the proliferation of concerns that we have seen over the past year regarding rogue regimes, developments of nuclear arse-

nals, increased ballistic missile testing, and potential violations of international agreements, I would say that these appointments are well long overdue.

Let me extend a personal welcome to Dr. Poblete, who I have known for years, going back to my tenure in the House of Representatives when she served as the staff director for the House Foreign Affairs Committee for my friend Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Congratulations on your nomination.

Congratulations to you, Mr. Ford.

As I noted, rogue nations and nonstate actors continue to present threats to the United States and its allies. And it is imperative that the United States continue to lead the world in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and curtail the ability of nefarious actors to utilize some of the world's most dangerous tools.

Now, I did not support the JCPOA. I do not believe that it was sufficient in its construction to prevent Iran from ever developing a nuclear weapon. And I am concerned about elements of it where there will be a lifting, in just a few short years, of some other elements that are incredibly important.

However, I believe it is important for the United States to demonstrate leadership and reliability on the world stage. And as long as Iran is upholding its commitments under an agreement, which I did not think was a standard we should have agreed to, but as long as its holding it up, it serves our interests to continue to work with our international partners to ensure robust enforcement of the deal.

So what I do want to ask you about is, how will you seek to engage with our international partners to curtail Iran's ability to stockpile and disseminate conventional arms and ballistic missiles to its proxy networks around the Middle East once the U.N. lifts the embargo and terminates restrictions on ballistic missile procurement and development?

Dr. FORD. Senator, I very much share your concern at the proliferation challenges that we may well face once the restrictions of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, for example, and the arms provisions therein expire. That is becoming a major focus, as you will not be surprised to learn, of our Iran strategy now. And addressing that would be a major focus of concern, if I were confirmed as Assistant Secretary for the ISN Bureau.

One of the hopes that we have by remaining, pursuant to the President's direction, remaining at the moment within the JCPOA is precisely to use that step of remaining within the deal in order to make sure that we maximize our ability to work with international partners to address a range of threats in the proliferation space and more broadly on Iran, and the issue of the dramatic buildup of Iranian missile and advanced conventional weapons capabilities, and its proliferation of these capabilities to other regional players, proxy forces, and terrorist organizations, for instance, will have to be a focus of that concern. It is our hope that we can work successfully with our partners to maximize pressure.

Senator MENENDEZ. They seem to be reticent. I have seen the Europeans through, in essence, their Foreign Ministers suggests that they are not interested in any other sanctions.

The problem with this is that, if we wait for the lifting moment of these sanctions, it will be far too late. And so I hope that the administration, and through you, will take a robust set of actions to engage our partners to say we cannot wait for the moment of the twilight to ultimately engage with the advent of what comes next. And that needs to be taken advantage of now.

And I think, actually, that as I suggested at a meeting at the White House with some of my colleagues, there is an opportunity to create leverage as a result of some of the President's actions to move in that direction.

The longer we wait, the more difficult it will be, and the more consequential to Iran's destabilization of the region. So I hope to hear, for example—I am very proud of what the Senate did. I was one of the instruments of it, the sanctions legislation we passed.

But I have not seen that legislation be robustly used by the administration. They need to use the very tools we gave them that passed 98-to-2. We do not get many things around here to pass 98-to-2.

That means you have the support of the United States Senate and of the Congress, giving you tools which, up to date, I have to be honest with you, I have not seen it.

So when you want to do something to Iran to curtail its nefarious activities, the wherewithal exists already. And so I would hope that we would do that. And I would like to get your response to that.

And then, finally, on North Korea, I see we have not addressed China. And it seems to me that, on this much I agree with the President, China is clearly the pathway to do something as it relates to North Korea. They are the ones that hold the resources with North Korea to change their mind.

But I am not quite sure what the administration's philosophy is here. First, I thought we were going to challenge China to do the right thing. Then we were going to cajole it to do the right thing. But now we seem to be embracing it without it doing anything.

We could declare it a currency manipulator. We could sanction banks that are pursuing access to North Korean money. We could, ultimately, look at some of our trading statuses. But I have not heard a whimper about that.

So talk to me about sanctions and how you are going to use them. Especially since the Secretary has closed the office of sanctions coordinator, what role is sanctions going to play in countering our adversary's abilities to proliferate dangerous weapons? And how are we going to approach China, so we can deal with the question of North Korea short of military confrontation?

Dr. FORD. There is a lot to respond to there, Senator. Thank you.

I think I would say that I completely share your concerns that we must not wait until it is too late. We must not wait until the expiration point of key restrictions on Iranian threat programs, for example, and the Security Council resolution, just as I think we should not wait to try to address the challenge of putting enduring limitations upon the size and scope of Iran's nuclear program in the years in which the JCPOA's limits on that program come to expire.

So I completely agree. The time to start working on those things is now. And that is exactly why this is an important part of the Iran strategy that we are currently building out.

So I hope that you will not be disappointed in seeing how we handle that. But rest assured, Senator, that we are committed. I am personally committed, would be thus as Assistant Secretary, if confirmed, to making sure that those processes of trying to work out those enduring solutions begin sooner rather than later in order to maximize our chances of success.

With respect to sanctions on Iran, we have been, in the last 11 months, I think, very forward leaning on this going back to the very—it was in February or March, you may recall, the phrasing about putting Iran on notice. We have been working the targeteers at the Office of Foreign Asset Control at the Treasury Department virtually 24/7. We are making them work extraordinarily difficult hours and challenges to make sure that so-called sanctions packages are developed at the utmost speed.

They are a low-density, high-demand force, as they say in the military, because there is an important demand for sanctions across the proliferation space with North Korea, with Iran, also with regard to human rights issues in Venezuela and elsewhere. But we are we are processing and using the sanctions tools, which we are delighted to have from Congress, as fast as it is possible to process those packages.

I must say personally, Senator, when I joined the State Department back in 2003, I am proud of the role that we played at that time in being very forward-leaning on using proliferation sanctions to try to change the behavior of proliferation entities around the world. We felt it was important to confront proliferator-facilitating entities with a choice. They could continue to be involved with the bad guys, as it were, or they could continue to be involved with the world's largest economy here in United States. They could not do both at the same time. Forcing more of them to make more of those choices I think had a measurable impact at the time. We were very proud of that.

And since those days, thanks to the work of this committee and others, the toolkit available for imposing sanctions has expanded considerably, as have the number of executive orders devoted to providing those tools to our foreign policy apparatus as well.

So rest assured, I would be, and I think we are already, very firmly committed to using every tool available.

And finally, with respect to China, I think it is safe to say that present policy continues to use a mix of cajoling and pressures. You will notice in the implementation of sanctions that Chinese entities have begun to appear amongst those who have been sanctioned for engagements with North Korea that ultimately facilitate the North Korean weapons of mass destruction and missile programs. They have no protected status anymore.

This is a process of gradually working with Chinese interlocutors to get them to move in the way that they do need to move if there is going to be a solution here. And although I would freely agree that they are not where they need to be at this time, it is also true that they are doing a great deal more than they used to. It is still

insufficient, but there has been some Chinese movement on this, which I think has greatly discomfited the North Koreans.

It is not yet enough, but I should also point out that as we have been gradually successful in cutting back the other range of revenue streams into North Korea that have been used to facilitate the military program there, the relative role and influence of China has increased not by virtue of it having increased in aggregate terms, but in a percentage of what the North Koreans are able to get from the outside world.

So China's leverage, in a sense, is now greater than ever, and we are working very hard to work with Chinese authorities to ensure that they live up to their responsibilities as an important power and a good citizen in the nonproliferation regime to put the pressure——

Senator RUBIO. Dr. Ford, I apologize. We are running out of time here. We are going to lose our folks.

Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Ford, Ms. Poblete. Thank you very much for your service. Congratulations on the nominations. And I appreciate your willingness to perform the duties before you.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman, as well, for holding the hearing today.

Mr. Ford, is it the Trump administration's position to seek complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula?

Dr. FORD. That is our objective, Senator. That is correct.

Senator GARDNER. And we talked about in my office whether that was China's goal or not. Senator Menendez talked about China. What is China's goal, as it relates to the proliferation in North Korea?

Dr. FORD. Well, Senator, speaking only personally and not on behalf of the intelligence community or anyone like that, my own view is that China is trying to figure out what its goal is.

The working assumption for many of us working on these issues has been in the past that China's principal objective is to ensure stability in the peninsula and to avoid what they see as a kind of parade of horribles: were the Kim regime to collapse, were we to get into a war with the North Koreans, or whatever else it might be, and that they have hitherto concluded that it is better to remain as a kind of grumpy facilitator and enabler of the North Korean regime's weapons of mass destruction——

Senator GARDNER. But complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is not China's goal?

Dr. FORD [continuing]. I do not think it has been, but I think they are beginning to reconsider that and realizing that if they are, in fact, in favor of stability in the peninsula, the time is now for them to join us, because the status quo is not one that points toward stability. It points only toward increasing risk and danger and uncertainty.

Senator GARDNER. And I think when it comes to that proliferation, and the position that China is in right now, it is one reason why I was pleased, one of the reasons I was pleased, that we moved away from the failed doctrine of strategic patience to a new doctrine of maximum pressure.

And I do believe we have put additional pressures on North Korea that were not in place over the past several years. I believe we have put pressure on China to help make sure we accomplish this CVID goal on the Korean Peninsula and to enlist their support in that goal.

But I am concerned about the slow pace that we have taken with China. And again, the doctrine is and should be maximum pressure, not maximum cajoling. And so if we can continue the pressure on China to the level it should be, we know over 5,000 businesses that are doing business right now with North Korea in China, start ratcheting that pressure up to a degree that we have not yet so far, then we will start to see more results as a result of the maximum pressure doctrine. So that is a discussion we can continue to have.

How do we achieve the CVID goal then, the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization? How do we achieve that strategy? How do we achieve the strategy as it relates to China?

Dr. FORD. Well, I think as I indicated a moment ago, one of the steps is to make it very clear through a range of tools to emphasize to the Chinese Government the degree to which their strategic interest is not, perhaps, what they once assumed it to be.

China's strategic interest, I would argue, and I think that recent events are increasingly making this very clear, and I hope that they are coming to realize it, their strategic interest now is very much aligned with ours in making every step possible to ensure that the North Korean regime changes its strategic course and adopts a policy of ratcheting back rather than ratcheting up the WMD and nuclear threats that they present in the region.

It seems clear to me that the status quo trajectory of the peninsula is downhill at an alarming and disturbing rate, and that China is now in a position of beginning to realize, perhaps not enough and not fast enough yet, but certainly the hope is that we can help them come to recognize that the circumstances are not what they were say 10 or 15 years ago, and that the way to ensure that all the parade of horribles they do not wish to see happen, the way to ensure that those things do not happen is not to remain as a facilitator, sort of a quiet enabler, of weapons of mass destruction and missile programs in the Kim regime, but, in fact, to join us in making sure that those threats are emphatically put back in the box so that the situation is brought back under control.

Senator GARDNER. Now, will you enter into negotiations with North Korea outside of the CVID, the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization parameters?

Dr. FORD. I am sorry. I did not understand.

Senator GARDNER. Will you negotiate with North Korea outside of those parameters, the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization?

Dr. FORD. I do not believe there is any anticipation of doing that. What Secretary Tillerson has said is that what we are looking for is some kind of an indication of North Korean seriousness to be finally willing to sit down and have that kind of a conversation. We have not seen that seriousness yet. And until such point as we do, we are endeavoring to steadily tighten the screws on the North Korean regime to incentivize finally making that choice.

Senator GARDNER. In your role of International Security and Nonproliferation, could you describe any cyber role that you might have?

Dr. FORD. Well, to my knowledge, Senator, there has not been much of one for the bureau hitherto. However, it is one of the roles of the bureau to, essentially, scan the horizon, speaking metaphorically, for emerging threats and emerging areas that may be in need of better nonproliferation norms or new nonproliferation norms or institutions or practices in the future.

I know that cyber issues are already emerging as one of the subjects for discussion within the Wassenaar Arrangement, which is an international dual-use and conventional technology export control standards regime. So cyber issues are emerging as a subject of increasing emphasis in the nonproliferation world.

It is not a terribly well-developed discipline at this point, but certainly, if confirmed, one of my responsibilities at ISN would be to make sure that we had an appropriate handle on emerging technologies and challenges out there that may need to be addressed in the future in ways, perhaps, analogous to how we have tried to address chemical and biological, radiological, and nuclear nonproliferation over the years. There may well be new areas in which that is very relevant.

Senator GARDNER. Ms. Poblete?

Dr. POBLETE. Yes, thank you, Senator. I would like to start with the cyber issue.

It is my understanding that the Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Bureau actually has had a role on the cyber issue. We have—the royal "we"—the AVC Bureau has provided support to the cyber coordinator. In fact, the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center, which, as you know, is the 24/7, 365-day communications hub with respect to verification and compliance issues on a broad range of international agreements, was directly involved in the notification to the Russian Federation of information that we had available that the Russian Federation had, in fact, attempted to interfere with our elections.

In addition to that, the Verification and Compliance Bureau using the history, the long history, in the implementation of a broad range of agreements has also been working with the interagency, and with our allied nations, to ensure that we are thinking about best practices, that we are thinking about emerging security challenges.

In fact, the AVC Bureau, the Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Bureau, has an office in the bureau just dedicated to emerging security challenges. And beyond the cyber issue, it is also looking at space security and challenges from Russian aggression, from Chinese aggression, and attempts to deny unfettered access to space by responsible parties.

And if I may go back to your question and Senator Menendez's references, while sanctions implementation and development is not in the AVC Bureau, you cannot de-link the AVC Bureau from ISN or from the rest of the T family, or from any discussion about sanctions.

Number one, I believe that the AVC Bureau, by developing the evidence, confirming and verifying the evidence, builds the case to

support a policy determination on whether or not to impose sanctions.

Further, by leveraging the threat of sanctions, by leveraging the actual implementation and enforcement of sanctions, and not just sanctions specifically designed to address a particular bilateral or multilateral agreement, but that are targeting the other actors, the other parties to those agreements, can certainly help fortify and strengthen our own capabilities in ensuring that, one, we do have verifiable, permanent compliance with the range of commitments and agreements. But also, it serves our deterrence objectives, both nonproliferation, writ large, and, again, to deter rogue regimes or state parties to agreements not to continue their aggressive stance.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Dr. Poblete. We need to move on. I apologize.

Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, both of you, for your willingness to serve.

Both of you have identified the administration's belief that the JCPOA is insufficient in many respects, and the administration has made it clear they are seeking to strengthen or renegotiate the agreement. It has been a little hard for many of us in Congress to get a handle on exactly how the administration wants to go about this process, and so I want to ask you both about what the administration policy may be, what your recommendation may be to the administration or to Congress.

To me, it seems as if there are four ways to go about changing the agreement, if you are of the opinion, as this administration is, that it needs to be changed. First, you could renegotiate with your partner, with the Iranians. Second, you could make changes to the agreement unilaterally, but in coordination with your European partners, make changes all together. You could make changes alone through executive actions of the administration. Or you could ask Congress to make changes to the agreement.

And so I want to ask what your recommendation is going to be. I will ask you, Ms. Poblete, and then you, Mr. Ford, as to what the best course of action should be, if you desire to change the terms of this agreement. And most specifically, what is your recommendation to Congress? When the President failed to certify under INARA, it was unclear whether he was asking us to pass legislation that would change the terms of the agreement.

So what is the best course of action to try to address insufficiencies that the administration has identified? And specifically, are you asking, are you going to be expecting to be working with Congress to pass legislation that would change the terms of the agreement?

Dr. POBLETE. Thank you, Senator.

The focus of the AVC Bureau will be, and if confirmed, that will be my mantra, my overarching objective, is to whatever agreement we have, whether it is the existing JCPOA or a future agreement, that we are able to both unilaterally, with our allied partners in support of the IAEA, that we are able to verifiably confirm or not that Iran is in compliance with its obligations.

Now as a point of personal privilege, in light of my background, particularly with respect to Iran, I always found it was most useful

when there was unanimity of purpose, unanimity of mission, from the entirety of the U.S. Government. So while I would not have a role on the actual development of the administration policy, I would just be feeding the information to the policymakers, I certainly would prefer, if asked, and would recommend, if asked, and if confirmed, that we do work, that the executive branch does, in fact, work closely with the Congress, particularly with this committee.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Ford, I want to ask one more question. So let me turn to you.

What are you asking Congress to do here?

Dr. FORD. Thank you, Senator.

What the President said in his October 13th speech is, he directed us and the administration to try to work both with Congress and with international partners to move forward on these issues. And I guess you could sort of think of those as two parallel and complementary tracks.

With respect to the congressional piece of it, there have been, actually, a series of ongoing discussions, still, with Congress on this topic, in the hope of finding a constructive way forward in a number of respects.

One of them has to do with, as I mentioned before, the challenge of the so-called sunset terms of the JCPOA, the fact that in I think 8 to 13 years' time now, the restrictions upon the size of Iran's nuclear program will sunset, pursuant to the terms of the JCPOA.

From a congressional legislative perspective, it may be possible to work with the Congress. We hope that it is possible to work with the Congress to change Iran's incentives with respect to the choices that it might make.

Senator MURPHY. But are you asking us to do something that would violate the terms of the agreement?

Dr. FORD. Actually, in fact, Senator, we have been asking Congress—we have been working very hard to try to make sure that the Congress does not do anything that would cause Iran immediately to run afoul. We have been trying to resist the insertion of so-called poison-pill pieces into the legislative framework. The hope is to be able to find a way to incentivize Iran to make choices that keep us from having enduring proliferation problems in the future, but not to blow up the deal.

Senator MURPHY. Let me ask you one thing—thank you for that—one quick question on Iran's ballistic missile program.

I was proud to support the sanctions bill here that levies new sanctions on Iran for their ballistic missile program. But let's be honest, Iran's ballistic missiles right now are not pointed at the United States. They are pointed at Saudi Arabia.

Simple question: Do you believe that Saudi Arabia's military buildup contributes to Iran's motivation to continue to develop their ballistic missile program?

Dr. FORD. I am confident that the Iranians would say so. If I were in Riyadh speaking personally, I would be very concerned by the path that Iran has taken over the last——

Senator MURPHY. But do you believe that is part of their motivation?

Dr. FORD [continuing]. Frankly, I am not comfortable trying to get into the heads of Iranian leaders in that respect. I worry that there is an action-reaction dynamic in the Middle East, which is one of the reasons why I was so unhappy, personally, to see that the Iran deal, in fact, took the steps that it did to provide legitimacy to and international acceptance of Iranian production of fissile material, for fear that that would set in place a further action-reaction dynamic that would increase the proliferation pressures elsewhere in the region.

So I think it is part of our challenge as a policy community to try to do what we can to put that cat back in the bag, as it were. And part of that will be working to provide the kind of solidarity against Iran that we hope to achieve by working with our international partners across the range of Iranian activity. Part of it will be bolstering our relationships with others in the region.

Historically speaking, at least, I think it is the solidity of the U.S. security relationship that has over many decades since the dawn of the nuclear age been very important to helping persuade countries that might otherwise have considered indigenous weaponization that that is not necessary, and certainly not a wise choice, and that their needs can be met through other means.

I hope we can continue to do that and meet these challenges in the Middle East as the years move forward, Senator.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Senator Markey?

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

I am very concerned to learn that the United States is engaged in active, ongoing discussions with both Saudi Arabia and Jordan on concluding 123 nuclear cooperation agreements. These agreements are essential for ensuring that nuclear technologies and expertise that can be used to make nuclear weapons do not spread and that nuclear cooperation with the United States is not used as a cover, as a hedge against or a leg up on one's neighbors.

And that is especially true in the Middle East, which remains a volatile, contentious region plagued by religious rivalries and proxy wars. In Iran, we have experienced firsthand how incredibly difficult it is to curb nuclear proliferation once the ball is rolling inside of that country, and the deep, unshakable suspicion that remains about its intentions on this committee, across our country, and across the world.

So even as we were moving forward on this effort to curb Iran's nuclear program, Saudi Arabia warned that the whole region "could be plunged into a nuclear arms race," and that if Iran goes for a nuclear program, "nothing could prevent us from doing it, too, not even the international community."

So that sounds like a recipe for trouble to me, and I would hate for the United States to be further exacerbating those tensions, especially in a part of the world blessed with such abundant solar and fossil resources that it could power the entire region's electricity needs alone, without ever having to deal with the complications of nuclear power.

So the Atomic Energy Act requires the President to keep the Senate Foreign Relations Committee "fully and currently informed

of any initiative or negotiations relating to a new or amended agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation." It also mandates that Congress review the terms of any 123 agreement and give Congress the power to block these agreements.

So it seems that, at this point, the Trump administration has forgotten this. So I will be sending a letter shortly to request a full and immediate briefing on these negotiations.

But for now, I am going to ask just some questions to try to understand better what the current status of these negotiations is.

Mr. Ford—and again, thank you both for your service to our country—yes or no, is the United States at present negotiating terms of a 123 agreement with Saudi Arabia and Jordan?

Dr. FORD. Thank you, Senator. We are presently in discussions with both the Saudis and the Jordanians about 123 questions. That is something that is not new. We have been in on-again, off-again discussions of that sort for some time, certainly predating the current administration.

But the short answer is, there are discussions underway.

Senator MARKEY. Did the Trump administration decide or did Saudi Arabia and Jordan approach the Trump administration to restart or revitalize the 123 negotiations after January of 2017?

Dr. FORD. Actually, the short answer is I do not know who spoke with whom first. I am afraid I do not know, Senator. I am sorry.

Senator MARKEY. Can you describe to us at what stage these negotiations are right now?

Dr. FORD. They are still very preliminary. To my knowledge, there has not been any engagement of technical experts at this point.

Senator MARKEY. So you are saying, at this point, neither Saudi Arabia nor Jordan have proposed specific terms or responded to terms posed by the United States?

Dr. FORD. I am, unfortunately, not at liberty to discuss these ongoing bilateral discussions in this forum. This is something that, perhaps, we would be able to discuss in a different context, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. Does the Trump administration believe the gold standard, the commitment not to enrich uranium or reprocessed plutonium, is a requirement in order to conclude terms for 123 agreements with these countries?

Dr. FORD. I would say, Senator, that it remains U.S. policy, as it has been for some time, to seek the strongest possible nonproliferation protections in every instance.

Senator MARKEY. Is that the gold standard?

Dr. FORD. Well, the strongest that has yet been achieved is the gold standard with the United Arab Emirates.

Senator MARKEY. Is that your goal, to keep that standard?

Dr. FORD. I would love to keep that standard in place, if we can, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. Do you personally believe the gold standard is a requirement, in order to conclude a 123 agreement with these countries?

Dr. FORD. It is not a legal requirement. It is a desired outcome.

Senator MARKEY. Have Saudi Arabia or Jordan asked for terms more permissive than the gold standard?

Dr. FORD. I would go back to my earlier comment, Senator, that it would be much easier to talk about ongoing bilateral negotiations in a closed forum.

Senator MARKEY. If we agreed to anything less than the gold standard with Jordan or Saudi Arabia, how do you think the United Arab Emirates would respond? The United Arab Emirates has been an excellent partner in agreeing to the gold standard, but has a legal right under the terms of their 123 agreement to drop these nonproliferation provisions if others receive better terms. How do you think the United Arab Emirates would respond, if there was no gold standard negotiated with Saudi Arabia?

Dr. FORD. I cannot speak for them, Senator, but I think you are quite correct that there is a provision in their 123 agreement that would allow them to initiate new discussions about the terms of their deal were someone else in the region to have gotten a different one.

Senator MARKEY. Do you believe the administration is meeting its requirement to keep Congress fully and currently informed about its current 123 negotiations with Saudi Arabia and Jordan?

Dr. FORD. I believe that it is, and that at such point as it is possible to have more to say, we would be delighted to have that briefing in a closed context, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. And if you are confirmed, would you commit to briefing this committee on the status of these negotiations in a classified, nonpublic setting within 30 days of your confirmation?

Dr. FORD. I would, Senator. As a long-time Senate staffer, you can be assured that close cooperation and communication with this body, as well as with the House, would be an enduring priority of mine.

Senator MARKEY. So my problem, Mr. Chairman, with this entire area is that there are now auctions in Mexico: 3 cents a kilowatt hour for solar—3 cents a kilowatt hour—below coal, below natural gas.

So in Saudi Arabia, the one thing we do know is it is sunny 365 days a year, and we know that the price of solar has completely plummeted. They also are flaring their own excess fossil fuels.

So we are heading into a very dangerous area here. As our concern about nuclear proliferation continues to expand in that region, we have an agreement that keeps the Iranian program under control. But again, what has made it possible for them to move forward is the fact that they had already been given access to nuclear technology.

If we continue down this pathway, then there is a recipe for disaster, which we are absolutely creating ourselves with our own policies. And so I just think it is very important area for us to pursue, and I think that this committee should be briefed immediately on the status.

Senator RUBIO. And the ranking member has a final question, too, but let me just ask real quick, in that vein, we talk about the UAE agreement as the gold standard for restraint. The JCPOA then happened and it allows Iran to retain and even grow its enrichment program.

Is it your opinion that that agreement has made it harder to do more UAE-type deals or easier?

Dr. FORD. I would say, Mr. Chairman, that the international agreement to allow Iran fissile material production capability has made it considerably more difficult to ask gold standard-type agreements, or, indeed, any type of limitations upon enrichment or reprocessing technology of others.

Senator RUBIO. All right.

Ranking Member?

Senator CARDIN. I want to just very quickly comment on Senator Markey's and Senator Rubio's points, because I agree with both.

But if we do not draw a line in the Middle East, it is going to be all-out proliferation. So I just will express my own view, but I think it is of many members of this committee and the Senate, that we need to maintain the UAE standards in our 123 agreements in that region. There are just too many other countries that could start proliferation issues that would be against our national security interests and the interests of the region.

So I want to thank Senator Markey for raising that, because, yes, we get involved in the process, the earlier, the better.

So as a former staffer here, I look forward to us getting engaged before decisions get beyond the point where our only option would be to vote against the 123 agreement.

I want to get to another area, Dr. Ford, that you should be very comfortable with, and that is carrying out the intent of this committee and the United Sates Senate and Congress in the Russia sanction bill that we passed. You have commented on it. And I learned a little bit today, that that will come under your portfolio, if confirmed.

And our law is pretty specific. They are mandatory sanctions. We give 180 days for improvements in the process by the Russian defense and intelligence sector. That expires on January the 29th.

The dates are pretty specific. Are you committed to working with this committee and working with—I might tell you, the Banking Committee is also very interested in it, Senator Crapo and Senator Brown; Armed Services is very interested, Senator McCain and Senator Reed; as well as this committee, to make sure the law is carried out.

Will you be working with this committee to make sure that that law, in fact, is carried out?

Dr. FORD. If confirmed, Senator, absolutely, I would.

The so-called CAATSA sanctions are a new area for me. It is not an area that my directorate at the NSC currently deals with, so I have been something of a newcomer to this as well, and I am trying to learn it as I go along.

It is very important. I completely agree, it would be very important that these things be implemented and be implemented well and effectively.

It is a very complex process. A list of Russian entities has been promulgated by the Secretary of State, I believe on October 27th or sometime thereabouts, pursuant to a delegation of authority that came from the President a month before that.

So this is a very new and emerging area. It is the responsibility of the State Department to identify those who have engaged in significant transactions with entities that are listed on that list that

corresponds to a number of entities of the Russian defense and intelligence sectors.

And then I think it is also the responsibility, once a transaction of significance since the effective date of the act has been identified, to apply to them a series of at least five from a list of as many as 12 penalties to those engaged in those transactions.

While all these determinations are going on, which are both complex factual and policy determinations, at the same time, it is part of Secretary Tillerson's direction that we would need to be coordinating very closely with international partners and with other stakeholders in the U.S. interagency to make sure that we work with international partners who engage or may have engaged or may in the future engage in transactions with Russian entities, in order to help them minimize any exposure they might have, help them understand how we are approaching these things.

And this is an enormously complex process. It will take a lot of doing to put this into place. But I am certainly committed to trying to make this work as well as possible.

Senator CARDIN. Let me make this clear. We made it more complicated, basically, at the request of our international partners and the administration, so they had flexibility. But the intent was very clear, that these are mandatory sanctions and that they need to be enforced in a timely way.

So I appreciate that we want to coordinate with our allies, and I agree with that. I would hope that some of the stakeholders would also include the Members of Congress who have been engaged in this process as you go through this process.

But I would just urge you, that January 29th date we expect to be complied with. We are not looking for extensions of that date. And I would just urge you to be mindful that good faith here goes two ways, and there will be other legislation that will be considered in the future. And I can assure you that if this law is not complied with, some of the discretion that is included in this statute will not be included in future enactments.

So it is of good faith, back and forth with the administration to have flexibility. But these are mandatory sanctions, and they must be applied, based upon Russia's behavior. And you have some discretion, but they have to be applied, if they have not complied with the law.

Dr. FORD. Message clearly received, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. One last point on sanctions. Here, I have seen similar comments made by the administration about Turkey's acquisitions of Russian technology contrary to their NATO commitments, but also in violation of the Russian sanction law.

I understand you may not be prepared to answer that question today. But this committee is going to be very interested in how we treat a NATO partner violating our Russia sanctions provisions, that they make it clear that this is mandatory sanctions and sanctions need to be applied, even if it is a NATO partner.

Dr. FORD. The short answer is yes, that sounds like a very challenging determination under the statute, but rest assured that I fully understand the mandatory nature of the sanctions and that this would be a focus of great concern.

As I mentioned earlier, I think it would be an important priority for me, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary, to make sure that the staffing and resources of the bureau were appropriately aligned to making sure that we are able to do that work to which you are referring, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. And, Dr. Poblete, I just want to underscore one additional area of concern that has not come out, and that is the Russia veto of the joint investigative mechanism under the chemical weapons inspection regime. That is going to present challenges as to how we enforce the prohibition on use of chemical weapons, particularly in Syria, without the inspection regime contemplated.

I note that Ambassador Haley has commented on this, but I want to make sure that is on your radar screen, that you have an effective way to enforce the chemical weapons bans.

Dr. POBLETE. Absolutely, Senator. It has been on the administration's radar screen. It has been on my radar screen from the onset.

I would like to point out that the United States has not given up on trying to hold the Syrian regime accountable. I would like to point out the meeting of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons that took place last week.

And regrettably, the Russian Federation once again demonstrated that it is not a responsible partner and a responsible stakeholder internationally, partnering up with the Iranian regime to block even accountability at the OPCW executive council.

We are currently engaged in the Conference of States Parties of the OPCW. That began yesterday. And I assure you that it is a priority for the administration to ensure that we have the necessary support and coalition to hold the Syrian regime accountable, because we understand that this is not just about the Syrian regime's actions, not just about the actions of nonstate actors within Syria. This is about sending a message to the world that the United States will not stand idly by and allow the use of chemical weapons in any theater in any scenario by any actor or nonstate actor.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. And I thank both our witnesses again for their response today.

Senator RUBIO. Absolutely. Thank you both for being here today and for your service and your willingness to continue to serve. I think it has been a very good and informative hearing, and I really look forward to moving forward on the process.

The record for this hearing will remain open for 48 hours. And for the members and their staff, the questions for record, we hope to have them in by close of business on Thursday.

So without objection, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:04 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DR. YLEEM D.S. POBLETE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. The defense and protection of universal human rights has been an integral part of my professional trajectory.

For me, there is a correlation between the manner in which foreign governments treat their people and the threats they pose to U.S. security interests and priorities. A regime which engages in violations of the fundamental freedoms of its people, other degrading and inhumane treatment, and demonstrates a blatant disregard for the survival and welfare of its citizens, will not be concerned about threatening its neighbors with missiles or undermining peace and security via the pursuit of nuclear, chemical, biological, radiological, advanced or destabilizing numbers of conventional weapons.

As a longtime Congressional staff member, I have been involved in the development, negotiation, and implementation of such legislative initiatives as the North Korea Human Rights Reauthorization Act, the Iran Freedom Support Act, the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act, the Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2008, and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Congressional Gold Medal Act. In my capacity as staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I exercised continued oversight over the implementation of such U.S. laws as the International Religious Freedom Act, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and the Middle East Partnership Initiatives; pressed foreign government officials on their human rights records; and worked to highlight the plight of religious and ethnic minorities around the world such as Christians in the Middle East, the Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan, and the Bahμ'φ in Iran.

I was fortunate to work on efforts against the lifting of sanctions or granting of PNTR to various countries due to ongoing human rights abuses and, in some instances, as in the case of the Russian Federation, to leverage the repeal of Jackson-Vanik and the granting of PNTR to help secure support, in the House of Representatives, for the inclusion and adoption of the Magnitsky Act in the final legislative package.

In certain international fora, I worked on advancing the U.S. agenda-from ensuring international condemnation of the genocide in Darfur; lobbying against adoption of anti-Semitic and anti-Israel UN resolutions; convincing foreign ministers from the Middle East and North Africa to agree to an Inter-Arab Democratic Charter and support the Plan of Action of the Community of Democracies Ministerial; to blocking the Libyan, Syrian, and Iranian regimes from assuming leadership posts at UN bodies focused on human rights matters (or disarmament and nonproliferation).

There are several ways to measure success in this arena but, on a personal level, the most rewarding was when former prisoners of conscience, thanked me because a resolution, a bill, a hearing, a statement I worked on in helped save their lives.

Question 2. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. Helping others realize their potential is a personal priority.

When I think about my service on the staff of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, one of the accomplishments I am most proud of is the myriad of other staff members who began as interns or fellows; whom I encouraged and supported to pursue advanced degrees; whom I helped advance in their careers; and who are actively engaged and succeeding in the national security arena. To this day, many seek my advice before pursuing new opportunities.

As a Hispanic, I am a member of an underrepresented group at the Department of State. I look forward to the opportunity, if confirmed, to use my personal and professional experiences to help address the diversity gap which exists at the Department of State and help implement the Secretary's vision to convert the Department into a reflection of the American people-of our nation.

If confirmed, I commit to engaging staff to identify professional goals and opportunities and to ensure that all personnel, including the Foreign Service and Civil Service, are afforded equal access to programs for career advancement and development.

Question 3. What steps will you take to ensure that each of the supervisors in the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will lead by example. More specifically, I take the issue of workforce development very seriously and, if confirmed, one of my priorities will be to work with supervisors to identify young talent with diverse backgrounds, expertise and training and afford this next generation the opportunity to learn from skilled professionals in order to develop the full range of skills essential to the vital areas covered by the AVC Bureau.

Together, Civil Service and Foreign Service personnel bring deep experience and knowledge to the Bureau. If confirmed, I will welcome the expertise of the Foreign Service Officers who add critical diplomatic skills and unrivaled connections with our foreign interlocutors. Military and other advisors on AVC staff contribute a needed perspective to the Bureau's work and help strengthen AVC's connections with the Department of Defense and other U.S. agencies. Conversely, they return to their agencies with a greater appreciation of the important and complementary role of AVC and the State Department in the field of national security.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. No.

Question 7. The latest NDAA conference report stripped all funding to the CTBT Preparatory Organization, except for money directed towards the International Monitoring System. The administration's budget request to Congress provided full funding to the organization. What impact do you believe cutting funding to CTBTO will have on U.S. global leadership on nonproliferation issues?

Answer. The administration is in the process of reviewing its policy on a number of arms control and nonproliferation issues, including the CTBT. Section 1279E of the NDAA conference bill provides that no U.S. funds may be made available to the CTBTO Preparatory Commission (PrepCom), except for U.S. funds for the International Monitoring System (IMS) or U.S. funds used solely for analysis and dissemination of data collected under the IMS. As you noted, the President's FY 18 budget request fully funds the U.S. planned contribution to the PrepCom. I pledge that, if confirmed, I will work with Congress to ensure U.S. support for the PrepCom is consistent with U.S. law and supports U.S. leadership on nonproliferation issues, including international efforts to ensure our ability to detect nuclear tests by North Korea and potentially others in the future.

Question 8. President Trump has previously stated a desire to vastly increase the size of the U.S. nuclear force, with some sources articulating he wanted a tenfold increase in our nuclear forces. Do you agree with this statement and what impact would that have on strategic stability with Russia?

Answer. Nuclear deterrence remains a foundational element of U.S. national strength and security and assures our Allies and partners that we can and will meet our extended deterrence commitments. To ensure the United States maintains an effective nuclear deterrent, President Trump directed the Department of Defense to conduct a new Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) to "ensure that the United States nuclear deterrent is modern, robust, flexible, resilient, ready, and appropriately tailored to deter 21st century threats and reassure our allies." The Department of State is participating in the NPR which, when released, will establish U.S. nuclear deterrence policy, strategy, and posture for the next five to 10 years and guide modernization of the U.S. nuclear deterrent for the 21st century security environment. Both Russia and China are modernizing their nuclear forces, while North Korea continues to advance its nuclear and missile programs. The U.S. nuclear sustainment and modernization program is designed to provide a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent; assure allies; and preserve strategic stability with Russia and China.

The United States and the Russian Federation held a meeting in Helsinki, Finland on September 12 to discuss issues relating to strategic stability. The U.S. dele-

gation was led by Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas A. Shannon, Jr. and the Russian delegation was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. The discussions provided both sides with an opportunity to raise questions and concerns related to strategic stability and to clarify their positions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DR. YLEEM D.S. POBLETE BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. Some have asserted that the United States should not remain in treaties to which other parties are in violation. Do you agree with this sentiment?

Answer. I would say that it depends on the circumstances. If a particular treaty remains in the national security interests of the United States, the U.S. should work toward bringing the violating state party back into compliance with the treaty.

Question 2. Russia is currently testing the boundaries of a number of arms control treaties, including the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty. Do you believe these treaties are in the national security of the United States? Are they valuable even when they are under duress?

Answer. The U.S. goal is to preserve the viability of the INF Treaty and other arms control agreements as a means of reducing threats to the United States and our allies.With regard to the Open Skies Treaty, approximately 95 percent of all Treaty flights take place without incident. The Treaty gives States Parties the ability to gather information through aerial imaging on military forces and activities of concern to them. It provides an opportunity to improve transparency among the States Parties. Our Allies and partners, over whom the great majority of flights take place, believe this transparency is an important confidence building measure in Europe, especially during times of increased tensions and uncertainty.

Question 3. How do we push Russia to bring Russia back into compliance with its obligations under these treaties and build consensus amongst our European partners about the importance of pushing Russia in that direction?

Answer. Since the United States declared Russia in violation of its INF Treaty obligations in July 2014, Russia has refused to engage in any meaningful way, and it continues to move forward with the production and deployment of the violating system.

The Trump administration reviewed the intelligence and the steps taken by the prior administration regarding Russia's violations of its INF Treaty obligations. The administration has engaged in consultations with Allies and has embarked on a strategy to press Russia to return to full and verifiable compliance with the Treaty. Although this is essentially a bilateral treaty, Allies have a common interest in full compliance.

With respect to the Open Skies Treaty, the United States concluded earlier this year that Russia is not in compliance with some of its Open Skies Treaty obligations. The U.S. has developed and declared a set of initial responses that are compliant with our treaty obligations and reversible should Russia address its violations.

Given that this is a multilateral Treaty process, we are working in close coordination with our Allies and partners, many of whom also greatly value the Treaty for the transparency it provides, particularly in this time of heightened tensions, to encourage Russia to return to full compliance with its obligations under the Treaty. Although Russia continues to facilitate numerous flights per year over most of its territory, its violations undercut the confidence building purpose of the Treaty and must be addressed

Question 4. Do you believe that the United States should exhaust all available tools, such as the dispute resolution mechanisms often included in these agreements, before deciding to walk away from them?

Answer. Yes. Since entry into force of the Open Skies Treaty, the Unites States has been an active participant in the Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC) and its Informal Working Groups, which are charged with resolving questions that arise in the implementation of the Treaty. These mechanisms, augmented by bilateral meetings between U.S. and Russian experts, have worked in the past to resolve a number of issues. Not so, in recent years. The United States remains committed to working with our Allies and partners to consider next steps to bring Russia back into compliance with the Treaty.

With regard to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the United States convened the Treaty's Special Verification Commission (SVC) in November 2016 for the first time since 2003 due to Russia's unwillingness to engage bilat-

erally. The United States will continue to use diplomacy, including bilateral engagements and the SVC, in an attempt to return Russia to compliance.

Question 5. The United States and Russia have been trading accusations about noncompliance with the 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). We have accused Russia of flight testing a ground-based cruise missile with a range prohibited by the agreement. In December 2017, the two countries held a meeting of the Joint Verification Commission, an implementation mechanism established by the treaty, to try to resolve the matter, and I understand another meeting of this body has been requested and will likely tale place soon.

The administration has made a number of policy decisions regarding how to respond to Russia's violation of the 1987 INF Treaty but has yet to publicly describe its strategy. The Wall Street Journal reported on November 16 that the Trump administration has begun preliminary research on a new, road-mobile ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) that if tested would violate the treaty. The report also indicated that the administration has informed Russia of the decision and that Secretary of Defense Mattis briefed NATO defense ministers on the approach during his recent visit to Brussels. Meanwhile, The Washington Post reported that same day that the administration has requested another meeting of the treaty's Special Verification Commission (SVC) to discuss our compliance concerns.

- On what basis does the administration believe that developing and possibly deploying a new U.S. GLCM will convince Russia to return to compliance with the INF Treaty? Doesn't the development of a new GLCM provide Putin a propaganda victory and a "legitimate" reason to blame the US for the collapse of the INF Treaty and begin deploying large numbers of illegal missiles without any constraints?

Answer. Since the United States declared Russia in violation in July 2014, Russia has refused to engage in any meaningful way, and it continues to move forward with the production and deployment of the violating system. The U.S. continues to seek a diplomatic solution to Russia's violation, including continuing to respond to Russia's allegations of U.S. noncompliance and considering how best to change the current diplomatic deadlock.

After reviewing the intelligence and the steps taken by the prior administration to seek Russia's return to compliance, the Trump administration has approved additional U.S. actions to pressure Russia to return to full and verifiable compliance. Should Russia return to compliance with the INF Treaty, the U.S. is prepared to reverse or cease these activities.

With regard to any military steps, I would defer to the Department of Defense. However, the United States takes very seriously its commitments under the INF Treaty and complies with those obligations.

These are steps the Russians are forcing us to take in an effort to save a framework that has helped preserve international security for decades.

Question 6. How did our NATO allies react to the news that the United States plans to develop a new road-mobile GLCM that if deployed would necessarily be placed in Europe? To your knowledge, are there any NATO or East Asian allies that would allow the United States to base a new road-mobile ground-launched cruise missile on their territory? If the development of a new GLCM becomes a controversial issue within the alliance, wouldn't that play into Moscow's efforts to divide the alliance and take the spotlight off its violation? ?

Answer. The United States has closely consulted with Allies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region and will continue to coordinate with them on this and other matters that affect our common security. Such consultations are held in confidence and we do not release their content. I want to highlight and reaffirm what NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg said last month about the Treaty: "it's extremely important that it is fully implemented, so we will continue to call on Russia to address the serious concerns in a substantial, transparent and verifiable way because the INF Treaty's important for all of us."

Question 7. To help resolve the noncompliance issues, will the new administration consider offering transparency measures to address the Russian charge that U.S. SM-3 launchers in Europe can contain ground-launched cruise missiles?

Answer. The United States is in compliance with its INF Treaty obligations. The U.S. takes these obligations seriously. Rather than address its own violation, the Russian Federation has raised baseless allegations against the United States in a clear attempt to deflect attention from Russia's INF-violating system. The U.S. has directly and substantively refuted these allegations with Russia on multiple occasions and provided our NATO Allies a detailed explanation of why U.S. systems are in full compliance with the INF Treaty.

The Aegis Ashore missile defense system being deployed in Romania and Poland is only capable of launching air and missile defense interceptor missiles. These missiles are not subject to the INF Treaty. Further, the Aegis Ashore system has never contained, launched, or prepared for launch any INF-prohibited missile. Therefore, it is fully consistent with U.S. obligations under the INF Treaty.

Question 8. In testimony to the House Armed Services Committee in March, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Paul Selva stated that "There are no military requirements we cannot currently satisfy due to our compliance with the INF Treaty." Do you agree with this statement?

Answer. I have no reason to disagree with this assessment by the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on military requirements.

Question 9. Over the past several years, the prohibition against chemical weapons use established by the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has been violated multiple times in Syria. Although the joint U.S.-Russian-OPCW operation removed the bulk of Assad's chemical weapons arsenal and manufacturing capacity, United Nations Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (UN-OPCW) inspectors have found that the Assad regime and elements of ISIS have used chemical weapons and they have done so since the Trump administration struck the Government military air base suspected of launching the deadly Sarin attack on a village in Syria earlier this year. Unfortunately, Russia has irresponsibly opposed efforts by the United States and other members of the United Nations Security Council to extend the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism to help hold CWC violators in Syria accountable.

- What strategy do you believe the United States should pursue to ensure that all states, including Russia, Syria, and others, respect the CWC and allow the OPCW and UN members states the ability to hold violators accountable?

Answer. The United States is pursuing a multifaceted strategy to ensure all States Parties comply with the CWC and deter future use by identifying and holding accountable those responsible for the use of chemical weapons. The United States continues to lead the effort with international partners. Action should be taken in cooperation with allies and partners, though the United States should be willing to act alone, if necessary. The United States will continue to engage diplomatically on chemical weapons issues at both the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Beyond taking action at the United Nations Security Council, the use of General Assembly mechanisms, such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) and the Commission of Inquiry on Syria, provide additional reinforcing support for attribution efforts. There are also other tools available, to include multilateral and domestic sanctions, to address CWC violations. Finally, the United States has sometimes provided financial support to ensure compliance with, and effective implementation of, the Chemical Weapons Convention. To name two examples, we did so for the removal of chemical weapons precursors from Libya in 2016 for destruction, and are now supporting the OPCW Fact Finding Mission, which is investigating suspected chemical weapons use in Syria.

Question 10. How will do you plan to deal with the demographic staffing issues in AVC since 50 percent of the Bureau is eligible to retire in the next 5 to 10 years? How will you bring new, young experts into the Bureau? How will you enhance gender and diversity balance? How will you attract new Foreign Service officers into the Bureau?

Answer. I take the issue of workforce development very seriously and, if confirmed, one of my priorities will be to identify young talent with diverse backgrounds, expertise and training and afford this next generation the opportunity to learn from skilled professionals in order to develop the full range of skills essential to the vital areas covered by the AVC Bureau.

It takes years of experience to build up the reservoir of talent, international reputation, and expertise. If confirmed, I will focus not only on today's portfolio, but on developing the skills for the future.

Together, Civil Service and Foreign Service personnel bring deep experience and knowledge to the Bureau. If confirmed, I will welcome the expertise of the Foreign Service Officers who add critical diplomatic skills and unrivaled connections with our foreign interlocutors. Military and other advisors on AVC staff contribute a needed perspective to the Bureau's work and help strengthen AVC's connections with the Department of Defense and other U.S. agencies. Conversely, they return to their agencies with a greater appreciation of the important and complementary role of AVC and the State Department in the field of national security.

Question 11. AVC has a number of career civil servants in leadership positions. Do you plan to retain those leaders?

Answer. If confirmed, I will meet with all the staff to gain their insight on AVC's needs, challenges and opportunities, relying heavily on their creativity, expertise, experience and international connections to assess and develop the policy course within the Department, the interagency and with the international community. I will seek to encourage a diverse and highly skilled workforce that brings in the best minds to contribute to U.S. arms control, verification and compliance.

Question 12. During your confirmation hearing, you indicated a belief that the Verification and Compliance bureau should be more involved in implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

- Please describe the role you see your bureau playing in implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Do you believe Iran is meeting its commitments under the JCPOA?

Answer. The Assistant Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance is statutorily responsible for "the overall supervision (including oversight of policy and resources) within the Department of State of all matters related to verification and compliance with international arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements or commitments." (Public Law 106–113-Appendix G). If confirmed, I will work with my State Department colleagues on their ongoing efforts to ensure that all relevant aspects of the JCPOA are rigorously verified, that Iran's compliance is strictly assessed, and that any and all violations are addressed. In all aspects of the administration's efforts related to the JCPOA, I will work with my colleagues to ensure the Bureau's integral role is represented.

As for whether Iran is currently meeting its JCPOA commitments, the President and the Secretary have been clear about their concerns regarding the JCPOA, including the need for Iran's strict compliance. I share these concerns. While the IAEA has reported that Iran continues to implement its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, questions remain about authorities and access to Iranian military facilities. The administration has made clear that Iran's continuing malign activities in the region, including ballistic missile activities and support for terrorism, have undermined the expectations set out in the JCPOA that the deal would positively contribute to regional and international peace and security. The administration further concluded that the sanctions relief Iran received as part of the deal is not "proportionate" to the specific, limited-duration measures taken by Iran with respect to terminating its illicit nuclear program.

Question 13. Do you believe that Article VI of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) obligates parties to pursue disarmament measures in good faith? What does that mean to you? In your estimation, what are some ways that we can strengthen all three pillars of the NPT? If the United States decides to build new nuclear weapons, how do you think the rest of the world will respond?

Answer. The administration is committed to the NPT in all its aspects, including Article VI. Adhering to this commitment in good faith entails pursuing effective measures that can help to create the security conditions that would facilitate further progress on nuclear disarmament. This approach looks at disarmament within the context of the overall security environment and is entirely consistent with the NPT.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with other NPT States Parties to maintain and strengthen the Treaty in all its aspects, while emphasizing the central role of nonproliferation in achieving the full benefits of the Treaty.

With regard to international reaction to a hypothetical decision by the U.S., the administration remains in the process of conducting its Nuclear Posture Review, and I would not presume to speculate on the outcome of that review or the potential reaction to it. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the United States remains at the forefront of international efforts to promote nonproliferation and effective measures that enhance our security and create the conditions that will allow for nuclear disarmament.

Question 14. Does the Trump administration believe the "gold standard"—a commitment not to enrich uranium or reprocess plutonium—is a requirement in order to conclude terms for 123 agreements with Saudi Arabia or Jordan? If the United States agrees to anything less than the "gold standard" with Jordan or Saudi Arabia, how do you think the United Arab Emirates would respond?

Answer. In addition to the legal requirements of Section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act, the United States has a longstanding policy of seeking to limit the spread of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR) capabilities around the world. The Trump administration remains committed to seeking the highest nonproliferation standards possible in 123 agreement negotiations with both Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The "Equal Terms and Conditions for Cooperation" clause of the 2009 U.S.-United Arab Emirates (UAE) 123 Agreement provides if the United States enters into a nuclear cooperation agreement with another non-nuclear weapon state in the Middle East with more favorable terms, the United States, at the request of the UAE, will consult with the UAE regarding the possibility of amending the U.S.-UAE Agreement. Since the United States has not entered into a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with a state in the Middle East since 2009, I cannot speculate on how the UAE would react to a hypothetical scenario.

Question 15. Twenty years ago, the United States was the first country to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which now has 183 signatories. The commitment to conclude negotiations on the CTBT was critical to securing the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, and it has been essential to establishing a global norm against nuclear weapons test explosions, which are prohibited by the CTBT. Today only one state—North Korea—conducts nuclear test explosions.

But the CTBT has not yet formally entered into force because the United States and seven other states have not yet ratified the pact. Nevertheless, Democratic and Republican administrations have supported the U.S. nuclear test moratorium in place since 1992 and the global monitoring system to detect and deter nuclear testing, and we have worked hard to prevent the resumption of nuclear testing by others.

In September 2016, the UN Security Council passed a resolution (2310) that was endorsed by 42 countries, including Israel that calls on all remaining states to ratify the CTBT and support the global test monitoring system. Last year, the three U.S. nuclear weapons lab directors reported that they are in a better position to maintain the arsenal with their multi-billion system of science-based stewardship than they were during the era of nuclear weapons test explosions.

- Are you aware of any technical reason to resume testing to maintain the current warhead types in the U.S. nuclear arsenal?

Answer. No, I am not.

Question 16. While the Trump administration may still be in the process of reviewing its policy on the CTBT, will the Trump administration support efforts reinforce the global norm against nuclear testing, including possible nuclear testing by North Korea, and will you pledge, if confirmed for this position, to take steps to strengthen the global nuclear test moratorium?

Answer. The administration has repeatedly called for North Korea to cease its nuclear testing activities, and continues to work with our international partners to increase pressure on North Korea to do so. If confirmed, I commit to calling on nation states to declare and maintain national moratoria on nuclear explosive testing.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DR. YLEEM D.S. POBLETE BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is a cornerstone of both the efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and to verify the activities of countries that have nuclear weapons through the use of international monitoring. I was pleased to hear that you support the continued moratorium on testing. However, the United States has signed but not ratified the treaty.

- Does the Trump administration support United States ratification of the CTBT?
- Does the administration support continued American funding for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization and the international monitoring stations?

Answer. The administration is in the process of reviewing its policy on a number of arms control and nonproliferation issues, including the CTBT. As such, the administration has not made a decision regarding ratification of the Treaty.The President's FY 18 budget request fully funds the U.S. planned contribution to the CTBTO Preparatory Commission (PrepCom), of whose budget, approximately 85 percent is devoted to developing, operating, and maintaining the International Monitoring System and the systems which support it, such as the International Data Center. I pledge that, if confirmed, I will work with Congress to ensure our support for the PrepCom is consistent with U.S. law and supports U.S. leadership on nonproliferation issues, including international efforts to ensure our ability to detect nuclear tests by North Korea and potentially others in the future.

Question 2. The Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, signed with the Soviet Union in 1987, remains a landmark accomplishment, with both sides agreeing

to eliminate an entire class of destabilizing nuclear weapons. I am dismayed at the recent evidence of Russian cheating on the INF treaty, but do not believe that the answer is to develop a new class of American intermediate range systems. Rather, I believe that we need to bring Russia back into compliance.

- What steps to you and the Department of State plan to take to incentivize Russia to come back into compliance with the INF treaty?
- What are your views on the development of a new American missile system of a range that would violate the terms of the INF treaty

Answer. Since the United States declared Russia in violation in July 2014, Russia has refused to engage in any meaningful way, and it continues to move forward with the production and deployment of the violating system.

The Trump administration has reviewed the intelligence and the steps taken by the prior administration to seek Russia's return to compliance. Following this review, the Trump administration has approved additional countermeasures as part of U.S. efforts to pressure the Russian Federation to return to full and verifiable compliance. Should Russia return to compliance with the INF Treaty, it is my understanding that the U.S. is prepared to reverse or cease these activities.

With regard to the military steps, I would defer to the Department of Defense. However, I would emphasize that the United States takes very seriously its obligations under the INF Treaty and complies with those obligations.

These are steps the Russians are forcing us to take in order to save not only the INF Treaty itself, but also the broader arms control framework that has preserved international security for decades. The goal for the United States is to preserve the viability of the INF Treaty by pressuring Russia to return to full and verifiable compliance with its INF Treaty obligations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DR. CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY FORD BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Probably the most important single contribution I have made to promoting human rights and democracy was the role I played in helping establish the Office of the Prosecutor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in the autumn of 2002.

The SCSL was established by agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations in the wake of the Sierra Leone Civil War of 1991–92. The civil war had been a terribly brutal struggle, leaving over 50,000 people dead and involving grotesque human rights abuses. Human Rights Watch, for instance, reported that rebel forces in Sierra Leone "systematically murdered, mutilated, and raped civilians," and these forces became particularly notorious for intimidating the civilian population by amputating civilians' "hands, arms, legs, and other parts of the body."

The SCSL was established after the war ended in order to prosecute "persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law" during the war. I was asked by the incoming Chief Prosecutor of the SCSL, David Crane, to join a group of international lawyers helping him establish the Office of the Prosecutor as the new court was being set up in Freetown.

At the time, I was working for Senator Richard Shelby as Minority Counsel to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI). I took leave from this position in October 2002, however, in order to help Mr. Crane set up the prosecutor's office. (U.S. law—specifically 5 U.S.C. §§3353 & 3382—permits federal employees, with their employer's permission, to be temporarily detailed to qualified international organizations in order to make U.S. Government expertise available to them.) I worked at the SCSL for about three weeks as an appellate litigation advisor to the prosecutor.

The SCSL was an important innovation in international humanitarian law. While purely international war crimes tribunals already existed (e.g., the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia), the SCSL was at the time an entirely unique model—a "hybrid" court established by agreement between a sovereign state and the United Nations as a new experiment in how to bring to justice those who had brutalized innocent civilians with crimes against humanity. And indeed the court was able to break new legal ground in holding such perpetrators to account.

To date, I believe, proceedings have concluded against 21 persons, and eight are still serving sentences for their crimes. Most significantly, the SCSL successfully prosecuted former Liberian President Charles Taylor, the first African head of state to be convicted of war crimes.

Because of the need to return to my duties at the SSCI, I was unable to stay in Freetown for longer. Nevertheless, I am proud of the role I played in helping establish the prosecutor's office, and thus in helping the Special Court find its footing and begin its important work in bringing war criminals to justice.

Question 2. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. I am committed to enabling professional and personal success for all staff under my direction. The Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation is staffed through various employee categories, including foreign service, civil service, contractors, military detailees, and interns. If confirmed, I pledge to support communities of interest in each category in order to better understand their unique concerns and to solicit advice for how best to strengthen an inclusive, diverse, and supportive working environment for all.

Question 3. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors in the Bureau of International Security and Non-Proliferation are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I pledge to work with supervisors and staff to strengthen all aspects of management within the bureau, including fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive. I will encourage all supervisors to continue advancing their skills as managers and leaders through training and developmental activities. I will also ensure bureau staff are aware of all channels for employees to report concerns without fear of retribution.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 6. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. No.

Question 7. The ISN Bureau plays a leading role in preventing the advancement of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile program.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure the international community is complying with UN Sanctions regimes?

Answer. All members of the international community are obligated to fully implement the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) on North Korea. The UNSCRs are designed to impede North Korea's access to weapons technologies and to block sources of the revenue needed to advance its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Department devotes substantial resources to support UNSCR enforcement activities, and the bureau I have been nominated to lead, International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN), plays a leading role initiating diplomatic and economic actions to promote and ensure strict implementation.

Over the past year, the Department of State, with strong interagency support—including with my own strong support and encouragement from the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Counterproliferation Directorate at the National Security Council, which I have had the privilege of heading since January 2017—has conducted multiple rounds of engagement with countries around the world to strengthen UNSCR implementation. ISN has engaged, for instance, with a range of countries seeking to provide any sort of service to, or to be the jurisdiction of record for, a company owning a DPRK-associated vessel in order to press them to comply with UNSCR sanctions. The Bureau has also targeted DPRK WMD procurements and worked aggressively to detect and disrupt suspected North Korea's arms transfers and to sever the underlying political and commercial relationships from which they result. ISN actively participates in ongoing interagency processes through which the

U.S. Government employs a broad range of diplomatic, economic, financial, law enforcement, and other tools to ensure UNSCR enforcement and impede progress on North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. If confirmed, I will ensure that this important work to impede and counter DPRK efforts continues, and will actively seek ways in which to improve the effectiveness of such activity. I will vigorously promote compliance with Security Council resolutions in regions where North Korea is known to operate, and will work with countries around the world to ensure robust implementation of the resolutions.

Question 8. How can the U.S. verify that these sanctions regimes are effective?

Answer. United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) on the DPRK contain the strongest set of provisions against Pyongyang yet, and end a strong message to North Korea that the international community stands united in condemning Pyongyang's continued violations of its UNSC obligations and demands the immediate cessation of its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs. As countries have improved their implementation of these sanctions, the revenue streams upon which the North Korean regime depends to fund its weapons of mass destruction and missile programs have been increasingly constricted, placing the regime under unprecedented stress, while broad international counterproliferation cooperation has also limited North Korean access to financing, technology, and materials relevant to these threat programs.

We have seen a number of governments take important steps to implement the UNSCRs and—in so doing—exert pressure on the DPRK. For example, Angola recently announced it had deported DPRK forced laborers, Uganda ordered the DPRK to withdraw two proliferation-related officials, and Sudan committed to sever arms and commercial ties with the DPRK in accordance with UNSCR obligations.

Overall, the comprehensive UN sanctions regime against North Korea now bans over 90 percent of that country's publicly reported exports, including coal, textiles, seafood and other items assessed in 2016 at a total of $2.7 billion. Since China's ban of coal imports in February, the DPRK has forfeited an estimated $805 million in revenue from coal exports at current market prices. On August 14, the Chinese Government issued a notice announcing a comprehensive ban on the import of coal, iron, iron ore, lead, and lead ore from the DPRK, effective August 15 in compliance with UNSCR 2371. Regional Chinese authorities also tightened restrictions on the import of seafood coming from North Korea after adoption of UNSCR 2371.

Furthermore, in light of the immediate and urgent DPRK threat, the State Department has led the administration's maximum pressure campaign by calling on all countries and working with international partners to persuade them to take steps above and beyond UNSCR requirements. We are encouraged by the strong measures countries across the world have done to answer this call. In Africa, for instance, Equatorial Guinea announced the termination of its trade relations with DPRK companies. In Asia, Singapore followed the Philippines' lead in terminating trade with North Korea. Multiple governments have signaled their concern by expelling DPRK officials, thus reducing the size of the DPRK's diplomatic presence and downgrading diplomatic relations—which has an important signaling effect in addition to its concrete impact in reducing North Korea's ability to use diplomatic personnel in illicit WMD-related procurement and revenue-generating smuggling activities.

In addition to individual countries' announced actions, the UN Panel of Experts (POE) gathers, examines and analyzes information from States regarding the implementation of the UNSCRs, investigates violations, and prepares and publishes reports on its findings. The POE is an important tool in drawing attention to violations as well as reports of implementation, compliance, and activities by UN Member States. If confirmed, I will continue to press countries to comply with the UNSCRs, provide reports to the POE, and support the POE's efforts to monitor UNSCR implementation and investigation violations.

In short, the UNSCR sanctions regime against North Korea has been effective in imposing unprecedented costs and pressures upon the DPRK regime, and powerfully supports U.S. and international efforts to bring about the end of destabilizing threats from Pyongyang's WMD and missile programs. The ISN Bureau has been at the forefront of this work, and if confirmed, I will work diligently to ensure that this critical activity continues and that we remain constantly active in trying to improve its effectiveness further.

Question 9. In your estimation, do you believe there is a military solution to the North Korea issue?

Answer. While the State Department has made clear our preferred approach of resolving the North Korea matter peacefully, the President has said repeatedly that all options are on the table. We are constantly reviewing our current posture to bet-

ter counter the DPRK's evolving threat, and we remain firmly committed to seeking a negotiated solution if we can. Diplomatic options remain viable and open, and indeed it is the purpose of our current campaign to maximize North Korean incentives to engage in the kind of negotiations that would be necessary in order to roll back its nuclear and missile programs. As Secretary Tillerson recently underscored, the United States remains committed to finding a peaceful path to denuclearization and to ending belligerent actions by North Korea. If confirmed, I will work with our allies and partners to deepen cooperation to this end, and to hold nations accountable to their commitments to isolate the regime.

To be clear, however, both Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis have unequivocally stated that "any attack by the DPRK will be defeated, and any use of nuclear weapons will be met with an effective and overwhelming response."

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DR. CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY FORD BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question 1. The President has threatened to "tear up" the Iran nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In your current White House role, you are one of the Senior Directors directly responsible for advising the President on this issue and- if confirmed—you will lead a bureau that plays an important role in ensuring Iran is complying with its nuclear commitments under the JCPOA. Do you believe the JCPOA is in the U.S. national security interest? Is Iran is in compliance with its commitments under the nuclear deal?

Answer. The President and the administration have been clear about our concerns regarding the JCPOA. While we share the assessment of the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran continues to implement its nuclear-related commitments, we have made clear that Iran's continued malign activities in the region, including ballistic missile activities and support for terrorism, have undermined the expectations set out in the JCPOA that the deal would positively contribute to regional and international peace and security. This does not mean that the administration believes it is impossible to fix the flaws of the JCPOA or that it is time for us to leave the deal. Indeed, pursuant to the President's direction and following a review of our policy toward Iran, we are continuing to implement our JCPOA commitments, and will continue to ensure that Iran strictly implements its own. The President has requested that Congress work with the administration to address the JCPOA's flaws, including through amending and strengthening the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, while continuing to hold Iran accountable to its commitments under the JCPOA, and he has directed his administration to work with international partners to meet long-term Iranian proliferation challenges and prevent Iran from acquiring the capability rapidly to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I would work diligently with international counterparts, with U.S. interagency partners, and with the Congress to ensure that the strongest possible protections are put in place, on an enduring basis, to deny Iran any viable pathway to nuclear weapons.

Question 2. Why have the President and other members of his administration said that Iran is violating the agreement? Are all other parties to the agreement and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—the world's international nuclear watchdog—wrong in continuing to affirm that Iran is complying with its nuclear commitments under the JCPOA?

Answer. The President and the administration have been clear about our concerns regarding the JCPOA. While we share the assessment of the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran is implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, we continue to be concerned that Iran has tried to push limits in the deal and, in the past, has exceeded some limits, such as those related to heavy water. In addition, Iran's continued malign activities in the region, including ballistic missile activities and support for terrorism, have undermined the expectations set out in the JCPOA that the deal would positively contribute to regional and international peace and security.

Question 3. If Iran is violating the deal as the President has claimed, why hasn't the United States engaged the dispute resolution process laid out in the text of the JCPOA? Some members of the administration, including Secretary Mattis, believe it is in the national security interest of the United States to remain in the JCPOA. Given this, should the United States be trying to exhaust every tool available to us—including the JCPOA's built-in dispute resolution mechanism—before walking away?

Answer. The administration has not announced an intention to end participation in the JCPOA at this time, and we continue to uphold our JCPOA commitments while working with Congress and international partners to improve how we meet long-term Iranian proliferation challenges. While we do so, we will continue to hold Iran strictly accountable to its nuclear-related commitments under the deal. The United States continues to engage Iran directly and in cooperation with our P5+1 partners to ensure technical implementation of the deal is strictly enforced. While to date we have not deemed it necessary to invoke the dispute resolution mechanism contained in the JCPOA, we recognize it is a tool available to us as appropriate.

Question 4. If the United States leaves the JCPOA or continues trying to unilaterally change the terms of the agreement either through legislation or the threat of re-imposing U.S. sanctions, what do you think the implications are for our relationships with other parties to the JCPOA such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, China, Iran and the European Union? Do you think such a step will impact the credibility of the United States with these parties and other countries around the world? How do you think such a move by the United States would impact international nuclear nonproliferation efforts and efforts by the United States to negotiate arms control and nonproliferation agreements with other countries like North Korea that pose a threat to U.S. national security interests?

Answer. The administration has not announced an intention to end participation in the JCPOA at this time, and we continue to uphold our JCPOA commitments. While we do so, we will continue to hold Iran strictly accountable to its nuclear-related commitments under the deal. The President has requested that Congress work with the administration to address the JCPOA's flaws, including through amending and strengthening the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). Our allies in Europe strongly support the JCPOA and want the United States to remain in the deal, and we have made clear that our efforts to strengthen INARA are a domestic matter outside the JCPOA. Our European partners have signaled a willingness to cooperate with us to address to address Iran's malign actions outside the JCPOA and long term Iranian proliferation challenges, as well as to continue to work together elsewhere where international support remains crucial, such as in addressing the threats presented by North Korea.

Question 5. Under a proposed re-organization of the State Department, the Iran Nuclear Implementation team at the State Department, which had previously reported directly to the Secretary, would be placed under the ISN bureau you are nominated to lead. Do you believe this is the right place for this team? What are your plans for this critical office and how do you intend to manage parts of this agreement that don't fall within your bureau's purview, such as the sanctions issues and engagement with the United Nations?

Answer. Based upon my previous experience at the State Department and my serving on the National Security Council staff, I am a firm believer in the principle that the American people are best met when organizations and personnel with deep functional and technical expertise are able to employ that expertise to address functional and technical challenges in foreign and national security policy, in close and collaborative coordination with their counterparts who specialize in broader regional affairs. The ISN bureau has unique technical expertise that provides an important locus for coordinating the strict implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran and developing improved ways to ensure that enduring constraints are placed upon Iran's ability to present nuclear and missile proliferation challenges in the future. If confirmed, I will work closely with senior leadership in the Department and key bureaus and offices including the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, and the Bureau of International Organizations, among others, to coordinate with our friends and allies in supporting this strict implementation of the JCPOA and to address Iran's destabilizing activities.

Question 6. North Korea is one of the most pressing foreign policy challenges the United States faces right now. Do you believe denuclearization should be a pre-condition for any negotiations with North Korea? What is the administration's strategy for rolling back and eliminating North Korea's nuclear weapons program? During your confirmation proceedings, you indicated that strengthening sanctions on North Korea is one of your top priorities if confirmed. How do you plan to do this? What do you believe is missing from our current sanctions regime against North Korea?

Answer. U.S. policy is to achieve the complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We have long made clear that we will not negotiate our way back to talks, and our current maximum pressure campaign is designed to incentivize a North Korean decision finally to engage seriously on roll-

ing back the destabilizing nuclear and missile threats it presents. We aim to demonstrate that North Korea will not achieve the security or prosperity it seeks until it changes its current course and returns to serious and meaningful talks aimed at denuclearization. The administration has made clear North Korea's flagrant violations of international law and its disregard for international norms will not lead to acceptance as a nuclear-armed state.

In 2017 alone, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test and more than 20 ballistic missile launches in violation of its international obligations and commitments. Its most recent launch was a likely intercontinental ballistic missile, highlighting the direct threat that Pyongyang seeks to present to the American homeland. North Korea's words and actions continue to demonstrate that it is not willing or interested in engaging in serious talks on denuclearization at this time. As Secretary Tillerson stated earlier this year, when the time comes for talks, it will not be enough for the DPRK to stop its program where it is today. North Korea must be prepared to come to the table ready to chart a course to "cease and rollback" its nuclear program.

In order to help bring this about, we are working hard to strengthen sanctions against North Korea, for both multilateral and U.S. sanctions play a critical role in our maximum pressure campaign strategy to counter the threat posed to the United States by the DPRK's prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

If confirmed, I will continue to push for strong multilateral sanctions against the DPRK at the United Nations. The current sanctions regime is unprecedentedly strong, and we will seek more sanctions as needed in order to contribute to bringing North Korean threats under control. We will also continue to work with partners around the world to improve the effectiveness of sanctions implementation, in order to ensure that these measures work as well as possible to choke off the DPRK's access to revenues, technology, and materials that can support development and maintenance of its nuclear and missile programs. We continue to press countries around the world to fully implement all UN Security Council Resolutions against North Korea—including UNSCRs 2270, 2321, 2356, and 2371—and to harmonize their domestic sanction regimes with our designations on North Korean and third-country entities. Since April, we have asked countries around the world to cut diplomatic and economic ties, including bilateral trade, with the DPRK. In every bilateral relationship we have around the world, we have made clear that we expect to see countries reduce these ties, or face consequences.

We are also aggressively using the United States' own nonproliferation and DPRK-specific sanctions authorities to target a range of North Korean activity, and these efforts will expand as we begin implementing the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act to impose new restrictions on the DPRK and to designate individuals and entities that enable the DPRK's illicit activities. These actions send a strong signal to the DPRK and third-country facilitators that we are watching their activities and will hold them accountable. On September 21, moreover, the President announced Executive Order 13810, imposing additional restrictions on North Korea and expanding the scope of U.S. sanctions authorities, including targeting funds the DPRK generates through international trade to support its nuclear and missile programs and weapons proliferation.

If confirmed, I will lead an ISN team that is staffed with experienced sanctions and interdiction experts who devote their time to leading State operational efforts to detect, prevent, disrupt, stop, and/or sanction arms and WMD transfers, related financial transactions, sanctions evasion, and other illicit activities. As is widely known, the DPRK is very adaptive and skilled at using deceptive practices to evade sanctions, so our sanctions posture must therefore also continuously adapt to meet this challenge. To maintain our edge, it is usually best that we not telegraph specific moves before they occur, for this can give the DPRK more time to seek ways around them. If confirmed, however, I will ensure that our efforts remain squarely directed at the DPRK threat and that we adapt and evolve our approaches in order to ensure their ability to meet counterproliferation needs, and I will work diligently to improve the effectiveness of this work wherever possible.

Question 7. Is the United States at present negotiating terms of a 123 agreement with Saudi Arabia and Jordan? Did the Trump administration decide to—or did Saudi Arabia and Jordan approach the Trump administration to restart or revitalize—123 negotiations after January 2017? Has the United States engaged in discussions on a new 123 agreement, renewal of a 123 agreement, or modification of an existing 123 agreement since the start of the Trump administration?

Answer. The United States has been in negotiations with Saudi Arabia on a 123 agreement since 2012, and with Jordan since 2008. While both these negotiations have remained open, it has been more than a year since any substantive discussions

on the respective 123 agreement texts have occurred. Separately, administration officials have spoken to Saudi counterparts in general terms regarding the Kingdom's nuclear power plans and its interest in pursuing U.S. nuclear technology, including U.S. legal and regulatory requirements for export of U.S. nuclear materials, equipment, and technology. Given the sensitive nature of those engagements, it is not possible to say more about these contacts here, but the Department would be happy to provide a closed briefing for committee staff on the substance of those discussions.

When the Trump administration came into office, it began a review of all ongoing 123 agreement negotiations and civil nuclear cooperation policy. That review is ongoing. The United States is also in negotiations with the United Kingdom and Mexico on 123 agreements.

Question 8. Please describe in as much detail as possible the status and tenor of any of the above negotiations.

Answer. Negotiations with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, and Mexico are ongoing, cordial, and cooperative. Given the sensitive nature of 123 agreement-related engagements, it is not possible to say more here, but the Department would be happy to provide a closed briefing for committee staff on the substance of those negotiations.

Question 9. Does the Trump administration believe the "gold standard"—a commitment not to enrich uranium or reprocess plutonium—is a requirement in order to conclude terms for 123 agreements with Saudi Arabia or Jordan? If the United States agrees to anything less than the "gold standard" with Jordan or Saudi Arabia, how do you think the United Arab Emirates would respond?

Answer. In addition to the legal requirements of Section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act—which include important nonproliferation protections such as requirements for materials and facilities security, as well as a prohibition upon enrichment or reprocessing of U.S.-origin material without U.S. consent—the United States has a longstanding policy of seeking to limit the spread of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR) capabilities around the world. The Trump administration remains committed to seeking the highest nonproliferation standards possible in 123 agreement negotiations with both Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The "Equal Terms and Conditions for Cooperation" clause of the 2009 U.S.-United Arab Emirates (UAE) 123 Agreement provides that if the United States enters into a nuclear cooperation agreement with another non-nuclear weapon state in the Middle East with more favorable terms, the United States, at the request of the UAE, will consult with the UAE regarding the possibility of amending the U.S.-UAE Agreement. Since the United States has not entered into a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with a state in the Middle East since 2009, I cannot speculate on how the UAE would react to a hypothetical scenario.

Question 10. The Atomic Energy Act (AEA) requires the Executive branch keep Congress through this committee "fully and currently informed of any initiative or negotiations relating to a new or amended agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation." The AEA also requires Congress to review the terms of any 123 agreement and gives us the power to block any 123 agreement. How do you interpret this requirement? Do you believe the administration is meeting these requirements in its current 123 negotiations with Saudi Arabia and Jordan? If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation, will you commit to fully briefing this committee on the status of these negotiations in a classified or nonpublic setting within 30 days of your confirmation?

Answer. The Department is committed to honoring its statutory obligations. In accordance with the AEA, the State Department briefs the appropriate committees before commencing negotiations on a 123 agreement. Beyond those statutory notifications, the Department also offers periodic briefings as negotiations progress.

The administration has fully met all legal requirements in consulting with Congress regarding longstanding 123 agreement negotiations with Saudi Arabia and Jordan. If confirmed, I am committed to keeping the committee fully abreast of the status of all 123 agreement negotiations, and would be pleased to personally brief the committee in a classified setting within 30 days of my confirmation.

Question 11. Do you believe the United States Government is providing adequate funding to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)? Do you believe the United States should increase its contributions to the IAEA?

Answer. The United States works closely with the IAEA and other member states to ensure the IAEA has the resources it needs to carry out its important work. For the IAEA's 2018 regular budget (as in previous years), the United States joined a consensus agreement in the IAEA Board of Governors on a revised budget level that was requested by the IAEA Director General. The United States contributes 25.5

percent of the IAEA regular budget, by far the largest share of any IAEA member. In addition to the assessed regular budget, the Department of State annually provides approximately $90 million in voluntary contributions to support activities that advance U.S. priorities. If confirmed, I will look at U.S. contributions to the IAEA to ensure we are providing adequate funding.

Question 12. Are you aware of any technical reason to resume testing to maintain the current warhead types in the U.S. nuclear arsenal?

Answer. No, I am not aware of any technical reason to resume nuclear explosive testing at this time to maintain current warhead types in the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Question 13. While the Trump administration may still be in the process of reviewing its policy on the CTBT, will the Trump administration support efforts reinforce the global norm against nuclear testing, including possible nuclear testing by North Korea, and will you pledge, if confirmed for this position, to take steps to strengthen the global nuclear test moratorium?

Answer. The administration has repeatedly called for North Korea to cease its nuclear testing activities, and continues to work with our international partners to increase pressure on North Korea to do so. If confirmed, I will continue to call on all states to declare, observe, and maintain national moratoria on nuclear explosive testing.

Question 14. What is the policy of the United States regarding the criteria that should be used to evaluate membership bids from non-NPT member states to the NSG? Please be specific and please explain how such an approach will strengthen rather than weaken compliance with the goals and principles of the NSG and of the NPT?

Answer. The United States believes that the factors for consideration of applications contained in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) Procedural Arrangement are sufficient for participation from any government. The State Department is working closely with NSG Participating Governments (PGs) to identify a path forward on the issue of possible membership for states that are not party to the NPT, and if confirmed I will continue this effort.

The NSG and global nuclear nonproliferation regimes are strengthened when all major suppliers of nuclear technology abide by stringent export control regulations and cooperate in crafting the NSG Guidelines that influence the formation of those domestic regulations.

Question 15. How would Indian membership in the NSG build on the nonproliferation commitments it already made, and has not fully met, on the eve of the NSG's September 2008 decision to exempt India from the NSG's longstanding requirement for full-scope IAEA safeguards? Be specific and use examples.

Answer. India is a responsible actor in the field of civil nuclear power and nuclear nonproliferation. India's likemindedness with Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) Participating Governments (PGs) is demonstrated by the large number of bilateral and multilateral nonproliferation commitments and the large number of bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements it has signed. Once India becomes an NSG member, it would commit to abide by the NSG Guidelines for transfers of nuclear and dual-use items, as well as its previous bilateral and multilateral nonproliferation and nuclear cooperation commitments.

Question 16. As you know, Section 104 of the Henry Hyde U.S.-India Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Act of 2006 requires an annual implementation and compliance report regarding a number of issues relating the arrangement. This report must, among other things, contain an estimate of the rate of production in India of fissile material for nuclear explosive devices and whether imported uranium has affected the rate of production of nuclear explosive devices. The law requires that the report shall be unclassified but may contain a classified annex.

- Can you confirm that there has been no finding of material noncompliance by India with any commitment made by India pursuant to this section of the Hyde Act and that India has not increased its rate of production, or capacity to produce, fissile material for nuclear weapons or other unsafeguarded purposes?

Answer. Every year since the Hyde Act passed into law, the Department of State has provided a report on the nuclear activities of India. In the 2017 report, in Part 1: Section 104(g)(1), as amended: Information on Nuclear Activities of India, the Department wrote that there has been no finding of material noncompliance by India with any commitment made pursuant to the Hyde Act.

In Part 2: Section 104(g)(2), as amended: Implementation and Compliance Report, the Department wrote that (SBU) "Both India and Pakistan continue to produce fissile material that can increase their nuclear weapons stockpiles."

Question 17. Will you commit to keeping my office and the committee "fully and currently informed" regarding implementation and compliance with this agreement? Will you provide a written copy of each annual report as required by Section 104 of the Hyde Act?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to keeping your office and the committee "fully and currently informed" regarding implementation and compliance with the Hyde Act and will provide a written copy of each annual report as required.

Question 18. Do you believe that Article VI of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) obligates parties to pursue disarmament measures in good faith? What does that mean to you? In your estimation, what are some ways that we can strengthen all three pillars of the NPT? If the United States decides to build new nuclear weapons, how do you think the rest of the world will respond?

Answer. Article VI of the NPT obligates all States Party to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The administration is committed to the NPT in all its aspects, including Article VI, and is committed to encouraging other States Party to fulfil their commitments too. Adhering to this commitment in good faith entails pursuing effective measures that can help to create the security conditions that would facilitate further progress on nuclear disarmament. This approach, which looks at disarmament within the context of the overall security environment, seeks to address disarmament as a real-world policy problem and is entirely consistent with the NPT, the Preamble of which expressly envisions easing tensions and strengthening trust among states "in order to facilitate" disarmament.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with other NPT States Party to maintain and strengthen the Treaty in all its aspects, while emphasizing the central role of nonproliferation in achieving the full benefits of the Treaty. The widespread benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology are a great success story of the NPT, which is only possible because of a strong nonproliferation regime. We will continue to highlight this success and seek opportunities to promote building further capacity in this area, consistent with global nonproliferation obligations.

With regard to international reactions to a hypothetical decision to build new nuclear weapons, the administration remains in the process of conducting its Nuclear Posture Review, and I cannot speculate on the outcome of that review or the reaction to it. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring that the United States remains at the forefront of international efforts to promote nonproliferation and effective measures that enhance our security and create the conditions that will allow for nuclear disarmament.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO DR. CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY FORD BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question 1. One of the most dangerous developments of recent years has been the proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia. Since the 1998 tests, India and Pakistan have both deployed increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapons on a range of platforms. A nuclear war in South Asia could easily lead to millions of casualties and the United States needs to do everything in its power to prevent such a conflict:

- What are the ISN bureau plans to improve strategic stability in South Asia to move India and Pakistan away from the precipice of nuclear war?
- What are your ideas for slowing or ending the arms race in South Asia?

Answer. In line with the President's South Asia strategy, we continue to encourage restraint in Pakistan's military nuclear and missile programs, and to urge Pakistan and India to reduce tensions and the risk of conflict. At every opportunity, we raise with India and Pakistan the need to engage with each other to ratchet down tensions. We do this in informal and in formal discussions, such as by encouraging both countries to engage in dialogue, to enact new confidence building measures, to adhere to self-imposed nuclear testing moratoria, not to mate nuclear warheads and delivery systems, to avoid development or deployment of types of weapon or delivery system that could destabilize their relationship, to improve nuclear security in order to ensure that non-state actors cannot acquire access to nuclear weapons or materials, and to exercise restraint aimed at improving strategic stability.

Question 2. One of the great challenges we face today is the spread of dual use technology that enables nuclear or other WMD proliferation. In some cases countries lack the capacity to enforce their United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540

obligations to prevent such proliferation. In other cases, countries ignore the proliferation activities of their national companies. We need to do everything possible to prevent proliferation:

- Given the role of the Export and Related Border Security Program in improving countries capacities to meet their UNSCR 1540 obligations and prevent proliferation, do you have plans to expand that program to other countries where we currently do not have an EXBS advisor?

Answer. U.S. capacity-building assistance has made important contributions to the global nonproliferation regime for many years. The EXBS Program currently works in 67 countries, including advanced technology suppliers and key transit/transshipment hubs. To support cost-effective program implementation and maintain ongoing liaison with host governments, EXBS employs 24 in-country advisors, some of whom have regional responsibilities. EXBS recently established two regional advisor positions for the Middle East and North Africa to support expanded assistance to this region. In South Asia, where EXBS has robust programming but few advisors, EXBS has been working to increase in-country support beginning with the addition of a regional EXBS advisor in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 2016. In countries without an EXBS Advisor, EXBS utilizes locally-employed staff, partners with other U.S. Government agencies, or engages contractors to execute program activities. The EXBS program also periodically reviews export control and border security challenges and requirements in key regions of the world in order to ensure that its efforts are appropriately focused and prioritized upon the greatest needs. If confirmed, I will review our overseas EXBS staffing and other programs to ensure we are doing all we can to prevent proliferation.

Question 3. In the case of countries that willfully ignore proliferation by their companies (we can discuss specifics privately or in closed session), will you commit to bringing more pressure on them to prevent proliferation of dual use technologies?

Answer. Yes. The Department of State closely monitors such activity and works closely with U.S. interagency and foreign partners to address such concerns, including by promoting effective implementation and enforcement of export controls and UNSC Resolutions, and using tools such as interdiction and the use or threat of sanctions to prevent shipments of proliferation concern. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I will ensure that we continue to do all we can to encourage countries to abide by their international obligations to halt proliferation to programs of concern and to contribute ever more effectively, even beyond what U.N. Security Council resolutions require, to choking off proliferators' sources of funding, technology, and materiel. Where proliferation-facilitating activity occurs, I will recommend sanctions against the entities involved when warranted and consistent with U.S. legal authorities, in order to spotlight deficient export control practices, constrain their ability to conduct business, incentivize improved behavior in the future, and signal to all other entities that might be considering such misbehavior that involvement with proliferation activity entails great cost and risk.

Question 4. Starting in 1967, one of the ways that the regions of the world have sought to prevent proliferation is to create nuclear weapons free zones. The nuclear weapons states can adhere to these treaties via protocols. Under those protocols, the United States and other NWS would pledge not to use nuclear weapons against, or place nuclear weapons in NWFZ regions. The Obama administration in 2011 submitted the protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) in Africa and the South Pacific to the Senate for ratification and in 2015 it submitted the Central Asian protocol to the Senate as well:

- What is the Trump administration's view of the value of NWFZs?

Answer. The United States supports, in principle, nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) that are consistent with U.S. national security interests, are developed in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission and are vigorously enforced, and evaluates them on a case-by-case basis. The United States believes that NWFZs can play an important role in the international non-proliferation regime by complementing and reinforcing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Question 5. Does the Trump administration support the ratification of these protocols?

Answer. U.S. policy on these protocols is under review.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio, presiding.

Present: Senators Rubio [presiding], Young, Menendez, Murphy, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

Senator RUBIO. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

This is a nominations hearing for Rear Admiral Kenneth Braithwaite, who is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Norway; the Honorable Carlos Trujillo, who is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States; the Honorable Brock D. Bierman, who is the nominee to be the USAID Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia; and Mr. Lee McClenny, who is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay. And we thank all of you for being here today and for your willingness to serve our country.

Today these four nominees are here for very different positions, but all are important and are all influential areas of U.S. foreign policy. Each of you will have a critical role in advancing U.S. policy and objectives in your respective posts abroad and here in the United States.

The Organization of American States describes itself as the oldest multilateral regional organization in the world. The main pillars of the OAS include democracy promotion, the protection of human rights, economic and social development, and regional security cooperation.

Article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter states—and I quote—the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it. Democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas. End quote.

It is critical to empower the OAS to fulfill its mission as stipulated in that article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and do so by working closely with our regional allies. Efforts to continue OAS engagement and security cooperation are indispensable to the stability of the region.

Sadly here in our own hemisphere, we still have dictatorial regimes that deprive citizens of their most fundamental rights.

In Cuba, the Cuban people have not been able to freely elect their leaders in 65 years and live under an oppressive regime.

In Venezuela, the erosion and now cancellation of democracy and freedom is truly tragic and catastrophic and has led to a humanitarian disaster.

In Nicaragua, we recently saw shocking reports of executions carried out by the military, including against innocent civilians.

Our hemisphere clearly still has many challenges to overcome before the democratic ideals of the OAS charter can fully be realized for all the people of the Americas.

Moving on to Paraguay, we see a nation that plays a key role in joint efforts to promote and strengthen democracy, security, and counternarcotics. Under the leadership of Admiral Tidd, Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, the United States has supported efforts to fight transnational crime and counterterrorism in Paraguay. We must continue to build on our partnership with Paraguay, which is vulnerable to illicit trafficking of narcotics, weapons, illegal goods, and people.

The tri-border area where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet is a place where illicit financing for criminal organizations and terrorists exists, terrorists including Hezbollah, and this has long been a concern. The U.S. needs to work with all three countries that share a responsibility for the tri-border area to better secure borders, reduce illicit trafficking, and improve counterterrorism monitoring.

Although Paraguay has made extensive progress in fighting corruption, it is still ranked 123 out of 176 in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index for the year 2016.

The U.S. is also an important trading partner for Paraguay. We should look for new ways to expand our trade relationship and help Paraguay grow their economy and strengthen their government institutions.

Norway is one of our closest and most active security allies, especially given that its population is only 5 million people, or roughly the same size as where I live in south Florida. As a founding member of NATO, Norway has fought with us in conflicts ranging from the Balkans to the present day operation in Afghanistan. It is also an important contributor to the fight against ISIS, putting boots on the ground in Jordan to help train Syrian freedom fighters.

Beyond our security alliances, Norway shares our concerns about Russia's aggression and interference, particularly given that long border that the two countries share.

Norway is an important contributor in other regions, including in our own western hemisphere. Oslo, for example, has pledged $22 million over 3 years to fund humanitarian demining in Colombia to support the peace process.

And lastly, the United States Agency for International Development plays a critical role in promoting American interests and values abroad by supporting the advancement of freedom, human dignity, and development. In particular, USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia is working to foster resilient and democratic societies, strengthen economic growth, and to support European-Atlantic in-

tegration. We have seen countries in the region such as Croatia and Montenegro graduate—that is in quotes—"graduate" from U.S. foreign assistance. This is the objective. Our foreign assistance is critical towards building sustainable economic and security partnerships that not only improve the lives of citizens of these countries but also are in our own national security interests.

As Vladimir Putin's malign influence continues to spread throughout the region, particularly in nations already suffering from rampant corruption and organized crimes, the United States must be engaged and proactive in securing our interests and in promoting peace and prosperity throughout Europe and Eurasia.

Although USAID's challenges can be overwhelming, especially with increased Russian activities in the region, the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia that you will be overseeing, if confirmed, is more important than ever.

So in closing, all of these positions have a key role to play in American foreign policy, and I thank you and I thank your families for your commitment to your country and your willingness to serve it.

And now I turn to the ranking member.

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

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

And let me congratulate all our nominees on their nominations.

I continue to be concerned about the slow pace of nominations from the President and the vacancies at the State Department, at USAID, and at critical posts overseas. So I welcome this opportunity to hear from nominees for the western hemisphere and for positions that stretch the definition of the western hemisphere far beyond even my imagination.

But we welcome you here, all. And we are happy that the committee is actually serving as a vehicle for moving your nominations.

While you have been nominated to serve in a range of positions, you are all signing up for the same fundamental duty: to serve the interests of the United States of America, the American people, and to promote our foreign policy objectives through diplomacy and development.

As a 25-year veteran of both the House and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I can think of no other position that is more significant in terms of both national security and national interests than the positions that our diplomats serve abroad and our development people serve as well. So it is a high calling.

I also appreciate your families because these positions are a sacrifice not only of yourselves but of your families, and we appreciate that reality as well.

And while we have several nominees beyond the normal jurisdiction of the committee, let me just say the OAS, as a longtime observer and someone who considers himself a Latin Americanist, is an incredibly important position. It is a position for which I believe we need vigorous leadership in an institution that also needs greater reforms. I am proud to have sponsored legislation that was signed into law in 2013 that urged management reforms at the OAS. And I am pleased to see that the OAS has taken some of

these reforms on, including its strategic vision plan that aligns with parts of the law, but I think we can agree that probably more can be done. So I look forward to hearing from you in that regard.

Also, the hemisphere—while we enjoy overwhelmingly democracy, there are challenges. And there is a backward slide. And I am really concerned about what happens at the OAS as an institution to move particularly the democratic charter of the OAS as a vibrant document, one that is living in its purpose, not simply as part of an overall aspirational goal versus something that is being pursued. And so I appreciate that.

I appreciate the AID work. I have long been a supporter of USAID. I think the development work we do is an important part of our national security and diplomacy interests and that without it, I think we cannot achieve many of the goals that we seek to achieve in the world. So I look forward to hearing from you.

And Norway. You know, it is one of those places in the world where often when we do not have trouble, so we do not talk about that country. But it is an incredibly important country. It has one of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world and also incredibly important in terms of the challenges that we have with Russia. So I look forward to hearing from you very much so in that regard, as well as with Paraguay.

As we are trying to develop this hemispheric further consolidation of democracy in the process. It may be in some people's minds a small country. I think it is an important country as it relates to that overall effort.

So I look forward to hearing from all of you. I will save the bulk of my time for questions.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the witnesses' testimony.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you to the ranking member. And you are right that the scope is broader. This is actually a hearing of the full committee being chaired and co-chaired by two Cuban Americans, which is a trend. Three would be a conspiracy. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. But Senator Cruz is not a member of the committee.

All right. So let us begin with the nomination of Rear Admiral Kenneth Braithwaite. I am sorry. Let us begin with the nomination of Mr. Bierman. And Ambassador Pamela Smith, who served in the Foreign Service for over 30 years, including a stint as our U.S. Ambassador to Moldova, is here, and I would like to recognize her to introduce Mr. Bierman.

STATEMENT OF HON. PAMELA SMITH, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO MOLDOVA

Ambassador SMITH. Thank you very much, Senator Rubio, Senator Menendez. It is a great honor to be here to introduce Brock Bierman.

He is really ideally suited to be USAID's Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia. In over 30 years in the Foreign Service, I have not met anyone whose talents, experience, and dedication better match the demands of this challenging job.

Brock was chief of staff for the same bureau when we first met in 2003 when I was Ambassador to Moldova. With his hard work

in Washington, our outstanding USAID mission helped that friendly, struggling little country cope with the grueling transition from East to West and from communism to democracy and a market economy, a journey that is regrettably not yet complete. I could not have been more impressed with Brock's pragmatism, tenacity, and sensitivity to the dynamics of the complex political environment.

I could also see that while his heart and some family roots were in Moldova, his results-oriented approach made him just as effective in the entire region.

Brock brings not just 5 years of success in the same bureau he has been nominated for. He also is committed philosophically to foreign assistance as a key tool of foreign policy as a national security priority. With Russia playing, as you said, an aggressive and pernicious role in the region and with violent extremism and destabilizing floods of refugees on the rise, we need people working there with seasoned expertise, people like Brock who can gauge trends and use our assistance to help consolidate democracy and combat the fracturing of the West.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, 12 of the 24 country programs receiving assistance from USAID's Bureau of Europe and Eurasia have graduated, as you noted, and joined the Euro-Atlantic community through such institutions as NATO and the EU. I spent much of my career in the Balkans, and believe me, this is an astounding track record. The next 11 countries will be much harder, but it seems to me that someone who knows the region, the bureau, the agency, and the Administrator well has the best chance to build on this success.

Brock and I have stayed friends since our time advancing U.S. interests in Moldova. I just want to share a few more words about him.

His engagement in the region preceded his first assignment in USAID and continued after he left the agency. This region is his personal passion. You should know that he served three terms as a State legislator in Rhode Island, and thus grasps the special relationship between government institutions and legislative bodies. He has also owned and operated several small businesses and has sat on many nonprofit boards and commissions. He knows how things work, how to make them work, and he has developed people skills that suit many circumstances.

His experience outside the beltway also gives him a unique ability to think outside the box. Importantly, he thoroughly believes in bipartisanship. Our friendship would not exist otherwise. His work with you will prove this immediately.

We are lucky to have someone of Brock's caliber put forward for this important position. He has my unqualified endorsement. He will serve the United States well and honorably, and I urge you to support his nomination. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you so much.

So let us begin. Mr. Bierman, thank you for being here and your willingness to serve and you are recognized.

By the way, for all the nominees, your opening statements are already in the record. So it will not be held against you if you abbreviate it. It will not be held against you if you skip them. I am not asking you to, but obviously, the shorter they are, the more

time we will have to interact with all of you. So just a suggestion. It will not count against you.

But anyway, thank you for being here, and you are recognized, sir. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. BROCK D. BIERMAN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. BIERMAN. Thank you and good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee. Actually I can take out the sentence about full statements being entered because I did shorten it.

Well, I just want to say I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before you today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia at USAID. I would like to thank President Trump, Administrator Green, and Secretary Tillerson for their support.

I would also like to thank Acting Assistant Administrator Margot Ellis, who is here today, who has led the bureau since January, and her staff who were invaluable as I prepared for my hearing. Having spent more than 5 years working in the Europe and Eurasia Bureau from 2002 to 2007, it has been wonderful to reconnect with many former colleagues.

And of course, I want to thank Pamela Smith, Ambassador Smith, for her kind introductory remarks. Ambassador Smith's work in Moldova has demonstrated the importance of American leadership, and she has been a mentor of mine since we met.

Most importantly, I want to thank my family, my wife and best friend of more than 30 years Lisa, who is sitting behind me, and my children Allison and Robert, who are sitting behind my wife. They are the most important inspiration, and without their love and support, I would not be sitting here today.

I want to start out by telling you that I am a second generation American. My grandfather came to the United States in 1906 from what now is the Republic of Moldova. He quickly learned what it meant to live in this country and what made our country great. He understood the importance of our democratic systems and volunteered to serve his new country during the First World War. Upon returning from the war, he served his community as a leader and philanthropist.

And to quote one of America's leading historians, David McCullough, in his recent book "The American Spirit," he said—and I quote—"history is about who we are and what we stand for, and it is essential to our understanding of our role and what it should be in our time." In many ways, I sit here today as a direct result of who we are as a country. My grandfather exemplified the American spirit, which I believe defines this nation and is at the heart of what USAID does.

In 1997, while serving in the Rhode Island State legislature, I participated with an exchange program with the American Council of Young Political Leaders, a nonpartisan organization that introduces next generation leaders to politics and governance of other countries. Knowing that my grandfather lived within the Russian Empire, I decided to participate in the Russian exchange program,

and interacting with Russian legislators at the time not only gave me a new perspective on my job as a State legislator but also was the beginning of my passionate interest in the region.

I returned to Eastern Europe in 1999 when Senator John Chafee made it possible for me to join the International Republican Institute as a volunteer trainer in Ukraine. While traveling from Kyiv to Odessa, I shared my own experience with democracy and helped Ukrainians of all parties learn more about our system of government.

In 2002, I was privileged to serve as chief of staff for the Europe and Eurasia Bureau, and while at USAID, I developed a region-wide initiative that brought young people together from different political parties to talk about problems facing the region and how to solve those problems. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing these efforts.

While at AID, I was also proud to support opportunities for professional development and training of our staff. If confirmed, I will support every member of the Europe and Eurasia Bureau through professional development, capacity building, and training.

Now, as you know, Ambassador Green has said USAID's objective is to end the need for foreign assistance. And I am excited to advance this priority. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you. I look forward to working with Administrator Green and the dedicated staff in the E&E Bureau to support U.S. national security interests.

I also think that Administrator Green's priority to respect the taxpayers' investment in foreign aid is critical. If confirmed, I look forward to ensuring USAID's programs in Europe and Eurasia are effective and efficient while also demonstrating how USAID's work brings stability and prosperity overseas, which in turn benefits neighborhoods across America.

I also look forward to spending time listening to my colleagues both here in Washington and in the field, as their perspectives will be vital to developing a successful course of action.

The challenges of Europe and Eurasia look a lot different now than they did when I was previously at USAID. The challenges cannot be overstated. The region has been hit with a major economic recession. Russia's malign influence is a serious problem. Russia has violated the territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine and is interfering with the internal affairs of several other countries in the region. In many ways, our efforts to counter this pervasive undercurrent will also serve to prevent the spread of violent extremism in Europe and Eurasia. As Administrator Green has stated, terrorist groups often feed on frustration and despair. The American spirit and the ideals that it reflects is our most valuable export. It serves as a counter to this frustration and despair.

The Europe and Eurasia Bureau faces other critical challenges such as government corruption, weak economies, fragile democratic institutions, and the energy dependence on Russia. I look forward to exploring those topics in greater depth today and working with your staff to answer any questions you might have. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to address these critical issues.

And in closing, I wish to thank the committee for their dedication to the American spirit. Thank you.

[Mr. Bierman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BROCK BIERMAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before you today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E) at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). I would like to thank President Trump, Administrator Green, and Secretary Tillerson for their support, and for the confidence they have placed in me.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Acting Assistant Administrator Margot Ellis, who has led the Bureau since January, her staff, and the staff within the Legislative and Public Affairs Bureau all of whom were invaluable help as I prepared for this hearing today. Having spent more than five years working within the Europe and Eurasia Bureau from 2002–2007, it has been wonderful to reconnect with so many knowledgeable professionals, many of whom were colleagues during my first appointment. And of course, I thank my good friend Ambassador Pamela Hyde Smith for her kind introductory remarks; Ambassador Smith's work in Moldova demonstrated the importance of American leadership, and she has been a mentor ever since.

Most importantly I want to thank my family—my wife and best friend of more than 30 years Lisa, my daughter Allison, and my son Robert. They are my most important inspiration and without their love and support, I would not be sitting here today.

I am a second-generation American on my father's side, as my grandfather came to the United States as part of the mass immigration of the late 19th early 20th century. He immigrated to this country during a turbulent time in Russian history, and came from what is now the Republic of Moldova. He came to America with the hopes and dreams to make a better life for himself and his family. And although I never knew my grandfather, my father told me that he quickly learned what made our country great. After only a few short years in America, he understood the importance of our democratic systems, and volunteered to serve his new country during World War I. Upon returning from the war and throughout his life, he served as a community leader and philanthropist.

David McCullough said it best in his recent book, The American Spirit. To quote him, "History, I like to think, is a larger way of looking at life. It is a source of strength, of inspiration. It is about who we are, and what we stand for, and it is essential to our understanding of what our role should be in our time. History, as can't be said too often, is human. It is about people and they speak to us across the years." In many ways, I sit here today as a direct result of who we are as a country. My grandfather exemplified the American Spirit, which I believe defines this nation, and is at the heart of what USAID does.

In 1997, while serving my second term in the Rhode Island State Legislature, I was chosen along with another colleague to participate in an exchange program with the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL), a non-partisan organization that introduces next generation leaders to the politics, governance, policy-making, and cultures of countries around the world through on-site exchanges. Knowing that my grandfather lived within the Russian Empire, I decided that this was the country and region I wanted to get to know better. Participating in the ACYPL program in Moscow and interacting with Russian legislators not only gave me a new perspective that made me a better legislator, but it was also the beginning of my passionate interest with the Europe and Eurasia region.

My understanding of the region further deepened when I returned to the region in 1999, this time to Ukraine as a volunteer trainer for the International Republican Institute, (IRI). A former U.S. Senator, John Chafee, had encouraged me to run for public office and serve in the State Legislature. Senator Chafee was a dear friend and mentor, and his influence made it possible for me to join IRI as a trainer. While traveling from Kyiv to Odessa, I enjoyed the opportunity to share my own democratic experiences and help Ukrainians of all parties learn more about our system of government.

Three years later, in 2003, I was privileged to serve as Chief of Staff for the Europe and Eurasia Bureau under Dr. Kent Hill, and spent the next five years dedicating my life to USAID's mission. During that time, I helped Dr. Hill advance the Bureau's top priorities, and specifically assisted with improving the Bureau's outreach and communications. I also worked to develop a region-wide initiative that brought young people together from all of our partner countries, and from different political parties to talk about difficult problems that were facing the region and how

to develop solutions they could apply from the local to regional levels. Youth programming was a top priority then, as it is again today, and, if confirmed, I look forward to deploying that experience to continue these efforts.

I was also involved with the Bureau's Trafficking in Persons initiatives, and served as a member of the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Task Force. Further, I am proud of my work to support capacity-building within the Bureau to create opportunities for professional development and training for our staff. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting every member of the Europe and Eurasia Bureau through professional development, capacity building, and training.

Although some of the same overall issues remain today, the challenges in Europe and Eurasia look a lot different now than they did when I previously served at USAID. The scale of challenges that are facing Europe and Eurasia is hard to overstate. Since my previous tenure with USAID, the region has been hit with a major economic recession. Russia has violated the territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine, and continues to have a military presence in Moldova. At the same time, Russia is interfering with the internal affairs of several other countries in the region. Putin's propaganda is exploiting ethnic divisions in the Balkans, furthering democratic backsliding throughout the Balkans.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Administrator Green and the dedicated staff in the Europe and Eurasia Bureau to continue USAID's tradition of supporting U.S. national security interests, with the aim of eventually transitioning countries in the region from U.S. assistance, along a positive path that will reduce these threats.

Administrator Green has set a clear path forward for USAID, and I am excited to advance his priorities. Clearly, USAID's objective to end the need for foreign assistance should be a goal the Agency keeps in mind during its strategic planning and budgeting, and as it works with our host countries. USAID's host countries do not believe in everlasting assistance either, but look forward to the day when they can stand on their own and be respected contributing partners in the world community. Increasing USAID's investments with local organizations to build capacity is a key part of this process.

I also think that the Administrator's priority to respect the taxpayers' investment in foreign aid is critical. If confirmed, I look forward to shaping USAID's programs in Europe and Eurasia in an effective and efficient manner, by using more innovative award mechanisms, while also educating our public on how USAID's work brings stability and prosperity overseas, which in turn benefits neighborhoods across America. Finally, I look forward to spending some time listening to my colleagues both here in Washington and those in the field, and learning from their experiences. Their perspective will be vital to developing a successful course of action.

As mentioned earlier, Russia's malign influence is a serious problem throughout the region, one that has developed since my last appointment. In 2014, I saw firsthand the open cooperation between Moldovan politicians and Russian government officials during the parliamentary elections. Many countries in the region are vulnerable to Russian influence because of their weak economies, corrupt public officials, and fragile democratic institutions. With assistance from the U.S. Government and USAID, I believe we can support countries that are committed to pursuing the Euro Atlantic path, and help them build a bright future of self-sufficiency, rather than dependence.

Since my first visit to Russia 20 years ago, I have had the opportunity to meet with many Russian citizens and talk openly about their hopes and dreams. It never ceases to amaze me how similar we all are on so many levels. I know that, on a personal level, many Russians share our vision for open democracy, fair and free elections, and a future in which all citizens have a chance for a better life. I believe we must remember that it is the Government of Vladimir Putin, rather than the people of Russia, that is trying to undermine our work with democracy and governance in the region.

In many ways, the efforts we must undertake today to counter this pervasive undercurrent will also serve to prevent the spread of violent extremism in Europe and Eurasia. We are all aware of the alarming rise of violent extremism which has led hundreds to travel to fight alongside ISIS. As Administrator Green has stated, terrorist groups often feed on frustration and despair. The American Spirit, and the ideals which this reflects, of equality, rights, and consent of the governed, is our most valuable export, and serves as a counter to this frustration and despair.

Although I touched on several of these issues earlier, I could go on about other critical issues, such as prevalent government corruption, border security, mass migration, human rights violations, energy dependence on Russia, lack of open markets and youth unemployment. I look forward to exploring those topics in greater depth today, and to answering any questions you might have.

In closing, I wish to thank the committee again for your dedication to the American Spirit we all share. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to further our shared goals and address the critical issues facing the Europe and Eurasia region. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Admiral Braithwaite, thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL KENNETH J. BRAITHWAITE, USN (RET), OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. It is almost impossible for me to capture in 5 minutes the words to adequately define how I feel, should I be confirmed, to be able to once again serve our great nation and the people of the United States. I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence, their faith and trust in me to serve as our nation's envoy to Norway. I can think of few greater honors than to be the principal representative of the United States to such an important strategic ally.

I would also like to thank several mentors who have guided me directly and indirectly as I have developed in my service to our nation: my first commanding officer, Admiral Tom Lynch, former Superintendent of the Naval Academy; Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who I served under in Islamabad; Ms. Uschi Keszler, U.S. Olympian and my life coach who is with me today; and my best friend, Mr. David Urban, a West Point graduate and proof that the Army and the Navy can get along well.

Finally and most especially, I would not be here without my wife Melissa and our two children, Grace and Harrison, who are with me today to support me hopefully once again in service to our nation together. I am reminded, as Senator Arlen Specter told me so many years ago when I worked for him, that the reason we serve is to ensure that our children and our children's children inherit the same great country that we received from those who went before us. After 31 years in the uniform of our nation, I intend, with your approval, sirs, to once again do all I can to uphold that sacred responsibility.

Our relationship with the Kingdom of Norway is truly a special one for so many reasons. Built upon a shared commitment to the idea that freedom is a sacred privilege that must be protected vigilantly, Norway has stood closely by the United States in many conflicts since its independence from Sweden in 1905. Norway was one of the first nations to stand with us in Afghanistan following the attacks of September 11th of 2001 and, as the chairman noted, continues to contribute troops to NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

As a founding NATO ally, Norway is the key guardian of our northern flank of this important alliance, standing watch over a vast Arctic frontier. Norwegians have demonstrated time and again their commitment to ensuring that regional aggressor nations do

not threaten ours or our allies' interests. As a young naval officer during bilateral carrier battle group operations in the fjords and later as a senior officer operating upon the Baltic Sea in joint fleet exercises, I personally witnessed, sir, the Norwegian military's incredibly impressive capabilities at sea and ashore. They are, without doubt, a highly valued and greatly trusted ally.

Norway also shares our faith in a strong market-based economy. Norwegians have established one of the most secure markets in the world, and only earlier this year, their national sovereign wealth fund reached an unprecedented achievement by surpassing $1 trillion. This stability affords them the opportunity to look towards new and innovative technologies and other investments seeking partner nations such as the United States with which to pursue greater economic strength.

Looking to the future, should you confirm my nomination, I would seek to pursue three principal objectives for the United States and our partnership with Norway.

First and foremost, I would seek to reaffirm that our commitment to NATO remains as strong as ever. The President and Secretary Tillerson, along with Secretary Mattis, have stated repeatedly that we stand behind article 5 and fully recognize the importance of a strong and adequately funded North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Secondly, I would seek to strengthen even further our investment and trade ties. I would work with U.S. businesses to seek opportunities to expand into growing Norwegian markets by exploring ways for Norwegian businesses to work in collaboration with U.S. companies in markets here and abroad.

And finally, I would do everything in my power to work closely with the Norwegian Government to ensure the safety and security of Americans abroad, whether engaged in business, academic exchange, research collaboration, or the pleasure of just traveling to such a wonderful nation as Norway. All free peoples are at risk of terrorist attacks today across the globe. So working closely with Norwegian security agencies, I would seek to extend an umbrella of safety over our respective nations.

As I close, I am reminded of something my father said to me as a young boy. My dad, Private First Class Kenneth J. Braithwaite, Sr., was severely wounded, shot in the head in France shortly after landing in the very first wave upon the beaches of Normandy on June 6th of 1944. He loved our country and all it stood for and was the first person, along with my mother Sylvia, to instill in me a sense of pride in our nation and a sense of duty and service above self. I asked him once how he did it, how he exited that landing craft that morning with enemy bullets hitting all around him. He said simply, it was my duty, son.

My father, although humble to a fault, was proud to have served to ensure our American dream could persevere. He told me as a young boy that anything was possible in America if you applied yourself and worked to realize your dream. He and my mother were very proud when I went off to the U.S. Naval Academy, both having never had the opportunity to attend college, nor being able to really afford to send me. I cannot help but reflect upon my father's life, that his sacrifice and duty to our nation is today real-

ized, his son, here before you, nominated to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. In America, the home of the free and the land of the brave, anything is possible.

Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, I am honored to be here and I look forward to your questions.

[Mr. Braithwaite's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL KENNETH J. BRAITHWAITE

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. Words cannot adequately define how I feel, should I be confirmed, to be able to once again serve our great Nation and the People of the United States. I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence, faith and trust in me to serve as our Nation's envoy to Norway. I can think of no greater honor than to be the principle representative of the United States to such an important strategic ally.

I would also like to thank several mentors who have guided me directly and indirectly as I have developed in my service to our country; my first commanding officer Admiral Tom Lynch, former Superintendent of the Naval Academy; Ambassador Ryan Crocker under whom I served in Islamabad; Ms. Uschi Keszler, U.S. Olympian and my life coach who is with me today; and my best friend, Mr. David Urban, a West Point graduate and proof that the Army and the Navy can get along well. Each of these individuals and so many others contributed to my development and continue to offer advice and guidance as I prepare with your support to serve again.

Finally and most especially, I wouldn't be here without my wife Melissa and our two children, Grace and Harrison, who are with me today to support me hopefully once again in service to our nation. I am reminded, as Senator Arlen Specter told me so many years ago when I worked for him, that the reason we serve is to ensure our children and our children's children inherit the same great country that we received from those who went before us. After 31 years in the uniform of our nation, I intend with your approval to once again do all I can to uphold that sacred responsibility.

Our relationship with the Kingdom of Norway is truly a special one for so many reasons. Built upon a shared commitment to the idea that freedom is a sacred privilege that must be protected vigilantly, Norway has stood closely by the United States in many conflicts since its independence in 1905. Norway was one of the first nations to stand with us in Afghanistan following the attacks of September 11th, 2001, and continues to contribute troops to NATO's Resolute Support Mission alongside us today. Nearer to my Navy roots, the Norwegians have deployed naval assets to support anti-piracy efforts in Operation Ocean Shield off Somalia in alignment with their belief as a maritime nation of the importance of open sea-lanes of communication. And today Norway is one of our strongest Allies in NATO, fully committed to supporting this important strategic alliance in both manpower and materiel.

As a founding NATO ally, Norway is the key guardian of the Northern Flank of this important alliance, standing watch over a vast arctic frontier. Norwegians have demonstrated time and again their commitment to ensuring that regional aggressor nations do not threaten our or our Allies' interests. As a young Naval Officer during bilateral carrier battle group operations in the fjords and later as a senior officer operating on the Baltic Sea in joint fleet exercises, I personally witnessed the Norwegian Military's incredibly impressive offensive and defensive capabilities at sea and ashore. They are without a doubt a highly valued and greatly trusted ally!

Norway also shares our faith in a strong market-based economy. Norwegians have established one of the most secure markets in the world and earlier this year their national sovereign wealth fund reached an unprecedented achievement by surpassing one trillion dollars. This stability affords them the opportunity to look towards new and innovative technologies and other investments, seeking partner nations with which to pursue greater economic strength.

Looking to the future, should you confirm my nomination, I would seek to pursue three principal objectives for the United States in our partnership with Norway.

First and foremost, I would seek to reaffirm that our commitment to NATO remains as strong as ever. The President and Secretary Tillerson, along with Secretary Mattis, have stated repeatedly that we stand behind Article 5 and fully recognize the importance of a strong and adequately funded North Atlantic Treaty Orga-

nization. I would personally deliver that message through routine engagement with the Norwegian government and public.

Secondly, I would seek to strengthen even further our investment and trade ties. I would work with U.S. businesses to seek opportunities to expand into growing Norwegian markets by exploring ways for Norwegian businesses to work in collaboration with U.S. companies in markets here and abroad. I believe Norway is in an unprecedented period in its history of market expansion, and I am confident the United States could further assist and benefit from such a relationship.

Finally, I would do everything in my power to work closely with the Norwegian government and its respective security agencies to ensure the safety and security of Americans abroad, whether engaged in business, academic exchange, research collaboration, or the pleasure of traveling to such a wonderful country as Norway. All free peoples are at risk of terrorist attacks today across the globe. Therefore, I would work diligently to ensure our security agencies are working closely with Norwegian security agencies to extend an umbrella of safety over our respective nations.

As I close, I am reminded of something my father said to me as a young boy. My dad, Private First Class Kenneth J. Braithwaite, Sr., was severely wounded, shot in the head in France shortly after landing in the very first wave upon the beaches of Normandy on June 6th 1944. He loved our country and all it stood for and was the first person along with my mother Sylvia to instill in me a sense of pride in our nation and a sense of duty and service above self. I asked him once how he did it—how he exited that landing craft that morning with enemy bullets hitting all around him. He said simply, "It was my duty son." My father, although humble to a fault, was proud to have served to ensure our American dream could persevere. He told me as a young boy that anything was possible in America if you applied yourself and worked hard to realize that dream. He and my mother were very proud when I went off to the U.S. Naval Academy, both having never had the opportunity to attend college, nor being able to really afford to send me. I can't help but reflect upon my father's life, that his sacrifice in duty to our nation is today realized, his son, here before you, nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. In America, the Home of the Free and the Land of the Brave, anything is possible.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for your time. I would be honored to learn from your comments and to answer any questions you may have.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you very much, sir.

Representative Trujillo?

STATEMENT OF HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO, OF FLORIDA, TO BE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. I want to thank the President for his confidence in me and the opportunity, with your approval, to represent the American people during a critical period in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

Before I begin, I would like to take an opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have supported me along the way: my wife Carmen, who is present today, along with our four children, Carlos, Isabella, Juan Pablo, and Felipe, along with my mother and in-laws—my mother, Georgina Fernandez, and in-laws Consuelo and Hector Mira, who are also present; my father Ruben Trujillo, who is watching from home; my step-parents, Hector and Jamais; and my grandparents, Manuel and Alba Fernandez, and Rubin and Mirtha Trujillo.

I know today is a remarkable day for my grandparents. They arrived in this country exactly 50 years ago from Cuba with nothing. This country has been our safe harbor and our greatest blessing. For me to stand here before this august body is a testament to the American dream and the power of education and hard work.

By way of background, I am currently the Special Advisor at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. That job has uniquely prepared me for the challenges that come ahead. In addition, my mix of public, private, and professional experience has given me a set of skills that I hope to be able to employ on behalf of the United States of America and in service to its people.

I have served as a prosecutor fighting for dignity and justice for all.

I have also served on the board of directors of the fourth largest public hospital in the country, the Jackson Memorial Public Health Trust. There I learned that people from all over the world still strive for a better and higher quality of life.

I have served as a State legislator elected four terms in one of the largest States in the nation. There I served as the Chairman of the Florida House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee, which oversees an $83 billion budget. My experience working in a legislative body and negotiating delicate, confidential, and immensely important matters will only complement my service to the United States in this honorable capacity to which I have been nominated.

In my private life, I am a graduate of Spring Hill College and the Florida State University College of Law. I have built a small and successful business. Along with my partners, I founded and managed a mid-sized Hispanic-owned law firm with more than 50 employees. We have weathered the storms of recession and strife, and I have learned much about the importance of tact, tenacity, integrity, and perseverance which has served me throughout my career in public service.

If confirmed, it will be an honor for me to advance U.S. foreign policy interests throughout the OAS, a noble organization that remains the preeminent multilateral forum for our region, the Americas.

OAS and the Inter-American system were created to promote democracy and the rule of law in the Americas; to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms; to advance the security of our citizens; foster economic development and prosperity; and to uphold the practices, purposes, and principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States, the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, in accordance with the United States Constitution. These instruments embody the shared democratic values that make the Americas unique and make our own country great. If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to ensure that the OAS lives up to its legacy as it confronts today's daunting challenges.

I will also work to make sure American taxpayers are getting a fair return for their investment in the OAS by working to build a stronger, more efficient, and more effective organization. Through tough but good faith negotiations with member states, we can

achieve a broader, more sustainable financial base for the OAS that does not depend so heavily on a single country, in keeping with the objectives outlined in the Organization of American States Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading the U.S. mission to the OAS in advancing the above-mentioned goals. I believe that my past experiences have prepared me, if confirmed by the Senate, to serve more effectively as the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. I am cognizant of the difficulties that have historically and currently face the region. If confirmed, I promise to work closely with you, with the executive branch, and all those concerned in advancing the goals of the American people.

Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today, and I look forward to your comments, humbly ask for your support, and look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

[Mr. Trujillo's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARLOS TRUJILLO

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. I want to thank the President for his confidence in me and for the opportunity—with your approval—to represent the American people during a critical period in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

Before I begin, I would also like to take an opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have supported me along the way: my wife Carmen and our four children; Carlos, Isabella, Juan Pablo and Felipe, who are with me here today. My family watching at home, my parents Georgina and Ruben, my step-parents Hector and Jamais, and grandparents Manuel and Alba Fernandez, and Ruben and Mirtha Trujillo.

I know that today is a remarkable day for my grandparents who came to the United States of America with nothing. This country has been our safe harbor and our greatest blessing. For me to stand before this august body is a testament to the American dream and the power of education and hard work.By way of background, I am currently the Special Advisor at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. That job has uniquely prepared me for the challenges that come ahead.

In addition, my mix of public, and private, professional experiences has given me a set of skills I hope to be able to employ on behalf of the United States of America and in service to its people.

I have served as a prosecutor—fighting for dignity and justice for all. I have also served on the Board of Directors of the largest public hospital in the country, the Jackson Memorial Public Health Trust. There, I learned that people from all over the world will strive for a better and higher quality of life.

I have served as a State Legislator, elected to four terms, in one of the largest states in the nation. There, I served as Chairman of the Florida House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee, which oversees an $83 billion budget. My experience working in a legislative body and negotiating delicate, confidential, and immensely important matters will only complement my service to the United States in this honorable capacity to which I have been nominated.

In my private life, I am a graduate of Spring Hill College, and the Florida State University College of Law. I have built a small and successful business. Along with my partners, I founded and manage a mid-sized Hispanic-owned law firm, with more than 50 employees. We have weathered the storm of recession and strife, and I have learned much about the importance of tact, tenacity, integrity and perseverance which has served me throughout my career in public service.

If confirmed, it will be an honor for me to advance U.S. foreign policy interests through the OAS, a noble organization that remains the preeminent multilateral forum for our region, the Americas.

The OAS and the Inter-American system were created to promote democracy and the rule of law in the Americas; to promote and protect human rights and funda-

mental freedoms; to advance the security of our citizens; foster economic development and prosperity; and to uphold the practices, purposes, and principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States, the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, in accordance with the U.S. Constitution. These instruments embody the shared democratic values that make the Americas unique, and make our own country great. If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to ensure that the OAS lives up to this legacy as it confronts today's daunting challenges.

I will also work to make sure American tax payers are getting a fair return for their investment in the OAS by working to build a stronger, more efficient and more effective organization. Through tough but good-faith negotiations with other member states, we can achieve a broader, more sustainable financial base for the OAS that does not depend so heavily on a single country, in keeping with the objectives outlined in the Organization of American States Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading the U.S. mission to the OAS in advancing the above- mentioned goals. I believe that my past experiences have prepared me, if confirmed by the Senate, to serve effectively as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States. I am cognizant of the difficulties that have historically, and currently, face the region. If confirmed, I promise to work closely with you, others in the Executive Branch and all those concerned with advancing the goals of the American people.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today. I welcome your comments, humbly ask for your support, and look forward to answering your questions.

Senator RUBIO. We were just commenting. You were a whole minute under on your statement. Very good.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Just a joke.

Mr. McClenny?

STATEMENT OF M. LEE McCLENNY, OF WASHINGTON, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY

Mr. MCCLENNY. Good morning, Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez.

It is an honor for me to be selected by Secretary Tillerson and nominated by President Trump to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay. I am deeply pleased to enjoy the invaluable support of my family and friends and colleagues, some present here today, and most especially the support of my wife Katherine who is following today's proceedings from our posting in Caracas, Venezuela.

Mr. Chairman, I have been privileged to serve our nation for some 30 years as a career Foreign Service officer, working to achieve our foreign policy goals and national security objectives. My nine overseas postings have been predominantly in the western hemisphere.

Paraguay today is one of our most like-minded partners in this hemisphere. It is clear that the Paraguayan people take the view, as we do ourselves, that sustained prosperity and long-term stability and security are inextricably linked to democratic governance and transparent and efficient institutions. If confirmed for this position, I pledge to continue our ongoing efforts to strengthen our mutually advantageous ties with Paraguay, to continue to assist Paraguay with its efforts to build durable and independent institutions, to grow a strong and resilient economy, improve government

transparency, and weed out corruption. These elements will strengthen Paraguay as a bilateral and regional partner and build support for critical U.S. priorities in this region, including fighting money laundering and financial crime, strengthening intellectual property rights protections. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to support Paraguay's pursuit of transnational criminal organizations that abuse that nation's territory to commit a range of crimes, including contributing to the financing of known terrorist groups and trafficking in narcotics, weapons, counterfeit goods, and people.

Paraguay has a steadily expanding open-market economy and progressive trade policies that make it increasingly attractive to the U.S. and to other international firms. Paraguay actively seeks involvement from U.S. companies in the country's growing role as a manufacturing and logistics hub for the much larger economies of Argentina and Brazil. We export some $2 billion worth of goods to Paraguay each year, and we enjoy a strongly positive bilateral trade balance. Paraguay's agricultural sector produces many of the same products as the United States, notably soy and beef cattle, but this creates opportunities for the export of advanced U.S. technology, agricultural services, and other synergistic trade relationships. Paraguayans admire the high quality of U.S. products, and a sustainably growing and inclusive Paraguayan economy will continue to increase demand for U.S. goods and services. If confirmed, I will work to expand our trade for the benefit of both nations. Paraguay's economic success advances U.S. economic success.

Our two nations have a long history of strong people-to-people ties, especially through the more than 5,000 Peace Corps volunteers who have served there since the program began in 1966. If confirmed, I will also support the Peace Corps program in Paraguay, as well as our embassy's flourishing programs to support English language teaching and learning, science education, and higher educational exchanges. These programs are especially valuable to reach the 44 percent of Paraguay's population that is younger than 25 years of age. They will also help strengthen people-to-people ties, foster mutual understanding, and encourage greater engagement between our two nations.

I look forward to, if confirmed for this position, to working closely with Congress to advance our national interests by further strengthening our positive relationship with the Republic of Paraguay as that nation builds its economy, strengthens its democratic institutions, confronts international criminal and terrorist actors, and plays an ever larger role on the international stage, including especially leading in regional and international efforts to defend human rights and democracy in Venezuela.

I would be delighted to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you very much.

[Mr. McClenny's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEE MCCLENNY

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Menendez, it is an honor to be selected by Secretary Tillerson and nominated by President Trump to be Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay. I am deeply pleased to enjoy the invaluable support of my wife, Katherine, as well as that of my family, friends, and colleagues. Many of them expressed a desire to be present to witness this important Constitutional process, but

the pressures of time, distance and commitments to work mean only a few have been able to be present today.

Mr. Chairman, I have been privileged to serve our nation for some 30 years as a career Foreign Service Officer, working to achieve our foreign policy goals and national security objectives. My nine overseas postings have been predominantly in the Western Hemisphere, including my current assignment leading the staff of our embassy in Caracas, Venezuela.

Paraguay is one of our most like-minded partners in the hemisphere. It is clear that the Paraguayan people take the view, as we do ourselves, that sustained prosperity and long-term stability and security are inextricably linked to democratic governance and transparent and efficient institutions. If confirmed for this position, Mr. Chairman, I pledge to continue our ongoing efforts to strengthen our mutually advantageous ties with Paraguay. We will continue to assist Paraguay with its efforts to build durable and independent institutions, grow a strong and resilient economy, improve government transparency, and weed out corruption.

These elements will strengthen Paraguay as a partner and build support for critical U.S. priorities. These include fighting money laundering and financial crime while strengthening intellectual property rights protections. We will support Paraguay's pursuit of transnational criminal organizations that abuse Paraguay's territory to commit a range of crimes, including contributing to the financing of known terrorist groups and trafficking in narcotics, weapons, counterfeit goods, and people.

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I would be delighted to respond to any questions you may have.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

I am going to defer my opening questions to the ranking member, Senator Menendez.

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

Thank you all for your statements.

Let me ask all of our nominees this question. A simple yes or no would suffice. It is a question that I have asked of every nominee that has been before us. And without commenting on the potential impact, do you believe that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential elections?

And I ask because in our own hemisphere, as Mr. Trujillo in a visit with me yesterday noted, there are going to be at least six countries that are going to be holding elections in the hemisphere. We know that Russia has ramped up various activities there. Obviously, for your portfolios, Rear Admiral Braithwaite and Mr.

Bierman, this is quite salient. So I am not asking whether or not they actually created an impact. I am asking whether or not you believe that they actually sought to interfere. So a yes or no would suffice.

Mr. BIERMAN. Yes.

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Yes, sir. As you know, the Norwegians moved to a paper ballot in September because of that concern. Thank you for the question.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, Senator.

Mr. MCCLENNY. Yes, Senator. I also see their involvement and influence in Venezuela where I serve currently.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you. I appreciate that because if we understand that they are a challenge, then we have to think about how we deal with that challenge.

Now, Mr. Trujillo, I want to thank you for stopping by yesterday. I appreciate our conversation. And let me pick up on some of the OAS institutional questions that I have.

You noted to me yesterday that one of your priorities was restoring credibility to the OAS, specifically noting that some Caribbean countries who have failed to condemn the current human rights and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, for example, is an issue.

So tell me and the committee how do you plan to engage with these countries. What specific tools in our diplomatic arsenal do you believe will be most effective at motivating other countries to stand up for the Inter-American Democratic Charter?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

You know, I think it is extremely important for these countries to realize the importance of the humanitarian side of what is happening in Venezuela.

I also think it is very important for the congressional support. I have reviewed the Humanitarian and Defense of Democracy Act in Venezuela that was sponsored by Senator Rubio and Senator Cardin. I think the energy independence for the Caribbean countries will ultimately help us accomplish that goal. But ultimately, I think it is very important for them to understand the importance of the humanitarian side, the importance of democracy and how important that is to the United States and to the region.

Senator MENENDEZ. I hope you will look at other tools of diplomacy that we have in our universe. Although you are not going to be a bilateral representative to any of these countries, obviously, in a multilateral institution, there are still opportunities, working with your colleagues throughout the hemisphere, to think about the other elements of American diplomacy, the use of aid, trade, international opinion, and sometimes, when it is appropriate, the denial of that aid or trade at the end of the day. So I would like you to think about some of those.

I want to ask you do you believe that high level representation of the United States in international organizations is important.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, I do, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. And I appreciate that answer because Secretary Tillerson has yet to attend a ministerial level meeting of the OAS, and that sends a hemispheric impression.

Now, I know that when we spoke yesterday, I asked you whether you had met with the Secretary, and that is not the case.

By the way, have any of you met with the Secretary as it relates to the nominations that you have received?

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. No, sir.

Mr. MCCLENNY. No, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Bierman?

Mr. BIERMAN. No, I have not.

Senator MENENDEZ. So I hope that if you are confirmed, will you recommend to the Secretary that at some point he personally participate in critical OAS meetings?

Mr. TRUJILLO. I will, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you about the reform bill that we passed in 2013, which I referenced in my opening comments. I authored and passed that legislation into law, which urges management reforms of the OAS. And as I said, their 2014 strategic vision aligns with parts of that law, but I think we can do more.

Do you think the State Department has developed a successful strategy as it relates to pursuing OAS reform? How would you evaluate the State Department's implementation of the law, and what components—I do not know if you are familiar with the law. I know I mentioned it to you yesterday—of reform would you specifically focus on beyond obviously pursuing a more vigorous response of countries of the Democratic Charter?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Well, I think, Senator, what is really important is just the governance of the institution from a managerial perspective. The United States contribution should not exceed 50 percent as far as the U.S. mission to the OAS. Their response in Cancun—they were very successful in achieving that. It is a 5-year glide path. We are hopeful to reaching it. If I am confirmed, I will definitely towards being successful in accomplishing those goals. But the financial integrity, aside from the charter, but the financial and the governance of the institution is of foremost importance.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired, but if there is no one else, I do have one other question for you, and then I would like to turn to one of our other nominees.

Now, I have spent the better part of a quarter of a century in Congress trying to improve our immigration laws and the lives of immigrants in their communities. And unfortunately, in the past few years, we have seen a surge of Central American migrants fleeing violence, oppression, and poverty. And when I engage with ambassadors from Central American countries, their primary focus is protecting their citizens, not only from the challenges they have at home, but from immigration orders that tear families apart and potentially incur other devastating consequences.

In 2015, you authored what I would consider a draconian bill in the Florida legislature that would have made not complying with the deportation order a felony, punishable up to 30 years in prison. So I want to give you a chance on the record because I know this is going to be pursued by others, and so I figured in fairness to you, I want to give you a chance on the record to give me a sense of what you meant by that bill because when you deal with the ambassadors of these countries, they are going to know this and they are going to say to themselves, you know, you want me to vote in a certain way. Some of these countries, Mexico, Guatemala, and others in Central America, are good partners with us at the OAS.

So this is going to be a bit of a challenge, and I want to hear what your intent was and how you are going to deal with that.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I would not have supported that bill in the form it was drafted. It was poorly drafted and it never captured my original intent. My original intent for that bill was to codify the federal statute of illegal reentry post deportation, post all of due process being exhausted.

As far as dealing with other ambassadors at the OAS, if I am confirmed, I think I would discuss my body of work in the State legislature. I supported KidCare. I supported a permanent resident of the United States being able to practice law in the State of Florida. I supported in-State tuition. So overall the comprehensive work that I did towards immigration reform, given the confines of being a member of the State legislature, I would definitely discuss that with them.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, it speaks volumes about the need to make sure, which I know we agonize here with what we introduce being what our intent was. And so if you are to be confirmed as the Ambassador to the OAS, what resolutions we pursue and how they are drafted are going to be incredibly important. So I hope that that is an experiential factor that you will take with you to the institution.

Mr. Bierman, I appreciate your past service.

According to USAID and the E&E Bureau, it seeks to promote resilient and democratic societies, strengthen economic growth and energy security, support European-Atlantic integration to realize a region that is whole, free, and at peace.

Now, I would argue, in the face of ongoing Russian military aggression and disinformation campaigns aimed at eroding democratic institutions and western alliances, this mission has never been more important.

Now, the question I would like to get a sense from you, do you feel that you are going to have the resources necessary to carry out your mandated duties? The request for fiscal year 2018 of the budget would eliminate—eliminate—not reduce—eliminate assistance for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. I do not know how those proposed cuts serve the national interest of the United States. And I know you are not there to have been an advocate of what the budget is. But, if confirmed, that statement that I read about a core mission is going to be very difficult to pursue without the resources, for example, Ukraine that is suffering under direct military occupation by Russia. So give me a sense of how you are going to meet that challenge.

Mr. BIERMAN. Well, thank you very much, Senator, for that question. And thank you to the entire committee for their work on this specific issue. I think Senator Cardin's work specifically in addressing the increasing resources in our region has been critical in our efforts over the last 2 years. As you can see, we have had a significant increase since 2015.

Senator MENENDEZ. You had an increase but the budget calls for an elimination.

Mr. BIERMAN. Well, I have not had a chance to actually work on those specific details, but I do look forward to working, if I am con-

firmed, specifically within the administration and being an advocate for foreign assistance and its value and then working again with your committee to try to address those specific issues.

I also would very quickly just like to thank you for your question earlier about Russian influence in elections because it is having an impact in every country, not just covertly but openly. I was in Moldova in 2014, and I saw open campaigning of President Putin with at least one specific political party. So it is an open campaign, as well as a covert campaign.

And I also want to thank you for your question regarding working with our partners. I think it is very important. I am looking forward to working with my European partners in the EU specifically on resources and how we can work together to have a larger impact on our role.

But I do think that, if confirmed, I am looking forward to working with you and the committee specifically on how to address the resource issue in our area.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I appreciate that answer. And I will close on this, Mr. Chairman. The rest of my questions I will submit for the record.

Earlier this month, a "Washington Post" article opened with a disheartening headline. And I appreciate the chairman who has been supportive of some of my efforts when we were marking up here on USAID. This is the headline: The Developing World Will Have Fewer American Engineers, Economists, Teachers, and Health Workers to Help Prepare for the Future," referring to the abrupt cancellation notices to 178 people previously accepted into Foreign Service positions.

So one of the questions I was going to ask you, but you preempted it, is if you are confirmed, hopefully you will be an advocate internally for—and I supported Ambassador Green to be the Administrator. I want to see every dollar used used wisely. I want to see every dollar used used effectively. But if we do not believe as we work to that goal of never needing foreign assistance again—but we are not there by any stretch of the imagination. If we do not believe that this is a critical element of U.S. foreign policy, then we are incredibly short-sighted.

So I hope that you will use your experience to explain how this is actually a force multiplier and an opportunity.

Mr. BIERMAN. If I might, I would like to say that the Europe & Eurasia Bureau specifically has been a model for success. 11 of our countries are now members of the EU, countries that we had missions in.

As you probably heard through my statement, I am an historian by nature, and in the same book that David McCullough wrote, he mentioned that in order to chart a path forward, we have to have an understanding of the past. And in many ways sometimes I think it is like planting cut flowers. If there is no root, there is no foundation, there is no understanding of the past, then it is not going to last. So I think it is important that we have a strong foundation in Europe & Eurasia, and I am looking forward to working with you and the committee on that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

And, Mr. Trujillo, your sons have made me feel very at home because they are doing what my kids used to do when I used to talk. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. They are lovely.

All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. We will see now if they wake up when I talk. [Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO. I want to follow up on a question that the ranking member asked. Who is the highest ranking State Department official that any of you have met with in preparation for and anticipation of your nomination with regard to this posting?

Mr. BIERMAN. I have met with Administrator Green, and we have had several discussions specifically, by the way, I will say on working with our European partners. So it actually addresses the ranking member's question earlier, but I have met with Ambassador Green and had substantive comments with him.

Senator RUBIO. Admiral?

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Deputy Secretary Sullivan, sir.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Kevin Sullivan over at the OAS.

Mr. MCCLENNY. Officials within the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and I will be meeting with Under Secretary Shannon later today.

Senator RUBIO. This question is kind of more open-ended. I will give you an opportunity to expand on your opening comments for each of you, and in fairness, since you have gone last every time, Mr. McClenny, we will start with you. Plus you have a pretty tough post right now, so I think you deserve a little benefit here given your current challenges that you face in a very difficult posting.

What is the greatest central challenge, if confirmed, in your new assignment, in your new post?

Mr. MCCLENNY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I think the greatest challenge will be continuing the policy of engagement that we have manifested, that we have executed over the recent years to carry Paraguay's own efforts forward on the areas of judicial transparency, fighting corruption, fighting transnational criminal organizations, as well as terrorist financing.

I think in your remarks, sir, you made reference to something that has been a constant and returning, recurring issue of concern in the western hemisphere, and that is activities of an illegal and terrorist nature taking place or emanating from the tri-border region. I agree completely with the comments you made that this is a problem that has been—it is a problem that we have been observing closely and we have been working against for a number of years. There is a lot of smoke. It continues to be a source of a great deal of concern for all of us. It will require work, if confirmed, on the part of myself and the staff in the embassy in Asuncion but also for the my colleagues across the border in Argentina and in Brazil. I pledge to pay very close attention to what is going on in the tri-border region because it is an area of great concern and it has been for many years.

Senator RUBIO. And just to expound on that for a second—and I apologize to the other nominees. We will get to you in a moment on the same question.

When you talk about the tri-border region, for those who may not be familiar with what exactly—you were actually referring to Hezbollah. A lot of people think about Hezbollah as a threat in the Middle East, and to the extent that their engagement in the western hemisphere exists, it has largely been viewed as a fundraising mechanism, a place where they conduct illicit activities to raise money and send back.

But just today there was an open source report in one of the press outlets about an increasing concern about Hezbollah scouting and surveiling and preparing contingency plans for activities against the United States and its interests in the western hemisphere and potentially having carried out those in the past in the western hemisphere.

In the case of a conflict either with Hezbollah and/or Iran, they would serve as a proxy, in essence. If the U.S. entered into some sort of conflict, the Iranians could order Hezbollah to conduct asymmetrical attacks both against the homeland and in the western hemisphere against U.S. interests in a way that gives them a level of deniability publicly, but we would know. And it would be a price that they would want us to know that we would have to pay.

So particularly with the threat of Hezbollah, it is your view that Hezbollah poses both—that they pose both, obviously, a financial threat but also a potential operational threat?

Mr. MCCLENNY. It is my view, based on the information that I have seen, sir, that there is an actual financial fundraising threat that is ongoing, current, and requires attention, and that there is a potential for an operational threat in the future. I have not seen any information to indicate that Hezbollah is operationally active in the tri-border region at this point in time, but completely agree with your view that this is something that must be watched very closely.

Senator RUBIO. Representative Trujillo, the same question on the broader challenge.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator.

I think the broader challenge is the backward slides in democracy. If you look at the situation in Venezuela where they have gone over the last 15 years and how that has spilled out over the region, it is something that will continue to affect the region for years to come, the humanitarian issues, the lack of democracy, the lack of elections, corruption. I think when you look at the Panama Papers and Odebrecht and how that corruption starts really challenging people's trust in a democratic system, I think that is definitely a challenge facing the region. And going forward is the elections, as Senator Menendez mentioned, over the next year, the six, maybe seven elections that will take place, the outcomes of those elections and making sure that not only are they democratic in nature and fair and transparent but also those leaders govern democratically once they are elected.

Senator RUBIO. Admiral?

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would have to say the Arctic, sir. And specifically, the Arctic is a top strategic foreign policy priority for the Norwegians and the United States in our partnership with them, but specifically the re-

militarization of the region by the Russians. As you know, sir, the Russians have reinstituted strategic bomber flights along the Norwegian coast. They have reestablished both land and closer to my roots, naval forces on the Kola Peninsula, including their brand new Borei class ballistic missile submarine.

So I think that our challenges are going to be to assure the Norwegians that we are there. We have created a number of interoperability opportunities with us with the Joint Strike Fighter and the P–8 Poseidon aircraft. With my roots as a former antisubmarine warfare pilot who spent a lot of time hunting then Soviet submarines, I think that is going to be at the forefront, if I were confirmed, during my time in Oslo working very closely with the Norwegian Government and keeping eyes on our friends in Russia.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Bierman?

Mr. BIERMAN. As I mentioned earlier, Russian malign influence is going to be a top priority along with fighting violent extremism.

But on a micro level, I think youth unemployment is of great concern specifically in the Balkans. Some of our countries are seeing a better than 50 percent unemployment rate between the ages of 18 and 25, and I think that that is a serious issue and it raises issues beyond unemployment.

I also think that open media and a free media is something of great concern and a top priority.

And lastly, I think decentralization is very important as we work with local communities to try to involve the local communities in governance and open and fair elections.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Senator Kaine. By the way, to Mr. Trujillo and McClenny, he speaks Spanish very well. He is very tricky about that, but he does speaks very well. But we are going to do this in English today.

Senator KAINE. He is overstating mi abilidad.

But thank you all and congratulations on your nominations for these important positions. Let me just ask each of you a couple of questions.

Mr. Trujillo, first to you. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. It has long been considered one of the crown jewels of the OAS and it has been a critical forum to focus on human rights issues, and it often is a target because of that focus and it is a target from folks on both the left and the right.

What is your assessment of the commission at this point, and what steps will you take to make sure that it is defended and appropriately funded, especially at a time when the administration is proposing some pretty significant budget cuts and being seen by objective observers as deemphasizing human rights issues as part of the portfolio of the administration?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I think the Human Rights Commission is extremely important. The most important thing is that it is autonomous. It cannot be controlled by a member state. It cannot be controlled by the organization. It really has to be an organization that stands for justice and stands for human rights.

My goal and my commitment is making sure that they have the adequate funding to carry out their mission. Obviously, Venezuela

and other members in the OAS are trying to undermine their objectives. My goal, if I am confirmed, is to advocate making sure that they are properly funded, they are autonomous, and they are able to carry out their mission.

Senator KAINE. Can you talk a little bit, using Venezuela as an example, what more might the OAS be able to do? What could you do? What could the United States do to help them be more vigorous in trying to promote human rights and more peaceful resolution of challenges within Venezuela?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I think one thing that they have done—Secretary Almagro, having the hearings over the last 3 months and analyzing violations of human rights and having those forums in which dissidents could come and express their concerns and ultimately trying to build a case in which those people are referred to The Hague Commission for prosecution—I think it is an exceptional step forward from the OAS and their prerogative.

As I mentioned earlier to Senator Menendez, I think the ability of the OAS to really stand by their charter, if they really believe in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and hold Venezuela accountable, making sure that they are held accountable for violating the charter. And I think as the United States, I think the sanctions are very effective, the sanctions that we have passed against high level officials. I think it is very important for us to try to deliver humanitarian aid. Obviously, it is being blocked by the Venezuelans, but I think it is of foremost importance for people to have access to water and food and medicine. They are human rights that should always be upheld.

Senator KAINE. I understand that Senator Menendez has already asked about this, but I am concerned about it as well. As a member of the Florida State legislature, you had legislation that would have charged undocumented immigrants with felony penalties under State law if they reentered the United States after deportation. And I am wondering about that. There are penalties for reentering under immigration law. What was your thinking about trying to, in addition, make that a State felony?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you for the question, Senator.

The way it was originally drafted was never my intention. My intention was to capture the illegal reentry and codify the federal statute. I was a prosecutor for 4 years in Miami, and one thing that was always a bit concerning were individuals with final ICE deportation holds being released. So they were people who were afforded due process, were released from either county jail or from State prison, transported back to our local facilities, a 48-hour ICE hold, and ultimately they were released back into the residence.

Senator KAINE. And they would be released because ICE would determine—they would be notified, but they would determine that there was no need to deport the individuals?

Mr. TRUJILLO. They were released—sometimes there were issues with communications between ICE and the county jails or the Department of Corrections. There were multiple issues with the communications between the interagencies.

Senator KAINE. I am just curious. When I was Governor, we had a very standard practice. If somebody was in a jail or prison who

was there and was undocumented, we would let ICE know before release. And we would let ICE make the decision about whether somebody needed to be deported or whether there was some other sort of process that needed to be engaged against them. And that was something we did as a matter of course. ICE usually, after checking someone's record, decided not to do anything, and somebody would be released.

But I am just curious. What exactly was your intention then in making that a separate State-level felony if ICE had determined that the individual posed no safety threat?

Mr. TRUJILLO. My intention was that if the person was forcibly removed from the United States, not a person who voluntarily leaves and returns, a person who is forcibly removed, has exhausted all due process, has a final deportation order and is removed, if they reenter and commit a new offense, they will be held for the additional crime of illegal reentry as to the State statute. As far as the ICE issue in Florida, there was some disconnect based on communication in which individuals could only be held under State law for 48 hours. After 48 hours, they have to be released. If not, their attorneys could file a writ of habeas corpus and have them released. So that was the issue I was trying to address.

Senator KAINE. Mr. McClenny, let me ask you a question about Paraguay. It is a significant transshipment point for cocaine and all the attendant challenges, corruption, limited government resources, affect on the public safety system.

I notice in budget submissions—well, first let me ask you this. What is your assessment of the steps that the Government of Paraguay is taking to increase the capacity to interdict illicit drugs?

Mr. MCCLENNY. Thank you for the question, Senator Kaine.

The Paraguayan Government is a strong partner and a good partner in the efforts regionally and bilaterally to interdict drug traffic shipments, as well as to interdict movements of money that are associated with drug trafficking. There are clear shortcomings in ability and technology and equipment and supplies and a variety of other things. Interagency and embassy programs are working to address those shortcomings. They have been over a number of years, and we will continue to do those. If confirmed, I pledge that we will continue to work hard on these important issues.

Paraguay is a transshipment country for cocaine but it is also a source country for marijuana that circulates largely in South America. That is another subject of focus for them and something that is a lower priority for the United States but still an important counternarcotics priority.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Chair, I have one more question, if I could continue before maybe going to Senator Murphy, on Paraguay.

I notice that Trump administration has proposed eliminating USAID development assistance to Paraguay. I have not visited Paraguay, but what I know about the country would suggest that there are still some very significant development needs where USAID could be helpful. And over the years, USAID I think has played a pretty important role working in tandem with the U.S. embassy and other American officials in Paraguay.

How would the elimination of USAID development assistance affect the relationship?

Mr. MCCLENNY. Again, thank you for the question.

USAID has a long and proud history of work in Paraguay and a significant record of achievements working with Paraguayan counterparts to advance our interests and goals in a variety of development ways.

You are correct that the current budget request for development assistance funds is zero for next year and zero for the year after that. This will have an impact on the programs that we are able to do on the ground. There is money, however, in the pipeline. We will continue to use those funds. We will use the resources that are provided to us the very best we can to achieve the goals that we can in the country.

In general terms with regard to the bilateral relationship, we have a strong relationship with Paraguay, and I do not think the zeroing out over time of these funds will fundamentally affect that relationship.

Senator KAINE. You have had a long career in the State Department and served in many positions, others in Latin America as well. But as a general matter, the USAID portfolio in these countries is an important and productive part of the American relationship with the countries. Would you not agree?

Mr. MCCLENNY. I absolutely would agree, sir. Currently where I serve in Venezuela, it is an important aspect. It is an important arrow in our quiver. It is an important tool in our toolbox. It has been in all of the Latin American countries where I have served.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Murphy?

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

Thank you to all four of you for your willingness to serve.

Mr. Bierman, I wanted to ask you a few questions about future USAID investments in Europe and Eurasia. I think many of us have a hard time understanding the set of funding priorities being sent to us by the administration with respect to the challenges that we face in this region. There is no doubt that we need additional military capacity, and we have stepped up to the plate through the Europe Reassurance Initiative. But many of the challenges that we face in the region are not conventional military challenges, and there are massive soft power plays being made by our adversaries in the region, which cannot be met if this Congress were to adopt the draconian funding cuts being proposed by the administration.

I will not ask you to opine on that budget, but I want to ask you about two specific challenges.

First, the Balkans. I think you might have briefly touched on this, but I want you to do a little bit deeper dive here. Russia, Turkey, and the Gulf States have initiated massive soft power offensives in the Balkans, and much of this coming just in 2017. The Russians have significantly doubled down in the Balkans over the last 10 months, having watched the United States telegraph a withdrawal from that region in part because of the budgets that have been submitted.

Do you think the United States is currently doing enough in the Balkans to match these efforts, and what could we be doing better or differently?

Mr. BIERMAN. Just to qualify, I have not been involved with the budgetary talks, but I do look at my role as an advocate for the agency and our mission. I am a believer, having spent 5 years under the previous Bush administration, in the same bureau, and I wanted to come back to this specific job in this specific administration to help guide the principles of development.

Look, I completely agree with what you are saying. I think we have got some serious issues in the Balkans specifically, as I mentioned earlier, with youth unemployment. I think we have got some backsliding with democracy. We have got some issues with ethnic tensions, and I do believe that the Russian malign influence is a serious problem not just covertly but openly.

I think that our way forward is to work openly with the governments, to work openly with democracy and governance, with our efforts to supply energy independence through the entire region. I think we can also work with economic development. We have got some great programs specifically in the Balkans.

I know that specifically in Serbia, for instance, we have a program that has worked with the Serbian Ministry for Construction on helping Serbia jump their permitting process, and since our work in this particular area, they have jumped 103 places which has spurred construction by 20 percent. That impacts Russian malign influence by giving people hope for the future and that their direction is in a Euro-Atlantic path.

Senator MURPHY. Then let us move to Ukraine for a moment. USAID is involved there in a number of different ways. But our funding pales in comparison to the amount of very quiet money that is being put into Ukraine through Russian sources. Talk a little bit about what we can be doing more of in Ukraine maybe specifically with an eye towards some of the anticorruption programming that is still desperately needed at the local level as much as at the national level.

Mr. BIERMAN. Well, there definitely is still work to be done, but we actually have made a great deal of progress with our e-asset declaration system with the Ukrainian Government and officials. It has opened transparency and it has given people confidence in their government.

But we have also had a tremendous amount of success with the ProZorro program, which costs about $2.2 million, and we have leveraged more than $1.25 billion, and that basically is an e-procurement system that allows open and transparent bidding on various e-commerce throughout the government. And we have provided technical assistance and I think continued technical assistance, not just at the ministry level but also at the local level. I talked about this earlier. It is very important that we make every Ukrainian understand that they can be involved with their government from the grassroots all the way to the national level. And if confirmed, I look forward to working with you, Senator, and the committee on how we can be effective in our programs and fight the influence from Russia.

Senator MURPHY. Well, I appreciate your testimony. I hope that you will end up being an advocate for increased funding in these accounts. I think in Ukraine, we need to come to the realization that Putin does not want to militarily own Ukraine. He wants to

create enough confusion and dissension within the ranks that he economically and politically breaks that country such that it decides that the fight in the east is not worth the hassle and they should come to some accommodation with Moscow. That means that it is that political and economic support for the country that is in many ways even more critical than the military support that we provide to them, and that happens through USAID. It cannot happen if we continue to have an administration that does not believe in the mission. But I am glad that you are signing up for the job.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two very quick questions and then a comment.

First to Mr. McClenny, let me just say as the only career nominee here today, I want to thank you for your service, and I appreciate those who are committed to the Foreign Service of the United States and have committed their lives to it. I think you promote America's interests abroad up front. So it is incredibly important.

I have a specific question as to your post-to-be. Human trafficking is something that both the chairman and I and the chairman of the full committee have a great passion about. We have passed legislation that I thought was incredibly important. I am concerned in different parts of the world about human trafficking, and I am concerned about it in Paraguay.

Could you speak to that in terms of one of your core missions?

Mr. MCCLENNY. Thank you, Senator Menendez, for the compliment on my service and also for the question about trafficking in persons in Paraguay.

Yes, trafficking in persons is a serious issue, a real issue in Paraguay. We produce an annual report on developments in the subject matter in Paraguay. The most recent report makes it very clear that there remain very serious concerns in prosecution of individuals who have been accused of such crimes, in prevention of further crimes being committed, and also in protection of victims of these crimes.

The Paraguayan Government, however, under President Cartes has recognized that this is an issue and is taking some steps and is working with us to advance on this. Not enough has been done. This clearly remains a priority and is something that we need to address going forward.

Senator MENENDEZ. And so can I glean from you a commitment to the committee that if you are approved, that you will make one of your core missions and you are not going to equivocate on it as it relates to other issues we may be concerned with in Paraguay?

Mr. MCCLENNY. If confirmed, sir, you have my firm pledge that this will be one our priorities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you for that answer.

I have a question for every nominee that I have asked since I have been on the committee, when I was the chairman of the full committee and now I still believe is incredibly important because sometimes people forget.

If you are confirmed—this goes to every nominee—will you commit that if the committee or its members reach out to you and seek to get insights from your posts and positions, that you will share them freely with them? We can down the line.

Mr. MCCLENNY. Yes, sir.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, Senator.

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Yes, sir. I consider it my duty.

Mr. BIERMAN. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. And then finally just a quick comment. Admiral, you are extraordinarily competent for this position, but you sort of like have an inside track here with me because your wife is a Jersey girl. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. And she was a Catholic schoolteacher in New Jersey. So that to me is really valuable. So I just want you to know that in addition to your competency, that does not hurt.

I appreciate Mr. Bierman's commitment to the agency. It is incredibly important for me. If I am going to support somebody, I want to make sure they are supporting the agency they are assigned to.

I appreciate, as I said to Mr. McClenny, the career commitment.

And I generally have an affinity for Cubans even when they are Republican. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. So thank you all for your commitment to be willing to serve. I may have some questions for the record. I would just urge you to respond to them as quickly as possible as the committee considers your nominations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

We are headed for the finish line here unless anybody else shows up, but I do want to touch on a couple more topics.

Mr. McClenny—and I am going to paraphrase from the Congressional Research Service. Paraguay is a significant transshipment point for Andean cocaine. Drug traffickers exploit its porous borders and extensive waterways. Paraguay has increased its capacity to interdict drugs and to conduct drug eradication and demand reduction activities. Their congress has supported cooperation with the U.S. on counternarcotics. They expanded their budget for a primary counternarcotics agency.

Here is an article from earlier this year in the Miami Herald." In June of 2017, a Paraguayan man was charged in federal court in Miami with conspiring to smuggle cocaine through the Ciudad del Este Airport with the intent to sell it in the United States. The individual charged had been extradited to the U.S. by the Paraguayan Government on suspicion of using drug trafficking to raise funds for a Hezbollah network.

In light of all of this, I do not ask you to opine on its wisdom because I do not want to put you in that predicament. But I do want to ask you, the President's 2018 foreign aid request for Paraguay would reduce our assistance to $400,000. That is a 95 percent cut compared to 2016, and this funding is primarily for military training and traditional development programs.

Would that sort of cut, if enacted, which I do not believe it will be, but if it does, will it make it harder or easier for us to work

with Paraguay to confront these challenges if we had a 95 percent cut like that?

Mr. MCCLENNY. I do not think it will make it harder for us to work with them because there is a willingness on the part of their government to work with us. But it will make it harder for us to make an impact and make a difference in this regard. Clearly, we would all rather have more rather than less. There are finite limits.

I can pledge to you though, Senator, if confirmed for this position, that we will wisely steward the resources that we are given to make as much of an impact as we possibly can.

Senator RUBIO. And Representative Trujillo, on the OAS—and I think that the ranking member alluded to this. One of the things that undermines any international organism is the inability to take action. And it has been very frustrating to a lot of people to see 20 members representing I think it is like 90 percent of the GDP of the western hemisphere vote to condemn what has happened in Venezuela, which is a direct violation of the very reason why the OAS exists, and that is to protect democracy. And the inability of get a handful of smaller nations to come on board for a variety of reasons—in the Caribbean, St. Vincent and Grenadine, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis have all voted to support Venezuela against efforts by the other countries to confront them. And then you have had a series of abstentions from places like Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, et cetera.

This is very frustrating. And in particular, it is frustrating when you view this list and you see in the case of, for example, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, nations who receive significant assistance from the United States but have chosen, for a variety of reasons, primarily financial in my opinion, to line up on behalf of a dictatorship and basically call into question the very purpose of the OAS so they cannot take collective action.

And so I guess my question is in regards to that, how do you balance between maintaining friendly relationships and not wanting to be the threatening power that goes in and tells them we are going to cut off your money unless you vote with us and at the same time justifying to the American taxpayer why we continue to pour money into the coffers of governments who in turn go to international organisms and vote against us in violation, for example, of the democracy they enjoy and of the very purpose of the organization in which the serve.

I guess the central question is if the OAS is not able to take collective action against such clear-cut violations of the democratic order, why do we have an OAS. Is that not a central long-term challenge?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator. I think it is the greatest challenge. The countries siding with Venezuela is the biggest challenge that undermines the entire goal of the organization, an organization that is committed to democratic values, that is committed to security, that is committed to human rights, in which you have a country that clearly cannot be a bigger violator of those three pillars and countries within the organization that support them. I think that is central and it is the biggest challenge I will face.

I think one thing that the Senator brought up—and obviously it is under Congress' purview—but the ability to influence trade and influence economic sanctions and influence aid, I think those are great tools in our toolbox that we can ultimately bring out, if necessary, in order to have some of these countries reconsider their position.

Senator RUBIO. Admiral, a more open-ended question. But Norway, obviously because it shares a 120-mile land border and a 14-mile maritime border with Russia—they are up close to this issue and have been historically for a very long time throughout the Cold War and beyond. Both from your military background and now entering the diplomatic world, is there anything that Norway does that we can learn from, anything they do particularly well with regards to Russia? Are there any lessons to be learned about how they deal with Russia that could be applied to the broader European theater and/or the United States?

Mr. BRAITHWAITE. Thank you, Senator, very much for the question.

Norway is in a much different situation, of course, than the United States is. They are not a super power. They are not viewed by the Russians as a great threat. They, in fact, have been a good neighbor to the Russians working through Arctic Council initiatives. Of course, they share fishery interests. There is border patrol, search and rescue.

But as you well know, sir, the Norwegians are very wise to the ways of Russia, their interests. As Senator Menendez had indicated earlier, their interests around the globe can be suspicious.

The Norwegians engage directly. I believe the United States could probably be a little more direct. And perhaps there is a way that we could partner with the Norwegians. I think the Arctic Council, sir, is a good start. There are numerous interests there, both on behalf of the Russians as well as the United States, as well as every member of the council. And I would intend, if so confirmed, sir, to continue that, be very proactive in our engagement with the Arctic Council and our relationship with Norway, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Finally, Mr. Bierman, my question for you is kind of a variation of the same question I asked Mr. McClenny, and that is, if you look at the President's fiscal year 2018 budget request for assistance to Europe and Eurasia, it was significantly less than the fiscal year 2016's actual funding. And it comes at a time in which Putin—and I do not say Russia. I say Putin because Russian people are not doing this. It is Putin who has made this decision—are increasingly trying to interfere in the Western democratic order particularly in Europe.

And so in the context of that and of the necessity to be helpful to our allies in the region, I am not asking you to opine on the wisdom. That is a policy determination. I am not trying to get you cross with the administration. But I guess my view is if such a reduction in funding—would it be helpful—and I think I know the answer, but would it be helpful or hurtful to our efforts to increase our ability to cooperate and assist allies in the region in need of that assistance?

Mr. BIERMAN. Well, thank you very much for that question, Senator.

Again, although I have not worked directly with this administration and the agency on the budget, I do look forward to working with you specifically as we move ahead.

And I am not trying to avoid that question. I think it is a matter of making the argument as to why assistance and development matters. And I look forward to making that argument, to looking historically as to our successes. We have seen some great successes. We want to make sure that our investment in the past is an investment that continues into the future. And I am excited about that opportunity, and I can tell you you have my commitment.

Senator RUBIO. Well, to all the nominees in the different contexts of the two that are going to particular countries and to you, Mr. Bierman, that is going to be involved in a programmatic effort in a larger region, and of course, Mr. Trujillo, who is going to be, hopefully, representing us in a broader multinational forum, the challenge when it comes to aid—the fundamental question a lot of Americans ask—first of all, they think it is like 30 percent of our budget when it is less than 1 percent. But the others are of the perception that foreign aid is charity, that we are doing this like a charity contribution. And the harder argument, the one we need to make is that these contributions that we make, appropriately channeled—we do not want the money being corruptly used—actually has both national security and soft power elements to it. This is good for America to do this. It is actually cheaper than the alternative. If we could help Paraguay, if we could help Central America, if we could help these nations confront, for example, transnational crime and the flow of illicit drugs, we could save, theoretically, a lot of money on the back end fighting that when it reaches the homeland.

So it is a challenge that all of you will face, perhaps a little bit less in Norway, though certainly in the military scope and the wisdom of NATO, it is relevant. And it is one that I hope all of you will be forceful advocates for. Again, we are not talking about wasting money. We are not talking about giving money to people that do not need it, but we are talking about why spending a dollar at the front end in helping capacitate countries could save us a lot of money at the back end when those problems reach us here. And I hope all of you will be engaged in that effort, if confirmed.

So I want to thank all of you. Unless Senator Menendez has anything else, I want to thank all of you for being here. For your families sitting through this hearing, I appreciate it as well. The fact that you did not get the full committee here is not bad news. It is good news. They know you are here. They know your nomination. They have read it. And obviously, a lot of them feel comfortable about it or they would be here asking tough questions. And to the members that came, I thank them because their questions were important. It was a really good hearing. So again, I thank you for your service and your willingness to continue to serve.

The record of this hearing will remain open until the close of business on Friday.

And without objection, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. BROCK D. BIERMAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights:

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I served on the State Department's Trafficking in Person's Task Force in the George W. Bush administration. I was asked to do so because of my interest in the issue and my knowledge about the challenges in Moldova. During the time I sat on the Task Force, it was charged with determining which countries were most at risk of trafficking and where a significant increase of funds could make an immediate difference. I argued successfully for the inclusion of Moldova, and as a result the additional funds had an impact on protecting basic human rights in Moldova. I look forward to continue advocating for and supporting programs that further the protection of fundamental freedoms throughout Europe and Eurasia, if confirmed.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Europe and Eurasia today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Europe and Eurasia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most pressing human rights concerns in Europe and Eurasia today include efforts to limit the fundamental freedoms of citizens—the freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and expression, and the freedom of conscience. Without these basic freedoms that are so critical to citizen participation and human dignity, the prospects for improving people's lives are greatly diminished. Another major, related concern is the closing space for civil society. When regular citizens are harassed, or worse, just for working together in associations and other non-governmental groups, this also stifles personal freedom and dignity. Finally, inclusion continues to be an ongoing challenge in the region. Members of various minority and underrepresented groups continue to face great challenges to be considered equal members of society. Unfortunately, Russia sometimes exploits these societal divisions to advance its own agenda.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that USAID's programs in Europe and Eurasia will focus on continuing and strengthening our commitment to these fundamental freedoms through support for civil society, fair political competition, freedom of expression and media, and human rights. I will also work to continue our focus promoting an inclusive approach to development that leaves no one behind, including women, youth and marginalized communities.

Question 3. 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 Europe and Eurasia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The central challenge for addressing human rights concerns is underdeveloped democratic institutions and democratic backsliding in the region. In some countries in the region, old patterns of concentrating political power mostly in executive authority have re-emerged. Those governments in the region that have shown the least progress in building functioning democratic institutions that can check executive authority are also those that have the most significant human rights issues. Closing space for civil society, and the associated harassment, restriction and repression of non-governmental organizations and activists, has been particularly severe in Eurasia, but has now spread further West to some Balkan and Central European countries. Other challenges include longstanding ethnic and religious divides that complicate efforts to build an inclusive democratic system and social understandings that marginalize some members of the community. Finally, I understand that establishing and strengthening resilient, functioning democratic institutions, processes, and values takes years of consistent effort—and will not be complete overnight.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. Yes.

Question 5. What will you do to build people-to-people ties between Americans and Europeans, and to support European and Eurasian civil societies, human rights

activists, and independent media? What do you need from Washington-based U.S. officials on this?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize strengthening understanding between the people of the U.S. and of the region. I feel strongly about this, given my own experience on an exchange to the region through the American Council of Young Political Leaders many years ago and from my service as a volunteer trainer for an IRI program in Ukraine.

I want to do more to help the American public understand the value of such engagement with citizens from the region through greater outreach. Similarly, I think we can do more to tell our story to the people of the region. Both of these efforts can be carried out through people-to-people exchanges. For example, I hope to better galvanize the East European diaspora in the United States to convey these message of friendship and partnership. I am aware that many of USAID's programs in the region already work to forge and strengthen these ties, but if confirmed, I will work to think about how we can increase those efforts. As part of that process, I will look for input and ideas from my colleagues in both the executive and legislative branches in Washington. I also look forward to working with you on implementing the provisions of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act that you authored earlier this year that was signed into law, and appreciate your leadership on these issues.

Diversity:

Question 6. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups at USAID?

Answer. The staff in the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia will be the most important part of our success. In order to achieve our shared goals, the Bureau must have a supportive and welcoming environment for all staff. As someone who hopes to lead the Bureau, I recognize that leadership and support from the top is essential to creating this type of work environment. Administrator Green has made it clear that USAID is "committed to a culture of inclusion, integrity, dignity, and respect." I share the Administrator's vision for a workplace that supports diversity and inclusion. I also look forward to ensuring all staff members in the Bureau have opportunities to grow professionally, develop skills, and benefit from training and capacity-building opportunities.

If confirmed, I will be interacting with all the staff members in the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia and will keep an open door policy. I plan to host two "brown bag" lunches each week, inviting every member of the staff of the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, and inviting only 8 staff at a time, until I have had a chance to meet every member of the Bureau. These meetings will be voluntary, but will give me an opportunity to interact with every member of the Bureau in a small group setting, and will be an important part of my open door policy. I plan to continue these "brown bag" lunches on a bi-weekly basis after I have had a chance to meet with every staff member.

Question 7. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors within the Bureau of Europe and Eurasia are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will insist that all supervisors and managers are fostering an environment that is open and collaborative, in which all cases of harassment and discrimination are dealt with swiftly, and where every staff member feels respected and empowered. I will make sure that all supervisors and managers are able to access training and capacity-building opportunities so they can ensure that the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia is one that welcomes and supports staff from all backgrounds. If confirmed, I will enforce a zero tolerance for any form of harassment or discrimination.

Conflicts of Interest

Question 8. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the USAID Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. Yes.

Question 9. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. Yes.

Question 10. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. No.

European Resilience

Question 11. The Russia sanctions bill that passed resoundingly in the Senate by 98 votes to 2 and informed the bill President Trump signed into law included a robust authorization for assistance to counter malign Russian Government influence across Europe and Eurasia. In contrast, the administration's FY 18 budget request called for significant cuts across Europe, at a time when Russia is aggressively attacking democratic institutions and exerting its influence across the continent. Congress will likely restore that funding through appropriations. What is your plan for disbursing U.S. assistance in Europe and Eurasia? What are your priorities?

Answer. The scale of the challenges facing Europe and Eurasia is hard to overstate. A still weakened European economy, malign Russian influence, changing demographics, and mass migration present a development context that requires bold USAID engagement across the region.

Although I was not involved in the formulation of the FY 2018 budget request for the State Department and USAID, I understand that it supports the President's commitments to make smart investments to further the capacities of governments, civil society, and the private sector to implement solutions to their development challenges. I strongly believe that USAID needs to be as efficient and effective as it can with its budget, regardless of the level of funding. Moreover, I plan to ensure that our program mechanisms are flexible enough to respond to emerging situations in a timely manner.

I look forward to working with you as we establish shared priorities for the region, and am thankful for your leadership on countering Russian malign influence. I believe that fighting the scourge of corruption, promoting greater regional economic and energy independence, and supporting democratic governance will be key priorities for our work in the region going forward and for countering Russian influence.

Legacy Funds

> The U.S. established a series of ten enterprise funds across Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, to "jump-start" capitalism in the former communist countries. They experienced varying degrees of financial success (in that some ended with considerable more in their investment funds than they started with) and in most cases these proceeds were turned into legacy foundations to provide grants to civil society actors across the region. There is reportedly more than $1 billion currently in the combined endowments of these legacy foundations, generating $50–75 million a year for expenditures in grants.

Question 12. With the resurgence of malign Russian influence in the region, should the boards of directors of these respective foundations be obliged to consider directing some or all of their grant-making towards projects and programs that address this urgent threat?

Answer. I understand that the Legacy Foundations were designed to operate with a great deal of autonomy with the direction of an independent Board of Directors, and that they work to promote private sector development and policies and practices conducive thereto in their host countries. That said, I'm also aware that the U.S. Government has a permanent non-voting liaison to all the boards, a position often filled by the U.S. Ambassador but sometimes by USAID, which maintains a direct line of communication between the U.S. Government and the Legacy Foundations.

If confirmed, I also look forward to learning more about USAID's relationship with the Legacy Foundations in the region and to exploring avenues, if any, to guide their future investments.

Question 13. How do you intend to engage with these boards in order to persuade them to direct funding towards this end?

Answer. I understand that the Legacy Foundations were designed to operate with a great deal of autonomy with, and under the direction of an independent Board of Directors. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about our engagement with the Legacy Foundations and to exploring avenues, if any, to guide their future investments.

Question 14. The original USAID grants creating these Enterprise Funds (EFs) called for evaluations at mid-point and end point, but these evaluations apparently did not take place. So, as Congress considers proposals to create new Enterprise

funds in other countries/region, we have no official assessment of these earlier cases. I understand that USAID did conduct an overall evaluation of these enterprise funds in the Europe and Eurasia region just last year. Do you commit to share the findings of that evaluation with the committee upon your confirmation?

Answer. While I have not read the report, I understand that USAID did recently commission its first ever external evaluation of the Europe and Eurasia Enterprise Funds and Legacy Foundation, from the launching of the first Funds in Poland and Hungary in 1990, through the Legacy Foundations' current private sector development work as the U.S. Government's enduring assistance legacy across Central and Eastern Europe.

My understanding is that the evaluation final report is nearing completion. Per USAID's evaluation policy, once finalized, the evaluation report will be made publicly available via the Agency's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) website for the sake of accountability and the use of evaluation findings by all interested stakeholders. I will also ensure the committee receives a briefing on the report.

Democratic Backsliding

Question 15. Hungary and Poland are both engaged in democratic backsliding that threatens their judicial independence, press freedom, and the functioning of their civil societies. Nevertheless, U.S. assistance has been redirected away from Central Europe in recent years as these countries have integrated into the E.U. What scope do you see for regional programs and other efforts to bolster democratic institutions in such places?

Answer. I agree that there are significant challenges to democratic institutions in Poland and Hungary. Support for democratic institutions in those countries could potentially be addressed through the framework of regional programs and in a targeted manner. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Department of State and would consult with Congress on determining appropriate levels of engagement for supporting democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe.

Energy Diversification:

Question 16. With the Russian Government continuing to exert pressure on European states through the energy sector, how will you utilize USAID assistance programming to boost resilience to such pressure and increase energy diversification on the continent?

Answer. I recognize the need for programs that address critical areas such as energy security Over-reliance on Russian sources of energy leaves many of our partners in the region vulnerable to Russia's malign influences. I understand that USAID entered into partnerships with U.S. industry associations and manufacturers to bring U.S. expertise, technology, and best practices in electricity, gas, cybersecurity, and critical infrastructure to the region. Also, through a combination of regional and bilateral programs, USAID continues to supports countries in the region with developing regional gas and electricity markets that are integrated with the European Union, leading to improved energy security through (1) diversification of market suppliers; and (2) increased energy sector investments, resulting from transparent and stable legal and regulatory frameworks.

If confirmed, I look forward to exploring these partnerships and programs in greater depth and consulting with Congress on how we can best support energy security in the region.

Discrimination/Xenophobia

Question 17. With increased incidents of hate crimes in Europe, concrete initiatives addressing racism, discrimination, and xenophobia are critical for the safety of our diplomats. I have annually supported funds to address anti-Semitism in Europe. More broadly, how will you work to direct funds in Europe to counter racism and xenophobia? How do you plan to include LGBT issues in USAID assistance? Do you see issues of tolerance and non-discrimination as relevant to stability in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. Tolerance and non-discrimination are important to maintaining stability in the region, and I applaud your leadership on this issue. I am deeply concerned about the rise of extremist groups and those who are willing to use violence to promote their agendas. I understand that currently USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives' programming in Ukraine promotes an inclusive civic identity and has also worked to promote human rights in Macedonia. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to explore new avenues to address these pressing issues.

Corruption/Rule of Law

Question 18. Russia continues to use extensive corruption networks to influence political actors in vulnerable parts of Europe, as well as to deny its own citizens the transparent, accountable government they deserve. How will you leverage USAID resources, in concert with State and DoJ partners, to address corruption and boost rule of law in Europe and Eurasia?

Answer. Corruption, often defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, is indeed a major and growing problem threatening the stability, prosperity and security of Europe and Eurasia. In many ways, corruption can also be conceived of as the manifestation of poor governance and inadequate rule of law. As a result, sound efforts of combat corruption need to work to strengthen democratic governance and the rule of law.

USAID programs can work to deter, detect, and combat corruption through increasing transparency and openness in the public sphere; support watch-dog civic organizations; support investigative journalists; promote open government and e-governance systems; support special anti-corruption institutions and processes; and strengthen judicial independence and capacity, among other areas.

In coordination with State and DOJ partners, USAID's anti-corruption efforts include working with government partners to enhance their capacity to reduce corruption by increasing the transparency and accountability of government institutions. For example:

- With USAID assistance, eight Europe and Eurasia countries are active in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and have committed to make their governments more transparent, though the extent and depth of this involvement varies from country to country. In fact, Georgia is currently leading the OGP.
- The Organized Crime and Corruption Network—a USAID-supported collective of investigative journalists who expose corruption—partnered in the release of the "Panama Papers," the Azerbaijan Laundromat, and the recent "Paradise Papers." This project sheds light on the illicit financial networks used by autocratic regimes. These illicit networks also divert significant resources from the Europe and Eurasia economies, markets and government budgets.

If confirmed, I anti-corruption efforts will remain a major priority and I will work to build on the progress that has been made, while also exploring new ways to support the rule of law, good governance practices, and strong democratic institutions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. BROCK D. BIERMAN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question 1. Will you advocate internally for an end to the Hiring Freeze at USAID?

Answer. USAID and the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia cannot further the Administrator's goal of ending the need for foreign assistance without a highly trained and capable workforce. If confirmed, I will work to meet the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia's staffing requirements, and to provide all staff with training and capacity-building opportunities. I also commit to working with the Administrator to fill all key positions in the Bureau.

Question 2. How do you plan to address the effects of Sec. Tillerson's hiring freeze on Foreign Service officers who would ostensibly serve under the auspices of your bureau?

Answer. Given the current constraints on hiring new Foreign Service Officers, I believe strategic workforce-planning is critically important to ensuring the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia can deliver on its mission. If confirmed, I look forward to being a part of the Agency's strategic workforce-planning decisions, and to advocate for the staffing needs of the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia. I will also work to make sure the Bureau's Foreign Service Officers receive the training and capacity-building opportunities they need to be successful.

Question 3. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, USAID established so-called Enterprise Funds to leverage private sector investment into regions previously in the Soviet sphere of influence. From 2000–2010 nine so-called legacy foundations were established in East Europe and Eurasia to build on these modes, which essentially made equity investments in small and medium sized firms in those regions. These were largely, although perhaps not altogether, successful and profitable, with earned funds being returned to the U.S. Treasury or establishing endowments. As I'm sure you're aware, certain committees in Congress have a hold on the disposi-

tion to the Treasury of the Russia Enterprise Fund, which currently totals about $150 million.

• Do you know why these funds are being held?

Answer. I understand that in accordance with the terms of the U.S. Russia-Investment Fund's (TUSRIF) grant agreement, following TUSRIF's active investment phase, the liquidation proceeds can only be distributed to 1) a non-profit entity or entities for the purpose of providing assistance for private sector development in Russia, 2) the United States Treasury, or 3) a combination of 1 and 2 above. In February 2007, USAID notified Congress of a plan for the distribution of TUSRIF's assets which stipulated that TUSRIF would return one-half of the liquidation proceeds,million to the U.S. Treasury and that TUSRIF would use the other half to establish the U.S.-Russia Foundation for Economic Advancement and the Rule of Law (USRF).

A hold was placed on the Congressional notification for the portion of the funds to be returned to the U.S. Treasury, and since that time USAID and its congressional oversight and appropriations committees have not been able to agree on a path forward for the funds that remain in TUSRIF—approximately $147 million.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and other committees of jurisdiction to bring this issue to a resolution.

Question 4. As you are also probably aware, in the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act that Congress passed almost unanimously this year, we called for the establishment of a fund to support efforts to counter malign Russian influence, disinformation campaigns and propaganda. Do you believe that these frozen enterprise funds could be put to good use building democratic institutions that would help build resiliency in Eastern European and Eurasian countries against Russian disinformation and interference?

Answer. I share your commitment to building democratic institutions in Europe and Eurasia, as democratic institutions are a critical to counter Russian malign influence. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you on implementing this new law. Strong democratic, market-based economies serve as bulwarks against the expansion of Russian malign influence in Europe and Eurasia. While I am aware that approximately $147 million of funding remains in the U.S.-Russia Investment Fund (TUSRIF), I have not been fully briefed on the specifics of how those funds may be used. If confirmed, I commit to working with all stakeholders, including USAID's congressional oversight and appropriations committees, to resolve the impasse over the TUSRIF funds and build resiliency to Russian malign influence in Europe and Eurasia through strong democratic institutions.

Question 5. If so, what is your plan to ensure the release of these funds?

Answer. As mentioned above, the objective of the proceeds is to provide assistance for private sector development. If confirmed, I commit to working with all stakeholders, including USAID's congressional oversight and appropriations committees, to resolve the impasse over the TUSRIF funds and build resiliency to Russian malign influence in Europe and Eurasia through strong democratic institutions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. BROCK D. BIERMAN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question 1. Mr. Bierman, as you may know, I have introduced legislation with Senator Wicker to authorize the establishment of an enterprise fund in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which lags the farthest behind the rest of Europe when compared to other economies in the Western Balkans. Last year, USAID produced an assessment of my proposal that found an enterprise fund in Bosnia would effectively support U.S. foreign policy objectives there. Have you read the assessment, and do you agree that an enterprise fund in Bosnia would fill a gap in the financing opportunities available to small business in Bosnia?

Answer. Yes, I have been briefed on that assessment and if confirmed, I commit to studying this issue further and consulting with you.

Bosnia clearly faces significant economic challenges and is one of the most fragile countries in the region. The 2016 internal USAID assessment found that an investment fund could effectively support U.S. foreign policy objectives in Bosnia. Continued economic growth assistance from USAID to support economic reforms and improve the enabling environment for Bosnian businesses and entrepreneurs will be critical to the success of such a fund. A Bosnia enterprise fund would benefit from

the larger existing macroeconomic and trade-oriented support provided by the World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other multilateral financial institutions.

Question 2. Mr. Bierman, the key to addressing many challenges in the Western Balkans remains EU enlargement and integration. That said, each of these countries still has a considerable distance to travel before they might join the EU. How can the U.S. continue to encourage EU accession in the Western Balkans?

Answer. EU accession represents a defining objective for USAID-assisted countries in the Western Balkans. As I mentioned during my nomination hearing, 11 USAID-assisted countries are now members of the EU. This is not only a testimony to USAID's efforts and legacy, but also to the vision and intent of Congress. These 11 countries have increased their U.S. imports from only $2 billion in 1995 to more than $10 billion annually in 2015, and as development peers, they have contributed over $1.4 billion to development in 2014, up from less than $200 million in 2002. Clearly, the goal of EU accession is not only central to addressing current challenges in the Western Balkans, but is very much in America's economic and national security interest.

USAID programs promote democratic consolidation and economic growth necessary to bolster our partner countries' efforts to progress toward EU accession. Work in Serbia and Macedonia is on the vanguard of this effort, but we will also continue to drive forward reform and address any backsliding in Bosnia and Kosovo.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, the EU, and our partners in the region to sharpen the focus of our assistance efforts and to do what we can to accelerate EU accession across the Western Balkans.

Question 3. Mr. Bierman, a large proportion of USAID funding goes to Ukraine. I believe the U.S. must continue to resolutely support the democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people, including through assistance to the Ukrainian Government, civil society, and other actors that are integral to the success of that country. In particular, the U.S. must encourage political leaders in Ukraine to continue with critical reforms to their judiciary, in part to ensure that the corruption that has plagued prior governments is rooted out. How do you assess Ukraine's anti-corruption efforts up to this point, and if confirmed, will you continue to emphasize the importance of judicial reform and anti-corruption efforts to Ukrainian political leaders?

Answer. Corruption is a central problem in Ukraine and across the region, and I appreciate all the efforts this committee has made to tackle corruption around the world.

Anti-corruption progress has been made in targeted areas in Ukraine, including in the successful implementation of Prozorro, a full-service electronic public procurement system which has saved an estimated $1.27 billion since its launch in February 2015. However, significant challenges remain.

I believe that corruption is a manifestation of governance problems, and as a result, efforts to combat corruption need to be based on efforts to improve democratic governance. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the importance of judicial reform and anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine and across the broader region, including through embedding good governance into our economic growth and social sector programming.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO KENNETH BRAITHWAIRTE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Having had the opportunity to serve in the United States Navy for over 30 years, I have taken part both as a junior officer and again as a senior officer (Rear Admiral) in numerous humanitarian actions on behalf of Our Nation. During the Balkans Crisis, I was awarded the Department of Defense Humanitarian Service Medal for my actions in support of Kosovo Refugees. I was assigned as one of the liaison officers at the temporary resettlement camp at Fort Dix, New Jersey. In this role I interacted directly with the refugees and was able to convey the aspects of democracy and freedoms that we in our country enjoy. I know those that we supported had a favorable impression of the United States and sought to later immigrate to the US. I was later as a Navy Captain (O-6) deployed to the western Sahara in Senegal to work with Senegalese tribes who had limited access to medical

care. I was part of a humanitarian effort directed towards establishing temporary primary care missions in support of US efforts to extend democracies into these regions. This was in alignment with our national effort to ensure these peoples could understand and appreciate the freedoms our country promotes in contrast to the efforts of AL Qaeda and other Islamic Terrorist Groups attempting to influence them. We were successful in that our enemies were unable to solicit or recruit from the regions where we were involved. Finally, also as a Navy Captain, I was deployed to Pakistan in 2005–2006 to take a direct leadership role in Our Nations efforts to respond to the devastating earthquake affecting thousands of Pakistanis on the eve of their winter season. Our efforts were directed to ensure those impacted knew of our compassion but also the manner in which our democratic principles directed our actions. Here again we wanted to ensure that those we interacted with understood and appreciated our freedoms in contrast with those from radical Islamic groups that were also operating in these regions. As the lead for all Strategic Communications, our direct efforts led to a Gallup Poll shift in the perception of US actions among Pakistanis of nearly 50 points, from a low upon arrival of 23 percent favorable to 79 percent favorable upon conclusion of our mission. I am very proud of all my teams direct efforts which in turn led to my second award of the Department of Defense Humanitarian Service Medal.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Norway today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Norway? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Norway has a strong record on human rights and is a good partner for the United States in promoting human rights around the world. Norway is one of the world's most generous providers of development aid, spending more than one percent of its GDP per year on assistance. A portion of these funds promotes human rights and democracy. Norway is also a strong NATO Ally that is dedicated to upholding the values upon which the Alliance was founded. As with every country, Norway has some incidence of societal problems such as violence against women and children. NGOs have also reported incidents of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant speech and sentiment in Norway. If confirmed, I will encourage Norway to continue protecting human rights at home and abroad. I will also regularly engage with representatives from government, political parties, and nongovernmental organizations to stress the importance of tolerance and diversity and to share best practices and new ideas for promoting human rights.

Question 3. 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 Norway advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Human rights are widely respected in Norway and its legal framework for protecting human rights meets international standards, so any obstacles to addressing human rights issues must be viewed in this context. Civil society and democratic institutions are both strong in Norway. To the extent that Norway exhibits human rights problems, they are largely societal and are adequately addressed by the country's judicial system, government institutions, and non-governmental organizations. If confirmed, I will work with those institutions and organizations to exchange experiences and best practices to further our shared values.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Norway?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Norway.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Norway to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Norway?

Answer. Norway has a strong human rights record and generally independent and impartial judiciary. There are no reports of political prisoners or detainees, or politically motivated prosecutions, in the country. If confirmed, I will call out any future cases of this kind if they occur, and work with the Norwegian Government to encourage their resolution in accordance with Norwegian and international law and commitments.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that Embassy Oslo staff have access to appropriate training on Leahy Law requirements. I will also ensure Embassy Oslo thoroughly vets individuals and units it nominates to participate in U.S.-funded security assistance activities.

Question 7. Will you engage with the people of Norway on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance part of Embassy Oslo's regular public outreach. I believe these are excellent areas for people-to-people engagements where our citizens can exchange views, experiences and best practices. Given Norway's excellent record on these issues, I will also look for opportunities where we can jointly cooperate to provide expertise to third countries.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the State Department?

Answer. I appreciate the importance of fostering diverse and inclusive teams. Through my military career and experience in business, I have seen the value of diversity in leadership positions. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, if confirmed I will develop an inclusive work environment at Embassy Oslo that encourages different perspectives.

Question 9. What steps will you take to ensure that supervisors at the Embassy foster an environment that is diverse and inclusive, including in terms of gender, ethnicity, and other characteristics?

Answer. I will ensure that all supervisors receive regular formal training and guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion. In addition to leading by example, I will monitor the supervisors at the Embassy to ensure they are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive.

Question 10. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 12. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Norway?

Answer. No.

Question 13. Have there been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. I know of no significant change in my financial affairs since I filed my report. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regards to my ethics obligations.

Question 14. Russia Sanctions: Unity with European partners on Russia sanctions is critical to their success. What is your diplomatic plan to build support within Norway for stronger sanctions on Russia?

Answer. Although Norway is not a member of the EU, it joined the United States and the EU in imposing economic sanctions on Russia in 2014 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea. It also suspended military-to-military cooperation with Russia. If confirmed, I will continue to build support within Norway for stronger sanctions on Russia by communicating the importance of Russia sanctions to leaders across the Norwegian Government, and working with Norway to find ways to minimize the impact of sanctions on the Norwegian economy.

Question 15. Russian Malign Influence: How will you seek to boost resilience to Russian meddling within Norwegian institutions and civil society? What assistance priorities will you push with Norwegian counterparts to shore up resilience elsewhere in Europe?

Answer. Russia has undertaken a whole-of-government campaign aimed at undermining democratic and free-market processes and core Western institutions. In Norway's September 11 parliamentary elections, local authorities made a last-minute decision to count all ballots by hand after security experts raised the possibility of hacking attacks against the computerized ballot scanning system used in some localities. Norway is more resilient to Russian misinformation due to their extremely high rate of news readership—79 percent of the population ages 9–79 reads a physical or online newspaper daily. If confirmed, I will stand firmly with Norway and the rest of our NATO Allies in countering Russia's malign influence. I will encourage Norway to join us in cooperating with our NATO Allies to counter Russia's malign influence through our Centers of Excellence. I will work with the government and civil society to raise awareness of this issue and to increase institutional and public resiliency to malign influence campaigns. I will also encourage our Norwegian counterparts to share their expertise with our other partners and focus on continuing to build their own resilience and the resilience of others to such threats.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Human rights and democracy are two areas that are extremely important to me. One area of human rights work I have focused on is combatting human trafficking. As an elected representative in the state of Florida, in 2015, I sponsored an appropriations act that provided funding for the creation of 20 to 30 beds for child victims of human trafficking. The act was passed and signed into law during the 2015 Florida Legislative Session. The act created additional separate housing for child victims of human trafficking.

Question 2. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that's diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I am committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, and to upholding equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will remain committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive team in the U.S. Permanent Mission to the Organization of American States, and make this a top priority throughout my tenure. I firmly believe, as articulated by the Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of State, that U.S. diplomacy is greatly served and strengthened by a Department of State that reflects America and the richness in diversity that characterizes our great country. If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining a robust and collaborative dialogue with Congress in advancing this important shared objective.

Question 3. Have there have been any material changes to your financial assets, income, or any other information requested by the OGE financial disclosure form since the date you signed it? If so, please list and explain below, and whether you have raised them with OGE.

Answer. There have been no material changes that would bear on my ethics obligations. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest and will remain vigilant with regards to my ethics obligations.

Question 4. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 5. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

OAS Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013

Question 6. What is your assessment of the State Department's efforts to advance the policy directives included in the OAS Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013 (P.L. 113–41), specifically the provisions on results-based budgeting, the streamlining of mandates, transparent and merit-based personnel practices, and the revision of member quotas related to the organization's budget?

- If confirmed, do you commit to taking all necessary steps to advance the policy directives in P.L. 113–41?
- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with routine briefings on your efforts to advance the policy directives in P.L. 113–41?

Answer. I believe it is critical that we continue to press for OAS reform consistent with the "OAS Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013" (P.L. 113–41) to build a stronger, more effective institution and help it reach its full potential.

I understand the U.S. Permanent Mission has made significant strides, working with OAS leadership and other member states, to put the OAS on a firmer financial footing and restore its critical leadership role in the region. It remains vital, however, that we continue to press for additional steps to build on the progress achieved to date and increase the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of the organization. If confirmed, I will remain committed to this critical objective.

Our focus should be to strengthen the core competencies of the institution as outlined in the "OAS Revitalization and Reform Act" (P.L. 11341), and also focus on further assessing and pressing on ways to strengthen budgetary and management reforms, reducing mandates, and bolster oversight, transparency and accountability mechanisms on the allocation and use of scarce resources to ensure they are utilized effectively in support the organization's most vital functions.

It is also important this be a shared priority for each and every member state as it is in our core collective interest to ensure that a strong OAS remains focused on its core pillars and the purposes and principles upon which it was founded and clear of purpose. We must all consider the value each of our countries gets out of the organization and share the burden of ensuring the OAS' long-term financial sustainability in a way the reflects that.

OAS member states passed a resolution at the 2017 General Assembly in Cancλn, Mexico, mandating a reduction of the U.S. contribution to below 50 percent. If confirmed, I will work for a more equitable distribution of quota assessments among member states to ensure that each of them has the necessary fiscal buy-in to guarantee the organization's financial sustainability.

If confirmed, I will also remain committed to briefing this committee on our efforts and also maintaining collaborative engagement to advance this important and shared objective.

Question 7. In your discussion with Senator Ben Cardin, Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you spoke in support of taking steps to expand opportunities for engagement by Members of Congress at the OAS. If confirmed, do you commit to taking steps to strengthen the role of elected national legislators at the OAS?

- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates on your efforts to strengthen the role of elected national legislators at the OAS?

Answer. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in advancing this important objective. I believe the OAS can play an important role in bolstering dialogue and cooperation between the region's legislatures. This kind of initiative can have enormous value, in particular in helping strengthen democratic institutions and advancing our region's shared commitment to democracy and to the separation of powers, consistent with the principles articulated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Strengthening engagement between the U.S. Congress and regional counterparts can also greatly enhance efforts to work jointly in promoting and advancing shared policy goals, values and objectives to the benefit of the citizens of the Americas. I understand the OAS Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy is working to enhance the role of the OAS in this regard and has organized various gatherings of regional legislators. I welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with this committee on ways to build on the OAS' achievements to date and bolster its efforts in this important area.

Question 8. What steps will you take to ensure the continued independence of the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)?

- What steps will you take to ensure that the OAS IACHR has sufficient resources to successfully advance its mission to defend human rights in the hemisphere, specifically at a point in time when the Trump administration is proposing drastic cuts to the U.S. foreign assistance budget?
- The OAS IACHR has taken incipient steps to review and investigate the July 2012 death of Cuban political activist Oswaldo Paya. If confirmed, do you commit to working with the IACHR to ensure a thorough investigation of Mr. Paya's death?
- In the aftermath of the September 2014 forced disappearance of 43 students in Iguala in the State of Guerrero in Mexico, the OAS IACHR established an Independent Group of International Experts (GIEI) to review the official investigation of the incident. What is your assessment of the GIEI's work?
- Following completion of the GIEI's mandate, the Government of Mexico agreed to establish a follow on mechanism with the OAS-IACHR to implement the GIEI's recommendations. If confirmed, do you commit to working with the OAS Secretariat, the IACHR, and the Government of Mexico to ensure successful implementation of the GIEI's recommendations for the investigation into the September 2014 incident in Iguala, Mexico?
- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates on your efforts to ensure the implementation of the GIEI and the success of the OAS follow on mechanism?

Answer. The United States has great respect for the role the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) plays in addressing human rights in the hemisphere, including delicate human rights issues in the United States, and is its biggest supporter, both politically and financially. The Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights look at some of the most delicate human rights issues in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, and Ecuador. In some countries, especially those with broken legal systems, it is the only avenue to address human rights violations. As an autonomous organ designed to promote and protect human rights in the Americas, the IACHR is a useful tool for holding states like Venezuela and Cuba accountable. Through our political and financial support, the United States supports the independent work of the Commission without infringing upon its direct engagement with a member state.

Recognizing the vital role the Commission and Court play in protecting and promoting human rights in the hemisphere and the need for both organs to have full independence in exercising their authorities, OAS member states decided at the 2017 General Assembly to increase the regular budgets of both institutions by a third over the next three years (2018–2020). If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for member states to commit sufficient resources to the Commission through the OAS Regular Fund as well as contribute voluntary funds so that the IACHR has a diverse and sustainable funding base.

I believe it is imperative that human rights defenders the world over, including the IACHR, remain engaged in reviewing and investigating the death of Cuban political dissident Oswaldo Paya, and that the Cuban Government be held accountable and responsible for its egregious human rights violations and systematic repression of the fundamental rights of the people of Cuba. If confirmed, I will remain committed to advocating for and defending the right of the Cuban people to democracy and respect for human rights, consistent with the principles articulated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and ensuring that the IACHR and the inter-American human rights system remain fully engaged in addressing the gross and consistent violation of human rights of the people of Cuba under the current dictatorship.

The September 2014 disappearance of the students in Iguala is a tragedy, and the United States actively encourages Mexican authorities to continue to thoroughly investigate and prosecute those responsible.

I understand the Department has met with some of the Iguala victims' families as well as with all of the members of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts who worked under the auspices of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to assist the Government of Mexico with its investigation.

I also understand the Department is actively following the implementation of the follow-up mechanism, agreed to by the Mexican Government, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and families of the victims. This mechanism, funded by Mexico, is intended to follow up on the experts' recommendations and ensuring protective measures for the victims and their families will remain in place. The Government of Mexico recently agreed to a one-year extension of the follow-up mechanism and the next visit of the mechanism is expected to take place February 2018. Mexico's Attorney General's Office remains in regular touch with the victims' fami-

lies. Additionally, Mexican President Pena Nieto signed a new law on forced disappearances November 16.

If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining an open dialogue with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the implementation of the GIEI and the OAS follow-on mechanism.

Also, if confirmed, I will remain firmly committed to work with like-minded member states to push back against those states that seek to undermine the IACHR and work to preserve its critical role in the promotion and defense of human rights in our region.

Honduras

Question 9. What is your assessment of the OAS Support Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH)?

- If confirmed, do you commit to working with the OAS Secretariat and the Government of Honduras to ensure that the MACCIH remains independent in its work and has all of the necessary resources needed to combat corruption and impunity in Honduras?
- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates on your efforts to ensure the success of the MACCIH?
- The OAS currently has an election observation mission (EOM) in Honduras. What is your assessment of the OAS EOM in Honduras?
- The OAS EOM in Honduras has expressed concerns about delays in the tabulation process for the Honduran presidential election. Do you agree with these concerns?

Answer. The OAS Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH) represents a wide-ranging approach to reforming Honduras' anti-corruption institutions, from the Prosecutors' Offices to customs to electoral financing, and aims to drive broad reforms to the Honduran judicial system. MACCIH's most notable success to date is helping draft and pass electoral finance reform legislation through the Honduran Congress in time to impact the 2017 presidential elections. The United States has contributed $8 million to establish a secure foundation for advancing the work of MACCIH. The mission will serve an important role in a comprehensive, long-term effort to tackle corruption networks and improve the rule of law in Honduras.

It is imperative that we continue to urge progress on anti-corruption efforts with the Honduran Government in collaboration with its partners and other OAS member and observer states, to ensure MACCIH has the resources and independence necessary to achieve its mission.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the OAS to ensure MACCIH has the capacity and support to achieve its objectives and is implemented effectively and I will keep members of Congress apprised of our efforts.

OAS electoral observation missions (EOMS) fulfill a critical function in our efforts to strengthen democratic institutions in the hemisphere. OAS EOMs enjoy a longstanding reputation for impartiality and technical competence, respected worldwide for stringent standards in accordance with the UN "Principles for International Election Observation." It is imperative that all stakeholders in the Honduran elections cooperate fully with international observers—including the Organization of American States and the European Union—and that both the OAS and EU be allowed to carry out their critical role in ensuring an open and transparent process that enables public confidence and trust in the results of these elections.

Question 10. The OAS maintains a Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP) in Colombia that supports the implementation of Colombia's historic 2016 peace accord. If confirmed, do you commit to working to ensure that the MAPP has all of the necessary resources that it needs to help advance the consolidation of peace in Colombia?

- If confirmed, do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates on your efforts to support the work of the MAPP?

Answer. Since 2006, the United States has committed over $10 million in contributions to the MAPP. The work of the OAS in Colombia remains vitally important given that the peace process is now in its implementation stage, with a support role being played by a UN Special Political Mission. Funding assistance—including through the OAS—will help Colombia secure post-conflict areas, address the needs of conflict victims, and promote licit rural economic opportunity to address the conflict's underlying drivers and build on the success of our prior assistance. Understanding that financing for the MAPP comes primarily from voluntary contributions, if confirmed, I will work to advocate for the necessary political and financial support

MAPP requires from the international community in order to enable it to continue its critical work and I will keep Congress apprised of my efforts.

Venezuela

Question 11. While OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro has made tremendous efforts to address Venezuela's current political, economic, and humanitarian crisis, OAS member states have not been able to achieve consensus about the current tragedy in Venezuela. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to forge greater hemispheric consensus regarding the situation in Venezuela?

- If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to advance a political resolution of the current crisis in Venezuela?
- If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to address the current economic crisis in Venezuela?
- If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to address the current humanitarian crisis in Venezuela?

Answer. With strong leadership from Secretary General Luis Almagro and a majority of like-minded member states, including the United States, the OAS has played a crucial role over the last 18 months in drawing increased international attention to the dire situation in Venezuela. After a series of high-profile Permanent Council sessions and declarations, Resolution 1078 of April 3 established that a rupture in Venezuela's democratic order had occurred, and set the stage for the region's foreign ministers to address the crisis.

Although the OAS General Assembly in Cancun was unable to approve a resolution on Venezuela, the 20 votes in favor of action to address the crisis represented a significant statement from leaders representing over 90 percent of the population of our region. Since then, governments in the Lima Group built on the OAS' work to ramp up international pressure still further.

Based upon the regional consensus originally developed within the OAS, the sanctions we and other partners have imposed on individuals and entities linked to the Maduro regime's repression and corruption have garnered strong support. It is critical that we continue to speak as a region—including through the OAS—regarding our concerns about the political, economic, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and maintain pressure on the Maduro regime for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela.

If confirmed, I will continue to carry out our concerted efforts to stand up for democracy and human rights in our region, guided by the Inter-American Democratic Charter, that are central to the work of the OAS in securing for our citizens a hemisphere of liberty and prosperity. Our shared goal continues to be to promote the return to full respect for the rule of law and the full respect for political expression and participation in Venezuela, consistent with the terms of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, to which Venezuela remains a signatory.

As President Trump has stated, a "stable and peaceful Venezuela is in the best interest of the entire hemisphere, and America stands with all the people in our great hemisphere yearning to be free." The United States wants to see a peaceful, prosperous Venezuela that respects the rule of law and basic human rights like the freedoms of political expression and public assembly. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the OAS continues to have a vital role to play in helping Venezuela find a path back to peace and prosperity.

Migration

Question 12. As a Florida state legislator, you introduced legislation that would have increased criminal penalties for unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. What was the intent of such legislation?

Answer. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify the intent of this legislation. The intent of the bill was to codify certain sections of the federal illegal reentry statute into state law. Mainly, to increase criminal penalties for individuals who had previously exhausted all due process, were forcefully removed from the United States, illegally reenter and are convicted of a new felony.

Question 13. The Western Hemisphere current faces myriad migration-related challenges in the hemisphere—including migrants and refugees fleeing violence in Central America, the growing refugee crisis emanating from Venezuela, and the challenges of statelessness facing individuals of Haitian ancestry in the Dominican Republic. If confirmed, will you advocate that OAS member states impose criminal penalties on individuals engaged in irregular migration in the region or will you work to ensure sufficient humanitarian protections for vulnerable migrants in accordance with international standards?

Answer. The OAS serves as a useful forum for generating attention on high-level cross-border and extra-continental migration issues which adversely impact the United States. If confirmed, I will continue to seek constructive engagement with OAS member states to address regional migration issues as well as counter unhelpful interventions by some OAS member states that view migration as way to divide the United States from the rest of the region.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TOCARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question . Peru will host the 8th Summit of the Americas in 2018. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States, you will play an important role in the coordination of the Summit. As Cuba doesn't meet the norms of the OAS Charter, do you believe that Cuba should participate at the Summit?

Answer. By precedent, the host of the Summit of the Americas has exercised its prerogative to invite countries at its own discretion. In 2015, Panama invited Cuba to participate, for the first time, in the Summit of the Americas held in Panama City.

Peru, as host of the next Summit, has indicated it plans to invite all governments of the Americas to the 2018 Summit in Lima, Peru, to be held April 13–14. It has chosen "Democratic Governance against Corruption" as the theme for the Summit. Cuba has not made any public statements as to whether or not it will participate in the Summit. If confirmed, I will express strong U.S. concern over Cuba's invitation with the Government of Peru.

I believe the Summit can allow the United States and its like-minded partners to call on Cuba to implement reforms consistent with the highest values of our hemisphere, such as our support for democracy and respect for human rights. As such, if confirmed, I will work with the White House and the State Department to ensure that, if Cuba is invited and decides to attend, it is held to the same standards as all participants in the Summit, and its failures in these areas are raised.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LEE MCCLENNY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As Charge d'Affaires of our Embassy in Caracas since July 2014, I led our government's efforts on the ground to defend human rights and democracy from the depredations of the corrupt and increasingly dictatorial Maduro regime. Using USAID and State Department democracy and governance and public diplomacy programs, we supported Venezuelan civil society and NGOs focused on civil rights, human rights, and press freedom through training, networking, and professionalization activities. We supported more than 20 human rights organizations. Embassy Caracas publicly and clearly backed civil society organizations working for equality of opportunity for marginalized Venezuelans, including for persons with disabilities and the LGBTI community.

We have focused especially on fair elections to ensure Venezuelans have a voice in their government. We provided support to NGOs conducting election observation activities, and Embassy personnel monitored nationwide elections for the National Assembly and governorships to assess the degree of freeness and fairness of the registration, tabulation, and actual voting procedures. We have coordinated with the international community to speak with a unified voice on the importance of free and fair elections and support to democratic actors.

We have also supported and engaged directly with both leadership and the rank-and-file of Venezuela's democratic opposition parties, as well as the opposition umbrella organization, MUD. This activity intensified as MUD officials increasingly faced arbitrary arrest and detention of its members. We have repeatedly, and publicly, demonstrated our support for the democratically- and legitimately-elected National Assembly, in the face of Maduro regime efforts to undercut its constitutional role, authorities, and prerogatives. Simultaneously, we have strictly rejected overtures by, and refused contact with, the illegitimate and unconstitutional Constituent Assembly, created by the Maduro regime solely to supplant the duly elected, opposition-controlled National Assembly.

Many of these efforts have amounted, unfortunately, to a rear-guard action. In the face of the increasingly flagrant efforts of the Maduro regime to undermine the few remaining Venezuelan institutions not compliant to its wishes, Embassy Caracas' strong, public stance across the spectrum of human rights and democracy and governance issues marked it as a beacon for many Venezuelans. Numerous of my Venezuelan contacts assessed that the U.S. mission's leadership helped create critically important breathing room, and provided a vital measure of encouragement and inspiration for those many Venezuelans fighting to defend and preserve democracy in their nation.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights concerns in Paraguay today? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to advance human rights and democracy in Paraguay? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Corruption is the primary human rights issue in Paraguay and a clear drag on both social and economic development. If confirmed, I will strengthen the mandate of the Embassy's newly established Anti-Corruption and Transparency Working Group, which integrates anti-corruption, anti-impunity, and transparency efforts into nearly every Mission activity from public diplomacy to our interactions with the Government, political contacts, and the private sector. We must help Paraguay strengthen its public institutions and improve governance as a critical first step in reducing corruption and impunity.

Child labor is pervasive, particularly for domestic labor and in the agriculture sector. The criadazgo system of using children from impoverished families to work as domestic laborers in richer households is prevalent and culturally accepted. No law now exists explicitly outlawing the practice, though a draft law has circulated unsuccessfully for some time. Only a strong legal framework coupled with government enforcement will change the situation, albeit slowly. If confirmed, I intend to maintain pressure on the Paraguayan legislature to make needed legal modifications, and I will urge the executive branch to enforce those laws and provide social support for victims. In the agricultural sector, the U.S. Embassy and Department of Labor have a dynamic working relationship with the Paraguayan Ministry of Labor to eliminate child- and forced-labor programs in the agricultural sector, including a $6 million project to prevent child labor in the sugar industry. If confirmed, I will reinforce and seek to augment these efforts. Our priority must be to help Paraguay protect its most valuable national asset—its youth.

Question 3. 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 Paraguay in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Lack of enforcement of the rule of law, facilitated by a climate of impunity and a dysfunctional and often corrupt judiciary, is the principal obstacle for addressing nearly every human rights issue in Paraguay, including corruption and child labor. Critical to holding government authorities accountable for enforcing the law fairly and justly is a capable and engaged civil society, which is still nascent. Paraguay has not had a strong tradition of effectively incorporating civil society voices, opinions, and ideas into public policy and governance discussions. As such, one of the biggest challenges is empowering civil society organizations to participate in policy-making and implementation while encouraging government agencies to recognize them as a resource. The U.S. Government has an important role to play in training, supporting, and highlighting the important dividends that a strong civil society, as we have in the United States, could provide to the Paraguayan public.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Paraguay?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to sustaining engagement with a broad spectrum of society among the Paraguayan public, including human rights activists, civil society, religious groups, and the organizations that represent them.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Paraguay to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Paraguay?

Answer. While there are no reports of political prisoners or detainees in Paraguay, my Embassy team and I will actively engage with the Government of Paraguay should such issues arise. The Embassy team is closely following reports that public employees have filed complaints with a non-government public employee association for being harassed, dismissed, or transferred for their stance on the upcoming presidential primary. We strongly support the principle of democratic transition of power

through free, fair, and credible elections. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that all relevant stakeholders in this electoral cycle are able to play a supportive and collaborative role on the ground.

Question 6. If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. Vetting of potential recipients of U.S. security assistance is vital in maintaining integrity of our assistance programs. Embassy Asuncion already has in place a robust and active Leahy vetting program, processing more than 900 requests per year. If confirmed, I will continue Post's prioritization of Leahy vetting and seek ways to further strengthen the program. If there is credible information implicating security force units or members in gross violations of human rights, we will take the necessary steps in accordance with the law and Department policy, including working to ensure the responsible parties do not participate in U.S.-funded training, and will assist their respective governments in taking effective measures to bring them to justice.

Question 7. Will you engage with Paraguay on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with the Paraguayan authorities on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of our bilateral mission.

Question 8. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I am committed to equal employment opportunity principles. If confirmed, I will foster a diverse and inclusive team in the U.S. Mission in Paraguay. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Mission in Paraguay continually strives to promote equal opportunity for our officers, including women and those from historically marginalized groups. In keeping with Secretary Tillerson's strong emphasis on diversity, I will ensure all supervisors have access to and avail themselves of opportunities to receive regular formal training and regular guidance on EEO principles, diversity, and inclusion to sensitize them to these important issues and ensure they are helping to foster a work environment that is diverse and inclusive.

Question 9. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 10. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 11. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Paraguay?

Answer. No.

Question 12. If confirmed, do you commit to taking all necessary steps to ensure that justice is upheld for the June 2015 murder of U.S. citizen Alex Villamayor?

Answer. Since 2015, the U.S. Embassy in Asuncion has repeatedly urged the Government of Paraguay to do everything in its power to guarantee an efficient and transparent judicial process, consistent with Paraguay's laws and procedures, and I will continue these efforts.

Question 13. If confirmed, do you commit to offering all necessary technical assistance to the relevant Paraguayan authorities to ensure that there has been a comprehensive investigation into Alex Villamayor's death and that there is an expeditious trial?

Answer. The United States and Paraguay enjoy strong cooperation in law enforcement and security, and in the past the U.S. Government has provided technical assistance and training for judges, prosecutors, and police. However, the judicial system continues to be highly politicized, and despite improving levels of transparency, corruption and impunity persist. If confirmed, I will engage with the Paraguayan

authorities to offer all relevant technical assistance that might help achieve a thorough, impartial investigation and fair trial in this case.

Question 14. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with the Alex Villamayor's family members?

Answer. Yes.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2017

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:05 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake, presiding.

Present: Senators Flake, Isakson, Shaheen, Kaine, and Booker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF FLAKE, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

Senator FLAKE. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today, the committee will consider the nomination of two experienced career Foreign Service officers to be U.S. Ambassadors to Rwanda and Gabon.

Economic growth in Rwanda has averaged 7.6 percent per year over the past decade, which we will get after we pass this tax bill. Right? [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. No, okay.

And it has gone from ranking 56th place to 41st place in the World Bank's 2018 Doing Business report.

Yet, a number of constraints on foreign investment in Rwanda persist. The donor aid remains a key source of funding for the country's development and economic growth initiatives, and concerns persist about the state of Rwanda's electoral process with the Trump administration recently criticizing irregularities with the country's presidential election last August, which saw President Paul Kagame, elected to his first term in 2003, handily win reelection here. Kagame was cleared to run for an additional term following a constitutional referendum that exempted him from presidential term limits.

Now, in Gabon, declining oil prices have led to economic challenges for an economy dominated by oil. Despite Gabon's President Bongo working to diversify the economy, private sector firms still face challenges to impede investment in the country, which is thought to have significant deposits of iron, diamonds, and gold, among other minerals.

Gabon is a key player in peacekeeping efforts in Central Africa and like Rwanda, has committed peacekeepers to a variety of missions. This is an issue that we have talked about in our office in terms of peacekeeping, and it is important in terms of these countries and their contributions.

I thank each of you for your time, for sharing your expertise. I also want to thank the family members who are in attendance and those who are not who continue to make sacrifices to support the work that you do for your country.

With that, let me turn it to Senator Booker for comments before we get to the witnesses.

STATEMENT OF HON. CORY BOOKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for your opening remarks and your unbounded optimism about the United States of America.

I am just going to submit my statement for the record.

I just really want to say thank you both. Reading your bios and knowing the strategic importance of places to which you are being nominated to represent the United States of America, you are great patriots that have served with incredible careers. I see a lot of people that look suspiciously like family members. I hope you will take some time to introduce us to your families who also make a tremendous sacrifice for their country and support you in your essential work on our behalf and, frankly, not just our behalf but on behalf of humanitarian issues, democratic issues, dealing with international diseases. It is tremendous the work that you all are doing. So thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Senator Booker's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Thank you for holding this hearing Mr. Chairman and thank you to our witnesses for being here today and for willing to take on these posts. We often don't thank our career foreign service officers for their service.

But indeed, you are expected to spend years abroad, away from family and friends here in the States. As Senator Flake mentioned, you have served in many corners of the world—Iraq, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Israel—working to promote U.S. priorities and relationships. You have also developed specialties in your fields, as expert negotiators and managers, which I know will be invaluable to the posts to which you will hopefully be deployed very soon.

You are also going to strategically important countries, especially in the context of peacekeeping operations. Both Gabon and Rwanda contribute to U.N. and African led peacekeeping missions.

We were reminded of the heavy price peacekeepers and their countries pay after last week's attack on U.N. peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Both countries will play important roles especially as the continent aims to raise sustainable African resources for peace keeping operations on the continent.

Thank you again for your service. Thank you for being here. I look forward to your testimonies and to your response.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Senator Isakson, do you have anything to say before we get started?

Senator ISAKSON. Have we had the testimony yet?

Senator FLAKE. No.

Senator ISAKSON. Let us hear from the witnesses.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Our first nominee is Ambassador Vrooman who most recently served as Chargé and Deputy of Chief of Mission in Ethiopia. Prior postings include New Delhi, Baghdad, Tel Aviv, Beirut, Djibouti, and U.S. Liaison Office in Somalia.

Our second nominee is Joel Danies, who is currently the Associated Dean of the School of Professional and Area Studies at the Foreign Service's Institute. In addition to serving as Special Envoy for Haiti, his prior assignments include Kabul, Geneva, Paris, and Sanaa.

With that, we recognize Mr. Vrooman.

STATEMENT OF PETER HENDRICK VROOMAN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

Mr. VROOMAN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, members of the committee, Senator Isakson, it is an honor to appear today before you as the nominee as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda. I thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position. 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 particularly recognize my wife Johnette, a former Peace Corps volunteer and photographer, and our children, Zarah and Hendrick, who are here. Without their love and strength and support, I would not be here.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Chairman, I think that is a foul. They really need to identify themselves.

Senator FLAKE. Yes, raise your hand there. There is the family. Okay.

Senator BOOKER. And who is the person charitably married to you, sir?

Mr. VROOMAN. I think she is parking at Union Station. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. I thank the family for being here.

Mr. VROOMAN. My mother Sally is also here from upstate New York. Her encouragement first propelled me into the field of foreign affairs, from my time as a Rotary International Foundation scholar and ambassador of good will in 1986 to an ambassadorial nominee here today.

My brother Eric has traveled from Minnesota to be here, and my other brother Bruce is watching from New Hampshire. My mother-in-law, sisters-in-law, and brothers-in-law and our extended family are here joining me as well today. So we have a full house.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Rwanda, my first priority will be to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Rwanda, whether they are representing our country as diplomats in our mission, whether they are representing our—working in NGOs or faith-based organizations, conducting business, traveling on vacation, or working in the Peace Corps.

My four policy goals will be to, one, sustain our development partnership while reducing Rwanda's aid dependency; two, promoting U.S. exports and business ties; three, advancing rule of law and human rights in Rwanda; and four, encouraging Rwanda's continued role in peacekeeping.

The United States has a strong partnership with Rwanda. The Rwandan people have crossed many milestones in their trajectory

of recovery, reconciliation, and rebuilding since the 1994 genocide. In the past 10 years, Rwanda lifted more than 1 million of its 11 million people out of poverty and doubled per capita GDP in that same period. Since the year 2000, Rwanda has reduced its budgetary reliance on foreign assistance from 86 percent to 35.

Rwanda has worked hard to meet the basic needs of the population for potable water, roads, primary education, and health care. And, for example, Rwanda's focus on combating the HIV epidemic—I was at the PEPFAR conference just this week—has resulted in a reduction of new HIV infections by more than 50 percent. Maternal and under-5 mortality has also dropped by more than 50 percent in the last decade. These and other critical gains in the health sector have occurred with support from our foreign assistance, including PEPFAR, USAID's maternal and child health programs, and the work of Peace Corps volunteers in rural communities.

Rwanda also encourages private sector investment. And we have been, over time, the largest investor in Rwanda, and U.S. citizens are its largest source of tourism outside the East Africa region. U.S. companies are bringing innovative ideas in water treatment, energy generation, aviation, logistics to Rwanda, creating jobs in both of our countries. If confirmed, I will promote a Rwanda that remains open to U.S. business, trade, and investment as it pursues continued economic growth.

Respect for human rights and democratic practices remain areas of great importance to our bilateral relationship. They are critical for Rwanda's continued prosperity, regional leadership, and partnership with the United States.

If confirmed, I will work with the Rwandan Government and civil society to encourage a Rwanda that adheres to the democratic ideals enshrined in its own constitution, and these include the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights, pluralistic democracy, equitable power sharing, tolerance, and resolution of issues through dialogue.

As noted, Senators, Rwanda is one of the most committed countries to international peacekeeping. It is the fifth largest contributor of troops, the second largest of police units to UN peacekeeping operations around the world. And Rwandan peacekeepers have served with distinction in many of the world's most complicated trouble spots from the Central African Republic to Haiti, South Sudan, and the Sudan. Rwanda championed the Kigali Principles on Protection of Civilians, a set of best practices for protecting civilians in times of armed conflict and during the deployment of peacekeeping operations. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage Rwanda to play a positive role in peacekeeping in Africa and beyond and within the African Union as President Kagame assumes the role of chairperson of the African Union for 1 year beginning in January 2018.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, Senator Isakson, for the opportunity and honor to appear before you today. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

[Mr. Vrooman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER VROOMAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda. I thank President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position. 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 recognize my wife, Johnette, and our children, Zarah and Hendrick, who are here today. Without their love, strength, and support, I would not be here. My mother, Sally, is here too, from upstate New York. Her encouragement first propelled me into the field of foreign affairs, from my time as a Rotary International Foundation "ambassador of goodwill" in 1986 to a junior Foreign Service Officer in 1991 and an ambassadorial nominee today. My brother, Eric, has travelled from Minneapolis to be here, and my other brother, Bruce, is watching from New Hampshire.

If confirmed, my first priority will be to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Rwanda, whether they are representing our country as diplomats, working in NGOs or faith-based organizations, conducting business, traveling on vacation, or serving in the Peace Corps. My goals will be to sustain our development partnership while reducing Rwanda's aid dependency, promote U.S. exports and business ties, advance the rule of law and human rights in Rwanda, and encourage Rwanda's continued role in peacekeeping.

The United States has a strong partnership with Rwanda. The Rwandan people have crossed many milestones along the trajectory of recovery, reconciliation, and rebuilding since the horrific 1994 genocide. In the past ten years, Rwanda lifted more than one million of its 11 million citizens out of poverty and doubled per capita GDP in that same period. Since the year 2000, Rwanda has reduced its budgetary reliance on foreign assistance from 86 percent to 35 percent.

Rwanda has worked hard to meet the basic needs of its population for potable water, roads, primary education, and health care. For example, Rwanda's focus on combatting the HIV/AIDS epidemic over the past decade has resulted in a reduction of new HIV infections by almost 50 percent between 2006 and 2016. Maternal and under-five mortality have also both dropped by more than 50 percent. These and other critical gains in the health sector have occurred with support from our foreign assistance, including the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID's Maternal and Child Health programs, and the work of Peace Corps volunteers in rural communities.

Rwanda encourages private sector investment. We have been the largest investor in Rwanda, and U.S. citizens are its largest source of tourism. U.S. companies are bringing innovative ideas in water treatment, energy generation, aviation, and logistics to Rwanda, creating jobs in both our countries. If confirmed, I will promote a Rwanda that remains open to U.S. business, trade, and investment as it pursues continued economic growth.

Respect for human rights and democratic practices remain areas of great importance to our bilateral relationship. They are critical for Rwanda's continued prosperity, regional leadership, and partnership with the United States. If confirmed, I will work with the Rwandan Government and civil society to encourage a Rwanda that adheres to the democratic ideals enshrined in its constitution. These include the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights, pluralistic democracy, equitable power sharing, tolerance, and resolution of issues through dialogue.

Rwanda is one of the world's most committed countries to international peacekeeping operations - the fifth-largest contributor of troops in the world and the second-largest contributor of police to international peacekeeping missions. Rwandan peacekeepers have served with distinction in many of the world's most complicated and protracted conflicts, including the Central African Republic, Haiti, South Sudan, and Sudan. Rwanda championed the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, a set of best practices for protecting civilians during peacekeeping missions. If confirmed, I will encourage Rwanda to continue to play a positive role in peacekeeping in Africa and within the African Union, as President Kagame assumes the role of AU Chairperson for one year starting in January 2018.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity and honor to appear before you today. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Danies?

STATEMENT OF JOEL DANIES, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE GABONESE REPUBLIC, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

Mr. DANIES. Thank you, Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Booker, Senator Isakson. It is an honor to appear before you today.

I am grateful to President Trump and to Secretary Tillerson for the confidence that they have placed in me as their nominee to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and also the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe. If confirmed, I will be honored to work with you and other Members of Congress to protect and advance U.S. interests in both countries.

Throughout my 30 years in the Foreign Service, I have focused on developing the skills required to promote U.S. interests globally and to effectively implement U.S. foreign policy objectives. I have worked to increase respect for human rights, identify U.S. trade opportunities, and promote adherence to the rule of law for the well-being and security of American and local citizens. If confirmed, I look forward to promoting our interests and democratic values in Gabon and Sao Tomé and Príncipe and to encouraging both countries to contribute to a vibrant and prosperous region.

I would not be where I am today without the enduring love and support of my family, and I am joined today by my wife Karen and my daughter Blair. Our son Judson is probably watching this from the West Coast, and some very close friends of mine have also joined us today.

Gabon and Sao Tomé and Príncipe have been relatively peaceful and stable since their independence. U.S. policy priorities are clear for both countries: protecting U.S. lives and interests, strengthening democratic institutions and improving governance, enhancing trade and economic opportunities, and ensuring peace, security, and stability.

In Gabon, our priorities remain to encourage the process of democratization, increase good governance, and increase transparency. If confirmed, I will engage government leaders, opposition parties, and civil society to strengthen human rights and fundamental freedoms, and urge Gabon to stay on the path to democracy.

Gabon's economy has been affected by falling oil prices leading to increased activity in the agriculture, fisheries, and timber sectors. These are areas in which U.S. knowledge and experience can contribute positively. If confirmed, I will tirelessly promote U.S. values and business interests, and I will continue to advocate on behalf of U.S. companies for a level playing in Gabon.

Gabon is a country located on the strategic Gulf of Guinea. If confirmed, I will work closely with the government, as well as the Economic Community of Central African States, headquartered in Libreville, to promote regional security cooperation in this vital region by leveraging partnerships with U.S. forces.

Gabon is also an important partner in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, a multilateral public-private initiative for addressing

regional environmental concerns, including deforestation and wildlife trafficking. If confirmed, I will continue to advance our shared work on sustained natural resource stewardship that denies revenues to transnational criminal organizations.

The other country to which I am nominated to serve as Ambassador, the small island of Sao Tomé and Príncipe, has a vibrant political scene but faces severe budgetary constraints that have hampered the dividends of democracy.

U.S. national interests are served by Sao Tomé's strategic location in the Gulf of Guinea and its respect for democracy. Sao Tomé has been a reliable partner, hosting since 1992 a Voice of America relay station that covers much of Africa. It has also encouraged U.S. investment, and as a result, a U.S. company began oil exploration there in 2016.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with Sao Tomé to improve its port security through cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as to strengthen regional security and improve bilateral trade links with the United States.

Every country's greatest hope for the future is its youth. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the young people in both countries to promote peaceful dialogue, empower women, and foster entrepreneurship to further expand the private sectors in their nations.

Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Booker, Senator Isakson, no goal will be more important to me than protecting the lives, interests, and welfare of Americans living and traveling in Gabon and Sao Tomé. If confirmed, I look forward to leading and fostering the development of the dynamic embassy team, including the great local staff that we have in Gabon and Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

Thank you.

[Mr. Danies's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOEL DANIES

Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Booker, and members of the committee: It is an honor to appear before you today. I am grateful to President Trump and to Secretary Tillerson for the confidence that they have placed in me as their nominee to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and also the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe. If confirmed, I will be honored to work with you and other Members of Congress to protect and advance U.S. interests in both countries.

Throughout my 30 years in the Foreign Service I focused on developing the skills required to promote U.S. interests globally and to effectively implement U.S. foreign policy objectives. I have worked to increase respect for human rights, identify U.S. trade opportunities, and promote adherence to the rule of law for the well-being and security of local and American citizens. If confirmed, I look forward to promoting our interests and democratic values in Gabon and Sao Tomé and Príncipe and to encouraging both countries to contribute to a vibrant and prosperous region.

I would not be where I am today without the enduring love and support of my family and I am joined today by:Gabon and Sao Tomé and Príncipe have been relatively peaceful and stable since their independence. U.S. policy priorities are clear for both countries: (1) protecting U.S. lives and interests; (2) strengthening democratic institutions and improving governance; (3) enhancing trade and economic opportunities; and (4) ensuring peace, security, and stability.

In Gabon, our priorities remain to encourage the process of democratization, increase good governance, and improve increased transparency. If confirmed, I will engage government leaders, opposition parties, and civil society to strengthen human rights and fundamental freedoms, and urge Gabon to stay on a path to democracy.

Gabon's economy has been affected by falling oil prices leading to increased activity in the agriculture, fisheries, and timber sectors. These are areas in which U.S. knowledge and experience can contribute positively. If confirmed, I will tirelessly

promote U.S. values and business interests, and I will continue to advocate on behalf of U.S. companies for a level playing field in Gabon.

Gabon is a country located on the strategic Gulf of Guinea. If confirmed, I will work closely with the government as well as the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) headquartered in Libreville, to promote regional security cooperation in this vital region by leveraging partnerships with U.S. forces. Gabon is an important partner in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), a multilateral public/private initiative for addressing regional concerns, including deforestation and wildlife trafficking. If confirmed, I will continue to advance our shared work on sustained natural resource stewardship that denies revenues to transnational criminal organizations.

The other country to which I am nominated to serve as Ambassador, the small island state of Sao Tomé and Príncipe (STP), has a vibrant political scene but faces severe budgetary constraints that have hampered the dividends of democracy.

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Every country's greatest hope for the future is its youth. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the young people in both countries to promote peaceful dialogue, empower women, and foster entrepreneurship to further expand the private sectors in their nations.

Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Booker, and other members of the committee, no goal will be more important to me than protecting the lives, interests and welfare of Americans living and traveling in Gabon and Sao Tomé. If confirmed, I look forward to leading and fostering the development of the dynamic embassy team, including the great local staff that we have in Gabon by serving as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Príncipe. Thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you for your willingness to serve, both of you.

Mr. Vrooman, with regard to Rwanda, what do you consider the greatest challenge you will face there? Does it involve their economy and U.S. participation or promotion of U.S. business there? Is it governance? What do you think the biggest challenge is?

Mr. VROOMAN. The biggest challenge that we will face or I will face, if confirmed as the Ambassador to Rwanda, is to promote the multiple pillars of our policy, and those include, as you have noted, promoting U.S. business, as well as our values, rule of law, and economic growth in Rwanda.

And I think for Rwanda, the biggest challenge is the youth bulge that they face. Like many countries in Africa, they have high fertility rates. Their population of 12 million will double by the year 2035, and they are already the most densely populated country on the continent. So the efforts that U.S. foreign assistance can assist the Rwandans in in helping provide jobs for the youth who are unemployed will be critical for their security into the future and to create markets for U.S. exports and trade.

Right now, we have a trade surplus. So that is less of a challenge, but cementing and making sure that our investments in Rwanda are protected—we have made significant investments in energy, aviation, and water treatment, but securing the fact that the American private sector interests will remain engaged will be a continuing challenge.

And finally, on the values side, I think clearly from your comments and from my own, promoting some of the values that we up-

hold, rule of law, will require our technical assistance and some of our programmatic assistance to assist the Rwandans in making good on some of their own constitutional ideals and some of their own values.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Danies, you mentioned our efforts to help with deforestation and wildlife preservation. They have some of the last remaining forest elephants I think there and lowland gorillas. We, working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, there, what agencies of the U.S. Government are making an effort there?

Mr. DANIES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You are correct that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as USAID, are very involved with the Government of Gabon towards the protection of its wildlife and towards the protection of its environment. This is something that we in the United States care very much for, and this is something that I believe our embassy is very well placed to be able to provide the technical assistance and know-how that we have gathered in the United States to help the Government of Gabon, the people of Gabon protect this environment.

Senator FLAKE. With regard to the Gulf of Guinea, there was concern a while ago, as we had some success with regard to piracy on the other coast of Africa around Somalia, that it might move to the Gulf of Guinea. Are there efforts and cooperation that is taking place to make sure that piracy does not gain a foothold there?

Mr. DANIES. Mr. Chairman, there is very much this sort of cooperation between the United States military forces who do multiple port calls, the U.S. Coast Guard in developing the capacity of the Gabonese maritime forces to be able to both protect the country, protect the region against piracy, against illegal fishing, against malevolent behavior that might take place in the Gulf of Guinea. So we are working very closely, and I can assure you, if confirmed, our embassy will be very engaged in that effort with the Government of Gabon.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. I am going to defer to the esteemed Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. I did not know he was here. [Laughter.]

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Cory.

Thank you, both of you, for accepting the challenge of representing our country as Ambassador. You are both very fortunate to go the countries you are going to.

Rwanda is one of my favorite places in the whole world. Everybody says you really have not been to Rwanda. Have you? I said I have been to Rwanda. And President Kagame is quite a character in and of himself and has done some exemplary things to bring about peace and justice in a time of terrible trouble. And I urge you when you get there—do you know what Umuganda Sunday is? Have you heard about Umuganda Sunday?

I love to tell this story, Mr. Chairman and Senator Booker, because it is just such a telling story about reconciliation in Africa. When Kagame rose to leadership, one of the main things he knew he had to do was bring the people together. So they created this

Umuganda Sunday where one Sunday out of every month, the president of the country declares a holiday. Nobody gets in their cars. Nobody goes anywhere, but the villages all get together and decide on a project they can do together to make their village better.

Senator Corker and I in 2010 were there on Umuganda Sunday and helped dig a stump out of the middle of the road that went through the town and the village going down to the larger town and village. The hardest day's work I ever put in in my life, but the most fun I ever had to see people who were, in many cases, still angry at each other over a lot of the problems that had happened previously, working together to solve a problem for the neighborhood.

And so I commend you, when you get there—you are dealing with a country that has really bent on reconciliation and improvement. It is growing tremendously. It is expanding tremendously. It is a great country, and Kagame has had a few stumps along the way, but he has done a fantastic job as president of that country and does a great job and a great friend of the United States of America.

I have not been to Gabon, but I have helped them get some poultry. They are working very hard to expand their business and economic opportunity working with the University of Georgia on some techniques where they can make a cottage industry in Gabon by raising chickens by families raising them. They are anxious to expand their economic growth.

Both those countries are tremendously important to the United States of America.

And I want to close with this statement and then ask anything you want to say.

Each of those countries, like every country in Africa, has a vote in the United Nations. Africa is the continent of the 21st century for our country. The opportunity to expand American influence and friendship on the continent of Africa offers tremendous opportunity for our country, not only on votes in the UN, friends voting with friends, but also expanding opportunities in markets in those two countries for American value-added products at the beginning of the chain, like baby diapers and things of that nature, to expansion like the industry of poultry and things of that nature.

So you are going to two great opportunities for our country. I know from reading both your resumes, you will both do a great job. And I look forward to hearing a good report when you come back. And I will first volunteer to say if you ever feel like the State Department is overlooking you—and I see the lady behind you is watching me when I say this—call me. I will go down there and vouch for you any time because you are going to the front line of where America's 21st century needs to be, and that is the continent of Africa.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Isakson.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much.

Again, it is great that you are here. Your wife now has returned from parking. So if you would like to point her out. Yes. You missed your moment. [Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. I am really grateful again for the two of you.

I want to jump right in. Obviously, these are such critical countries that you all are going to be representing the United States to, and there have been tremendous positive things happening. But I just want to hone in a little bit on some human rights issues and perhaps temper some of the praise for President Kagame as well.

Right now—this is according to the Congressional Research Service—human rights advocates are asserting the laws and taboos prohibiting public acknowledgement of ethnic identity have been wielded as a tool to silence criticism of the government and that years of intimidation and interference have weakened the capacity of civil society to operate effectively. Over the years, various political opponents, critics, and journalists have been criminally prosecuted or have fled the country. Several dissidents have been violently attacked or killed outside the country in what critics portray as state-backed assassination.

There are a lot of these reports. Does this concern you? And tell me what we could be doing from the State Department to address some of these issues.

Mr. VROOMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Booker, for that question. It is an important one and a challenging one, given where they have come from, as Senator Isakson had mentioned, from the genocide onward, and building a community of reconciliation and overcoming the legacy of the genocide is an amazing challenge for an emerging democracy like Rwanda.

I think that some of the key tools that we have to work with the Rwandans have been in the area of rule of law, which is fundamental to addressing any number of the challenges that you have just raised, whether it is with regard to civil society organizations and their freedom of operation, freedom of expression for the media, or for those very same opposition members, some of whom have been detained.

So we have a number of ways in which we are working through USAID programs, one of which is through the University of Northern Ohio which has done training for judges and prosecutors and has worked on law school curriculum that help improve the delivery of justice in Rwanda.

We have also as well an Access to Justice program that is unique with USAID and involving local partnerships and providing legal defense for people in Rwanda. That is critical.

The University of Massachusetts is working with the Legal Aid Forum in Rwanda and looking at the quality and consistency of judicial decisions. And I found that in my experience before in Ethiopia that working on rule of law is one tool to helping a country move towards greater democratic pluralism and the rule of law in the country.

So these programs are really critical, and I thank the Congress and the American people for supporting the efforts that we have put in, as well as the universities that have contributed to those efforts thus far.

Senator BOOKER. So I appreciate that. And I will note that there were many universities you mentioned, none of which were in New Jersey.

But I do have some concerns about the overall State Department's support of the kind of efforts that you are talking about. Last week, Secretary Tillerson held a town hall with employees of the State Department and USAID, which were both mentioned as important actors in the region, which they absolutely are, but when the Secretary announced the State Department's and USAID's missions, neither included democracy or democracy promotion.

I have concerns about the health of civil society in Rwanda and in Gabon, which maybe you both can address, but maybe let us just sticking with Rwanda for a second—I think I respected George Washington as much as I did when I started studying African countries. It seems that President Kagame is intending to stay for an undetermined period of time. The constitution has been changed. Obviously, Rwanda has a tremendous record for promoting women, something frankly that maybe the United States can learn a thing or two from. But when Diane Rwigara, a Kagame critic and would-be first female independent presidential candidate, was denied registration as a candidate, that obviously raises concerns. She was also subject to an apparent smear campaign and was arrested for tax evasion shortly after the vote. I am really concerned about the continued focus on these issues in terms of democracy promotion and what this might mean for long-term stability in a nation that, as you said, is such an essential partner for us in regional stability.

Mr. VROOMAN. Indeed. And I think President Kagame—he was first elected in 2003. He has indicated on several occasions that he does not intend to remain president forever.

Senator BOOKER. But I read the constitution. He could stay till 2035.

Mr. VROOMAN. Indeed. But, again, that is the outward limit of what is conceivably possible under the new constitutional amendments.

But one of the opportunities that I see in the coming year, if confirmed, would be to work with the Rwandan parliament which, as you say, 60 percent are women in the parliament, but primarily those do not include many opposition parties. So it is not a very vibrant body in terms of diversity in terms of political parties.

That said, they are revising their electoral law. And I think it is a hope of many Rwandans, both inside and outside Rwanda, that that electoral law will have in its reform better and more transparent criteria for becoming candidates, which is one of the criticisms that has been levied about the Rwandan democracy, and secondly, that there will be more safeguards put in place for the ballot counting mechanisms that are in place. So I would see it as a fundamental role as an ambassador to engage with Rwandan officials, whether they are in the legislative branch or the executive branch, to work with them at making improvements to their electoral law. And that is an area, as you know, where we have many U.S. agencies, both in and outside of government, that have expertise in that matter and there are many as well around the world.

Senator BOOKER. And, then Mr. Danies—I know I am a little bit over my time, but if you will indulge me with answering the question about human rights concerns. Obviously, there have been election irregularities as well. Can you tell me about it, should you be confirmed, about some of your focus on civil society, democracy, and human rights?

Mr. DANIES. Thank you, Senator.

I would say that that is probably the one area where the United States carries the greatest amount of strength and credibility in the way we have worked with organizations and groups, whether they are in the opposition or whether they are nongovernmental organizations or civil society organizations in countries to reinforce the benefits that they bring to a democratic process.

I would say to you that, if confirmed, I could not imagine behaving any differently in Gabon in the sense of we have a country that has stated its determination to the democratic process, to openness, to transparency. I believe that we should hold them to their word and we should continue to encourage them to proceed down that path and to continue to strengthen those institutions.

Senator BOOKER. [Foreign language spoken.]

Senator FLAKE. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for being here today, for your service, and for your willingness to be nominated for these new very important posts. And I am delighted, Mr. Vrooman, that your brother Bruce is watching from New Hampshire. [Laughter.]

Senator SHAHEEN. I want to ask you because we have all watched, especially given what happened in Rwanda in the 1990s, the genocide, and the gains that have been made there. The importance of women is one of the things that I have watched very closely. I think Rwanda has the highest percentage of women of any country in its national governing body, its parliament. But to what extent has that equality for women in elective office translated across the culture in the country, and to what extent do they, in reality, share power in the country?

Mr. VROOMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I think there is still work to be done in the economic sphere, in the social sphere within Rwanda. As with many women around the world, gender-based violence is still an issue, as it has been in many of the places where I have served, whether in Ethiopia or India. And several of the ways that a U.S. Ambassador and their country team can work to bring attention to those issues and those inequalities is through nominating international women of courage that come to the State Department as nominees from our missions. And we have nominated—I have nominated women in those positions from India and Ethiopia. And I would think that there are people in Rwanda that would deserve similar recognition.

One of the things concretely that we are doing through our programmatic assistance through PEPFAR, for example, recognizing that, for example, female sex workers have the highest prevalence of HIV—Ambassador Birx and the PEPFAR program have given us an opportunity to work on the DREAMS Program to help address both sexual violence and also the spread of HIV among adolescent girls. So the DREAMS Program has given us some additional re-

sources to begin to target that community with additional assistance to help alleviate that challenge.

But one of the things I believe in and I have believed in throughout my career is the importance of the girl child. I have one. So promoting those opportunities—and I think as an ambassador, one of the things we can do is to promote inclusiveness within our country teams to give opportunities to women, to the disabled, and to disabled women. That is one thing we have done in Ethiopia and which I would hope in a country like Rwanda that has suffered after the genocide with many people who face disabilities to give them opportunities, in addition to focusing on women as one of the key communities that does the work in the society and that will open opportunities for Rwanda as it goes forward and continues its economic development.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. It is also one of the reasons why diversity within our State Department is very important as well.

I want to ask both of you about 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, which listed both Rwanda and Gabon on its tier 2 watch list, meaning that they both have work to do in that area. And I wonder if both of you could tell me to what extent you think the leaders in the countries appreciate the importance of addressing this issue and what they might be doing to help make progress.

Mr. VROOMAN. Yes, indeed. And tier 2 watch lists is really a wakeup call. If the tier 2 was not, then the watch list is because that can lead to an automatic downgrade if action is not taken.

I will say that in my briefings and consultations, I have learned about the action plan that was put in place in 2014 to begin to address more seriously the trafficking issues that Rwanda faces. And they have made some headway. All border forces in Rwanda have received training. There are 30,000 community workers who have received training to help identify minors and others who might be victims of trafficking.

We, through the J/TIP Office at the State Department, have offered programs to help provide some regional legal assistance—and this is done throughout the region—in helping them define a standalone anti-TIP law that is about to be unveiled. Now, law in itself is not sufficient because implementation and bringing to justice people who are judged guilty of promoting trafficking in persons needs to be done. So I believe our terrific embassy is going to be looking at and evaluating and reporting to what degree there is implementation and execution of that law and bringing people to justice.

The other key aspects are we are working kind of uniquely with the International Organization of Migration both through J/TIP and USAID to form complementary programs to not just look at the law but the implementing regulations so that trafficking prevention, the three P's of anti-trafficking efforts, are really brought to bear and scaled throughout the country. And that is one thing that Rwanda is particularly good at is bringing programs to scale. So, if confirmed, when I go out there, I will be looking to see to what degree that the one-stop shops for people who are seeking protection get it, to see what their needs are because offering protection to victims of trafficking is expensive and challenging, but incredibly important for their rehabilitation. So that is something

that I would look forward to see expanding under the next action plan after this one concludes at the end of the year.

Senator SHAHEEN. Great.

Mr. Chairman, can I get an answer from Mr. Danies as well?

Senator FLAKE. Sure.

Mr. DANIES. Senator, Gabon is very fortunate as being a middle income country which, therefore, means that it is attractive to a lot of the citizens and countries in its neighboring countries. As a result, it is very important for Gabon to have better control over the movement of people in and out of the country in order to be able to combat the illegal trafficking of people. It has a viable economy, which makes it attractive and therefore, of course, allows for criminal elements to use that as a way to be able to continue this horrid practice of trafficking in human beings.

I believe that the United States again is very well placed to provide the sort of assistance that a country like Gabon could use in terms of helping develop its law enforcement capabilities, in helping it increase and provide the right sort of shelters, be able to identify criminal elements, and then create the institutions necessary to both investigate and then prosecute them as a way to stop this sort of practice.

Senator SHAHEEN. I am over my time, but do I understand you to say then—yes or no—are they committed to addressing this issue?

Mr. DANIES. I apologize. Yes, they are very committed to it. This is one of the areas that we have worked very closely with the Government of Gabon.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations to each of you for your careers and for your nominations.

I would actually like to ask both of you—this is almost more an Armed Services question than Foreign Relations. I sit on both, as does Senator Shaheen.

The extent of U.S. military operations in Africa are something that I think a lot of Americans are surprised by when they wake up and they read about the death of American troops in combat in Niger, for example. That was surprising to many, not to those of us who serve on these committees. My son was deployed in Africa with the Marines in 2015, attached to AFRICOM.

But talk a little bit about the state of the mil-to-mil relationship between the United States and each of the countries for which you have been nominated and what you could do in the position as Ambassador to promote cooperation, human rights training, upgrading of military standards, et cetera.

Mr. VROOMAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

It is very important. I have worked in Ethiopia now and, if confirmed, in Rwanda, which are two of the leading African peacekeeping contributors. Both countries and Rwanda are beneficiaries of U.S. training for peacekeeping and have received substantial training monies from the U.S. Congress for support for the ACOTA training of peacekeepers. And in Rwanda's case, they have received

IPPOS police keeping training from INL to support the police in their deployments of foreign police units overseas.

What that means is that cumulatively that 20 percent of Rwanda's forces are deployed—their soldiers are deployed on peacekeeping missions. And all of those have gone or almost all of them have gone through some form of peacekeeping training, which includes respect for rule of law. And that is one reason I think that there has been—Rwandans have been valued in peacekeeping and been awarded, recognized in the Central African Republic for their work. They also have a zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse, which is significant and I know is a consistent concern of the Congress and the administration in that regard. So those training programs have been important.

Rwanda like Ethiopia is also a beneficiary of APREP. That is an acronym, so I will spell it that out. But it is the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response country, of which there are six in Africa. And that program has allowed them or will allow them, as it rolls out, to support their logistics, the deployment of medical evacuation units, and their support for aviation, which would facilitate, if we are able to deliver two Cessna aircraft—allow them to do evacuation of peacekeeping personnel in their deployments. So the APREP has given them a significant boost to the security assistance that we offer, and their IMET training is something that they willingly engage in and they permit Leahy vetting very transparently. And that is something that I would, if confirmed, pledge to continue.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Mr. Danies, if you could answer the same question about Gabon.

Mr. DANIES. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Both of us would tell you that the worse news an ambassador can ever receive is the death of an American citizen in their region, much less that of an American citizen who is the military, which means that it is critical to us that we continue to have these military-to-military cooperation arrangements but that we do so in a way that works to strengthen and bolster local forces in order to both be able to protect their citizens but also protect our citizens.

In the case of Gabon, there is a very close partnership certainly related to maritime protection in the Gulf of Guinea, but also in helping to combat the encroachment of poachers into their region which can not only, of course, destroy the environment but also bring with them criminal elements which are dangerous to the country and eventually perhaps to the rest of the world. We are fortunate that the Government of Gabon—Libreville hosts the Economic Community of Central African States, which continues to be a cooperative arrangement of 10 countries in the region with which our U.S. military cooperates, both our naval forces and our military forces. So I believe that the relationship is a strong one and we will continue to keep it that way.

Senator KAINE. I appreciate that.

And, Mr. Chair, my observation from working on the defense authorizing bill every year is that the work we do to train foreign militaries is just like part of a fingernail of the Department of Defense budget, whether it is bringing officers for training here at the War College or in other venues in the United States, or whether

it is on-the-ground training in those countries. But we would want them to want us to be their security partner of choice, and that training both in technical capacity but also around issues like respect for rule of law and human rights is incredibly valuable, and it also builds relationships that are important. The captain you train today could be the defense minister in 10 years or the leader of a country in 20 years.

So this is a really important part of what we do on the defense side and it is about diplomacy and building relationships. These Ambassadors will have an important role to play in it, and I wish you both well. Thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

We have got votes in just a few minutes, but I just have one quick question. Then I think Senator Booker has another.

Mr. Vrooman, there is a long history of border incidents between Rwanda and Burundi. There have been issues of troops coming across. In what ways are we dealing with that issue, and is the government sufficiently cooperating with us and with the Government of Burundi as well?

Mr. VROOMAN. Yes, sir. In my consultations, I have looked at that history. In the past, the Child Soldier Protection Act—because of Rwanda's support for the M–23 militia in eastern Congo, they were listed under that in 2015 and similarly for recruiting Burundi soldiers in their refugee camps in 2015, later in 2016.

But in the actual year of 2016 and 2017, following that listing, they are no longer, to the extent that I am aware, supporting proxies in those neighboring states. And that is a good thing. So I cannot attribute it to whether the listing had that effect, but the corrective actions that have been taken have been noted by our embassies in the region.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. I am just going to briefly put out two questions and maybe you guys can answer them and we can conclude.

The first one will be for Mr. Danies. Obviously, climate change is having a disproportionate impact on countries like Sao Tomé and Príncipe. What do you believe we could be doing in the United States to help them deal with this pressing concern?

And then the second one for Mr. Vrooman. I have some concerns about the violence between Hutus and Tutsis in Burundi and how that might destabilize Rwanda.

If you all could comment on those two, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. DANIES. Thank you, Senator.

Very briefly, just like in the Amazon, one of the biggest sources of mitigation for the climate are protecting forests and rainforests. And both Gabon and Sao Tomé and Príncipe are very fortunate to have viable environments. And therefore, I think it is in our favor to be able to continue to help them protect those, to help them manage them in a very smart way so that they are constantly providing more protection for the environment rather than going through some of the problems countries that have been deforested have seen and which have exacerbated the problem of climate change.

You are right that for a country island state like Sao Tomé and Príncipe, this is especially important, and therefore, I think this is a role that the embassy can play very well in helping them develop the right economic techniques to be able to protect that environment.

Mr. VROOMAN. Senator, to your question about the relations with Burundi, that is obviously a question that the Ambassadors of both missions look to. If confirmed, I will work closely with our embassy in Bujumbura. I am meeting our Ambassador tomorrow as part of my consultations.

But my understanding is that there are more than 70,000 refugees from Burundi in Rwanda currently in camps. So that is an area certainly of concern that I will continue to monitor going forward.

The East African Community is charged with having dialogue and conducting dialogue between the two countries, and that is an area that I would continue to monitor as well, if confirmed as Ambassador to Rwanda.

Senator BOOKER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you both. We appreciate you being here and your families as well. I continue to be impressed by the sacrifices that they make. These are tough posts, a long way from home, and we just appreciate your willingness to serve and the sacrifices made by all the families.

For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow—that is December 20th—including for members to submit questions for the record. We would ask the nominees if you could respond as promptly as possible to these questions.

With the thanks of the committee, the hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:53 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JOEL DANIES BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. From very early in my career, I have worked to promote human rights, beginning with my repeated visits and engagements in Yemen with a small community of Jewish citizens to confirm their security and well-being and to report on behalf of the Embassy any concerns they might have regarding mistreatment or discrimination by the authorities. During this first assignment in Yemen, I also traveled with the Ambassador to visit Eritrean refugees in the southern part of the country to review their living conditions and coordinate with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on the protection and care in the refugee camps located there. I was a key member of the staff of the President's Special Representative on Haiti in 1992–93, engaged in the successful effort to overturn the illegal military coup in Haiti and the return of its exiled president. Our primary focus was on the protection of the Haitians fleeing the criminal behavior of the junta leaders. We worked closely with IOM, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (OHCR), and the U.S. military to establish sites in Jamaica, Turks and Caicos, the Bahamas, and Guantanamo for the protection and care of Haitian refugees. I worked diligently within the Department and administration to uphold the Leahy legislation toward Colombia by ensuring that counternarcotics assistance was

provided solely to government entities that were not accused of being or alleged to be human rights violators. I also spent four years in Geneva heading U.S. Government human rights efforts, representing our country's human rights values and objectives before the U.N. Human Rights Council, and coordinating with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). During that period, in a number of instances, I led U.S. Government efforts to hold countries identified as human rights offenders accountable for their behavior, and I successfully negotiated resolutions that promoted and strengthened the values outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The most important human rights problems for Gabon, as noted in State Department's 2016 Human Rights Report, are harsh prison conditions, lengthy pretrial detention, and arbitrary arrests. In addition, the 2016 presidential election was marred by significant irregularities. I will pursue opportunities to continue to engage leaders from the Government, opposition parties, and civil society to increase respect for human rights and protection for fundamental freedoms, and to press Gabon to abide more fully by democratic norms and principles.

In Sao Tomé & Príncipe, also as noted in the State Department's 2016 Human Rights report, the most pressing human rights issues are difficult prison conditions, official corruption, and domestic violence. I will work closely with the Sao Toméan Government and civil society to identify effective ways to promote transparency and rule of law.

In both countries, establishing open and honest relationships with government and civil society will be crucial to countering these issues.

Question 3. 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 Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Institutional capacity will likely be the biggest obstacle. In addition, civil society remains weak in both countries. I will seek opportunities and resources for capacity building. I would note that in both countries, severe budgetary constraints will also limit local governments' efforts. Shifting institutional culture as well as societal norms will likely be challenges.

In Sao Tomé and Príncipe, we face the added challenge of promoting human rights from a distance. We do not have a significant presence on the ground and must engage from Libreville. To counter this challenge, I will regularly visit and seek opportunities to partner with Sao Toméan Government institutions and civil society to support democratic development and respect for human rights.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. I am committed to meeting with organizations that are concerned with human rights and civil society issues concerning Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe. Ensuring that the United States does not provide military assistance to foreign military units that violate human rights is crucially important. I will ensure that Embassy personnel responsible for vetting under the provisions of the Leahy Law are familiar with its rules and can implement them fully and effectively. I will engage host government interlocutors to remind them of the importance the United States places on respect of human rights by security services.

Question 5. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe?

Answer. I will engage with the governments of both countries to address cases of political prisoners and arbitrary arrests.

Question 6. Will you engage with Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. I will engage regularly on these issues with the Governments of Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe, opposition parties, and NGOs.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign Government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Gabon and Sao Tomé & Príncipe?

Answer. Neither I nor any of my immediate family members have any financial interests in Gabon or in Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. The country team is a very important part of any embassy; it provides direction, feedback, and guidance to the Chief of Mission on all aspects of embassy operations. Seventy percent of Embassy Libreville's country team is comprised of officers from a diverse background and/or underrepresented group. These talented and highly-qualified officers work in nearly 50 percent of our positions.

I will support and mentor all officers at post to ensure they have an equal opportunity to advance through the organization to the highest levels throughout their career. Additionally, I will make a concerted personal effort to reach out and recruit qualified officers who reflect the rich diversity of our nation to fill the periodic vacancies at the embassy.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I will ensure that embassy personnel are familiar with applicable federal laws and State Department policies that protect an inclusive workspace. This includes the continued appointment and support of EEO officers at post, as well as periodic Embassy-wide town halls to discuss issues of diversity, inclusiveness, and bullying for both the American and the locally-employed staff. Additionally, I will ensure officers at all levels are given the opportunity to serve and chair the many important committees within an embassy that shape both internal and external operations, to include the various budget, security, safety, and employment committees. I will also motivate my staff to continue to pursue leadership training opportunities that reinforce the values of diversity and inclusiveness.

Question 12. In what sectors is most official corruption found in these countries?

Answer. Corruption remains a major concern in Gabon. Nepotism, in particular, places a burden on the country's financial situation, resulting in a large and expensive civil service. There are also widespread reports of Gabonese officials' utilizing public funds for travel on private jets or openly displaying extravagant spending such as for high-end luxury vehicles. Within key economic sectors, the timber and petroleum industries are most affected by corrupt behaviors, although such corruption is often difficult to prove. Most Sudanese also view the judicial system as highly corrupt. Corruption also manifests itself in the actions of lower level functionaries, including police officers, the customs administration, and public utilities.

The Gabonese Government launched an anti-corruption campaign called "Operation Mamba" in 2016. To date, only a small number of officials or former officials have been prosecuted through this effort. Former Hydrocarbons Minister Etienne Dieudonné Ngoubou is incarcerated. Former Minister (Economy, Budget, and Infrastructure) and Advisor to the President Magloire Ngambia is facing charges of embezzling state funds in the amount of $810 million. While the Operation Mamba cases reflect positive steps, more needs to be done in order for Gabonese authorities to address the nation's corruption challenges.

Official corruption is much less open in Sao Tomé and Príncipe, but it is still cause for concern among embassy interlocutors. In particular, there are those who vociferously complain in local media that nepotism influences the hiring process for government positions as well as the awarding of contracts. Although in the past

there have generally been weak government accountability and controls, the National Assembly recently passed legislation authorizing the referral of public corruption cases to the Public Prosecutor's Office for investigation. On December 20, the National Assembly directed one of its own, Deputy Delfim Neves, to present himself to the Public Prosecutor's Office to for questioning regarding an attempt to bribe magistrates.

Question 13. If confirmed, what tools do you have at your disposal to help address corruption and what actions will you take as Ambassador to advocate for improvement in transparency and good governance with relevant stakeholders?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work closely with the two primary anti-corruption groups in Gabon: the Commission to Combat Illicit Enrichment (CNLCEI) and the National Financial Investigations Agency (ANIF). I would also work with civil society and members of the non-governmental organization (NGO) community to continue to raise the public's awareness about the importance of eliminating corruption at all levels and reinforce the important role of civil society in pushing for greater transparency and accountability. I would also continue to explore opportunities to encourage Gabonese institutions to take advantage of U.S. Government technical assistance programs to assist with anti-corruption efforts, transparency, and the rule of law. These include exchange programs focusing on anti-corruption efforts and organizing remote discussions through Digital Video Conference technology and expert speaker programs that target anti-corruption.

While the amount and scope of public corruption in Sao Tomé and Príncipe (STP) is relatively small, our active engagement with the Government, opposition parties, and NGOs is important to promote greater transparency. If confirmed, I intend to visit STP regularly and deliver consistent messaging in support of rule of law and the principle of meritocracy.

Question 14. The State Department has ranked Gabon "Tier 2 Watchlist" in its most recent Trafficking in Persons Report. If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance, if any, would you pursue to help Gabon better tackle this problem?

Answer. The State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Libreville actively engage with the full range of public and private stakeholders to encourage the Gabonese Government to take additional steps to address trafficking in persons (TIP). Gabon ratified the Palermo protocols in 2010, but has yet to harmonize its domestic legal system. In addition, our joint efforts are required to strengthen key institutions and address the broad perception that bribery of the judiciary effectively eliminates trafficking-related cases. There have been no trafficking-related prosecutions in recent years. If confirmed, I would work with effective individuals and institutions in Gabon to reconcile its penal code with the Palermo protocols, and I would seek opportunities to provide direct support through USG technical assistance, including training for the judiciary.

Question 15. In what ways might such efforts be incorporated into existing U.S. programs that aim to help strengthen Gabon's security sector and the rule of law?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy has had some success in recent years building capacity in individual judges through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). If confirmed, I would work to continue to offer this type of experience to members of the judiciary we identify as emerging leaders. As the pool of IVLP alumni in the judiciary grows, we are hopeful they will form a nucleus around which rule of law will grow and ultimately be the norm.

Question 16. In your view, what are the core U.S. interests in Gabon? What changes to U.S. bilateral aid would you advocate, if any?

Answer. The core U.S. interests in Gabon are long-term political stability, sustaining maritime and border security, supporting U.S. companies, including those that are heavily invested in the petroleum industry, eliminating wildlife and other illicit trafficking, protecting the flora and fauna in the Congo Basin, and supporting Gabonese peacekeeping efforts. Gabon is also a Cooperative Security Location for the Department of Defense, which allows the country to facilitate U.S. crisis response, including emergency evacuation of U.S. embassies. At present, U.S. bilateral aid for Gabon is limited to International Military Education and Training (IMET) programming, grants and direct support awarded through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and USAID's Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). Gabon has also received security assistance funding through the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account to fund a number of key efforts, including peacekeeping capacity building, counter-poaching efforts, maritime security capacity building, and military education institution building. Gabon has also received funding through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) fund maritime capacity building

efforts. In addition to supporting these existing efforts, I would advocate in two key areas:

Agribusiness: Gabon is very interested in attracting businesses that transform natural resources, generating added value. If confirmed, I would like to look at ways that agencies such as OPIC, USTDA, the U.S. Export-Import Bank, and USAID might be able to support U.S. companies that are interested in investing in Gabon. There is a relatively short window of opportunity to help Gabon develop the structures necessary to take advantage of the remaining eight years of AGOA.

Rural Development: With Embassy Libreville's support and advocacy, both the Government of Gabon and the Peace Corps have expressed interest in re-establishing a Peace Corps program in Gabon, resources permitting. If confirmed, I would continue to advocate for the return of Peace Corps as I believe there is potential to have a positive impact in all six of Peace Corps' project sectors: agriculture, community economic development, education, the environment, health, and youth in development. If confirmed, I would like to see whether Peace Corps could return to Gabon.

Question 17. Please describe U.S. maritime security cooperation efforts in Gabon. Please describe U.S. support for Gabonese environmental conservation, and the results of such efforts to date.

Answer. Maritime Security cooperation is a key element of U.S. engagement in Gabon. Gabon is a part of AFRICOM's Line of Effort (LOE) Four, which supports and focuses U.S.-based security assistance toward maritime security and countering illicit activities in the Gulf of Guinea. Gabon has historically received all its maritime security cooperation through the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard.

In 2014, the U.S. Secretary of the Navy delivered recommendations for a maritime security strategy to President Ali Bongo. Shortly thereafter, Gabon established a Sea Security Council, which currently advises its president on maritime capacity building. The U.S. Embassy works with the Gabonese to identify areas where the United States can support the implementation of Gabon's maritime security strategy.

One of the U.S. Navy programs supporting this strategy is the expansion and maintenance of its shore-based sensor surveillance system, the Regional Maritime Awareness Capability. The current project, funded through State Department assistance, aims to build a sensor site at Cap Esterias (north of Libreville), repair and upgrade existing systems in Port Gentil, and potentially install a new sensor site in Mayumba (southern border between Gabon and the Republic of Congo) with existing Africa Maritime Security (AMS) Foreign Military Financing (FMF) grants. AMS has also supported the sustainment of naval vessels.

For early 2018, the U.S. Navy is also working with Gabon to host OBANGAME EXPRESS 2018, a Gulf of Guinea naval exercise. This will consist of Gabon's hosting a Final Planning Event in mid-January 2018, followed by the exercise the last two weeks of March 2018. The U.S. Navy is also working with Gabon to host a Senior Leader Seminar during the exercise, which will draw Chiefs of the Navies from many Gulf of Guinea states, as well as international partners and senior U.S. Navy leadership to a three-day maritime security seminar.

The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program consistently prioritizes developing the capacity of Gabonese naval officers. In FY 2017, Gabon sent two naval officers to further their military training at U.S. Navy and Coast Guard training centers. The Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)-funded Africa Maritime Security Initiative (AMSI) has supported the training of officers in Gabon on maritime topics including maintenance, management, and boarding team operations. Three commissioned Gabonese naval officers recently graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. The U.S. Embassy is working with these commissioned officers to ensure a positive impact on the Gabonese Navy and hopes to continue to provide technical to support qualified Gabonese candidates.

Environmental Conservation

In 2018, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will support the fifth year of a five-year cooperative agreement developed in collaboration with Gabon's National Parks Agency (ANPN). Through this agreement, USFWS partners with ANPN to address rapidly escalating threats to security, including elephant poaching and trans-boundary environmental crime. In addition, USFWS has stationed a Special Agent/Attaché at the Embassy in Libreville to partner with Gabonese authorities in the investigation of natural resource crimes. USFWS draws from its expertise in wildlife management to assist Gabon as it develops a protected area system and capable personnel to run it. USFWS also plans to continue support for small grants to non-governmental organizations to complement ANPN's activities.

With USFWS support, ANPN has successfully eliminated elephant poaching from the Wonga Wongué Presidential Reserve, whose bull elephants were previously heavily poached for their ivory. This approach is being replicated in other national parks in Gabon. USFWS support has also led to the establishment of a new Marine Protected Area (MPA) network via the 'Blue Gabon' initiative. In working towards an expanded MPA network, ANPN, in collaboration with the Gabonese Navy and Gabon's national fisheries agency, succeeded in bringing together diverse stakeholders ranging from coastal communities to companies involved in offshore oil production. The U.S. Government will also assist the Gabonese Armed Forces and ANPN Park Rangers to develop their civil-military operations capability to ameliorate a gap in the Government's ability to work with the local populace on anti-poaching efforts.

Question 18. Did Sao Tomé's MCC Threshold Program achieve its stated aims?

Answer. Sao Tomé's MCC Threshold Program was very successful. It helped the Government of Sao Tomé increase revenue through improved tax and customs administration and enforcement, and also helped streamline business registration procedures. Based solely on the success of its Threshold Program, Sao Tomé would usually be considered for a compact, but it is considered too small. If confirmed, I would like to explore opportunities for including STP in MCC regional programs or MCC programs that are designed to target small island nations, such as those in the Pacific.

Question 19. What kinds of U.S. assistance, if any, would you advocate for Sao Tomé?

Answer. If confirmed, I would advocate for assistance in agriculture and agribusiness development, environmental degradation, and rural development. It is worthwhile to note that Peace Corps suspended its program in Sao Tomé and Príncipe when it suspended its Gabon program in 2005, as the two programs were managed out of Libreville. If Peace Corps were to resume operating in Gabon, I would advocate for a corresponding return to Sao Tomé.

Question 20. What are the aims and status of U.S. maritime security capacity-building efforts in Sao Tomé, and the role of the IMET program?

Answer. Nearly all capacity-building occurs in the maritime security sector, where the U.S. works closely with the Sao Toméan Coast Guard. The United States led a multilateral effort with STP, Portugal, Brazil, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the development of STP's draft maritime security strategy. The strategy was approved in December 2017 by the Council of Ministers and awaits final approval by the National Assembly, the last remaining step before we can continue our assistance in supporting the development of an implementation plan.

The United States conducts security assistance training and annual military exercises with STP with the intent to help strengthen its maritime security capacity. The STP Coast Guard participates annually in the U.S. Navy-sponsored maritime security exercise OBANGAME EXPRESS, which Gabon will host in March 2018. STP has historically participated in limited fashion since 2011 by contributing some vessels, boarding teams, and use of its maritime operations center. Moreover, the U.S. Navy evaluates the STP Coast Guard's performance and programs training, when available, to assist in improving identified deficiencies.

In 2007, the United States installed the first shore-based sensor system, the Regional Maritime Awareness Capability, on Sao Tomé and Príncipe for maritime surveillance in the Gulf of Guinea. In 2010, the United States granted a 43-foot Archangel class patrol craft, using anti-terrorism funding. Both the sensor systems and vessel have suffered from a lack of maintenance due to insufficient funding within the Ministry of Defense and the Coast Guard, leaving both in a state of disrepair. Small Africa Maritime Security (AMS) Foreign Military Financing (FMF) grants have permitted some minimal maintenance. The U.S. Navy expects to spend $150,000 in repairs to the shore-based sensors systems in February 2018 and, dependent on the availability of funding, conduct around $200,000 in repairs to Archangel.

The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program focuses on professionalizing STP's Coast Guard through professional military education (PME), Expanded-IMET (E-IMET) focused on human rights and rule of law, and limited technical training. Over the past three years, the IMET program has enabled the U.S. Embassy in Libreville to send three Sao Toméan Coast Guard officers to further their professional military education at U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy training centers. Currently, the IMET program sponsors a Sao Toméan Lieutenant Colonel attending the U.S. Navy Command College in Newport, Rhode Island.

In late 2017, the Portuguese Navy announced that it would base the naval patrol craft "Zaire" in Sao Tomé. The plan is to have two 33-man crews, one from STP and the other from Portugal, to patrol the waters within STP's Exclusive Economic Zone starting in January 2018. Over the course of one year, Portugal will phase in STP Coast Guard crew members and replace Portuguese sailors. The end state of this operation is STP taking complete control of the mission, comprised of only STP sailors, by January 2019. To support this endeavor, AFRICOM aims to start the process of integrating STP and Portugal into the Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) with the vessel as possible means to eventually conduct combined operations in the Gulf of Guinea with a U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET).

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO PETER VROOMAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question 1. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. During the course of my Foreign Service career, I have drafted or supervised the drafting of numerous Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights, including reports on Djibouti, Lebanon, Israel, and Ethiopia. When I served as the country desk officer for Algeria, I worked with the American Bar Association, which conveyed a "Rule of Law letter" to the Algerian Government on the case of another defense attorney who had been arrested and was later acquitted. I developed a strategy with our Embassy in Algiers and several international election monitoring organizations for observing the 1997 legislative elections, which, while flawed, marked the evolution toward more democratic government after years of violent conflict.At the United Nations, I worked with other diplomats to call for a Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi death camps. This session provided an opportunity for Elie Wiesel to address representatives of Member States, and its most significant impact was the establishment of an annual Holocaust Remembrance Day at the United Nations. In Israel, our team supported local NGO efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants and trafficking victims. As spokesperson of the U.S. Embassy in India, I promoted the rights of the Girl Child and efforts to combat gender-based violence. For example, in the wake of several horrific rape cases in Delhi, our Embassy nominated an Indian victim as an International Woman of Courage.Q

Question 2. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Rwanda? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Rwanda? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. The State Department's most recent human rights report notes that the most important human rights issues in Rwanda are government harassment and arrest of political dissidents; restrictions on media freedom and civil liberties; and restrictions on and harassment of nongovernmental organizations. If confirmed, I would continue to consistently engage in a frank dialogue with the Government on human rights issues. I would ensure that Embassy staff attend relevant trials that are open to the public. I would also look for opportunities to sustain our engagement and programming with respect to promoting the rule of law, a vibrant civil society, and freedom of expression.

Question 3. 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 Rwanda in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Rwanda often replies to criticism of its human rights record that it is a sovereign country with a unique context and that outside actors should not interfere in its internal affairs, particularly after the failure of the international community to intervene to prevent the 1994 genocide. Our challenge is convincing the Government that efforts to silence critics run counter to Rwanda's development goals and constitutionally enshrined rights, and that greater respect for freedom of expression and media freedoms are crucial to fostering the knowledge-based economy the Government seeks to build.

Question 4. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights

NGOs in Rwanda? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. I am committed to meeting with U.S. and local human rights and civil society organizations, if confirmed. If confirmed, I will also ensure that my staff fully complies with the Leahy Law and similar efforts.

Question 5. Will you and your Embassy team actively engage with Rwanda to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Rwanda?

Answer. Yes, my Embassy team and I will actively engage with Rwanda on such cases.

Question 6. Will you engage with Rwanda on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Rwandan officials on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance. These issues are indispensable to our bilateral diplomacy and central to our efforts to ensure that Rwanda consolidates the socioeconomic gains it has made in the past decades.

Question 7. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 8. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question 9. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in the Rwanda?

Answer. Neither I nor any members of my immediate family have any financial interests in Rwanda.

Question 10. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. In 1991, I entered the Foreign Service with two classmates who were the first two blind Foreign Service Officers. Their service inspired me to promote an inclusive workplace. I subsequently served as an EEO Counselor at two large U.S. embassies and this experience has greatly enhanced my toolkit for promoting the respect for and encouragement of diversity in the workplace. For example, I recommended mission-wide training and sensitization regarding sexual harassment in the workplace at three embassies. In one instance, I succeeded in removing a local guard supervisor who had created a hostile work environment for female employees. The removal of this bully not only addressed a valid EEO complaint, but also allowed for the development of a more tolerant and inclusive workforce environment that benefited all employees at the Embassy. My message as a mentor and a leader has been to encourage everyone at our missions to know their EEO rights and their reporting responsibilities regarding harassment and discrimination. If confirmed, I would ensure that all employees take required No FEAR Act training and EEO sensitization aimed at advancing this objective.

Question 11. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. In Addis Ababa, I chaired an interagency Inclusiveness Working Group that included supervisors and managers to look for ways to promote this value internally within our mission and externally in our public diplomacy and programmatic outreach. For example, we looked for concrete ways to promote awareness of the challenges faced by disabled persons. We awarded community grants to local NGOs and took steps to make sure that the Embassy, the Ambassador's residence, and our American space in Addis Ababa are accessible to disabled persons. We created a Disability Advisor position within our human resources section to promote accessibility, accommodation strategies, and more effective recruitment policies

for our own staff. If confirmed, I would look forward to engaging in similar initiatives with our country team in Rwanda and will ensure that all Department of State supervisors have taken required leadership courses regarding EEO/Diversity and the fundamentals of supervision at the Foreign Service Institute, or other accredited leadership training institutions.

Question 12. On December 6, the U.N. Committee Against Torture released its concluding observations after a routine review of the situation in Rwanda. During the review, committee members raised concerns about serious violations—including torture, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, and intimidation of journalists, human rights defenders and opposition party members. What role should the U.S. play in addressing the concerns raised by the U.N. with the Rwandan Government?

Answer. The U.S. Government has repeatedly expressed concerns about torture; extrajudicial killings; enforced disappearances; and intimidation of journalists, human rights defenders, and opposition figures in Rwanda. Our Embassy has also encouraged senior members of the Rwandan Government to engage with U.N. bodies and international human rights organizations to address credible allegations of human rights violations. If confirmed, I will continue to raise these concerns with the Rwandan Government. I will also encourage the Government of Rwanda to continue to investigate allegations of torture and to bring additional perpetrators of torture to justice, as the committee against torture highlighted in its second periodic report (CAT/C/RWA/CO/2) regarding Rwandan Government efforts to date.

Question 13. Rwanda is ranked 50th of 176 on Transparency International's Corruption Index. In what sectors is most official corruption found in Rwanda?

Answer. Rwanda is ranked among the least corrupt countries in Africa, and the government has been proactive in addressing corruption when it occurs. While corruption is not prevalent within any specific economic sectors, there are occasional cases of misuse of public funds. Rwanda's National Public Prosecution Authority routinely prosecutes civil servants, police, and other officials for fraud, petty corruption, awarding of public tenders illegally, embezzlement, and mismanagement of public assets. In 2017, the vice rector of the University of Rwanda and the managing directors of the Water and Sanitation Agency and the Energy Utility Corporation were arrested on corruption charges. Between September 2016 and August 2017, 203 individuals—mostly local leaders and administrative staff members—were convicted of embezzlement.

Question 14. If confirmed, what tools do you have at your disposal to help address corruption and what actions will you take as Ambassador to advocate for improvement in transparency and good governance with relevant Rwandan stakeholders?

Answer. The Government of Rwanda has stated its commitment to eradicate official corruption. Our Embassy is actively engaged in advocating for improvements in fiscal transparency with senior Rwandan officials and in promoting capacity building for local officials and administrative staff to improve good governance and management of public resources. If confirmed, I would continue these efforts.

Question 15. The State Department has ranked Rwanda "Tier 2 Watchlist" on trafficking in persons. If confirmed, what types of U.S. diplomatic efforts and assistance, if any, would you pursue to help Rwanda better tackle this problem?

Answer. The United States is supporting Rwanda's efforts to address the concerns raised in the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report through multiple initiatives geared to improving inter-government coordination on TIP and boosting investigative and prosecutorial capacity. For example, in January 2017, USAID awarded a $1.3 million grant to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to assist Rwanda in combatting trafficking.

If confirmed, I would monitor the effectiveness of this new program, along with other U.S. Government-funded initiatives to combat trafficking in persons and continue to make the issue a priority in our diplomatic engagement with the Government of Rwanda.

Question 16. In what ways might such efforts [to combat human trafficking] be incorporated into existing U.S. programs that aim to help strengthen Rwanda's security sector and the rule of law?

Answer. In March 2017, the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) awarded a targeted technical assistance grant to the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime for investigative and prosecutorial training.

J/TIP has also approved an additional award for FY 2018 to the International Organization for Migration to combat TIP, including in refugee camps, that complements the existing USAID grant to IOM.

If confirmed, I would look for synergies between these programs and existing police-training programs that the U.S. Government supports, such as the International Law Enforcement Academy and police, peacekeeping, and capacity-building programs. I would also encourage the Government of Rwanda to address recommendations identified in our TIP report.

Question 17. What steps has Rwanda taken, if any, to address alleged official involvement in Burundian refugee recruitment into armed groups in 2015–2016?

Answer. In 2016, the Government of Rwanda adopted new guidelines on refugee camp management, which explicitly outlawed recruitment and trafficking-in-persons in refugee camps and imposed criminal sanctions for these actions. There were no credible reports of Rwandan authorities' involvement in the recruitment of refugees into armed groups from Rwanda's refugee camps in 2017, and Rwanda was removed from the Child Soldier Prevention Act list in 2017.

Question 18. The U.S. has invested heavily in development and peacekeeping in Rwanda over the past two decades. What impacts, if any, might the administration's proposal to decrease funding for health and development programs have on Rwanda, if implemented? What democracy-promotion programs might be feasible, if any?

Answer. U.S. assistance in Rwanda has improved basic health services, expanded economic opportunities in rural areas, strengthened agricultural production and food security, prepared youth to contribute to the transitioning economy, and encouraged citizen-responsive governance. USAID will continue to find effective ways to leverage private sector and local resources to advance these development goals and support Rwanda's efforts to reduce its reliance on foreign assistance. USAID supports a number of targeted activities to promote the rule of law, human rights, civil society, and the media. These activities include strengthening local NGO capacity to engage in policy-making, improving the ability of the media to provide independent and impartial information to objectively inform citizens, and skills training for judges to issue accessible and transparent decisions.

Question 19. What lessons can we draw from Rwanda's response to criticism and military aid restrictions imposed in reaction to Rwanda's support for rebel groups in DRC and Burundi?

Answer. Rwanda defends fiercely its reputation and actions when challenged by international partners and NGOs and is quick to issue defensive responses to any evidence or reports linking the Government to wrongdoing. However, Rwanda also cares about its international reputation, and in some instances has taken corrective steps in the past in response to concerns about its actions in the region when met with sustained criticism and especially punitive measures that affect its access to international aid. Coordinated messaging from the international community, including the United States, has been important in encouraging Rwanda to play a constructive role in supporting peace and stability in the Great Lakes region, including in the DRC.

Question 20. Rwanda is named in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Strategy for Accelerating HIV/AIDS Epidemic Control (2017–2020) as one of 13 high-burdened countries prioritized for investment during the life of the strategy to achieve the 90-90-90 targets by 2020, whereby 90 percent of people living with HIV know their status, 90 percent of people who know their status are accessing treatment and 90 percent of people on treatment are virally suppressed. What are the main challenges facing the country in achieving their 90-90-90 goal?

Answer. Because Rwanda is in the "last mile" to reach the 90-90-90 goals, finding the remaining HIV-positive individuals is the country's greatest challenge. Therefore, the PEPFAR program in Rwanda is focusing on finding undiagnosed HIV-positive individuals in specific key populations (commercial sex workers, men who have sex with men, etc.) who have the highest prevalence rates and getting them onto antiretroviral treatment. PEPFAR is also increasing its testing efforts in geographic areas that have the highest HIV prevalence rates (i.e. the three districts of Kigali) and supporting proven interventions to reduce new infections.

Question 21. If confirmed, what will you do to support Rwanda and its communities in achieving that [90-90-90] goal?

Answer. In addition to increasing efforts to find, test, and treat the remaining undiagnosed HIV-positive individuals, it is imperative to continue providing support to direct services in order to maintain the impressive results Rwanda has already achieved in putting and keeping people living with HIV on treatment, which is key for viral suppression. If confirmed, I would concentrate my efforts on ensuring that the Government of Rwanda continues to foster an environment that enables these successes to continue, while strengthening its own domestic health investments. As such, I would work closely with senior government leaders to support the implementation of PEPFAR activities and initiatives to reach the 90-90-90 goal and maintain the U.S. taxpayers' investment in a program that has saved tens of thousands of lives in Rwanda and millions of lives throughout the African continent.

APPENDIX

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations During the First Session of the 115th Congress

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with Important Dates

115th Congress, First Session

Name	Position	Referred to Committee	Hearing	Business Meeting	Reported Out of Committee	Placed on Sen. Exec. Cal.	Confirmed	Returned to President
Andre, Larry Jr.	Amb. to Djibouti	9/5/2017	10/3/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Arreaga, Luis E.	Amb. to Guatemala	6/29/2017	7/19/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Balerin, Peter H.	Amb. to Republic of Cameroon	7/19/2017	10/3/2017	10/26/2018	10/26/2018	10/26/2018	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Bass, John R.	Amb. to Islamic Repub. of Afghanistan	7/27/2017	9/12/2017	9/19/2017	9/19/2017	9/19/2017	9/28/2017: Voice Vote	
Bierman, Brock D.	Assist. Admin. of USAID	10/16/2017	11/30/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/21/2017: Voice Vote	
Bohigian, David	Exec VP of OPIC	6/6/2017	7/11/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Braithwaite, Kenneth J.	Amb. to Norway	10/23/2017	11/30/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/21/2017: Voice Vote	
Branstad, Terry	Amb. to China	1/20/2017	5/2/2017	5/9/2017	5/9/2017	5/9/2017	5/22/2017: Roll Call 82/13	
Brewer, Maria E.	Amb. to Sierra Leone	6/26/2017	7/26/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Brown, Scott	Amb. to New Zealand and Samoa	4/25/2017	5/17/2017	5/25/2017	5/25/2017	5/25/2017	6/8/2017: Roll Call 94/4	

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with Important Dates

115th Congress, First Session – continued

Name	Position	Referred to Committee	Hearing	Business Meeting	Reported Out of Committee	Placed on Sen. Exec. Cal.	Confirmed	Returned to President
Brownback, Samuel	Amb.-at-Large for Intn'l. Religious Freedom	7/27/2017	10/3/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017		1/3/2018[1]
Buchan, Richard III	Amb. to Spain and Andorra	8/3/2017	9/27/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Carter, Thomas	Rep. on Council of the Intn'l. Civil Aviation Org.	9/5/2017	10/18/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Craft, Kelly	Amb. to Canada	6/15/2017	7/20/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Currie, Kelley	Economic and Social Council of the U.N., and Alt. Rep. to U.N. Gen. Assembly	6/26/2017	7/11/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Danies, Joe	Amb. to Gabonese Repub. and Sao Tome and Prinicipe	11/1/2017	11/19/2017	1/18/2018	1/18/2018	1/18/2018	2/15/2018: Voice Vote	
Day, Sharon	Amb. to Costa Rica	6/15/2017	7/19/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Desrocher, John	Amb. to People's Dem. Repub. of Algeria	6/26/2017	7/26/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	

[1] Governor Brownback's nomination was resubmitted on January 8, 2018; he was confirmed by a Roll Call Vote (50/49) on January 24, 2018.

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with Important Dates

115th Congress, First Session – continued

Name	Position	Referred to Committee	Hearing	Business Meeting	Reported Out of Committee	Placed on Sen. Exec. Cal.	Confirmed	Returned to President
Dodman, Michael	Amb. to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania	7/27/2017	10/4/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Dowd, J. Steven	Director of the AFDB	7/27/2017	9/12/2017	9/26/2017	9/26/2017	9/26/2017	10/05/2017: Voice Vote	
Eisenberg, Lewis	Amb. to Italy	7/11/2017	7/20/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Evanoff, Michael	Assist. Sec. of State (Diplomatic Security)	9/5/2017	10/18/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Evans, James	Amb. to Luxembourg	9/28/2017	11/1/2017	12/5/2017	12/05/2017	12/5/2017		1/3/2018[2]
Fite, Nina	Amb. to Angola	9/5/2017	10/3/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Fitzpatrick, Kathleen	Amb. to Timor-Leste	7/25/2017	9/27/2017	10/26/2018	10/26/2017	10/26/2018	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Foote, Daniel	Amb. to Zambia	9/5/2017		10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Ford, Christopher	Assist. SoS (International Security and Non-Proliferation)	11/2/2017	11/28/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/21/2017: Voice Vote	
Friedman, David	Amb. to Israel	1/20/2017	2/16/2017	3/9/2017	3/9/2017	3/9/2017	3/23/2017: Roll Call 52/46	

[2] Mr. Evans's nomination was resubmitted on January 8, 2018; he was confirmed by Roll Call Vote (48/43) on May 24, 2018.

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with Important Dates

115th Congress, First Session – continued

Name	Position	Referred to Committee	Hearing	Business Meeting	Reported Out of Committee	Placed on Sen. Exec. Cal.	Confirmed	Returned to President
Gingrich, Callista	Amb. to the Holy See	5/25/2017	7/18/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	10/16/2017: Roll Call 70/23	
Glass, George	Amb. to Portuguese Republic	6/19/2017	7/18/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Goldstein, Irwin	Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy	9/28/2017	10/25/2017	11/14/2017	11/14/2017	11/14/2017	11/16/2017: Voice Vote	
Gonzales, Rebecca	Amb. to Lesotho	9/12/2017	10/25/2017	11/14/2017	11/14/2017	11/14/2017	11/16/2017: Voice Vote	
Green, Mark	Admin. to USAID	5/10/2017	6/15/2017	7/12/2017	7/12/2017	7/12/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Grenell, Richard	Amb. to Germany	9/5/2017	9/27/2017			10/26/2017		1/3/2018[3]
Hagerty, William IV	Amb. to Japan	3/27/2017	5/9/2017	6/7/2017	6/7/2017	6/7/2017	7/13/2017: Roll Call 86/12	
Haley, Nikki	Amb. to U.N. and Rep. to 72nd Session of the UNGA	1/20/2017	1/24/2017	1/24/2018	1/24/2017	1/24/2017	1/24/2017: Roll Call 96/4	
Haskell, Todd	Amb. to Congo	2/28/2017	4/26/2017	5/9/2017	5/9/2017	5/9/2017	5/18/2017: Voice Vote	
Hoekstra, Peter	Amb. to Netherlands	7/27/2017	9/27/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/09/2017: Voice Vote	
Huntsman, Jon	Amb. to Russia	7/20/2017	9/19/2017	9/26/2017	9/26/2017	9/26/2017	09/28/2017: Voice Vote	

[3] Richard Grenell's nomination was resubmitted on January 8, 2018; he was confirmed by Roll Call Vote (56/42) on April 26, 2018.

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with Important Dates

115th Congress, First Session – continued

Name	Position	Referred to Committee	Hearing	Business Meeting	Reported Out of Committee	Placed on Sen. Exec. Cal.	Confirmed	Returned to President
Hutchison, Kay Bailey	Rep. to NATO Council	6/29/2017	7/20/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Johnson, Lisa	Amb. to Namibia	10/5/2017	11/1/2017	11/14/2017	11/14/2017	11/14/2017	11/16/2017: Voice Vote	
Johnson, Robert IV	Amb. to UK of GB and Northern Ireland	6/26/2017	7/20/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Juster, Kenneth	Amb. to India	9/5/2017	10/3/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
King, Stephen	Amb. to Czech Republic	7/11/2017	8/1/2017	9/19/2017	9/19/2017	9/19/2017	10/05/2017: Voice Vote	
Kohorst, W. Robert	Amb. to Croatia	9/5/2017	10/5/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Kritenbrink, Daniel	Amb. to Vietnam	7/27/2017	9/27/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017: Voice Vote	
Lawler, Sean	Chief of Protocol	9/28/2017	11/1/2017	11/14/2017	11/14/2017	11/14/2017	11/16/2017: Voice Vote	
Manchester, Douglas	Amb. to The Bahamas	5/16/2017	8/2/2017	9/19/2017	9/19/2017	9/19/2017		1/3/2018[4]
McCourt, Jamie	Amb. to French Rep and Monaco	8/2/2017	7/26/2017	8/2/2017	8/2/2017	8/2/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
McFarland, Kathleen	Amb. to Singapore	6/15/2017	7/20/2017	9/19/2017	9/19/2017	9/19/2017		1/3/2018[5]

[4] Mr. Manchester's nomination has not been resubmitted.
[5] In early February 2018, Ms. McFarland withdrew from consideration to be Ambassador to Singapore.

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with Important Dates

115th Congress, First Session – continued

Name	Position	Referred to Committee	Hearing	Business Meeting	Reported Out of Committee	Placed on Sen. Exec. Cal.	Confirmed	Returned to President
McClenny, M. Lee	Amb. to Paraguay	10/30/2017	11/30/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/21/2017: Voice Vote	
McMullen, Edward	Amb. to Swiss Confederation and Liechtenstein	9/5/2017	9/27/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Mitchell, A. Wess	Assistant SoS (European and Eurasian Affairs)	7/25/2017	9/19/2017	9/26/2017	9/26/2017	9/26/2017	09/28/2017: Voice Vote	
Murray, Jay	U.N. Special Political Affairs and Alt. Rep. to U.N. Gen. Assembly	5/10/2017	7/11/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017		1/3/2018[6]
Mushingi, Tulinabo	Amb. to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau	2/28/2017	4/26/2017	5/9/2017	5/9/2017	5/9/2017	5/18/2017: Voice Vote	
Newstead, Jennifer	Legal Advisor of State	9/5/2017	10/18/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	12/19/2017: Roll Call 88/11	
Poblete, Yleem	Assist. SoS (Verification and Compliance)	10/16/2017	11/28/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017	12/5/2017		1/3/2018[7]
Raynor, Michael	Amb. to Ethiopia	5/25/2017	7/26/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Reimer, David	Amb. to Mauritius and Seychelles	9/5/2017	10/3/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	

[6] Mr. Murray's nomination has not been resubmitted.
[7] Ms. Poblete's nomination was resubmitted on January 8, 2018; she was confirmed by Voice Vote on April 26, 2018.

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with Important Dates

115th Congress, First Session – continued

Name	Position	Referred to Committee	Hearing	Business Meeting	Reported Out of Committee	Placed on Sen. Exec. Cal.	Confirmed	Returned to President
Risch, Carl	Assist. SoS (Consular Affairs)	6/26/2017	7/18/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Sales, Nathan	Coordinator for Counterterrorism	6/15/2017	7/18/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Sands, Carla	Amb. to Denmark	9/12/2017	10/5/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Siberall, Justin	Amb. to Kingdom or Bahrain	7/27/2017	9/12/2017	9/26/2017	9/26/2017	9/26/2017	09/28/2017: Voice Vote	
Singh, Manisha	Assist. SoS (Economic and Business Affairs)	9/12/2017	10/18/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017 : Voice Vote	
Sison, Michele	Amb. to Haiti	7/27/2017	10/4/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	
Sullivan, John	Deputy Secretary of State	4/25/2017	5/9/2017	5/16/2017	5/16/2017	5/16/2017	5/24/2017: Roll Call 94/6	
Tillerson, Rex	Secretary of State	1/20/2017	1/11/2017	1/23/2017	1/23/2017	1/23/2017	2/1/2017: Roll Call 55/43	
Trujillo, Carlos	Perm. Rep. to the OAS	10/30/2017	11/30/2017	1/18/2018	1/18/2018	1/18/2018	3/22/2018: Voice Vote	
Ueland, Eric	Under Secretary of State for Management	6/15/2017	7/12/2017	11/14/2017	12/5/2017			1/3/2018[8]

[8] Mr. Ueland's nomination was resubmitted on January 8, 2018, placed on the Senate Executive Calendar on February 7, 2018, and withdrawn from consideration on June 18, 2018.

Alphabetical Listing of Nominees Considered by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, with Important Dates

115th Congress, First Session – continued

Name	Position	Referred to Committee	Hearing	Business Meeting	Reported Out of Committee	Placed on Sen. Exec. Cal.	Confirmed	Returned to President
Urs, Krishna	Amb. to Peru	6/29/2017	7/19/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Vrooman, Peter	Amb. to the Repub. of Rwanda	10/30/2017	11/19/2017			2/7/2018	2/15/2018: Voice Vote	
Washburne, Ray	President of OPIC	6/6/2017	7/11/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	7/27/2017	8/3/2017: Voice Vote	
Whitaker, Eric	Amb. to Niger	9/5/2017	10/3/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	10/26/2017	11/2/2017: Voice Vote	

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