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NOMINATIONS OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JANUARY 3, 2020 TO JANUARY 3, 2021

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations

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NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m., by video conference, Hon. John Barrasso, presiding.

Present: Senators Barrasso [presiding], Gardner, Romney, Young, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, and Booker.

Ex Officio: Senator Risch.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator BARRASSO. Good afternoon. I would like to call to order this hearing of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

I hope everyone is staying healthy and safe during these unprecedented times. The coronavirus has impacted people across our country in many ways. Americans have lost their loves or become seriously ill. Healthcare workers and essential employees are working diligently around the clock. Businesses and schools are closed. We are learning how to adapt to the ever-evolving situation, including in Congress. So, as a way to ensure the Senate can continue to do our work, we are conducting the first remote hearing in this committee. Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, the hearing today is a little different from the traditional format, but I know we can all rise to the challenge.

Our committee is meeting today to examine the nominations of five individuals to serve their Nation's interests across the globe. These nominees are joining us from all over the country.

I want to welcome all of you and congratulate you on your nomination to these important positions. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to your friends and your family who are watching from home.

Should you serve our Nation in these important positions, it is critical that each of you provides strong stewardship of American taxpayer resources; demonstrate professionalism and good judgment; and vigorously work to advance the priorities of the United States.

During your testimony, I hope that each of you will lay out your vision and goals for the position in—to which you have been nominated, and how you plan to achieve them.

I would now like to take a moment to introduce our nominees to the committee:

Natalie Brown is the nominee to the U.S. to be Ambassador to Uganda. She is a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor. Ms. Brown was previously the Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy in Eritrea, in East Africa. She also previously held the positions of Deputy Permanent Representative and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations Agencies in Rome. During her career, she has also served overseas at U.S. Embassies in Tunisia, Jordan, Kuwait, Ethiopia, and Guinea.

Ramsey Day is the nominee to be the USAID's Assistant Administrator for the African Bureau. Mr. Day is currently the Assistant to the Administrator from the Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Learning. He previously worked as Senior Director at the International Republican Institute, IRI, and the IRI County Director in Jordan. Throughout his career, Mr. Day has held numerous positions within the international development and foreign policy communities in the United States as well as overseas.

Sandra Clark is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso. She is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor. Since 2017, Ms. Clark has been the Deputy—the Director of the Office of West African Affairs in the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs. She has also held the position of the Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. Embassy in Senegal. During her career, Ms. Clark also served overseas at U.S. Embassies in the United Kingdom, Georgia, France, and Nigeria.

William Grayson has been nominated to be U.S. Ambassador to Estonia. He is currently serving as the National Director of the Family Offices of the Bernstein Private Wealth Management in San Francisco, California. With over 2 years of—two decades of experience, he has valuable knowledge in investment, marketing, and management positions in large global investment firms. Mr. Grayson's public service included appointments under four presidents. President George Herbert Walker Bush appointed him to be Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Army, where he oversaw the Army's 2,700 lawyers. He is the recipient of the Outstanding Civilian Service Award from the Secretary of the Army.

And Henry Wooster is the nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Jordan. He is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor. Mr. Wooster is currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Maghreb and—or Egypt in the Bureau of Northeastern Affairs. He has previously worked as the Deputy Chief of Mission and then Chargés d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Jordan. Mr. Wooster has also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in the U.S. Embassy in France.

This is clearly an impressive group of nominees.

And I would like to now turn over the meeting to Ranking Member Booker for his opening comment.

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

Senator BOOKER. Yeah, Mr. Chairman, can you hear me?

Senator BARRASSO. I can hear you very well, thank you.

Senator BOOKER. Great. I am just going to submit my remarks to the record, with the exception of just saying two things.

One is, I am just really grateful that you are assuming the chairmanship of the subcommittee after Senator Isakson's retirement. We are definitely going to miss him, but I look forward, really, to working with you.

And, obviously, we have severe crises when it comes to COVID. The World Health Organization is talking about a potentially catastrophic impact, and we are already seeing significant infections.

So, I am looking forward to the work we have before us, and to working with many of the nominees. I am looking forward to the questions, but I will submit my formal remarks for the record. I have delayed the meeting long enough with the technical difficulties.

[The prepared statement of Senator Booker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Thank you to the nominees for your participation in today's hearing and for your willingness to serve your country in these challenging times.

I want to welcome and congratulate Senator Barrasso for assuming the Chairmanship of the subcommittee after Senator Isakson's retirement. We certainly miss Senator Isakson, but look forward to working with you.

The posts to which you have been nominated will certainly demand a great deal from you. Burkina Faso is one of the worst affected countries by the COVID–19 pandemic in Africa, Jordan faces political and economic instability, and the Assistant Administrator at USAID, will be tasked with helping to lead what will be a much needed humanitarian response.

Last week, the World Health Organization said that nearly 200,000 people in Africa could die of coronavirus in the first year of the pandemic and 29 to 44 million be infected during the period. While the virus has been slow to spread in the continent and there are indications that it won't spread as exponentially as it has in the U.S. and Europe, it could linger in transmission hotspots suggesting a more prolonged outbreak over a few years. The WHO further said "COVID–19 could become a fixture in our lives for the next several years unless a proactive approach is taken by many governments in Africa." Meanwhile many governments in Africa look to upend hard fought democratic norms under the cover the of COVID–19 pandemic.

I look forward to hearing from our nominees to Uganda, Burkina Faso, and USAID about how they will address the coronavirus's impacts on Day 1 if confirmed to their new posts, and how they will address the secondary effects of the virus—including the upending of democratic norms, the plight of internally displaced people, and potential outbreaks of other diseases such as polio and measles, as vaccination campaigns have been paused.

I also look forward to hearing about how we can bolster the U.S. relationship with two critical allies, Jordan and Estonia, as regional circumstances demand continued U.S. support.

Thank you to the nominees for bearing with us in a non-traditional hearing setting, and to the Chairman for working with us to resume our committee's activities under these new circumstances. Again, I look forward to working with you and your staff in this subcommittee.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you so much, Senator Booker.

And this is our first hearing together as subcommittee leadership, and I do look very much forward to many more opportunities for the two of us to work together in the year ahead.

Now, all of the positions that the committee is discussing today are very important. We look forward to hearing the testimony from each of the five of you.

And I will let you know that your full statements will be entered into the record in its entirety. So, I ask that you summarize your testimony in about 5 minutes in order for members to have an opportunity to ask questions.

The order that we will go in, we will start with Ms. Brown first, and then Mr. Day, then Ms. Clark, then Mr. Grayson, and then Mr. Wooster will be our final one to testify, and then we will go to questions.

So, with that, Ms. Brown, I will welcome you and congratulate you and ask you to start.

STATEMENT OF NATALIE E. BROWN, OF NEBRASKA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Ms. BROWN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda.

I appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary have placed in me by submitting my name for consideration, and I welcome the opportunity to speak with you today in this innovative format.

If confirmed, I pledge to work with you, directly or virtually, to advance our Nation's interest in Uganda.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to acknowledge family members cheering me on from afar, as, without their support, encouragement, and sacrifices, I would not be with you today:

My mother, Betty Brown's love of geography and interest in global events made me curious about the world. And I thank my sister, Daryle Glynn Brown, who is both my staunchest supporter and my toughest critic, for always challenging me to do better. And with me today in spirit are my father, Eugene, whose 27 years as a police officer inspired my career in Foreign Service—in public service; my dear friend, Fay Holl, whom I met on my first diplomatic assignment and who provided a home away from home over the years; and my fiancé, Fikret Yildiz, who passed away recently, most likely a victim of the pandemic that has claimed far too many lives globally, and who was looking forward to joining the State Department family.

Mr. Chairman, Senators, in eight countries across Africa and the Middle East, as well as in Washington, I have had the great privilege of representing the United States and advancing American interests, from assisting American citizens in need, to helping iden-

tify business opportunities for American companies. I supported Kuwaiti women in their first efforts to vote and run for elected office and vote, and time spent at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College was a chance to learn more about my uniformed colleagues and their roles in protecting American interests.

Coupled with this substantive background is experience in directing U.S. foreign policy and mentoring the next generation of American diplomats. Most recently, I served as Chief of Mission in Asmara, Eritrea, where my team worked to revitalize long-strained relations amid political and security change in the Horn of Africa. In Rome, as the Deputy in our Mission to the U.N. Food Agencies, we coordinated across the U.S. Government to build consensus with international partners in alleviating hunger and ensuring the responsible contributions—the responsible use of contributions to the U.N. system. I was also Deputy Chief of Mission in Tunisia, and a high point of my career remains the substantial support from the United States to that country and its people as they transitioned from dictatorship to democracy. I believe these experiences have prepared me well to guide and support our country team in Uganda and its work on some of the world's most challenging issues.

Mr. Chairman, over the past 25 years, the United States and Uganda have cooperated to counter terrorism and promote stability, particularly in Somalia, to encourage economic growth and prosperity evidenced by increasing private U.S. investment in the country, and to curb the spread of pandemics, such as COVID–19. Here, Uganda's experience in combating HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and other infectious diseases, bolstered by significant long-term technical and material support from the United States, is helping to set an example. We have made notable progress, and, if confirmed, my team and I will work hard to continue and, hopefully, accelerate this trend.

Regrettably, there are areas tilting the opposite direction. Strengthening Uganda's multiparty democracy, promoting good governance, combating official corruption, and reinforcing respect for human rights, including for marginalized populations, are key U.S. policy priorities and, if confirmed, areas on which I intend to focus.

Uganda will hold elections in early 2021, and President Museveni is expected to seek a sixth term. If confirmed, I will encourage him to ensure the political space required for an open and vibrant process with free and full participation. Given Uganda's influence in the region, this is important, not only for the future of the country and its people, but also for its neighbors.

Mr. Chairman, key to much of Uganda's progress in combating terrorism, growing the economy, and taking care of its people are the significant investments by the United States in security, agriculture, and education. The majority of our assistance targets the health sector, with a historical special focus on achieving HIV epidemic control, and fighting malaria, as a healthier population is essential to Uganda's continued development. If confirmed, I will work with Uganda to maintain momentum on its achievements in health and to prepare for the day when it assumes full responsibility for the programs now funded by the United States.

On the critical issue of economic growth, with 80 percent of Uganda's population under the age of 30, in order to compete in the global marketplace, it is vital that Uganda encourage and promote job creation, technological advances, and foreign investment. Harnessing the potential of this tremendous youth bulge as a force for economic ingenuity and prosperity will also serve as a counter to violent extremism and despair. Partnering with U.S. firms can help achieve these goals and create jobs in both countries. If confirmed, I will strive to expand trade and commercial ties between the United States and Uganda for the advancement of both of our nations.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Brown follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATALIE E. BROWN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda. I appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary have placed in me by submitting my name to this body for consideration, and I welcome the opportunity to speak with you today in this innovative format. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you—directly or virtually—to advance our nation's interests in Uganda.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to acknowledge my family members without whose support, encouragement, and sacrifices, I would not be with you today.

It was my mother, Betty Brown's, love of geography and interest in global events that made me curious about the world, and it has been a delight to travel with her to many of the places we read about in my National Geographic Children's Atlas.

My sister Daryle Glynn Brown has been my staunchest supporter, as well as my toughest critic—like most siblings—and I thank her for always challenging me to do better.

And with me in spirit today are my father Eugene, whose 27 years as a police officer inspired my career in public service; my dear friend Fay Holl, whom I met on my first diplomatic assignment and who provided a home away from home throughout the course of my career; and my fiancé Fikret Yildiz, who passed away recently, most likely a victim of pandemic that has claimed far too many lives globally, and who was looking forward to joining the State Department family.

Mr. Chairman/Senators since 1990, in eight countries, primarily in Africa and the Middle East, as well as in Washington, I have had the great privilege of representing the United States and the American people, of advancing American interests, and of promoting our democratic values. In doing so, I have assisted American citizens in need and adjudicated visa applications of people interested in visiting the United States, I have helped identify overseas business opportunities for American companies and I was proud to support Kuwaiti women in their very first efforts to vote and run for elected office. In what was for me the most "foreign" of my assignments, I even spent a year at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, getting to better know my uniformed colleagues and their varied roles in protecting American interests.

In addition to this substantive experience, I am grateful for the leadership opportunities afforded to me to in directing U.S. foreign policy and mentoring the next generation of Foreign Service Officers. For example, I recently concluded a three-year assignment as Chief of Mission in Asmara, Eritrea, where my small team and I worked to revitalize long-strained relations against a backdrop of profound political and security change in the Horn of Africa. In Rome, as Deputy Permanent Representative of our Mission to the U.N. Food Agencies, my colleagues and I coordinated with numerous United States agencies in building consensus with a range of partners to alleviate hunger and ensure responsible use of contributions to the U.N. agencies. I was also Deputy Chief of Mission in Tunisia as that country transitioned from dictatorship to democracy. There, the U.S. response to that transformation was swift and substantial, and one of the highlights of my career remains our work with the Tunisian people to instill democratic practices.

I believe the sum of these experiences has prepared me well to work with and guide our country team in Uganda, which is working on some of the world's most

challenging issues, including threats to peace and stability, massive refugee flows, rapid population growth, and corruption. Of course, in the headlines today are efforts to curb the spread of pandemic disease. Here, Uganda's experience in combatting HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and other infectious diseases, bolstered by significant long-term technical and materiel support from the United States, is helping to set an example for many others.

Mr. Chairman/Senators, the United States and Uganda have enjoyed a solid bilateral relationship over the past 25 years, cooperating to counter terrorism and promote stability, particularly in Somalia; to encourage economic growth and prosperity, evidenced by increasing private U.S. investment in the country; and, as noted, to curb the spread of pandemics. We have made notable progress on all fronts and, if confirmed, my team and I will work hard to continue and hopefully accelerate this trend.

The urgency of the current global health crisis, however, should not detract from other areas warranting continued serious attention and engagement. Strengthening Uganda's multiparty democracy, promoting good governance, combatting corruption, and reinforcing respect for human rights, including for marginalized populations, are key U.S policy priorities. Regrettably, these are also areas where the trend is not so positive and where there have even been efforts to stifle voices and curb political aspirations. If confirmed, these are areas on which I intend to focus.

Uganda will hold elections in early 2021, during which President Museveni is expected to seek a sixth term. If confirmed, I will urge President Museveni to ensure the political space required for an open and vibrant campaign with the free and full participation of all parties. Given Uganda's influence in the region, this is important not only for the future of the country and its people, but also for its neighbors.

Mr. Chairman/Senators, key to much of Uganda's progress in safeguarding the region, in growing its economy, and in taking care of its people is the significant assistance provided by the United States. We have invested in security and combatting terrorism, and we make contributions to agriculture and education. The vast majority of our assistance, however, targets the health sector, with a historical special focus on achieving HIV epidemic control and fighting malaria as a healthier population is essential to Uganda's continued development. Healthy students learn and perform better, and healthy workers can help the economy grow faster. If confirmed I will work with Uganda to maintain momentum and prepare for the day when it assumes full responsibility for the health programs now funded by the United States.

On the critical issue of economic growth, with 80 percent of Uganda's population under the age of 30, in order to compete in the global marketplace, it is vital that Uganda encourage and promote job creation, technological advances, and foreign investment. Harnessing the potential of this tremendous youth bulge as a force for economic ingenuity and prosperity will also be critical as a counter narrative to violent extremism and despair. Partnering with U.S. firms can help achieve these goals and create jobs in both countries. If confirmed, I will strive to expand trade and commercial ties between the United States and Uganda for the betterment of both our countries.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you so very much for your testimony. We welcome your mom, who is there. We appreciate your father, who is with us in spirit, and his years of service to the law enforcement. And we are very sorry to hear about the loss of your fiancé. But, we are grateful for your service and your testimony. And we are going to return, in a few moments, with questions. Thank you so much for being here, and for your testimony. Congratulations.

And now I would like to turn to Mr. Day.

STATEMENT OF RAMSEY COATS DAY, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINEE TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. DAY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today as President

Trump's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

I would also like to thank President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, former Administrator Green, and Acting Administrator Barsa for their support and for the confidence they have placed in me to serve in this role.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank Acting Assistant Administrator Chris Maloney, who has led the Africa Bureau since January of this year. I also want to recognize my remarkably talented and dedicated colleagues at USAID, and particularly those in the Africa Bureau, both here in Washington and overseas.

And, of course, a special thank you to my wonderful wife, Charlotte. To say that I "married up" would be quite an understatement, and I am immensely grateful for her love and support.

Lastly, I would also like to thank my mother, Janie, who, along with my late father, Woody, instilled in me the values, principles, and faith that guide me every day.

Mr. Chairman, my love of Africa began nearly 20 years ago, when I landed in Johannesburg, South Africa, as a backpacker, as part of a year-long journey around the world. I spent several months exploring the continent, and I was completely captured by the natural beauty of the landscapes, the richness and diversity of the cultures, and, of course, the awe-inspiring wildlife. But, most importantly, I fell in love with the people, particularly the many young Africans whom I learned from, laughed with, and shared countless stories. It was this experience in Africa, as well as living in New York City on September 11th, that helped shape a vision for a career I never dreamed of as a kid growing up in Mississippi. Africa has truly changed the path of my life and career.

Over the past 15 years, I have been fortunate to serve at USAID multiple times and in multiple administrations, both in Washington and overseas. I have also worked for a USAID implementing partner at the International Republican Institute in Jordan, where I led programs advancing the democratic principles of citizen-responsive government.

For the last 2 years, serving in the Africa Bureau, and, more recently, in the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning at USAID, I have seen that Africa is a continent both of immense opportunities and acute challenges. The continent's rapidly expanding demographics means Africa's labor force will soon be bigger than China, bigger than India. And if Africa becomes more integrated into the international economic system, millions of people could be lifted out of poverty, and the U.S. would have expanded market opportunities on a continent with ever-increasing spending power.

But, Africa is also faced with chronic corruption, poor governance, and food insecurity, as well as devastating natural disasters and crushing manmade conflicts that have displaced millions. And the American people have been, and will continue to be, there to support our African partners. USAID, on behalf of the American people, is by far the world's largest health and humanitarian assistance donor responding to these challenges. Programs like the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR, and the President's Malaria Initiative have literally saved millions of lives. But, over 70 percent of the African population is under the age of

35. Without opportunities for meaningful work, this young population is vulnerable to recruitment from extremist organizations or other destabilizing influences. American engagement has been, and will continue to be, critical. Never is this more evident than today.

As the COVID–19 pandemic continues to sweep across the globe, health systems in developing countries, particularly in Africa, need to be strengthened to adequately respond to the crisis. As we have seen in recent months, this virus can spread quickly. We have also learned that what happens overseas can have an immediate and profound impact on our homeland, on our way of life. USAID has been at the front lines in the fight against Ebola, HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and we are also spearheading the global response to COVID–19, as we continue to battle it here at home. If I am confirmed, I intend to work tirelessly on this and other issues critical to our national strategic and security interests.

And, if confirmed, my priorities would be clear. First, as always, and without compromise, will be the health and safety of every USAID staff member and their family. My second priority will be to maintain the highest level of financial integrity. Leaders at USAID are the stewards of hard-earned and precious taxpayer resources. Congress and the American people have entrusted us to ensure those resources are deployed in the most efficient and effective way possible to advance American interests around the world. And lastly, I will concentrate my efforts on ensuring every USAID program is focused on advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives through USAID's Journey to Self-Reliance organizing principle.

Mr. Chairman, if I am confirmed, it would be a tremendous honor to serve and lead the nearly 3,000 Civil Service, Foreign Service, Foreign Service Nationals, and personal services contractors that make up the USAID Africa family. And I commit to you that I will work closely and transparently with Members of Congress and staff to integrate your perspectives, experiences, and priorities into our approaches to the development challenges faced by our African partners. Your viewpoints are absolutely crucial to the work that we do on the ground, and are greatly appreciated.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Day follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RAMSEY COATS DAY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). I would like to thank President Trump, former Administrator Green, Acting Administrator Barsa, and Secretary Pompeo for their support, and for the confidence they have placed in me to serve in this role.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank Acting Assistant Administrator Chris Maloney, who has led the Bureau for Africa since January 2020. I also want to recognize my remarkably talented and dedicated colleagues at USAID and in the Africa Bureau, both here in Washington and overseas, with whom I have worked for the last two years.

I am thankful to have with me today—and every day—my wonderful wife, Charlotte. To say I "married up" would be quite an understatement, and I appreciate immensely her love and support.

Mr. Chairman, my love of Africa began nearly twenty years ago when I landed in Johannesburg, South Africa, as part of a year-long backpacking journey around the world. I spent several months exploring the continent, and I was completely captured by the natural beauty of the landscapes, the richness and diversity of the cul-

tures, and, of course, the awe-inspiring wildlife—but most important, I fell in love with the people, particularly the many young Africans from whom I learned, and with whom I laughed and shared countless stories.

It was this experience in Africa, as well as living in New York City on September 11, that helped shape a vision for a career I never dreamed of as a kid growing up in Mississippi. Africa has truly changed the path of my life and career.

Upon my return home, I decided to leave the private sector and move to Washington to pursue a career in international development. I did so because I saw firsthand the impact USAID's work had on the people of the African continent. But I also have since gained a much greater appreciation for the critical nature of development work in advancing our national strategic, security, and commercial interests.

Over the past 15 years, I have been fortunate to serve at USAID multiple times and in multiple administrations, both in Washington and overseas. As the USAID Country Representative in the Republic of Montenegro, I learned how powerful American assistance can be in helping a country integrate into trans-Atlantic alliances and strengthening the Euro-American partnership. I also have worked for a USAID partner, the International Republican Institute (IRI). As the Country Director for IRI in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, I worked on programs to empower women, strengthen citizen-responsive government at the local level, and help Jordanian leaders understand the importance of public opinion when making policy decisions.

For the last two years at USAID, serving in the Africa Bureau and, more recently, in the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, I have had the honor and privilege of working alongside some of the most dedicated public servants I have ever known as we work together to address issues critical to our national interests.

I have learned over my career that what happens overseas can have an immediate and profound impact on our homeland and our way of life. Never is this more evident than today. As the pandemic of COVID–19 caused by the novel coronavirus continues to sweep across the globe, health institutions in developing countries, particularly in Africa, are ill-equipped to respond to the crisis. As we have seen in recent months, this virus can spread quickly. We will beat this outbreak in the United States, but it could well continue its spread as the Southern Hemisphere heads into Winter. USAID has been on the front lines in the fight against Ebola, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and we will continue to lead the global response to the COVID–19—even as we battle the disease at home.

To protect America's strategic and security interests even better, USAID must evolve. And under the leadership of former USAID Administrator Mark Green and current Acting Administrator John Barsa, I believe we are building the USAID of tomorrow by integrating an organizing principle we call the Journey to SelfReliance into all our work. We believe every program and every partnership into which USAID enters should strengthen the ability of a country's citizens to plan, finance, and implement their own development solutions to the challenges they face.not because we want to walk away from our friends, but because we believe in them. We want to transform these relationships from ones based on an aid to ones based on trade and investment, shared security and diplomatic interests, and mutual respect. It has been my experience in the Balkans, in the Middle East, and, certainly, in Africa, that our partners want to transform this relationship as well.

At USAID, we believe the goal of foreign assistance should be to end the need for it to exist. If I am confirmed as Assistant Administrator for Africa, I intend to work tirelessly in support of this goal, and my top priorities would be clear.

First, as always, would be the health and safety of all USAID staff members and their families. Many of our teams are working in difficult and even dangerous environments, so my number-one priority would be to ensure we are following every rule, practice, and protocol set forth by the Regional Security Officer at each U.S. Embassy in Africa. However, we will never be able to eliminate risk completely, because development professionals, by nature, want and need to be outside our Embassy walls so they can get to know the people we are helping, evaluate the progress of our programs, and learn how we can do better. This is the only way we can maximize the effectiveness of our programs on behalf of the American people. Balancing this risk versus effectiveness requires constant monitoring.

My second priority would be to maintain the highest level of financial integrity. Leaders at USAID are the stewards of hard-earned and precious taxpayer dollars. Congress and the American people are entrusting us to ensure we deploy these resources in the most efficient and effective way possible to advance American interests around the world.

Lastly, if confirmed, I also would be hyper-focused on ensuring every USAID program advances U.S foreign-policy objectives, reflects USAID's Journey to Self-Reliance organizing principle, and represents the best of American values.

Whether responding to natural disasters in the Republic of Mozambique and outbreaks of Ebola in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo, or tackling the ongoing COVID–19 crisis, helping brave citizens find their democratic footing in Ethiopia or Sudan, strengthening communities to fight back against savage terrorist networks in the Federal Republic of Somalia or the Sahel, or saving millions of lives from the ravages of chronic food-insecurity, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, or malaria, the women and men of USAID and our interagency partners represent the best of America overseas.

USAID's programs alleviate human suffering, lift up communities that are committed to their own development, champion the cause of democracy, empower women and girls to lead, and respond to some of the most complex natural and manmade disasters that affect millions of people around the world.

If I am confirmed, it would be a tremendous honor to lead the nearly 3,000 Civil Servants, Foreign Service Officers, Foreign Service Nationals, and Personal Service Contractors, and others that make up the USAID Africa family.

And I commit to you that, if confirmed, I will work closely and transparently with Members of Congress and your staff to integrate your perspectives, experiences, and priorities into our approaches to the development challenges faced by our African partners. Your viewpoints are crucial to the work we do on the ground, and I appreciate them greatly.

Thank you for granting me this hearing. I look forward to your questions.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Day. And congratulations, again, on your nomination. We look forward to getting to questions in a few moments.

I would like to now turn to Ms. Clark, nominee to be Ambassador to Burkina Faso. Thank you for joining us today. Congratulations.

STATEMENT OF SANDRA E. CLARK, 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 BURKINA FASO

Ms. CLARK. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear as the nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have shown in nominating me for this position.

I would like to recognize my husband, Alan Tolerton, and thank him for his unfailing love, and my wonderful and intrepid daughter, Emma. I am also grateful to my brothers, Gregory and David, and my sister-in-law, Lisa, for their support. And I am thankful for the gifts that we received from our late parents: our mother, who immigrated to the United States after the second World War, and our father, whose family has long and deep roots in New England. And I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues who have joined us virtually today.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will marshal my 34 years of experience as a Foreign Service Officer to promote and protect U.S. interests in Burkina Faso. I would look forward to working closely with members of this committee and your staffs in that endeavor.

Burkina Faso is at the nexus of U.S. strategic interests in the Sahara and West Africa. This country, with its proud tradition of peaceful coexistence among its diverse communities, remains the bulwark against extremism spreading to its neighbors. If con-

firmed, I will spearhead our efforts, with our Burkinabe partners and international allies, on the interlinked objectives of advancing regional security; promoting democracy, good governance, and human rights; and encouraging economic opportunity and development.

Burkina Faso and our bilateral partnership cannot flourish if it is plagued by violence. Armed attacks have driven over three-quarters of a million people from their homes. The security and law enforcement services face a daunting challenge and require support to enable them to counter this threat while protecting the population. If confirmed, I will continue our work to develop more capable and professional military and law enforcement services who respect human rights.

Burkina Faso is working with other nations, such as the G5 Sahel members, to solve regional problems. And the United States has like-minded partners there. The Secretary approved a Diplomatic Engagement Framework for the Sahel and appointed a U.S. Special Envoy to maximize our collective impact. And, if confirmed, I will work closely with the Special Envoy to coordinate and leverage these many efforts.

Burkina Faso is a young democracy. President Kabore is the first democratically elected president after the 27-year rule of his predecessor. Burkinabe continue to respect and criticize and shape their democracy. Peaceful elections later this year that accurately reflect the will of the people will be crucial to solidifying that democracy.

Burkina Faso's judicial system has struggled to bring terrorists and human rights violators to justice. If confirmed, I will build on our relationships with government and with the country's vibrant media and civil society organizations to strengthen democratic institutions and practices and advocate for human rights.

Burkinabe are dynamic, creative, and seek a better economic future. The United States is partnering with them through such agencies as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which is working to finalize a second compact for Burkina Faso this year. These programs, coupled with U.S. diplomacy and the ingenuity of the U.S. private sector to help promote economic growth and create jobs for both our countries, especially for the burgeoning youth population.

The United States has provided humanitarian and other assistance to the people of Burkina Faso over the years, including to establish the national public health emergency operations center, which is playing a pivotal role during this COVID–19 pandemic. Indeed, the epidemiologist leading Burkina Faso's COVID–19 response is a Centers for Disease Control Fellow who just returned to his country.

I am proud of the role the United States has played in helping the Burkinabe respond to the pandemic and of the Embassy's success in assisting more than 150 Americans return home.

It would, indeed, be an honor and a privilege, if confirmed, to lead our talented and committed Embassy staff at this critical juncture in Burkina Faso.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Clark follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SANDRA E. CLARK

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear as the nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have shown in nominating me for this position.

I would like to recognize my husband, Alan Tolerton, and thank him for his unfailing love and his willingness to accompany me on this journey, and my wonderful and intrepid daughter, Emma. I am grateful to my brothers, Gregory and David, and my sister-in-law Lisa, for their support. I am thankful for the gifts we received from our late parents, our mother who immigrated to the United States after the Second World War, and our father whose family has long and deep roots in New England. I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues who are joining us virtually today.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will marshal my 34 years of experience as a Foreign Service Officer to promote and protect U.S. interests and values in Burkina Faso. I would look forward to working closely with members of this committee and your staffs in that endeavor. Burkina Faso is at the nexus of U.S. strategic interests in the Sahel and West Africa. This country, with its proud tradition of peaceful coexistence among its diverse communities, remains the bulwark against extremism expanding to its neighbors. If confirmed, I will spearhead our efforts, with our Burkinabe partners and international allies, on the interlinked objectives of advancing regional security; promoting democracy, good governance, and human rights; and encouraging economic opportunity and development.

Burkina Faso—and our bilateral partnership—cannot truly flourish if it is plagued by violence. Armed attacks have driven over three-quarters of a million people from their homes. The security and law enforcement services face a daunting challenge and require support to enable them to counter this threat while protecting the population. If confirmed, I will continue our work to develop more capable and professional military and law enforcement services which respect human rights.

Burkina Faso is working with other nations, such as G5 Sahel members, to resolve the region's problems. The United States has likeminded partners there. This is why the Secretary approved a Diplomatic Engagement Framework for the Sahel and appointed a U.S. Special Envoy to maximize our collective impact. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Special Envoy to coordinate and leverage these many efforts.

Burkina Faso is a young democracy. President Roch Kabore is the first democratically elected president after the 27-year rule of his predecessor, ousted in October 2014. The Burkinabe continue to respect, criticize, and shape their democracy. Peaceful elections later this year that accurately reflect the will of the people will be crucial to solidifying that democracy. Burkina Faso's judicial system has struggled to bring terrorists and human rights violators to justice. If confirmed, I will build on our relationships with the Government and with the country's vibrant media and civil society organizations to strengthen democratic institutions and practices that advocate for human rights.

The Burkinabe are dynamic and creative and seek a better economic future. The United States is partnering with them through such agencies as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which is working to finalize a second compact with Burkina Faso this year. These programs, coupled with U.S. diplomacy and the ingenuity of the U.S. private sector, should promote economic growth and create jobs in both countries, especially for the burgeoning youth population. The United States has provided humanitarian and other assistance to the people of Burkina Faso over the years, including the establishment of a national public health emergency operations center, which is playing a pivotal role in responding to the COVID–19 pandemic. Indeed, the epidemiologist leading Burkina Faso's COVID 19 response is a Centers for Disease Control Fellow who just returned to the country. I am proud of the role the United States has played in helping the Burkinabe respond to the pandemic and of the Embassy's success in assisting more than 150 Americans return home.

It would be an honor and a privilege, if confirmed, to lead our talented and committed Embassy staff at this critical juncture in Burkina Faso.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to your questions.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, again, thank you. Congratulations. We look forward to having a chance to ask you questions. There is a woman from my home State of Wyoming who has previously been Ambassador to Burkina Faso, so I am familiar with the challenges that you will be facing. And I also have a wonderful and intrepid daughter, who is also named Emma. So, hopefully, we can get them together at some point in the future.

Ms. CLARK. Yes, that would be great. Thank you, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you. Well, congratulations, again.

Now we would like to hear from Mr. Grayson, the nominee to be the Ambassador to Estonia.

Mr. Grayson, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM ELLISON GRAYSON, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA

Mr. GRAYSON. Great. Great. Thank you very much, Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today in this virtual hearing during this unprecedented time and pandemic as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia.

I am deeply grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the trust and confidence that they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working very closely with the committee, your staffs, and other Members of Congress to build upon the robust partnership that exists between the United States and Estonia.

My top priority will be the welfare, security, and health of the U.S. citizens in Estonia and our exceptional Embassy team and talent, also work to strengthen our joint security, our cooperation with NATO, further bilateral trade and economic opportunities, and, of course, counter malign influence in the region.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to introduce my family members. First, my wife—and they are going to appear, if that is okay, Mr. Chairman—first, my wife, Laurie Grayson, who, if I am confirmed, will be an outstanding representative——

Senator BARRASSO. Hi, Laurie.

Mr. GRAYSON [continuing]. For the United States in Estonia.

I am also proud to introduce our three daughters. Two of them are here with us in San Francisco: Elizabeth and Caroline. And I also want to introduce our daughter, Katherine, who is in D.C., working for—working on Capitol Hill. And that is a picture of Katherine, in case you see her running around the Hill.

I also want to take a minute to recognize my great sister, Darby, and our parents, EC and Jean Grayson, who continue to be outstanding role models to us. My dad served as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Reagan administration and is a decorated Korean War veteran. He and my mom instilled as—in us our deep love of family, country, and travels around the world.

Senator BARRASSO. Bye.

Mr. GRAYSON. Bye.

[Laughter.]

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you, Senator.

Throughout my private- and public-sector career, I have been honored to serve in four administrations, as you noted. First as the Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Army under George H.W. Bush, then on the President's Commission on White House Fellowships under President George W. Bush, then as a Regional White House Fellows Judge under President Barack Obama, and currently, thanks to President Trump, I am the chairman of the Presidio Trust in San Francisco, where I have the privilege of overseeing one of the National Parks' crown jewels. I am now honored again, of course, to be the President's nominee to be the Ambassador to Estonia.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Estonia have been close friends for over 100 years. A strong NATO ally since 2004, Estonia has shown an unwavering commitment to our shared global security. Estonian troops serve with us in Iraq and contribute to NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Estonia has committed 2 percent of its GDP to defense spending for 8 years and serves as a role model to other NATO allies. If confirmed, I will continue to work hard to deepen our defense relationship with Estonia.

Also, this October, Estonia will host the Three Seas Initiative, which is a Central European-led effort to accelerate cross-border commerce through important infrastructure projects in transportation, cyber, and digital. It would also provide an alternative to malign investments from the PRC and other nations that are not aligned with the region or the United States. This year, we also marked the 80th anniversary of the 1940 Wells Declaration, under which the United States refused to recognize the forced annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Estonia showed great courage in overcoming Soviet occupation and has since become a shining example of innovation to the world. The democratic values that the U.S. and Estonia share continue to be the bedrock of our bilateral, regional, and global partnership.

E–Estonia, as it is often called, is one of the most digitally advanced countries in the world. If confirmed, I will use my experience working with talented tech, cyber, AI company founders and innovators in San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and across the country, to expand trade, research, and investment opportunities. Estonia hosts the NATO- accredited Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in Tallinn, which the United States joined in 2011. Last year, Estonia joined us in signing a 27-country agreement, Advancing Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace. Further, our recent Joint Declaration on 5G Security is evidence of our cyber cooperation, which, if confirmed, I look forward to continuing and expanding.

The United States and Estonia are strong partners guided by a century of diplomatic relations and friendships. Given the many global threats and opportunities that exist today, our relationship is as important now as it has ever been. If confirmed, I will be a champion for the United States and its interests in Estonia while strengthening the bilateral economic, defense, and democratic ties that bind us.

Mr. Chairman, I greatly appreciate the honor bestowed upon me by this nomination, and, if confirmed, I will do my best to uphold the trust that you, your fellow members, President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and the American people are placing in me.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you——

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you again for this opportunity to appear, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Grayson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM ELLISON GRAYSON

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored and privileged to appear before you today, in this virtual hearing during this unprecedented time and pandemic, as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. I am deeply grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the trust and confidence that they have placed in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the committee, your staffs, and other Members of Congress to build upon the strong and robust partnership between the United States and Estonia. My top priority will be the health, welfare, and security of U.S. citizens in Estonia and our exceptional Embassy team in Tallinn. I will also work to further strengthen our security, NATO cooperation, bilateral trade and entrepreneurial opportunities and to counter malign influence in the region.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to introduce and thank my family members who are with me today. First, my wife Laurie Grayson who, if I'm confirmed, will be an outstanding representative of the United States in Estonia as she's been throughout my career. I am also proud to introduce our accomplished and loving three daughters, Elizabeth and Caroline, here with us in San Francisco and Katherine, who's in DC working on Capitol Hill. I also want to recognize my great sister Darby and my amazing parents, EC and Jean Grayson, who continue to be exceptional role models. My Dad served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy under President Ronald Reagan and is a Korean War veteran. He and my Mom instilled in us our love of family, country and public service.

I am grateful that throughout my private and public sector career, I have had the opportunity to serve in four presidential administrations. First, as the Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Army under President George H. W. Bush. Next, on the President's Commission on White House Fellowships under President George W. Bush, then as a regional White House Fellows panelist under President Barack Obama. I am currently the Chairman of the Presidio Trust in San Francisco, appointed by President Trump, where I have the privilege of overseeing one of the National Park's crown jewels. I am now honored and humbled as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Estonia.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Estonia have been close friends for over 100 years. A strong NATO Ally since 2004, Estonia has shown unwavering support for our shared defense and security around the globe. Estonian troops serve with us in Iraq, and Estonia continues to contribute to NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Estonia has committed two percent or more of its GDP to defense spending since 2012, serving as a model for other NATO Allies. If confirmed, I will work to deepen our defense cooperation with Estonia.

This October, Estonia will host the 2020 Three Seas Initiative Summit. The initiative is a Central European-led effort to accelerate cross-border commerce through north-south energy, transportation, cyber and digital infrastructure projects. It should also provide an alternative to malign investments from the PRC and other nations that are not in the long-term interests of the region or the United States.

This year we mark the 80th anniversary of the 1940 Welles Declaration under which the United States refused to recognize the forced annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Estonia showed great strength and determination in overcoming Soviet occupation and emerged as a shining example of innovation to the world. The shared democratic values of the U.S. and Estonia continue to be the bedrock of our bilateral, regional, and global cooperation.

Estonia is a leader in information technology being one of the most digitally advanced countries in the world. If confirmed, I will use my experience working with talented tech, cyber and AI company founders and innovators in San Francisco, Silicon Valley and around the U.S. to expand our trade, research and investment opportunities. Estonia hosts the NATO-accredited Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in Tallinn, which the United States joined in 2011. We share a vision

of a secure and open cyberspace, in which all countries behave responsibly. Estonia joined us last year for a 27-country joint statement on Advancing Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace, and we continue to collaborate on cyber deterrence efforts. Our recent Joint Declaration on 5G security is further evidence of our cyber cooperation which, if confirmed, I look forward to continuing and expanding.

The United States and Estonia are strong partners, grounded by 100 years of diplomatic relations and friendship. Given the many global threats and opportunities that exist today, our relationship is as important now as it has ever been. If confirmed, I will be a champion for the United States and its interests in Estonia while strengthening the bilateral economic, defense and democratic ties that bind us. Mr. Chairman, I recognize and appreciate the honor bestowed upon me by this nomination. If confirmed, I will do my best to uphold the trust that you, your fellow members, President Trump, Secretary Pompeo and the American people are placing in me.

Thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Grayson. We congratulate you. Thank you for including your family. I know Senator Alexander—Lamar Alexander—emailed me last night, and he was hoping so much to be able to introduce you in person in the committee. We did not want to delay your hearing, though, until a time when that might be possible. I know you wanted to be here with your family. But, congratulations again.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. Now we will turn to our final nominee, Mr. Wooster, who is the nominee to Jordan.

Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF HENRY T. WOOSTER, OF VIRGINIA, 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 HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

Mr. WOOSTER. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today, albeit virtually, as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for their confidence in me.

Gratitude is also due to my wife, Laura Dallman, and our four children—Cameron, Claire, Kimberly, and Kristen—who have shared the public-service journey worldwide. Their love, when we were together and when unaccompanied, have sustained me.

I joined the Foreign Service 20 years ago, following 9 years in the Civil Service, 5 of which were overseas; before that, service in the U.S. Army and the Army Reserve. I have served in eight U.S. embassies as diverse as Paris and Baghdad, as well as in numerous Washington positions. I have advocated for U.S. interests across the globe and worked with allies in the international community to pursue joint goals. At present, I am the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Maghreb and Egypt.

As Secretary Pompeo said last year, Jordan is one of the United States' enduring strategic partners. And from my own past service there, I know this to be true. American-Jordanian friendship advances U.S. interests, as does Jordan's path of modernization and its example of moderation.

Over the last decade, Jordan has suffered a series of external shocks: the Syrian civil war, the fight against ISIS, and now, of course, COVID–19. All of these have battered its people and its economy. The U.S. priority is to help the Kingdom's economic recovery—excuse me—economy recover in a way that ensures stability. Jordan's 2020 budget contains concrete, meaningful reforms, and the Government's decisive response to the COVID crisis should enable it to begin reopening its economy very soon. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you, with all the tools the U.S. Government has, with international organizations, like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and with the international community, to help Jordan create a stable and growing economy.

Our partnership with Jordan has long included military collaboration. Jordan has been an invaluable ally in our joint work to counter terrorism, support international peacekeeping, and provide humanitarian assistance throughout the region. Jordan is the third-largest recipient of U.S. foreign military financing, with our support focusing on the Jordanian armed forces' 5-year plan for modernization, readiness, and enhanced interoperability among its own forces, with our forces, and with NATO forces. Our military assistance reinforces Jordan's role in the region as a bastion of stability.

Beyond Jordan's value to the United States as a strategic partner, the Kingdom has proven a generous neighbor. Not only does Jordan promote peace in the region, but throughout its history it has welcomed refugees from neighboring countries, including hundreds of thousands of Syrians. I am proud the United States has contributed nearly one-and-a-half billion dollars of humanitarian aid to refugees in those communities in Jordan since the Syria crisis began. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for assistance in international fora and promote burden-sharing to ensure we collectively provide for those in need.

If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, I will continue to strengthen our partnership with the Government of Jordan and the Jordanian people. To reflect the face and values of the United States, I will recruit, hire, and maintain a diverse Embassy team. I will prioritize the safety of over 23,000 U.S. citizens residing in Jordan and the over 100,000 American tourists who visit annually. To protect and advance U.S. interests, I will proudly lead the nearly 1,000 American and local staff at our Embassy, and I will have a special duty to ensure the security of the Embassy's 500 American family members.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, if confirmed, I will do my utmost to honorably represent the United States of America to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. To do this and ensure the most informed and effective policy, I look forward to continuing my engagement with you and other Members of Congress.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wooster follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HENRY T. WOOSTER

Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for their confidence and trust in me.

I would be remiss if I did not also thank my wife, Laura, and our four children who have shared this public service journey. Their love and care, while we served worldwide, has sustained me. I joined the Foreign Service 20 years ago, following nine years in the civil service, five of which were spent overseas, and before that, served in the U.S. Army and Army Reserve. I have served in eight U.S. embassies—from Paris to Baghdad—as well as in numerous positions in Washington, D.C. I have advocated for U.S. interests across the globe and worked with allies and the international community to pursue joint goals. At present, I am Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Maghreb and Egypt.

As Secretary Pompeo said last year, "Jordan is one of the United States' enduring strategic partners," and from my own past service there, I know this to be true. American-Jordanian friendship advances U.S. interests, as does Jordan's path of modernization and its example of moderation. The Government of Jordan's choices have brought its people real benefits, as shown by Jordan's 98 percent literacy rate, 74-year life expectancy, and 1 percent child mortality rate. Yet, despite these successes, Jordan has suffered a series of external shocks over the last decade—such as the Syrian civil war and the fight against ISIS, and more recently, COVID–19—that have battered its economy.

The U.S. priority in Jordan is to help the Kingdom's economy recover in a way that ensures its stability and security. Economic growth in Jordan slowed from 8 percent in 2007 to about 2 percent in 2011, when the country was hit by regional disruptions caused by the Syrian crisis. It had remained at that level until COVID–19 forced an economic shutdown. Nevertheless, Jordan has stepped up to the challenge. Its 2020 budget contains concrete, meaningful reforms to stimulate the economy, and the Jordanian Government's decisive response to COVID–19 should enable it to begin safely reopening its economy. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you, with all the tools the U.S. Government has, with international organizations like the IMF and the World Bank, and with the international community, to help Jordan create a stable and growing economy. Thanks to your strong bipartisan support, U.S. economic assistance to Jordan in FY 2019 exceeded $1 billion, including $745 million in direct budget support that bolstered the Kingdom's economy as it implemented reforms and reduced budgetary strains.

Our partnership with Jordan has long included military collaboration. Jordan has been a leading member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and has more broadly been an invaluable ally in our joint work to counter terrorism, support international peacekeeping, and provide humanitarian assistance throughout the region. Jordan is the third largest recipient of Foreign Military Financing, with our support focusing on the implementation of the Jordan Armed Force's five-year plan for modernization, readiness, and enhanced interoperability among Jordanian, U.S., and NATO forces. Our military assistance furthers Jordan's place in the region as a bastion of stability.

Beyond Jordan's value to the United States as a strategic partner, the Kingdom has proven itself a kind and generous neighbor. Not only does Jordan promote peace in the region, but throughout its history it has welcomed millions of refugees from neighboring countries, including hundreds of thousands of Syrians. I am proud the United States has contributed nearly $1.5 billion dollars of humanitarian aid to refugees and host communities in Jordan since the Syria crisis began, and that the United States has assisted Jordan in hosting refugees from Iraq, Yemen, and scores of countries. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for humanitarian assistance in international fora to promote burden sharing and ensure we collectively provide for those in need.

If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, I will continue to strengthen our partnership with the Government of Jordan and the Jordanian people, especially as the country works to recover from the COVID–19 pandemic. To reflect the face and values of the United States, I will recruit, hire, and maintain a diverse Embassy team. I will prioritize the safety of the over 23,000 U.S. citizens residing in Jordan and the over 100,000 American tourists traveling there yearly. To protect and advance U.S. interests, I will proudly lead the nearly 1,000 American and local staff at our Embassy. And, I will have a special duty to ensure the security of the nearly 500 American family members in our Embassy community.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, if confirmed, I will do my utmost to honorably represent the United States of America to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and its people. To do this and ensure the most informed and effective foreign policy, I look forward to continuing my engagement with you and other Members of Congress.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you very much. We appreciate it. Congratulations, again. And we look forward to the questioning in a few moments.

We have had a total of nine Senators on this to hear your testimony and that of the other nominees, and some of them may not be able to stay through all of the questioning. We will have 5-minute rounds, and I will begin and then turn to Senator Booker. But, in addition, Senator Gardner, from Colorado, and Senator Young, from Indiana, Senator Romney, from Utah, are on, as well as Senator Shaheen, from New Hampshire, Senator Murphy, from Connecticut, Senator Kaine, from Virginia, and Senator Coons, from Delaware. So, there is a lot of interest in this hearing and in the nominations of all of you.

What I would like to do is start with my questions, and specifically with Mr. Ramsey Day. And want to focus right now on Mr. Day on a couple of issues relating to energy development in Africa. Because, worldwide, 840 million people are living without electricity, 573 million of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. And I think about what—the challenges that you are going to be facing, Mr. Day, because energy development can help lift people out of poverty and improve their education, their health, their well-being. And developing countries desperately need access to a steady supply of affordable, reliable electricity to support their economic growth.

Can you tell me about your commitment to helping countries use all energy resources in order to promote economic development and reduce poverty in Africa?

Mr. DAY. Thank you, Senator. And thank you for your leadership on this issue. It is an absolutely critical issue on the African continent.

USAID has been a leader in this field with the launch of the Power Africa Initiative several years ago. The Trump administration has doubled down on Power Africa. We call it Power Africa 2.0. And the initiative has been extremely successful. There have been over 120 transactions that have been supported by Power Africa, and they have connected 13 million homes, and over 60 million people now have electricity that did not have it prior to the initiative. And we are also advancing overall two-way trade between the U.S. and Africa through the Trump administration's Prosper Africa Initiative, which is kind of an all-encompassing and multi-sectoral initiative. But, this is one of the key elements of our approach towards development, is to engage the private sector so that there are benefits both to African development, but also to U.S. businesses. But, we are absolutely committed to the Power Africa Initiative, and it has been successful, and we are going to continue to support it.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you. I would like to add, for all of the members here, that Senator James Risch, from Idaho, who

is the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has joined me in my office, because he wanted to look at the behind-the-scenes—of how we are working this, and with the staff here doing all of that, as well as the questioning, and see how it would look from sitting there from the position of chairing the subcommittee.

So, Senator Risch, we welcome you as part of this discussion and subcommittee hearing.

I would like to turn now, Mr. Day, to the question of coronavirus in Africa. For more than 50 years, USAID's global health programs have been focused on saving lives, protecting vulnerable populations from disease, promoting stability in nations around the world, and specifically also with Africa, because the United States has worked extensively with African nations to strengthen public health systems in order to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, Ebola, other infectious diseases. The world is now facing a global pandemic due to coronavirus. So, the disease could be, my concern, particularly devastating to Africa because of the fragile health system, the limited resources, some existing insecurity from civil conflict. You know, as the Ambassador in this position, what could be your—what would be your plan for managing and coordinating the COVID–19 resources for Africa?

Mr. DAY. Yeah. Thank you, Senator.

You are absolutely right. The U.S., through USAID, has been a leader in global health and humanitarian assistance. In fact, if you add up two of the donors—two, three, and four—they still do not add up to the commitment of the American taxpayer to supporting global health and humanitarian assistance around the world. And COVID–19 is no different in that respect.

I think what is interesting about COVID–19 in Africa is that I think the impacts are going to be multidimensional, in that there will certainly be a health crisis—that is obvious—but, it is unclear to us exactly what that impact is going to look like. You know, right now, there are about 65,000 confirmed cases across the African continent. We have to assume that there are significantly more cases than that. And so, it is yet to really unfold what the health crisis looks like on the African continent; however, we certainly know there is going to be economic distress, if not economic devastation. So, the second-and third-order impacts of COVID–19 are something that we are watching very, very closely.

We have already committed significant resources, about $200 million or so, towards supporting COVID–19 response in the—on the African continent, but what we will still ultimately have to do is prioritize our assistance. So, we always are going to look at it from a needs perspective, and root it in the President's National Security Strategy. And then we have to look at: Where can we make the biggest impact? Who is going to be most vulnerable? Where can we save the most lives? Which governments are going to be most committed? And so, we will have to go through a prioritization process, which our USAID COVID–19 Task Force is currently doing now. But, we are absolutely committed to supporting our African partners on this. And, if I am confirmed, I certainly look forward to working with Members of Congress and our African partners, because I—if I am confirmed, this will certainly

be the top programmatic priority for the foreseeable future for USAID.

Senator BARRASSO. And then, as you mentioned, the largest contributor would be the United States compared, I think you said, more than two, three, and four combined. So, of course, you would expect this committee to also be wanting to make sure we had a—adequate accountability and oversight of those funds.

I am going to ask a last question. And it has to be the way target. China has been targeting investments in African countries in order to expand their own political, economic, strategic goals. I mean, every time I am in Africa, I see direct evidence of what China is doing. I hear it when I talk to leaders there. Almost, you could call it, "debt diplomacy," where they put countries into debt and then want back from them resources, concessions, equity in strategic important assets. Could you address that? And then I want to turn to Senator Booker.

Mr. DAY. Sure. Of course. Thank you, Senator.

This is an incredibly complex and important issue that we are dealing with on the African continent. If you look at the U.S. model versus the Chinese model, it is two completely different models. Ours is based on locally-led solutions, enterprise-driven development based on transparency and accountability, and really focused on citizen-responsive government. The Chinese model is the complete opposite of that. It is opaque, and, in many cases, it rewards corruption and it drives African countries into unsustainable indebtedness. And, in many cases, we have seen where sovereign assets have been used to collateralize many of these loans.

So, unfortunately, I also think that, all too often, African countries, they look to the U.S. for a lot of the social programs, but then they go and do business with China. And I think that is where we really have to look at the balance. Our values and our principles are certainly going to dictate that we are going to continue to support our African partners, from a social-program perspective, all the global health programs that we have, all of the humanitarian assistance, the development programs. But, at the same time, I think there needs to be a balance, because they are looking to China to do business, but they are looking to the U.S. for these social programs. So, this will be something that I think we are going to have to watch very closely, but we have to be very clear, in terms of how we articulate our model versus the Chinese model, and also other malign influences, as well, that are continuing to emerge on the continent.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, I appreciate your focus on this and your keen observations about what is happening there. Thank you.

Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. All right. Mr. Chairman, can you hear me?

Senator BARRASSO. Yes. Very well, thank you.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you.

I would like to direct my first question to Ms. Clark. In Burkina Faso, there are 11 ventilators right now for roughly 20 million people, and the country is among the hardest hit by the coronavirus on the entire continent. Meanwhile, there is a surging conflict we see that is targeting the Government and the hundreds of thousands who have fled the violence and squeezing together in very

difficult conditions, although they are supposed to be sheltering apart. I was there in Burkina Faso with some other Senators in early 2018, and we met with President Kabore and—where he was committed to the growing—really, Burkina's democracy. We left, excited about the hope and the promise within that nascent democracy, and were really grateful that they were eager to continue the partnership with the United States.

And I guess my first question is, What are the implications now, understanding some of the fragility within Burkina Faso—what are the implications of the worsening armed conflict, this internal displacement crisis, combined with the COVID–19 caseload, on Burkina's nascent democracy?

Ms. CLARK. Thank you very much, Senator, for that question.

You are right to point out that there are many different forces that are impacting Burkina Faso at this moment. They have been hit by the coronavirus, and, working with USAID and the Centers for Disease Control, we are helping the Burkina Faso Government and helping others to respond to that—to that crisis.

At the same time, the terrorist attacks and the instability caused by that has continued, and the numbers of internally displaced people continues to increase. So far, though, the numbers of coronavirus at least officially reported are—from last week, were approximately 744 cases. And so, I think some of the efforts have perhaps yielded some success so far in containing the virus spread. But, certainly, the impact that it will have on the economy from decreased economic activity and decreased trade will be very important to follow. And we will have to work with all different players, all the different—that we have to——

Senator BOOKER. And, Ms. Clark, if I can interrupt real quickly—I am sorry—what are your thoughts about the likelihood that national elections will actually take place in 2020 at the end of the year?

Ms. CLARK [continuing]. Thank you, Senator. As far—so far, the Government has said that it wishes to continue with having the elections next year and—later this year, rather—and I believe that that would be very important—those elections will be very important to ensure the solidification of the democracy that was started, that is very—still young in Burkina Faso. But, you are right to point out——

Senator BOOKER [continuing]. Thank you, Ms. Clark. I am so sorry. I just have 5 minutes, and I——

Ms. CLARK [continuing]. Oh, sorry, sir.

Senator BOOKER. No, no worries.

I would love to move on to Ms. Brown, real quick. Just given my concerns about Uganda right now, and leaders who are trying to exploit this crisis for political ends, we have seen—their President has been in office for about three decades, and is seeking to—seeking reelection. But, in an earlier interview, he suggested it would be madness to hold elections in 2021. And so, how do you think we should respond, as a country, if the Ugandan Government postpones the elections? And should evidence of state corruption and reports of abuse—torture, the unlawful killings by security forces—draw, you know, real scrutiny of our close, you know, bilateral relationship that we are having with them? And should the

United States security forces respond against, sort of, the opposition politicians and supporters to support them in—as they prepare for elections?

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Senator, for your question.

The issues you have raised are critical for Uganda and a priority for our engagement, and for our—going forward. I am familiar with the press report that you referenced.

Apologies. I have incredible feedback, so I will pause periodically——

About the date of the elections, looking at the full transcript, my understanding and, I think, what a lot of people are saying is that President Museveni is committed to holding the elections in early 2021, but that will be determined on the—on whether or not they are able to continue to curb the spread of COVID–19.

As I mentioned in my remarks, holding the election, making sure that the process is free and fair and transparent, and that all the voices are heard, is extremely important. USAID has already identified fundings to work on democracy programs. I know that the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor has also set aside fundings to work with Ugandans and with civil society in ensuring that the process is smooth, that it is free of coercion, that we do our best and work together with civil society to minimize any violence against individuals.

As Uganda seeks to build the economy to come out of this current pandemic, I think holding elections in a timely fashion, ensuring that there is full participation, that there is no abuse, I think, is extremely important to having—to building confidence among the public in the system. Ultimately, it is up to the Ugandan people to elect their next leader. But, as I said, Uganda has a very, very young population, and whichever leader is elected, I believe that person has to think about the future and what is right for the country, and certainly multiparty democracy, where the rights of all are respected, where anyone who commits a human rights abuse, that that is investigated, that the legal system is used, if necessary, that that is extremely important.

And I will add to that that the United States, in the past, when there has been evidence of human rights abuses, we have sanctioned individuals, and that certainly is a tool that, if confirmed, we will consider that—applying that, if necessary.

Thank you.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for indulging me to go a little bit over.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you so much, Senator Booker.

Now I can turn to Senator Young.

Senator Young, are you still on?

I think Senator Gardner has stepped off.

Senator YOUNG. I am. I am here, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. Great.

Senator YOUNG. Thanks so much.

I want to thank all our participants in today's panel.

So, Mr. Day, China's Belt and Road Initiative is forging a web of intertwined economic, political, and security ties between Africa and China, advancing Beijing's geopolitical interests. China's policy of employing Chinese labor for its infrastructure projects in Africa

has resulted in somewhere around 200,000 Chinese citizens working on One Belt, One Road contracts across the continent. Given the strategic nature of those investments, such—investments in ports, in railways, oil and gas pipelines—some African Governments view attacks on Chinese interests as a threat to their own national interests or their own national security. How are you thinking about this challenge of countering Chinese influence on the continent, sir?

Mr. DAY. Thank you, Senator.

Again, it is an incredibly important issue, and something that we spend a lot of time thinking about and are incorporating into our various approaches and strategies. And the—again, similar to my comments before, we have really been seen by African partners as the health and humanitarian assistance partners, and it is incredibly important to me that we broaden that perspective. We really have not been engaged on an economic level. Roughly around 1 percent of our overall trade and investment goes towards Africa. So, we are launching initiatives that can help support American companies in their interests on the African continent—their commercial interests on the African continent.

One thing that I think is incredibly important, though, is that all of this is rooted in democratic principles, meaning it is—we are not going to be very successful in convincing American companies to go to the African continent, which, oh, by the way, has, certainly, benefits on the benevolent side, but also has benefits to American jobs and American businesses, and also counters China's malign influence. But, we are not going to be very successful if we cannot convince these American companies to go. And what they are going to be looking for is the principles of democracy, rule of law. How can they get their money in, how can they get their money out? So, it is one of our key pillars of our overall strategy is to engage our African partners so that we can transform this relationship from an aid-based relationship to one that is really based on economic cooperation, diplomatic cooperation, security, et cetera. So, this is something that—it is going to be one of my top priorities, if I am confirmed.

Senator YOUNG. Is there—and I apologize if the Chairman went down this line of questioning earlier—but, is there anything that we can improve upon as it relates to educating African leaders regarding the threat of debt-trap diplomacy, debt-trap development associated with the Belt and Road Initiative?

Mr. DAY. Yeah, it is an excellent question. I think——

Senator YOUNG. I know transparency is important, and the IMF and other multilaterals have been helpful in providing technical assistance to some of these governments so they do not get themselves into a debt trap. So——

Mr. DAY. That is right.

Senator YOUNG [continuing]. That is one potential solution, but are there other things we might do?

Mr. DAY. Sure, sure. It is an excellent question, and one that we will—if I am confirmed, we will certainly work closely with our State Department colleagues. My personal opinion is that we need to sharpen our other elbows a little bit, and that we need to be very clearly communicating what our model is versus other malign in-

fluence—the models of malign influences. And so, we have engaged in some activities. We have supported the Africa Legal Support Fund, which does some, kind of, deal analysis. And so, we can look at increasing those types of activities, where it—where we do have knowledge of particular deals, we can actually look—do some legal analysis and then be able to communicate some perspectives on whether or not this is a good deal or a bad deal or could be putting you in a situation of unsustainable debt.

But, again, I think our African partners, they want to do business with us, and that has been something that has been clear for quite some time. But, the consistent message that we get is that we are just not there, in a commercial sense. And so, that is what, if I am confirmed, is going to be one of my top priorities in working with our State Department colleagues, and Treasury and Commerce and others, to ensure that we are doing everything that we can to help de-risk some of the opportunities for American businesses.

Senator YOUNG. Sounds like the right approach. Thanks so much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Senator Young.

Senator Shaheen.

I think you have to unmute.

Senator SHAHEEN. Can you hear me?

Senator BARRASSO. Now we can, yes, thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Okay, great.

My first questions are for Mr. Grayson.

Mr. Grayson, I have had the chance to visit Estonia. I appreciate that it is in a very challenging part of the world. And we have seen increasing signs of Russian aggression in the Baltic region, including a buildup of their military forces in the areas bordering the Baltic states. I wonder if you think that U.S. and NATO forces presence in the Baltic region is enough to deter Russian aggression there.

Mr. GRAYSON. Senator, thank you for that question. It is certainly a critical issue for Estonians. That eastern flank and border is the tripwire for NATO. So, that is very important. The U.K.-led enhanced forward-presence battalion is certainly comforting to the Estonians. And the administration and the President continue to view Article 5 as ironclad, and our involvement in NATO, as such. And so, the United States and the administration will fully support whatever needs that the Estonians have.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. You talked about Estonia's innovation and how wired a country it is. It is also one of—considered one of the most stable democracies in—of the former Soviet Republics, and has had a very strong reputation for forward-looking economy, for really sharing our values when it comes to democracy. And yet, the far-right Conservative People's Party of Estonia has tripled its share of seats in the parliamentary elections last year. And I think that surprised a lot of people—including myself—who were used to Estonia's reputation. I wonder how you assess the rise of populism in Estonia, and whether that threatens their forward-looking towards western Europe and our shared values.

Mr. GRAYSON. Senator, thank you for the question on both those topics.

First, the e-Estonia. It, certainly since its emergence from Soviet occupation in 1991, has been one of the great innovators and leaders in digital technology. And, as you pointed out, you know, some of the economic factors—lowest unemployment, highest GDP, lowest debt-to- GDP, innovation on e-residency, e-taxes, e-health, e- everything—so they have really been a star in that regard. And as—if I am confirmed, the administration and the State Department and everybody who interacts with the leadership in Estonia understands that there are multiple parties, and that the far-right party did emerge with greater numbers in this past election, but it would be my job, if confirmed, to work with all parties to continue to advance our agenda in Estonia.

Senator SHAHEEN. Spoken like a true diplomat, thank you very much.

My next questions are for Mr. Wooster.

Jordan strongly objects to Israeli unilateral annexation of territory in the West Bank, Mr. Wooster, and we have just seen that Prime Minister Netanyahu and his main opponent in the last few elections—Mr. Benny Gantz—has agreed to a power-sharing relationship that includes asking Parliament to vote on annexation of settlements in the West Bank. And I wonder what you think that would do to our relationship with Jordan. Prime Minister Netanyahu has said that he can go forward with that because he has the support of the President and the U.S. administration.

Mr. WOOSTER. Thank you, Senator. Obviously, a germane issue.

The Secretary was in Jerusalem today. In public remarks there, he said, "There remains work yet to do." So, that captures, really, all of it. I know it is not a very satisfying response, but I do not want to get ahead of him.

That said, in response to your question, yes, Jordan has a stake in any peace effort. The Jordanians have raised some concerns on behalf of themselves and on behalf of Palestinians. The administration has asked the Jordanians to encourage the Palestinians to bring those concerns to the negotiating table.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. And, as you pointed out in your opening statement, Jordan is a very important player in the Middle East, and our relationship with Jordan is very important. But, we are seeing some troubling signs, in terms of concern among the Jordanian population about the institutions in Jordan and about what is happening within the country with the increased number of refugees, and what that means for the average citizen. So, can you talk about how, as Ambassador, you can work to support Jordan as they are dealing with some of these very difficult challenges?

Mr. WOOSTER. Yes, Senator. Since its founding, Jordan has weathered internal and external crises. In fact, the magnitude of the crises, particularly the external ones, that they have weathered has been remarkable. It is not something that any country would want. I am thinking, in particular right now, the ongoing Syrian crisis since 2011. So, as a result of these, we can call them, I think, "exogenous shocks," because that captures pretty accurately what they are. As a result, the Kingdom's trade has been disrupted, hun-

dreds of thousands of refugees, perhaps more, have taken sanctuary in Jordan, and economic growth, of course, has suffered. To say that the economy is lackluster as a result is being, maybe, too gracious.

So, Jordan's going to require continued assistance. The good news is, its leaders recognize it needs to continue reforms to reinforce stability and to achieve self-reliance. These are not just in the security realm, or even, for that matter, exclusive to the economic realm, they of course cut across political, security, economic areas. King Abdullah has outlined some of these reforms, including freedom of expression and allowing the emergence of independent and policy-focused political parties.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much.

And thank you, to all of the nominees today, for your willingness to be considered for these very important posts at this critical time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I am out of time.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you so much, Senator Shaheen.

And Senator Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Wooster, I am going to continue with the line of questioning that Senator Shaheen began with regards to Jordan.

We have, of course, a very special relationship with Israel. My guess is that all the members of this committee have been there multiple times, and we feel very deeply about a nation which shares our values in many respects, as Israel does.

We also—a very important and—well, a key relationship with Jordan, and I would anticipate that sometimes the—balancing both those relationships could be a particular challenge. Right now, as you point out, a lot of issues are faced by the Jordanian Government and by the King, not only as they relate to Israel, but as they relate to the Syrian refugees, to their own economic challenges, and so forth.

And I guess the question is, Does the administration, as you understand it—and the State Department and you personally—do you feel that our relationship with Jordan is also key and, therefore, that, in fashioning our policy as it relates to the Middle East, and particularly as it relates to Israel and the region, that we need to be very, very careful that we do not put Jordan in a position where they might be inclined to draw away from us in some way? They obviously play a very—a key role. They have with regards to security, with regards to intelligence-sharing, and so forth. And the King would be under pressure, given the fact that the majority of its population is Palestinian. And, of course, with the peace plan that the administration put forward, there was a lot of resistance on the part of the Jordanian Palestinians.

And so, I am concerned about the relationship we are going to try and maintain with Jordan. And I would be interested in your thoughts about how we maintain that and do not in any way signal that we only care about one of the two neighbors, but we care about both in a very substantial way.

Mr. WOOSTER. Thank you, Senator.

As you have made clear in your remarks, this is—you recognize, and I think all observers of this scene do—the relationship between those two countries is interdependent. Israel cannot be secure with-

out the buffer that Jordan provides, and Jordan is not going to be likely very viable in terms of its own stability and economics as well, without a friendly Israel next door. So, I think all of us are awake to that. I cannot speak for Israel, and I cannot speak for Jordan, but, having served out there, I know that people are eyes-wide-open about the realities.

So, Jordan and Israel—I think it is important for us to establish as a baseline—they have been at peace for over 25 years, since they signed an historic peace treaty in 1994. Security cooperation between the two countries remains strong, and it does so because it addresses the concerns of both countries. Politically, no secret, relations have been strained over the last few years, and those tensions carry a cost with them, including in missed economic opportunities—or, to restate that, opportunities for economic cooperation that would benefit both of those countries. So, the U.S. Government, we remain committed to strengthening diplomatic, economic, and people-to-people ties between both Jordan and Israel.

In terms of the treaty, we continue to—the United States—we continue to respect that '94 treaty, and that recognizes the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom in the—overseeing the holy shrines in Jerusalem, and we will continue to work with the Governments of Jordan and Israel to identify areas of cooperation and mutual benefit. And again, because it is not only beneficial for the two of those countries, but, because of the paramount concern for American officials: this is in the interest of the United States.

Senator ROMNEY. And from your perspective, is the King, as he has been in the past, in some respects above politics or—and widely respected by the people in the country, and followed with great passion and care, or is he under increasing pressure, by virtue of the challenges with regards to annexation and with regards to the peace plan that was proposed by the administration?

Mr. WOOSTER. So, the King is a member of the Hashemite royal family. He is carrying on a proud tradition which bears with it enormous credibility and legitimacy, certainly within the Kingdom and also in the region and, of course, here in the United States. And beyond that, like any head of state or head of government, he is going to—he has to contend with the tumult that is attendant to political life anywhere. Things come along, and, you know, are you prepared for them, are you not? In their case, again, the exogenous shocks are overwhelming, but we are confident that they have got the right team, politically and economically, to come through this, and we are going to make sure of that because the imperative here for us is, it is in our interest to see that that happens.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Wooster.

Mr. Chairman, I yield my time.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Senator Romney, appreciate it.

Senator Murphy.

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

Thank you, to all of our nominees. Thank you, to you and your families, for choosing to serve and, for many of you, to continue to serve.

We are going to keep the focus on you, Mr. Wooster, continue along the same line of questioning. But, before I do, let me note

that, though you got your undergraduate degree at a second-rate school—those of you who went to Williams College know how Amherst fails to measure up, year after year—you have made up for it by coming to Connecticut to get your graduate degree in New Haven. So, I would give you points for that.

Mr. WOOSTER. You are gracious, Senator.

[Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY. I do not want to leave this conversation about the effects of annexation with the sense that we have underplayed the level of concern in Jordan. You know, years ago, when there were economic protests in Amman, they would be centered on the Parliament and on the elected leaders. Now those protests show up at the doors of the royal family. And so, there is a real worry these days, from the King and those that serve him, that, you know, there is a real political instability that can increase as the situation in Israel continues to move away from a two- state solution.

So, you said that there are concerns in Jordan about the annexation of the West Bank. What are those concerns? What are the concerns that they have expressed to us and to the Israelis about what would happen in Jordan should Israel move forward with annexation?

Mr. WOOSTER. Thank you, Senator.

In terms of what the concerns are, the concerns are that the Jordanians would not like to see any unilateral annexation. That is a public and repeated and declared position of the Jordanians.

Beyond that, to return to a point I had mentioned with Senator Shaheen, the administration has asked the Jordanians to encourage the Palestinians to bring their concerns to the negotiating table. So, yes, the Jordanians have their own sets of concerns. They have expressed those. They have expressed those of the Palestinians. And again, our plea, repeated again and again, is, "We have a plan that is detailed, it is implementable, it meets the core requirements of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Bring your concerns to the negotiating table." We have called on all members of the international community to consider the plan thoughtfully. The only realistic path all of us know to getting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolved is through negotiations.

Senator MURPHY. That is correct, but that is not what this administration is proposing. They are proposing the unilateral annexation, and the endorsement of it by an American administration, should the Palestinians and the Israelis not be able to proceed to that negotiation.

But, let me drill down a little bit more on the concerns that they have raised. They have raised concerns, the Jordanians have, about annexation, as they did about the parameters of a possible peace plan presented by the Trump administration, because, in part, they worry that that will lead to greater instability inside Jordan. With a large Palestinian community, the further that we get away from a potential two-state future, the greater unrest comes amongst that population, creating more of a threat to Jordan's stability. Is that not right?

Mr. WOOSTER. Well, Senator, obviously there have been tensions. That is without going into each and every one of them. So, clearly this is—you know, there is a lot of uphill sledding here, to keep it

in New England terms, if you will. But, it is an incredibly important relationship, it is built on an historic peace, and we, the United States, will use our good offices—again, because of the imperative I mentioned earlier, it is in our interest—we will use our good offices to strengthen the bonds between these peoples. We do not have any other option.

Senator MURPHY. I just hope that you go into this job with eyes wide open. I understand you are being very diplomatic now, and you are representing an administration that has taken a very different position than prior Republican and Democratic administrations, but there is going to be a fury in Jordan, should this annexation go forward. It is going to make your job much more difficult. And I assume, and hope, you know that.

One final question, Mr. Chairman, for Mr. Day.

I think that you are right in the way that you have approached the questions presented to you regarding how we countenance China's increasing role in the continent. You made one comment I just wanted you to clarify. You certainly remarked that we need to have an alternative. We need to create more opportunities for Africa to invest with the United States, and let them choose between the offers from the United States and the offers from China. But, you also said that you think we need to have "sharper elbows." And I just did not quite understand what you meant by that phrase. What do you mean by "sharper elbows"?

Mr. DAY. Sure. Thank you, Senator.

I think we need to be a bit more aggressive in how we articulate the U.S. model. You know, USAID has done tremendous work on the African continent. But, in some cases, we have not been the best communicators of the work that we have done. And so, I think it will be important, as we move forward, to differentiate our model versus the Chinese model, in this particular case, but also in—with other malign influences. So, we always have been, I think, very, very diplomatic, in terms of our—the way in which we communicate to our African partners, but we are getting to a place where the indebtedness that many of these African countries are seeing is absolutely unsustainable. And so, I think that we need to be much more clear in how we articulate our model versus the Chinese. And, in some cases, we need to be more direct.

Senator MURPHY. I guess I was wondering whether "sharper elbows" meant, sort of, forcing countries to make a choice between the United States and China. There—it is one thing to make our argument better, it is another thing to create a policy in which we ask countries to make a choice between China and the United States. Is that what you are suggesting?

Mr. DAY. Senator, no, it is not a—it is not a binary choice. It is really—when I say "sharper elbows," I mean it is more about how we are articulating how we do business versus how the Chinese do business.

Senator MURPHY. Do business.

Mr. DAY. Yeah, they have multiple choices. And so, what we need to do is present the U.S. model as one of many choices. And so, if we can help American companies do business on the African continent, it will be good for them, good for us.

Senator MURPHY. Sure, that they know what the consequences of doing business with China are. That is—I think that is the right tack.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Senator Murphy.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Can you hear me, Mr. Chair?

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator. Yes, welcome.

Senator KAINE. And am I up on video now, too?

Listen, I want to thank the witnesses. This is a superb panel. And, Mr. Chair, good work trying to manage the technology.

I do want to continue a little bit with Mr. Wooster, also, and then have a couple of questions for Ms. Brown.

So, Mr. Wooster, thank you. We put a couple of issues on the table with Jordan, because I am also very worried about the U.S.-Jordan relationship. The King often visits the Foreign Relations Committee. And year after year, when we meet in the Foreign Relations committee room, he looks us in the face, he talks to us about how important the relationship with the United States is, and then he says, "Please do—please advance the peace process." The fact that they have come out, the Jordanian leadership, against the peace plan—and one of the reasons they have come out against it is that it was proposed with no meaningful involvement by the Palestinians—so, I get that we are trying to tell the Palestinians to bring their issues to the table, but I think the Palestinians have a threshold question: Why was something proposed without our involvement?

Second, the Jordanian leadership has expressed really serious concerns about potential unilateral annexation, concerns that a number of members on the committee share. But, the—a third element is the U.S. decision, unilaterally, to cease contributions to UNRWA in 2017. My recollection is that the U.S. was the largest contributor to UNRWA before we stopped those contributions. Is that not accurate?

Mr. WOOSTER. Yes, Senator.

Senator KAINE. And, Mr. Wooster, what—you were the Chargés in Amman, is that not correct?

Mr. WOOSTER. Yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. And when was that, that you were the Chargé?

Mr. WOOSTER. For about 18 months, from 2017 through 2018.

Senator KAINE. How many Palestinian refugees, approximately, live in Jordan?

Mr. WOOSTER. The numbers on that differ because of how the count goes. There is also sensitivity to it, for the demographics, for domestic political reasons. But, I think that, Senator, we can say there are an awful lot of them.

Senator KAINE. Well, was UNRWA providing service to those Palestinian refugees in Jordan?

Mr. WOOSTER. So, UNRWA was providing services, yes, in the form of education in schools.

Senator KAINE. And so, the U.S. decision to eliminate, I think it was, about $500 million a year to UNRWA, that definitely has an effect in life in Jordan, at least insofar as services that are being provided to Palestinian refugees in Jordan are curtailed. And that

makes things more difficult for the Jordanian Government in, sort of, managing a reality where they have not only Palestinian refugees, but Syrian refugees. Is that not accurate?

Mr. WOOSTER. Well, Senator, it remains the prerogative of the United States Government to decide how to appropriate its—not appropriate—excuse me—how to allocate its resources. And——

Senator KAINE. Right.

Mr. WOOSTER [continuing]. We had a lot of differences with UNRWA. It was not unique to this administration. There have been a lot—this had gone on for decades—a lot of spats and disputes with UNRWA and the effectiveness of programming and efficiency. So, I cannot make the pretense of telling you I am an expert on all the details, but this had been a longstanding problem that UNRWA had never resolved.

Senator KAINE. And I do not raise it to debate whether the administration should do that. I would not ask you that question. I have an opinion about it. I am just saying that, with respect to the situation in Jordan, an ally that we deeply want to maintain as an ally, if they are—if they are not supporters of the peace proposal on the table, if they are worried about the potential unilateral annexation and the U.S.'s acceptance of it, and if the U.S. ended funding to an agency that was providing support for refugees in Jordan, that that latter fact, that that is also kind of a potential challenging point right now with Jordan, is it not?

Mr. WOOSTER. Well, Senator, no one knows this better than the Jordanians—no one is a better friend to Jordan than the United States is. And we can say that with integrity. And I can look you in the virtual eye and say it. And that is true by orders of magnitude. It is not simply a debating distinction. It is true if you look at the record. And the record shows, again and again and again, and with orders of magnitude, there is no friend that is better to the Hashemite Kingdom than the United States. So, we do not want these people to be beleaguered, and we do not want them left out in the dark. I mean, these are allies and strategic partners, and we are going to stand by them. We are going to make sure that they are not left with a deal that is bad for Jordan, too.

Senator KAINE. Let me ask Ms. Brown a question.

Ms. Brown—this is a very qualified panel. I intend, absent some big surprise, to support everybody on it—but, Ms. Brown, with respect to Uganda, an issue with Uganda that has been a point of significant concern has been the treatment of LGBT folks in Uganda. We cannot tell another nation how to do their domestic politics. They are going to make their own decision about domestic policy. But, we have a set of norms that, you know, begin with the equality principle; and our institutions, like the Supreme Court, have said that that equality principle extends to LGBT people. How, in your approach to your ambassadorship in Uganda, should you be confirmed, would you try to hold up the banner of the U.S. equality principle, including equality to LGBT people who are beleaguered in that country?

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Senator, very much for your question—a really important issue. If confirmed, I would be guided by the U.S. position, which you just articulated, in which we condemn violence and discrimination targeting vulnerable populations, includ-

ing LGBTI individuals. My understanding is, the U.S. Embassy in Uganda has long maintained a relationship with the LGBTI community—and we have not shied away from speaking out when these—when this groups—well, these groups have been targeted or abused. If confirmed, I would make it a point to continue to engage civil society, this community, as well as government officials, which, you know, my predecessors have done and which the Embassy is doing right now, on the importance of treating everyone equally, with respect, ensuring that they are not abused, and making sure that everyone can take part in and contribute to Uganda's economic and social development.

I will say that—with regard to any engagement with the Government, particularly if——

I am sorry. Can you hear me?

Senator KAINE. Yeah, I can. Thank you.

Ms. BROWN. Okay. I would just like to finish, in just saying that any engagement with the Government—of course, we want to do that. In—you know, in consultation with civil society, as these groups currently are more vulnerable, we do not want to do anything that is going to create problems for them. It does not mean not addressing any—an issue if it comes up, but we want to make sure whether or not a public statement is helpful or—want to make sure that that is helpful or if it is best, at times, to engage in private. And I will say that I know that some Ugandan politicians have periodically raised, you know, creating laws against LGBTI individuals, but I have no indication right now that that is a serious consideration by the Government. And we will certainly monitor and make sure that these groups continue to be protected and are free to live their lives as they like.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chair, I will just say, in conclusion, that I have certainly heard from LGBT activists in other countries around the world that, though their government may be cracking down on them when the U.S. Embassy or Consulate treats them with respect, includes them, has them to events, that is enormously powerful and appreciated by LGBT activists. We cannot affect the laws that other countries do, but if we treat people with respect, and countries value the relationship with us, that has an example.

So, thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Senator Kaine.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Barrasso, Senator Booker, for holding this virtual nominations hearing. It is wonderful to be on with you. When I was the Chairman of the Africa Subcommittee for a number of years, I enjoyed confirmation hearings such as this, and appreciate the chance to connect with all of you.

I have been to and visited the U.S. Embassy, and stationed in literally every one of the countries you are nominated to represent us at in ambassadorial roles, and look forward very much to working with you, and, to Mr. Day, in your USAID role. So, all of you, you know, should you be so fortunate as to be confirmed by the Senate, thank you, to you, to your families, for the willingness you have demonstrated to step up and serve our Nation. And, for those

of you have long careers in the Foreign Service, for the ways in which that sacrifice has continued over many years, I have such deep respect for the work that you do, and am grateful for a chance to briefly question you.

It was not my intention to sit here, but that is literally a "chawarra" that I got in Burkina Faso, over my shoulder, which I just noticed, in looking at it, Ms. Clark.

Mr. Day, if I might, I just had a good phone call yesterday with Acting Administrator Barsa. One of his priorities for USAID is reorienting USAID into a post-COVID world. We talked about a bill, that Senator Graham and I have led and is now law, called the Global Fragility Act. And global fragility requires us to develop a strategy, a long-term strategy to deal with fragile areas, such as the Sahel, in which Burkina Faso certainly sits, among others. I would be interested, if I could, Mr. Day, in your comments on what your priorities are for reorienting USAID response in Africa during and post-COVID—you may have covered this while I was on another call, I apologize—and to hear how you view working with my office and Senator Graham's office in implementing the Global Fragility Act.

And I note the Chairman is yawning visibly as I was questioning you.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DAY. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. John, I have that effect on so many of my colleagues.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DAY. Senator, number one, thank you for the——

Senator BARRASSO. I was thinking of some of those long——

Mr. DAY [continuing]. Senator, thank you so much for the——

Senator BARRASSO [continuing]. Flights you and I have had together over Africa.

Senator COONS. Mr. Day. My apologies.

Mr. DAY. That is all right.

Senator, thank you so much, not only for the question, but also for your, just, tremendous leadership on Africa issues. I know that my former boss, Mark Green, enjoyed, immensely, working with you and your team. And I hope to continue working closely with you and your team on all of these important issues.

Perhaps I will start with the Global Fragility Act. We are very excited about this. USAID will take one of the leadership roles within the interagency. We are in the process now of developing the strategy, which due—is due in September, and that is on track.

One of the things that I think is so exciting about the Global Fragility Act is that it really will push us to look at a multifaceted approach to countering violent extremism and fragility on the African continent. One, we have focused a lot on treating many of the violence and conflict areas, what I would call, kind of, symptoms, if you will, meaning the humanitarian assistance and a lot of our health programming. But, it also is going to push us to look at some of the root causes. And that is what is absolutely critical about this issue, is that you cannot just treat the symptoms, you have got to also look at the root causes.

And so, we—when we look at many of the fragile states around Africa—and obviously we are thinking about not only the Sahel, but Somalia and South Sudan—and there are also some that very well may be fragile in the future. I am deeply concerned about countries like Tanzania that have seen pretty significant backsliding on the democracy front. And so, the Global Fragility Act will be an important, kind of, authorizing tool to make us look at not only those—the symptoms of conflict and violence, but also looking at the root causes.

But, we will have to work closely with our African Government partners. And this is where, kind of, some of the analysis that we have done on levels of commitment—for example, in Burkina Faso and Niger, we really see significant levels of commitment. So, those are areas where we can really believe we can get some work done. Much more complex in Mali, which is where a lot of the instability is emanating from. But, one of our strategies, of course, is to do everything that we can to support Burkina Faso and Niger to create as much of a firewall as we can from that—creeping down into the littoral states of Togo, Benin, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire. So, this is something that will be, I think, incredibly important for us.

In terms of COVID–19 and our approach towards that, I mentioned, a little bit earlier, that, you know, we are certainly watching closely the health impact of COVID–19, but it is a bit unclear as to how it is going to actually unfold on the African continent. And so, we are watching it very, very closely. But, what we do know is that the economic impact is going to be significant, if not devastating.

The third-order impact that I am deeply concerned about that I made reference to earlier is that we also have a lot of authoritarian leaders around the continent who may be looking to take advantage of this opportunity——

Senator COONS. Absolutely.

Mr. DAY [continuing]. To consolidate their power, to look at ways in which they can repress free media, suppress opposition, look—crack down on civil society. So, that is something that we are going to have to really focus on quite a bit, and it is something that is a real concern of mine and, I know, my colleagues, as well.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you. I look forward to working with you on these important issues. And I agree with you about a number of the countries you mentioned, and your characterizations. I will also add Sudan, if I can, to that list, where a fragile democratic transition, I think, is under real pressure because of the pandemic. I am meeting, I think it is later today, with Governor Beasley, of the World Food Programme, and I have met with several folks from leadership in Sudan, the Prime Minister and others, and am trying to find an appropriate path forward for supporting their stabilization.

I also think Ethiopia is a country of great promise that could really be an anchor of stability in the Horn, and I hope we will stay in regular touch across all these different countries.

If I might, Ms. Clark, I am going to move to you. I had a wonderful and productive delegation. I led a bipartisan delegation to Africa. I think this is almost 2 years ago now. And we visited both Niger and Burkina Faso. I found the Burkinabe to be wonderful

partners and to benefit from a responsive and engaged leadership at a time when they are under enormous pressure. I just thought—I would be interested in hearing how you see our work with the Burkinabe and their governance and leadership and society, what role you think there is for the U.S.-French partnership in the region, and what you think are the major challenges as we try to sustain their progress in the face of rising violence and jihadist attacks.

Ms. CLARK. Thank you, Senator, for that question. And you have rightly identified many of the challenges that Burkina Faso faces today. And I think, should I be confirmed, I would look to use all the tools that we have at our disposal—diplomatic engagement, working with civil society organizations, working with the Government—to promote human rights, to help solidify the democracy there, which I think will be very important for countering a violence narrative—the violent extremist narratives, also working on the economic front with my AID colleagues.

And I just want to say that it would be wonderful to continue to work with Ramsey Day, and I agree with what he just outlined for the—for our assistance efforts, because I think that is really critical. We will have to also work on supporting the law enforcement and security forces so that they can become more effective in responding to terrorism and, at the same time, underscoring the need to respect human rights and to have—develop a good relationship with the people that they protect. I think right now part of the problem is that some of the territory has been ceded, or has been lost, and we need to work with our partners to help strengthen and to return so that there is the vision of government services, et cetera. And I think, working—should I be confirmed, I would work carefully and closely with other partners, such as the French and other countries that are there, to—so that we could jointly—leverage our combined efforts.

Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you. I look forward to hearing more about your work in Ouagadougou. It is a very challenging region, and our mission there plays a critical role.

I do not know how much patience you have got for me, Mr. Chairman. I have questions or everybody. But, there is two I would like to make sure I get to, if I might.

Senator BARRASSO. Go right ahead, yes. I know we are supposed to have a rollcall vote in a few moments, but yes.

Senator COONS. Ms. Brown, if I might, I have visited Uganda a number of times, most recently last August. Your predecessor in that post is someone I have followed closely and enjoyed working with when she was Liberia and in Uganda. President Museveni became president, actually, at the same time that I was traversing Uganda as a college student, in an ill-conceived foray into a country in the middle of a civil war. And he is still hanging on, and has recently said it would be wrong to hold a presidential election if the pandemic persists, signaling a likely intention to delay the elections.

How can we work with the Ugandan Government and provide appropriate pressure to make them respect the opposition and minority voices? As Senator Kaine, the question you got—and I hope

Ms. Brown is on—as Senator Kaine questioned you about, I, too, have been engaged in receptions and events at the Embassy, events when I have visited Uganda, I think, three times over the last 8 to—8 or so years—so encourage minority political party members, human rights activists, journalists. I think this is a role that every American post can play around the world.

Ms. Brown, if you are not here—I do not see a video—I may simply ask Mr. Grayson if we can slide over to Estonia and—I will just briefly say—there we are. Ms. Brown, if you have got some—did you get—did you hear my question?

Ms. BROWN. Yes, Senator, I did hear your question.

Senator COONS. How are you going to get our dear friend, Mr. Museveni, the President——

Ms. BROWN. And I will say, if confirmed, I——

Senator COONS [continuing]. To absolutely follow the constitution?

Ms. BROWN [continuing]. Well, first, Senator, again—thank you for your question. And, if confirmed, I certainly hope you make yet another trip to Uganda, when conditions permit such travel.

I would just like to, kind of, restate what was in my statement, in my testimony, and also, Senator Booker had asked a similar question to that end. First, the issue of the date of the elections. Looking at the transcript, President Museveni, as I understood it, said, you know, the plan is to hold elections in early 2021, but a lot of that depends on whether or not they have been successful in——

Senator COONS. Right.

Ms. BROWN [continuing]. Curving the spread of COVID–19. And, so far, they have been very successful in doing this. The reports are that there have been only 122 cases, and no deaths. And so, I think that suggests that, if this trend continues, that the conditions will exist where you can hold elections in early 2021, as scheduled.

The United—you know, the U.S. Embassy and all of our resources, we have been working with civil society, with groups to really ensure that the playing field is level, that groups have an opportunity to participate, to share their positions, so that the electorate is well-informed and can make an informed decision. These are messages that have been—the importance of this is a message that has been conveyed to President Museveni. If confirmed, it is a message that I will repeat often and as strongly as possible about the need to have an open and transparent process, where the voices of Ugandan citizens can be heard and where the electorate can make their decision. As I said, ultimately this is a decision that the Ugandan people have to make, but, if confirmed, I assure you that we will use all of the available resources to make sure that their voices are heard and that their will is respected at the polls.

Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Ms. Brown. I look forward to being an instrument of your will if I can be of any assistance. A previous Ambassador—oh, gosh, many years ago now—surprised me as I was about to walk into a meeting with the President and said, "You need to tell him that, under the Leahy Act, we are going to cut off funding for his"—I think it was his military intelligence unit, because they had failed vetting. And I was happy to do so.

You should always feel free to put visiting Senators to work so we can earn our fare.

Thank you for your willingness to take on this important post.

Mr. Grayson, if I might, briefly, I just—I did not know much about Estonia before visiting, a number of years ago, in a bipartisan delegation. And I was so impressed with the ways in which they have innovated. They have, in large ways, recovered from a devastating cyberattack by Russia in 2007, and then shown how you can make cybersecurity a real national resource and priority. I think they contributed in significant ways to our NATO alliance and to our security. And I suspect you, too, may have already addressed this in a previous question. I apologize. Feel free to be concise, if you wish. How do you view Estonia's contributions to our NATO alliance?

Mr. GRAYSON. Well, Senator, thanks for the question. And you have seen it firsthand, so you know how important and how impressive it is. But, the NATO Cyber Center of Excellence is the first part, and the activities between EUCOM and the U.S. Cyber Command, including all the joint exercises and missions between our country and Estonia are quite prolific. And even most recently with COVID–19, they have launched multiple initiatives, in the Global Hack-a-thon, to incentivize Estonians, which they do not need much incentive to do, but to really try to find solutions—e-solutions to this global pandemic that is facing the world. So, I hope, if confirmed, I can further turbocharge this relationship that we have with them on cyber issues, e- issues, everything possible that e-Estonia has become so famous for.

Senator COONS. And thank you, Mr. Grayson. And I hope you will stay in touch. And feel free to update me on their developments. I really found it an inspiring country. I had a—we—a bipartisan delegation, we had a meeting with the head of the Estonian armed forces in a long briefing that left an enduring impression on me of the role that they are taking on and playing in NATO.

Henry, last, but far from least, if I might. Please give my best to Laura. It is wonderful to see a college classmate ascend to the position of Ambassador. And you are taking on, in Amman, a critical strategic post, one where our relationship with the Kingdom, as you said in your opening statement, is critical, both in terms of their values, the way in which the Hashemite Kingdom continues to welcome and support refugees, the ways in which the King, the keeper of the holy sites of Jerusalem and a real leader in the Muslim world, continues to be an absolutely critical partner for us. So, I would be interested—you did speak to Jordan's economic stability. Not to be too pointed about it, I am concerned that there is a budget request that would significantly reduce aid to Jordan. What sort of an impact do you think there would be on Jordan's stability and on the U.S.-Jordan relationship if we were to sharply reduce U.S. support for Jordan?

Mr. WOOSTER. Senator, sharply reduced support would not be celebrated, of course, in Amman. But, for understandable reasons, if you are referring to the President's budget request for FY 21—is that what you are pointing to?

Senator COONS. I am. The FY 2021 budget reduces aid to Jordan by 250 million, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. WOOSTER. Okay. So, Senator, Jordan's stability is premised on its economic stability. And the stability of the Hashemite Kingdom is a U.S. priority. The budget, or this FY 2021 budget, it seeks 475 million in direct support, sometimes referred to as budget support. That is consistent with our FY 2020 request. The President's FY 2021 request strikes a balance between supporting, on the one hand, Jordan's economic development, and then ensuring, on the other hand, a modern, interoperable military that is capable of continued support to U.S. forces and to coalition forces. So, within the parameters of the memorandum of understanding, we routinely assess the assistance mix to ensure that the request that we have is aligned with what we anticipate the future needs are going to be. Senator, if confirmed, I pledge to work with you and the rest of the members to ensure we have the mix right.

Senator COONS. How sustainable is the number of refugees that Jordan has taken in, you know, on a per-capita basis, given the very limited natural resources they have, given the dramatic number of refugees who have been in Jordan for decades? I have really been struck at their ability to sustain and endure—as have several other countries in the region, admittedly, but Jordan is an exceptional ally, I think, and their ability and willingness to really sustain a significant Syrian population, now over many years, has impressed me. How sustainable do you think it is, both economically and politically? And given that my next meeting is with the head of the World Food Programme, how do you see our support for refugees within Jordan?

Mr. WOOSTER. Well, Senator, the sustainability aspect of the question is dependent directly upon the willingness of countries to be supportive. So, in our—in the case of the United States, that is not really a question. This is a priority for us. It is an anchor for us in the Middle East. It is a strategic partner. And we also need the international community to be on board with us to share this burden—that has a pejorative term that I do not mean, but I cannot think of something more elegant at the moment.

Senator COONS. "Blessed opportunity."

Mr. WOOSTER. Blessed opportunity. Thank you, Senator. The United States has provided about one- and-a-half billion in humanitarian aid to the organizations that are assisting the Syrian refugees in Jordan. And that includes the Jordanian host communities. Because you may recall, Senator—I know you have visited Jordan before—but over 80 percent of the Syrian refugee population are not in refugee camps, they are in Jordanian local communities. So, we are very awake to that, and we tailored that assistance so that it hits those communities, as well. And our assistance supports not just the Syrian refugees, but the non-Syrian refugee populations in Jordan from over 50 different countries. So, we are going to continue to work with the international community to support Jordan in giving refugees a dignified life, access to services, and opportunities. Again, the imperative here—we always come back to this, we anchor in this—it is in the U.S. interest.

Senator COONS. Thank you. I have visited the Bidi Bidi refugee camp in Uganda twice, last August and 2 years before that, one of the fastest-growing, open refugee camps in the world, where refugees are given an opportunity to own land, to farm, to fully inte-

grate into Ugandan society. One of the most memorable refugee camp visits I will ever make was with Senator McCain and a bipartisan delegation to Zaatari, in Jordan, where—it was in the early days of the Syrian civil war, and just heartbreaking.

So, to everyone on the call who has got anything to do with our refugee support, as Mr. Day certainly will, and as Ms. Clark also will, please just know that is an area of passion and interest for me, and please know how much I appreciate the work of our Foreign Service and development career professionals in remote and difficult and dangerous places. Many of you are going to be going to places that are challenging. Estonia is—you know, might be challenging, should the Russians make a strategic decision, but it is literally one of the loveliest countries I have ever been to, absent the Russian threat.

Let me just say, in closing—my apologies—that I am so grateful to all of you for your years of dedicated service to our Nation, and to your families. And I appreciate the chance to question you.

Thank you for your patience, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to supporting all of today's nominees.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you so very much, Senator Coons.

And Senator Booker, do you have any closing comments before I wrap it up?

Senator BOOKER. They have called the vote. Why don't we wrap up?

Senator BARRASSO. Okay. Well, thank you.

I want to thank all of you for your testimony, for your patience in navigating the new process, and willingness to serve our Nation. It is my hope that each of you will be dedicated to ensuring the safety of Americans, to advancing U.S. interests all across the world.

And, members of this committee, we have had ten members on board during the hearing today. members of the committee are going to have until 5 p.m. on Friday, May 14th—sorry—May 15th to submit questions for the record. We ask the nominees to respond promptly in writing to the committee in order for your nomination to be considered in a timely manner.

Thank you again. Congratulations to each and every one of you.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:23 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. NATALIE E. BROWN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. President Museveni publicly stated this week that it would be wrong to hold presidential elections next year if the coronavirus persists. If confirmed, what tools do you have at your disposal to help ensure that the Government does not subvert the rule of law and the will of the Ugandan people related to the 2021 elections?

Answer. In considering whether to postpone elections, there should be a consensus between political parties, electoral experts, and public health officials, and any action should be consistent with Ugandan law and Uganda's constitution.The U.S.

Mission in Uganda is already applying extensive advocacy and diplomatic pressure in coordination with other international donors to ensure that the Government does not subvert the rule of law. In the past, the Mission has successfully leveraged joint diplomatic pressure with allies such as the United Kingdom and the European Union to hold the Ugandan Government accountable on human rights issues. If the Ugandan Government announces intentions to postpone the elections, the U.S. Embassy should engage directly and frequently with the Ugandan Government to stress the importance of holding the elections in a timely manner and in conformity with the constitution. If confirmed, I would look to work with like-minded partners, international organizations, and domestic civil society organizations to offer technical assistance to help create the conditions for safe elections as quickly as possible.

Question. What U.S. pre-elections and elections support programs and activities are currently underway in Uganda? How have they been impacted by COVID–19? If confirmed, what additional programs and activities will you bring on line to help ensure a credible poll next year? What elections related actions will you recommend be taken to ensure the participation of youth?

Answer. The United States is committed to supporting democracy, human rights, and good governance in Uganda. These principles are enshrined within Uganda's constitution and remain central to the aspirations of the Ugandan people.

The U.S. Mission to Uganda utilizes an interagency approach to support the 2021 election process. Through USAID's Strengthening Citizens Engagement in Elections (SCENE) activity, the Mission is currently supporting a network of 43 Ugandan organizations to generate grassroots engagement in the elections. Activities included efforts to promote voter registration and electoral reform. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) funds two active programs in Uganda. One, a two-year program begun in 2018, is focused on protecting freedom of expression and access to information in Uganda. The second supports Ugandan women and youth in engaging local-level government officials to promote free, fair, and transparent political processes and good governance. Additionally, DRL and USAID are in the final stages of establishing complimentary election-specific programming focused on voter education, voter mobilization, and citizen-led efforts to ensure violence-free elections.

Question. Freedom House downgraded Uganda from "Partly Free" to "Not Free" in its Freedom in the World 2019 index, citing government efforts to restrict free expression, including through surveillance of electronic communications and its social media tax. What tools exist for the United States to help ensure internet freedom? What U.S. assistance programs will you use to if confirmed will you use to help ensure Ugandans are able to exercise free speech through social media? How will internet restrictions impact dissemination of information and the ability of candidates to campaign in advance of elections?

Answer. Freedom of expression is not only a human right, but also essential to the democratic process. The Embassy is currently supporting multiple DRL programs aimed at protecting freedom of expression and access to information, promoting rule of law, and enhancing access to justice in Uganda. In addition to encouraging assistance programs such as these, if confirmed, I will engage openly and regularly with the Government of Uganda and civil society to promote the freedom of expression, including by using social media platforms administered by the Embassy.

In addition to elections-specific programming led by USAID and DRL, the Department will continue to press for a level playing field for opposition candidates, including respect for the fundamental freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. If confirmed, I will ensure our Embassy in Kampala continues to advocate against efforts to unduly restrict, interfere with, and intimidate journalists, civil society organizations (including LGBTI groups), and political opposition members. I will lead the call for a more open operating environment for journalists, political opposition, and members of civil society, and ensure that U.S. Government messaging highlights our serious concern with Uganda's shrinking political space. Finally, I will support the establishment of credible electoral institutions and encourage citizens' participation in the democratic process, particularly by women, youth, and other marginalized groups.

Question. During your testimony, Senator Kaine alluded to LGBT issues in Uganda. What plans do you have to augment/reinvigorate existing embassy programs or re-invent, reinvigorate the dialogue with the Ugandans regarding LGBT concerns? During your hearing the issue of torture and extrajudicial killings in Uganda was raised. Opposition politicians have been arrested, harassed and tortured. What spe-

cific steps will you take if confirmed to champion and advance human rights and political freedoms in Uganda?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy in Kampala has a long history of engaging on matters of human rights, democracy, and good governance through various programs. These include recent efforts to combat societal discrimination and strengthening LGBTI organizations and supporting Ugandan youth to defend their rights, as well as programs to promote freedom of expression, rule of law, and access to justice and efforts to protect freedom of expression and access to information in Uganda.

If confirmed, I am committed to continuing our outreach to LGBTI individuals and organizations as well as working with the Ugandan Government, like-minded diplomatic missions, civil society, and international organization to advance these important issues.

With regard to reports of torture and extrajudicial killings, if confirmed, the Embassy team and I will continue to engage government officials and work with our partners on human rights protections and advocate for the rule of law. As appropriate, and in consultation with the Department, we will consider the use of tools such as financial sanctions and visa restrictions for human rights violations and abuses or corruption.

Question. Uganda has one of the most significant youth bulges in Africa. What specific actions will you take if confirmed to address the issues of economic and educational opportunity, political inclusion, and other concerns identified by youth?

Answer. The U.S. Mission to Uganda currently has in place a strategy formulated to address the needs of the "average" Ugandan, symbolized by the 14 year-old girl, whose needs must be addressed if Uganda is to achieve sustainable, broad-based prosperity and long-term stability. Through its programming, the Mission implements positive youth development approaches across sectors to enable youth to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives and to be dynamic agents of change in Uganda's development trajectory, including by increasing youth engagement and participation in the democratic process. If confirmed, I will place my full support behind existing youth-oriented programming and seek to expand on this programming with additional efforts to promote the health, well-being, education, and economic development of Uganda's youth.

Question. Only 10% of Uganda's gold exports are mined in the country, however, gold surpassed coffee as Uganda's biggest earner of foreign currency in 2018, growing from $10 million to over $500 million in the past decade. Shipments of more than 7 tons of gold were reportedly transferred from Venezuela on a Russian charter aircraft to a refinery in Uganda in March 2019, processed at a refinery that some have alleged appears to be operated with the knowledge of President Museveni. Was this an effort to circumvent U.S. sanctions on Venezuela's central bank and gold industry? What actions has the State Department taken to corroborate such claims? If confirmed, what actions will you recommend be taken in response to sanctions violations by the Museveni regime?

Answer. The Department was highly concerned by the shipment of Venezuelan gold that passed through Uganda. Leadership at the U.S. Embassy in Uganda reached out to the highest levels of the Ugandan Government to express our concern and to dissuade the Government from permitting Venezuelan gold to be processed in Uganda again. President Museveni stated publicly that no additional Venezuelan gold would be permitted to pass through Uganda again. The Embassy remains highly engaged on the issue of gold refined in Uganda, and has facilitated interagency analysis and examination of Uganda's gold industry. If confirmed, I would support the stringent application of appropriate measures, to include financial sanctions and visa restrictions, as may be applicable, to any Ugandan Government official found to have been involved in the circumvention of U.S. sanctions targeting Venezuela.

Question. What is the status of Uganda's ties with North Korea? Are reports of military ties accurate? If so, how should this impact our military to military relationship and our security assistance programs and activities? If confirmed, what steps will you take if Uganda is found to be violating U.N. sanctions against North Korea?

Answer. The Government of Uganda maintains diplomatic relations with North Korea. The U.S. Embassy in Uganda has engaged often and in detail with the Ugandan Government to remind it of the obligations of all U.N. member counties to uphold U.N. Security Council resolutions related to North Korea. The Ugandan Government has repeatedly assured the Mission of its efforts to comply with these resolutions. If confirmed, I would ensure the Embassy continues to make clear to Uganda its obligations with regard to North Korea.

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that you fully brief Members of Congress and/or their staff when you are in Washington for visits or consultations during your tenure as Ambassador Uganda?

Answer. I have great respect for and place high value on the importance of the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government. If confirmed, during my tenure as Ambassador to Uganda, I commit to briefing Members of Congress and/or their staff when I am in Washington for visits and consultations, as organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs. Congressional delegations are also valuable in highlighting for host governments U.S. viewpoints or policies, and if confirmed, I would welcome the continuation of such visits.

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

Answer. I spent most of my career as a political officer, meaning democracy and human rights work were at the core of my overseas and domestic assignments. I observed elections in Ethiopia, managed the redesign of U.S. activities in Niger after a coup ousted a democratically-elected government, and advocated for new assistance programs and greater engagement in Tunisia as the country transitioned from dictatorship to democracy.

For me personally, however, my most meaningful work to promote human rights and democracy occurred during my assignment to Kuwait from 2004-2006. Kuwaiti women had long sought the right to vote and run for office and the United States was a powerful supporter and advocate in their struggle, regularly raising the issue with Kuwaiti leaders. As the Embassy's Political Chief, I had access to the country's political leaders and legislators, where I could make the case for full civil and political rights for women. My gender, however, in a country where gender segregation was not official but common, gave me direct access to the women leading the fight for equal rights. Spending time with them helped me to understand the legal and cultural barriers they faced and as a result, I was able to tailor U.S. interventions accordingly. I proposed movie nights for legislators, academics, and activists, which the Ambassador hosted, where documentaries and other films showcased American women in politics or other fields dominated by men. The resulting debates were lively and the educators asked for, and the Embassy procured, copies of the films for them to show to their students. When parliament was dissolved and elections, with the full participation of women, were scheduled with little over one month to prepare, my knowledge of what Kuwaiti women wanted and needed allowed the Embassy to adjust its programming and deliver. With experts from the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and other organizations, we held workshops on how to develop a platform, how to build a base, and how to run a campaign. Although no women were elected in that first election, participants in the seminars credited the Embassy for helping them on messaging and changing Kuwait's political landscape. In the next election, women did join parliament for the first time.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Uganda? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Uganda include violence and intimidation against journalists and some political opponents of the ruling National Resistance Movement party and President Museveni, substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, certain restrictions on political participation, and corruption.

If confirmed, I will frankly, forcefully, and repeatedly raise U.S. Government concerns about these governance and human rights issues with leading Ugandan Government officials, including the President. I will meet with leadership from domestic and international human rights organizations, political opposition groups and their leaders, and civil society organizations working on issues of democracy and governance. Additionally, I will use public platforms to voice support for democracy and good governance.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Uganda? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use my leadership and voice to make clear that respect for human rights is essential for Uganda's future growth, prosperity, and security. The steady decline of civic and political space has been a source of critical concern inside and outside of the country. I will engage Ugandan authorities, international partners, civil society organizations, and business leaders to work together toward these goals.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. U.S. assistance to Uganda advances democracy and governance, both through funds dedicated specifically for those issues and through sector-specific programming, such as health, which depend on a reliable, evidence-based, technocratic government. Through our development assistance, the United States improves the resilience of civil society organizations in the face of diminishing democratic space, supports Ugandan partners to advance their advocacy priorities related to human rights, enhances the professionalism of independent media, and seeks to improve the inclusivity and transparency of democratic processes. Additionally, the United States supports the introduction and expansion of good governance within service delivery systems (health, education, etc.), which bolsters transparency, citizen participation, and accountability within planning and financial management processes. To complement and expand these efforts, I will continue to engage within the Department and with USAID to ensure appropriate resources are available to advance U.S. interests in Uganda.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Uganda? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Human rights, civil society organizations, and other non-governmental organizations, regardless of where they are registered or operate, play an important role in advancing democratic governance, and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with individuals and organizations that support U.S. values, and will do all I can to support and promote their good work. Throughout my career, I have always viewed the Leahy Law and similar requirements as important mechanisms by which the U.S. Government can ensure that security assistance and security cooperation activities are used to reinforce human rights.

I understand that, consistent with the Leahy Law, the U.S. Embassy in Kampala discontinued training certain elements of the Ugandan security apparatus that were credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights and made clear to the Ugandan Government our reasons for this action. If confirmed, I will reinforce this decision and ensure the Ugandan Government remains aware of U.S. law, policies, and priorities as they relate to security assistance and cooperation activities.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, under my leadership the Embassy will continue to engage with representatives from across the political spectrum, including the ruling party and opposition parties. I will advocate for democratic values and extend support through existing instruments to organizations that promote the active participation of women, youth, and other marginalized populations in political activities. Furthermore, I will fully support all Mission programs and activities that support voter mobilization campaigns and citizen engagement in the democratic process. At the local government level, the U.S. Embassy has had great success training and partnering with youth and women local councilors and mayors, and if confirmed, I will seek to continue these efforts in future programs.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Uganda on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Uganda?

Answer. Freedom of expression, including for members of the press, is fundamental to an open, just, and democratic society. If confirmed, my embassy team and I will actively engage with Uganda on press freedom. I will speak openly and hon-

estly with the Ugandan Government and civil society about any efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom, and will meet with independent and local press in Uganda.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will direct my Embassy team to actively engage with civil society and government counterparts, as well as with local media, to counter disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors. I will strongly support actions I understand the Embassy is already taking in this regard through weekly interagency messaging meetings aimed at doing this in the context of the COVID–19 pandemic, supplementing existing monthly strategic messaging meetings.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Uganda on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador to Uganda, I will proudly engage on matters of labor rights with leadership in government and civil society.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Uganda, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Uganda? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Uganda?

Answer. The LGBTI community in Uganda faces numerous economic, social, health, security, and educational challenges. LGBTI Ugandans face discrimination in employment, access to medical care and housing, and harassment and lack of protection by local law enforcement agencies. They are regularly threatened and face physical violence from both private citizens and government actors.

As a result of the profound protection needs this community faces, future human rights activities should have legal aid and protection components, as well as a rapid response mechanism to allow the Embassy to provide timely support to LGBTI individuals facing harassment. Existing U.S. Government human rights programming has made important progress on LGBTI issues, and Embassy programming is established to continue these efforts. If confirmed, I commit to use existing programs and, where appropriate, new initiatives to promote the rights of marginalized groups, including the LGBTI community.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. NATALIE E. BROWN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. 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 most of my career as a political officer, meaning democracy and human rights work were at the core of my overseas and domestic assignments. I observed elections in Ethiopia, managed the redesign of U.S. activities in Niger after a coup ousted a democratically-elected government, and advocated for new assistance programs and greater engagement in Tunisia as the country transitioned from dictatorship to democracy.

For me personally, however, my most meaningful work to promote human rights and democracy occurred during my assignment to Kuwait from 2004-2006. Kuwaiti women had long sought the right to vote and run for office and the United States was a powerful supporter and advocate in their struggle, regularly raising the issue with Kuwaiti leaders. As the Embassy's Political Chief, I had access to the country's political leaders and legislators, where I could make the case for full civil and political rights for women. My gender, however, in a country where gender segregation was not official but common, gave me direct access to the women leading the fight for equal rights. Spending time with them helped me to understand the legal and cultural barriers they faced and as a result, I was able to tailor U.S. interventions accordingly. I proposed movie nights for legislators, academics, and activists, which the Ambassador hosted, where documentaries and other films showcased American women in politics or other fields dominated by men. The resulting debates were lively and the educators asked for, and the Embassy procured, copies of the films for them to show to their students. When parliament was dissolved and elections, with

the full participation of women, were scheduled with little over one month to prepare, my knowledge of what Kuwaiti women wanted and needed allowed the Embassy to adjust its programming and deliver. With experts from the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and other organizations, we held workshops on how to develop a platform, how to build a base, and how to run a campaign. Although no women were elected in that first election, participants in the seminars credited the Embassy for helping them on messaging and changing Kuwait's political landscape. In the next election, women did join parliament for the first time.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in Uganda include torture, arbitrary detention, violence and intimidation against journalists and some political opponents of the ruling National Resistance Movement party and President Museveni, substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, certain restrictions on political participation, corruption, criminalization of same-sex consensual sexual conduct, and security force harassment and detention of LGBTI individuals.

If confirmed, I will frankly, forcefully, and repeatedly raise U.S. Government concerns about these human rights issues with leading Ugandan Government officials, including the President. I will meet with leadership from domestic and international human rights organizations, and use public platforms to voice support for human rights defenders. Additionally, I will not hesitate to use the tools available to me, including financial sanctions and visa restrictions, to promote accountability for human rights violators and abusers.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Uganda in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Living conditions in Uganda have improved notably under President Museveni over the past three decades, to include enhanced security and greater economic growth and stability, but democratization in Uganda remains incomplete. Political opposition and civil society groups are pushing for democratic reforms, including to the electoral process, but these reforms have been stalled by Museveni and the ruling National Resistance Movement party. Newspapers and radio stations have, on occasion in the past, been pressured and even shut down for political reasons. When human rights abuses are severe enough to force an official response, the Government may hold low-level officials accountable but rarely, if ever, punishes higher-ranking officials.

If confirmed, my challenge will be to draw attention to serious human rights violations and abuses and call on the Government to hold all officials to account, while maintaining the cooperative and productive relationship the United States enjoys with Uganda on issues such as regional security, promoting global health, and addressing regional refugee issues.

Question. 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 Uganda? 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 consider meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-government organizations as a core responsibility of an ambassador. If confirmed, I am absolutely committed to engaging with Ugandan and international organizations, and will do all I can to support and promote their good work. Throughout my career, I have always viewed the Leahy Law and similar requirements as important mechanisms by which the U.S. Government can ensure that security assistance and security cooperation activities are used to reinforce human rights.

I understand that, consistent with the Leahy Law, the U.S. Embassy in Kampala discontinued training certain elements of the Ugandan security apparatus that were credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights and made clear to the Ugandan Government our reasons for this action. If confirmed, I will reinforce this decision and ensure the Ugandan Government remains aware of U.S. law, policies, and priorities as they relate to security assistance and cooperation activities.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Uganda to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Uganda?

Answer. Repression of political opposition and vocal critics of President Museveni and his inner circle are serious concerns in Uganda. If confirmed, I will actively engage with the Ugandan Government to ensure it respects its own constitution and does not single out critical voices for undue punishment.

Question. Will you engage with Uganda on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Respect for human rights is a fundamental value for the United States. If confirmed as Ambassador to Uganda, I will proudly engage on matters of human rights, including civil rights, and good governance with leadership in government and civil society.

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Uganda?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes a security interest in a global company that may have a presence in Uganda. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. 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 joined the Department of State in 1990, shortly after the Palmer federal class action lawsuit where the court found that female Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) were discriminated against in assignments, awards, and promotions, and while another class action, the Thomas case alleging discrimination against African Americans, was being processed and eventually settled. My entry class was the first class to be 50 percent female and "State Magazine," in reporting on my class, noted the gender breakdown as well as one Black FSO and one Hispanic in the group. At that time, I was regularly told I was a "twofer," and the only reason I made it into the Foreign Service was because of my race and gender. Times have changed, but the State Department is not yet as diverse as it could be. If confirmed, I would do what I have done since I assumed managerial positions: mentor individuals from underrepresented groups and advocate for their inclusion, seek out a diverse pool of candidates when hiring or filling vacant positions, and call out and seek to change policies that discriminate. For example, at a previous post, I successfully advocated for the Ambassador to take the female subject matter expert with him to meetings on political-military affairs. As a hiring official, I reacted when the short lists of candidates for positions lacked diversity and fought for inclusion. I was not always successful in changing the lists, but hope that the more junior staff who saw my messages took note and learned something. I served for seven years as an EEO Counselor and I do not hesitate to address discrimination.

Question. 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 would strive to lead by example, building a capable and as diverse a team as possible. I would encourage my subordinates to do the same and make clear that I have zero tolerance for discrimination. In addition to setting clear policies, I would meet regularly with section and agency heads to reaffirm these messages. I would also foster diversity on guest lists for Embassy events and

make sure, as appropriate, that nominees for cultural and exchange events, both Americans and Ugandans, come from a diverse pool of candidates.

Question. How does political corruption impact democratic governance and the rule of law?

Answer. Political corruption is endemic in Uganda, affecting all aspects of life. In addition to the enormous financial waste that corruption engenders, it also leads to losses of time, stifles ingenuity, and disrupts social cohesion. Corruption hampers development, restrains economic growth, and deters foreign investment. Furthermore, the unequal application of the law leads to distrust of government and disinterest in civic duty.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Uganda and efforts to address and reduce them by the Government of Uganda?

Answer. According to Transparency International, Uganda ranks 137 out of 180 countries surveyed in the Corruption Perceptions index, leaving much room for improvement. President Museveni has made numerous public announcements addressing corruption in Uganda, and has stated his intentions to hold public officials accountable for corrupt practices. Additionally, the Government of Uganda has created several task forces and various bodies to address political corruption. Unfortunately, many of these efforts are used to target Museveni's political or economic rivals while people in his inner circle, including his family members, are not held to account. In other cases, the Government may make headlines for arresting lower level officials while more senior leaders remain free. Furthermore, attempts to combat corruption often stop with the arrests and flashy headlines, with less emphasis on the successful prosecution of corrupt actors.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Uganda?

Answer. U.S. Government programming administered by offices in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor or by partners in USAID strengthen good governance and combat corruption in countries around the globe. Investments in good governance and efforts to curb corruption pay significant dividends down the road, and reduce the future need for U.S. development assistance. If confirmed, I will press State Department offices and other government agencies to include good governance and anti-corruption programming for Uganda as part of their regular annual program planning.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. NATALIE E. BROWN BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. How should the United States respond if the Ugandan Government postpones elections next year?

Answer. In considering whether to postpone elections, there should be a consensus between political parties, electoral experts, and public health officials, and any action should be consistent with Ugandan law. If the Ugandan Government announces intentions to postpone the elections, the U.S. Embassy should engage directly and frequently with the Ugandan Government to stress the importance of holding the elections in a timely manner and in conformity with the constitution. If confirmed, I would look to work with like-minded partners, international organizations, and domestic civil society organizations to offer technical assistance to help create the conditions for safe elections as quickly as possible.

Question. Should evidence of state corruption and reports of abuse, torture, and unlawful killings by security forces draw scrutiny of our close bilateral relationship with Uganda?

Answer. American values drive U.S. foreign policy and must always do so. While the United States has enjoyed a close and productive relationship with Uganda for a number of years, the U.S. Government should not and cannot tolerate human rights violations and abuses or corruption.

The vast majority of U.S. assistance to Uganda goes directly to the Ugandan people in the form of health assistance. The United States also maintains a close security relationship with Uganda in support of shared regional counter terrorism efforts. Any efforts by the U.S. Government to re-examine our relationship with the Ugandan Government should ensure that the Ugandan people, our true partners in the country, are not negatively affected. In accordance with the Leahy Law, the De-

partment of State does not provide security assistance to security forces credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights. The Secretary also has designated high-ranking current and former government officials under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act for involvement in gross violations of human rights, and supported Treasury Department efforts to apply Global Magnitsky sanctions against a former high-ranking Ugandan official. If confirmed, I will use the tools at my disposal to address concerns about human rights violations and abuses and corruption, including financial sanctions and assistance and visa restrictions, to communicate to the Ugandan Government that the U.S. will not tolerate human rights violations and abuses or corruption.

Question. How should the United States respond if security forces use force against opposition politicians and supporters, as they have in previous elections?

Answer. Any evidence of electoral violence must be taken seriously. The United States must be clear and transparent with the Ugandan Government and the Ugandan people about our concerns if abuses occur. If confirmed, I would lead the embassy in pressing the Government to hold any human rights violators and abusers accountable, support the imposition of sanctions and implementation of visa restrictions on such individuals as applicable, and be prepared to reevaluate certain elements of our bilateral relationship if the Ugandan Government demonstrates that it does not adhere to democratic values and norms.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO RAMSEY COATS DAY BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

COVID–19

Question. You mentioned that if you are confirmed COVID–19 assistance will be a top program for USAID. What has the U.S. response to the spread of COVID–19 been in Africa to date?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is investing more than $215 million in 42 countries in sub-Saharan Africa to respond to the COVID–19 pandemic, with more assistance on the way.

Health-specific response programs in Africa include support for risk-communications and community engagement, behavior change related to hygiene, the prevention and control of infections in health facilities, the management of cases of COVID–19, case-finding, contact-tracing, water, sanitation, hygiene, disease-surveillance, laboratory diagnostics, procurement and logistics, the training and education of healthcare workers, and overall national readiness and response.

The U.S. Government's response to the pandemic also includes significant funding for humanitarian assistance in fragile and conflict-ridden states to protect those who are most vulnerable to the impact of COVID–19, including in the Republic of South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. We are aware that food-insecurity related to COVID–19 is increasing, compounded by the swarms of desert locusts in East Africa. We are looking at increasing our funding for food aid to address these growing issues.

Furthermore, USAID also has committed assistance to support communities in the Republic of Sudan, the DRC, Ethiopia, and the Sahel region to prepare for, mitigate, and address the second-order economic, civilian-security, stabilization, democratic-governance and multi-sector impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic. This funding provides social and economic support, protection, and assistance to vulnerable populations, and helps small-and-medium-sized enterprises to withstand the economic disruptions caused by the disease. USAID also will finance programs to promote peace and stability in conflict-ridden regions, improve education and distance-learning, combat gender-based violence, bolster civil society and citizen-responsive governance, and improve public confidence and involvement in government.

Question. How has the suspension of U.S. funding for the World Health Organization impacted the response? What programs and activities in Africa have been halted due to the response? Have alternative implementing partners been identified for any activities that have been impacted?

Answer. The World Health Organization (WHO) supports national surveillance for COVID–19, as well as for other infectious diseases such as polio and measles, in affected countries in Africa. Specific activities by the WHO to support government's response to the pandemic of COVID–19 include the following: strengthening labora-

tories to test for the virus that causes COVID–19; providing assistance for screening at points of entry; conducting case-finding and event-based surveillance; training rapid-response teams to investigate cases of the disease and perform contact-tracing; and procuring and deploying essential health commodities. In addition, the WHO helps develop standard operating procedures, provide advice on monitoring and evaluation, and undertakes other coordination-related activities.

During the pause the President announced, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has identified alternative partners around the world to fight the pandemic of COVID–19. My understanding is that the pause has affected USAID's programs related to COVID–19 in five sub-Saharan African countries—the Republics of Cameroon, Djibouti, Mauritius and Sudan; and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. In these countries, USAID has found other international organizations and non-governmental organizations that can handle activities for which the Agency would have engaged the WHO.

For example, in Ethiopia and Djibouti the United Nations Children's Fund will promote accurate risk-communications and services to prevent and control infections in health facilities. In Mauritius, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will provide COVID 19 support, with a focus on community engagement, through the national chapter of the Red Cross

Question. If confirmed, how will you alter or adjust current activities? What would that program look like?

Answer. While much remains unknown about the epidemiology of the disease, COVID–19 could have catastrophic effects in Africa. The pandemic already has caused more than 40,000 reported cases and over 1,000 deaths, and the fragile health-care institutions in the region might not be able to absorb more stress. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is funding a response COVID–19 response in over 43 countries in Africa, and we are continuing to implement our core investments in public health, including the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, the Global Health Security Agenda, and our programs in maternal and child health, all of which have provided a foundation for interventions against COVID–19. USAID is committed to supporting African countries to continue these existing, life-saving programs in addition to bolstering efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to ongoing and future infectious-disease threats.

We also anticipate the pandemic will have wide-ranging second- and third-order impacts on sub-Saharan Africa. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID adapts our strategic approach as needed to address them. For example, as a result of COVID–19, within the next year, more than 140 million people in sub-Saharan Africa could reach crisis-level food insecurity. East Africa is already grappling with an infestation of locusts that could harm staple crops in a serious way. The combined pandemic and oil-price shock are likely to tip Africa into an economic contraction in 2020, in the absence of major fiscal stimulus. Economic growth across the continent is projected to decline from 2.4 percent before COVID–19 to between (2.1 percent) and (5.1 percent), with widening fiscal deficits.

I also am concerned about democratic backsliding, and how some African regimes could use COVID–19 to restrict democratic space and constrain free media even further. Some governments using COVID–19 to commit human-rights abuses, restrict civil society, suppress political opposition, and delay democratic processes. Disturbing trends include the cancellation or postponement of elections, widespread misinformation or disinformation, targeted crackdowns on key population groups, and increased criminal violence, among others. I am also concerned about the increase in the number of incidents of gender-based violence, particularly intimate-partner violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse during the ongoing COVID–19 pandemic across the world, as reported by United Nations Secretary-General Antθnio Guterres and others.

USAID has geared much of our response to the pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa to date toward protecting long-term development gains. Our investment of supplemental resources from the Economic Support Fund has focused heavily on fragile states such as the Republic of Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Across the continent, stability hard-won through years of partnership and investment is at risk of being compromised without immediate relief. This is especially true in West Africa and the Sahel, and in urban areas in many nations where pandemic-related lockdowns have disrupted the livelihoods of large numbers of informal workers.

USAID is adapting our existing programs to respond to the new context of COVID–19. The Agency has helped large manufacturers affected by a collapse in global demand for their products shift their operations to the production of personal

protective equipment, which not only supports the health response but protects jobs and years of investment in local industry.

USAID continues our core work of supporting sustainable health and food systems that help communities in our partner countries manage crises such as this one. The Agency also is focused on facilitating trade and mobilizing private investment to help increase capacity, reduce future debt burdens, and achieve lasting development results.

USAID is revitalizing previously-funded radio and television education programs, and providing support to Ministries of Education to develop distance-learning curricula. The Agency sees this as an opportunity to strengthen the resilience of local educational institutions, help governments and private providers develop lasting capacity for remote learning, and maintain basic skills while children are out of school.

Additionally, USAID continues to fund health programs begun long before the COVID–19 pandemic, to sustain the gains in essential life-saving activities in maternal and child health, malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV. USAID also is contributing to the whole-of-government "SAFER" framework for the international response to the COVID 19 pandemic, which builds upon long-standing and substantial global health and humanitarian assistance by the American people and the U.S. Government's commitment to the Global Health Security Agenda.

Additionally, USAID is using supplemental resources to provide social and economic support, protection, and assistance to vulnerable populations and supporting small-and-medium-sized enterprises to withstand the economic effects of COVID–19 in Sudan, the DRC, Ethiopia and across the Sahel. We are also financing programs to improve peace and stability in conflict-ridden regions, improve education and distance-learning, strengthen civil society and citizen-responsive governance, and improve public confidence and involvement in government. USAID's programs are also adapting and mobilizing to mitigate the impact of COVID–19 on women and girls through social-assistance programs, economic support to women-owned small and medium-sized businesses, and social services in heavily affected communities.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we continue to fund immediate response needs and support our partners in the region to adapt to the long-range impacts of COVID–19.

Question. What guidance has been issued to implementing partners related to the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE)? Have any health care workers working to implement any U.S. funded programs and activities been infected by COVID–19? Have any of them died? Were they working to implement U.S. funded programs without PPE?

Answer. Given the short supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the United States, since March 2020 the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been unable to fund the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) for our programs abroad. USAID is working within the U.S. Government and with international partners on this critical issue. We understand the urgency of the domestic requirements here in the United States while we continue to remain sensitive to the needs of our neighbors and friends around the world.

Acting Administrator John Barsa issued guidance that USAID partners may use Program funds to finance the local production of medical-grade PPE and non-medical-grade PPE products. This includes, but is not limited to, masks, gowns, face shields, protective eyewear, boot covers, linens, and gloves. In addition, on May 15, 2020, the Agency clarified to our partners that the policy restrictions on the procurement of PPE do not extend to the procurement of cloth masks. Similarly, the clause on PPE that is currently in awards financed by supplementary funding for COVID–19 in the International Disaster Assistance account does not preclude the procurement of such items.

As of May 16, 2020, no partner of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has reported to our COVID–19 Task Force that any health-care workers that are implementing U.S.-funded programs have tested positive for COVID–19. No USAID implementing partner has reported any COVID–19-related deaths to our COVID–19 Task Force.

China in Africa

Question. You mentioned that Africans turn to China for business and to the U.S. for social programs. Why is that a problem, and what specific actions will you take if confirmed to change and or impact that dynamic?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is particularly concerned about Chinese business practices in Africa that are undermining development gains. State-owned enterprises conduct many Chinese business transactions

and deals, often at the behest of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Unfortunately, many of these business transactions are to the detriment of African nations and their people, and only benefit the PRC. Especially in questionable infrastructure and resource-extraction projects, many Chinese businesses engage in improper behavior, such as paying bribes and supporting or enabling authoritarian regimes.

If confirmed, I will ensure USAID takes steps to combat this negative influence. I will continue to support the Prosper Africa Initiative to increase two-way trade between the United States and Africa. The U.S. private sector offers a superior value proposition that supports African communities on their respective Journeys to Self-Reliance. American companies bring significant capital, innovation, and proven solutions. U.S. business practices also adhere to the highest standards of transparency, competitiveness, quality, responsible and sustainable conduct, and efficiency. The American private-sector model stands in stark contrast to the predatory, state-led models of doing business employed by the PRC and others that saddle African nations with unsustainable debt.

I am also committed to continuing the Agency's projects that foster economic growth. By showing the American model of development will improve the lives of citizens, help establish a robust economy and raise living standards, we will demonstrate why the U.S. model of development is superior in the long run. Finally, if confirmed, the Bureau for Africa will continue to work with our interagency colleagues at the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce and the Treasury on this important issue.

Question. During your testimony, you alluded to China's "debt trap diplomacy." What is debt trap diplomacy and what specific programmatic programs or activities do you plan to offer to African countries as alternatives.

Answer. As noted during my testimony, unsustainable indebtedness, often called "debt-trap diplomacy," is the concept that malign actors, such as the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC), are forcing unsustainable debt on governments to use as leverage at a later date. The PRC often does so by offering to drop debt or significantly restructure payment terms or dates, in return for certain actions. Using this leverage, the PRC pressures governments for votes in elections at international organizations and to support Chinese candidates who seek to lead them, gain preferential trade deals, and secure exclusive access for Chinese companies.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is in a strong position to counter corrosive Chinese practices regarding debt. First, USAID's development programs have an end goal of self-reliance, which means governments, civil society, and the private sector will have the capacity to plan, finance, and implement solutions to their own challenges and maintain strong, robust institutions that can discern between reasonable and rational debt and predatory loans. The Agency's initiatives, such as Prosper Africa and Power Africa, along with its technical assistance in areas such as health, education, and economic development, are debt-free and intended to move communities towards self-reliance. Second, USAID and the U.S. Departments of State and the Treasury are working actively to build institutional capacity in governments and civil society to understand the terms and conditions of loans. USAID, through Power Africa, works with the African Legal-Support Facility (ALSF) housed at African Development Bank, dedicated to providing legal advice and technical assistance to African Governments in the negotiation of complex commercial transactions, litigation with creditors, and other related sovereign transactions. USAID and other U.S. Government actors are committed to providing sustainable development projects that do not leave countries with unsustainable debt.

If confirmed, I will continue to support the vital work in which USAID and the broader United States Government are engaging to combat predatory Chinese loans and debt-trap diplomacy.

Question. You mentioned during the hearing that America is missing "in a commercial sense" from Africa. Please expand on your plan to increase America's commercial footprint on the continent if confirmed? Are there conversations ongoing with U.S. Commercial Services for expanded outreach/interest in Africa? What would a plan for an expanded U.S Commercial Service in Africa look like, and how would such an expansion be coordinated with USAID programs and activities?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to bolster the capacity of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to support U.S. commercial interests in Africa by advancing the goals of Prosper Africa, a key administration initiative that aims to increase two-way trade and investment between the United States and Africa significantly. I would prioritize targeted policy reforms in key markets and sectors; focus

existing trade and investment resources, programs, and platforms on expanding financing and investment links between the U.S. and the African continent; and develop new public-private partnerships with United States companies and investors to leverage the American private sector.

USAID is actively working with the U.S. Department of Commerce (DoC), and 14 additional participating Federal Agencies and Departments, to establish a coordinated strategic approach to advancing U.S. commercial competition in Africa. In support of Prosper Africa, the DoC will provide resources to support the Prosper Africa Executive Secretariat and other implementation activities, including by posting personnel from the Foreign Commercial Service at U.S. Embassies in Africa.

To support effective interagency collaboration in pursuit of these goals, if confirmed, I will build on the work of USAID's Trade and Investment Hubs in Africa, including efforts related to the African Growth and Opportunity Act. USAID will develop a continental platform that supports interagency collaboration to facilitate free, fair, and reciprocal bilateral trade, as well as offer increased support to interagency Deal Teams already established at U.S. Embassies across Africa.

Democracy and Governance

Question. We are watching authoritarian leaders on the continent use the COVID–19 pandemic to close political space, clamp down on media, and entrench and consolidate power. What specific actions will you take if confirmed to address COVID–19's impact on democracy/rule of law in Africa?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is tracking the evolution of the spread of COVID–19 closely, including its impact on citizen-responsive governance, civil and political rights and stability. As I noted in my testimony, I am concerned about democratic backsliding, and how some African regimes are using the justification of COVID–19 to restrict democratic space and constrain free media even further. Governments are employing COVID–19 as a pretext to commit human-rights abuses, restrict civil society, suppress political opposition, and delay democratic processes. Disturbing trends include the cancellation or postponement of elections, widespread misinformation or disinformation, targeted crackdowns on key population groups, and increased gender-based and criminal violence, among others. Several parliaments have passed legislation that will inhibit democratic processes and would otherwise spark protests. Other governments are downplaying the threat of COVID–19 and arresting and detaining individuals who speak out.

USAID is already adapting our programming; identifying innovative solutions; and continuing our programs in democracy, governance and elections. For example, in the Republic of Mali USAID worked with the National Electoral Commission to promote accurate health messaging and proper practices in coordination with the Ministry of Health in advance of nationwide legislative elections. This included ensuring voter-registration and polling centers had adequate hygiene safeguards and procedures in place, which reduced the risk to voters and election workers. USAID also funded a citizen election-observation group to adapt its methodology to monitor public-health measures during the elections. In the Republic of Senegal, USAID's civil-society partners are providing critical oversight of the Government's humanitarian assistance, and have called out potential fraud and waste at the national level.

In an effort to prevent further closure of space for civil society during the pandemic of COVID–19, USAID should increase its support for civil society, independent media, journalists, and citizen-responsive governance. Maintaining and bolstering the ability of citizens to exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms will lead to greater long-term stability. Additionally, anti-corruption efforts will take on renewed importance, so we can ensure our COVID–19-related assistance and resources are used for their intended purposes. If confirmed, I will continue to counter democratic backsliding, which began before the COVID–19 pandemic, and now has the potential to become worse.

Question. How much funding has been allocated for Democracy and Governance in Africa over the last three fiscal years? Has that funding been adequate to address needs created by transitions in Ethiopia and Sudan? What specific actions will you take if confirmed to provide robust support for the political transitions in those two countries?

Answer. In Fiscal Years (FY) 2017, 2018, and 2019, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) allocated nearly $862 million for programming in democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) in sub-Saharan Africa. In FY 2017, the amount of funding the Agency invested in DRG programming on the African continent was $302.367 million; in FY 2018, the total was $290.51 million, and in FY 2019, $268.862 million.

USAID is supporting the transition in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from a closed autocracy to a politically and economically open model. USAID will provide technical assistance to the newly constituted National Elections Board for the organization of the upcoming voting. USAID will also provide funding for civic and voter education; domestic and international observation; capacity-building of political parties; and training for media in gender, conflict-sensitive reporting, and countering disinformation. USAID continues to provide technical assistance to governmental institutions in Ethiopia, including the following:

- To the Attorney General's Office, to draft key pieces of legislation essential to democratic and economic reforms;
- To the Civil-Society Agency, to implement the new law that has enabled non-governmental organizations to re-emerge after more than a decade of autocratic repression; and
- To the Supreme Court, to bolster the capacity of the judiciary to provide impartial justice.

Since the revolution in the Republic of Sudan last year that ended the Bashir regime, USAID has expanded our development assistance to improve the prospects for a successful hand-over to a civilian-led, democratic government at the end of the transitional period in 2022. This includes expanding support for civil society and peacebuilding; providing technical support to help the civilian-led government deliver on Sudanese citizens' goals for the revolution, including the responsiveness and accountability of government institutions; and exploring other ways our expertise can support a positive transition in Sudan, in coordination with other donors.

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the U.S. Department of State and our field-based Missions in both Ethiopia and Sudan to determine how USAID can best support the respective governments as they work to meet the high expectations and needs of their citizens in challenging transitional contexts. I will also ensure proper fiduciary and technical oversight of our taxpayer dollars as we expand these critical programs. In addition to working with national governments, I will also ensure USAID is working with civil-society organizations, other independent institutions, and the media to enhance their capacity to engage with their governments and hold them accountable.

Youth Bulge

Question. What specific initiatives will you develop and implement if confirmed to address the social and economic impact of the youth bulge in Africa?

Answer. Sixty-nine percent of sub-Saharan Africans are under the age of 30. This massive youth bulge will continue to grow at least through 2050. These young people have the potential to create a new workforce and economy or fuel the instability that comes from dissatisfaction and exclusion. The Youth in Development Policy of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) positions the Agency and its partners to capitalize on favorable global pop-ulation trends by investing in programs and approaches by, with, and for youth that seize opportunity and lead to sustainable growth and human development, including through the real-ization of what is often referred to as a "demographic dividend."

If confirmed, under my leadership, USAID will continue to fund the Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI), specifically the Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs), which are USAID's main investment in YALI. The RLCs have emerged as incubators of talent and innovation, and as a space for youth from 48 countries collaboratively to tackle the challenges they face in their home countries. In addition to funding from the U.S. Government, YALI has also leveraged resources from private-sector companies, civil-society organizations, and the public sector.

Highly-quality education creates pathways for greater economic growth, improved health outcomes, sustained democratic governance, and more peaceful and resilient societies. USAID's educational investments support governments and private providers in our partner countries to strengthen their capacity to achieve sustainable, high-quality learning and educational outcomes. Because of the COVID–19 pandemic and the closure of all educational institutions in sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 243 million children are out of school. These closures will have long-term negative economic and human capital effects in African countries. The pandmeic's impact on education is likely to be most devastating in countries with low learning outcomes and high dropout rates.

During the pandemic, USAID-funded education programs in sub-Saharan Africa largely have had to pivot to distance-learning. As a result, the Agency is revitalizing previously-funded radio and television education programs, and providing support to Ministries of Education to develop distance-learning curricula. The Agency sees this as an opportunity to strengthen the resilience of local educational institutions, help

governments and private providers develop lasting capacity for remote learning, and maintain basic skills while children are out of school.

Jobs for youth are another critical component to address the growing youth bulge, since formal work provide greater opportunities. USAID's market-driven workforce-development programs help connect youth to jobs; this greater economic opportunity, in turn, helps to mitigate the root causes of migration, crime, instability and violent extremism. USAID works with local businesses to ensure youth learn the technical, entrepreneurial and other critical skills they need to obtain good local jobs to support themselves and their families, and prepare them for a successful, life-long career.

Congressional Consultations

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that you fully brief Members of Congress and/or their staff as requested?

Answer. During my tenure at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), it has been a pleasure and honor to meet, consult with, and brief Members of Congress and their staff regularly. If confirmed, I commit to continuing to do so, in accordance with law and the rules and regulations of USAID.

Support for Democracy

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

Answer. I have dedicated the majority of my professional career to advancing the cause of democracy and human rights. If confirmed, democracy and human rights will remain at the core of my approach to steering the strategic and programmatic priorities of the Bureau for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Starting as a USAID Desk Officer in the mid-2000's, I worked to support programs focused on combatting human trafficking, cultivating and empowering young democratic leaders, and ensuring citizens had a voice in the democratic process through elections and civic engagement in Eastern Europe.

More recently, I led the International Republican Institute's program in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, based in Amman, where my sole mission was to advance democratic principles in a key U.S. ally in the Middle East. I focused the Institute's programs on empowering women leaders at the community level, helping political parties build platforms based on the needs of citizens, and assisting persons with disabilities become more integrated into the political process in their communities. As a result, more women ran for public office at all levels in Jordan, political parties increasingly based their platforms on sound policy ideas, and more persons with disabilities had a voice in their communities.

As a leader within USAID over the last two-and-half years, I have prioritized development activities and approaches that have protected and supported the most vulnerable in conflict zones, worked closely with interagency colleagues to develop U.S. policy positions on critical issues related to human rights and democracy, and highlighted the importance of democratic principles to foreign-government counterparts in Africa and around the world.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Africa? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, two-thirds of the countries that are experiencing fragility or extreme fragility are in sub-Saharan Africa. This instability is driving most global humanitarian needs, and incubating and exporting a range of threats, from conflict and terrorism to displacement and infectious disease. The governance dysfunctions that define fragility are evident in Africa in the persistence and further entrenchment of autocratic states; in democratic backsliding; the spread of violent extremism; persistently poor development outcomes; and the inability to weather shocks, such as recurrent droughts, floods, and locusts, without outside donor assistance.

The continued entrenchment of authoritarian governance, propelled by dominant parties and leaders, poses a clear threat to African's aspirations for democracy and improved economic and social outcomes. In countries like the United Republic of Tanzania; the Republics of Uganda, Guinea, and Benin; and the Federal Republic of Nigeria, governments are working actively to close political space, stifle competition long before elections take place, curtail public participation, and suppress crit-

ics. As Africans find innovative ways to organize and express themselves, autocratic governments have found new ways to restrict these voices, and suppress and falsify information, often by labelling critics as "foreign agents" or a "security threat." This can sometimes lead to restrictive legislation that limits the advocacy efforts of civil society and constrains access to resources by non-governmental organizations.

I am very concerned that some African regimes are using COVID–19 as a pretext to restrict democratic space and constrain free media further. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is tracking the spread of COVID–19 closely, along with its impact on citizen-responsive governance, overall state fragility, civil and political rights, and stability. Disturbing trends include the cancellation or postponement of elections, targeted crackdowns on key population groups, and increased gender-based and criminal violence, among others. A clear example occurred in March in Guinea, where the incumbent government pushed through a constitutional referendum to extend presidential term limits with very low participation, just as the first COVID–19 infections were being reported in the country.

Persistently high levels of corruption, weak judiciaries, and limits on access to justice diminish the efficacy of the rule of law to counterbalance executive dominance. From manipulation of constitutions to evade or change term, such as in Guinea, to the undermining of judicial offices in Benin, respect for, and adherence to, the rule of law continues to be a major challenge in Africa.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Africa? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to promoting democracy, human rights, and citizen-responsive governance in sub-Saharan Africa, and will emphasize strengthening democratic systems, countering and mitigating the risks of democratic backsliding, and creating an enabling environment for development and economic growth to succeed. Inclusive, citizen-centered, democratic governance and respect for human rights reflect U.S. values. Well-functioning democracies ultimately advance U.S. influence, prosperity, and security. In support of this approach, and with the long-term goal of ending the need for foreign assistance through the Journey to Self-Reliance, if confirmed, I will work to support national efforts to build commitment for reforms, build the capacity to manage democratic transitions, and promote the accountability of governments to their citizens.

Assistance provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has had a positive impact over time on the quality of election processes, as in the Republics of Malawi and Liberia. As 2020 continues, the Republics of Burundi, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Ghana; the Central African Republic; and the United Republic of Tanzania are all scheduled to hold general elections. If confirmed, I will work to continue USAID's engagement on election processes in sub-Saharan Africa. I will also continue to provide robust funding to track the civil society and media environment in African countries and implement programming to ensure these groups have the appropriate support and resources to operate.

If confirmed, I will work to refine USAID's approaches to reducing the drivers of fragility in sub-Saharan Africa, not only in the interest of preventing violence and promoting stabilization, which are the focus of the Global Fragility Act, but also in recognition that inclusive, accountable, citizen-responsive governance is associated with more equitable development, greater prosperity, and improved self-reliance.

Question. What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The resurgence of involvement by the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation in sub-Saharan Africa to prop up authoritarian regimes, push for non-democratic systems, fuel corruption, and limit citizens' participation in government and access to information is concerning. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), alongside other like-minded donor partners, engages actively in combating malign influence globally through its planning and programming.

Authoritarian regimes can repurpose the same technologies that offer opportunities for strengthening democracy as impediments to democracy. They are developing and sharing tools to spread disinformation, manipulate elections, and discredit democratic institutions. If confirmed, I will continue USAID's efforts to understand the scope and scale of this effort, and to adapt our programming as appropriate.

The arrival of COVID–19 on the African continent, and the longer-term uncertainty over the disease's trajectory and its ultimate impact on democratic space and development will shape USAID's investments for years to come. COVID–19 did not create fragility in Africa, but it has the potential to exacerbate symptoms that already exist, including poor governance, authoritarian retrenchment, and a host of

other issues. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID looks at shocks like COVID–19 in the context of the continent's wider democratic development and governance patterns. Specifically, this means ensuring continued support for democracy, human rights and citizen-responsive governance—whether institutional development, robust accountability mechanisms, or support for political transitions—over the long term.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Africa?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to meeting with civil-society and human-rights organizations, both in Washington, D.C., and during my travels abroad.

Question. What steps will you take to proactively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. I understand the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has funded programs to improve the legal environment and preserve and expand civic space around the world, including to help African civil society respond to growing restrictions on freedoms of association, assembly and expression. This assistance includes analyses to forecast closing space, rapid-response assistance to address restrictive laws and regulations, and interventions to boost the resilience of civil society. USAID's investments complement those by the U.S. Department of State and multinational diplomatic efforts to promote and defend democratic principles and freedoms.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties?

Answer. Yes. I commit to meeting with democratically oriented political figures and parties, both in Washington, D.C., and during my travels abroad.

Question. What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition?

Answer. I believe political competition is an essential element of democratic governance. I have extensive professional experience in working with non-governmental organizations that the U.S. Agency for International Development has funded through its programming to foster genuine political competition in a number of countries. If confirmed, I commit to funding critical programs that strengthen political parties, improve the administration of electoral and dispute-resolution institutions, provide the credible and impartial domestic and international observation of elections, conduct civic and voter education, and prevent and mitigate election-related violence.

Question. Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will be a staunch advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties. Diversity of all sorts, particularly the diversity in viewpoints offered by these and other population segments, are critical voices to be heard as communities continue on the Journey to Self-Reliance.

Question. Will you and your team actively engage on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, supporting freedom of press will remain one of my priorities. The U.S. Agency for International Development historically has recognized the important role the independent media plays in citizen-responsive governance and is one of the largest donors to the development of pluralistic, diverse, independent media systems.

Question. Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press if and when you travel on the continent?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Will you ensure that USAID Missions are actively engaging with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Africa?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to continuing engagement with civil society to counter disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Africa.

Question. Will Missions actively engage on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed as Assistant Administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development, I will proudly support our Missions as they engage on matters of labor rights with governments and civil society in their respective countries.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Africa, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Yes. Former Administrator Green and Acting Administrator Barsa have been clear that inclusion is one of the core values of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and that non-discrimination toward beneficiaries is a basic principle of our work. I wholly agree. If confirmed, I commit that I will defend the lives, human rights, and dignity of all people across the globe, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Africa?

Answer. In many African countries, discrimination, stigmatization, violence, marginalization, and exclusionary laws have a negative impact on the lives of many marginalized groups, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) communities, which contributes to poverty and increasing inequality. LGBTI people and other marginalized groups in many African nations face harassment, physical attacks, and arbitrary arrests. Unfortunately, this violence is often life-threatening. Access to basic education, health, housing, economic opportunities, and other social services is essential for all citizens, including LGBTI persons, but governments often deny them this access. The participation by LGBTI people in democratic processes and government in sub-Saharan Africa is very limited. Archaic laws are indicative of larger concerns USAID has in countries where government are abusing human rights in general, and where basic freedoms, such as free assembly and association, are under assault.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Africa?

Answer. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LBGTI) persons—like all persons—must be free to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, without fear of reprisal. LGBTI persons must be free to enjoy lives free of violence or discrimination. As Americans, we place a high value on these rights and freedoms, which all persons deserve to enjoy fully and equally. When we protect all persons on the basis of equality and with dignity, we strengthen global stability.

If confirmed, I will continue to implement the comprehensive, inclusive non-discrimination policies of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for the beneficiaries of our contracts and grants. To carry out USAID's mission, our programs will continue to reach out to the most-marginalized and vulnerable members of society, including LGBTI people. I will continue to elevate the importance of inclusive development approaches to help ensure all people can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from USAID's development efforts.

If confirmed, I will work with the leadership of USAID's Missions across Africa to engage civil society, including LGBTI organizations, and host governments to protect the lives, human rights, and dignity of all people. Furthermore, as Assistant Administrator I will continue to draw on the skills and contributions of all people. I deeply value the contributions of our staff to ensure our programs and policies are inclusive of all people.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO RAMSEY COATS DAY BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Lebanon

Question. Lebanon's Government is controlled by Hezbollah, an Iran-backed terrorist group. Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs David Schenker recently said that Lebanon's Health Ministry is "run by Hezbollah" and that the U.S. therefore withholds aid that would go to that Ministry. The policy is justified: because money is fungible, comingling U.S. assistance with Hezbollah infrastructure allows them to move resources into malign activities, including terrorism. Moreover Hezbollah's control over the Health Ministry provides it with granular control over many aspects of life in Lebanon, including at the municipal level, where health care services

provided by municipalities is tightly integrated with the Health Ministry, including in government-run hospitals.

Nevertheless, in late April, USAID transferred $5,300,000 in assistance to Lebanon, part of a package announced by the U.S. embassy in Beirut that totaled $13.3 million in new assistance.

- What steps did the State Department take to ensure that the new U.S. assistance would not either directly or indirectly comingle with Hezbollah-controlled health care infrastructure?

Answer. Senator, I respectfully direct you to my colleagues at the U.S. Department of State to respond to your inquiry.

Question. What steps did USAID take to ensure that the new U.S. assistance would not either directly or indirectly comingle with Hezbollah-controlled health care infrastructure?

Answer. If confirmed as Assistant Administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), I will not have oversight over USAID's assistance in Lebanon. However, I have consulted with my colleagues in USAID's Bureau for the Middle East. I understand that the funding announcement in late April was for the response to the pandemic of COVID–19. I further understand that USAID is not working with the Lebanese Ministry of Health on COVID–19, but instead is collaborating with International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private hospitals to avoid the possibility of co-mingling with Hizballah-controlled health-care infrastructure.

Furthermore, USAID implements a rigorous, three-stage process to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources inadvertently could benefit a designated terrorist or sanctioned groups. Under Stage One, implementing partners are contractually obligated to conduct due diligence against open-source reporting and publicly available databases. Stage Two requires that USAID's staff and implementing partners conduct a pre-award survey and assess through local sources the likelihood that an organization could be affiliated with a sanctioned group. Stage Three involves applying USAID's partner-vetting requirements, which requires the pre-award vetting of the implementers of awards/subawards that exceed $25,000.

Question. As Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, can you commit to ensuring that no more USAID health care assistance—a full cut-off—will go to Lebanon it that assistance might comingle with Hezbollah funds or Hezbollah-controlled infrastructure?

Answer. Although I am not as familiar with these issues since I am the nominee to be Assistant Administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), I commit to relaying your concerns to the Assistant Administrator for the Middle East, Mike Harvey. In addition, I understand that it continues to be the express position of USAID that we will not provide any assistance whatsoever to Hizballah or Hizballah-controlled entities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO RAMSEY COATS DAY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. 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 dedicated the majority of my professional career to advancing the cause of democracy and human rights. If confirmed, democracy and human rights will remain at the core of my approach to steering the strategic and programmatic priorities of the Bureau for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Starting as a USAID Desk Officer in the mid-2000's, I worked to support programs focused on combatting human trafficking, cultivating and empowering young democratic leaders, and ensuring citizens had a voice in the democratic process through elections and civic engagement in Eastern Europe.

More recently, I led the International Republican Institute's program in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, based in Amman, where my sole mission was to advance democratic principles in a key U.S. ally in the Middle East. I focused the Institute's programs on empowering women leaders at the community level, helping political parties build platforms based on the needs of citizens, and assisting persons

with disabilities become more integrated into the political process in their communities. As a result, more women ran for public office at all levels in Jordan, political parties increasingly based their platforms on sound policy ideas, and more persons with disabilities had a voice in their communities.

As a leader within USAID over the last two-and-half years, I have prioritized development activities and approaches that have protected and supported the most vulnerable in conflict zones, worked closely with interagency colleagues to develop U.S. policy positions on critical issues related to human rights and democracy, and highlighted the importance of democratic principles to foreign-government counterparts in Africa and around the world.

Diversity

Question. 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?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors in your Bureau at USAID are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) works to support communities in our partner countries as they address some of the most challenging and complex issues faced in the world today. To be successful, Agency leaders must draw upon a diverse range of perspectives to ensure proposed programmatic interventions consider the broadest range of factors possible. This diversity of thought is the strength that drives the most creative and innovative solutions to the challenges faced in our partner countries.

Valuing diversity and ensuring every member of our team has a voice in the decisions that guide the Africa Bureau is critical to our success, and will continue to be a core tenet of my leadership approach. If confirmed, I will set the example by instilling this principle in the senior leadership team, but also empower and hold accountable other supervisors and team leaders to embrace the same approach as a foundational value.

This approach is also consistent with broader USAID principles, as championed by former Administrator Mark Green, Acting Administrator John Barsa, and Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick. If confirmed, I will ensure the Africa Bureau not only complies with the Agency's regulations, practices, and norms, but also is a leader within USAID on diversity and inclusion because this is the best way to ensure we are developing the most effective programs on behalf of the American people.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. No, not to my knowledge.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO RAMSEY COATS DAY BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

World Health Organization

Question. On April 14, President Trump announced a suspension of further funding to the World Health Organization while the administration conducts a review of United States funding to the organization. The President's decision to suspend funding to the World Health Organization in the midst of global pandemic risks not

only the very global coordination that is currently needed, it has interrupted life-saving activities such as measles and polio vaccinations, HIV testing, newborn and maternal support, and various other global health and research activities.

- As you know, WHO is often the provider of last resort. Can you describe the impact of WHO's activities in Africa?

Answer. The World Health Organization (WHO) supports national surveillance for COVID–19, as well as for other infectious diseases such as polio and measles, in affected countries in Africa. Specific activities by the WHO to support government's response to the pandemic of COVID–19 include the following: strengthening laboratories to test for the virus that causes COVID–19; providing assistance for screening at points of entry; conducting case-finding and event-based surveillance; training rapid-response teams to investigate cases of the disease and perform contact-tracing; and procuring and deploying essential health commodities. In addition, the WHO helps develop standard operating procedures, provide advice on monitoring and evaluation, and undertakes other coordination-related activities.

- Are there other partners ready to go to replace WHO's life saving activities?

Answer. During the pause the President announced, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has identified alternative partners around the world to fight the pandemic of COVID–19. My understanding is that the pause has affected USAID's programs related to COVID–19 in five sub-Saharan African countries—the Republics of Cameroon, Djibouti, Mauritius and Sudan; and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. In these countries, USAID has found other international organizations and non-governmental organizations that can handle activities for which the Agency would have engaged the WHO.

For example, in Ethiopia and Djibouti the United Nations Children's Fund will promote accurate risk-communications and services to prevent and control infections in health facilities. In Mauritius, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will provide COVID 19 support, with a focus on community engagement, through the national chapter of the Red Cross

Question. What is the timeline for the completion of the review of WHO?

Answer. Funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development to the World Health Organization (WHO) will be on pause for 60-90 days, pending a full review of the WHO's performance.

Protective Equipment Protocols

Question. Do USAID missions and offices in Africa have sufficient protective equipment and protocols in place to safely maintain operations?

Answer. All of the Missions and Offices of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Africa are coordinating with the field-based medical personnel of the U.S. Department of State to establish appropriate protocols and ensure the availability of protective equipment. Under USAID's Roadmap to Return, and the Department of State's return plan (Diplomacy Strong), U.S. Chiefs of Mission will take into consideration local health, medical, security, policy, and operational conditions when making decisions about initiating a phased approach for employees to return to the workplace. USAID's Mission Directors are working with their respective Chiefs of Mission as part of each post's inter-agency Emergency Action Committee to ensure all staff, including U.S. Direct-Hires, contractors, and Foreign Service Nationals, have the proper protections when they return to work on site. I understand that all USAID's staff in Africa are safe and have access to sufficient protective equipment at the moment.

As I noted in my opening statement, if confirmed, the safety and security of my staff will be my number-one priority. This commitment includes ensuring USAID's Missions and Offices have sufficient protective equipment and protocols in place to safely maintain operations.

Question. How can Congress support the Africa Bureau's COVID–19 response efforts?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) deeply appreciates the generous support of Congress and the American taxpayer. USAID is investing more than $200 million in sub-Saharan Africa to respond to the COVID–19 pandemic, with more assistance on the way. If confirmed, I commit that USAID will invest, monitor, and evaluate funding for COVID–19 in Africa in accordance with our Agency-wide guidelines and Congressional requirements.

Armed Conflict

Question. Absent inclusive economic and social development and vastly improved governance, recent trends in armed conflict in North and sub-Saharan Africa reveal a troubled future for the continent. There are bright spots showing progress in inclusion of youth, security sector reform, dismantling of elite capture of the state, basic infrastructure, access to markets, and more.

Question. In your new role, how do you plan to work to address main drivers of violence across Africa?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) employs a range of activities to prevent conflict, counter violent extremism, and promote stabilization in sub-Saharan Africa.

USAID works with communities, civil society, and governments to support the peaceful resolution of conflict; build resilience; promote social cohesion and reconciliation; and reduce vulnerability to non-state armed groups, including violent extremists. For example, in the Central African Republic and the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, USAID funds community-based protection programming, and reconciliation, reintegration, and psychosocial support services for communities affected by the Lord's Resistance Army and other non-state armed groups. In the Federal Republic of Somalia, USAID's partners engage with vulnerable communities and nascent local governments to reduce opportunities for extremists to manipulate grievances.

USAID also seeks opportunities to support African-led regional programs to prevent and mediate conflict. The Agency operates from the premise that women and other marginalized groups play a critical role in mediating and resolving conflict at both the national and local levels. For instance, in the Lake Chad Basin Region, USAID's Partnership for Peace supports traditional women leaders to defuse tensions across ethnic, generational, and religious lines.

USAID and the U.S. Departments of Defense and State strive to coordinate stabilization activities with military and diplomatic objectives and employ the precepts highlighted in the interagency Stabilization Assistance Review (https://www.state.gov/reports/stabilization-assistance-review-a-framework-for-maximizing-the-effectiveness-of-u-s-government-efforts-to-stabilize-conflict-affected-areas-2018/). For example, in the Sahel, USAID's activities combine aspects of traditional development work in areas such as health and education with investments in stabilization and countering violent extremism to strengthen communities' resilience and reduce opportunities for violent extremist groups to gain traction.

As the Global Fragility Act makes clear, development assistance is a vital tool for addressing fragility, but effective action will require a whole-of-government approach. USAID, alongside the Department of State and other interagency partners, intends to take a lead role in implementing foreign assistance to support the forthcoming Global Fragility Strategy and the subsequent implementation plans for priority countries and/or regions, which are currently under development through a collaborative, consultative, evidence-based interagency process.

Climate Change

Question. Twenty percent of the Earth has already warmed by 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to temperatures in the 19th century—the point at which the IPCC and scientific community warn of irreparable damage to billions of people and the planet. Africa is already experiencing devastating effects of climate change; as one example, Mozambique has been hit by the second and third largest back-to-back cyclones ever to touch ground on the continent in human history.

- How do you anticipate USAID's work needing to adapt in order to fulfill U.S. development and foreign policy goals?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is adapting our programs continuously to help Africans on the Journey to Self-Reliance. Climate variability and change are important factors that can prevent nations from achieving their development goals. USAID uses an adaptive-management approach to help communities in Africa address climate shocks and stressors to improve their current and future resilience.

USAID requires all of our programs to identify and address significant current and future climate risks. For example, increased temperatures could lead to more outbreaks of infectious diseases. A focus on managing climate risk allows programs to adapt by developing better early-warning systems for infectious diseases that include temperature forecasts. In addition, prolonged droughts can decrease crop yields. USAID-funded agriculture programs conduct research on, and use, more drought-tolerant seeds to improve the productivity of crops during droughts. Anal-

yses of climate risk occurs early in the design of programs in all of the sectors in which USAID works, and our partners make adjustments to adapt to changing circumstances.

For example, under the President's Malaria Initiative USAID has been helping the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia reduce the risk of malaria for over a decade as warmer temperatures cause the disease to expand to higher-elevation regions that previously did not have it. USAID works with the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health to understand how varying temperatures change the occurrence of malaria, and to develop an early-warning system that incorporates data on climate and weather. The Ministry can use this information to decide which interventions to use to keep communities safe from malaria in different parts of the country.

Question. How will USAID do its part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions known to cause climate change?

Answer. Sub-Saharan Africa is responsible for about only seven percent of the world's emissions of greenhouse gases. About two-thirds of all of Africa's greenhouse-gas emissions comes from the inefficient use of land, particularly deforestation and degradation. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) helps governments, the private sector, and local communities in our partner countries worldwide protect, manage, and restore forests and other lands to reduce emissions, store carbon, protect biodiversity, improve livelihoods, and enhance climate resilience.

Understanding how much greenhouse gas is emitted into the atmosphere, and from what sources, is essential for societies to make decisions about how to reduce their emissions. In Africa, USAID has worked with governments and civil society to monitor and manage their forests better through programs such as SilvaCarbon (https://www.silvacarbon.org), which is an interagency U.S. Government technical-cooperation program to enhance the capacity in selected tropical countries to measure and report on carbon in their forests and other lands. Through a partnership with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), called SERVIR (https://www.nasa.gov/mission—pages/servir/africa.html), USAID provides governments and other partners with access to satellite imagery and information on climate and weather to enable wiser decisions about development, including to improve the monitoring of, and reporting on, forests.

The most-useful tools to prevent the emission of greenhouse gases in Africa are the conservation of forests and the prevention of degradation, especially in the face of population increases and agricultural encroachment. In central Africa's Congo Basin, the second-largest tropical rainforest in the world and a globally important carbon sink, USAID's Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) promotes the sustainable management of forests and improves livelihoods for the people who live in and around them. CARPE helps conserve and restore forests so they can continue to act as carbon sinks instead of releasing their stored carbon into the atmosphere.

Programming impacted by COVID–19

Question. As USAID prioritizes COVID–19 response and existing programming is also impacted by the pandemic, what adaptations are being made to ongoing programs?

- What impact do you see this pandemic having on USAID's strategic approach to the region?

Answer. While much remains unknown about the epidemiology of the disease, COVID–19 could have catastrophic effects in Africa. The pandemic already has caused more than 40,000 reported cases and over 1,000 deaths, and the fragile health-care institutions in the region might not be able to absorb more stress. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is funding a response COVID–19 response in over 43 countries in Africa, and we are continuing to implement our core investments in public health, including the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, the Global Health Security Agenda, and our programs in maternal and child health, all of which have provided a foundation for interventions against COVID–19. USAID is committed to supporting African countries to continue these existing, life-saving programs in addition to bolstering efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to ongoing and future infectious-disease threats.

We also anticipate the pandemic will have wide-ranging second- and third-order impacts on sub-Saharan Africa. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID adapts our strategic approach as needed to address them.

For example, as a result of COVID–19, within the next year, more than 140 million people in sub-Saharan Africa could reach crisis-level food insecurity. East Africa is already grappling with an infestation of locusts that could harm staple crops in a serious way. The combined pandemic and oil-price shock are likely to tip Africa into an economic contraction in 2020, in the absence of major fiscal stimulus. Economic growth across the continent is projected to decline from 2.4 percent before COVID–19 to between (2.1 percent) and (5.1 percent), with widening fiscal deficits.

I also am concerned about democratic backsliding, and how some African regimes could use COVID–19 to restrict democratic space and constrain free media even further. Some governments using COVID–19 to commit human-rights abuses, restrict civil society, suppress political opposition, and delay democratic processes. Disturbing trends include the cancellation or postponement of elections, widespread misinformation or disinformation, targeted crackdowns on key population groups, and increased criminal violence, among others. I am also concerned about the increase in the number of incidents of gender-based violence, particularly intimate-partner violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse during the ongoing COVID–19 pandemic across the world, as reported by United Nations Secretary-General Antθnio Guterres and others.

USAID is using supplemental resources to address these issues in the Republic of Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and the Sahel region. This funding is providing social and economic support, protection, and assistance to vulnerable populations and supporting small-and-medium-sized enterprises to withstand the economic effects of COVID–19. We are also financing programs to improve peace and stability in conflict-ridden regions, improve education and distance-learning, strengthen civil society and citizen-responsive governance, and improve public confidence and involvement in government. USAID's programs are also adapting and mobilizing to mitigate the impact of COVID–19 on women and girls through social-assistance programs, economic support to women-owned small and medium-sized businesses, and social services in heavily affected communities.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we continue to fund immediate response needs and support our partners in the region to adapt to the long-range impacts of COVID–19.

Question. What's being done to assure that long-term development gains are not lost?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has geared much of our response to the pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa to date toward protecting long-term development gains. Our investment of supplemental resources from the Economic Support Fund has focused heavily on fragile states such as the Republic of Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Across the continent, stability hard-won through years of partnership and investment is at risk of being compromised without immediate relief. This is especially true in West Africa and the Sahel, and in urban areas in many nations where pandemic-related lockdowns have disrupted the livelihoods of large numbers of informal workers.

USAID is adapting our existing programs to respond to the new context of COVID–19. The Agency has helped large manufacturers affected by a collapse in global demand for their products shift their operations to the production of personal protective equipment, which not only supports the health response but protects jobs and years of investment in local industry.

USAID continues our core work of supporting sustainable health and food systems that help communities in our partner countries manage crises such as this one. The Agency also is focused on facilitating trade and mobilizing private investment to help increase capacity, reduce future debt burdens, and achieve lasting development results.

USAID is revitalizing previously-funded radio and television education programs, and providing support to Ministries of Education to develop distance-learning curricula. The Agency sees this as an opportunity to strengthen the resilience of local educational institutions, help governments and private providers develop lasting capacity for remote learning, and maintain basic skills while children are out of school.

Additionally, USAID continues to fund health programs begun long before the COVID–19 pandemic, to sustain the gains in essential life-saving activities in maternal and child health, malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV. USAID also is contributing to the whole-of-government "SAFER" framework for the international response to the COVID 19 pandemic, which builds upon long-standing and substantial global

health and humanitarian assistance by the American people and the U.S. Government's commitment to the Global Health Security Agenda.

Free and Fair Elections in Africa

Question. U.S. assistance supports fair and free elections throughout Africa which is a challenge despite COVID–19 impacts on programming.

- How do you envision support for Democracy, Rights, and Governance, especially making sure elections are held and done so freely but also safely?

Answer. National elections are scheduled in 12 African countries during the remainder of 2020. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) currently plans election-related support and programming for nine of them. Along with the U.S. Department of State, USAID is tracking each election closely at the country level.

Conducting free and fair elections in the midst of the pandemic of COVID–19 will be very challenging. Physical distancing, quarantine measures, and travel restrictions make many election-related activities difficult. In-person political events, rallies, the registration of voters, voting, and observation all risk the transmission of COVID–19. Some governments have postponed elections until they can mitigate these challenges more effectively, while others are using COVID–19 as an excuse to restrict fundamental freedoms or the ability of opposition parties to compete fairly. Women and marginalized populations face even greater challenges to participating in elections because of the effects of COVID–19.

Despite the pandemic, I understand that USAID is adapting our approaches, identifying innovative solutions, and continuing our election-related programming in sub-Saharan Africa. For example in the Republic of Mali, USAID worked with the National Electoral Commission to disseminate proper health messaging and promote safe practices in coordination with the Ministry of Health in advance of national legislative elections. This included ensuring voter-registration and polling centers had adequate hygiene safeguards and procedures in place, to reduce the risk to voters and election workers. USAID also funded a citizen election-observation group to adapt its methodology to monitor public-health measures during the elections.

If confirmed, I will make supporting USAID's investments in democracy, rights and governance, including to promote free and fair elections, a top priority.

Question. COVID–19 presents a governance crisis. In your view, how can USAID better respond to rising authoritarian opportunism in the region; and encourage nascent democracies to develop inclusive responses?

Answer. In an effort to prevent further closure of space for civil society to operate during the COVID–19 pandemic, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) should bolster our support for local civic organizations, independent media, journalists, and citizen-responsive governance. Maintaining and improving the ability of citizens to exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms will lead to greater long-term stability.

Anti-corruption efforts will take on renewed importance, because we need to ensure our assistance and resources related to COVID–19 are used for their intended purposes. In the Republic of Senegal, USAID's civil-society partners are providing critical oversight of the Government's humanitarian assistance, and have called out potential fraud and waste at the national level.

Several parliaments have passed legislation that will inhibit democratic processes and would otherwise spark protests. Some regimes are downplaying the threat of COVID–19, and are arresting and detaining individuals who speak out. If confirmed, I will emphasize the imperative of preventing democratic backsliding, which began before the COVID–19 pandemic, and now has the potential to become worse.

Migratory Pests

Question. FEWS Net anticipates that desert locusts are expected to contribute to an increase the number of people in food security crisis and requiring food assistance across areas of East Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda) through at least September 2020.

- How is USAID responding to desert locusts? What issues are you facing?

Answer. To date, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided nearly $19.6 million to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to scale up surveillance and pest-control activities through direct interventions and local capacity-building. This funding is helping the Governments and farmers of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Federal Republic of Somalia, and the Republics of Kenya and Sudan control infestations within their bor-

ders, as well as guard against additional invasions. USAID also provides other long-term funding to protect food security and livelihoods for the people of this region, as well as strengthen institutional capacity for detecting, monitoring, reporting on, and controlling desert locusts.

USAID's funding has enabled response teams to obtain critical equipment in recent weeks, including aircraft and vehicles for surveillance and control. In addition, USAID's programs are training community members, local officials, and scouts on the early detection, surveillance, and monitoring of, and reporting on, locusts. To detect and track the pests, USAID is also providing equipment like Global Positioning System equipment, radios, and eLocust3 tablets-specialized systems that gather field data and transmit them in real time to government officials and the staff of the FAO. This information allows decision-makers to assess the current situation, forecast the movement and impact of the locusts, provide early warnings to communities, and take necessary actions to help control infestations.

USAID also has disaster experts in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and the republic of South Sudan who are assessing humanitarian needs and coordinating response efforts with local governments and humanitarian organizations.

I understand that, as of mid-May, limited surveillance capacity and heavy rainfall across the region were hindering efforts to scale up response interventions and preventing the optimal use of available aircraft. Additional field monitors are needed throughout the region to survey vast territories infested by locusts; staff are also needed to direct aerial spraying in Kenya. Coordination gaps between governmental authorities and pest-control teams have also hampered surveillance and control activities in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia in recent weeks. As a result, the FAO continues to report a shortage of surveillance data across the region, including in heavy breeding areas.

In response, USAID is mobilizing humanitarian and development partners to participate in locust-monitoring by using the eLocust3M mobile application, which collects and transmits data on the locations and stages of locust swarms in real time via satellite from the field to national locust centers. USAID is also engaging with other donors and host-country governments to promote the use of eLocust3M, including by encouraging officials to identify key staff from each country's Ministry of Agriculture and related pest-control departments to participate in FAO-led training-of-trainers sessions on the use of the application. Access to robust real-time monitoring data is critical for informing daily control operations, because it enables teams to determine the location of the locusts accurately, adjust the application of pesticides to local conditions, and compile precise flight plans that maximize the use of aircraft and other resources.

- How is COVID–19 impacting desert locust response efforts?

Answer. I understand that locust-surveillance and pest-control operations have continued largely uninterrupted in most countries. However, travel restrictions related to the COVID–19 pandemic have affected the supply-chain and delayed deliveries of critical equipment and supplies, including vehicles and aircraft for surveillance and biopesticides, which has challenged efforts to scale up this large-scale regional response. Both the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and affected governments in the region are adapting their procurement plans for key commodities continuously, including by sourcing some materials locally. The FAO has also addressed anticipated shortfalls of pesticides by finding local suppliers or resolving earlier disruptions to the supply-chain; as of mid-May, pesticide supplies were sufficient to support control operations in most countries at least through June.

Travel restrictions related to the COVID–19 pandemic are likely to continue posing challenges and could delay planned interventions in the coming weeks. COVID–19-related confinement measures-which require travelers to undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine period upon entering target countries-could affect the FAO's plans to deploy skilled logisticians to affected areas and postpone the arrival of additional surveillance aircraft and flying crews. This would further limit the flexible use of air assets within the region.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is continuously monitoring the situation and engaging with the FAO, as well as with host-country governments and other key stakeholders, to develop timely solutions in response to these COVID-related interruptions. USAID is meeting weekly with the FAO to track the agency's progress, identify operational obstacles, and explore solutions to outstanding constraints. USAID is also assisting host governments to prioritize the response to desert locusts by facilitating the importation of essential supplies.

If confirmed, I will make ensuring USAID can continue to respond to the desert locusts in the midst of COVID–19 a top priority.

Gender Equality

Question. Gender inequality in African countries is a present and persistent issue that stands in the way of women's and girls' rights, health, and development. This inequality will also continue to hamper the development and security of their communities and nations.

- As Assistant Administrator, how will you prioritize advancing gender equality and stemming the harmful practices/outcomes that result?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) follows the basic principle that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to achieving peace, democracy, prosperity, and security across Africa.

We cannot solve the major economic, security, governance, health, and educational challenges of our time without the contribution of women and girls at all levels of society. Investing in women and girls is one of the most powerful ways to improve standards of living and develop vibrant civil societies and private sectors.

If confirmed, I will ensure gender equality and women's empowerment remain top priorities for me and the Africa Bureau. Under my leadership as Assistant Administrator, USAID will continue to help women and girls reach their full potential by prioritizing their political and economic participation; promoting their equal access to high-quality education, health care, property rights, jobs, and financial resources; and protecting their physical and emotional safety.

If confirmed, I will prioritize the implementation of the White House-led Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative; the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act; and the Women, Peace, and Security Act.

Question. How do you plan to work with local actors, particularly African women themselves, to address these challenges?

Answer. As part of the Journey to Self-Reliance, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is elevating women's local leadership under our New Partnerships Initiative. USAID engages the ingenuity and knowledge of women's organizations that are connected to the people and the communities we serve. In doing so, the Agency ensures women have an opportunity to be agents of their communities' growth and prosperity for generations to come.

USAID also emphasizes a comprehensive approach; ensuring adolescent girls are educated, healthy, economically and socially empowered, and free from violence and discrimination, further promoting global development, security, and prosperity. If confirmed, I will ensure the Africa Bureau will continue to partner with a variety of organizations and empower women and girls with information, skills, and opportunities.

Nigeria

Question. In recent months, the Government and security forces of Nigeria have restricted the humanitarian operating environment in the country's northeast, where more than seven million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. In September 2019, the Nigerian military temporarily suspended the relief agencies Mercy Corps and Action against Hunger and investigated several others through an extra-legal process, sending a chilling effect throughout the humanitarian community. In addition, passage of the Law to Establish Borno State Agency for Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response (BASH) last month poses a significant threat to organizations providing lifesaving assistance in the northeast. Among its most problematic components, this law imposes a one percent tax on humanitarian assistance, including U.S. Government contributions; mandates bureaucratic governmental approval of all assistance projects; and penalizes those accused of noncompliance with heavy fines and imprisonment.

- Does USAID have a plan of action for addressing these challenges with the Government of Nigeria, including Nigerian security forces and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, to improve its coordination with humanitarian organizations, prevent the suspension of or restrictions on humanitarian organizations, and to ensure that the Government of Nigeria upholds International Humanitarian Law?

Answer. I understand the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has received assurances from the Borno State Government that Agency funding will not be subject to the fee imposed on humanitarian assistance. The Borno State Agency for Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response has relaxed several other measures of law following concerted engagement by the international community with Borno State authorities.

Additionally, I understand USAID will continue to engage on specific issues with Nigerian officials, including State and Federal civil authorities and military leader-

ship. For example, USAID/Nigeria Mission Director Stephen Haykin recently spoke with Borno State authorities, including Governor Zulum, to improve coordination between the State government and humanitarian organizations in response to the COVID–19 pandemic.

USAID is a regular participant at meetings convened by the U.S. Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission with Nigerian Government officials, such as the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, to discuss challenges with humanitarian assistance. USAID plans to use the Government of Nigeria's newly-created National Humanitarian Coordination Council as a conduit to address our concerns with Nigerian restrictions on humanitarian assistance.

USAID liaises closely with the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Abuja and uses the Humanitarian Country Team to address challenges faced by the international-aid community. Finally, USAID's support to the Nigeria International Non-governmental Organization (NGO) Forum has created a strong advocacy platform and improved the coordination of humanitarian NGOs.

If confirmed, I will take this issue seriously and do all I can to ensure the life-saving assistance from the American people reaches those who need it most in Northeast Nigeria. For example, if confirmed, I will continue to press the Government of Nigeria to follow international humanitarian law, improve its coordination with humanitarian organizations, and remove restrictions on NGOs.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO SANDRA E. CLARK BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

COVID–19

Question. Recent reports on COVID–19 incidents indicate that Burkina Faso has had 750 cases and 52 deaths. How accurate are these figures? Senator Booker noted during your testimony that there are 11 ventilators in Burkina Faso, yet Burkina Faso is not on the list of countries slated to receive ventilators from the U.S.? Why? You mentioned during your testimony that if confirmed you intend to work with CDC and USAID to address COVID. Through what specific programs and actions?

Answer. As is the case with many African countries, testing rates in Burkina Faso are low. However, we are encouraged that Burkina Faso recently expanded its testing policy and now tests contacts of patients, and not just symptomatic patients. Through close coordination with international donors, Burkina Faso has reportedly received additional ventilators.

The United States is providing $4.6 million in COVID–19 related assistance to Burkina Faso. These funds are intended to support technical assistance and coordination, including point of entry, surveillance, supplies, and workforce training, and other crucial needs relating to the pandemic. Since 2018, U.S. Global Health Security Agenda funding has helped Burkina Faso establish a national public health emergency operations center (CORUS), which is playing a pivotal leadership and coordination role in responding to the COVID–19 pandemic. If confirmed, I will lead the U.S. Mission to continue working closely with CORUS and other international donors as we address the COVID–19 challenge.

Question. Authoritarian leaders on the continent appear to be using COVID to justify crackdowns and limit freedoms, and further entrench and consolidate power. Is Burkina Faso at risk for the same Why or why not? What specific actions will you take if confirmed to counter actions that limit civic freedoms and close democratic space

Answer. There have been isolated reports of violent incidents involving police responding to civilians' refusals to abide by COVID-related curfews and travel restrictions, but these do not appear to be part of any systematic effort to leverage COVID as a means of justifying limits to freedom. If confirmed, I will continue our open dialogue with the Government of Burkina Faso on the importance of governing democratically and respecting fundamental freedoms and human rights.

Democracy and Governance/Human Rights

Question. Burkina Faso is due to hold national elections in November. What in your view are the challenges facing Burkina Faso as we draw closer to elections? What U.S. programs and activities are currently underway to support elections and how have they been impacted?

Answer. The Burkinabe leadership and the independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) have reiterated their commitment to holding presidential and legis-

lative elections as scheduled in November 2020. Nevertheless, the Government faces steep challenges including: facilitating the vote of nearly 850,000 internally displaced people, delayed voter registration because of COVID–19 related shutdowns, and a complicated security environment that limits movement election officials attempting to prepare and voters wishing to cast their ballot.

The United States is providing support for peaceful, transparent, and inclusive national and local elections in Burkina Faso. USAID is devoting $2 million for a 24-month program to strengthen election administration, including planning for electoral security and enable civil society organizations to fulfill their role of increasing citizen awareness of and participation in the electoral process. State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization (CSO) will fund a $500,000 "Relief and Recovery Program" to help prevent election violence. If confirmed, I will work closely with all stakeholders to support elections that are free and fair and viewed by the majority of the population as credible.

Question. A local prosecutor in the east of Burkina Faso indicated an inquiry has been opened after 12 people detained on suspicion of terrorism were found dead in their police cells. How do you plan to engage with the Burkinabe on human rights/rule of law concerns if confirmed? How will the U.S.-Burkinabe security assistance relationship be impacted if the investigation is not credible and there is no accountability for what may turn out to have been extrajudicial killings

Answer. Human rights abuses and violations by security forces, armed civilian militias, as well as terrorist groups remain a pressing issue in Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso has created a National Commission for Human Rights to address human rights concerns and USAID just started implementation of a three-year project to strengthen the capacity of the National Human Rights Commission to carry out its mandate. If confirmed, I will continue support for this important initiative. I will also push the Government to investigate all allegations of human rights abuses and violations, prosecute those responsible for such crimes, and implement an aggressive diplomatic strategy to advocate for the respect of human rights by Burkinabe security forces. I will continue, if confirmed, the Embassy's efforts to engage the Government to investigate and prosecute terrorists while respecting their human rights, including fair trial guarantees. Under my leadership, if I am confirmed, the Embassy will continue to vet all potential candidates for U.S. security assistance to ensure that no U.S. security assistance is provided to any security forces unit where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights, as required under the Leahy Law. U.S. foreign assistance should be used to assist the Burkinabe in developing the capacity to promote human rights throughout its various security sectors.

Partnerships

Question. During your testimony, you mentioned the U.S. French partnership as a focus areas. What is the status of the Pentagon's review of troop deployment in Africa and how is that impacting our relationship with the French?

Answer. Cooperation with partners and allies such as France is an integral part of U.S. Government engagement in Burkina Faso and the wider Sahel. Absent U.S. support, Burkina Faso and the region could experience serious setbacks.The rapid increase in insecurity over the past year, which continues to move south towards the West African littoral states, indicates that Burkina now faces a persistent fight for stability and peace. Success in Burkina Faso will determine whether this country is a firewall against or a gateway to the expansion of violent extremism in West Africa.

Much of the State Department's security assistance does not depend on the U.S. military for implementation and oversight, and I am committed, if confirmed, to maintaining engagement in line with U.S. objectives. I would refer you to the Defense Department for additional information.

Congressional Consultations

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that you fully brief Members of Congress and/or their staff when you are in Washington for visits or consultations during your tenure as Ambassador Burkina Faso

Answer. If confirmed and during my tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso, I would look forward to briefing Members of Congress and/or their staff when I am in Washington, as organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Support for Democracy

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

Answer. I consider the promotion of human rights and of democracy as intrinsic to U.S. diplomacy. Respect for human rights and a democratic process that respects the will of the people are integral to progress on development and security. Throughout my career, for example from serving as an election observer to push for free and fair elections in The Philippines and Georgia, to working on programming and strategies to strengthen democracy as Deputy Coordinator for Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, to advocating for reform in Guinea-Bissau when Deputy Chief of Mission in Dakar, Senegal, I have been an advocate for these core values. I have also advocated for reforms and anti-corruption measures to strengthen the rule of law, and met with civil society leaders, helping to support their work on human rights. I have made sure to include diverse representation in embassy activities and programming, such as nominations for U.S. Government exchanges. I look forward, should I be confirmed, to doing all I can to strengthen the young democracy that is Burkina Faso, to advocate for human rights, and incorporate these values in all my work as Ambassador and in that of our mission.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Burkina Faso? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Our efforts to advance good governance and democracy are facilitated by a population that already strongly values fundamental freedoms, as well as a vibrant civil society that advances good governance and anti-corruption efforts. This political culture makes the Burkinabe natural partners for the United States.

Answer. As a young democracy in an unstable region, Burkina Faso faces severe challenges, foremost among them, violent extremists' organizations who seek to destroy the gains Burkina Faso has made to date. The Government of Burkina Faso's challenges with respect to projecting its presence in ungoverned areas and its tenuous relationship with certain communities, as well as a lack of economic opportunity are among the drivers of insecurity in Burkina Faso. Strong democratic institutions that provide marginalized communities with a voice and way to resolve their grievances are critical to prevent further terrorist recruitment. The provision by the Government of basic services to its citizens will offer an alternative to terrorist groups.

Answer. Insecurity stemming from terrorist attacks has driven Burkina Faso's leaders, for example, to adopt revisions to its penal code to prohibit media outlets from publishing news relating to terrorist attacks or military counterterrorism operations, and this has prompted self-censorship among journalists and civil society activists. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Burkina Faso to engage with its citizens in a way that strengthens its legitimacy.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Burkina Faso? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The United States plays a critical role in advocating for democracy in Burkina Faso through diplomatic engagement, which I will ensure continues if confirmed as Ambassador. I will continue the Embassy's advocacy of press freedom in Burkina Faso and seek to avoid any backsliding on press freedom. I commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Burkina Faso and to following and addressing obstacles to governance, rule of law, and threats to human rights and press freedom.

Additionally, our efforts through cross-cutting programs aim to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments to address nuanced underlying grievances, societal cleavages, and economic drivers that can contribute to insecurity. I will be a strong advocate of these programs should I be confirmed.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead the U.S. Government in its efforts to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments to address the nuanced underlying grievances and economic drivers that can lead to insecurity using every tool avail-

able. For instance, the Public Affairs Small Grants program supports training of women and youth to participate in elections. Public Diplomacy programs launch campaigns to inspire civic engagement in local communities. USAID programs continue to build the legislative capacities, oversight, and accountability of the National Assembly.USAID works to support Burkina Faso's vibrant civil society organizations to play a fundamental role by advocating on behalf of marginalized populations and promoting active and responsible participation.Over 100 members of the independent electoral commission (CENI) at the central, provincial, and municipal levels have benefited from USAID training.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Burkina Faso? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Burkina Faso has a vibrant civil society. I commit, if confirmed, to meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights non-governmental organizations in Burkina Faso. I will continue to engage civil society actors that seek to hold government institutions accountable for improved governance and rule of law and discourage the Government from restricting or penalizing NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. There is broad support in Burkina Faso for the democratic electoral process; upcoming elections are critical to rooting Burkina Faso's nascent democracy. I commit to meeting with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties, should I be confirmed. Increasing the participation of women and youth in the election process in Burkina Faso is a central tenet of the United States' election assistance. Embassy Ouagadougou has sent dozens of young leaders including directors of the CENI on democracy-focused International Visitor Leadership Programs (IVLP) in the United States. In addition to political and civil society leaders, the Embassy has supported journalists and security directors on IVLP programs focusing on elections coverage and elections security. If confirmed, I plan to engage these alumni upon their return and empower them to organize programs around the country promoting civic engagement, democracy, and good governance.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Burkina Faso on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Burkina Faso?

Answer. urkina Faso ranks 36 out of 180 according to the 2019 World Press Freedom Index. Regrettably, rising insecurity has led to revisions of Burkina Faso's penal code that prohibits media outlets from publishing any news related to terrorist attacks or military counterterrorism operations, prompting a growing climate of self-censorship among journalists. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure this trend does not develop into a backsliding of press freedom, continuing the Embassy's advocacy of press freedom. I commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Burkina Faso and to using public opportunities to defend and protect these core values.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. Disinformation and propaganda disseminated by violent extremist organizations and governments such as Russia and China are a concern in Burkina Faso and across the region. If confirmed, I will lead my team in countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Burkina Faso on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions

Answer. Protecting workers' rights, especially the freedoms of association and collective bargaining, is essential to building durable democracies as well as achieving sustainable growth for prosperity. If confirmed, I will commit to engaging with the Government and the people of Burkina Faso on these important rights.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Burkina Faso, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Burkina Faso? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Burkina Faso?

Answer. While there are no laws criminalizing LGBTI status or conduct, these individuals are often victims of discrimination. If confirmed, I will meet with representatives of the LGBTI community and advocacy groups and include them in Embassy outreach and programming. I will encourage the Government of Burkina Faso to proactively protect members of the LGBTQ community from harmful societal stigmas.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO SANDRA E. CLARK BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I consider the promotion of human rights and of democracy as intrinsic to U.S. diplomacy. Respect for human rights and a democratic process that respects the will of the people are integral to progress on development and security. Throughout my career, for example from serving as an election observer to push for free and fair elections in The Philippines and Georgia to working on programming and strategies to strengthen democracy as Deputy Coordinator for Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, to advocating for reform in Guinea-Bissau when Deputy Chief of Mission in Dakar, Senegal, I have sought to be an advocate for these core values. I have also advocated for reforms and anti-corruption measures to strengthen the rule of law, and met with civil society leaders, helping to support their work on human rights. I have made sure to include diverse representation in embassy activities and programming, such as nominations for U.S. Government exchanges. I look forward, should I be confirmed, to doing all I can to strengthen the young democracy that is Burkina Faso, to advocate for human rights, and incorporate these values in all my work as Ambassador and in that of our mission.

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

Answer. Human rights abuses and violations by security forces, armed civilian militias, as well as terrorist groups remain the most pressing human rights issues in Burkina Faso. If confirmed, I will continue to push the Government to investigate allegations of human rights abuses and violations, prosecute those found guilty of such crimes, and implement an aggressive diplomatic strategy to advocate for the respect of human rights by Burkinabe security forces. I will also continue to push the Government to investigate and prosecute terrorists.

If confirmed, I will draw on all existing USG resources to assist the Government in reducing the potential violence and harm by community based armed groups that were recently created to supplement the military. I will work with the Government to establish a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program that engages entire communities, responds to local drivers of terrorism, and provides alternative options for support and recovery assistance to women and youth subjected to violence by terrorists. If confirmed, I will work with all actors in country to ensure free and fair presidential and legislative elections scheduled for November 2020 and municipal elections the following Spring.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in?Burkina Faso?in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Burkina Faso's justice system is overburdened and understaffed, creating a case backlog and a prolonged timeline for holding perpetrators accountable for human rights abuses. Widespread insecurity throughout the country has limited investigators' access to crime scenes as well as the availability of witnesses and evidence. Rising insecurity has also led to revisions of Burkina Faso's penal code that prohibits media outlets from publishing any news related to terrorist attacks or military counterterrorism operations, prompting a growing climate of self-censorship

among journalists and civil society activists. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure press freedom is strong and does not lead to a closing space for civil society. I will also work closely with the Burkinabe Government and its independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), as well as other parties to ensure that despite steep challenges the upcoming elections are viewed as credible by the majority of the population.

Question. 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 Burkina Faso? 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 commit, if confirmed, to meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights non-governmental organizations in Burkina Faso. I also will ensure that the Embassy continues to vet all potential candidates for U.S. assistance to ensure that no U.S. security assistance is provided to any foreign security forces unit where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights, as required under the Leahy Law. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure training on rule of law and armed conflict and human rights are provided in conjunction with as much of our security training as possible in the future. Such training is consistent with shared values and failure to abide by human rights makes our work more difficult.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with?Burkina Faso?to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted?by Burkina Faso?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with the Government, should there be cases of people who have been unlawfully or arbitrarily detained. Burkina Faso's justice department is currently investigating multiple allegations of human rights abuses toward civilians and refugees by its armed forces during counterterrorism operations. If confirmed, I will urge the Government to complete these investigations and hold perpetrators accountable.

Question. Will you engage with Burkina Faso on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage on these issues with the Government and other stakeholders. I will ensure, if confirmed, that embassy personnel and U.S. Government programming address and promote these issues as well. The Burkinabe seek cooperation with U.S. personnel across a broad spectrum, to include the sectors of security, military, human rights, justice, and health, among others.The United States plays a critical role in advocating for democracy and human rights in Burkina Faso through diplomatic and other engagement. U.S. Government programs build legislative capacities, oversight, and accountability of the National Assembly, and support Burkina Faso's vibrant civil society organizations to play a fundamental role by advocating on behalf of marginalized populations and promoting active and responsible participation. I will continue to support these programs if confirmed as Ambassador.

Diversity

Question. 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. I value a workplace where each individual is treated with respect and dignity and would make clear my expectation that the mission in Burkina Faso is such a workplace, should I be confirmed. I have endeavored throughout my career to be a colleague, mentor and leader in support of these principles and would continue to do so, setting a strong example. I would ensure that everyone understands the importance of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles, that we abide by them on a daily basis, and that there are?well-trained?and proactive EEO counselors who conduct trainings and other activities to underscore the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion for both American and local employees. I would endeavor to recruit staff who reflect the diversity of the United States. I would look for ways to solicit feedback from all members of the embassy community on the work environment and take measures as appropriate to address concerns, and would encourage cross-cultural understanding between American and local staff. I

would ensure that embassy staff are aware of and can tap into all the resources the Department of State has available, should I be confirmed.?

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Burkina Faso are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I would set an example as a leader who values and fosters a diverse and inclusive environment and make clear my expectations that each supervisor does the same. I would encourage supervisors to take advantage of training and provide more informal ways to further their skills as supervisors. I would ask supervisors to pay attention to the professional development of each person they supervise, stressing that EEO principles are an integral part of their work requirements, and encourage them to be proactive in fostering a diverse and inclusive environment.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Burkina Faso?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes funds that may have or acquire investments in companies with a presence in Burkina Faso; however, all but three of these funds are exempt from the conflicts of interest rules. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Burkina Faso specifically?

Answer. Political corruption erodes state legitimacy and ultimately degrades the rule of law. Corruption can also undermine support for democracy, especially in a fragile democracy like Burkina Faso. Corruption must be addressed in order to root Burkina Faso's nascent democracy, attract additional U.S. investment to Burkina Faso, and encourage economic growth. If confirmed, I would encourage the Government of Burkina Faso to invigorate its anti-corruption efforts.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in?Burkina Faso?and efforts to address and reduce it by that Government?

Answer. Corruption continues to be a problem in Burkina Faso and throughout the region. Burkinabe law provides criminal penalties for official corruption and the Government has created official entities responsible for addressing corruption. Prosecutors recently pressed charges against members of the Government for their involvement in the illegal export of gold. In 2019, Burkina Faso met the Department of State's minimum requirements for fiscal transparency. If confirmed, I would encourage the Government of Burkina Faso to invigorate its anti-corruption efforts.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Burkina Faso?

Answer. In keeping with U.S. strategic interests, the U.S. Embassy in Burkina Faso is committed to a partnership with the Government of Burkina Faso, and other technical and financial partners, for positive security, governance, and socio-economic outcomes for the Burkinabe people. These desired outcomes include helping the Government bolster security and stability, strengthen the country's social compact, and reduce the population's vulnerability to violent extremist recruitment and attacks. Our efforts to advance good governance and democracy are facilitated by a population that strongly values freedom of expression and freedom of religion, as well as a vibrant civil society that advances good governance and anti-corruption efforts.This political culture makes the Burkinabe natural partners for the United

States. If confirmed, I would strongly support anti-corruption programming, and advocate for the completion of investigations related to corruption, which will promote confidence in state authorities and counter violent extremism. I would continue to engage civil society actors that seek to hold government institutions accountable for improved governance and rule of law.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM ELLISON GRAYSON BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

U.S.-Estonia Security Relations

Question. I was pleased to see that in your opening statement you committed to working to "deepen our defense cooperation with Estonia." However, last October President Trump did the opposite when he diverted nearly $16 million in European Deterrence Initiative funding from Estonia to fund his border wall. I understand that the administration did not inform the Government of Estonia that it was making this cut prior to the public announcement.

- If the administration sought to redirect EDI Estonia funds in the future to the President's border wall, would you support such a decision?

Answer. Last year, the U.S. Department of Defense deferred a number of military construction projects to provide funding for military construction projects determined necessary in connection with the national emergency declared by the President on February 15, 2019, and continued in effect on February 13, 2020. I will support the administration's decisions on allocation of EDI funds while working to clearly convey to the Government of Estonia that the administration remains committed to EDI. The administration's request for an additional $4.5 billion in FY 2021 funds to support a more robust U.S. military rotational presence throughout the European theater shows our commitment to Europe's, and Estonia's, security. These funds will go toward increasing training and exercises, continuing placement of prepositioned equipment to support the rapid deployment of forces to Europe if required, improving infrastructure, and expanding engagements to strengthen the capacity of our Allies and partners to defend themselves. The U.S. is strongly committed to the security of Estonia as a NATO Ally and strong partner. If confirmed as Ambassador, I would push for investment to increase Estonia's readiness, enhance its deterrence and defense capabilities, and meet new challenges.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to inform and consult with the Government of Estonia on decisions relevant to its security?

Answer. The United States and Estonia have been close friends for nearly a century. This was exemplified most clearly in the 1940 Sumner Welles Declaration, which forcefully stated the United States' refusal to recognize the forced annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania by the Soviet Union. The Welles Declaration made clear America's steadfast commitment to the Baltic nations' freedom, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. We work closely with Estonia as a NATO Ally to counter terrorism on a global scale. We partner to address state-sponsored threats posed by Russia and the People's Republic of China to subversively attack America's commitment to Europe, undermine transatlantic unity, and weaken European institutions and governments. If confirmed, I commit to continue this close cooperation and inform and consult with the Government of Estonia on decisions relevant to its security.

Question. I understand that the State Department is considering adding Estonia to the European Recapitalization Incentive Program (ERIP).

- What is the status of discussions with Estonia regarding ERIP, particularly regarding any bidding laws that could preclude it from purchasing American equipment?

Answer. The State Department and Defense Department work closely with the Estonian Ministry of Defense to allocate U.S. security assistance, including Foreign Military Financing (FMF) which funds ERIP (European Recapitalization Incentive Program). A partner must have Russian-origin or Soviet-legacy equipment to divest in return for an ERIP grant to acquire U.S. equipment. According to Estonian officials, Estonia divested almost all Soviet-legacy equipment prior to ERIP's establishment in 2018. U.S. company Lewis Machine & Tool won an $81 million contract with Estonia in 2019 to supply the Estonian Defense Forces with automatic firearms and auxiliary equipment over a seven-year period, showing U.S. competitiveness in Estonia's arms sales market.

Domestic Issues in Estonia

Question. As you said in your opening statement, Estonia's leadership in cyber and information technology presents many opportunities to increase U.S.-Estonia relations.

- What are the biggest barriers to increased U.S. investment in Estonia's tech sector, and if confirmed how will you work to address them?

Answer. The United States and Estonia work closely together to drive technological innovation. The U.S.-Estonian trade relationship has great growth potential. If confirmed, I will work to expand our economic ties, promote U.S exports, and attract additional Estonian investment in the United States to support U.S. jobs. Estonia's membership in the EU means investors and U.S. firms wanting to do business in Estonia face limited barriers to entry, particularly if they are already operating in other EU member countries. This, coupled with a high level of government transparency, means U.S. firms face few regulatory challenges in Estonia. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work with the Government and the private sector to strengthen our trade and economic ties. I will actively engage AmCham Estonia and monitor policy challenges that affect U.S. companies. I will promote global U.S. economic policy priorities, including intellectual property protections. In addition, I will actively promote the SelectUSA program to encourage Estonian firms to invest in U.S. expansion and create jobs in the United States.

Question. Given Estonia's leadership on cybersecurity, how can the U.S. increase collaboration and best practice sharing with Estonia to help address our own cybersecurity challenges?

Answer. The United States and Estonia cooperate closely on cybersecurity and share a common vision of an open, interoperable, reliable and secure cyberspace. We are committed to developing a common approach to network security and ensuring a vibrant 5G ecosystem based on free and fair competition, transparency, and the rule of law. The United States and Estonia issued a joint declaration on 5G telecommunications security last year and we engage in joint exercises and conferences on cyber cooperation. If confirmed as Ambassador, I commit to working to realize our common vision of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure cyberspace based on a framework of responsible state behavior in cyberspace which includes the affirmation of the applicability of international law to state behavior in cyberspace, the promotion of voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible state behavior during peacetime, and the development and implementation of cyber confidence building measures to reduce the risk of conflict and escalation in cyberspace. I will seek increased collaboration and future cooperation with Estonia to include cyber incident response, personnel exchanges, and increased exercise participation and information sharing.

Question. The Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) is a member of the ruling coalition and leads the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Information Technology, among others.

- What is your view of the disturbing ideas reportedly espoused by members of this party, such as suggesting top Estonian politicians are "secret Jews"; saying Estonia's President "becomes so emotionally upset as a woman that she makes a decision right away"; and calling for a "white Estonia"?

Answer. The March 2019 Parliamentary elections resulted in a new ruling coalition that includes the far-right Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE). I agree with the many Estonian officials and political leaders who have condemned those divisive statements. If confirmed, I will listen to and engage with people representing the full spectrum of responsible political viewpoints, but will make clear that hateful and divisive rhetoric has no place in democratic society. The Estonian people are among the most pro-American populations in Europe and if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to maintain close and productive relations with the Government of Estonia.

Question. In your interactions with EKRE officials who support such views, do you commit to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Estonia?

Answer. Estonia has consistently ranked near the top of various international indices that measure democratic protections, media freedoms, and government transparency. The country is a founding member of the U.S.-led International Religious Freedom Alliance and has made the promotion of human rights one of the centerpieces of its ongoing U.N. Security Council term. If confirmed, I commit to defend human rights and dignity of all people in Estonia and will work to foster dialogue between the Government and civil society and to connect Estonian civil society with U.S. experts and practitioners to share best practices and experience.

Question. How will you specifically support efforts to increase integration of Russian-speakers in Estonia and help the Government of Estonia counter Russian disinformation targeting this population?

Answer. The social and linguistic divide between Estonia's ethnic Estonian majority and Russian-speaking minority presents opportunities for foreign disinformation campaigns. These campaigns target the 25-30 percent of Estonia's population that speak Russian. If confirmed, I will work with the Estonian Government to implement outreach efforts that promote understanding between the two linguistic groups to strengthen social cohesion.

Question. If confirmed, how will you directly engage with Estonia's Russian-speakers?

Answer. Our U.S. Embassy in Tallinn uses a wide range of public diplomacy tools and resources to advance shared security policy objectives, promote transatlantic partnerships, and support Estonian efforts to advance social cohesion as part of a broader U.S. effort to reach Russian-speaking audiences in Estonia. If confirmed as Ambassador, I would emphasize English language, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs as vital tools to engage young Russian speakers and strengthen their connections to Estonia and Europe. In addition to direct engagement with targeted youth audiences, I will continue our collaboration with Estonian institutions and organizations to expand activities in key communities, and will leverage social media. I will prioritize cultural programming and academic and cultural exchanges to invest in our long-term partnership with the younger generation and promote accurate information about U.S. policy. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the embassy's active engagement to strengthen our close friendship with the Estonian people.

Democracy and Human Rights

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

Answer. I have made the promotion of democracy and human rights a priority in my private sector and public sector roles. I am proud to have helped select over 100 White House Fellows, as a Commissioner and a regional judge, who were committed to human rights and democracy. I have also served on non-profit boards (including colleges and universities) where I prioritized these issues. If confirmed, I will ensure that the promotion of human rights and respect for individual human dignity remain central in the work of the United States Embassy in Estonia.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Estonia? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Estonia is a vibrant democracy with resilient institutions, established respect for rule of law, and a free press. Estonia is also a strong partner sharing our values and principles on human rights—there are no reported cases of political prisoners or people unjustly targeted by Estonia. Around the world, corruption saps economic growth, hinders development, destabilizes governments, undermines democracy, and provides openings for dangerous transnational criminal organizations and malign actors. The Government of Estonia has passed and adheres to laws aimed at controlling corruption. Estonia consistently receives high scores in international rankings for being one of the least corrupt countries in the world. A 2019 Transparency International report ranked Estonia as the 18th least corrupt country, earning Estonia a score higher than France, its Baltic neighbors, and Poland.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Estonia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Estonia is a vibrant democracy with strong institutions, and through organizations such as the Estonian e-Governance academy, shares its best practices on transparency and accountability with other countries. If confirmed, I will engage with Estonian officials on promoting democracy, good governance, and anticorruption reforms, measures, and programs. Through relevant U.S. programs and engagement, I will also deepen and expand our cooperation with Estonia on ways to promote transparency and respect for rule of law. I will leverage available U.S. assistance programs to promote good governance, democracy, and human rights in Estonia. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about how Estonia has

made the promotion of digital governance innovations the centerpiece of its international assistance programs, and discussing with the Government how the U.S. and Estonia can work together to increase anti-corruption capacities in third countries.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will leverage available U.S. assistance programs to promote good governance, democracy, and human rights in Estonia. I will also seek opportunities for the U.S. and Estonia to partner to increase anti-corruption capacities in third countries. Estonia has drawn on its transition experiences and cyber expertise to provide specialized development assistance in cybersecurity and the use of information technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector. In addition to partnering with the U.S. Government to support development projects in Moldova and Georgia through the Department of State's Emerging Donor Challenge Fund, Estonia mentors Eastern Partnership countries and other emerging democracies through the Tallinn-based e-Governance Center.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Estonia? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations across the United States and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Estonia on a wide array of human rights. While there are no reports of efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs or civil society at present in Estonia, and the Government generally takes steps to investigate and punish abuses, if confirmed I will continue to monitor for possible efforts to restrict NGOs or civil society and ensure vetting procedures for U.S. assistance to Estonia are implemented consistent with U.S. law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Estonia is a vibrant, multi-party, parliamentary democracy with resilient institutions, established respect for rule of law, and a free press. If confirmed, I will advocate for the continued participation of women, minorities and youth within political parties in Estonia.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Estonia on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Estonia?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, my embassy team and I will actively engage with Estonia on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures. Estonia consistently rates very highly on indices of press and internet freedom, ranking 11th in the 2019 World Press Freedom Index. Estonia has a well-developed and professional media industry. The editors-in-chief of each publication/outlet set their own editorial agendas and there has been a lively debate about editorial decisions and political preferences since the March 2019 parliamentary elections. If confirmed, I commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Estonia.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. The U.S. supports the Estonian Government's initiatives to continue integration efforts between the majority ethnic Estonian population and the country's Russian-speaking minority. This outreach protects social cohesion, builds civic identity and trust in the national government, and encourages resiliency against disinformation campaigns by malicious foreign actors. If confirmed, my embassy team and I will actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country. We will work to foster dialogue between the Government

and civil society and to connect Estonian civil society with U.S. experts and practitioners to share best practices and experience.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Estonia on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Estonian law, related regulations, and statutory instruments provide workers with the right to form and join independent unions of their choice, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. The law allows unions to conduct their activities without interference and prohibits antiunion discrimination. According to the U.S. Department of State's 2019 Human Rights Report, parties in Estonia freely engaged in collective bargaining, and there were no reports that the Government or parties interfered in the functioning of workers' organizations. If confirmed, my embassy team and I will actively engage with the Estonian Government on the continued protection of these rights for labor groups, including independent trade unions.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Estonia, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Estonia? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Estonia?

Answer. Estonian law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. While the law is not specific regarding the forms of sexual orientation and gender identity covered, the general understanding is that it encompasses lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals. According to the U.S. Department of State's 2019 Human Rights Report, police registered one case that included hatred against LGBTI persons in 2018. Advocacy groups reported that, while societal harassment and discrimination against LGBTI persons remained common, they also noted improving attitudes towards LGBTI persons. U.S. Embassy Tallinn is active in promoting a tolerant Estonia, free from institutional homophobia and transphobia, and safe for the LGBTI community. If confirmed, I commit to using my position to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Estonia, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Responsiveness

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels, including reporting to the Office of the Inspector General.

Administrative

Question. Following President Trump's comments last year welcoming derogatory information on a U.S. political figure from foreign entities, it is important that the State Department have explicit guidance for all of its personnel on how to deal with this scenario. Guidance on handling interactions that prompt concern about exploitation by a foreign entity, such as FAM Chapter 12, Section 262, does not clearly address this situation.

- If a foreign person or government approaches you or a staffer at the embassy with derogatory information on a U.S. political figure, what is your understanding of official State Department policy on how to handle this specific situation? Has a cable with clear guidance on how to handle this specific situation been sent to all U.S. embassies?

Answer. If confirmed, I will follow the Department of State's guidance with regard to reporting derogatory information.

Question. Has anyone ever made a formal or informal complaint or allegation of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappro-

priate conduct against you, in a workplace or any other setting? If so, please describe the nature of the complaint or allegation, your response, and any resolution, including any settlements.

Answer. No. I take the issues of sexual harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate conduct with the utmost seriousness. To my knowledge, I have never been named in a formal or informal complaint of harassment or discrimination.

Question. Have you ever addressed concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappropriate conduct made against any employee over whom you had supervisory authority? If so, please describe the outcome and actions taken.

Answer. No. As stated above I take the issues of sexual harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate conduct with the utmost seriousness and would immediately address any issues raised to me in accordance with the Department of State's policies.

Question. Do you agree that any targeting of or retaliation against career employees based on their perceived political beliefs, prior work on policy, or affiliation with a previous administration, is wholly inappropriate and has no place in the federal government? If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that all employees under your leadership understand that any retaliation, blacklisting, or other prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated?

Answer. Yes. I agree that any targeting of or retaliation against career employees based on their perceived political beliefs, prior work on policy, or affiliation with a previous administration is wholly inappropriate. I take allegations of such practices seriously and if confirmed, I will maintain a policy of no tolerance for retaliation, blacklisting, or other prohibited personnel practices at U.S. Embassy Tallinn. I will hold U.S. Embassy Tallinn employees accountable to the highest standards in accordance with applicable law, rules, and regulations on anti-discrimination and prohibited personnel practices, including the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, as amended. If confirmed, I commit to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Responses to Additional Questions for the Record Submitted to William Ellison Grayson by Senator Benjamin L. Cardin

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have made the promotion of human rights and democracy a priority in my private sector and public sector roles. I am proud to have helped select over 100 White House Fellows, as a Commissioner and a regional judge, who were committed to human rights and democracy. I have also served on non-profit boards (including colleges and universities) where I prioritized these issues. If confirmed, I will ensure that the promotion of human rights and respect for individual human dignity remain central in the work of the United States Embassy in Estonia.

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

Answer. Estonia has consistently ranked near the top of various international indices that measure democratic protections, media freedoms, and government transparency. The country is a founding member of the U.S.-led International Religious Freedom Alliance and has made the promotion of human rights one of the centerpieces of its ongoing U.N. Security Council term. The Government has continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts to combat trafficking in persons, although further improvement should be made to better investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, and authorities should proactively identify and assist potential labor trafficking victims, as noted by the State Department's 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report. Estonia continues to face challenges in overcoming social and linguistic divides between Estonian and Russian speakers. The U.S. supports the Government's initiatives to continue integration efforts between the majority ethnic Estonian population and the country's Russian-speaking minority, as such outreach protects social cohesion, builds civic identity and trust in the national government, and encourages resiliency against disinformation campaigns by malicious foreign actors. If confirmed, I will work to foster dialogue between the Government and civil society and

to connect Estonian civil society with U.S. experts and practitioners to share best practices and experience.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Estonia in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The primary obstacles to addressing human rights issues concern the social and linguistic divides between the country's ethnic Estonian majority and Russian-speaking minority, which constitutes some 25-30 percent of the population and is concentrated in the country's northeast and in Tallinn. Such divides have the potential to manifest stark differences in social and economic indicators between the two groups, which in turn can create vulnerabilities. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to support the Government of Estonia's development and implementation of outreach efforts that promote mutual understanding between the two linguistic groups.

Question. 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 Estonia? 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, I will engage with civil society and non-governmental organizations across the United States and in Estonia on a wide array of human rights. While there are no reports in the 2019 Human Rights Report of serious human rights abuses and the Government generally takes steps to investigate and punish abuses, I will continue to ensure vetting procedures for U.S. assistance to Estonian security forces are implemented consistent with U.S. law.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Estonia to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Estonia?

Answer. Estonia is a strong partner sharing our values and principles on human rights. There are no reported cases of political prisoners or people unjustly targeted by Estonia. If such reports become known in the future, if confirmed, I will engage Estonian Government officials, regulatory bodies, parliamentarians, and nongovernmental and civil society organizations to address them.

Question. Will you engage with Estonia on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will engage Estonian officials on promoting democracy, respect for rule of law, human rights, the important role of civil society, and good governance practices, measures, and programs.

Diversity

Question. 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. I fully support a diverse workforce. Diversity advances and illustrates American values and improves work environments by tapping into new perspectives and visions. Increasing diversity fosters an inclusive workplace and promotes exchange of new ideas and innovative thinking. I have been involved in diversity and inclusion training roles at the companies where I have worked (JP Morgan, Alliance Bernstein, Bank of America) and in the Government departments and agencies where I have served, the Department of Defense and the Presidio Trust in San Francisco. I strongly support the State Department's goal of fostering a workplace that reflects the rich diversity of the United States. If confirmed, I will promote a workplace that encourages tolerance, respect, collaboration, and inclusion.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Estonia are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. Diversity and inclusion must be a focus area for Embassy planning and leadership. If confirmed, I will foster a positive work environment by instituting diversity and inclusion as priority objectives in Embassy strategy and planning documents. I will also promote diversity and inclusion as focal points in my first meetings with Embassy leadership. If confirmed, I will underscore that our policies and outcomes are improved by drawing on inclusive, diverse teams with a breadth of ex-

periences and perspectives. I will also communicate strongly the Department's EEO policies in my mission and work to ensure they are followed.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Estonia?

Answer. Neither I nor any of my immediate family have any specific financial interests in Estonia. My investment portfolio includes both individual stock holdings as well as mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence in Estonia, but the latter of which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Estonia specifically?

Answer. Around the world, corruption saps economic growth, hinders development, destabilizes governments, undermines democracy, and provides openings for dangerous transnational criminal organizations and malign actors. In addition, weak rule of law and a corrupt judicial system constrain U.S. interests in promoting economic development, democratic consolidation, and stability in our allies. The Government of Estonia has passed and adheres to laws aimed at controlling corruption. However, when corruption does occur, it weakens public confidence in judicial institutions and democracy, impedes access to justice, and limits the willingness of foreign investors to invest in the country.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Estonia and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Estonia is a vibrant democracy with resilient institutions, established respect for rule of law, and a free press. Estonian law provides effective mechanisms to investigate and punish corruption, including criminal penalties for corruption by government officials, and the Government generally implements the law effectively. Estonia's investments in digital governance have shown that such innovations can also be a powerful tool for fighting public sector corruption. Estonia has improved is standing each year since 2012 on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, scoring 74 on the index in 2019 on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Estonia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with Estonian officials on promoting democracy, good governance, and anticorruption reforms, measures, and programs. Through relevant U.S. programs and engagement, I will also deepen and expand our cooperation with Estonia on ways to promote transparency and respect for rule of law and I will leverage available U.S. assistance programs to promote good governance, democracy, and human rights in Estonia. If confirmed I look forward to learning more about how Estonia has made the promotion of digital governance innovations the centerpiece of its international assistance programs, and discussing with the Government how the U.S. and Estonia can work together to increase anti-corruption capacities in third countries.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM ELLISON GRAYSON BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Online Disinformation

Question. Russia has been engaged in online misinformation and influence campaign against democratic nations, particularly in countries with Russian-speaking communities such as Estonia. Through this component of "hybrid" warfare, Russia looks for opportunities to challenge democracies. We now know well that one such opportunity was the U.S. presidential election in 2016. The outbreak of COVID–19 has presented Russia with another opportunity to undermine liberal democratic norms and institutions, weaken cohesion among democratic allies and partners, reduce U.S. influence, and advance Russian interests. The European Union reported that Russian media have deployed a "significant disinformation campaign" against European societies to worsen the impact of the coronavirus:

- What measures should the U.S. consider to push back, expose, and impose costs on Russia for their disinformation campaigns?

Answer. The United States should continue to use all available tools including diplomatic engagement, public diplomacy, intelligence, and financial and law enforcement lines of effort to expose and impose costs on Russia for its disinformation campaigns. The Department of State works through a variety of interagency mechanisms, to include the Global Engagement Center, to streamline day-to-day efforts to counter all aspects of Russian influence campaigns and to ensure more efficient coordination of these resources. The Department should continue these efforts and actively work with our Allies and partners in Europe, including the Baltic nations, which have confronted Russian disinformation campaigns for decades, to identify and expose Russian disinformation. The Department should also continue to promote accurate messages about the United States and other nations in the pursuit of freedom, prosperity, and security in Europe.

Question. As Ambassador, how will you prioritize deterring Russian aggression in Estonia and the larger Baltic region?

Answer. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are strategically aligned with the United States, fundamentally value the transatlantic alliance, and actively seek to support U.S. policy on Russia. NATO's eastern flank, including the Baltic nations, is again confronted by the actions of an aggressive Russia. Russia continues to seek to intimidate its neighbors, challenge their national sovereignty, and disrupt Euro-Atlantic integration. If confirmed as Ambassador, deterring Russian aggression in Estonia and the larger Baltic region would be a top priority for me. I will continue to work closely with Estonia to counter threats posed by Russia's subversive measures aimed at weakening the credibility of America's commitment to Europe, undermining transatlantic unity, and weakening European institutions and governments.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HENRY T. WOOSTER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What concrete steps has Jordan taken toward structural reform and fiscal consolidation?

Answer. Jordan has taken steps toward structural reform and fiscal consolidation since 2018. Jordan's economic team, led by Finance Minister Mohammad Al-Ississ, is committed to implementing these reforms and working with international financial institutions and bilateral donors, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of its new $1.3 billion four-year Extended Fund Facility. Notably, Jordan has implemented reforms that have helped it improve the Kingdom's business climate, as noted by the World Bank's 2020 Doing Business rankings, which cited Jordan as one of the top three improvers after it jumped 29 spots. Additionally, Jordan has diversified its sources of energy after facing an acute power crisis the previous decade.

Question. If confirmed, how will you support Jordan's own Economic Growth Plan 2018-22?

Answer. The U.S. Government will continue to work with the Government of Jordan to support not only efforts at reform, but also efforts to invigorate economic growth and attract foreign investment. If confirmed, I will work with USAID to identify areas of potential growth in the Jordanian economy and target U.S. support and assistance in a way that provides a net boost to overall growth prospects. If confirmed, I will also work with the Government of Jordan to identify regional and

global trade opportunities in areas in which Jordan has a competitive advantage and support its pursuit of those opportunities. Lastly, if confirmed, I will work to strengthen economic ties between Jordan and Israel.

Question. In your view, what reforms should the Government of Jordan be making at this time, to ensure that continued financial assistance isn't necessary?

Answer. Despite recent progress, Jordan still needs to improve public sector effectiveness; increase the Government's ability to generate revenue; reduce costs to businesses and increase regulatory quality; deepen energy and electricity sector sustainability; expand access to finance; and include more women in the formal economy. If confirmed, helping Jordan move forward on its path to self-reliance will remain one of my priorities.

Question. How is the United States Government prepared to assist Jordan in reducing business costs, enhancing competitiveness, reforming the labor market, overhauling public governance, improving tax collection, and increasing access to credit?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with our partners in Jordan to reinforce and sustain their commitment to critical economic reforms. First, I will work to support continued engagement by the Government of Jordan with the IMF and other international financial institutions to implement reforms. Second, I will ensure Jordanian officials understand the priority we attach to economic reform while encouraging my economic team to continue advising and assisting their Jordanian counterparts. Lastly, I will ensure U.S. assistance is used properly and in a way that diminishes Jordan's dependence on external support.

Question. In addition to our healthy economic assistance for Jordan, how can the United States help Jordan with its refugee population?

Answer. The U.S. Government will continue to work with the international community to support Jordan in meeting the needs of refugees and host communities. The United States has and will continue to support improvements to Jordan's education, health, and water infrastructure, under strain from a variety of factors including the presence of a significant refugee population, approximately 83 percent of whom live in host community towns and cities. In addition, the United States contributes substantial funding to international organizations and non-governmental organizations in Jordan that directly support refugees from Syria, Iraq and over 50 other countries. We also have resettled nearly 33,700 refugees from Jordan since FY 2010. The United States also spearheads donor support to the Government of Jordan by coordinating assistance and promoting burden sharing.

Question. In your view, what are short- and long-term solutions for the population trapped at al-Rukban camp? How can we partner with the Jordanians on these solutions?

Answer. To meet humanitarian imperatives, the United States continues to coordinate with the U.N. on assistance deliveries to Rukban from Damascus, but the Assad regime has refused to permit regular deliveries. We continue to urge the Assad regime and Russia to allow sustained deliveries of humanitarian assistance to Rukban.

To end the Syrian conflict, which has displaced nearly 12 million Syrians both internally and outside of Syria's borders, a nationwide ceasefire must be implemented, followed by a political agreement, in line with U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254, that will provide for a Syrian-owned political transition to end the conflict. In addition, the U.S. Government and our allies can also help find durable solutions for all Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons, particularly those who wish to pursue safe, dignified, and voluntary returns. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Jordan to support each step towards the resolution of the conflict in Syria.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to foster Israeli-Jordan cooperation over water resources?

Answer. Jordan and Israel have a history of cooperation on water, which, if confirmed, I will build upon. In addition, Israel has provided additional water to Jordan for purchase almost every year, including the past several years. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to expand their partnership to share water resources, as both countries face an even drier future. I will support and promote dialogue on this water cooperation that provides mutual benefits while fostering partnership between the two countries.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HENRY T. WOOSTER BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. Can you please explain the security dynamics along the border between Jordan and Israel that necessitate Israeli control over the Jordan Valley, as acknowledged through President Trump's peace proposal?

Answer. Israel's security is of tremendous importance to the United States. The U.S. Vision for Peace between Israel and the Palestinians fully addresses Israel's security requirements, does not ask Israel to take additional security risks, and enables Israel to defend itself, by itself, against any threats. That includes the Vision's provisions for the future of the Jordan Valley. Israeli security cooperation with Jordan is also a key element of Israel's security, and the administration strongly supports military and intelligence coordination, as well as all other relations, between Israel and Jordan.

Question. Please describe the extent to which Jordan's refusal to extradite Tamimi has affected U.S.-Jordanian relations?

Answer. We continue to ask that the Government of Jordan arrest Ahlam Aref Ahmad Al-Tamimi and agree to extradite her to the United States. The Government of Jordan has been unwilling to accede to our request due to the Court of Cassation's ruling that our bilateral extradition treaty is not valid.

We continue to dispute the court's claim, as we exchanged instruments of ratification that brought the treaty into force on July 29, 1995 and the treaty has not been terminated. We continue to raise this issue at the highest levels in order to reach a satisfactory solution.

Question. What options and leverage does the United States have to secure Tamimi, including potentially withholding assistance to the Government of Jordan?

Answer. The United States has multiple options and different types of leverage to secure Ahlam Aref Ahmad Al-Tamimi's extradition. We will continue to engage Jordanian officials at all levels not only on this issue, but also on the extradition treaty more broadly. U.S. generosity to Jordan in Foreign Military Financing as well as economic support and other assistance is carefully calibrated to protect and advance the range of U.S. interests in Jordan and in the region.

Question. Can you commit to using those options and leverage to secure Tamimi's extradition?

Answer. If confirmed, I would explore all options to bring Ahlam Aref Ahmad Al-Tamimi to justice, secure her extradition, and address the broader issues associated with the extradition treaty.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HENRY T. WOOSTER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. The virtue of being an American diplomat is that our presence or affiliation alone can promote our values, especially with regard to human rights and democracy. As the son of an Assyrian Christian refugee mother from the USSR, I know what it costs when human rights and democracy are absent. When the corpse of the Soviet Union was still warm, I volunteered to open the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, Tajikistan 1992-93. Moving around the country during its civil war had a meaningful impact, leading to a drop in the number of atrocitiesand killings in the areas I accessed. In 1994, after the Haitian military ousted freely-elected President Aristide, I was selected to lead his government-in-exile's recruiting and training efforts to launch a nascent national police force that would replace the coup-prone Haitian army. From 1994-1995, at Embassy Moscow, I coordinated assistance and training for Russian police in the United States. I was struck by the esteem returning Russian police had for their U.S. counterparts and how much they wanted to be seen that way at home. From 1997-1998, I was seconded to the U.N. Observer Mission in Georgia as the human rights officer in breakaway Abkhazia where I accompanied Russian military forces on patrol. No Russian patrol I accompanied ever had an allegation of abuse or murder, which were otherwise routine occurrences. As desk officer, Deputy Director, Director, and Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iran (2005-2008 and 2010-2012), I promoted human rights, democracy, and freedom of expression, overseeing a budget of $175 million.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in Jordan include arbitrary arrest and detention, allegations of torture by Jordanian security forces, infringements on citizens' privacy rights, restrictions on free expression and the press, and restrictions on freedom of association and assembly. If confirmed, I will promote human rights in Jordan, as a reflection of U.S. values and in accordance with U.S. policy. 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 Jordan and is studied carefully by the Government of Jordan, international and Jordanian NGOs, and other groups working on human rights.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Jordan in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The most immediate obstacle to progress on human rights includes regional and domestic challenges that make security a priority for the Government of Jordan. The longer-term obstacles to progress include implementing laws. Although Jordan's legal structure provides for prosecution and punishment of officials who commit human rights abuses, enforcement remains a problemchallenge, so government officials enjoy a measure of impunity. The Government of Jordan must ensure transparent steps to investigate, prosecute, and punish officials who commit abuses. Progress is being made, as evidenced by the 2019 convictions of 11 police officers for the extrajudicial killing of two detainees. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Jordan to ensure steps like these continue and are implemented transparently.

Question. 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 Jordan? 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 meeting with human rights, civil society, and other NGOs in the United States and in Jordan. Embassy Amman routinely meets with local NGOs to learn about alleged human rights abuses and hear their views on how the United States can advance human rights. Our embassy team implements the Leahy Law and vets recipients of U.S. security assistance and participants in security cooperation activities. If confirmed, I will ensure my embassy team continues to do this.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Jordan to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Jordan?

Answer. If confirmed, my embassy team and I will actively engage with the Government of Jordan on the unjust detention and harassment of individuals for political reasons. Embassy Amman regularly engages at all levels of the Government of Jordan to emphasize the importance of an active civil society and freedom of expression. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to underscore the importance of these activities.

Question. Will you engage with Jordan on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Human rights, civil rights, and effective governance are vital to our bilateral relationship and, if confirmed, I will continue to work with senior officials, international human rights NGOs, local NGOs, and civil society to enhance judicial independence, promote accountability among the security forces, and encourage respect for the rule of law. Freedom of assembly, freedom of expression (including online), democracy, accountability and transparency, empowering women, economic opportunity, and education are all U.S. priorities.

Question. 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. Creating a welcoming environment for all people is one of my priorities: it corresponds to the values I was raised on the Golden Rule; it fulfills the Depart-

ment's ethos; and it makes a more effective workforce. From a career in the Foreign Service, across multiple assignments, as a spouse and as a parent, I recognize that beyond being a workplace, U.S. diplomatic Missions are people's homes. To establish a baseline, I will conduct Town Halls, "walkabouts" to meet Embassy colleagues and their families, and consider other sources to gather information, such as an anonymous survey. These tools will provide multiple options for the Embassy Amman community to inform me how we are faring. The results will help me, in consultation with my senior interagency leadership team, in determining what next steps need to be taken. Additionally, I will support ongoing Diversity and Inclusion events, affinity groups, as I have throughout my career.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Jordan are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. To ensure that supervisors foster a diverse and inclusive environment, I will emphasize to them and our Embassy community that this is a U.S. value, it complies with the Department's ethos, and it is my priority as Chief of Mission. I will work to create an open community where everyone's concerns and experiences are heard and dealt with in accordance to State Department policy.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Jordan?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. I will divest any investments the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. I will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Jordan specifically?

Answer. Political corruption undermines the rule of law and weakens the judicial process, both of which we seek to strengthen in Jordan. Transparency International ranks Jordan 60 out of 180 countries rated for public corruption. The Government of Jordan has made strides in combatting corruption and works with us in this area.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Jordan and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Corruption trends in Jordan have held relatively steady since the mid-90s, with Jordan consistently receiving a Transparency International score between 44 and 57, with a higher score indicating less corruption. Variations year-to-year indicate Jordan can do better and that corruption is likely affected by the extent to which the cabinet at any given time prioritizes the issue. The Government of Jordan has increased its efforts to combat corruption, including through investigating and prosecuting instances of high-level corruption. We have worked with Jordan on this issue, including by strengthening its asset declaration regime and supporting the work of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Jordan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to ensuring we maintain—and strengthening where possible—U.S. good governance and anticorruption efforts in Jordan. Our assistance program and relationships with Jordanian officials are the foundation for addressing these issues. If confirmed, I will underscore U.S. expectations that Jordan make progress on improving governance and strengthening anticorruption efforts.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2020

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m. by video conference, Hon. Todd Young presiding.

Present: Senators Young [presiding], Cardin, and Merkley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TODD YOUNG, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator YOUNG. Okay. Senator Merkley will be with us momentarily. I thank my colleagues for joining us and, most importantly, thanks so much to our witnesses.

This hearing of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations will come to order. I want to thank my fellow members of the committee and our nominees today for their patience with the technological limitations the COVID–19 pandemic has placed on us.

I hope everyone can hear me, incidentally. You can nod affirmatively if, indeed, that is the case or put your thumb up.

[Laughter.]

Senator YOUNG. Thank you. And the record will show that everyone nodded affirmatively. I know we all wish we could be meeting and hearing from this talented group of people in person.

I would also like to thank Senator Merkley for his willingness to help convene this hearing today and for his tireless work with me on many, many issues facing our nation abroad.

Today, this committee will consider the nominations of five individuals to represent the United States of America and their respective organizations.

Our nominees today are Ms. Jenny McGee to serve as the associate director of the United States Agency for International Development; the Honorable Steven Dowd to be U.S. director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the Honorable Richard M. Mills to be deputy representative of the United States to the United Nations with a rank of ambassador; Mr. Jason Chung to be U.S. director of the Asian Development Bank with the rank of ambassador; Mr. Joseph Manso to be the U.S. representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with the rank of ambassador.

Thank you for your willingness to serve.

For those of you that do not know, Senator Merkley and I have the privilege of leading the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on

Multilateral Organizations, and in that role we have oversight of some of the organizations which will be discussed today.

As we have discussed in our subcommittee and, indeed, as the full Senator Foreign Relations Committee has heard many times, the United States and the liberal democratic order is under assault by illiberal forces and governments.

These governments do not seek freedom and peace but instead seek power and influence over weaker nations from which they hope to gain regional and global dominance.

As has been a central conception of this administration's national security strategy, the United States is facing a period of great power conflict. This period of challenge, however, may not be limited to battlefields, at sea, on land, or in the air, and it is my deep hope that these differences will never erupt in open conflict.

But as we are already seeing, our adversaries are already waging serious and strong campaigns within and against international and multilateral institutions.

It is imperative that the United States refuse to sit back and accept our adversaries' marches down the field.

In short, it is time for the United States to go on offense. This means public servants exerting pressure within international organizations for those organizations to abide by their charters and to seek freedom, peace, prosperity, and opportunity.

Within the international fora to which the U.S. is a party, this is going to require a maximalist strategy of seeking partners, building coalitions, and creating pathways for these bodies to actually serve their member states.

For standard-setting bodies, this means open transparent mechanisms and leadership that upholds rules and regulations and does not serve the Government and industries of any one nation, and in development organizations this means a people and business first approach that leverages private sector capacity and human rights to support sustainable projects that are not abused by investing governments.

For our nominees today, I wish to underscore that agenda and requirement for you. If confirmed, I only ask that you execute your duties with unflagging effort, enthusiasm and patriotism.

I hope to hear how you will seek to do that shortly.

I now recognize, if he has joined us, my friend and distinguished colleague, Senator Merkley, for his opening comments.

STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF MERKLEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We have been having technical difficulties. I could see you all but there was—I was not being admitted on the video end, and that seems to have been fixed on the fourth try.

So I am good. Good to be with you now as we all come into this different age, and this is an important hearing and thank you to the nominees who are willing to serve, putting themselves forward to tackle the significant challenges that we have in a variety of fields.

I am pleased that even in the midst of disruptions to normal Senate business we are able to move forward and consider impor-

tant nominees in the multilateral institution and development spheres.

Each of these nominees would oversee critical work, touching on key challenges such as economic development and human rights and climate chaos and weapons proliferation, humanitarian relief.

If confirmed, they would assume leadership roles during a global pandemic that has killed more than 375,000 people. It has had a devastating impact on the global economy.

The COVID–19 crisis has given rise to tremendous global health and humanitarian needs, severely disrupting the global food supply. It has propelled hundreds of millions of people into unemployment and financial peril. It has exacerbated the risk of human rights abuse and violent conflict and harmed many of the world's most vulnerable.

Meanwhile, we need to increase United States leadership and work in diplomacy and development. We have to avoid any retreat from organizations and international agencies and such agencies as you all will be tasked to lead if confirmed.

Several of these positions have relevance for our country's coronavirus response. All of them are vital to promoting democracy and peace building and economic dignity, now more important than ever.

I look forward to hearing from each of you and how you will ensure that the United States works in partnership with the international community to solve the critical challenges the world faces.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Senator Merkley, for those words and for your continued leadership in this area.

We will now turn our attention to our nominees. All five have already served or are currently serving the United States in various roles around the globe, and I am sure our conversations today will reflect that expertise and commitment to service.

I offer my congratulations to all of you on your nominations to these respective roles and thank you for your willingness to serve in them, and I especially want to thank your families for the sacrifices they have made and will continue to make upon your confirmations.

Now, before I go further, I understand Congressman Don Bacon from the great state of Nebraska wishes to be recognized in order to introduce a nominee.

Please proceed.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and also thank the ranking member and the committee for having me on today. I really appreciate you all leading the way and getting our—you are showing the way how to get our country back to work. I thank you.

I have the honor of introducing to the committee a colleague, a friend, and a distinguished public servant, Jenny McGee.

Jenny has been nominated by the president to serve in the newly-created position of USAID associate administrator for relief response and resilience, and I thank the committee for the opportunity just to say a few words on her behalf.

As a citizen, I am deeply grateful that capable and patriotic Americans like Jenny will be willing to devote their lives to serve our nation in challenging positions of consequence.

USAID embodies the nobility of this calling, and with the advice and consent of the Senate we will greatly benefit from Jenny's experience, her leadership, and her passion to build a more peaceful and prosperous world.

I had the honor of serving with Jenny on active duty in the Air Force where she was known as a leader of integrity who served with distinction in some of the most dynamic and challenging missions confronting our country.

Her nomination now before the committee represents an important opportunity with the right person and the right position at the exact right time.

By the way, when I served with her she oversaw all of the training, all of the promotions, all the assignments for all of our Air Force intelligence personnel, a tremendous responsibility, and she did it with superb excellence.

So as USAID associate administrator, Jenny will be charged with providing strategic guidance for the Bureaus of Humanitarian Assistance, Conflict Prevention, and Stabilization and Resilience and Food Security.

Her distinguished service in the Middle East and Europe to her policy experience in the Pentagon and the National Security Council, Jenny has proven time and time again her ability to solve conflicts challenges while inspiring others to exceed their expectations of themselves.

So through the storied history, USAID has symbolized American leadership and manifests the compassion of the American people. Equally important, it plays an increasingly central role in our national security strategy of the United States.

So I can think of no better leader to nominate for this important job and I ask for the committee's thoughtful consideration of the nomination before you.

Standing before you, you have Jenny. She is full of integrity, she is mission focused, and she is compassionate. She is going to do a great job for America.

I thank you, and I yield back.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you so much, Congressman, and you are welcome to stay with us for the remainder of the hearing. I do know how busy our jobs are. So I will leave that up to you. Feel at liberty to shove off if you like, sir.

Okay. To all our nominees today, without objection, your full written statements will be included in the record. I would ask each of you to kindly summarize your written statement in no more than five minutes, if possible. That could be challenging for senators but we ask that of our nominees.

We will hear first from Ms. Jenny McGee, the president's nominee to serve as associate administrator for Relief Response and Resilience at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

As Congressman Bacon noted, Ms. McGee served our nation with great distinction for 31 years in the United States Air Force, retiring in December as a colonel in her career.

Colonel McGee served in command at operational intel, surveillance, and reconnaissance units around the globe. She additionally served on the staff of the National Security Council and within the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

She held senior positions within the U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Africa, at CENTCOM and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and perhaps most importantly, she is a graduate of Indiana's own Purdue University.

Ms. McGee, thank you for being here and please proceed.

STATEMENT OF COLONEL JENNY A. MCGEE, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, RETIRED, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. MCGEE. Good morning, and thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for associate editor—excuse me, associate administrator for Relief Response and Resilience at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

I am grateful to President Trump, former Administrator Green, Acting Administrator Barsa, Deputy Administrator Glick, for their trust in me to serve in this important new role, and I would like to thank Congressman Bacon for his kind introduction and his leadership, his counsel, and his friendship.

If confirmed to this new position as associate administrator, I would oversee three bureaus for some of the most fast-paced and high-profile work of the agency: the Bureaus for Humanitarian Assistance, Conflict Prevention and Stabilization, and Resilience and Food Security.

This is certainly a herculean task to which I will devote all of my energy, capabilities, and heart. During the confirmation process, I have had the honor to meet with many USAID employees.

To those dedicated Foreign Service, civil service, and contract employees, I thank you for your counsel and your guidance. Under the leadership of Rear Admiral Tim Ziemer, Dr. Beth Dunford, Trey Hicks, Rob Jenkins, this incredible team responds to natural and manmade disasters, supports programs to reduce global hunger, and works to prevent conflict and violent extremism.

Both Admiral Ziemer and Dr. Dunford have just or are retiring this month and I would like to salute their service and thank them for their decades of service to the nation.

I must also thank my family, friends, and colleagues who have given me tremendous support and encouragement over the years. My wonderful husband, Patrick, is a retired U.S. Navy officer and is here with me today. Thank you, dear. And my——

Senator YOUNG. That is fantastic. That is fantastic. Hi, Patrick, and welcome.

[Laughter.]

Ms. MCGEE. And my grandfather, Joe, is a retired U.S. Air Force senior master sergeant and an Air Force civil servant, and my mother, Tokiko, are both in Ohio, safely in their home.

The life and opportunities I have had, including my military career, all stem from my parents' decision to adopt me from an orphanage in Seoul, South Korea, and I am grateful to their unconditional love and values and their belief in this great nation.

When I decided to retire from 31 years in the Air Force, I knew I wanted to continue to serve in a role that emphasizes our exceptional American values and commitment to democracy and humanitarian assistance.

During my career, I have appreciated the opportunity to work with USAID, most directly as part of logistics planning in the wake of the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

My units have also engaged in security assistance work across the spectrum, supporting the agriculture and land use in Niger and Ghana, and the capacity-building projects across Africa and Europe.

In every engagement I have admired the consistent courage, commitment, and mission focus of USAID personnel and, if confirmed, it will truly be an honor to join the USAID team.

If confirmed as associate administrator, I will work to strengthen the integration of our humanitarian assistance, resilience, and crisis prevention programming, a critical task as we respond to the COVID–19 pandemic, which created a unique set of challenges abroad, particularly in fragile contexts.

While physical distancing is an effective tool to contain the spread of COVID–19, there is no space for distancing in Cox's Bazar, the world's largest refugee camp, hosting some 600,000 Rohingya refugees, and despite a declared cease fire in Yemen, the fighting has escalated, complicating efforts to respond to a burgeoning outbreak in that country.

Beyond responding to immediate needs, we must also prepare for secondary and tertiary effects of the pandemic. Deteriorating health systems and widespread food insecurity could lead to new humanitarian crises. Democratic institutions will need to be rebuilt or reinforced.

If confirmed, I would be proud to help bring all of the agency's assets to bear to contain the disease and help the world maximize its recovery from COVID–19.

If confirmed as associate administrator, I will have four priority areas. First and foremost, I will work to ensure the safety and security of the 1,500 personnel I would directly oversee, many of whom work in dangerous environments and difficult circumstance.

Second, I will work to integrate and streamline USAID's humanitarian assistance, food security and resilience programming, and conflict prevention interventions to address fragility, respond to global crises, and act as a stabilizing force in times of country transition.

Third, I will strengthen and elevate the U.S. Government's humanitarian voice both in the interagency and on the world stage.

And last but, certainly, not least, I will work to improve the administration's ability to identify fragile states and deliver corrective mitigating measures by further strengthening civil and military collaboration.

Senator, if confirmed as associate administrator, I pledge to be a strong advocate for USAID's mission and people to take full advantage of the expertise of our workforce and partners, and to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars.

I am humbled every day by the incredible work of humanitarian and development professionals and, if confirmed, I look forward to the service, the teamwork, and the camaraderie alongside them.

It is an honor to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McGee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF COLONEL JENNY MCGEE, USAF (RET.)

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be Associate Administrator for Relief, Response, and Resilience at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I am grateful to President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, former Administrator Green, Acting Administrator Barsa, and Deputy Administrator Glick for their trust and confidence in me and my leadership to serve in this important new role.

I am truly humbled to be considered for the Agency's Associate Administrator for Relief, Response and Resilience, whose mandate is at the forefront of U.S. national security interests. As part of USAID's Transformation, this new position is a new principal in the Office of the Administrator, specifically responsible for some of the most fast-paced and high-profile work at the Agency. The three Bureaus I would oversee-Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS), and Resilience and Food Security (RFS)-will improve the Agency's effectiveness in providing life-saving aid, preventing and addressing crises, strengthening self-reliance, and avoiding hunger. This is certainly a Herculean task, to which I would devote all of my energy, capabilities, and heart. It would be an honor to help USAID continue this important work to protect America's security and prosperity, and assist countries along their Journey to Self-Reliance.

I want to recognize the service of the extremely dedicated and talented USAID workforce who have led the Agency's response to natural and man-made disasters, designed programs to reduce global hunger and malnutrition, and worked to prevent conflict and violent extremism. Under the leadership of Rear Admiral Tim Ziemer, Trey Hicks, Rob Jenkins and Dr. Beth Dunford, this incredible team has responded to hurricanes in the Caribbean; earthquakes in Indonesia and Albania; drought and locust infestations in the Horn of Africa; the threat of famine in Yemen, South Sudan, and Nigeria; and the ongoing conflicts and crises in Syria, Iraq, and Venezuela. I sincerely thank Admiral Ziemer, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Jenkins, and Dr. Dunford for their counsel in our interactions, and I look forward to a continued strong working relationship as we create an effective and streamlined approach to preventing and responding to crises. Both Admiral Ziemer and Dr. Dunford have been forces of stability within the Agency and extremely influential in driving forward USAID's mission. I admire their dedication to service, and I wish them well in their retirement.

During my consultations in preparation for this hearing, I had the pleasure and honor to meet with many USAID employees who provided me with briefings and papers that detailed their work. To those dedicated Foreign Service, Civil Service, and contract employees, thank you for your counsel and guidance, and for making USAID the world's flagship development agency that makes such a difference in the lives of so many.

I must also thank my family, friends, and colleagues who have given me tremendous support and encouragement over the years. My wonderful husband, Patrick, a retired U.S. Navy officer, is here with me today, while my proud parents, Joe and Tokiko, remain safely inside their home in Ohio. My father was born on a small farm in Maine and ultimately retired after 23 years of active duty in the Air Force and then as an Air Force civilian. My family is dedicated to service and country, and has sacrificed over the years in support of my own long Air Force career. The life and opportunities I have had, including my military career, all stem from my parents' decision to adopt me from an orphanage in Seoul, South Korea. I am grateful for their unconditional love, and for the values they instilled in me. My commitment to service is rooted in the gratitude and patriotism that I have as a result.

When I decided to retire after 31 years in the Air Force, I knew I wanted to continue to serve our country, and in a role that emphasizes our exceptional American values and commitment to democracy and humanitarian assistance. During my time in the White House Situation Room, on the staff of the National Security Council, and in military units around the world, I have had the opportunity to see USAID

hard at work to support communities in their Journey to Self-Reliance. I have been part of coordination with USAID on security in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, and have worked on security assistance projects directly with allies in all of these regions. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, my unit communicated directly with USAID and its government partners on the ground to assist the logistics effort to deliver relief. I actively participated in planning at U.S. Southern Command headquarters, as well as the Air Force's theater operations center, to best support the delivery of aid. My units have supported planning in typhoon-relief activities in Asia; improvements to agriculture and the use of land in Niger and Ghana; and capacity-building projects in North and East Africa, the Sahel, and Europe. In every engagement or observation, I have always admired the consistent courage and commitment of USAID's personnel and partners, who operate in challenging environments with a true focus on mission.

If confirmed as Associate Administrator, the challenge that lies ahead is not lost on me. I am prepared to work with Acting Administrator Barsa and Deputy Administrator Glick to guide the strategic direction of the Agency, particularly when it comes to the work of the new Bureaus I will oversee. I also look forward to strengthening the integration of our humanitarian assistance, investments in resilience, and crisis-prevention programming as the Agency responds to the most significant global health crisis of our lifetime. While we battle the pandemic of COVID–19 here at home, we must also respond to the unique set of challenges the outbreak has caused abroad, particularly in countries that already are facing humanitarian crises, conflict, and a lack of access to basic social services.

Physical distancing proves to be one of the most effective tools to contain the spread of COVID–19. However, there is no space for distancing in Cox's Bazar, the world's largest refugee camp, which hosts some 600,000 Rohingya refugees. Children in South Sudan cannot wash their hands when they have no consistent access to clean water. And as COVID–19 spreads across conflict zones, the impact of the disease could potentially be catastrophic. Despite a declared cease-fire in Yemen, the fighting has escalated, which complicates efforts to respond to a burgeoning outbreak in the country. USAID has experience operating in these fragile contexts and is the designated Agency to lead the USG's humanitarian responses overseas, including COVID–19. If confirmed, I would be proud to help bring all of the Agency's assets to bear in containing the disease.

Responding to the COVID–19 crisis means not only assisting with the immediate health needs, but preparing for the secondary and tertiary effects of the crisis. The post-COVID–19 world will be fragile. Deteriorating health care could lead to new humanitarian crises. The outbreak likely will reduce the supply of food in many communities, which could cause widespread hunger.

Democratic institutions will need rebuilding or reinforcement. I look forward to leading USAID's response to helping the world maximize its recovery from the COVID–19 pandemic.

USAID is already investing heavily in the tools and capacity to confront the outbreak. RFS is funding partners under the Feed the Future initiative to procure, transport and deliver food to affected communities. BHA is assisting people in countries that already are suffering from humanitarian tragedy, where the risk to vulnerable populations is great and access to basic and life-saving health care is limited. The parts of USAID that soon will become CPS are conducting field-driven analysis of vulnerabilities in fragile countries and providing assistance to reduce the risks of violence; combat misinformation; and fund civil-society organizations that are working to promote effective, transparent responses to the outbreak.

If confirmed as Associate Administrator, I look forward to working closely with USAID's leadership, Congress, the U.S. Government interagency, and the international community on the following priority areas:

First and foremost, my priority would be the safety and security of USAID's personnel. The Bureaus I would directly oversee have approximately 1,500 staff members. Many of them are working in dangerous environments and under difficult conditions, and are still maintaining the same dedication to mission while facing all the COVID–19 challenges. If confirmed, I would work to ensure all of our staff have the resources to safeguard and care for themselves.

My second priority would be to integrate and streamline USAID's humanitarian assistance, investments in food security and resilience, and interventions to prevent conflict to address fragility, respond to global crises, and act as a stabilizing force in times of transition. These efforts optimize USAID's effectiveness and directly support the President's National Security Strategy to contribute to American security and stability.

Third, I would strengthen and elevate the U.S. Government's humanitarian voice, both within the interagency and on the world stage. The U.S. Government is the

largest donor of humanitarian aid, and we must use our leadership role to encourage consistent adherence to international humanitarian principles as well as to leverage additional financial support for the greatest needs.

Last, but certainly not least, I would work to improve the administration's ability to identify fragile states and deliver corrective, mitigating measures. By further strengthening civil-military collaboration, USAID can play a key role in combining foreign assistance, diplomatic engagements, and defense strategy to effectively stabilize conflict-affected areas.

In a world as complex as ours, with our national security challenged by a myriad of threats with global reach, we must bring to bear the entirety of our statecraft toolbox, including our most sophisticated development tools. If confirmed as USAID Associate Administrator for Relief, Response, and Resilience, I pledge to be a strong advocate for our mission and our people; to take full advantage of the tremendous expertise of our workforce and partners; and to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars—always a precious resource, especially in these trying times. I would be humbled everyday by the incredible work of humanitarian assistance and development professionals around the globe, and I look forward to the service, challenge, and teamwork alongside them.

Thank you for your time. It is an honor to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ms. McGee.

Next, we will hear from the Honorable Steven Dowd, who has been nominated to serve as the U.S. director of the European Bank for Reconstruction in Development.

Mr. Dowd served as the U.S. executive director of the African Development Bank since 2017. He has been responsible for overseeing that organization's audit in finance activities, and in that capacity he has helped lead America's growing developmental infrastructure and monetary activities on the African continent.

He previously worked for over three decades in the private sector and has been the leader of major multi- industry companies.

Mr. Dowd, thank you for being here and please proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. J. STEVEN DOWD OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. DOWD. Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, 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 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Before discussing my background in the EBRD, I would like to introduce my wife, Lillian. Lillian is an attorney and an ardent defender of legal rights for women and girls in Africa.

We share a great love for Africa. My deepest thanks to Lillian and our three children, Steven, Thomas, and Andrea, for their love and support.

Also watching today is my college professor from more than four decades ago, Professor Frederick Schweitzer of Manhattan College.

Serving at the African Development Bank has been a privilege. It is not an easy job but it is immensely satisfying. Tough issues from strategic program design and implementation to complex and sensitive governance issues need to be addressed in a balanced but firm manner.

Americans are the most generous people in the world, but often multilateral institutions have become ineffective and often driven by political agendas.

International cooperation can be important and constructive. But it should serve U.S. interests by working toward clear benefits for the people of developing countries.

American leadership is essential to revitalizing and renewing multilateral development assistance.

Due in part to its many successes in private sector-led growth and promoting democratic value systems aligned to ours, many EBRD countries are valued allies and important trading partners of the United States.

The EBRD support plays a crucial role in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region as well as in Ukraine, Mongolia, and Central Asia.

In fact, the EBRD is one of the few instruments the U.S. has to engage in Central Asia at a time of Belt and Road, and great power competition, as mentioned by Senator Young.

Having said that, the EBRD is at a crossroads and the United States will be an essential voice and a consensus leader in shaping the bank's direction and purpose in the years ahead.

Rather than expanding into sub-Saharan Africa, the EBRD should finish the job in its existing portfolio. Knowing African finance and some African leaders well, I would leave the door open to deeper African engagement to the future.

The bank must accelerate prosperity by crowding in private capital many times bigger than the collective capital at EBRD from investment funds, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, insurance funds, and other pools of long-term funds.

There are other challenges facing the EBRD, from debt sustainability to the economic shock of COVID–19, as discussed by Senator Merkley.

There is much work to be done. My experience in development banking and finance, coupled with private sector executive experience, provide me with a skill set well suited to the challenges at the EBRD.

Charting the course forward, the bank must be guided by its democratically grounded mandate that assists clients toward market-oriented growth and investment, promotes entrepreneurial initiative, fortifies banking and credit systems, and bolsters legal frameworks to support contract and property rights.

These are the components of shared prosperity, peace, and stability. I will resolutely safeguard our nation's vital interests and deeply-rooted values at the EBRD should you allow me the opportunity to serve as executive director.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dowd follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF J. STEVEN DOWD

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, 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 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Before discussing my background and the EBRD, I would like to introduce my wife, Lillian. Lillian is an attorney and an ardent defender of legal rights for women and girls in Africa. We share a great love for Africa. My deepest thanks to Lillian and our three children Steven, Thomas and Andrea for their love and support. Also

watching today is my college professor from more than four decades ago: Professor Frederick Schweitzer of Manhattan College.

Serving as United States Executive Director at the African Development Bank has been a privilege. It's not an easy job. But it is one that is immensely satisfying as it can potentially unleash forces that improves the lives and livelihoods of millions. However, tough issues—from strategic design and implementation to complex and sensitive governance issues—need to be addressed in a balanced but firm manner.

In my view, development assistance is not a charitable exercise, nor is multilateralism an end in itself. Americans are the most generous people in the world. They have always been forthcoming and willing to support those less fortunate. Their generosity extends beyond immediate neighborhoods and borders as they are keen to lend a helping hand to all around the globe. They want a better life for people living thousands of miles away, who they may never know. I believe that these hard-earned dollars must be safeguarded rather than taken for granted by ensuring they are used for the purposes intended and delivers the greatest impact. Traditionally, this has been achieved by complementing our bilateral support with multilateral assistance.

Although the objectives of the multilateral institutions remain relevant, in many cases these institutions have become ineffective and often driven by political agendas. The attention to results, value for money and focus on the client, ie. the disadvantaged, is often neglected or misplaced. Nonetheless, the U.S. agreed to large capital increases, and negotiated substantial reform packages, for the World Bank and the African Development Bank. However, especially at a time when many Americans have lost their jobs, American tax dollars need to be as effectively managed as possible. International cooperation can be important and constructive. American leadership will be essential to revitalizing and renewing the mission and focus of multilateral development assistance.

The EBRD was set up in 1991 in response to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The EBRD has helped dozens of countries establish democratic capitalism. Many of the countries where EBRD works are now members of the EU and NATO and are valued allies and important trading partners of the United States. EBRD should focus its efforts on countries where the private sector is less well developed and EBRD support can have a larger impact, for example in Central Asia, and with vital national security partners across the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. Conversely, it should reduce its engagement in more advanced European countries, through a graduation process.

The EBRD has been a critical partner in times of democratic change and even upheaval in Ukraine, Mongolia and Central Asia. In fact, the EBRD is one of the few instruments the United States has to engage in Central Asia at a time of Belt and Road and Great Power competition.

The EBRD is one of the largest investors in many countries where it operates in support of private sector growth and enjoys trust, great prestige and influence in those countries. It certainly deserves our close attention.

The EBRD has strong finances, with significant room to increase investment. In the current crisis, the EBRD should look to increase its investment portfolio to help address immense private sector needs, particularly for small and medium size enterprises. In doing so, it should carefully guard its AAA rating and avoid coming back to shareholders for additional capital.

Having said that, the EBRD is at a crossroads and I believe the United States is an essential voice in shaping the bank's direction and purpose in the years ahead. Briefly, the EBRD has to decide whether to focus on its current foot print of countries which encompasses the original countries in the post-Soviet world along with Middle Eastern and North African countries. Or, to expand its mission to encompass sub-Saharan African countries (and potentially beyond). Given this choice, we believe the bank should focus on the first option: the current footprint of countries and "finish the job" before seeking to expand to additional countries. I hasten to add that, given my familiarity with African finance and friendship with some leaders in Africa, and as the largest shareholder of the EBRD at 10% of the shares, the United States will be an active and engaged shareholder in this and all future debates.

In my business career I would often ask colleagues: "what business are we in?" They might say we are in the widget business. I would say, "no, we are in the leverage business." It is the same in the development banking business: our job is to leverage the collective capital of the shareholders to to do more with less. We must accelerate prosperity by "crowding in" private capital many times bigger than the collective capital at the EBRD making use of current and new financial instruments that only a development institution can bring to bear. Investment funds, sovereign wealth funds, pensions funds, insurance funds and other pools of long-term funds

must be incentivized to engage vigorously in development. They can and should be brought to the table. For this is a win-win for all of the players around the table.

There are other immediate challenges facing the EBRD—among them pending leadership changes, Brexit, a crisis in remittance flows, and, certainly not least of all, debt sustainability. Of course, these challenges are made more complicated given the economic shock of Covid-19 and its aftermath. There is much work to be done. My experience in development banking and finance coupled with private sector executive experience, provide me with a skill-set well suited to the challenges at the EBRD.

Charting the course forward, the bank must be guided by its founding mandate. A democratically grounded mandate, that assists clients toward market-oriented growth and investment; promotes entrepreneurial initiative; fortifies banking and credit systems; and bolsters legal frameworks to support contract and property rights.

Good governance and free enterprise underpin fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, the sure path to innovation and wealth creation. These are the components of shared prosperity, peace and stability—the reward for which is a better future.

I will resolutely safeguard our nation's vital interests and deeply-rooted values, and vigorously represent your fiduciary oversight obligations at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development—should you allow me the opportunity to serve as U.S. Executive Director.

Chairman Young, Senator Merkley, and members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you, and look forward to your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Dowd.

Our next nominee is the Honorable Richard Mills, who is the nominee to be deputy ambassador and deputy representative of the United States to the United Nations bodies in New York.

Mr. Mills is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service Class of Minister-Counselor. He currently serves as the Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy to Canada, and from 2015 to 2018 served as the U.S. ambassador to Armenia.

In a career of service spanning three decades, Mr. Mills has additionally served as a diplomat in Lebanon, Malta, Iraq, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Ireland, Russia, France, and Pakistan.

He has also served as a political officer in the U.S. mission to the United States and in numerous positions here in Washington.

Mr. Mills, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD M. MILLS OF TEXAS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER- COUNSELOR, TO BE THE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY

Mr. MILLS. Thank you, Chairman Young. I appreciate that introduction, and my thanks as well to Ranking Member Merkley, distinguished members of the committee.

I am very honored to appear before you today as the president's nominee to serve as the deputy representative of the United States to the United Nations.

As the chairman mentioned, I have been privileged to serve on behalf of the American people in many places during my career in the U.S. Foreign Service, including in Armenia as ambassador and, most recently, here in Ottawa where I lead an outstanding team at the U.S. mission to Canada.

But it will be a special privilege for me if I am confirmed to join Ambassador Kelly Craft's team and return to the U.S. mission to

the United Nations where I previously had the great privilege of serving from 2001 to 2003.

That experience provided me insight into the strengths and the weaknesses of the U.N. system. The strengths are real. I think we see those strengths in conflict and post- conflict zones where the U.N. blue helmets can provide space for peace to take root.

We see them where U.N. agencies such as UNICEF and the World Food Program save lives and bring hope to devastated communities, and I see those strengths when the U.N. Security Council applies meaningful sanctions to rogue states such as North Korea and Iran.

In all of these examples of U.N. effectiveness, Mr. Chairman, I think you find the United States at the center of the action. It is my view that the U.N. would quickly, in fact, lose its bearings without the continuing stewardship and leadership of the United States.

I say that because no other nation demands more of the U.N. than the United States. I say that because the values on which the U.N. is founded are American values: peace, protection of human rights, respect for sovereignty, and we need to defend those values.

And I say that because even now, 75 years after the creation of the U.N., a majority of member states still look, I believe, to the United States to lead the way.

Mr. Chairman, the weaknesses in the U.N. system are apparent as well. The COVID crisis dramatically, for example, underscored the need for an incredible and effective World Health Organization.

Unfortunately, the WHO's failings in response to the crisis have underscored to the United States and to our like-minded partners that we must demand maximum transparency from international organizations and never allow individual member states to politicize technical international agencies like the WHO, and if it happens, the United States must act.

I do believe positive steps have been taken in recent years to improve accountability in the entire U.N. system. Since my previous tour at the U.N. mission I have seen increased scrutiny of peacekeeping mandates and that has improved the efficiency and the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions.

Secretary General Guterres has taken important steps to improve transparency and strengthen reporting requirements. But, as I think we all know, this is an ongoing process. So, if confirmed, I look forward to supporting Ambassador Craft, her team, and the hard continuing work of promoting oversight and making sure there is continuing reform.

Mr. Chairman, other members states, as we have heard from the other panelists, can and need to do more to support financially the world's expanding humanitarian needs.

Last year, the United States contributed more than $9 billion to U.N. humanitarian responses. Unfortunately, the needs outstrip the resources.

As the situations in Syria, Yemen, Venezuela continue to worsen, the United States is asking U.N. members to do more.

In addition, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, I am aware that there are other actors on the global stage that pose challenges to the U.N.'s core principles and to American values—a more asser-

tive China, for example, which his eager to assume leadership, leadership roles across the U.N. system, and then use U.N. venues to advance its own ideology and self-interested vision for global development.

Iran continues to fuel conflict in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. Russia, too, is hard at work propping up the Assad and the Maduro regimes, and shielding both of them from international action in the Security Council.

This is all to say, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, that in a complex world an effective U.N. remains crucial to protecting America's interest in the world.

If confirmed, I look forward to helping the U.N. mission ensure the U.N. remains an effective tool.

Thank you. I welcome your questions and your comments.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mills follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD M. MILLS, JR.

Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations.

I am also honored to have—off-camera—with me today my much better half, Leigh Carter. Leigh and I met early in our respective Foreign Service careers, married as entry-level officers thirty years ago, and throughout my time in the U.S. Foreign Service, she has been a mentor, a true partner, and most of all a wise sounding board for me.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve on behalf of the U.S. people in many places during my thirty year career in the Foreign Service, including in Armenia as U.S. Ambassador and most recently in Ottawa where I led for the past ten months the outstanding team at the U.S. Mission to Canada. But it will be a particular pleasure for me, if confirmed, to join Ambassador Craft's team at USUN, where I previously served in the early 2000s. Ambassador Craft chose me to serve as her deputy chief of mission in Canada in 2018 and we worked together for nine months before she left Ottawa for New York. She was a caring, thoughtful leader of the team in Canada and I am proud of what the team at Mission Canada accomplished under her leadership. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Ambassador and helping the team she has assembled at USUN achieve U.S. policy priorities at the U.N.

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned, I served at USUN once before, from 2001-2003. A time when the U.N. system faced two of its greatest post-war challenges: the aftermath of 9/11 and marshalling support for the reconstruction of post-Saddam Iraq. That experience provided me insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the U.N. system. The strengths are real, and often evident in circumstances of dire human need and conflict. It is evident in conflict and post-conflict zones where U.N. blue helmets provide the space for peace to take root. It is in these same environments where UNICEF and the World Food Program save lives and bring hope to devastated communities. It is through the Security Council that meaningful sanctions can be applied to rogue states such as Iran, and unwelcome scrutiny can be applied to the conduct of corrupt actors such as Nicolas Maduro and Bashar al Assad. In all those examples of U.N. effectiveness, you will find the United States at the center of the action. In fact, Mr. Chairman, it is my view that the United Nations would quickly lose its bearings without the continuing stewardship of the United States.

I say that because no other nation demands more of the U.N. than the United States. I say that because the values upon which the U.N. is built are American values—peace, freedom, respect for sovereignty, individual liberties. And I say that because even now, 75 years after the U.N. was created, the majority of member states look to America to lead the way.

Mr. Chairman, an effective network of international organizations has never been more crucial to global peace, health, and prosperity. We need only consider the COVID–19 crisis to recognize the crucial need for a credible and effective World Health Organization. Unfortunately, WHO's failings in response to this crisis remind us that the United States and our like-minded partners must be vigilant, must

demand maximum transparency from organizations, and must never allow individual member states to contort or politicize these important international tools.

The World Health Organization's performance during the COVID pandemic is an important indicator that oversight and reform must be a continuous exercise, and meaningful accountability must be applied in instances of mismanagement or misconduct. Positive steps have been taken in recent years to improve transparency and accountability in the U.N. system, but that drumbeat must continue, and if confirmed, I will actively support that effort. Increased scrutiny of peacekeeping mandates has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions and in several instances resulted in missions being completed and closed.

Secretary-General Guterres has taken important steps to improve accountability and strengthen reporting requirements. We need to encourage further action to maximize the U.N.'s value to the American people and to American national security.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, there is one reality at the United Nations that stubbornly refuses to yield, a reality that Ambassador Craft is fighting hard to counter, and that is anti-Israel bias. Far too often the United States stands in small company in our defense of Israel. If confirmed, I look forward to joining Ambassador Craft in her vigorous campaign to expose to the light this deplorable situation.

Combatting anti-Israel bias is first among Ambassador Craft's overarching priorities, but demonstrating American leadership on a broader scale runs a close second.

A few months ago, the Ambassador hosted a groundbreaking event in New York to assemble innovative private sector actors for discussion of unlocking the unlimited potential for partnership with the United Nations to advance humanitarian and development objectives.

That event aligns with the Ambassador's vision for a growing pool of private sector partners that can bring American expertise and innovation to some of the world's pressing challenges. I share the Ambassador's excitement about this potential, and if confirmed will look for every opportunity to advance her vision.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, other member states can and should do more to support financially the world's expanding humanitarian needs. Last year the United States contributed more than 9 billion dollars to U.N. humanitarian responses, extending decades of American leadership in these efforts. Unfortunately, the needs outstrip the resources, and as the situations in Yemen, Syria, and Venezuela continue to worsen, the United States is asking more nations to do more. If confirmed, I will support Ambassador Craft's outreach to member states to encourage them to reconsider their current levels of support.

In addition, we must be cognizant of other forces at work on the global stage that pose challenges for American leadership. A more assertive China, for example, which is eager to assume leadership roles across the U.N. system and use U.N. venues to advance its own vision for global economic development.

Iran continues to roil its region, fueling conflict in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. Russia too is hard at work propping up the Assad and Maduro regimes, and shielding both from international action at the Security Council.

All that to say, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, that in a complex world the United Nations remains a crucial institution. An institution that, when effective, serves American interests and those of the global community. Maintaining the U.N.'s effectiveness requires the focus and skilled efforts of the outstanding team at USUN. I believe I am ready to add value to their efforts, and if confirmed I will endeavor to do so.

Thank you and I welcome your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Mills.

Our next nominee is Mr. Jason Chung, who has been nominated to serve as the U.S. director of the Asian Development Bank with the rank of ambassador.

Mr. Chung currently serves as the U.S. alternative executive director of the ADB, a position he has served in since 2018 and represents the U.S. on the board of directors.

He previously served in the Treasury Department as the deputy assistant secretary for public affairs and had served in the department's International Affairs Office.

Mr. Chung previously worked as a consultant in Washington, D.C., as well as in the U.S. House of Representatives and for the state of Maryland.

Mr. Chung, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF JASON MYUNG–IK CHUNG OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DIRECTOR OF THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Mr. CHUNG. Chairman Young, Senator Merkley, and members of the committee, I am honored to be President Trump's nominee to be U.S. director of the Asian Development Bank with the rank of ambassador.

I am grateful to Secretary Mnuchin for his confidence in recommending me for this position. I also appreciate the support from Undersecretary McIntosh and my colleagues at the Treasury Department.

I would like to acknowledge my wife, Suzanna, and sons, Davis and Alexander, and humbled to have the three of them in my life.

Likewise, I am grateful to my parents for their love and guidance throughout my life.

As the son of immigrants, it has been an incredible honor to serve my nation in various roles in government. As you said, Mr. Chairman, I served as deputy assistance secretary at the Treasury Department working on international affairs and development issues under then Undersecretary David Malpass.

I also gained firsthand appreciation for the legislative and oversight processes during my five years working in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Currently, as U.S. alternate director to the Asian Development Bank, I serve on the ADB's board of directors. I help advance the ADB's core mission of achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific while ensuring ADB's programs online with American goals, values, and policies.

The world is facing a profound public health and economic challenge and looks to respond to the COVID–19 pandemic. The United States and G–20 have called on international financial institutions and multilateral development banks to provide urgently needed financial and technical support to the developing world.

This support comes at a crucial time when resources are scarce and the needs are many. ADB is in the unique position to help bridge these gaps in an appropriate and thoughtful way.

It is imperative that the U.S. promotes transparency and exercises oversight authority at the ADB during this time.

While responding to the COVID–19 pandemic that has taken center stage at international institutions across the globe, I would note how ADB programs fit into the overall U.S. strategic interest.

During the past year and a half, the U.S. staff and I have set out goals to be achieved and we have begun to accomplish these goals.

One accomplishment includes the approval of a differentiated pricing scheme for sovereign loans. This initiative strengthens the ADB's financial sustainability by requiring upper middle income countries like China and Kazakhstan, among others, to pay increased premiums for borrowing from ADB.

This will help alleviate the need for U.S. taxpayer-funded capital increase and mirrors reforms the World Bank Group enacted a few years ago.

We also use our perch at ADB to advance debt transparency and sustainability. As the premier development and lending institution in the region, ADB has a key role to play in supporting the IMF and World Bank multi-pronged approach for addressing emerging debt vulnerabilities.

Given the vast development needs and financing gap in the region, we are also closely monitoring the activities of other financiers.

We strongly advocate for other institutions to follow sound development practices on debt sustainability, accountability, and anti-corruption, as well as enact vigorous environmental and social safeguards.

We are keenly aware of China's goals and ambitions through Belt and Road Initiatives or other instruments. We highlight the shortcomings of BRI to provide necessary lending safeguards, governance, and debt transparency.

We have arranged frameworks and MOUs with ADB and with USAID, OPIC, now DFC, to serve as high-quality transparent alternatives to the debt trap programs by China.

We have worked with our partners on the board of directors to prevent ADB projects from being introduced in nations and regions where state actions run contrary to American values.

For instance, the U.S. and our European partners prevented board approval of two ADB projects planned for Xinjiang, China. Legislative mandates such as trafficking in persons have provided us with strong tools to discourage institutions like the ADB from supporting programs and nations that abuse human rights.

If fortunate to be confirmed, I look forward to continuing with the progress that the office has made in advancing ADB's core mission and American values abroad.

I remain committed to alleviating corruption, enhancing transparency, and strengthening institutions in Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today. I look forward to working with you and members of both the Senate and the House in addressing our goals in Asia and the Pacific.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have and, if confirmed, I hope to foster a close working relationship with you and your staffs.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Chung follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JASON MYUNG IK CHUNG

Before proceeding, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge my family. I want to thank my wife, Susannah, and two children, Davis and Alexander, for their love and support throughout this process. I am lucky and humbled to have the three of them in my life; they are my compass and they are truly the light of my life.

Likewise, I am grateful to my parents for their love and guidance throughout my life. They came to this country as immigrants, seeking a better life for themselves and their eventual family. Because of their hard work, perseverance, and many sacrifices, their son is now appearing before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I am grateful for the life they provided me.

As the son of immigrants, it has been an incredible honor to serve my nation in various roles in government at different points in my life. Over my career, I served as a deputy assistant secretary at the U.S. Treasury Department, working on international affairs and development issues under the leadership of then-Under Secretary David Malpass. I also gained a first-hand appreciation for the legislative process during my 5 years working in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Now, in my current role as United States Alternate Director to the Asian Development Bank, I serve on the ADB's Board of Directors, representing the views of the United States at the institution. I help to advance the ADB's core mission of achieving "a prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable Asia and the Pacific" all while making sure ADB's programs are in line with American goals, values, and the administration's larger Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Today, the world is facing a profound public health and economic challenge as it looks to respond to and recover from the COVID–19 pandemic. The United States and the G20 have called on the international financial institutions and multilateral development banks to provide urgently needed financial and technical support to many in the developing world. This support comes at a crucial time where resources are scarce, and needs are many.

The ADB is in a unique position to help bridge those gaps in an appropriate and thoughtful way. The ADB currently has different modalities and initiatives to assist in the health response, social protection, and economic recovery efforts. It is imperative that the United States promotes transparency and exercises its oversight authority at the ADB during this time to maximize the benefits of these initiatives and to mitigate any risks associated with expanded technical assistance, budget support, and project based loans to developing member countries.

While responding to the COVID–19 pandemic has taken center stage at international institutions across the globe, it is worth mentioning how the ADB and its programs fit into overall U.S. strategic interests. During the past year and a half, the U.S. staff and I have set out goals to achieve, and we have begun to accomplish these goals. One accomplishment included the approval of a "differentiated pricing" scheme for sovereign loans. Known as the "Diversification of Financing Terms," this initiative strengthens ADB's financial sustainability by requiring upper-middle income nations like China and Kazakhstan, among others, to pay increased premiums for borrowing from the ADB. This initiative will help alleviate the need for a U.S. taxpayer-funded capital increase and mirrors the reforms that the World Bank Group enacted a couple of years ago.

The "Diversification of Financing Terms" initiative is illustrative of our overarching desire to heighten financial sustainability at the ADB. Each day, we look for ways to enhance the sustainability of the institution. A more sustainable ADB will rely less on U.S. taxpayer-funded interventions now and in the future. Moreover, the additional income will bolster ADB's ability to support the poorest and most vulnerable countries in Asia and the Pacific, primarily through grants and concessional loans.

Additionally, we are using our perch at the ADB to advance debt transparency and sustainability. As the premier development institution in the region and the leading partner for many countries, including in the Pacific, ADB has a key role to play in supporting the IMF and World Bank's Multi-Pronged Approach for Addressing Emerging Debt Vulnerabilities. We are advancing this agenda through other avenues as well, such as the ongoing negotiations for the next replenishment of the Asian Development Fund.

Given the vast development needs and financing gaps in the region, we are also closely monitoring the activities of other financiers. We strongly advocate for other institutions to follow sound development practices on debt sustainability, rigorous environmental and social safeguards, accountability, and anti-corruption.

We are keenly aware of China's regional goals and ambitions, whether it is through Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or other instruments. We are highlight the failure of BRI to provide necessary lending safeguards, governance, and debt transparency as well. I believe the ADB is a better partner for countries to help them achieve sustainable economic growth. We work to prevent heavy-handed Chinese interventions in Asian and Pacific nations, and we consult with our U.S. and international development partners to provide better alternatives for borrower nations in the region.

Within this vein, we have arranged frameworks and memoranda of understanding with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, now the Development Finance Corporation, to serve as high-quality, transparent alternatives to the debt-trap programs fueled by China. These efforts focus on helping the neediest countries, all while ensuring that these countries have a path toward sustainable economic growth.

We also have worked with our partners on the Board of Directors to prevent ADB projects from being introduced in nations and regions where state actions run contrary to American values. For instance, the United States and our European partners prevented Board approval of two ADB projects planned for Xinjiang, China. Legislative mandates, such as the trafficking in persons and human rights mandates have provided us with strong tools to discourage institutions like the ADB from supporting programs in nations whose governments are not complying with the minimum standards for trafficking in persons and are engaging in a pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.

If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I look forward to continuing the efforts and progress the Office of the U.S. Executive Director has made in advancing the ADB's core mission and American values abroad. I will remain steadfast in my efforts to alleviate corruption, enhance transparency, and strengthen institutions in Asia and the Pacific. I also will focus on creating sustainable economic growth in the region and raising median incomes. Finally, I will work to curtail China's opaque and non-market lending practices in Asia and the Pacific and I will continue to work with our U.S. and international partners to provide developing nations with better alternatives to Chinese lending.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today. I look forward to working with members of this committee and the interested members of both the Senate and the House in addressing all of our goals in Asia and the Pacific. I look forward to answering any questions you may have and, if confirmed, I hope to foster a close working relationship with you and your staffs as it relates to ADB's COVID–19 response initiatives and the ADB's role in Asia and the Pacific more broadly.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chung.

Next, we will hear from Mr. Joseph Manso, who is the president's nominee to be U.S. Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with the rank of ambassador.

Mr. Manso is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service Class of Minister-Counselor and has served as a diplomat since 1985. He currently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs where he has been since 2018.

He previously served as director in the Offices of the U.N. Political Affairs and Regional European Security Affairs as well as the Deputy Permanent Representative at the U.S. mission to NATO.

In a variety of diplomatic, law enforcement, and military affairs roles, he has served in Spain, Mexico, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Iraq, and at the U.N. in New York as well as roles here in Washington. He has also taught at the National War College.

Mr. Manso, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH MANSO OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, FOR THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Mr. MANSO. Thank you, Chairman Young. Thank you, Ranking Member Merkley, and distinguished members of the committee.

It is an honor to come before this committee as the president's nominee to be the next U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests at the OPCW.

I would not be here today without the support and love of my wife, Patricia, and my daughters, Lauren and Marissa. They have

shared my Foreign Service journey, moving 16 times in the past 35 years, usually without complaint.

I would also not be here without the love and support of my parents, Jose and Mary Manso. I thank them and all my family.

We are all patriots here and none of us requires further proof of the goodness of the United States. But the fact that this country has offered so much to the son of an immigrant from Spain underlines how America remains a land of opportunity.

It is for me a privilege to serve the American people as a Foreign Service Officer and I have sought throughout my career to protect and advance the interests of the United States whether at NATO, United Nations, the OSCE, or my bilateral postings.

If confirmed, this OPCW assignment would be a logical follow-on to my years of multilateral work in the Foreign Service.

The mission of the OPCW to end the development, production, stockpiling, transfer, and use of chemical weapons is essential to the security of the American people.

This mission has had strong and continuous bipartisan support since the Chemical Weapons Convention, the CWC, entered into force in 1997.

In April 2017, President Trump stated it is in the vital national security interests of the United States to prevent and deter the spread and use of deadly chemical weapons.

The United States has made it a priority to restore deterrence against the use of chemical weapons. In the past two years, the United States and its partners led efforts at the OPCW to take action seeking to stop further chemical weapons use.

In June 2018, States Parties of the OPCW agreed to an unprecedented decision condemning recent uses of chemical weapons in the U.K., Malaysia, and in Syria by the Assad regime the 2018 decision directing the OPCW to establish attribution arrangements for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The OPCW is mandated to identify perpetrators for use of chemical weapons in Syria, which the OPCW has addressed through the creation of the Investigative and Identification Team, the IIT.

The IIT released its first report in April 2020, attributing responsibility to the Assad regime, which it identified as the perpetrator of three chemical weapons attacks that occurred in Syria in March 2017.

In response to the report, the United States is urging responsible states to work together to push for accountability for the Syrian regime's confirmed use of chemical weapons, looking at the full array of tools available at the OPCW, the U.N., and to us as sovereign states.

Chemical weapons use will not be tolerated.

Another example of U.S. leadership in addressing chemical weapons use was in response to the Salisbury and Amesbury incidents involving military-grade nerve agents referred to as Novichoks.

The United States, Canada, and the Netherlands jointly submitted a proposal to add two chemical families of Novichoks to the Annex to the Convention. This proposal was adopted by consensus at last year's Conference of the States Parties.

The additions of these lethal nerve agents developed by the former Soviet Union will ensure their declaration and subject them to verification by the OPCW.

This change that goes into effect next week represents the first ever addition to the CWC Annex on Chemicals and reflects the convention's adaptability to current threats.

If confirmed, I would be honored to aggressively take forward this work, which have been accomplished thus far through U.S. leadership.

If the United States is to succeed in restoring deterrence against chemical weapons use and driving chemical weapons use to zero, we must continue to support these efforts.

And now the most beautiful words in the English language, Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, I am proud of what the United States has accomplished at the OPCW and, if confirmed, I would be honored to be part of the administration's team committed to effective multilateralism and advancing our national security objective of seeking a world free of chemical weapons.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Manso follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOSEPH MANSO

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Merkley, and distinguished members of the committee: it is an honor to come before this committee as President Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). I am grateful for and humbled by the confidence the President and Secretary Pompeo have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in the OPCW. If confirmed, this OPCW assignment would be a logical follow-on to my years in the Foreign Service, and I would not be here without the love and support of my wife, Patricia, and my daughters Lauren and Marisa. They have shared my Foreign Service journey, moving 16 times in the past 34 years, usually without complaint. I would also not be here without the love and support of my parents, Jose and Mary Manso. I thank them and all my family.

We are all patriots here, and none of us requires further proof of the goodness of the United States, but the fact that this country has offered so much to the son of an immigrant from Spain underlines how America remains a land of opportunity. It is for me a privilege to serve the American people as a Foreign Service Officer, and I have sought throughout my career to protect and advance the interests of the United States, whether at NATO, the United Nations, the OSCE, or my bi-lateral postings.

The mission of the OPCW, to end the development, production, stockpiling, transfer, and use of chemical weapons, is essential to the security of the American people. This mission has had strong and continuous bipartisan support since the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) entered into force in 1997.

In April 2017, President Trump stated, "It is in the vital national security interests of the United States to prevent and deter the spread and use of deadly chemical weapons." The United States has made it a priority to restore deterrence against the use of chemical weapons and has made clear its national security importance.

In the past two years, the United States and its partners led efforts at the OPCW to stop further chemical weapons use. In June 2018, the OPCW Conference of the States Parties adopted an unprecedented decision condemning recent uses of chemical weapons in the UK, Malaysia, Iraq, and in Syria by the Assad regime. The 2018 decision directed the OPCW to establish arrangements to identify perpetrators for use or likely use of chemical weapons in Syria, which the OPCW accomplished through the creation of the Investigation and Identification Team (the "IIT"). The IIT released its first report in April and attributed to the Assad regime responsibility for three chemical weapons attacks in March 2017. In response to the report, the United States is urging responsible states to work together to push for accountability for the Assad regime's confirmed use of chemical weapons and to prevent further use, looking at the full array of tools available at the OPCW, the U.N., and belonging to sovereign states. CW use will not be tolerated.

Another example of U.S. leadership in addressing chemical weapons use was in response to the Salisbury and Amesbury incidents involving the military-grade nerve agent referred to as Novichoks. The United States, Canada, and the Netherlands jointly submitted a proposal to add two chemical families of Novichoks to Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention, which was adopted by consensus at last year's Conference of the States Parties. The addition of these lethal nerve agents developed by the former Soviet Union will subject them to the routine verification requirements under the Convention. This change, which goes into effect next week, represents the first-ever addition to the CWC Annex on Chemicals in the Convention's history and reflects the Convention's adaptability to current threats.

If confirmed, I would be honored to take forward this work, which has been accomplished thus far through tireless U.S. leadership. If the United States is to succeed in restoring deterrence against chemical weapons use and driving chemical weapons use to zero, we must continue to support these efforts, and we must encourage and support proactive initiatives against chemical weapons development, production, stockpile, and use.

If confirmed by the Senate, I will work to ensure that the OPCW remains a viable and effective force for promoting a world free from chemical weapons by addressing possible future chemical weapons threats. In October 2019, the United States, Australia, Switzerland and 21 additional co-sponsors launched an initiative to adopt a set of decisions making clear States Parties' understanding that under the CWC the aerosolized use of central nervous system (CNS)-acting chemicals for law enforcement is impermissible. The United States is working to create a broad coalition of states committed to ensuring there is no use of CNS-acting chemicals as chemical weapons.

This administration has emphasized it is crucial to call out non-compliance with the Convention to make clear such behavior is not acceptable, and to prevent further malign behavior. I fully support this administration priority. The United States announced its assessment of Iran's non-compliance with the Convention in its national statement to the Fourth CWC Review Conference in November 2018. The United States highlighted its assessment that the Russian Federation violated the Convention when it used a Novichok in an assassination attempt in the United Kingdom. Sadly, the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons repeatedly against the Syrian people as a means to gain a military advantage and to terrorize people into submission. And in November 2019 in its national statement at the OPCW Conference of the States Parties, the United States also raised to States Parties' attention Burma's non-compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. This demonstrates the United States' concerted effort to address CWC non-compliance and not to allow these violations to go unchallenged. I am fully committed to making it clear that States Parties must comply with their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. In the case of Burma, we are working with that Government to help them come into compliance with their obligations, having engaged with them repeatedly on these issues, including by declaring and destroying a historic chemical weapons production facility, most recently with a bilateral consultation in late February in the Burmese capital, Nay Pyi Taw.

In conclusion, I am proud of what the United States, States Parties and the OPCW together have accomplished thus far. If confirmed, I will be honored to be part of the administration's team committed to effective multilateralism and advancing our national security objective of seeking a world free of chemical weapons and driving chemical weapons use to zero.

Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Mr. Manso. Thank you all for your previous service and for your willingness to be nominated for these posts.

We will now open it up for questions from the committee, and I suppose I have prerogative since I am chairing this hearing. But I will defer to our ranking member, Senator Merkley, if he would like to proceed.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will jump right in then.

And, Ms. McGee, when we had the chance to talk I noted that we are in an incredibly challenging world situation. Existing famines, complicated by weather the last year, locusts, COVID–19, and

military conflicts are expected to double the number of people on the planet who are in acute food shortages, from about 135 million to, roughly, twice that—265 million to 270 million people.

I had asked if you would meet with leaders of groups like Mercy Corps. I gather you did that yesterday. And maybe you could just give us a little bit of a sense of the role those organizations play in partnership with USAID and any insights that you might have gained from that dialogue.

Ms. MCGEE. Thank you, Senator.

Indeed, we did have that session yesterday and I very much appreciated the active participation and the candor and the viewpoints that were shared by the associations and the groups that attended.

As you can imagine, COVID–19 response was foremost in many of their minds. The guidance and operating conditions that they are contending with are challenging, both, of course, on a humanitarian response perspective as well as to continue a long-term development work.

They are certainly aware of USAID's priority and approach along with the State Department to do work that would help prevent backsliding and loss of some of the gains, the hard-fought gains, that have been achieved on the development and the spectrum of USAID, its partners, and the host nations abroad.

So USAID, along with the other COVID strategies, are working on, of course, the global health emergency aspect as well as working to prevent further humanitarian consequences of existing complex crises and anything that could further exacerbate that.

So USAID and the partners are on the ground working as best they can. Of course, they are contending with logistical impacts, as you and I also discussed, in relation to some of the movement restrictions that are being caused by the response to COVID–19.

I will say that Yemen was also raised as a concern. Of course, that is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. The U.S. remains one of the largest donors to the humanitarian response and so the continuing and exacerbating conditions on the ground there in Yemen were also highlighted.

And then there were some questions about USAID organization when some of the particulars will manifest such that the agencies and organizations will see them. But they also, certainly, shared their passion, their commitment on the ground of their workers and appreciating that we will have a candid and close working relationship.

I committed that to them and I certainly ask them for their candid feedback at all times, and we emphasize with one another the importance of that exchange that I spoke about, certainly the best intents that all of us have, you know, in Washington or on the staff to put forward policies or operating guidance that does not always necessarily come out, you know, the chute in the best most ideal way, you know, in the context of an operating environment. And so that dialogue was necessary.

Senator MERKLEY. I am going to cut you off there because you have answered the question. Thank you very much for meeting with those groups and to have an ongoing dialogue with them,

their expertise and their role in delivering assistance around the planet.

Mr. Dowd, I wanted to turn to the role of the EBRD. It often focuses on project loans, equity investments, and guarantees to the private sector.

Right now economic havoc is afflicting Greece, Albania, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, other countries in southeastern Europe that are impacted by the pandemic in all kinds of ways including the role of tourism.

Should they be a special focus of the bank in the year or two to come?

Mr. DOWD. Thank you, Senator.

Certainly, and I have some encouraging news there. I am not at the bank, obviously, yet so I do not know the details.

But I understand that the bank has allocated, I believe, $21 billion for short-term liquidity assistance to small and medium-sized businesses in the bank's portfolio, and I believe in the longer run the bank has dedicated most of the 2020 program and the 2021 program to COVID-related effects and aftermath of the COVID.

So I think the bank has taken steps and, certainly, this will be a key area as these countries, the countries in the portfolio, seek to rebuild after the devastating financial consequences of the virus.

And also, it is another reason to at least postpone any thinking of expanding the bank's portfolio. It seems that would be ill timed as the resources of the bank will be in such demand in the countries you identified and other countries.

Senator MERKLEY. And I found it very interesting when you talked about the potential plan for sub-Saharan Africa and your sense that that is not the right thing to do at this moment and you are bringing expertise directly from the African Development Bank to that conversation.

The European Investment Bank, the lending arm of the European Union, announced in November that it would phase out possible fuel investments by the end of 2021, citing the worldwide impacts of carbon pollution and climate chaos on the human condition.

Is it time for the EBRD to follow suit?

[Pause.]

Mr. DOWD. I am sorry. Okay.

Senator, the EBRD, I think, is, from what I can see, and I am not there, but I think they are aggressively pursuing programs along those lines. I do not know the details.

But as a consensus-driven organization, I think that there is a consensus for strengthening programs along these lines and I think you will be pleased.

I mean, you and I spoke during my interview there, and I appreciated that very much, about this very topic and that is something I will monitor and I would certainly welcome the input from you and your staff in helping guide our interaction at the bank.

Senator YOUNG. Senator Merkley?

Senator MERKLEY. Yes?

Senator YOUNG. We may have—if I could—if I could just interject. I think we are going to have a number of senators with great interest in our nominees here wanting to ask questions.

So we may circle back. The hearing has been scheduled until noon so if time permits opportunity for——

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will just note on that point, Mr. Dowd, that the EBRD is continuing to finance possible fuel projects, Romanian-based Black Sea oil and gas, bonds with possible fuel companies in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt, gas grid projects, the Trans Adriatic and Trans Anatolian pipelines.

So, certainly, you are not yet following the path of the European Investment Bank, but for the same reasons that bank cited its change of policy I think it is a conversation that is important for us to be part of as we consider the humanitarian impacts on the economy and the environment around the world.

Thanks so much.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Senator Merkley.

Ambassador Mills, you previously served at the U.S. mission to the United Nations, as I indicated in your introduction, from 2001 to 2003. That was back when John Negroponte was our ambassador.

What has changed? I am going to ask some fairly short questions here as kind of a lightning round. So perhaps you could give me a tight answer, if possible.

But what has changed about the United States' relationship with that institution, with the United Nations, from your standpoint since you last served there?

Mr. MILLS. I think the United States is much more focused on reform, accountability, and transparency, and we have seen some results, and I think that is the biggest difference since I was last there.

When I was there in 2001 to 2003, we were all shocked by the beginning reports about sexual exploitation and abuse in some of the peacekeeping operations, and I think we have seen some real reform there.

I think Secretary General Guterres has an annual report now that comes out that describes where the zero tolerance policy is being followed. There is more engagement with the troop-contributing countries.

And so, to me, that is one example how a bit more aggressive focus on reform and transparency has made a difference because of our leadership.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ambassador.

Next question is for Colonel McGee.

Colonel McGee, the conflict in Yemen is one in which I have been deeply involved with a number of my colleagues. There has been a lot of focus on the extent to which food insecurity plays a role in feeding greater desperation and leading to more conflict.

For a period of time I focused on what I regarded as violations of the law or from the coalition, and my hope is that we can eventually find a political agreement, a path towards peace.

So what is USAID doing now to prepare for eventual political agreement in Yemen that will open the door for greater international involvement in caring for those desperate people in that country?

Ms. MCGEE. Thank you, Senator.

I agree. I share your concern about the profound state of affairs that exist in Yemen and the ongoing fighting and displacement of personnel.

As we know, the Yemeni people have been suffering with tremendous humanitarian need and health crises that continue.

We are—USAID continues to provide lifesaving assistance both in the north and throughout the country as well as food assistance, water, sanitation, health care protection and those kinds of things.

It is a place where we want to closely monitor the use of our U.S. taxpayer dollars. That has been $1.1 billion since the start of fiscal year '19 and so it is important that we are ensuring that those funds are being applied towards the most vulnerable people who need them and in the way that was intended when Congress appropriated the funds and as we are programming to do with our partners on the ground.

And so those provisions continue. We continue to participate in the donor conferences as well. There was just a pledging conference a couple of days ago.

The U.S. did participate and did attend and, as you know, we are contending with the situation in the north where the Houthis have been blocking aid and interfering with the provision of aid as intended and harassing aid workers.

So we continue to call on the Houthis with a concerted voice of groups to try to improve that situation and expand our programming.

Senator YOUNG. It is very difficult to give a tight answer when asked anything about Yemen. I have discovered that. So but that was—thank you so much for that fulsome response.

And, lastly, I will just ask, because my time is expiring as well, Mr. Chung, if you could try and address in a very concise fashion what you see the role of China and India being, looking ahead at the ADB in coming years.

I know that is a very large question. But if you have any reflections on that topic.

Mr. CHUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

China and India are our two largest borrowers. So the idea is that, especially with China, I think the focus will always be now putting them on a path to graduation so they are no longer borrowers from the institution.

For India, India is a little bit more complicated due to the fact that, as you know, ADB's mission is to alleviate the poor and vulnerable. India is in quite a predicament as we speak.

So I think, in a way, they are going to continue to borrow both on the sovereign and nonsovereign side of the ledger and you will see probably increased programming in that country while we will push for decreased programming and loan support for China.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chung.

I believe Senator Gardner is with us. In this Zoom era it can be sometimes difficult to determine if that is the case. I know Senator Gardner has gaveled in and has great interest in this topic. But we are often double and triple booked.

Senator Gardner, you are recognized if you are with us at this time.

[No response.]

Senator YOUNG. Otherwise, we will move on to another one of my colleagues. Okay.

Senator Cardin, who I know has been at another hearing, but he, too, is quite interested in this.

Senator Cardin, are you—are you with us for this hearing?

[No response.]

Senator YOUNG. Okay. Next is Senator Barrasso.

Senator Barrasso, you are recognized.

[No response.]

Senator YOUNG. Okay. It is a Thursday here in Washington. We tend to have a lot of hearings and votes before we fly back to our respective states.

Well, I will proceed with more questions then, and they only get harder. I am sorry.

So, Mr. Chung, what actions would you pursue as director to minimize China's attempt to squeeze Taiwan out of the ADB?

Mr. CHUNG. Thank you very much for that question.

I can tell you, as we speak we are addressing these concerns at the institution.

Right now, I will be honest with you, there is unequal treatment of Taiwan and Taiwanese nationals at the institution and we are working with our Taiwanese board colleague to address those issues.

We are going to—we have already asked my colleagues at the Treasury Department to send notes to ADB management on this topic and we are in the process of discussing these issues in terms of unequal treatment and fairer treatment for a founding member of the institution as well.

Senator YOUNG. I look forward to staying in touch, should you be confirmed, on that topic. I imagine that once—it is going to be one that we in Congress continue to press on, and I know this administration is quite interested in that.

Are there members, Mr. Chung, of the ADB that, to put it colloquially, are not pulling their weight as it relates to their contributions and can you name them.

Mr. CHUNG. Mr. Chairman, that is somewhat of a loaded question, I will be honest with you. You know, I do think that with our colleagues and with our partners, especially the Europeans, that we are working in every capacity to prevent impropriety that takes place in the bank, namely, from the Chinese.

I think we are working together to encourage the bank to graduate China. I think at times there are geopolitical consequences with China being the largest neighbor in the region and some of the bilateral force that they bring to be bear being that neighbor.

But I do believe there is some impetus and a role that the Europeans, Australians, as well as the Japanese. We are firmly addressing the issue as it relates to China.

And there is also issues regarding bank processes and institutional constructs that we are looking to address with those who are like-minded with us as well.

Senator YOUNG. Okay.

Mr. Dowd, what value does the United States provide to and derive from our involvement in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development?

Mr. DOWD. Thank you, Senator.

As I mentioned in my opening statement and expand a little bit in my written statement that I submitted, the—particularly focusing on Central Asia, it is one of the very few channels the United States has to engage there and this—Central Asia is sort of the heart of the Belt and Road program and the EBRD has been very effective there and I think it is something that is to the U.S. benefit.

Also in the Mediterranean, as I mentioned earlier also, in the Middle Eastern area I think it is another means for like-minded countries that are interested in democratic development in the long run—it is not an easy process—but especially a hearing to the rule of law, because in many of these countries, as in Africa, as I experienced, we are engaged in how it might be described as the rule of law versus corruption.

And I, for one, have no tolerance for corruption, and any of these institutions should be leading the way on anti- corruption, both within their institutions and beyond and all their clients, and this is something that I assure you will be a high priority to me at the EBRD.

Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. So to what extent is the EBRD already—are they deeply involved in the Middle East and supporting development efforts there already or is that sort of something you see as important to the future? Help educate me on this, if you would, sir.

Mr. DOWD. Yes. In the eastern Mediterranean countries the bank is very engaged as well as in Egypt where there is a considerable portfolio.

I believe Egypt is the second largest client of the bank, Turkey being the first. But also across the Arab world, as you were mentioning, in Tunisia, in Morocco, certainly, and I think that there is interest in expanding possibly into Algeria and who knows, maybe Libya someday if things ever get to a point where they are settled enough to engage in private sector development.

But across many Middle Eastern countries, the bank is very engaged again in promoting democratic values and rules- based operations.

Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you. That is quite helpful.

I see Senator Merkley is with us and I will happily—if he would like to ask some additional questions I will happily recognize him at this time.

Otherwise, I am loaded with more questions and, as I said, they only get more difficult.

Senator MERKLEY. Mr. Chung, I wanted to turn to the Asian Development Bank, and you noted that China needs to be put on a path to graduation.

When do you—what date do you have in mind for China's graduation?

Mr. CHUNG. Senator, I wish I had a specific date in mind. The sooner the better, obviously. We are—as I noted in our bilateral meeting a couple weeks ago—ADB is in the process of working with China on their next five-year lending program and it is our

position as well as the Japanese position to put them on that path to graduation in that—in that document in that lending program.

If it was up to me, China would have graduated already and if it was up to me a little bit more I would put them—they would be graduating at the end of this five-year document, which is supposed to take place starting in 2021.

Senator MERKLEY. So thank you, Mr. Chung. Just to share with you my perspective on this, I have watched China do massive investments at home in metro systems, in freeways, on bullet trains.

How many miles—you may not know the answer to this but I will pose it rhetorically in case—unless you want to jump in. But how many miles of bullet trains does the U.S. have and how many miles does China have?

I will just pause for a second in case you wanted to jump in.

Mr. CHUNG. Sir, I do not know the answer of how many miles of bullet train rail that China has. I do believe I know what the answer is going to be in the United States and I could not agree with you more on these issues, and I think the priority is from my office and the office that—in the elevation position that I am seeking is to get China to graduate so they no longer are borrowers.

Senator MERKLEY. As you probably were—I know you said you knew the answer I am sure you were thinking zero in the United States.

Mr. CHUNG. Yes.

Senator MERKLEY. And I was on the very first link from Beijing to Tianjin. That was about—I think it was 200 kilometers or 200 miles, and that was not that many years ago. It is after I came to the Senate. I think it was about 2013, about seven years ago, and China now has 16,000 miles of bullet trains.

And just out of curiosity, as Chairman Young was interviewing you, I wanted to look up the highest tech magnetically levitated trains and I see a whole series of videos on YouTube about China having the fastest mag lev train in the world.

It bothers me subsidizing China, which is turning around and using its capital to do debt trap financing and I think you used that word in your testimony—debt trap financing.

It took me back to college when I read a book by Cheryl Payer called "The Debt Trap," and at that time it was not about China. It was about other international institutions that were lending to very poor countries and then those countries' elite were stashing their money in Switzerland and the whole country of very poor people was trapped trying to pay back that debt, which was a horrific situation.

But now we have China engaged in predatory actions of this nature. So I—if it was up to me, they would be cut off yesterday. I do not think we should be part of financing China.

I am still waiting for a bridge over the Columbia River where we still have an ancient bridge on wooden piers that interrupts the main north-south corridor on I–5 between Oregon and Washington.

And so you get my sense of concern about this. I also wanted to turn to the issue of China's abuse of the Uighurs in Xinjiang and, basically, a million people put into a high-tech slave camp with facial recognition, cell phone tracking, concentrated almost slavery style work centers, and how—and just really feeling like the U.S.

has to take a major stand about this including blocking products being brought to the United States from this operation.

And how can the bank possibly play a role in highlighting and cutting off funding to anything involved or connected to that massive human rights abuse?

Mr. CHUNG. Senator, thank you very much for that question. As I noted in my testimony, I, along with my colleagues and my partners on the board, we essentially killed two projects that were slated for that province in China, Xinjiang.

And, you know, we felt that, you know, the measures undertaken by the Chinese authorities in that did not warrant any type of funding ADB would provide and, as you noted, it would be—it would be U.S. tax dollars subsidizing this problem.

And, Senator, I could not agree with you more. We are not going to stand for this and we will do everything in our power to make sure that, one, China does not receive any additional funding for that—for this province.

I have had assurances by bank management, and we are extremely vigilant on this key issue. Secondly, we are working on putting China on this path to graduation so they no longer are going to be borrowing from the Asian Development Bank also.

That is probably going to be my primary focus in my current position and if I am confirmed for the director position as well. You have my solemn word on that.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chung. I appreciate that.

And Mr. Mills, we had the opportunity to highlight this issue at the United Nations. Your thoughts on that?

Mr. MILLS. I share my panelist's concern about what is happening and yours as well, Senator. This is an issue that the U.N. needs to address.

The U.S. Government has, as you know, taken some action. We have taken visa restriction sanctions on PRC and local regional officials who we believe are responsible for the crimes you have outlined.

Treasury has put, I believe, over 15 PRC entities on its list—restricted list. So we are taking some action. The U.N. needs to take action, too.

I know it is a strong concern of Ambassador Craft and her team in New York and I know they press to bring light to it through whatever mechanisms they can in the U.N. and to assemble a coalition of like-minded states to press China to take action and stop these crimes.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ambassador Mills.

I would like to recognize Senator Cardin of the great state of Maryland.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Chairman Young.

And let me, first, thank all of the witnesses for not just being here today but for your willingness to serve our country.

I was listening to the hearing a little bit earlier. I know you called on me, I was dual tasking with two committees that are meeting at the same time. So very much I appreciate your response.

To Ms. McGee, I did hear your response to Senator Merkley in regards to the issue of what you are doing on trying to balance different priorities. This is a new division within State, and I guess my concern is this: We are very much interested in making sure America plays a key role in humanitarian assistance globally. That is part of our DNA. We want to make sure we are aggressively engaged in helping people that desperately need help around the world.

But we always do that within the parameters of our values—promoting human rights. So I just really want to get your view as to how do you balance a country that people desperately need human rights—desperately need humanitarian assistance, I should say—but have challenges as far as their governments, how they handle their human rights?

How do you leverage America's participation on humanitarian aid to advance the core values of this country in respecting basic human rights?

Ms. MCGEE. Thank you, Senator.

Our American values, as you say, are part of our DNA and underpin everything that we do. USAID uses a needs- based assessment for saving as many lives as possible and [audio malfunction in hearing room] being those who are most vulnerable and in greatest need.

And so we approach that need with as much, again, targeted contextual information and analysis as we can. We respect the needs and rights of those that we are seeking to help and that is the way in which we and our partners conduct our operations.

We work with as many partners and agencies as we can to deliver the best response and that is on policy level, at operational level, and on the ground, executing the programs.

Senator CARDIN. I would just make one additional observation. We are not doing the people any favors when we provide humanitarian aid that gets diverted to corrupt regimes and does not reach the individuals themselves—the people themselves.

So we have to have a pretty firm policy of why we are doing humanitarian aid: To reach people and to advance U.S. values.

So I am going to expect that you will keep our committee informed on how you are meeting that mission. I can tell you there is strong interest among all of our members to advance U.S. humanitarian assistance but also recognizing that we do not want to fund corrupt regimes and see this money just diverted.

Ms. MCGEE. Absolutely, Senator. I share that concern wholeheartedly. USAID does use safeguards and provisions in concert with its partners such as geotagging photos, video distribution of aid, and vetting of bad actors—well, to prevent bad actors and diversion of aid and egregious use. So that is absolutely a concern and I commit to you that I will absolutely ensure taxpayer dollars are used as intended.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Dowd, if I could turn to you just for one moment.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has an explicit political mandate to support democracy. And yet, when we look at its history it has supported a lot of countries that, certainly, are not democracies.

So how do we promote the mission of the Bank? How does U.S. leadership make it clear that we expect our participation to carry out the core mission, which is to promote democracy?

Mr. DOWD. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, indeed, in the founding mandate of the EBRD it explicitly says that this is a democratically-focused bank and it advances democratic values.

And perhaps that has been somewhat forgotten. I do not know. I give them the benefit of the doubt. And, of course, many of the countries with which the EBRD does business are not exactly glowing examples of democratic progress.

But I would hope that the bank will be a voice for democratic participation and it is a long-term process, and I certainly can tell you this.

I will be a strong voice for democracy in all of the bank's dealings and for those values that we as Americans hold, which are free markets, free elections, and democracy.

I think it should be a part and, as I say, it is unique among multilateral banks and that it explicitly calls for that and that is something I will be reminding people of frequently.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you for that answer. That is exactly what I wanted to hear, that you——

[Laughter.]

Mr. DOWD. Well——

Senator CARDIN [continuing]. That is in the core mission of the document and, obviously, it has not been carried out with a lot of the different loans that have been given.

So I appreciate your commitment to remind your colleagues of the mission of the Bank as you go forward with particular projects.

And to all of you, I ask all of our nominees, how are you going to advance American values, how are you going to advance basic human rights, how are you going to advance what makes America truly unique in world participation?

So I will be following up with each of you as to how you will use your position, if confirmed, to advance our values and how you can see working with our committee and how we can work together to accomplish that mission.

Again, thank you all for your willingness to serve.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Ms. McGee, in 2018 USAID underwent some sort of fundamental restructuring, the emphasis was on increasing resiliency. One of the goals associated with that resiliency initiative was to, and this is a quote from USAID documents, "elevate and integrate humanitarian and development assistance through the Office of the Associate Administrator for Relief, Resilience, and Response."

So as the nominee to fill this position, how do you assess USAID's efforts to elevate and integrate humanitarian and development assistance and what, if any, metrics might be available to accurately make that assessment or it might be qualitative instead, which is fine.

Ms. MCGEE. Indeed. Thank you, Senator.

That move was legally put into motion just before former Administrator Green departed USAID earlier this year. He legally estab-

lished the Office of the Administrator with the immediate change being the establishment of this associate administrator position for relief, response, and resilience, as you say, or we say, more briefly, our three.

It is—it is, I think, a reflection just as many organizations contend with addressing the urgent issues while attempting to work towards and continue to work towards strategic objectives.

And so this position and the formation of the three bureaus that it would oversee are a reflection of a cohesive and structural approach to do that, particularly in this COVID environment.

It has been said that if USAID had not designed this new structure, it would need to now. And so I think it was—it was great forethought that that design organizationally was made.

In the position I would be providing strategic direction and priorities and advocacy as well as advice for those—for those bureaus, those being humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention and stabilization, and resilience and food security, and engaging with the interagency and externally with Congress, external stakeholders, private sector host nations, et cetera.

And so that is the approach, again, to address that continuum from immediate humanitarian assistance to the long-term development.

And so part of my role will be—the real focus on integration will be ensuring that collaboration mechanisms are in place, accountability to coordination across those—across those functions so that we are sharing and updating information as we go and so that we are maintaining the focus and delivering on the excellent results that have always been the case through humanitarian assistance and also that long-term development.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you. As you, clearly, have command of where strategically things need to head and it seems you have more than a sense of what steps need to be taken, but if we in Congress can assist in those efforts, moving forward, if any additional authorities might be needed I look forward to working with you on that effort.

Mr. Manso——

Ms. MCGEE. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG [continuing]. OPCW was and has been actively involved in Syria in recent years as the Assad regime has used chemical weapons against the people of Syria.

I know that OPCW has made some valiant efforts to try and hold that regime to account. But he has—Assad has escaped justice, escaped accountability, and continues to—continues to defy international norms and laws.

What more, in your assessment, can OPCW do in Syria to draw attention to the atrocities perpetrated by Assad against his people through the use of chemical weapons?

Mr. MANSO. Well, thank you, Senator, for that question and for touching on this very important issue.

And what I would say is that the Assad regime has escaped accountability thus far, but we are not finished with this issue and this issue is not—the world is not finished with this issue.

So I think there are a number of things that we can do and we are doing, and if confirmed, I would be very aggressive in pursuing these steps.

So the first set of steps would be within the OPCW itself. They are going to conduct further investigations into other attacks to maintain a constant effort to develop the facts, present the facts to the international community, and have a political drumbeat of the need for accountability.

There are then also technical steps we could take within the OPCW such as denying them the right to vote and denying them the right to speak and other types of steps that we can do to indicate that they are in a pariah status and that they are out of compliance with their obligations in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

There are steps we could take at the United Nations including the United Nations Security Council and, lastly, there are steps we could consider bilaterally. We already have taken some bilateral steps including sanctions.

So we are by no means at the end of this story and it is very much the intention of the administration and, if confirmed, my intention to aggressively pursue these steps.

Senator YOUNG. Well, that is incredibly encouraging. Thank you.

Russia has had—they have met with some success, Mr. Manso, in creating a false narrative about the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and as you contemplate stepping into this role with OPCW, what might that organization do as it relates to their findings related to chemical weapons use in Syria that has not already been done, if anything?

Mr. MANSO. Well, thank you for that question. It is, indeed, a very good observation and I have over my career dealt with the Russians a great deal.

And something that you realize is they regard lying as a diplomatic tool. So, therefore, the first thing to do is to make this clear that they are not attached to the truth as something that is important in diplomatic discourse and they are perfectly willing to use untruths.

And I must say that in a number of their efforts of, particularly, trying to tarnish well-known NGOs, or to tarnish the work of the investigative team that was put together by the OPCW, there are ample facts that we need to bring out in terms of public discourse that show that they are reflecting a position that is not true.

But what I would say is this. This is the kind of issue that is not an event. You do not do it once and it is done. It is a process. They will be tireless in promoting a false narrative. So we have to be tireless in promoting the truth. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

Senator YOUNG. So the fact-finding missions—this gets a little more operational—that OPCW sends in to determine whether or not chemical weapons have been used, the composition of those missions, of those teams, has been criticized by the Russians, as I understand it, for not including Russians, right, on the teams.

Is that a fair criticism and, if so, why? If not, why not?

Mr. MANSO. I would say it is not a fair criticism. The OPCW has a commitment to what is called geographic diversity and their

Technical Secretariat. So they do have a broad range of nations represented in their technical secretariat and among their experts.

These teams are multinational teams chosen, largely, on the basis of their expertise and, therefore, the teams also represent a broad base of technical expertise and of nationalities.

But no one country has the right to insist that their nationals be on the team and, I might add, it does not strike me as the best practice if you have a nation that is potentially involved in the incident as an enabler that their nationals be on the team.

So I do not think the Russians have a fair criticism here.

Senator YOUNG. I am grateful for that closing with a dose of common sense. So I think that makes a lot of sense. I do not want Russians on those teams.

So I thank each of you for your patriotism, for your desire to serve. You are all very intelligent people with an incredible record of service, and you have many professional options but you want to serve your country during these challenging times.

That says a lot about you. It says a lot about your families. I am so appreciative for your time and your testimony here today. I know Senator Merkley is as well.

I believe we have votes going on, Senator Merkley. They have been called. They will be called in about two minutes.

So if there are additional questions from any of my colleagues they will submit those questions to you in writing. We hope you will provide a fairly quick turnaround of responses to those questions and the record is going to remain open until the close of business on Friday for that purpose.

So thanks again to each of you. This hearing is now adjourned. Thank you all.

[Whereupon, at 11:32 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JENNY A. MCGEE BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

COVID–19 Supplementing Funding

Question. Congress has appropriated nearly $2B in supplemental funding to USAID to address the global COVID–19 pandemic, more than $500 million of which is under International Disaster Assistance (IDA), an account which you will directly oversee in your role. We understand that USAID has not expeditiously obligated this funding to our partners fighting the pandemic, and is experiencing delays due to friction with the White House.

- What is the reason for the delay?

Answer. Congress appropriated $1 billion in supplemental funding for the pandemic of COVID–19 to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), including $558 million in International Disaster Assistance (IDA). As of June 8, 2020, I understand USAID has committed approximately $185 million in COVID–19 IDA supplemental funding. In preparing for my hearing, I learned that IDA funds are unique in that, once USAID commits funds to a forthcoming award, partners are able to begin implementing activities and expending against that grant, cooperative agreement, or contract, even before final obligation. Implementing partners, including non-governmental organizations, can do this by requesting a Pre-Award Letter (PAL), which is permission from USAID to start work and a promise from the Agency that funding is coming soon. United Nations agencies can do the same by tapping into their internal forward-funding facilities. In effect, at the time of obligation into

an award, USAID then reimburses humanitarian partners for work already undertaken. This means that even before USAID makes a formal obligation, implementing partners are spending IDA money on the ground.

I understand that USAID is prioritizing all awards funded from the IDA account with supplemental appropriations for COVID–19, and that the Agency is moving expeditiously to ensure its partners have these additional resources. In particular, staff have briefed me that USAID is prioritizing resources that scale up and expand ongoing interventions in health and water, sanitation, and hygiene to mitigate the transmission of COVID–19, as well as directing significant resources to respond to growing global food-insecurity related to the pandemic.

I understand the Agency is working to review and resolve bottlenecks and, if confirmed, ensuring USAID is committing and obligating COVID–19 funding expeditiously will be one of my top priorities.

Question. Should you be confirmed, what will you do to ensure that these funds are quickly and efficiently obligated to humanitarian partners fighting the COVID–19 pandemic overseas?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure that committing and obligating funds quickly and efficiently, including supplemental appropriations in the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account, remains the top priority for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Under my leadership, if confirmed, USAID would make every effort to get these additional resources quickly to the Agency's partners so they can continue critical and life-saving programs.

This includes continuing to provide non-governmental organizations (NGOs) partners with Pre-Award Letters (PALs), which enable them to begin implementing programs and spending money against an award prior to the obligation of funds. United Nations partners also mobilize resources against our commitments through their internal forward-financing facilities. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID also continues to reassess its internal processes and systems to identify efficiencies and areas for improvement and apply course-corrections in real time.

In addition, if confirmed, I would ensure USAID increases communications and outreach to its partners to ensure they are aware of the status of their proposals.

Question. In addition, please provide us with your strategy to coordinate an effective U.S. humanitarian response to the global COVID–19 pandemic, in coordination with the Department of State?

Answer. It is critical that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), continue to lead the humanitarian efforts of the United States around the world, especially in humanitarian settings where the COVID–19 pandemic is exacerbating needs among already vulnerable populations. If confirmed, I would continue USAID's ongoing and robust engagement with the Bureau of Population, Migration, and Refugee (PRM) at the U.S. Department of State to ensure a coordinated and holistic humanitarian response. I understand this coordination is most evident in countries like the Lebanese Republic, where USAID will use supplemental funding for COVID–19 from the International Disaster Assistance account to provide emergency food assistance to Syrian refugees and PRM will use supplemental funding appropriated to the Migration and Refugee Assistance account to support complementary interventions, such as education and health care.

Access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Question. We understand that USAID has included specific restrictions on the local and regional procurement of PPE by its partners fighting the COVID–19 pandemic on the ground.

- Please provide us with USAID's policy on partner procurement of PPE in response to the COVID–19 pandemic.

Answer. USAID released the following policy guidance on PPE on June 9, 2020. I understand that this new guidance supersedes the clause on "Covered Material" previously included in awards funded through supplemental appropriations for COVID–19 in the International Disaster Assistance account; the Agency will modify existing awards with this clause accordingly.

USAID's Policy Guidance on PPE/Covered Materials

USAID's implementing partners must seek the prior written approval of their Agreement or Contracting Officer(s) to procure the following supplies with USAID's funds: N95 filtering facepiece respirators; other filtering facepiece respirators; elastomeric, air-purifying respirators and appropriate particulate filters/cartridges; PPE surgical masks; PPE gloves or surgical gloves; ventilators; or COVID–19 test kits

that are meant for the U.S. market. These commodities are collectively called "Covered Material."

However, implementing partners may use USAID's funding to procure Covered Material without further approvals in either of the following two situations:

1. For the protection of, and use by, their staff under both grants and contracts from USAID. In this situation, implementing partners may procure Covered Material from any source; or
2. When procuring Covered Material for the safe and effective continuity of USAID-funded programs, including the protection of beneficiaries (but not the protection of their staff, covered in #1 above), implementing partners may procure Covered Material manufactured locally or regionally, provided the Covered Material is not, and could not reasonably be intended, for the U.S. market.

All other PPE and COVID–19 test kits not mentioned above are not restricted from procurement or subject to limitations pursuant to this guidance.

Collaboration Across USAID

Question. As the administration has made moves to create the R3 structure within USAID, one of the main benefits touted has been better humanitarian and development collaboration within the agency. However, only small component parts of USAID's development functions will be controlled under the R3 umbrella.

- What steps would you take to ensure synergies between the functions of the three bureaus under your control with the rest of the Agency?

Answer. I believe synergies between the functions of the Bureaus for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS), Resilience and Food Security (RFS) and the rest of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are critical to the successful attainment of U.S. national security objectives. If confirmed as Associate Administrator for Relief, Response and Resilience (R3), my role would be to coordinate Agency-wide efforts related to disaster, conflict, resilience, water, nutrition, and food security.

If confirmed, I commit to using existing internal USAID coordination mechanisms to engage with the rest of the Agency. For example, I understand former Administrator Green created the cross-Agency Leadership Councils for Water, Nutrition, and Resilience to facilitate collaboration and ensure a whole-of-Agency response to these issues. In particular, I understand USAID's Resilience Leadership Council engages leadership from across the Regional Bureaus; the Bureau for Global Health; and the Bureau for Education, Economic, and the Environment. It is also my understanding that the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) is expanding its Sector Council on Countering Violent Extremism to serve as a platform for the Agency to discuss issues across peace and security. By involving staff from across the Regional and Functional Bureaus, CPS should ensure the coordination of stabilization and transition issues across the Agency, and serve as a forum for adaptive learning.

In addition to using these existing mechanisms to coordinate between the R3 family of Bureaus and the rest of the Agency, if confirmed, I also would remain open to creating new approaches to enhance and improve that coordination. If confirmed, I commit to promoting a collaboration-minded work environment within the R3 family of Bureaus.

Responsiveness

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, in accordance with law and the rules and regulations of USAID.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through and conducted according to USAID practice.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General?

Answer. Yes, when the Inspector General is the appropriate channel. I am committed to upholding high standards of accountability, and, if confirmed, would not tolerate waste, fraud, or abuse.

Administrative

Question. Has anyone ever made a formal or informal complaint or allegation of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappropriate conduct against you, in a workplace or any other setting? If so, please de-

scribe the nature of the complaint or allegation, your response, and any resolution, including any settlements.

Answer. No. I have not received such complaints or allegations of either a formal or informal nature.

Question. Have you ever addressed concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappropriate conduct made against any employee over whom you had supervisory authority? If so, please describe the outcome and actions taken.

Answer. While I served as the Director of Intelligence at the Headquarters for United States Air Forces in Europe—Air Forces Africa at Ramstein Air Base (July 2015–July 2017)—two incidents of alleged sexual harassment and assault came to my attention.

In the first instance, prior to my arrival, a female enlisted member based elsewhere had accused a junior officer on the staff of sexual assault. The alleged incident occurred a few years earlier, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) was looking into it. My predecessor had suspended the junior officer's access to classified information, an action I continued as his functional senior. Because the allegation involved misconduct by an officer, only the Commanding General had the authority to decide whether or not to prosecute. Ultimately, the AFOSI report was inconclusive as to the underlying assault. However, because the alleged incident occurred while the junior officer and the enlisted member were traveling together, this constituted a violation of the prohibition against fraternization and a demonstration of unprofessional behavior. I therefore coordinated with the office of the Judge Advocate General at Ramstein Air Base to draft a Letter of Counseling for the junior officer and presented it to him with a verbal reprimand, in concert with a video appearance by his Squadron Commander at the time of the incident, to reinforce the same message.

In a second circumstance, it came to my attention that a female junior officer had mentioned feeling uncomfortable around a new male civilian employee. They worked in an office that was two levels below me in the Intelligence Directorate. I take even non-verbal cues and discomfort very seriously, and asked for the junior officer to come speak to me privately so I could better understand her concerns about what had transpired. While the junior officer did not report any verbal or physical incidents, she conveyed her feelings of unease around the civilian. I told her that, regardless of whether or not he was aware that his conduct was causing her to feel uncomfortable, it was nevertheless not appropriate. I advised that she begin formally documenting her uncomfortable experiences, explaining that her documentation would be useful in the event of continuing or worsening issues that might lead to a need for formal personnel action against the civilian, and that her notes would be most helpful if she made them contemporaneously. I also assured her that I would be tracking the situation closely, and that she could contact me personally with any further concerns. Following our conversation, I spoke directly with the civilian's supervisor, shared the discussion I had with the junior officer, and took steps to ensure the her interactions with the civilian were limited moving forward. I instructed the supervisor to incorporate this situation into his planned counseling of the civilian regarding a handful of other issues, to watch closely, and to formally document the complaint in the event that issues continued or worsened. As I was shortly departing for my next assignment, I ensured my Deputy was aware of the situation, so that any needed, appropriate follow-up would occur following my departure.

Question. Do you agree that any targeting of or retaliation against career employees based on their perceived political beliefs, prior work on policy, or affiliation with a previous administration, is wholly inappropriate and has no place in the federal government?

Answer. Yes, I agree that the federal government should not employ prohibited personnel practices.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that all employees under your leadership understand that any retaliation, blacklisting, or other prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated?

Answer. Retaliation, blacklisting and other prohibited personnel practices are never acceptable, and if confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would not tolerate them.

I know equal employment opportunity (EEO), diversity, and inclusion are among USAID's core values. Even from the outside, I can see the Agency is dedicated to removing impediments to inclusion by enforcing EEO laws and policies; promoting

diversity; and providing an environment free of discrimination and harassment in which all employees are valued, and can contribute to their fullest potential.

I understand that USAID follows the statutorily required process for redress for employees who have faced harassment, including sexual harassment, which includes set timeliness and protections against retaliation. If confirmed, I would follow these processes.

Additionally, I understand that USAID provides mandatory training on the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (the NO FEAR Act) to all employees every two years as required by law, and the Agency's Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD) conducts anti-discrimination and anti-harassment trainings. I also understand that, as part of USAID's onboarding program, employees receive harassment training upon their entrance on duty—which is vitally important. If confirmed, I commit to taking this training as soon as I assume the job.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JENNY A. MCGEE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. 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. Prior to my active duty military service, for years I had planned a career as a journalist.

I took journalism courses and served as editor-in-chief of both my high school and college newspapers. I have always believed in the criticality of a free press, and that free and independent journalism is vital to open and democratic societies.

I then embarked on a 31-year career in the U.S. Air Force, during which I swore to uphold our Constitution. As an intelligence officer, I have reported on other governments' crackdowns on their citizens, as well as various forms of undemocratic acts and maltreatment to inform policy-makers and my chain of command. I have also produced intelligence about foreign actors who sought to attack our democracy, or that of our allies. This includes my tours of duty in the White House Situation Room and on the staff of the National Security Council. In addition, when assisting partner governments in the development of their intelligence/security services or military intelligence capabilities, the protection of human rights and democratic values was fundamental and underpinned all discussions.

Diversity

Question. 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?

- What steps will you take to ensure each of your supervisors at USAID are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) works to support communities in our partner countries as they address some of the most challenging and complex issues in the world today. To be successful, the Agency's leaders must draw upon a diverse range of perspectives to ensure proposed programmatic interventions consider the broadest range of factors possible. This diversity of thought is the strength that drives the most creative and innovative solutions to the challenges in our partner countries.

In my military experience, valuing diversity and ensuring every team member has a voice have been critical to success, and will continue to be core tenets of my leadership approach. If confirmed, I would continue to incorporate these practices in my leadership and draw upon the tremendous diversity of experience and expertise of the USAID team and its implementing partners. I also would make clear my expectations for this to my leadership team and hold them accountable.

This approach is also consistent with broader USAID principles, as championed by former Administrator Mark Green, Acting Administrator John Barsa, and Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick. If confirmed, I would ensure the R3 family of Bureaus emphasizes diversity and inclusion in its daily operations and professional development opportunities and engagement, in full compliance with the Agency's regulations, practices, and norms, with an eye to developing the most-effective programs on behalf of the American people.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. I commit to complying with all relevant Federal ethics laws, regulations and rules, and to raising concerns that I might have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant Federal ethics laws, regulations and rules, and to raising concerns that I might have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. No, not to my knowledge.

Role of Associate Administrator

Question. The position for which you are nominated, Associate Administrator for Relief, Response, and Resilience, is a new position at USAID with oversight responsibilities for three new bureaus: Humanitarian Assistance, Conflict Prevention and Stabilization, and Resilience and Food Security.

- How will you work to support and empower USAID Foreign Service officers and civil service employees with significant experience in development and humanitarian assistance? How would you ensure that their expertise is reflected in policy and programmatic decision-making?

Answer. I mentioned during my opening statement that, in preparation for my hearing, I had the opportunity to meet with many dedicated Foreign Service Officers (FSOs), members of the Civil Service (CS), and contract staff at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). I understand that FSOs and CS employees are part of the organizational makeup of the Bureaus for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) and Resilience and Food Security (RFS) at USAID. The Bureaus have FS and CS employees in senior management, middle management and non-supervisory positions. USAID staff have briefed me that the unique perspectives and expertise of FSOs, CS employees, and others have been part of all aspects of the design and decision-making process around Transformation.

USAID's FSOs bring a wealth of knowledge from their experience in working at the Agency's field Missions across the world to manage programs that address a range of humanitarian and development challenges. The Agency's CS employees provide institutional knowledge from their experience in serving in various parts of USAID headquarters, especially engagement with the interagency, Congress, and other U.S. stakeholders.

If confirmed, I commit to listening to, and relying on the expertise and diverse perspectives of, FS, CS and contract employees to make well-informed decisions about USAID's programming and policies.

Question. How do you intend to work with and learn from humanitarian and development implementers? Will you commit to engaging with outside organizations working in this space?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging regularly with humanitarian and development actors around the world to coordinate our efforts to save lives and assist communities in need. Thanks to the generous support of Congress and the American people, the United States is the world's leading provider of humanitarian and development assistance; however, because of growing need and protracted crises, I understand the ability of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to create innovative solutions and effective responses often depends on successful partnerships with other organizations.

If confirmed, I would ensure USAID deepens and strengthens its partnerships with key actors, including United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, and the private sector. I recognize that USAID cannot achieve its mission without these relationships, and I look forward to listening to, and learning from, these partners. I also commit to relying on USAID's field staff, who regularly engage with a variety of actors on the ground and who provide vital country-specific and regional context, to inform my decision-making. For this work to be successful and sustainable, we must create interventions

that are appropriate, targeted, and not duplicative, to ensure maximum effectiveness and impact.

USAID Restructure

Question. Major restructuring in an agency is difficult at any time, and is likely to be more complicated now as USAID is in the midst of helping countries fight the coronavirus pandemic.

- How do you plan to coordinate the respective roles of the State Department and USAID in their shared humanitarian responses under this new USAID bureau?

Answer. The Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) became operational on June 5, 2020. USAID is responsible for more than $6 billion of the U.S. Government's approximately $9 billion humanitarian assistance portfolio. I believe the Transformation will strengthen USAID's role as the Lead Federal Coordinator for international disaster assistance, and will elevate and unify its humanitarian voice in the U.S. Government interagency, and with international partners.

I understand USAID/BHA and staff in the Bureaus of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and International Organization Affairs (IO) at the U.S. Department of State communicate regularly to ensure strong coordination of their respective roles and to enable the U.S. Government to speak with one voice on global humanitarian responses and issues.

To further elevate this coordination, in November 2018 Secretary Pompeo and then-USAID Administrator Mark Green launched the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Council (HASC), the senior-level body tasked with improving the effectiveness and accountability of U.S. and international humanitarian efforts and increasing burden-sharing.

If confirmed, I would co-chair the HASC and continue its important work, which aims to align U.S. humanitarian assistance to the President's foreign policy and national security priorities, and contributes to the smooth and effective delivery of humanitarian aid. Closer coordination results in better information sharing, better insight into dynamics on the ground in all affected countries, and better understanding of the plans of our important United Nations and non-governmental partners, at global, regional, and country levels.

If confirmed, I would work to coordinate USAID's humanitarian assistance closely with all of the Departments and Agencies of the U.S. Government, including the U.S. Department of State.

Question. Will restructuring the bureaus of Humanitarian Assistance, Conflict Prevention and Stabilization, and Resilience and Food Security improve USAID's effectiveness?

Answer. As Associate Administrator for Relief, Response, and Resilience (R3), I would oversee the newly created Bureaus for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS), and Resilience and Food Security (RFS) at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). I understand the intent of the new structure is to further strengthen USAID's efficient and holistic approach to programming, across the spectrum of preventing, preparing for, responding to, and mitigating disasters. Also, I expect the new R3 structure would elevate USAID's voice with U.S. Government interagency colleagues on these issues.

If confirmed as R3 Associate Administrator, I would lead a focused and coordinated structure to provide strategic and cohesive guidance to the three R3 Bureaus. I would set priorities, promote an integrated approach across all three Bureaus, and work creatively to improve effectiveness in achieving the R3 Vision across the allied investment strategies. Each Assistant to the Administrator (AtA) for an R3 Bureau would serve as the "first-line" of day-to-day coordination within and across the R3 Bureaus, and with the wider Agency. I would support the R3 AtAs by providing higher-level direction and representation within the Agency and beyond.

I understand the restructuring of BHA, CPS and RFS will improve USAID's effectiveness in the following ways:

BHA. BHA will unite and elevate U.S. humanitarian assistance into one Bureau that can respond better to the magnitude, complexity, and protracted nature of today's emergencies. BHA will create a strong platform for more coordinated and more effective responses to humanitarian crises. It will achieve efficiencies by eliminating redundancies and optimizing resources for joint operations, and integrating food and non-food humanitarian assistance further. USAID recognizes the importance of interagency and multilateral coordination, and this unified structure will enable USAID to maintain a lead role in global coordination.

CPS. Once operational, CPS will elevate USAID's capabilities to analyze fragility and conflict; strengthen the Agency's focus on preventing violent extremism; and coordinate efforts in prevention, stabilization and response. The proposed CPS Bureau will have a field-driven focus, and also will manage civilian-military coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense to inform and support U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities.

RFS. RFS became fully operational in early March 2020. The new Bureau elevates resilience and nutrition and strengthens coordination across the technical areas of agriculture-led growth; water security, sanitation and hygiene; nutrition; and resilience. Through the new structure, and close collaboration with the other two Bureaus under the R3 structure, RFS will help vulnerable families and communities transition from crisis—including recurrent crises—to development and, ultimately, self-reliance. RFS continues the work of Water for the World Act to expand safe and sustainable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene for all, and the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative to combat global hunger, poverty, and malnutrition.

Question. What challenges do you anticipate facing in this new Associate Administrator role and with the new bureaus under its purview? How do you plan to overcome these challenges?

Answer. Today, we are seeing the rise of protracted, man-made disasters as well as continued risk from natural disasters. To respond effectively to these complex challenges, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) must coordinate its humanitarian, conflict prevention, resilience and food security programming to address the needs of affected populations holistically. The creation of the new R3 family of Bureaus under one Associate Administrator provides an opportunity to strengthen linkages between humanitarian and development assistance, and more broadly, across the peace, development, and humanitarian continuum. If confirmed, I commit to build on USAID's experience with cross-Agency efforts to build resilience in areas of recurrent crisis, with the aim of fostering more stable and peaceful societies.

USAID also operates in complex environments where coordination poses unique challenges. To address them, it is critical to maintain flexibility to adjust and refine approaches, based on needs on the ground and by using a range of interventions. If confirmed, I would rely on the counsel of my staff in Bureaus for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS), and Resilience and Food Security (RFS) to develop and carry out coordinated, creative solutions that draw upon each of their unique perspectives and toolkits.

For example, I understand the programs USAID has funded in the Sahel region of West Africa showcase this collaborative approach. The Sahel continues to face a number of shocks and vulnerabilities with varied causes: scarcity of water, extreme weather, high levels of poverty, low access to health care, lack of access to high quality basic education, poor governance, and increased conflict and violent extremism. Emergency assistance alone cannot solve these complex problems; they require comprehensive responses that allow communities to become and remain more self-reliant. I know USAID's programs make important contributions toward this goal. Both BHA and RFS fund distinct, but complementary, activities to address immediate needs and build resilience to food-insecurity, persistent poverty, conflict, and recurrent climate shocks. CPS is strengthening resistance to violent extremist organizations by building the capacity of local groups, improving community-government collaboration, promoting community cohesion, productively engaging youth most vulnerable to recruitment, and supporting reintegration and reconciliation. If confirmed, I commit to continue to build on these types of integrated, combined efforts help households and communities become more resilient and less vulnerable to shocks and stresses.

Coronavirus Pandemic

Question. The unprecedented coronavirus pandemic has consumed countries' focus around the world.

- How do you believe the global coronavirus pandemic will shape the focus of the Humanitarian Assistance, Conflict Prevention and Stabilization, and Resilience and Food Security bureaus?

Answer. I believe the coronavirus pandemic and the increasing frequency and complexity of shock and stresses that communities and countries face require the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to do business differently. I understand USAID has brought these three Bureaus together to form a more robust

and comprehensive link between sustainable development and the response to, and mitigation of, conflict.

BHA. The COVID–19 pandemic is re-shaping the humanitarian landscape by creating new needs across the globe while exacerbating emergencies that existed prior to the pandemic. I understand BHA is deploying resources to address the immediate, short-term impacts of the pandemic. However, BHA is beginning to see the secondary and medium-term impacts of COVID–19 become increasingly intertwined with pre-existing vulnerabilities. In East Africa, for instance, pandemic-related economic and market stressors are compounding the impact of drought, conflict, and the infestation of desert locusts. This will require BHA not only to prioritize resources carefully to save the most lives, but also to continue to work with partners to adapt programs to be more "COVID-sensitive" moving forward. If confirmed, I look forward to working with BHA to continue to adapt and improve our humanitarian programming, by taking into account the lessons learned during this COVID–19 pandemic.

RFS. The economic impact from efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID–19 have far-reaching implications for food production systems, including small- and medium-sized businesses and people's livelihoods, incomes, and ability to grow, raise, and purchase food. These effects will continue for years to come, as an estimated 148 million people could become poor and hungry because of measures put in place to mitigate the spread of COVID–19 (a full 20-percent increase over current levels). COVID–19 also is already causing financial losses for water and sanitation utilities, which threatens services now and into the future. In response, I understand RFS is helping USAID's Missions flex their existing development programming to help keep vulnerable families from backsliding further into need while mitigating disruptions to these systems, protecting development gains, and speeding economic recovery. If confirmed, I look forward to working with RFS to ensure this rapid response continues and adapts as new data and analysis become available on COVID–19's far-reaching impacts.

CPS. COVID–19 is much more than a health and economic crisis. The COVID–19 pandemic has the potential to undermine USAID's efforts in fragile contexts and further destabilize these already volatile environments. I understand many of the countries in which USAID funds programs already were in acute crisis, recovering from crisis, or in the middle of a fragile political transition even before the COVID–19 pandemic. With the onset of the pandemic, we are already observing concerning trends. Some authoritarian governments are using the crisis to further entrench their power and curb rights. Traditionally marginalized populations, including women, are under increased threat during the pandemic, which require increased protections. Corrupt and criminal actors are exploiting the crisis to misuse and divert life-saving funds and resources. In some cases, violent extremist organizations are capitalizing on the pandemic by increasing attacks where security forces are distracted, blaming the West and neighboring governments for the effects of COVID–19, spreading disinformation, and stepping in as health providers to gain popular support. Foreign malign actors, such as the Communist Party of China and the Kremlin also are exploiting the pandemic to promote their authoritarian governance models. Support for preventing and stabilizing conflict are critical for responding to these challenges, ensuring an effective response to the pandemic, and helping communities stay on a path toward self-reliance. If confirmed, I look forward to working with CPS to ensure that USAID is mitigating the impacts of COVID–19 on fragile societies.

Question. As countries begin to recover from the pandemic, how will you work to strengthen resilience so countries can better withstand future shocks? How can USAID ensure that partner country governments and civil society have ownership in this process?

Answer. Amid the pandemic of COVID–19, it is more important than ever to make progress in coordinating across humanitarian and development actors and to support joint and cross-sector analyses and country-led collective outcomes. If confirmed, I would ensure the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is layering, sequencing, and integrating its humanitarian assistance with longer-term programs to address current and future risks. I understand USAID coordinates across sectors to reduce shocks and stresses that lead to an increased need for humanitarian assistance. These efforts involve host-country governments and civil society, with the understanding that lasting progress can only happen when they are owners of their own development. COVID–19 compounds numerous existing shocks

people in developing countries already face, especially in areas of recurrent crises. If confirmed, I would strengthen USAID's partnerships with host-country governments and civil society to improve early warning, early response, and other systems and build national capacity and commitment to prepare for and manage shocks, reduce future humanitarian needs, and advance communities on the Journey to Self-Reliance.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. J. STEVEN DOWD BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. When reviewing projects at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), what criterion will you use in determining whether the United States will support energy development projects?

Answer. First of all, I would consider any United States legal requirements. I will insist that energy projects are driven by and respectful of the circumstances and needs of recipient countries, not dictated by others. And, I will demand that any energy alternative guarantees value for money, cost efficiency, and maximum impact for the people for whom a project is designed.

Question. Do you believe the EBRD should support all types of energy resources?

Answer. Absolutely. I embrace the all of the above strategy, driven by analytics that demonstrate the highest return on investment and the most cost-effective delivery to consumers.

Question. Will you commit to objecting to and voting against additional restrictions on financing and investments for energy projects at the EBRD?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Please identify the current financing and investment restriction in place for energy projects at the EBRD.

Answer. The EBRD approved a revised Energy Sector Strategy in December 2018, which states that the EBRD will not finance any greenfield coal-fired power plant except in rare circumstances, where there are no economically feasible alternative energy sources. The U.S. Executive Director at the time voted against this strategy. The EBRD does finance oil and gas projects that meet its requirements for additionality, sound banking, and transition impact.

Question. Do you pledge to work to eliminate these financing restrictions and other barriers to financing of traditional energy resources, such as coal, oil and natural gas at the EBRD?

Answer. Yes.

Question. 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. Yes.

Question. How much financial assistance has the United States made to the EBRD?

Answer. Unlike other multilateral development banks, the EBRD only makes market-based loans and calls on shareholders for capital increases much less frequently. The United States has not provided new paid-in capital to the EBRD since 2006. Our total paid in capital contributions are $636 million. The United States makes targeted contributions to donor trust funds hosted at the EBRD; for example, in 2019 the United States gave $5 million to the Small Business Impact Fund (SBIF), which supports lending and advisory services for over a million SMEs. Total U.S. contributions to EBRD trust funds since the EBRD's inception in 1991 is $552 million.

Question. What level of influence does the United States have over the EBRD operations and EBRD loan policy?

Answer. The United States has a 10 percent shareholding in the EBRD. Consequently, we do not have veto power, but I will be a strong voice for commonsense loan policies, especially in the realm of energy projects. I will work closely with like-minded shareholders to seek to guide the EBRD's investment operations in line with U.S. policy objectives.

Question. Do you believe poverty alleviation and economic development should be primary goals of the EBRD?

Answer. Yes, but in the case of the EBRD, these goals are furthered through focus on private sector development and promoting transition to a market economy and democracy.

Question. What specific criterion should be used to determine whether a country needs to graduate from the EBRD? What countries have already graduated from the EBRD? What countries are close to graduating?

Answer. Graduation from EBRD borrowing for the most advanced transition countries remains a fundamental principle of the EBRD and I believe it should be a priority for the United States. However, progress on graduation has been delayed, initially due to the prolonged financial crisis in Europe, spillover effects of Russian aggression in Ukraine, and most recently the economic impacts of the current pandemic.

The Czech Republic graduated from EBRD borrowing in 2007. The other seven EBRD member countries that joined the European Union in 2004 (Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia) are expected to graduate from the EBRD in the medium term.

Question. What do you believe the position of the United States should be regarding EBRD's interest in expanding to different regions including sub-Saharan Africa?

Answer. I do not see a strong case for EBRD expansion into sub-Saharan Africa at this time. I question the EBRD's ability to utilize its specialized knowledge in this region and see potential for the EBRD to disrupt the work of existing institutions in the region such as the AfDB. The EBRD should instead focus on the less advanced countries where it already operates and support their transition to fully functioning private sector-driven economies.

Question. Along with the EBRD, other development banks, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and national development banks, are funding projects in EBRD member countries. How can the United States ensure the development banks are not duplicating efforts, creating redundancies, and working at cross-purposes?

Answer. Treasury works to encourage coordination between multilateral and bilateral development finance institutions to ensure complementary finance in all regions, including through close coordination between the U.S. Executive Director's Offices at the International Financial Institutions, Treasury, and other U.S. agencies. In EBRD's case, its transition mission and strong focus on private sector and sub-sovereign public finance (e.g. municipal services) differentiate it from those MDBs which provide sovereign guaranteed public finance.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. J. STEVEN DOWD BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Democracy and Human Rights

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

Answer. At the African Development Bank, I have consistently and forcefully spoken out for human rights and democracy. For example, I have spoken both formally and informally in opposition to human trafficking and child labor. I have also assisted my wife, where appropriate, in her fight for legal and property rights for women and girls. With respect to the impact such interventions have, I would say that change is a slow process, but consistent messaging and effort will hopefully deliver long-term improvements in the lives of those suffering under cruel circumstances. I have also been insistent that the African Development Bank champion democracy as a philosophical underpinning of its transactions throughout Africa. There has been resistance to this effort, but I am an indefatigable champion for democracy.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in the countries where EBRD works? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Among the most pressing challenges across the region are weak institutions, high levels of corruption, and bureaucratic red tape that foster opportunities for corruption. These institutional weaknesses and corruption create space for non-democratic actors, including China, Russia, and transnational terrorist groups, to undermine democratic governance, human rights, and economic freedom via a variety of means including force, predatory lending, and misinformation and propaganda. Russia, Belarus, and other countries in the EBRD's region have struggled to make progress to build democratic institutions. It is core to the EBRD's mission to support countries committed to building multi-party, pluralistic democratic institutions, and I believe the EBRD should continue to provide frank assessments of countries' progress in all of these areas and to support those countries that are making progress.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in the countries where EBRD works? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The EBRD has a unique mission to support the transition of countries from command economies to multi-party democracies with market economies. The EBRD's political mandate as stated in Article 1 of its charter makes it unique among development banks. The United States views this mandate as a critical element to the EBRD's work in the region to promote vibrant and open democracies.

I will advocate for the EBRD to support countries in strengthening public institutions, improving public financial management, and improving transparency and anti-corruption, while opposing assistance to countries that are gross violators of human rights. I will also advocate for EBRD to consult actively with civil society groups and implement robust safeguards and accountability over its operations. I look forward to working with you and your staff to encourage democracy and democratic values. I will work with EBRD management and staff to promote democratic policies in recipient countries and apply calibrated approaches to operating in countries that are not making progress on the transition to democracy. I will work with other U.S. Government stakeholders (State Department, USAID, DFC, among others) to increase visibility on these core principles. Our legislative mandates help us to highlight these values in practical terms, and our application of them to EBRD projects encourages the EBRD to pursue additional, similar efforts to address the concerns we highlight in recipient countries.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S., local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in the countries where EBRD works?

Answer. Yes. As U.S. Executive Director at the African Development Bank (AfDB), I have met with representatives of civil society organizations, including to understand how people adversely affected by an AfDB-financed project engage through the institution's own independent review mechanism to ask for compliance with established policies and procedures.

Question. Will you and your mission teams actively engage with the countries where EBRD works on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in the countries where EBRD works, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in the countries where EBRD works? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in the countries where EBRD works?

Answer. EBRD promotes and encourages diversity in the workplace, including in countries where EBRD has a presence. I will support the institution in continuing this practice

Responsiveness

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to appear before this committee upon request, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Administrative

Question. Following President Trump's comments last year welcoming derogatory information on a U.S. political figure from foreign entities, it is important that the Treasury Department have explicit guidance for all of its personnel on how to deal with this scenario. If a foreign person or government approaches you or a staffer at the mission with derogatory information on a U.S. political figure, what is your understanding of official Treasury Department policy on how to handle this specific situation? Has a cable with clear guidance on how to handle this specific situation been sent to all U.S. embassies?

Answer. Should I find myself in this kind of an interaction, I would abide by guidance from the State Department and the Treasury Department as well as relevant U.S. laws. My understanding is that I would report this to the Treasury Department Inspector General or the State Department Inspector General and, if needed, report this issue to the Regional Security Officer and other law enforcement colleagues and hand over any and all information.

Question. Has anyone ever made a formal or informal complaint or allegation of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappropriate conduct against you, in a workplace or any other setting? If so, please describe the nature of the complaint or allegation, your response, and any resolution, including any settlements.

Answer. No.

Question. Have you ever addressed concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappropriate conduct made against any employee over whom you had supervisory authority? If so, please describe the outcome and actions taken.

Answer. No.

Question. Do you agree that any targeting of or retaliation against career employees based on their perceived political beliefs, prior work on policy, or affiliation with a previous administration, is wholly inappropriate and has no place in the federal government?

Answer. I agree that the federal government should not employ prohibited personnel practices.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that all employees under your leadership understand that any retaliation, blacklisting, or other prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated?

Answer. I will work to ensure that the EBRD maintains strong and effective institutional policies addressing these and related issues for all EBRD staff, including a strong whistleblower policy and staff code of conduct.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. J. STEVEN DOWD BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. At the African Development Bank, I have consistently and forcefully spoken out for human rights and democracy. For example, I have spoken both formally and informally in opposition to human trafficking and child labor. I have also been insistent that the African Development Bank champion democracy as a philosophical underpinning of its transactions throughout Africa. There has been resistance to this effort, but I am an indefatigable champion for democracy.

Diversity

Question. 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. On a personal level, I absolutely embrace diversity. Operationally, the position does not involve much in the way of direct hiring, but among those assigned to our office the message is all are welcome, and all are respected. If confirmed, I will endeavor to ensure that the EBRD applies similar principles in its approach to recruitment, retention, and promotion of staff.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the EBRD are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. Again, as a board member I will not have direct say in bank hiring. However, I will always support and encourage diversity and inclusiveness. In the event that I were to observe disrespectful behavior in any context, I would voice opposition decisively and categorically.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the Treasury 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country abroad?

Answer. No.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. RICHARD M. MILLS, JR. BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. From the date of your arrival in Canada in November 28, 2018, until Ambassador Craft's departure on June 23, 2019, how many days did you serve as Chargé d'Affaires? (Note: Please list the total number of calendar days between your arrival and June 23, 2019, as well as the number of days that you served as Chargé).

Answer. From the date of my arrival at the Mission (November 10, 2018) to the Ambassador's final departure from post (August 23, 2019), I served a total of 172 full or partial days as Chargé d'Affaires, out of a total of 287 calendar days.

Question. Did you sign any departure notices/cables for Ambassador Craft when she traveled outside of Canada?

Answer. Yes, it is common practice for a Chargé d'Affaires to sign out Request for Permission cables for their chiefs of mission. I did that as necessary, including on cables requesting amended travel itineraries.

Question. Following Ambassador Craft's tenure in Ottawa, did U.S. Embassy Ottawa implement any changes to policies or procedures with regard to absences from post?

Answer. No, those policies and procedures for Chiefs of Mission are set by the Department and overseen by the Under Secretary for Management.

Question. Please describe any impact on U.S. Embassy Ottawa that Ambassador Craft's absences had on operations or staff morale.

Answer. Morale among mission staff in Ottawa and the U.S. constituent posts across Canada was excellent during the Ambassador's tenure, and operations continued without interruption when the Ambassador was traveling. She was in every

instance available and involved in Mission activities, including providing guidance and direction as necessary.

Question. In the instances in which Ambassador Craft traveled outside of Canada without State Department authorization or extended without authorization a previously approved trip, did you provide Ambassador Craft with any guidance about the importance of always seeking official approval from the State Department for her trips? Please detail any such guidance that you provided.

Answer. During my overlapping tenure with the Ambassador, I can recall no instance in which there was a failure to request and receive authorization for such travel.

Question. Do you agree that a strong, consistent, and visible presence at the U.S. mission to the United Nations is important?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you commit to providing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with updates, when requested, regarding your own attendance or absence from the U.S. mission to the United Nations as well as Ambassador Craft?

Answer. Yes, I agree to accommodate all congressional requests for information by supplying the requested information to the fullest extent, consistent with applicable statutes, the U.S. Constitution, and Department of State procedures.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Has anyone ever made a formal or informal complaint or allegation of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappropriate conduct against you, in a workplace or any other setting? If so, please describe the nature of the complaint or allegation, your response, and any resolution, including any settlements.

Answer. No.

Question. Have you ever addressed concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappropriate conduct made against any employee over whom you had supervisory authority? If so, please describe the outcome and actions taken.

Answer. Over the course of my career, I have had occasion to address workplace interactions that resulted in damage to office cohesion and relationships. In those rare instances, I employed counseling and team-building measures that improved communication and strengthened morale. If confirmed, I will be keenly attuned to such matters, including any conduct that might constitute sexual harassment or discrimination.

Question. Do you agree that any targeting of or retaliation against career employees based on their perceived political beliefs, prior work on policy, or affiliation with a previous administration, is wholly inappropriate and has no place in the federal government? If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that all employees under your leadership understand that any retaliation, blacklisting, or other prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated?

Answer. Yes. I agree that the federal government should not employ prohibited personnel practices. I take allegations of such practices seriously and if confirmed,

I will maintain a policy of no tolerance for retaliation, blacklisting, or other prohibited personnel practices.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. RICHARD M. MILLS JR. BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promotion of the U.S. human rights and democracy agenda has been a key component of my career, from serving as the Human Rights Officer during my second overseas tour at Consulate St. Petersburg to my time at Embassy Baghdad as the Senior Democracy Advisor, responsible for overseeing all of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor programs in Iraq. Looking back, I assess my most meaningful accomplishments are two.

First, during my tour at USUN, leading the Mission's effort to create the Special Court for Sierra Leone, intended to provide accountability and justice to the victims of the country's decade long civil strife. I visited the country as part of that effort and worked with human rights groups, the host country legal community, and the U.N. system, to build what I assess was a successful mechanism to bring a measure of justice to the country.

Second, as Ambassador to Armenia, I focused the Embassy on assisting the Armenian people in building the infrastructure of democracy. In particular, we focused on fighting corruption through a free press and supporting Armenian organizations pressing for the rule of law and transparency. It was the Armenian people that led the "Velvet Revolution" of 2018, and peacefully removed a corrupt government that held onto power through un-democratic means. I do believe, however, it was the work of the U.S. Embassy in providing the Armenian people with some of the tools to make peaceful change that helped the revolution succeed.

Question. 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 endeavor at every appropriate opportunity to promote diversity in the workplace, promote excellence, and mentor staff from all backgrounds. I have made it a hallmark of my career to cultivate diversity and inclusion, and know firsthand the many benefits of a diverse workplace that embraces dissimilar perspectives and welcomes the views of all.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure that your supervisors and colleagues at the United Nations are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to lead by example and guide with encouragement. Creating and sustaining an inclusive work environment takes effort and attention. I will ensure that supervisors at the U.S. Mission are appropriately trained and accountable, and that all employees know that I am an advocate and an available resource.

Question. 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. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from

the conflict of interest laws. I also currently hold financial interests in a number of companies which have interests in various foreign countries. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JASON MYUNG-IK CHUNG BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. When reviewing projects at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), what criterion will you use in determining whether the United States will support energy development projects?

Answer. We review each project on its own merits, assessing the country's needs, and the consistency with the ADB's strategy in that country. ADB country strategies are negotiated between the developing member country and the ADB with input from the United States and other members. These country strategies provide a roadmap for ensuring that ADB activities provide a coherent and agreed structure.

Question. Do you believe the ADB should support all types of energy resources?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Will you commit to objecting to and voting against additional restrictions on financing and investments for energy projects at the ADB?

Answer. We will review any such proposals consistent with our "all of the above" energy policy, and work to ensure that they reflect U.S. priorities.

Question. Please identify the current financing and investment restriction in place for energy projects at the ADB.

Answer. Under current ADB policy, all energy sector investments will comply with ADB safeguard policies regarding the environment, involuntary resettlement, and indigenous peoples. ADB will not be involved in financing nuclear power generation. ADB will not finance coal mine development except for captive use by thermal power plants, and oil field development except for marginal and already proven oil fields. ADB will support (i) safety in coal mines, (ii) environmentally and socially sound mining practices and efficient use of coal for power generation, (iii) carbon capture and storage (or sequestration) once technologically viable, (iv) coal bed methane extraction and use, (v) coal gasification, (vi) coal scrubbers, (vii) waste coal utilization, and (viii) efficient coal transportation over land and sea.

Question. Do you pledge to work to eliminate these financing restriction and other barriers to financing of traditional energy resources, such as coal, oil and natural gas at the ADB?

Answer. I will work to eliminate any barriers to financing of traditional energy resources, such as coal, oil, or natural gas.

Question. 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. Yes.

Question. How much financial assistance has the United States made to the ADB?

Answer. The United States has paid in $991.2 million in capital contributions since the ADB's inception and has subscribed to an additional $18.8 billion in callable capital. The United States has contributed to $4.3 billion to the Asian Development Fund, the ADB's concessional window.

Question. What level of influence does the United States have over the ADB operations and ADB loan policy?

Answer. The United States is the co-largest shareholder in ADB along with Japan, with 12.751 percent voting power each, and the second-largest historical donor to the Asian Development Fund, which provides grants to the poorest and most vulnerable countries in Asia and the Pacific. We are a leading voice on strategic, policy, and operational issues. Our influence is magnified by working closely with like-minded shareholders. With Japan we hold a joint veto over major governance decisions such as the admission of new members and increases in ADB's authorized capital stock.

As I noted in my written and oral testimony, I am particularly proud of our efforts on two issues relevant to using our influence: projects in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), China; and a change in ADB's loan policy to introduce "differentiated pricing" terms. On China, we used leverage generated by legislative mandates to ultimately secure denial of two projects slated for Board consideration in XUAR. We led a coalition with our European partners to force ADB Management to abandon plans to seek approval for the two projects, focusing in particular on the grave human rights issues where the Uyghur people are concerned. One was an urban revitalization project, and the other was a customs and trade facilitation project (cross border). The impact of our actions include that ADB will not propose any new projects in XUAR for the foreseeable future.

On loan pricing, our efforts resulted in the approval of a "differentiated pricing" scheme for sovereign loans. Known as the "Diversification of Financing Terms" initiative in ADB parlance, this initiative strengthens ADB's financial sustainability by requiring upper-middle income nations like China and Kazakhstan, among others, to pay increased premiums for borrowing from the ADB. This initiative will help alleviate the need for a U.S. taxpayer-funded capital increase and mirrors the reforms that the World Bank Group enacted a couple of years ago.

Question. Is poverty alleviation and economic development top priorities at the ADB?

Answer. Yes. The Bank's charter states that "[t]he purpose of the Bank shall be to foster economic growth and co-operation in the region of Asia and the Far East and to contribute to the acceleration of the process of economic development of the developing member countries in the region, collectively and individually."

Question. Along with the ADB, other development banks, including the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and national development banks, are funding projects in ADB member countries. How will you ensure ADB is not duplicating efforts, creating redundancies, and working at cross-purposes?

Answer. All the multilateral development banks (MDBs), including the ADB, prepare a Country Strategy (CPS) for each country. These documents describe the sectors in which the ADB plans to engage and are guided by both the country's own development strategy and the ADB's corporate priorities. The Board receives updates from the country teams ahead of a CPS and the CPS is endorsed by the Board. In both of these instances, we engage to make sure the strategy is appropriate, measured, targeted, and designed to avoid duplication and deliver maximum additionality. In addition, the ADB closely coordinates with all donors in each country to help ensure there is a proper division of labor and to reduce duplication. Any time the United States becomes aware of any duplication or redundancies, we will engage immediately with Senior Bank Management to help de-conflict. Lastly, the ADB also provides Regional Cooperation Strategies for an ADB-defined region or subregion, which also provide us an opportunity to examine strategic priorities at a higher level in order to mitigate working at cross-purposes.

Question. What is your view of the ADB's current longterm corporate strategy called "Strategy 2030?"

Answer. I believe Strategy 2030 lays out the viability of ADB as an organization as well as the areas in which to assist client countries in the region. For example, I was pleased that Strategy 2030 clearly articulated a plan to differentiate ADB loan pricing based on recipients' income levels and that it focused on the need to improve application of the ADB's graduation policy to better focus ADB efforts on the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Despite that, I was disappointed that Strategy 2030 fell short in establishing a clear prioritization for ADB as an institution.

Question. Strategy 2030 set out priorities to support ADB member countries in line with commitments made under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris agreement on climate change. The priorities include tackling climate change, building disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability. The United States has announced its withdrawal from the Paris agreement on climate change, which will occur this year. When reviewing projects, what criterion will you use in determining whether the United States will support climate change projects at the ADB?

Answer. The MDBs are well aware of the administration's position with regard to the Paris Climate Accord. The United States is respectful of the interests of many developing countries to borrow from the MDBs to address risks arising from severe

weather. The United States does not support work by the MDBs that directly contribute to implementing the Paris Climate Accord.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JASON MYUNG-IK CHUNG BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Democracy and Human Rights

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

Answer. As I noted in my written and oral testimony, I am proud of our efforts to promote human rights and democracy as they relate to Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), China. We used leverage generated by our legislative mandates to ultimately secure denial of two projects slated for Board consideration in XUAR, China. We led a coalition with our European partners to force ADB Management to abandon plans to seek approval for the two projects, focusing in particular on the grave human rights issues where the Uyghur people are concerned. One was an urban revitalization project, and the other was a customs and trade facilitation project (cross border). The impact of our actions include that ADB will not propose any new projects in Xinjiang Province for the foreseeable future. We remain vigilant on any project that takes place in China, especially in XUAR.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in the countries where ADB works? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The issues most pressing are in the areas of accountable governance, providing for basic human need and human rights issues in some member countries, and the ability to provide relief to those in need. ADB projects provide a significant value to client countries; but on occasion, it is difficult to see how the projects, loans, and technical assistance get to those who need it most. One example would be providing relief for displaced persons. On more than one occasion, civil society organizations (CSO) have sought out our office to point out how ADB and the client government's executing agency did not provide the necessary relief for the displaced population in question. Furthermore, it was the CSO's belief that the Government was complicit in evicting the local population in order for ADB to complete an energy project. As noted in the first question, it is a significant concern on issues of human rights in XUAR and similar issues involving the Rohingya in Myanmar. This specific challenge stems from ADB's ability to ensure ADB resources are not going towards any Burmese entities that are involved with the crisis. Furthermore, it is ensuring that ADB resources supplied to the Government and other international organizations in support of refugees in Bangladesh as a result of the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in the countries where ADB works? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. I believe this is a hallmark of what we can do as we represent the United States at the AsDB. I will advocate for the ADB to support countries in strengthening public institutions, improving public financial management, and improving transparency and anti-corruption, while opposing assistance to countries that are gross violators of human rights. I will also advocate for ADB to consult actively with civil society groups and implement robust safeguards and accountability over its operations. I look forward to working with you and your staff to encourage democracy and democratic values. I will work with ADB management and staff to promote democratic policies in client countries. I will work with other U.S. Government stakeholders (State Department, USAID, DFC, among others) to increase visibility on these core principles. Our legislative mandates help us to highlight these values in practical terms, and our application of them to ADB projects encourages the ADB to pursue additional, similar efforts to address the concerns we highlight in client countries.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S., local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in the countries where ADB works?

Answer. For the last two years as Alternate U.S. Director, I have been a member of the ADB Board Compliance Review Committee, the body that oversees ADB's accountability mechanisms. In carrying out these duties and continuing the strong tradition of close oversight of accountability issues by the U.S. Executive Director's Office at ADB, I have met with NGOs and civil society groups and will continue to do so. I will encourage these groups to seek out our office as issues arise on both proposed and existing projects to work to ensure that the ADB is held accountable.

Question. Will you and your mission teams actively engage with the countries where ADB works on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. I will engage with all groups and encourage my staff to do so as well. If the need arises, I will encourage ADB to work with these key stakeholders and stress the importance of supporting initiatives on which these organized groups focus.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in the countries where ADB works, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in the countries where ADB works? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in the countries where ADB works?

Answer. ADB promotes and encourages diversity in the workplace, including in countries where ADB has a presence. I will support the institution in continuing this practice. I will work with ADB management and Board colleagues to support LGBTQ and human rights endeavors. For example, ADB recently organized a webinar on LGBTQ inclusion in operations in partnership with the World Bank, EBRD, and IDB. I will actively support similar efforts in the future and encourage ADB to build on this initiative.

Responsiveness

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to appear before this committee upon request, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Administrative

Question. Following President Trump's comments last year welcoming derogatory information on a U.S. political figure from foreign entities, it is important that the Treasury Department have explicit guidance for all of its personnel on how to deal with this scenario. If a foreign person or government approaches you or a staffer at the mission with derogatory information on a U.S. political figure, what is your understanding of official Treasury Department policy on how to handle this specific situation? Has a cable with clear guidance on how to handle this specific situation been sent to all U.S. embassies?

Answer. My understanding, based on the trainings and classes on these topics mandated for all Treasury employees, is that I would report such a situation to the relevant security and counterintelligence offices at Treasury. Should I find myself in this kind of an interaction, I would abide by guidance from the State Department and the Treasury Department as well as relevant U.S. laws. In my current position at the ADB—and in the ED position, should I be confirmed—I would also report this foreign contact to security officials at the Embassy, and to other law enforcement colleagues, as needed, and provide them with any and all information in my possession.

Question. Has anyone ever made a formal or informal complaint or allegation of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappro-

priate conduct against you, in a workplace or any other setting? If so, please describe the nature of the complaint or allegation, your response, and any resolution, including any settlements.

Answer. No, not to my knowledge.

Question. Have you ever addressed concerns or allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination (e.g., racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), or inappropriate conduct made against any employee over whom you had supervisory authority? If so, please describe the outcome and actions taken.

Answer. I have not had an instance of these types of issues brought to my attention.

Question. Do you agree that any targeting of or retaliation against career employees based on their perceived political beliefs, prior work on policy, or affiliation with a previous administration, is wholly inappropriate and has no place in the federal government? If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that all employees under your leadership understand that any retaliation, blacklisting, or other prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated?

Answer. I agree that the federal government should not employ prohibited personnel practices. If confirmed, I will maintain a policy to ensure that prohibited personnel practices will not take place.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JASON MYUNG-IK CHUNG BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As I noted in my written and oral testimony, I am proud of our efforts to promote human rights and democracy as they relate to proposed ADB projects in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), China. We used leverage generated by our legislative mandates to ultimately secure denial of two projects slated for Board consideration in XUAR, China. We led a coalition with our European partners to force ADB Management to abandon plans to seek approval for the two projects, focusing in particular on the grave human rights issues where the Uyghur people are concerned. One was an urban revitalization project, and the other was a customs and trade facilitation project (cross border). The impact of our actions include that ADB will not propose any new projects in Xinjiang Province for the foreseeable future. We remain vigilant on any project that takes place in China, especially in XUAR.

Diversity

Question. 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. As an Asian American and someone who comes from an immigrant family, I support staff from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups. I promote diversity of thought and an inclusive decision-making process. I support efforts to hire staff from varying backgrounds to work in the Office of the U.S. Executive Director, consistent with U.S. law.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Asian Development Bank are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. The Office of the U.S. Executive Director promotes diversity and inclusion, both within our office and to the wider ADB community, and we are keenly aware that there are those in the institution who do not share these ideals. I supported setting gender targets in ADB's corporate results framework, including a target to increase the share of female International Staff. I also supported the creation in 2019 of a new Office of Professional Conduct (OPC) to increase awareness around bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, retaliation, and abuse, as well as contribute to workplace conflict resolutions. The OPC promotes best practices at ADB on these issues to foster a positive and productive work environment based on mutual respect regardless of background or position. We will work with ADB management to foster diversity and inclusivity and will work to address the concerns of

those staff who feel that they are retaliated against for issues outside of work performance, consistent with the policies and procedures of the Bank.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the Treasury 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. As indicated in my financial disclosure statement, I have two bank and two ADB retirement accounts abroad, both in the Philippines. I do not have any other foreign financial interests.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOSEPH MANSO BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I worked to promote human rights in Mexico. Working with a range of NGOs, I facilitated a nation-wide effort to monitor the Mexican elections in the mid-1990s. I also led the team that drafted the State Department's human rights reports from 1995 to 1998. These reports had enough of an impact on the Government of Mexico that they asked for human rights consultations with the USG, which was a change from their prior policy of not wanting to talk to us about human rights issues. When President Clinton visited Mexico in the mid-1990s, I proposed and arranged for him to meet with key opposition leaders. During this period, one of Mexico's leading human rights proponents told me he had never felt so respected by the American Embassy.

Question. 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. I strongly agree that diversity is essential, not only is it the right thing to do, it makes us stronger as an organization. If confirmed, I will at the OPCW: recruit from a broad pool of candidates; make everyone feel welcome and part of the team; monitor performance and address any issues early and in a constructive manner working to set each individual up for success; set aside time to mentor officers individually; pay attention to morale issues and to the tone in the office; use my behavior to model correct tone and conduct in the office.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. The current Director General of the OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias, ran on a platform of enhancing staff diversity and gender balance in the Technical Secretariat. DG Arias set the tone for his tenure of DG and for the Organization by selecting a female Deputy Director General from Cameroon. Subsequently, he has followed up by creating a gender point of contact in each division, instituting new hiring practices aimed at attracting more women candidates. The OPCW has increased the number of women in the Technical Secretariat from 22 to 27 percent over the last three years. He is also working to increase geographic diversity, seeking more qualified candidates from Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The disparity is primarily due to a low rate of minimally-qualified applicants from these regional groups applying for positions.

If confirmed, I will publicly support and encourage these steps by OPCW leadership aimed at fostering diversity among the Technical Secretariat, and encourage DG Arias to work to identify additional recruitment tools to make it easier for OPCW positions to be advertised globally. Further, I will encourage other countries to take a vested interest in promoting OPCW positions and ensure that qualified candidates from their country or regional group apply for OPCW vacancies. DG Arias' initiatives can only be actualized if all States Parties remain committed to a gender and geographically balanced workforce.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. Neither I nor any member of my immediate family have any specific financial interests abroad. My investment portfolio includes mutual funds, those funds may hold interests in companies with an international presence, but these are exempt from conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m. in Room SD–106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Rubio, Johnson, Gardner, Barrasso, Portman, Young, Cruz, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, and Booker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

The CHAIRMAN. The hour of 10:00 a.m. having arrived, this hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today the committee will hold a nominations hearing for three very important positions. Our nominees today are the Honorable Marshall Billingslea to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security; the Honorable Curtis Joseph C.J. Mahoney to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State; and the Honorable Carlos Trujillo to be Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

We have two very distinguished guests today to introduce one of our nominees: Senator Pat Roberts and Senator Jerry Moran. And I am going to postpone my opening statement and request that Senator Menendez does the same as we allow Senator Roberts and Senator Moran to introduce one of our nominees. So with that, Senator Roberts, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. PAT ROBERTS, U.S. SENATOR FROM KANSAS

Senator ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, it is a privilege to be here. Thank you for your leadership doing a tough job the best that can be done. It is a privilege to be here with my distinguished colleague, Senator Moran, and we both, of course, think it is a very distinct honor and privilege to introduce Mr. C.J. Mahoney as the nominee for Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

C.J. hails from Russell, Kansas, home of Bob Dole and Arlen Specter, by the way. And I have had the opportunity to talk at length with him over the years. Each time I have been impressed by his intellect, his integrity, his character, his experience so much so this is the second time I have introduced him before a Senate committee. It does not get any better than that.

The professional path that brought C.J. to this point is both unique and exceptional. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School where he was editor of the Yale Law Journal and was a visiting lecturer on international arbitration.

For the past 2 years, he has served as Deputy USTR Representative for Investment Services, Labor, Environment, and Labor. During that time he also played a very key role in securing the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or what we call USMCA. By the way, that stands for United States Marine Corps Always. Actually it is a trade bill. Thank you, C.J. We really needed that very badly.

He has experience working in international disputes and arbitration, each giving him perspective on how best to advise the State Department. Each position that he has held has built his critical reasoning and decision-making skills. This is evident by his peer support and, I venture to say, everyone who knows C.J. and is familiar with his work and exceptional skills.

Mr. Chairman, my colleague, C.J. Mahoney, has my strongest possible support, and I have no doubt he will serve the State Department well in the legal advisory role.

Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much.

Senator Moran?

STATEMENT OF HON. JERRY MORAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM KANSAS

Senator MORAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Thank you and Senator Menendez for the opportunity to be with you this morning and to add my comments to my colleague, Senator Roberts, in support of the confirmation of C.J. Mahoney to serve as Legal Adviser at the State Department.

Senator Roberts and I had this opportunity to do this similar kind of presentation in the Finance Committee when C.J. became the Deputy Trade Ambassador and responsible for half of the globe from Mexico to China, and his significant involvement in USMCA, as Senator Roberts said, was an important component to us getting an agreement. And I am pleased to be here.

I would not reiterate C.J.'s qualifications, but it is one of those Kansans. We all have people in our State that we look to to say, wow, they have done a lot with their lives and they have been very successful and we are very proud of them. And C.J. fits that category not only for me but for folks in his hometown, a town of about 4,000 or 5,000 people. I just was there a couple weeks ago and all wanting to know how C.J. Mahoney was doing. It is something about growing up in a small town and what we now often define as success is honored and esteemed in your hometown. And in the case of C.J., it happens across the State of Kansas.

I met C.J. in 1996. I saw him on television at the Republican National Convention in which he seconded the nomination of Bob Dole for the Republican nomination for the presidency. I then connected with C.J., and he and I traveled the State of Kansas as I was a candidate for Congress. And C.J. became my driver and companion. And we got well acquainted in that circumstance, as you all know from your experiences in campaigning.

And C.J. has demonstrated, at every turn in his life, capabilities, qualifications, integrity, someone that Kansans have every reason to honor and esteem. And I know that if you have had dealings with C.J., you have that sense, and I can tell you that your sense is well founded.

I would finally say, as I did at the hearing in front of the Finance Committee, it was a great honor to introduce C.J. to the committee. He was my very first intern in 1997 as a House Member, then he became an Ambassador, now with your support can become the Legal Adviser to the Department of State. I ask your consideration of C.J. I know this committee has its challenges in the confirmation process at this point, but I hope that the personal aspects and the qualifications of C.J. allow this committee to recommend him favorably to the full Senate where I will proudly vote for my fellow Kansan and neighbor 25 miles down the road.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Menendez, thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senators, thank you very much. We will now proceed, and we know you have a busy schedule. So we will excuse you.

In the meantime, our other two nominees can join us at the table, and we will proceed to opening statements from myself and from Senator Menendez. We will then hear from the candidates and, of course, thereafter we will proceed to question and answer. So with that, we will proceed.

Today we meet to consider the nominations of three qualified individuals for extremely important posts. We welcome you and we thank you sincerely for your willingness to serve and, of course, your families we thank also because we know the sacrifices attached to service.

Each of these positions plays a vital role in U.S. foreign policymaking, and each is in need of a Senate-confirmed leader. It is unfortunate we have had to hold these hearings under these present circumstances, but that is the place we find ourselves.

The nominees are infinitely qualified for these positions and are committed public servants with long track records that highlight their commitment to the United States. There are, indeed, some policy disagreements with them on particular issues. This is the Senate and I would expect nothing less. But in our age-old deference on this committee to civility, I am certain we can get through this.

However, it is time for the nominees to have their public hearing so that members of the committee may ask their questions of the nominees and the public may hear their views on important issues facing our country.

First, we have Marshall Billingslea to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. This position oversees the Bureaus of, one, Political and Military Affairs; number two, International Security and Nonproliferation; and three, Arms Control Verification and Compliance, all issues that this committee has been greatly concerned with.

I agree with Ranking Member Menendez's recent statements that it is key that we have a Senate-confirmed individual in this position. It is vital that our relationship with allied and partner military support our foreign policy goals and that the United States

be able to provide our allies and partners with critical capabilities in a timely manner. The Department must especially prioritize those capabilities and arms transfers most needed to deter Chinese and Russian aggression. Arms control has been a key element of U.S. foreign policy for decades, but there are tectonic shifts in the arms control world that we cannot ignore. We do not pursue arms control merely for its own sake. To safeguard the American people, arms control agreements must be verifiable, enforceable, and effective. We currently lack adequate agreements that fully meet those requirements.

As talks begin with Russia next week on the future of our major nonproliferation agreements, the United States must acknowledge it is entering a new era of arms control. While the U.S. constrains itself to adhere to its arms control obligations, we cannot say that Russia and especially China are likewise constrained by the current arms control frameworks and agreements. The old bilateral model of arms control is no longer sufficient under such conditions.

I look forward to hearing today about how we can move forward to true trilateral discussions that accounts for the interaction between all three major powers, with the full understanding that one of those powers has not indicated its desire to enter into such negotiations or agreement.

Mr. Billingslea is well qualified for this position. He currently serves as Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control at the State Department. In that role, he has been an effective advocate for the United States on these very issues, and just last month, he provided this committee a timely and comprehensive, well thought out classified assessment, which our members truly appreciated.

He has also served as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorist Financing, a position for which he was confirmed by the Senate in June of 2017.

In addition, he served in positions at the Defense Department and NATO under the George W. Bush administration, and he is a former staffer for this committee.

Second, we have Curtis Joseph "C.J." Mahoney to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State. The Legal Adviser, or the L position as it is known at State, is critically important because this person advises the Secretary of State on all legal issues related to the work of the Department, including matters of international law, use of force, and international agreements entered into by the United States.

Mr. Mahoney is well qualified for this challenging position. On March 1, 2018, he was confirmed unanimously by the Senate to be Deputy U.S. Trade Representative for Investment Services, Labor, Environment, Africa, China, and the Western Hemisphere. In this position, he played a key role in negotiating the new USMCA.

Prior to his current position with USTR, he was a partner at the law firm of Williams and Connolly, has served as a law clerk to the former Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Third, we have Carlos Trujillo to be Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. This position is responsible for advising the Secretary on how best to advance U.S. interests in a diverse region that includes a NATO ally, two top U.S. trading partners, and three socialist dictatorships. The U.S. has a vital national

interest in promoting a western hemisphere region that is prosperous, democratic, and secure.

I am concerned about the malign influence of China, Russia, and Iran across the region. Their negative influence is augmented by involving transnational criminal organizations and persistent corruption.

Carlos Trujillo is ready to take on this important job. He currently serves as the U.S. Permanent Representative of the Organization of American States, a position for which he was confirmed unanimously by the Senate in March 2018. At the OAS, Ambassador Trujillo has worked hard to grow and sustain a regional effort to help Venezuelans and Nicaraguans recover their freedom. He has also successfully kept the OAS focused on its core objective of supporting democratic governance.

Prior to his diplomatic service, Mr. Trujillo served in the Florida House of Representatives, as a State prosecutor, and as an attorney in private practice.

With that, I will turn to Senator Menendez.

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

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

And welcome to each of the nominees.

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I want to thank you for listening to the Democratic members on the importance of rebalancing the committee agenda. We urged you to shift away from a nominations-only approach and to rejuvenate the committee's policy and oversight focus. The fact that you finally appear to have secured Secretary Pompeo's testimony in particular is a solid step in the right direction.

But at the same time, I must share my deep disappointment over today's hearing, including that you noticed it unilaterally and over the objection of the committee minority. Today's hearing represents the evisceration of critical committee oversight efforts and of a related and continual pattern of rubber-stamping Trump administration nominees. On both fronts, the committee is caving to the executive branch and moving forward without transparency, accountability, or regard for our constitutional system of checks and balances. Let me explain what I mean.

It is no secret that the President and his Secretary of State recoil from scrutiny. They claim to act on behalf of the American people. Yet, they fight against any congressional or public scrutiny of their actions. This is obviously unacceptable. In response and as a last resort, committee Democrats urged you not to move forward with nominations for positions connected to blatant State Department stonewalling. This was particularly the case with the Legal Adviser and Western Hemisphere positions, as the administration has been particularly obstructionist in those areas. Let me give you just a few examples.

The Department is blocking us from examining the firing of the State Department Inspector General, the very same Inspector General who was investigating Secretary Pompeo at the time of his firing.

The Department has refused to come clean with the legal determinations concerning Saudi Arabia's brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

The administration is withholding key witnesses in a joint Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House investigation into the Trump administration's political targeting of career State Department employees.

And the administration continues to hide the controversial instruments negotiated with Mexico and the Northern Triangle countries.

This is dangerous. Bad things happen when there is no transparency, no accountability, no oversight. We have seen it time and again with this administration.

Yet, Mr. Chairman, by moving forward with this hearing—and I understand it is under significant pressure from Secretary Pompeo—you eliminated any incentive that the Department had to engage and undermined the committee's ability to pursue the public interest to shine a light on the darkest, most disturbing corners of the Trump foreign policy and the Pompeo State Department.

A separate but related problem is the refusal of the administration and some nominees to cooperate on vetting matters. This problem is front and center with Mr. Billingslea. He has simply not come clean about his involvement in Bush-era torture programs, claiming over and over again that he never advocated for torture. The problem is that is just not true. The evidence shows that Mr. Billingslea was a strong advocate for hooding, 20-hour interrogations, forced grooming, sleep deprivation, removal of clothing, face and stomach slaps, and use of dogs in interrogations. We should not be moving forward with Mr. Billingslea's nomination. Period. The stain of torture, combined with his credibility gap, should be disqualifying.

But even if you disagree, Mr. Chairman, at a minimum we should not be moving forward until he truthfully acknowledges his actions, but here he is before us today. So what incentives does he have left to come clean with us?

And it is not just Mr. Billingslea. We have seen it multiple times over the last 2 years: Michael Pack, Darrell Issa, Doug Manchester, and so on.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am deeply dismayed at what this hearing represents. If we are truly a coequal branch of government, we have to act like it. On behalf of the American people, we have to rebalance our relationship with the executive branch regardless of which party is in the White House. Our relevance depends on it, and I hope we can move forward in the future in a different direction.

Finally, a word to the nominees, in particular Ambassadors Mahoney and Trujillo. I am a huge believer—I spent my whole life—in public service, and I have the greatest respect for our career diplomatic and development professionals. I also believe that service as a political appointee is a noble calling and essential to our system. Until this moment, I would have never questioned anyone's decision to serve in a political capacity in any administration, Democratic or Republican. But I am honestly perplexed as to why you are pursuing these nominations.

They are great jobs and honorable ones under normal circumstances.

But nothing about this moment and this administration is normal. We have a President who seeks to divide us domestically, that attacks our allies and coddles our enemies, and we have a Secretary of State that enables him. And this is not the beginning of the administration. We all know its ugliness, its incompetence, and its lawlessness: Charlottesville, Khashoggi, the Ukraine scandal, more recently Lafayette Square, Portland, Oregon, and reportedly a Trump green light for Uighur concentration camps. There is no bottom.

I do not understand why you are signing on to such a tour. I cannot imagine that you will be proud of what you are going to have to advocate for. So why do you want to own it?

I think it is past time for the senior political leadership in this country to stand up and say enough. This is not right and I do not want to be a part of it. We have to ask ourselves that question, and I hope you will reflect on it urgently.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

To make sure that the record is complete on this, you are correct that I did unilaterally notice this hearing over your objections and your staff's objections. However, it should also be noted that that was not done in a vacuum. We negotiated at great length. We were unable to reach an agreement. And as I have said before, my responsibility to move these forward. I understand your arguments and feelings from a political and philosophical basis about the President and about people that need to be in these positions.

Having said that, it is my obligation to move these forward. I am going to. That is the great part of a democracy is we debate these out and then we vote. And the vote will determine the outcome. So that is my objective here is to move these forward and allow everyone on this committee state for themselves whether they throw in with the thoughts that you have or whether they have their own thoughts and go a different direction. And I think that is fair and I think that is the way democracy works. I hope we can do it civilly, and even though we disagree, we can do it in that fashion.

So with that, we will turn to our nominees, and we will start with Mr. Billingslea. Your statement will be included in the record in full, without objection. So if you could please keep your remarks to no more than 5 minutes or so, we would appreciate that. Mr. Billingslea, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Thank you, Chairman. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Pompeo for their trust and confidence in me to serve in this important new role.

First of all, I thank my family, my wife Karen and my two daughters, Morgan and Elsa, for supporting me in my decision to

accept the President's nomination to the Department of State. These positions require enormous family sacrifice, and I could not do this without their love and backing.

It is, Senators, a great pleasure to appear before this committee, which dates to the earliest days of our republic as one of the original 10 standing committees of the Senate, and, in particular, an honor to appear before this body which discharges the Senate's constitutional prerogatives under Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 of the treaty making power. I hope it will be a nice homecoming of sorts. As some of you may know, I began my government career on the professional staff of this very committee.

The experience I gained from my time as an SFRC staffer was formative and has had a lasting influence on my career in government.

In particular, I am gratified to be nominated to lead the T family of bureaus, given that I worked very closely for nearly 7 years with both the T Bureau and with its predecessor, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. In fact, I had the privilege in the late 1990s of co-drafting for the chairman at the time the bipartisan legislation that would fold ACDA into the Department of State and create the Under Secretary position.

So I find myself 21 years later now sitting before you nominated for that very position.

If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to tackling the many and critical national security issues for which the T family is responsible within the Department of State. Some of those challenges are recurring decades-old issues, predating the very creation of the Under Secretary position. And there are newer, emergent problem sets that require fresh and creative thinking.

I am pleased to be nominated to a position with a portfolio with which I am deeply familiar. This is not just from my time serving on this committee staff but also in my tenure as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Negotiations Policy where I worked closely with both the arms control and the nonproliferation functions of T, later as our Assistant Secretary General at NATO, and then as the Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy, I worked closely with the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and its with its Directorate of Defense Trade Controls.

Members will see in my history of public service a career spent working on a wide range of arms control, nonproliferation, and political-military issues. I supported a number of arms control and law of war treaties over the years. I helped move several of those through this committee during the 1990s ranging from START II to the Amended Mines Protocol, the CFE Flank Agreement, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and so on and so forth.

My support for arms control that advances U.S. security and which is both enforceable and verifiable is fully captured in my 2002 testimony as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense before the Senate Government Affairs Committee. In that hearing, I stressed the importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, something I hope we can discuss today, and the value of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as the enhanced access to be afforded under the new Additional Protocol at the time, which I supported during the Bush administration. I also spoke at length

about the importance of multilateral regimes, such as the Australia Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

During that time, I launched expansion of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea Treaty to include proliferation and to provide a basis for interdiction of proliferant traffic on the high seas. And I also drove DOD's support and involvement in the Proliferation Security Initiative. I also testified before this committee on behalf of the Child Soldiers Protocol.

And finally, my time at the Treasury Department over the past 3 years demonstrates my deep and abiding commitment to enforcing global nonproliferation norms, especially U.N. Security Council resolutions. Much of what I did as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury was to confront North Korean proliferation networks that were circumventing the objectives of the NPT and flouting UNSCRs. And similarly, I drove the use of sanctions and other financial tradecraft to disrupt Iranian proliferation networks, as well as their terror apparatus.

It is with this background, my ability to recognize what makes an international agreement a good deal for the United States, and my commitment to verification and compliance and enforcement that led to my appointment as Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control. The President has tasked me with a formidable job, which is to negotiate the most complete, effective, and verifiable arms control agreement possible to safeguard American national security. And that is why he also put me forward for the broader role of Under Secretary.

As the chairman has mentioned, I had a chance to talk to this committee in great detail on our thinking prior to engaging the Russian Federation, and I look forward to sharing additional thoughts as our negotiations in Vienna are set to commence next week.

And let me in closing say that in preparation for this hearing over the past several weeks, I have had a chance to work closely with the professionals in the T family, and it has been a real pleasure to be able to get to know and to work alongside both our Foreign Service officers and our career civil servants, and I look forward to supporting them in the coming days, if confirmed.

Again, Chairman Risch and Senator Menendez, I ask that the rest of my statement be included in the record.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Billingslea follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Pompeo for their trust and confidence in me to serve in this important new role.

First of all, I thank my family—my wife Karen and my two daughters Morgan and Elsa—for supporting my decision to accept the President's nomination to the Department of State. These positions require enormous family sacrifice, and I could not do this without their love and backing.

Senators, it is a great pleasure to appear before this committee, which dates to the earliest days of our Republic as one of the original ten standing committees of the Senate. It is an honor to appear before the body, which discharges the Senate's constitutional prerogatives under Article II, Section 2, Clause 2. I hope it will also

be a nice homecoming of sorts; as some of you may know, I began my government career on the professional staff of this very committee.

The experience I gained from my time as an SFRC staffer was formative, and has had a lasting influence on my career in government.

In particular, I am gratified to be nominated to lead the "T Family" of Bureaus, given that I worked closely for nearly seven years with both T and its predecessor, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. In fact, I had the privilege in the late 1990s of co-drafting for then Chairman Helms the bipartisan legislation that would fold ACDA into the Department of State and create the Under Secretary position.

So I find myself, 21 years later, now sitting before you, nominated by the President for the position of Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security.

If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to tackling the many, and critical, national security issues, for which the T family is responsible within the State Department. Some of those challenges are recurring, decades-old issues, pre-dating creation of the Under Secretary. And some are newer, emergent problem sets requiring fresh and creative thinking.

I am pleased to be nominated to a position with a portfolio with which I am familiar. This is not just from my time serving on this committee staff, but from my tenure as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Negotiations Policy, where I worked closely with both the arms control and nonproliferation functions of T, and later at both NATO and then as Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy, where I worked closely with the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and its Directorate of Defense Trade Controls.

Members will see, in my history of public service, a career spent working on a wide range of arms control, nonproliferation, and political-military issues, I supported a number of arms control and law of war treaties, over the years. I helped move several of those through this committee during the 1990s, ranging from START II to the Amended Mines Protocol, the CFE Flank Agreement, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and other measures.

My support for arms control that advances U.S. security, and which is both enforceable and verifiable, is fully captured in my 2002 testimony as DASD for Negotiations Policy, before the Senate Government Affairs Committee. In that hearing I stressed the importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the value of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the enhanced access provided under the Additional Protocol, which I supported during the Bush administration. I also talked at length about the importance of multilateral regimes, such as the Australia Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

During that time, I launched expansion of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea (SUA) Convention to include proliferation, and drove DoD involvement in creation of the Proliferation Security Initiative. I also testified before this committee on behalf of the Child Soldiers Protocol.

Finally, my time at the Treasury Department, for the past three years, demonstrates my deep and abiding commitment to enforcing global nonproliferation norms, especially U.N. Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs). Much of what I did, as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, was to confront North Korean proliferation networks circumventing the objectives of the NPT and flouting UNSCRs. Similarly, I drove the use of sanctions and other financial tradecraft to disrupt Iranian proliferation networks, as well as their terror apparatus.

It is with this background—my ability to recognize what makes an international agreement a good deal for the United States—and my commitment to verification of compliance and enforcement, that led to my appointment as Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control. The President tasked me with negotiating the most complete, effective, and verifiable arms control agreement possible to safeguard American national security. It is also why he put me forward for the much broader role of Under Secretary.

As Senators know, I recently testified before this committee in closed session on our thinking regarding nuclear arms control, the New START Treaty, and the worrisome nuclear arms buildups of both Russia and China. I will continue to keep this committee fully and currently informed of our progress in these areas, though for obvious reasons, cannot delve into specifics of the negotiations in open session. I look forward to continuing those discussions with you, particularly as the results of our technical working groups—which soon will deploy to Vienna—become apparent.

In closing, leading nuclear arms control negotiations as Special Presidential Envoy has provided me an even deeper respect for the hard-working men and women at the State Department, particularly those in the "T Family" of bureaus and offices.

Notwithstanding COVID, the T family continuously rises to the challenge. From the Arms Control Verification and Compliance Bureau's efforts to address global WMD proliferation issues to the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation's effective responses to proliferation threats and shaping of the international security environment to the outstanding work by the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs to support our global security partnerships on the one hand, and the American defense industrial base on the other, the T family is providing outstanding support to the President's arms control, nonproliferation, and international security priorities. If confirmed as Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, I am committed to working with this committee to strengthen the "T Family," the State Department and American national security.

Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez, I greatly appreciate the opportunity afforded by the committee to appear before you today as you consider my nomination.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Billingslea.

We will now hear from Mr. Mahoney.

STATEMENT OF HON. C.J. MAHONEY, OF KANSAS, TO BE LEGAL ADVISER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. MAHONEY. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, I thank you and your staff for holding this hearing, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you this morning about my nomination to be Legal Adviser at the Department of State.

I would also like to thank my fellow Kansans, Senator Roberts and Senator Moran, for their kind introductions. Our State has long been well represented in the United States Senate. Senator Roberts and Moran are worthy successors to the great Kansans who came before them, most notably my fellow Russell, Kansas native, Senator Bob Dole.

If there is one thing I would like the committee to take away from my comments today, it is this. I do not seek this position because I have some ideological axe to grind. Despite my detour as a trade negotiator for the past 2 years, professionally I think of myself first and foremost as a trial attorney. My only goals, if I am confirmed as Legal Adviser, will be to ensure that policymakers at the Department of State receive the best possible legal advice and to uphold the fine traditions of the Office of the Legal Adviser.

Since its creation in 1931, the Office of the Legal Adviser, or L as it is referred to in the Department, has played a critical role in defending America's rights under international agreements, helping to ensure our own compliance with international law, and offering honest, professional advice to the Department. Over the years, the office has been led by some of the nation's preeminent legal scholars and consistently staffed on the front lines by some of its very best attorneys.

In preparation for this hearing, I reached out to each of the living former legal advisors, Republican and Democrat, going all the way back to the Nixon administration. They provided me with candid advice and invaluable insight into their experiences, both of which I will carry with me into the job, if I am confirmed. And I am honored that several former legal advisors and other State Department and executive branch officials have signed bipartisan letters supporting my nomination.

Before joining USTR, I spent 2 years as a law clerk and over a decade as a lawyer in private practice at Williams & Connolly.

Along the way, I had the good fortune to be mentored by lawyers who represent the very best of the legal profession both in terms of skill and integrity.

First among them is one of my personal heroes, Justice Anthony Kennedy. Justice Kennedy's fairness, personal decency, and concern for individual liberty makes him in my view one of the towering figures in American and international law.

In private practice, I tried commercial and criminal cases in federal courts and before international arbitration panels. I learned the craft of zealous advocacy, but also the importance of strict adherence to the high ethical standards of the profession. I learned that a lawyer is only as effective as he is credible and that, quite often, a lawyer's most important obligation is to tell the client precisely what he does not want to hear. I am proud that 110 of my former law partners, who are arrayed across the political spectrum and known to many of you, have sent the committee a letter testifying to my experience and supporting my nomination.

For the past 2 years, my primary task was the negotiation and implementation of the USMCA. I was one of the principal negotiators in talks with Canada and Mexico and led the administration's efforts to secure congressional passage of the agreement. Working closely with your colleagues on the Finance Committee, Senators Grassley and Wyden, in addition to other members on both sides of the aisle, I helped design and personally negotiated several of the agreement's most important provisions, including the first-of-its-kind rapid response labor enforcement mechanism. I worked extensively for over 2 years with labor, environmental, and business groups to bridge differences and build a broad base of bipartisan support for the new agreement. And in the end, USMCA passed with 90 percent of members in both the House and Senate voting in favor.

As Legal Adviser, I would have a different role, to provide legal advice to the Department, not to set policy. But you have my commitment that I will make myself available to members of this committee to answer your questions and will strive in good faith to support your important policy and oversight work. I submit that my record at USTR lends credibility to that commitment. I am proud to have played a part in bringing about greater bipartisan consensus in trade policy. I like to think that is still possible in foreign policy as well. I am certainly committed to that goal.

In closing, I would like to thank another Kansan, Secretary Pompeo, for the confidence he has placed in me and the President for nominating me to this position. I would like to thank Ambassador Lighthizer for giving me the opportunity to serve under him at USTR, for his friendship, and for supporting me in my next endeavor.

I would also like to thank my wife Becca and my children, Eleanor and Patrick, for supporting my desire to serve in government and for their love and patience.

Members of the committee, I thank you again for this opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mahoney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. C.J. MAHONEY

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First among them is one of my personal heroes, Justice Anthony Kennedy. Justice Kennedy's fairness, personal decency, and concern for individual liberty makes him, in my view, one of the towering figures in American—and international—law.

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In closing, I'd like to thank another Kansan, Secretary Pompeo, for the confidence he has placed in me, and the President for nominating me to this position. I'd like to thank Ambassador Lighthizer—himself an honorary Kansan by virtue of his long association with Senator Dole—for giving me the opportunity to serve under him at

USTR, for his friendship, and for supporting me—albeit begrudgingly—in what I hope is my next job.

Mostly, I'd like to thank my wife Becca and my two children, Eleanor and Patrick, for supporting my desire to serve in government and for their love and patience.

Members of the committee, I thank you again for this opportunity and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Mahoney.

Mr. Trujillo?

STATEMENT OF HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Chairman. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members, it is an honor to be with you today as President Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

I am humbled and deeply appreciative for this important opportunity. I would like to first take a moment to express my gratitude to God for all his blessings in my life. I would also like to thank my amazing wife Carmen and my son Carlos who are here with me today and our three wonderful children who are watching at home, our friends and our family watching from home today, and those watching from heaven above. Thank you for your love and support.

I would also like to underscore my deep appreciation to this committee and its staff whose diligent work and dedication made this hearing possible in view of some very trying times.

I am also deeply grateful for the trust placed in me by President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo in putting forth my nomination. I am proud of the opportunity to have served over the course of the last 2 years as Permanent Representative of the United States to the Organization of American States.

I am particularly pleased that the OAS represents an organization whose leadership role has been restored and revitalized, an institution that is working to live up to and preserve the core values and principles whose mission it was meant to uphold, the promotion and defense of democracy, the respect of human rights, and the development and security cooperation on behalf of our citizens. Important institutional reforms have also been implemented to place the organization on firmer footing with effective measures to enhance oversight and accountability.

But for all these achievements and hard-fought gains, great challenges lie before us, and we are reminded each day that the promotion and defense of democracy and human rights, economic opportunity and security for our region requires constant work and dedication to strengthen our regional friendships and alliances in securing a future of greater progress, prosperity, and good will.

The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs is at the forefront of the Trump administration's agenda to work with our hemispheric partners to promote shared security and prosperity, promote democratic governance, and more recently, combat the COVID–19 pandemic which brings with it new challenges for our region and new tests for the resilience of our institutions and economic prosperity.

The President and Secretary are actively engaged in taking action to pursue those ends, and if confirmed, I will be firmly and

tirelessly committed to upholding the United States' historic role and leadership to advance these values and common interests.

The Trump administration has overseen a remarkable shift toward democratic governance in the hemisphere, but Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba unfortunately remain outliers. In Venezuela, we are working to support the will of the Venezuelan people to seek a peaceful transition to free and fair elections. In Nicaragua, we are also calling for free and fair democratic elections. We are increasing pressure on the Castro regime to constrict internal repressive capabilities and to stop its interference in other countries.

Our economic engagement with the hemisphere is robust and reflects our interests in remaining the partner of choice for our region. U.S. companies have invested over $350 billion in Latin America and $400 billion in Canada. U.S. goods and service trade with the western hemisphere totals nearly $2 trillion annually.

In 2019, the United States came together with Mexico and Canada to replace NAFTA with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. In December, the White House expanded the Growth in the Americas, or America Crece initiative.

The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation is a critical tool for our prosperity efforts. We expect the DFC to leverage at least $12 billion worth of investment in the region.

Our initiatives provide the framework for the administration's ability to respond strategically to second and third order effects of the COVID–19 pandemic.

We are also working to counter the malign and undemocratic influences of China and Russia in the western hemisphere. Our approach emphasizes U.S. comparative advantage in economics and security, as well as our shared democratic values with our partners in the region.

In closing, I wish to underscore my firm commitment to the importance of working together closely with this committee, in a spirit of cooperation and common purpose, as we work to advance a foreign policy rooted in a shared vision, a vision of a region of shared heritage, dedication, and sacrifice in the universal struggle for and faith in the values of liberty, and an abiding conviction, courage, and determination to secure the human fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations for a great democratic future for all of our people.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Trujillo follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members, it is an honor to be with you today as President Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

I am humbled and deeply appreciative for this important opportunity. I would like to first take a moment to express my gratitude to God for all His blessings in my life. I would also like to thank my amazing wife Carmen, our four wonderful children, and our friends and family watching from home today for their love and support. I would also like to underscore my deep appreciation to this committee and its Staff members whose diligent work and dedication made this hearing possible in view of these very trying times and extraordinary circumstances.

I am also deeply grateful for the trust placed in me by President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo in putting forth my nomination, and proud of the opportunity to have served over the course of the last two years as Permanent Representative of the United States to the Organization of American States (OAS).

It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve our great nation and the American people and work to build and strengthen the strong bonds of friendship which today unite us with our democratic partners throughout our hemisphere.

I am particularly pleased that the OAS today represents an organization whose leadership role has been restored and revitalized, an institution that is working to live up to and preserve the core values and principles whose mission it is meant to uphold—the promotion and defense of democracy, respect for human rights, and development and security cooperation on behalf of our citizens. Important institutional reforms have also been implemented to place the organization on firmer footing with effective measures to enhance oversight and accountability.

We have made significant progress in strengthening democratic institutions and support for the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the leadership exercised by the OAS in giving voice to the oppressed people of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, marks a critical and historic milestone for the organization in its fundamental responsibility to stand up against dictatorships and make real the promise of the Inter-American Democratic Charter for all the peoples of the Americas. This is multilateralism that works.

But for all of these achievements and hard fought gains, great challenges lay before us, and we are reminded each day that the promotion and defense of democracy and human rights, economic opportunity and the security of our region requires constant work and dedication to strengthen our regional friendships and alliances in securing a future of greater progress, prosperity, and good will.

The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs is at the forefront of the Trump administration's agenda to work with our hemispheric partners to promote shared security and prosperity, promote democratic governance, and, more recently, combat the COVID–19 pandemic—which brings with it new challenges for our region and new tests for the resiliency of our institutions and economic prosperity. This in turn calls for concerted regional action.

The President and the Secretary are actively engaged in and taking action to pursue those ends, and we are seeing results in our policy on what the Secretary calls the "Hemisphere of Freedom." I pledge, that if confirmed, I will be firmly and tirelessly committed to uphold the United States' historic role and leadership to advance these shared values and common interests.

EXPANDING RESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE HEMISPHERE OF FREEDOM

The Trump administration has overseen a remarkable shift toward democratic governance in the hemisphere, but Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba remain outliers. In Venezuela we are supporting the will of the Venezuelan people by seeking a peaceful transition to free and fair elections. In a display of regional solidarity, we the Lima Group and the OAS came out among Guaidó's first supporters in January 2019 and saw the first invocation of the Rio Treaty since September 11, 2001.

The states that are party to the Rio Treaty have approved resolutions that address the former Maduro regime's threat to regional peace, stability and security in Venezuela and the region.

Our goal is to leverage the Rio Treaty mechanism to coordinate peaceful regional action such as multilateral economic sanctions, visa restrictions, and diplomatic pressure to support the restoration of democracy in Venezuela. At the same time as this regional mechanism moves forward, we will continue to provide bilateral support to address Venezuela's humanitarian crisis. To that end, we have committed $856 million in U.S. assistance.

In Nicaragua, we are also calling for free and fair elections. We stepped up diplomatic pressure and increased sanctions on the Ortega regime, its repressors, and corrupt enablers to push for conditions for free and fair elections and respect for human rights, and we will continue to press for continued engagement by the OAS. Our pressure and diplomatic campaigns are ongoing.

Cuba actively undermines democracy in the region by exporting dictatorship, committing human rights abuses, trafficking in medical workers, and abusing opposition figures. We are increasing pressure on the Castro regime to constrict internal repressive capabilities and stop its interference in other countries by restricting key sources of revenue, including foreign investment, travel to the island, and the Cuban medical missions program.

INCREASING PROSPERITY

In keeping with our commitment to democracy and prosperity in the region, we look forward to free, fair, and transparent elections in Bolivia—with international observation, including the OAS—that reflect the will of the Bolivian people.

If confirmed, I would also look forward to working with the Haitian Government to meet the needs of the Haitian people by urgently addressing public security, restarting economic growth, and organizing free, fair, and credible legislative elections as soon as technically feasible.

More broadly, in the Caribbean, I believe it is important that we build on Secretary Pompeo's message during his visit to Kingston, Jamaica earlier this year in which he underscored the United States' commitment to work together to build closer ties and strengthen our bonds of friendship and cooperation. It is important also to recognize the important role of key Caribbean countries in the successful reelection of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro to secure strong leadership for the organization.

In addition, if confirmed, I would ensure all necessary capacity of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs is available to support the White House in hosting a successful Summit of the Americas in 2021, as announced by Vice President Pence at the Summit in Lima in 2018. Serving as Summit host provides opportunity for the United States to work closely with our democratic partners to set a constructive and productive hemispheric agenda moving forward.

The United States continues to work with the democratic governments and institutions of the Americas to realize the promise of the Lima Commitment—adopted at the 2018 Summit—and to enhance the ability of civil society to monitor governments' implementation of their anticorruption commitments.

Our work to reduce corruption is vital to our vision of a hemisphere of freedom, and the United States remains committed to combatting corruption in the Western Hemisphere and to the promotion of integrity, transparency, and accountability.

Corruption erodes the foundations of a stable, prosperous, and well-governed societies. Combatting corruption and impunity is key to upholding democracy, improving civilian security, and establishing the enabling economic environment to create jobs and erode the influence of transnational criminal organizations.

Our economic engagement with the hemisphere is robust and reflects our interest in remaining the partner of choice with our neighbors.

U.S. companies have invested $350 billion in Latin America and $400 billion in Canada. U.S. goods and services trade with the Western Hemisphere totals nearly $2 trillion annually.

In 2019, the United States came together with Mexico and Canada to replace NAFTA with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which will increase middle-class jobs in manufacturing, agriculture, and digital trade, while bolstering North America's competitiveness as a global economic powerhouse.

In December, the White House expanded the Growth in the Americas or America Crece initiative, which seeks to foster economic growth by catalyzing private sector investment in energy and other infrastructure across Latin America and the Caribbean. To date, we have signed MOUs with eight partner countries: Panama, Chile, Jamaica, Argentina, Colombia, and most recently El Salvador, Ecuador, and Brazil.

The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is a critical tool for our prosperity efforts. We expect the DFC to leverage at least $12 billion worth of investment in the region. We are working to create the economic environment in the region to leverage DFC investment.

All these initiatives also provide the framework for the administration's ability to respond strategically to the second and third order effects of the COVID–19 pandemic. We will continue to be the partner of choice in helping the region overcome this challenge, as well.

COMBATTING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND PROMOTING SECURITY

The administration is working closely with our Mexican and Central American partners to secure the U.S. southern border and combat illegal immigration into the United States.

The U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration was signed June 7, 2019, to address the shared challenges of irregular migration, especially the large numbers of immigrants seeking to enter the United States illegally. As part of its commitments, Mexico deployed its National Guard to enforce its borders. Mexico also agreed to support the expansion of the Migrant Protection Protocols across our shared border.

In 2019, the United States secured significantly greater cooperation from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in addressing the humanitarian and security crisis at the U.S. southern border. That collaboration included the signing of multiple agreements and arrangements to enhance cooperation on border security, expand information sharing, promote access to legal temporary employment in the United States, and improve asylum capacities to help protect vulnerable populations.

As a result of these joint, regional efforts, we achieved a 77 percent decrease in the number of irregular migrants arriving at the U.S. southern border from May 2019 to June 2020.

In response to these increased efforts by Central American governments, the administration resumed targeted assistance this spring for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Assuming such cooperation continues, the administration intends to continue distributing additional assistance.

The administration and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs will continue working to address border security as well as other security threats in the region, including transnational criminal organizations in Mexico and Central America.

Assistance programs in the region such as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, Merida in Mexico and our security partnership with Colombia combine security and development to enhance partner capacity and deny Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) permissive environments.

The administration's approach is grounded in encouraging adoption of a shared responsibility for addressing security challenges and requires demonstrable political will from our partners.

COUNTERING MALIGN INFLUENCES

We are also working to counter the malign, undemocratic influences of China and Russia in the Western Hemisphere. Our approach emphasizes U.S. comparative advantages in economics and security, as well as our shared democratic values with our partners in the region. We must also continue to ensure international space for our democratic partner Taiwan in our hemisphere. Indeed, the Western Hemisphere is home to nine of Taiwan's remaining diplomatic partners.

CLOSING

I have had the privilege to work closely with my colleagues in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. I have been proud to be part of this team and, if confirmed, I look forward to leading the team in further advancing the Trump administration's agenda for the Americas.

I also wish to underscore my firm commitment to the importance of working together closely with this committee, in a spirit of cooperation and common purpose, as we work to advance a foreign policy rooted in a shared vision—a vision of a region of shared heritage, dedication and sacrifice in the universal struggle for and faith in the values of liberty, united in peace and prosperity, whose governments honor, guarantee and respect the fundamental freedoms and human dignity of each individual, and an abiding conviction, courage and determination to secure the human fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations for a greater democratic future for all of our peoples. Thank you for your time today.

I am happy to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you much.

We will now do a round of questioning, and I am going to start briefly with Mr. Billingslea.

First of all, thank you for taking the time previously to meet with this committee in a classified setting to talk about arms negotiations. And I agree with the ranking member that we are not spending enough time on policy but way more time than we should on confirmations. But in my judgment, it is obviously important that we get a government stood up.

Having said that, we are where we are, and I think every member of this committee is deeply, deeply committed to having successful negotiations with our adversaries when it comes to arms control.

Ten years ago, we sat here and went through this as New START was negotiated. A lot of us had issues with it, still do. A lot of us had issues with the entity on the other side that we were negotiating with and still do.

But the game has changed and it has changed dramatically. This is a seasoned relationship that regardless of what the treaty says,

has aspects that are in all likelihood going to prevent us from having an accident where we get into it with the Russians.

Unfortunately, we are now in a position where another near-peer contender is on the scene, and that is China. And they are—as you have indicated and I think as people acknowledge and the Chinese themselves acknowledge, they just simply are not interested in doing these kinds of negotiations. We know that when you are talking about really these existential issues, that we need understandings and agreements and negotiations with the adversaries.

So, again, I do not want to dwell on this, but I would appreciate it if you could give us your thoughts on the fact that this is probably going to be bilateral as opposed to trilateral and what we can do to try to encourage to get to eventually a trilateral position. I think we would be better off if we had a better good faith partner than we do with the New START treaty. But nonetheless, we are where we are. So your thoughts please, Mr. Billingslea.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Thank you, Chairman.

As you point out, a lot has changed in the previous decade since the negotiation of the New START treaty. There were some things known at the time and things that could have been foreseen, and then there were a large number of things that could not have been foreseen as our negotiators were hammering out the details of the New START treaty.

I think one of the things that could not have been foreseen would be that just 3 years after the Senate acted on that treaty, President Putin began his campaign to seize Crimea, to invade and destabilize Ukraine. And then we saw a string of malign Russian activities erupt across the globe, including manipulation of our elections, meddling in Venezuela to prop up Maduro, support for the Assad regime and its barbaric chemical attacks against the Syrian people, and the litany just goes on and on, the Skripal attack in broad daylight using the novichok nerve agent.

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, that effectively derailed the SALT II treaty. If Putin had acted 3 years earlier, I am sure it would have had implications for consideration of New START.

We also have now learned that the Russian Government was plotting systemically to violate the INF Treaty for more than a decade, and that they were developing novel doomsday systems that are designed not to be captured by the New START treaty limits.

So these are examples of things that do influence the security environment, and some of the particulars of what we need to negotiate bilaterally with the Russians.

But the other thing that could not have been foreseen or was not foreseen at the time would be what we now know is a secretive and unconstrained Chinese buildup of its nuclear arsenal. And as you say, that means in effect that we have to modernize our approach to nuclear arms control to cover, in effect, an emerging trilateral dynamic. And so while I do agree that probably we will see progress in bilateral channels, perhaps certainly with the Russians I think and perhaps bilaterally with the Chinese, those paths ultimately need to converge, and they need to converge in the direction of a trilateral arms control arrangement that brings back many of the most effective verification mechanisms that we once had under

the original START treaty and which also address the unconstrained warheads that Russia is now building, not just the novel doomsday systems but a whole manner of battlefield type nuclear weapons which it doctrinally would plan to use in a first-use scenario against our NATO allies.

So these are the three key pillars of how we are approaching the negotiations.

Later this afternoon, I will be talking with the heads of our delegations, three different working groups, who will shortly be headed to Vienna to undertake the detailed discussions with the Russians on these matters and on the matter of space and weaponization of space, which is another major issue of concern.

And then separately, I still hold out hope that the Chinese will come to the negotiating table. I think it is in their best interest to do so, but in the interim, we will certainly continue to highlight the alarming number of activities in which they are engaged.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Billingslea.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me ask all three of you, and I ask you to answer quickly a yes or no to the following two questions.

If confirmed, do you commit to making yourself available to members of the committee and staff to answer questions and engage on matters of substance in an open and timely fashion?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Yes.

Mr. MAHONEY. Yes.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. There has been a concerning trend under this administration of attacking and retaliating against career public servants, particularly at the State Department. Some have been reassigned based on assumptions about their political affiliation or national origin. Others have been labeled, "disloyal." Some have been called out publicly as "radical unelected bureaucrats" by senior administration officials.

As someone who has spent his entire congressional career doing foreign policy, I cannot think of anything that is more cancerous for the Department or career employees across the Government.

If confirmed, do you commit to making clear to all the employees under your authority that any retaliation, black-listing, or other prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. I do.

Mr. MAHONEY. I do.

Mr. TRUJILLO. I do, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Now, Mr. Mahoney, I have great respect for the Legal Adviser's Office. I am also impressed by your legal resume. And while you may not seem to be experienced on the issues that will be front and center at your role at State, if confirmed, I suspect you will be a quick study. So let me ask you a few questions.

I understand that when you met with my staff, you emphasized a willingness to engage with the committee, and I appreciate that. I am submitting for the record a letter I sent to the Secretary last month outlining more than 60 requests that the Department has failed to fully respond to.

[The information referred to above is located at the end of this hearing transcript.]

Senator MENENDEZ. Many of those were on issues of a legal nature that your office would be involved in. And I want to make clear that this list of outstanding requests is not what engagement looks like, and I expect to hold you to your commitment.

Let me flag two issues specifically.

First, as you know, the administration has refused for almost a year to provide this committee with copies of all of the agreements, arrangements, and associated documents that it has negotiated with Mexico and the Northern Triangle. There is no legal or policy basis to block Congress or the public from these materials. The administration is simply trying to hide them. So I am going to continue to pursue this matter, and if confirmed, I would expect you to work with me and my staff to get the documents before the committee.

Second, what is your reaction to the fact that the Department has not produced a single document related to the decision to withhold U.S. security assistance to Ukraine, which jeopardized critical funds to counter Kremlin aggression, but the Department quickly handed over thousands of pages related to requests about Vice President Biden and unsupported theories about Ukrainian interference in U.S. elections?

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, I obviously was not involved in any of those decisions, but I will tell you I do not think oversight matters ought to be handled in a partisan way. I do not think that the committee or the party affiliation of the chairman should influence how those matters are handled.

Now, obviously, as you know from having served in this body and in the House for many years, disagreements between the executive and legislative branches on document production are not infrequent. But I can give you my commitment that to the extent I am involved in these matters, I will do so in an evenhanded way. I will try to work with you and your staff in good faith to reach accommodations that get you the information that you need to perform your important policy and oversight work.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. I appreciate that answer.

I understand there are always disagreements, but these are 60 requests from this committee, longstanding.

Do you think it is appropriate executive branch responsiveness to Congress to deny virtually on all occasions the requests for documents and information?

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, because I have not been involved in this, I do not want to characterize the position.

Now, what you just said, is it appropriate to reflexively deny all requests, no, that is not appropriate. And that would not be the tack that I would take.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this. Do you commit to review any future release of documents where the Department intends to hand over documents to one party but not the other?

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, I am not sure I understand the question.

Senator MENENDEZ. So we have had situations where it seems that one party can get documents from the Department but another party cannot. Do you commit to review any future release of

documents where the Department intends to hand over the documents to one party but not the other?

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, I commit to handling all these things in an evenhanded fashion without regard to party.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, something is clearly amiss because responsiveness to Congress means all of Congress, not one party, not just certain chairmen, and not just to further the President's chosen political narratives. As Legal Adviser under the Secretary, you will be on the hook to make sure that the State Department is not weaponized in support of the President's reelection more than it has already been. And I hope that you will be up to that task.

As is well documented, Secretary Pompeo played a key role in the Trump Ukraine scandal, including listening in on the infamous quid pro quo call between Trump and President Zelensky.

More recently, the Secretary was involved in the firing of State Department Inspector General Linick. At the time of the firing, the Secretary was under investigation by the Inspector General.

Despite his personal involvement in each of those episodes, the Secretary did not recuse himself from congressional investigations into these matters.

Does that comport with your view of good government?

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, the question of whether recusals are merited is obviously fact-specific. I am aware of both of those instances. I understand your interest in them.

My view is that going forward, we should work with the Congress to try to get you answers to your questions, to the extent that that is possible, in a manner that is consistent with Department policy and due respect for executive branch equities.

Senator MENENDEZ. I am not even asking you for a legal opinion. I am asking you from a common sense perspective. Is sometimes the appearance of conflict not equally as important as the conflict itself?

Mr. MAHONEY. I would agree with that, Senator. I think you always need to be concerned with the appearance of conflict in any situation where judgments might be called into question.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this. The role of Legal Adviser is somewhat unique in our government. If confirmed, you will not just be the general counsel for the State Department, you will also be the chief international legal diplomat for the United States. I am interested in how you plan to approach the second role, which requires respect for both domestic and international law, as well as for the rule of law generally. What will be your priorities in this area, and how do you expect to accomplish them given the reality of a President that, from my perspective, subverts the rule of law at home and abroad in light of the way we have engaged with the rest of the world and what we are seeing happening in Portland and other places? How do you envision your ability to deal in that reality, and what are going to be your priorities in this regard?

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, I think it is very important that the United States adhere to its international law obligations. That is one of the key tasks of the Legal Adviser and that is something that I would take quite seriously.

There are a number of issues that the office is dealing with right now with regard—a number of human rights issues with regard to

China, for example, as well as implementing recent legislation on Hong Kong. That would be a priority for me.

There are ongoing discussions about international law as it applies to space, as well as to cyber. That is something else that I would be interested in.

But, Senator, the most important thing, as I see it, for the Legal Adviser to do is to offer honest professional advice on all of the topics that reach the Secretary, and that for me will be my first and foremost priority.

Senator MENENDEZ. And then finally, Mr. Chairman, I do not have any idea what my time is. This keeps moving around.

The CHAIRMAN. It is a real benefit for you.

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. I am really appreciative of you continuously giving me 5 minutes.

The CHAIRMAN. It is part of the chairman's generosity.

Senator MENENDEZ. To my colleagues, I will just finish with Mr. Mahoney on this line of questions, and then I will reserve my questions for the other candidates when everyone else goes through.

I would like to get a series of commitments from you, if I can, Mr. Mahoney. Either a yes or no will do.

If you are confirmed, do you commit not to influence, interfere with, or seek to stop any ongoing Inspector General investigation into the Department or the Secretary?

Mr. MAHONEY. Yes, I commit to that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you commit to give your best objective legal advice, as informed by the facts and the law independent of political or electoral consequences?

Mr. MAHONEY. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you commit to do so even if it puts you at odds with the Secretary or the President?

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, I think that that is the duty of every attorney. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you commit to formally recommend against taking any action that you believe will violate the law, even if it means disagreeing with the President or the Secretary?

Mr. MAHONEY. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. If you are in such a moment—I hope you are not—but if you are in such a moment, will you write a memo outlining your objection?

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, I do not want to speculate on exactly how I would handle that situation. But I am not going to do anything that I think is illegal. I am not going to do anything that is immoral. I believe that I can serve well and honorably in this position, and that is what I intend to do.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you commit to report to proper authorities, including the FBI Inspector General and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Mr. MAHONEY. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. And finally, do you commit to report to proper authorities, including the FBI Inspector General and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Mr. MAHONEY. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your answers.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Portman?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for holding this hearing today, and I want to thank my colleagues for being here. This is important; this is one of our responsibilities. We talked earlier about what this committee is supposed to be doing. One of those things is ensuring that well qualified candidates have the opportunity to serve their country, particularly at the State Department. The Department of State is understaffed, and they need help. I am glad that these three individuals have chosen to step up and serve. All three of these men are highly qualified and have been waiting a long, long time for this hearing. We have got to be sure that we are addressing this backlog. Again, I appreciate my colleagues being here, from both sides of the aisle, and I thank the chairman for holding this hearing.

I have a letter regarding C.J. Mahoney. Some of you have seen it. It is a letter of recommendation, a bipartisan tribute to C.J. signed by former USTR and State Department officials who served in the George H.W. Bush, Clinton, G.W. Bush, and Obama administrations. I would ask, Mr. Chairman, unanimous consent that this be part of the record.

The CHAIRMAN. It will be included.

[The material referred to above is located at the end of this hearing transcript.]

Senator PORTMAN. I have some perspective on C.J.'s background. He served at the State Department Legal Adviser's Office back when I was in law school, and then some 22 or so years later as U.S. Trade Representative. His most recent job was being deputy there, and he did a great job on USMCA and other matters, as has been said.

As our colleagues have said during the introductions of C.J., he is particularly well suited for this role. His background, his experience, his accomplishments, his intellect, his judgment, and I would say his temperament and bipartisan approach that we have seen even today is important. So let us be sure and move quickly on this nomination, as well as the other two that I plan to support today because, again, we want these good people to be in place helping our country at this time.

C.J., my question to you is about the ICC. The International Criminal Court has made a recent decision to investigate Israel for alleged crimes in the West Bank and also in Jerusalem, also in Gaza. And as you know, Israel is not even a signatory to the Rome Statute.

Second, the ICC has no jurisdiction over disputed territory, has not in the past, and under its own rules, can only initiate actions that are brought by states, and this action was brought by the Palestinian Authority, not a state.

I have worked with my colleague, Ben Cardin, who is here today, to put together a letter to your future boss I hope, Secretary Pompeo, on this issue. By the way, it received enormous bipartisan

support. Sixty-seven of our colleagues signed the letter, including I think all members of this committee who are here today.

I ask you about this because to me this is an example not just of them not following the rules at the ICC, it is being politicized, and the politicization of the ICC has been a concern in Republican and Democrat administrations alike. Frankly, that is why we have not joined.

What about the ICC's recent decision to pursue an investigation into war crimes against U.S. and allied troops for actions in Afghanistan, again even though the United States in this case is not even a signatory to the Rome Statute.

So if confirmed, do you pledge to continue to push back against these efforts by the ICC to expand its legal mandate and to protect the United States and its troops and our allies from politically motivated prosecutions?

Mr. MAHONEY. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator PORTMAN. I appreciate that.

Ambassador Trujillo, we have been hard hit by this opioid epidemic in my home state of Ohio—and around the country. A number of us on the committee have focused on this issue. Unfortunately, what we are seeing right now with the coronavirus pandemic is more drug addiction, more overdoses, more overdose deaths—and this is troubling. It is partly because of the isolation and also partly because of the lack of access to treatment, at least face to face.

The DEA just came out with their most recent threat assessment, saying that meth, crystal meth, cocaine, heroin are all predominantly produced in the areas you are going to have jurisdiction over, Central America, South America, and smuggled into the U.S.

They have also made the point that the deadliest opioid, fentanyl, is increasingly coming in over our southern border.

We have a role here at the State Department to crack down on this transnational, criminal organization activity. What do you plan to do in your new job to cut down on this drug trafficking across our border? Specifically, what do you plan to do and will this be part of what you view as your mission in this new job?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

Absolutely, I think the forefront of our mission is keeping Americans safe. I agree with you that fentanyl is by far the most deadly. A lot of those precursor chemicals, unfortunately, are coming from China. It would be my responsibility, if confirmed by this committee, by the Senate, of working with our Mexican counterparts to identify those precursor criminals to disrupt those transnational criminal organizations and working with some of the tools we have in place through INL and other law enforcement agencies to make sure that we keep those drugs off of our American streets.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you. I hope you will make that a personal commitment and a passion in this job because I think there is a great opportunity for us to do more working with DHS and the State Department.

One final question, if I could, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador Billingslea, there are so many issues to talk to you about but one would be hypersonic weapons. You might know that in the NDAA, the legislation currently before us in the Senate, we have lan-

guage—Senator Brown and I—to increase the need for hypersonic testing facilities to include non-DOD facilities. There is one in Ohio called Plum Brook that is ideally situated to help.

But what do you think about hypersonic weapons? What are our adversaries' capabilities here? I hear some things that, frankly, are very concerning. And what can we do to ensure that we are ready to meet the global challenge of hypersonic weapon competition?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Thank you, Senator. You are putting your finger on one of the new emerging technologies that is going to redefine both our conventional strike capabilities, as well as ultimately the nuclear deterrent forces at least with the Russians and possibly the Chinese.

I would say without having looked at the specifics of your legislation, we have an urgent need to robustly test a number of emerging hypersonic glide vehicle technologies that are coming online both with the Army, the Navy, and potentially even the Air Force. We are, I think it is fair to say, behind when it comes to the Chinese testing program in particular. And the Russians have actually already deployed two nuclear hypersonic weapons on their heavy ICBMs, and I expect more to come as the Russians bring online an even larger ICBM called the Sarmat where they will be able to hang multiple of these weapons on them.

Hypersonics offer a number of advantages. The United States I do not believe is pursuing nuclear weapons in that respect, but conventional armed hypersonics. And these will be I think important equalizers for us particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you. We will get you the language of that amendment, and I appreciate your commitment to ensuring we can stay up with the competition.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Portman.

The clock has now been fixed. So we are off the honor system and back on the clock.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. It seems like we should equalize the same number on each side.

The CHAIRMAN. You will find the chairman very generous in this regard.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me thank all three of our nominees for their willingness to serve our country.

Let me thank Senator Portman for raising the ICC issue, and Mr. Mahoney, thank you for your response.

Mr. Mahoney, I want to follow up on Senator Menendez's point. I am very impressed by your resume and your responses. It is exactly what I think we want to hear. Senator Menendez was concentrating on response to requests from Congress.

I want to talk a little bit about the advantage we have in America because of the independent branches of government. And it is particularly important on foreign policy, where we generally have the same objectives in foreign policy, the legislative branch and the executive branch. And we have been able to use the independence to advance U.S. values globally because the administration rightly points out to our allies that Congress is independent and, therefore,

what Congress is demanding the administration needs to deliver. And that has been important on human rights. It has been important on a lot of other issues with strategic partners where we have to have a relationship and Congress can push that relationship to support our values. That is why it is critically important that we get the information we need to be a constructive partner.

And Senator Menendez is talking about response to information, which is an important part. I want to talk about involving us. Under both Democratic and Republican chairmen of this committee, we have gotten advance notices of information that is important for us to understand to calculate in order to represent America by our representation in the Senate. I recall specifically the Iran Nuclear Agreement—not necessarily a noncontroversial agreement—where we had partisan differences on that agreement. The prior administration gave all of us, regardless of party, in-depth information so that we understood the dynamics and could reinforce American values. That was critically important.

Today we are asking you questions because we find out through the news media not through the type of transparency that should be involved in both branches that want to advance the interests of the United States. And I see you are responding in a favorable way. I just really want to make that point and hope that you will be a voice within the administration that recognizes that value in American democracy that we add to the global community and that we can get you, as an advocate, to say "keep Congress involved. We are all on the same team."

Your response.

Mr. MAHONEY. Well, Senator, as you noted from my nodding, I agree with, I think, everything that you said, and I would note a couple things.

Number one, as someone who is kind of an amateur student of history, I look back fondly at the work that was done in the aftermath of the Second World War by General Marshall, Secretary Acheson, and Senator Vandenberg, the former chairman of this committee, to try to craft a bipartisan foreign policy. I think that our posture in the Cold War was much stronger as a result of that. I would like to get back to that.

All I can offer you to bolster that commitment is my record at USTR where we have worked—and I personally—I probably spent more time with Democratic Members of Congress——

Senator CARDIN. It is a good example. I benefited from that experience, and the agreement was much stronger and it did include a lot of priorities of our country.

I would just urge you to recognize that we need to have the information in a timely way, and you have to make that available. You are legally obligated, I think, to do it, but it just does not make sense to do it any other way than that. So I hope you will be a strong voice in that regard.

Mr. Trujillo, I want to first thank you for your work at OAS. One of the advantages we have in the OSCE is that we do have robust legislative participation, and because they are independent branches, we can leverage that within the OSCE for greater effectiveness of America's interests. We want to do the same in OAS, and I thank you for your help. We have legislation that is moving

through here, and I hope that under your new title, you will help us in getting that legislation and implementing that legislation to the finish line.

I want to mention one other issue if I might, and that is the Caribbean nations. There are a lot of Caribbean nations. They each get a vote in the United Nations. There is outside interests outside of our hemisphere and influencing the Caribbean states. Is it not time that we reevaluate our commitment to the Caribbean states and have a stronger strategy to try to get more friends among those island states than we have today?

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

I completely agree. Throughout my time at the OAS, one of the efforts I have undertaken is working with the Caribbean countries. For the election of Secretary-General Almagro which took place just 3 months ago, almost half the Caribbean countries supported us in those efforts. When it comes to Venezuela or Nicaragua, we are seeing an increased support from the Caribbean. And they are also a great security partner with the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. So if confirmed, I will definitely continue to work with the Caribbean and some of the resiliency challenges they face, some of the correspondent banking challenges they face, and also some of the economic development changes that they will face post COVID.

Senator CARDIN. And it would be nice to have a closer ally in the United Nations on some of those votes with the Caribbean states than they are doing now. I think that is an area that we have not pushed hard enough to get stronger global support from some of our closest neighboring states.

Mr. TRUJILLO. I agree. We have St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia who all recognize Taiwan. And they are very good partners when it comes to human rights issues and other issues, and we should continue to work with them.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator Barrasso?

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Billingslea, thank you for the briefing that you did with a number of us prior to your trip overseas. Thanks for visiting with me when you got back.

I just have a couple questions on a couple of different things.

Iran arms embargo. Under the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, the Obama administration agreed to lift the U.N. arms embargo on Iran after a number of years, after 5 years. U.N. restrictions on the export and import of conventional weapons to Iran are set to expire October 18th of this year, coming up now in the next couple of months. The international community giving Iran the green light to purchase advanced weapons, transfer weapons to terrorists I believe threatens the security of not just the United States but our allies and folks around the world.

Brian Hook, who is the U.S. Special Representative to Iran, correctly explained that we are risking Iran becoming the arms dealer of choice for rogue regimes and terrorist organizations around the world. And the Trump administration is working on a new U.N. Se-

curity Council resolution to extend the arms embargo on Iran and do it indefinitely.

Given Iran's increasing aggression, what are the risks of failing to extend the U.N. arms embargo and export ban, and how do you recommend the United States respond if these international restrictions are lifted?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, you are highlighting an emerging existential threat to the United States with the potential expiration of the U.N. arms embargo on Iran. That is of the highest priority for the Secretary. He has made clear that the embargo must be extended and that things such as snapback of the sanctions are legally available to this administration under the terms on the face of the U.N. Security Council resolutions.

If we fail to extend the arms embargo, a number of damaging trend lines begin to emerge. In particular, we have spent an enormous effort—I in my prior capacity at the Department of the Treasury in particular have spent an enormous amount of time drying up revenue streams but also impairing the ability of Iranian networks to source these kinds of weapons. They have been forced to do so illegally because of the U.N. embargo. If it suddenly becomes legal to export these weapons to the Iranians, all of that work falls by the wayside or much of that work falls by the wayside.

Moreover, we have to understand what the Iranians then do with these types of weapons. They turn around and supply them to their proxy groups. So we worry greatly, together with the Israelis, for instance, regarding precision-guided munitions that Hezbollah has been given by the Iranians. There is no reason to believe the Iranians would not turn around and source additional weaponry from Russia and China right back to their terror proxies, the Houthis in Yemen, the Hamas and Palestinian Islamic jihad organizations. And oh, by the way, we have to watch out what is happening in Venezuela.

Carlos and I have worked very closely together over the years, and I will support him. I was just in the Caribbean in one of my last Treasury roles, and I will look forward, if confirmed by this committee, to having the T family bureau, particularly the Political-Military Affairs Bureau in strong support of our regional bureaus.

Senator BARRASSO. I wanted to switch briefly to missile defense. And during the New START treaty debate, there was a lot of discussion about the importance of U.S. missile defense. As our country continues to face threats from around the world, I mean, it is critical that we do not restrict our own U.S. missile defense options. So the United States I believe must remain in charge of our own missile defense, not Russia, not other countries, as we negotiate.

So I am asking if you would commit to me that in any arms control discussions with Russia for which you would be responsible that the United States will not agree to limit our own ability to defend ourselves.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, absolutely. The President has made clear he will not accept limitations on missile defense.

Senator BARRASSO. And then with regard to the new Russian strategic weapons that we have had a chance to discuss in a different setting, Russia is developing a number of new kinds of strategic nuclear weapons to evade or to penetrate our own ballistic missile defenses. In March of 2016, President Putin announced Russia's development of new strategic nuclear weapons that he believes he said will render U.S. missile defenses useless. I have raised these questions in this committee to others prior to this today.

The weapons include a nuclear-powered cruise missile, a nuclear-powered underwater drone that could be armed with a nuclear warhead, and a hypersonic missile.

Under article 5 of the New START, parties can raise their concerns about new types of strategic offensive weapons under the bilateral consultative commission.

Has the administration, do you know, raised concerns about the new types of weapons under this commission, and does the administration believe that these new strategic nuclear weapons should be covered under, say, a New START extension?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, it is a mixed bag. Some of these weapons will be covered simply because in the case of the nuclear hypersonics, when they put them on that ICBM, they become captured. And we have made clear that that is the case and it is not open for negotiation.

But other of these weapons—I would not want to say they should be captured—we frankly do not think these weapons should exist at all. Why on earth would you have a nuclear-powered, nuclear-tipped cruise missile? That is nothing more than a flying Chernobyl. Just think about the radioactive plume that it would generate as it circles. There is no good argument. There is no good logic for having these kinds of doomsday systems. And I have been very clear with my Russian counterpart that these are enormous wastes of funds and they ought to cease and desist and abandon these kinds of destabilizing ideas.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Well said, Mr. Billingslea. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

We will move to Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to the three of you for your testimony today and for your willingness to consider appointments to these very important positions.

Mr. Trujillo, I want to start with you because I have been approached by a number of federal employees who were posted to either Cuba or China where they received devastating brain injuries because of the attacks on our embassies in both of those countries. Unfortunately, many of these individuals are still paying out of pocket for the medical bills related to these injuries, and there is currently legislation that Senators Risch and Menendez have worked with me on to provide these employees with long-term benefits to account for lost wages and uncovered medical expenses.

Can you tell me if you have been briefed about the situation with our embassies in both Cuba and China, and if you are confirmed,

will you commit to ensuring that these employees, once this legislation passes—and I believe it will pass—will be able to access the benefits that were granted to them by Congress in the 2020 appropriations bill?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator.

I have been briefed at a high level on the sonic attacks that took place in Cuba, and I do make that commitment on the latter.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Billingslea, I appreciate the administration's interest and share it on the issues that Senator Barrasso raised with respect to trying to expand New START, any extent of New START to wider negotiations with Russia to looking at China and seeing how we might be able to engage China in a nuclear agreement.

However, the question that I have is how best to do that. And I had the opportunity as a member of the Armed Services Committee to ask both General Hyten, the current Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and former Commander of USSTRATCOM, and Admiral Charles Richard, the current Commander of USSTRATCOM, about the importance of the New START treaty. And both of these generals agreed that the treaty serves our national security interests, not the Russians' but our national security interests. And they give us transparency into Russia's current and planned nuclear forces.

So given the importance of that and the ability to go ahead and provisionally extend this treaty without having to come back to Congress and given the challenges that we are experiencing with trying to further engage China and address other issues, explain to me the rationale of the administration in thinking that we should just let this drop and then go back to the drawing boards and start all over again when we could continue to address the nuclear aspect of that treaty in a way that is in our national security interest.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Thank you, Senator.

We had a chance to talk a little bit about this in closed session.

Senator SHAHEEN. Yes. I was not convinced then, so see if you can convince me now.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Well, I will want to be a little circumspect in open session on matters that would touch our negotiating position.

But suffice to say that we have not arrived at a decision one way or another on extension of the agreement and, if so, for what period of time. What is clear to us is that we need today to begin laying the antecedents for the next arms control agreement and that it would be we have waited too long and it will be too late if we wait for China to have built up in the direction that they are going, perhaps even pursuing some form of parity with us, qualitatively or quantitatively. We seek to forestall that.

I am in routine contact with both General Hyten and our STRATCOM Commander because their views and their input are very heavily factored in. In fact, they are co-leading the delegations that are headed to Vienna next week with senior generals and admirals on those delegations. So that perspective and that viewpoint is featuring heavily in our thought process.

That said, we must, in addition to China, also address what we know is happening, which is the Russian buildup of their short-

and medium-range tactical nuclear arsenal and their intention to potentially use those weapons in a first-strike scenario, escalate to win in a European environment. It is not a theoretical problem with the Russians given that they have demonstrated a willingness to invade other countries repeatedly. So this is something that has to be front and center in our process.

And then I would add the final aspect which is the verification, the importance of really enhancing the verification regime particularly if we are successful in answering this committee's call. When this committee put the resolution of ratification forward for New START, it said the next agreement needed to cover all of these non-strategic warheads. We want to do that but we are going to need much more robust verification to tackle that challenge.

Senator SHAHEEN. And are there other incentives, other issues that we have put on the table other than the extension of New START as it currently exists in terms of being able to encourage the Russians to look at this from the perspective that you outlined?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Well, Senator, I would like to maybe handle that offline with you in terms of the diplomatic back and forth. But what we do understand is that the Russian Federation is now 80–90 percent of the way through their nuclear modernization. For a variety of reasons here in the United States, we have not yet really begun the kind of modernization that is now urgently needed. And so the Russian motive here is that they very much want this agreement extended because it provides them a level of predictability in what we may do. At the same time, I know both you and Senator Kaine are on the Armed Services Committee, and I do suggest simply that our ability to negotiate effective arms control does, in fact, go hand in hand with a robust modernization program.

Senator SHAHEEN. I would like to continue this discussion but I am out of time. But I would just argue that given that Russia is able to expand into those tactical weapons and do the modernization, we clearly are able to do that as well outside of the New START treaty.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

That is an excellent line of inquiry and underscores the fact that this is truly a non-partisan, bipartisan matter that all of us need to engage in. And I think that that probably is as good as we have done on a non-partisan basis of late, and we will continue to pursue that. I think that is probably one of the most critical areas that this committee really needs to deal with. So thank you for that.

And with that, we will go to Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Thank you to all the nominees for your willingness to serve.

Let me begin with Ambassador Trujillo, who I have known for a long time. I am excited and very supportive of your nomination.

One of the things I am excited about is the way—you know, this is a committee that oversees the State Department and diplomacy, and the way you have reinvigorated diplomacy at the OAS is a story that has not been told enough. Obviously, we are not members of the Lima Group and its response to the Venezuelan crisis, but the supporting role the U.S. has played is in no small part due to your efforts.

But particularly the invocation of the RIO Treaty which is a mutual defense agreement in the hemisphere. In December, I know it took a lot of old-fashioned diplomatic work behind the scenes with our partner nations in the region and I think is in no small part due to—you have been a major player in that effort.

I wanted to talk with you about two of the irritant points in our hemisphere. The first is Cuba. It is interesting. There is a lot of talk about the embargo. To this day, there are still not a lot of Japanese or German cars on the streets. There is no German or Japanese embargo although there are Mercedes that are being driven by government officials, but they basically are able to buy any product they want from anywhere in the world.

The reason why they cannot has nothing to do with the U.S. embargo. It has to do with the fact that the Government there has no plan for developing its economy. The model of the aging leaders of that regime has basically been how do we hold onto power and restrict both the economic and political freedoms of people to do so.

I think the desperation is manifested in their recent announcement now that they are allowing people to buy in dollars with no fees attached. They used to take 10 percent of the dollars that were sent over there. It is just because their currency is worthless around the world. So they need people to pull dollars underneath their cushions or get more remittances sent to them so that they can have more dollars circulating that they can use to buy things.

But this policy of control is largely evidenced by a military company that controls the economy and the Communist Party that controls their politics. But a lot of the key people in that regime that are left—they are in their 80s and early 90s. So let us just say they are not going to live forever.

Is there any hope in your mind that there is—I am not saying there is a bunch of people there that are democrats and believe in the values of freedom and liberty—but is there any hope that there is some new generation of leadership at some point within that government that would begin to move on some of these issues regarding economic and political freedoms?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator, for your question and your kind words.

I do. I spent a significant amount of time over the last 2 years working with the civil society, working with some of the younger people, working with some of the entrepreneurs, and they yearn for all the things that America has. They yearn for freedom. They yearn for an independent press. They yearn for democracy. They yearn for economic empowerment. And I think now with social media and the sharing of information and how quickly information is accessible, these folktales of how evil the Yankee empire is no longer hold true. People could go on the Internet and see for themselves why does my cousin who lives in Miami have a nice pair of jeans and a decent house and some food on the table, and I who live in Santiago am starving to death.

So I think there is a lot of hope. I think the civil society in Cuba is better organized than people give them credit under very, very difficult circumstances.

Senator RUBIO. On the issue of Venezuela, would you agree that it is a mistake to view the Maduro regime as a government as op-

posed to a criminal enterprise, an organized crime syndicate that happens to control a national territory?

Mr. TRUJILLO. I agree with your assessment. It is an illegitimate regime that is deemed as much not only by the United States but by multiple countries across the world.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Billingslea, on the Iranian U.N. restrictions that are in place now, those come off I believe in October. Would they then be allowed to sell weapons to, for example, Venezuela?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Well, Senator, unfortunately the Iranian regime is proliferating weaponry, and I think in a different setting it would be good to make sure—well, you will have on the Intelligence Committee access to all of that information.

The concern would be that they will have much more ready access to buy weaponry from the Russians and Chinese who will no longer technically be prohibited from selling to them under the embargo.

Senator RUBIO. And on the question of arms control, I think it is by now I hope well established in the minds of most people that no one can win a nuclear war fought with strategic nuclear weapons in which each side exchanges 1,500 warheads against each other. That is not only a war you cannot win, it is the end of the world.

What is a danger is the use of tactical nuclear weapons on the battlefield to escalate a fight in order to deescalate the notion that you could use a nuclear weapon, artillery or whatever it might be, a short-range missile, to sort of stop in a conflict and the belief that that will not spiral on to something bigger.

Is that not, at the end of the day, the area we should be most concerned about? And the Russian violations of these tactical weapons is that they think they could potentially use it to win or deescalate a conflict.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, that is exactly right, and that is why we have focused in these Vienna talks on Russian nuclear doctrine. And so as the teams deploy next week, one of the working groups we have agreed is a working group to cover both this matter of warheads and doctrine. We will be prepared to discuss the Nuclear Posture Review and our thinking on nuclear doctrine but we expect the Russians to be transparent on their doctrine as well.

And we are greatly concerned about this concept of escalate to win particularly when we are talking about a country like Russia that seems to feel free to invade and occupy other nations.

On the case of China, we have a different issue, which is that China has not ever been part of an arms control dynamic that has led to the establishment of risk reduction measures such as hotlines. We have the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center. We have an architecture that was put in place over the many years during the Cold War that has allowed us to avoid mishap. And if China, indeed, intends to build up the way we believe they will, we must get at this matter of transparency and confidence building measures.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, for holding this critical nominations hearing.

I just want to make a brief comment about the importance of this committee's oversight role which many of you have discussed with the chair and ranking member.

This committee has attempted to conduct its responsible oversight role into critical issues: the arms sales to Gulf States, the killing of Soleimani, President Trump's withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty, agreements reached with Central American states. In all of these cases, the inability of this committee to get timely information from the State Department has really frustrated our engagement and I think has been harmful to our foreign policy.

So I support the efforts of our ranking member and colleagues from both sides who are working to get this information in a way to conduct our oversight responsibly. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to see we have an aggressive schedule for the next 3 weeks and look forward to engaging actively as we get more witnesses and more opportunities. And I am hopeful that in this month we will be conducting the oversight that is a critical part of this committee's mission.

So if I might, first, Mr. Billingslea. On June 25th, media outlets reported the Trump administration is seriously discussing ending a decades-old process of congressional review of arms sales, which has been in critical moments used to delay or block sales to governments over human rights concerns or over the targeting of civilians using weapons we had provided.

Do you support continuing congressional review of arms sales as that process currently exists? And if confirmed, will you commit to continuing congressional review of arms sales?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, absolutely. When I was a professional staff member on this committee, I was in fact one of the four members that facilitated that arms sale consultative process, the informal notification process followed by the formal notification process. And I well know how important the informal notification process is and the dialogue that emerges around it. And I support continuing the existing informal process for congressional clearance of arms sales.

If confirmed, in the event that I do identify opportunities for improvement or other kinds of systemic change, I would like to work with the committee, with both the chairman and the ranking member, on that topic for their consideration. But please rest assured I strongly support the informal process.

Senator COONS. Have you been a part of any of the interagency conversations that were reported so far?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. No. No, sir.

Senator COONS. And would you recognize that at key points both parties have used the congressional role in arms sales notification and approval to ensure that we are putting human rights and some of our highest values ahead of temporary military alliances?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, absolutely, and I did exactly the same on behalf of the chairman at the time I was here. I recognize the value. I view it as a lack of successful consultation if joint resolutions of disapproval are where things wind up. I do note that there has been perhaps a bit of a slowdown in some of these processes, and I would like to explore with the committee why that might be. But I think I have already shown my commitment to working close-

ly with this committee in the context of the arms control negotiations, and I intend, if confirmed, to carry that forward in every aspect of the T family with this committee.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

If I might, Mr. Mahoney. The role for which you have been nominated is a critical one, and I just wanted to say I am working with members of this committee and the Office of Legal Adviser to try and appropriately resolve terrorism-related claims against Sudan to get justice and compensation for hundreds of terror victims. There are a number of concerns of a range of members here. Resolving these claims fairly and appropriately is a critical step before Sudan can reenter the international community following the ouster of brutal dictator Omar al-Bashir.

If confirmed, will you prioritize this issue and work transparently with both sides of this committee on making sure we get a fair resolution of this issue?

Mr. MAHONEY. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator COONS. Let me ask you another question, if I could, about WHO withdrawal. Harold Koh, a former Legal Adviser to the State Department, has argued publicly that the President lacks the constitutional authority to unilaterally withdraw. The joint resolution passed in 1948 implementing the structure of our engagement with the WHO says Congress would have to first appropriate funds.

If confirmed, do you commit to examining whether or not sufficient legal basis exists to support a unilateral presidential power to terminate international agreements both with the WHO and more broadly?

Mr. MAHONEY. Yes, Senator. That is definitely something that I would examine, I should add, in consultation with the career staff of the department of the Legal Adviser who have dealt with these issues across the years.

Senator COONS. I look forward to working with you on that, if confirmed.

If I could, Carlos—excuse me—Mr. Trujillo. And my welcome to your family who has also joined us for this I think constructive hearing.

I had grave concerns about the strategy of cutting off funds for health, for development, for good governance projects in order to secure an agreement with the Northern Triangle countries to try and address root causes of migration.

Will you work with us on this committee to ensure the congressionally appropriated funds continue to flow to the Northern Triangle and will not be misused as a leverage point to try and get temporary agreements around migration issues?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator.

I commit to continuing to work with the committee. Yes.

Senator COONS. Would you agree or disagree that cutting off funds that we have appropriated for health, development, and governance advances our interests and values in the region?

Mr. TRUJILLO. I think the funds are an important tool of our foreign policy toolbox. It allows us to advance a lot of interests that are beneficial to the American people.

Senator COONS. Well, let me move to one last question given the time.

The Venezuelan people, as I think we would all agree, continue to suffer at the hands of the Maduro regime and the humanitarian crisis he has created. Venezuela is the number one country of origin for individuals claiming asylum in the United States. Ranking Member Menendez has led an effort to urge the administration to grant TPS for Venezuelans.

Do you think blocking Venezuelans' ability to seek protection in the United States advances our interests and values in this region?

Mr. TRUJILLO. I think it is very difficult to send Venezuelans back to the terrible conditions that currently exist in their country.

Senator COONS. Would you advocate for TPS status?

Mr. TRUJILLO. TPS is a legal recognition. I would advocate so that they were not removed, especially those who do not have deportation rulings based on crimes committed that they are not removed back towards Venezuela.

Senator COONS. But you would advocate for an appropriate asylum process that is not politicized?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Absolutely.

Senator COONS. Thank you to all three of you for the answers you have given to suggest that, if confirmed, you will be more responsive to requests for information from this committee. I look forward to having the chance to work with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you to the witnesses. Mr. Billingslea, good to see you again.

I have a quick set of questions for each of you.

I have been concerned that the administration has not kept Congress informed of Part 810 agreements to allow transfer of nuclear technology to other nations. The Armed Services Committee learned a while back that there had been transfers authorized to Saudi Arabia. We learned that through a Reuters account. When we pressed administration officials for Congress to receive the information, as Congress had in the past, we could not get the information frankly until the chair of this committee directed that the information be provided. And when it was provided, it was disclosed that the transfers to Saudi Arabia, one, happened just days after the assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, a Virginia resident, and what happened 4 months later.

I am assuming you are aware of the Part 810 process, which I believe the DOE is at the top of but State weighs in with recommendations about Part 810 transfers.

Based on your earlier work on this side of Pennsylvania Avenue, would you agree that Congress should be kept informed of Part 810 transfers when the administration agrees they should be made?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, I am unaware of any argument of why you would not be kept in the loop. This committee within the statutory framework oversight of the Atomic Energy Act. That also includes the Article 123 agreements in which the department is now

engaged with a couple of countries. And I would also commit to keeping you fully and currently informed on those topics as well.

Senator KAINE. Please. That is very important.

On 123 agreements, the U.S. is currently negotiating a 123 agreement with Saudi Arabia. In a September 2019 letter to a Saudi counterpart, the then Secretary of Energy Perry reiterated the U.S. position that Saudi Arabia must negotiate and implement an additional protocol to safeguard its program and agree to forego uranium enrichment as part of any agreement.

To your knowledge, is that still the position of the United States?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, I am not privy to the current state of affairs in the negotiation. I would say that during my time here on this committee staff, I supported the chairman at the time and actually worked closely with then Congressman Markey on the proliferation threat that is posed by reprocessing mixed oxide fuels and enrichment. If confirmed by this committee, you have my commitment that I will pursue the so-called gold standard in these 123 agreements, something that was achieved with the UAE and I believe should also be pursued with the Saudis, which is to forego reprocessing and enrichment.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Ambassador Mahoney, here is a question that you cannot answer because it is about the State Department, and you are at USTR right now. I would not expect you to be up on this, but it is a concern that I would like to work with you on.

At the end of last year, 2019, Secretary Pompeo announced that the U.S. was rescinding a 1978 memorandum called the Hansell Memorandum, which had been honored by administrations of both parties. That memorandum stated the U.S.'s position that annexation of territories, Israeli annexation of territories, in the West Bank was a violation of international law. Reporting suggests that that was rescinded based upon an effort that was led by Ambassador Friedman and supported by a 40-page legal memorandum by your predecessor.

We have not had State Department witnesses in the committee since then. We have not had the ability to ask why did you rescind this 40-plus year document that had been an agreed upon statement of policy by both Democratic and Republican administrations. I do not know whether that 40-page memorandum is in a form that Congress could receive, but whether or not we agree with the administration on the position, I do think this committee is entitled to understand the basis for the State Department's reversal of a 40-year policy, and I would like to work with you to try to gain an understanding for why the Trump administration chose to rescind that memorandum.

Mr. MAHONEY. Senator, I have not seen the memorandum to which you refer obviously. But I would look forward to working with you on this and other issues.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you.

Ambassador Trujillo, I want to ask you about an important issue to me and that is corruption in the Northern Triangle. During the last year, two very prominent anti-corruption bodies, the CICIG in Guatemala and the MACCIH in Honduras, have been allowed to expire. The reporting about both suggests that these anti-corrup-

tion bodies—CICIG was set up between the Guatemalan Government and the United Nations with the strong support of the United States under then President George W. Bush. MACCIH was set up by Honduras and the OAS, as you know, with the strong support of then President Obama.

The reporting—and again, we have not had State Department witnesses to be able to ask them about this—suggests that in both instances, the U.S. was willing to allow the anti-corruption bodies to expire because they got other things. In the case of Guatemala, Guatemala recognized the new site of the Israeli—they moved their embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In the case of Honduras, Honduras entered into a third party agreement that allowed some asylees and refuges to be returned to Honduras. And the reporting suggests that because of that, the U.S. was willing to drop their support for strong anti-corruption bodies in each country that had had some significant success.

Should you be confirmed in your current position, will you be a strong voice for anti-corruption in the region and express that it should be an American value that we would want the kinds of corruption that often are root causes for people migrating to our country—we should want to do all we can to stop corruption?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, Senator. And I was involved in MACCIH, and I did advocate strongly including multiple trips to Honduras to try to get that mandate renewed. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful.

Senator KAINE. And if I could, just as I conclude, Mr. Chair, I do credit that. I know you were, along with some others, trying to get the mandate renewed, but at the same time as you were trying to get the mandate renewed, DHS leadership, including Chad Wolf, were going to Honduras praising Honduras for entering into the third party agreement with respect to refugees—I am sorry—asylees. And Honduras clearly picked up—and you and I both have friends there—a signal from the United States, as did Guatemala with respect to CICIG that if you make the U.S. happy here, you can abandon your commitment to anti-corruption efforts.

And we should want to work with Honduras on asylum and we should want to work with Guatemala on other issues, but we should not say if you meet U.S. policy here, we will turn a blind eye to corruption. And that is the impression that has been left in Central America by the abandonment of both MACCIH and CICIG. And I hope you will do all you can, should you be confirmed, to stand for the proposition that the U.S. is against corruption.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator.

I do not believe they are a binary choice. I believe they are intertwined. Lack of rule of law and weak institutions and corruptions will ultimately lead to migration because economic opportunity and economic advancement will not occur. So I commit to do that.

Senator KAINE. I completely agree with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. While you were gone, we got the clock fixed you will be unhappy to hear. But with the chairman's infinite generosity, please take your time.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, Mr. Chairman, I will avail myself of your infinite generosity.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Ambassador Trujillo, for years the President has had a policy—I would consider it a bullying of our closest partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its approach to Mexico has included tariffs, U.S. troops on the border, a wasteful and ineffective border wall, disturbing immigration programs like Remain Mexico. Its approach to Central America has included foreign assistance cuts and threats of visa sanctions if the Governments do not receive deportation flights, even when individuals on the flights test positive for the COVID–19 virus. So those are just some of, from my perspective, egregious examples of how the President's xenophobic views distort our foreign policy towards the region.

I was personally troubled when Guatemalan President Giammattei said in May, "I don't believe the United States is an ally to Guatemala because they don't treat us like one."

So let me ask you, does the fact that the Trump administration deported COVID-positive individuals to Central America make you proud?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator.

Obviously, those are very concerning reports, and it is something that if I am confirmed, we will work to make sure that individuals who test positive are not deported.

Senator MENENDEZ. So they should not have been sent. If they tested positive, they should not have been sent to the Central American countries.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Senator, my understanding is that there is a protocol in place by ICE. They test these people. There are about 5,000 Abbott tests. They review the tests. They have incubation protocols, and their intention is not to deport people who do test positive. I am not sure if people who have actually tested positive——

Senator MENENDEZ. You can understand how these countries feel when they are getting COVID-infected persons deported to them.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, I can.

Senator MENENDEZ. If confirmed, what are you going to do about the President's anti-immigrant agenda as a centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy towards the region?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Senator, I would continue to work with the Central American countries, including Mexico as well, as I have over the last 2 years in advancing our diplomatic mission, whether it comes to Nicaragua, when it comes to Venezuela, when it comes to our national security, or it comes to trade.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, let me ask you then, how high levels of violence and forced displacement on top of extremely weak asylum systems in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador provide strong evidence that the asylum cooperative agreements signed by the United States with these countries do not comply with U.S. law. The State Department is aware of the lack of asylum capacity in these countries, and my staff brought this evidence to your attention. Yet, DHS and DOJ have determined that Guatemala and Honduras provide full and fair asylum screening.

Knowing what you know about the systems of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, do you believe these countries offer conditions of safety to protect refugees?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator.

As you noted, DHS and Department of Justice made a free and fair assessment. I think it is important to make sure they have the capacity in order to receive the asylum seekers. Currently in Honduras, it is around 100 that have been returned; Guatemala, about 500; and El Salvador, around 40. So I think it is very important——

Senator MENENDEZ. I did not ask you about DHS. I said knowing what you know—I appreciate your dancing around my questions. Knowing what you know, do you believe, as the nominee for the Assistant Secretary of State, as the Ambassador to the Organization of American States, that these countries offer the conditions of safety to protect refugees? Yes or no.

Mr. TRUJILLO. I think the approach of a very small-scale approach is the appropriate one.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, that is not what is happening. That is not what is happening.

Let me ask you this. We have heard a lot about Venezuela. No one has been more engaged than me on that. My VERDAD Act was signed into law last year, for progress remains limited.

Last month during an interview, President Trump said—I am quoting, "Guaido was elected. I think that I wasn't necessarily in favor, but I said some people liked it, some people didn't. I was okay with it. I don't think it was—you know, I don't think it was very meaningful one way or the other."

Now, these comments come after the recent publication of a book by former National Security Adviser Bolton, which stated that the President views interim President Guaido as, "weak," and that it would be, "cool" to invade Venezuela.

Ambassador Trujillo, do you agree with President Trump's comments about interim President Guaido?

Mr. TRUJILLO. I have had the opportunity of meeting with President Guaido in April, at the Summit of the Americas in 2018, in December of 2018, and after since he became interim President. He is a very brave person. I admire his courage.

Senator MENENDEZ. You admire his courage. So then you would disagree with the President as to him being weak. If somebody is courageous, they are not weak. Right?

Mr. TRUJILLO. That is correct.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this. I heard your answer to—I forget which of my colleagues—about TPS for Venezuelans. Why would you not advocate for temporary protective status for Venezuelans? You said you would advocate for them not being deported, assuming they had no criminal background. But you would not advocate for TPS. Is TPS not the very essence of what that is all about? TPS means temporary protected status until that time in which the conditions in your country change and you can return.

Mr. TRUJILLO. I am not an immigration expert. I understand TPS also comes with additional qualifications, restrictions, and benefits. My comments I stand by, saying that individuals should not be returned to Venezuela given the current circumstances.

Whether that is through a TPS model or a different model, I am not——

Senator MENENDEZ. What other model would there be?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Just by ICE not having any enforcement actions.

Senator MENENDEZ. So in essence, somehow freezing their deportation but not giving them any temporary status in the United States.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Again, Senator, I am not an expert on all the different asylum——

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, you are going to be the Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, if you are confirmed. This is the very essence of—let me ask you—the very essence of policy issues. You know, you are going to be having an interdepartmental process. I want to hear how you are going to weigh in as the Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere.

Let me ask you this. As you know, my office raised repeated questions and concerns about whether you asked the OAS to open an investigation to intentionally target a U.S. citizen employee of that organization. The investigation you requested resulted in a recommendation for the termination of the employment of a U.S. citizen, even while that final decision is under appeal.

Will you commit that you will provide complete and truthful answers to all of my written questions until we get to the bottom of this matter?

Mr. TRUJILLO. Yes, Senator. I have already previously also provided it in questions, but——

Senator MENENDEZ. Just for the record, I voted for you to be the OAS Ambassador.

Mr. TRUJILLO. That is correct, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. But I have to be honest with you. After that, you disappeared. There is no one other than maybe Senator Rubio and Senator Cardin to some degree who has shown a consistent, intensive engagement in the western hemisphere as I have. So I hope, if you are confirmed—the next time I will see you is not when you are either leaving office or up for a reconfirmation because that is not my idea of engagement and a consultative process.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Senator, I respect your assessment, and it is true we have not met. But I have met extensively with your staff over the course of the last 2 years.

Senator MENENDEZ. I am not going to belabor the point.

I have questions of Mr. Billingslea, but I see that Senator Cruz is here.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Senator Cruz, welcome. You are up.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, welcome. Congratulations on your respective nominations.

Ambassador Billingslea, let us talk a little bit about New START. I have long expressed concerns about Cold War style treaties that apply only to the United States and Russia, that leave China unconstrained, and that are applied unevenly in a way that disadvantages U.S. national security. When it comes to New START, the treaty was riddled with holes. It was created while Russia was in violation of several treaty obligations, including

START, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, and the Open Skies Treaty. And yet, its drafters did not take that into account seriously.

Checking warhead limitations became impossible because of the inspection rules. The treaty had loopholes for so-called uploading of missile warheads. It failed to limit non-deployed mobile missiles. It abandoned START and INF verification measures, including the ban on telemetry encryption, and on and on.

Could you please describe to this committee what you see as the biggest flaws in our ability to verify New START and what it would take to fix them?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Thank you, Senator.

We have actively looked at that, and we have done a cross comparison with the original verification mechanisms contained in the START treaty itself, as well as some of the valuable experience we had from portal monitoring in the INF Treaty. And we believe a combination of those measures is far superior to what is afforded under the New START treaty.

As you point out, the verification of the telemetry exchanges have resulted in zero exchanges of value to the United States. The Russians have only given us antiquated systems with which we already have the telemetry data. But having that telemetry data, particularly when it comes to a trilateral arrangement with China, I think is very important as a confidence building measure. It lets you understand what that particular missile is doing at any given moment in time.

The decision to, in effect, triple the period of time that it takes for on-site inspectors to get to a particular inspectable site is another major deficiency that needs to be rectified because surprise, surprise, very often the thing you went there to inspect is not there when you give so much heads-up in advance. So while technically not a violation of the treaty, not a great practice and something we need to bring to an end.

But everything we do in terms of restoring a truly verifiable framework has to be done, as I have said, with an eye towards China. China is in the middle of an unconstrained crash program. They are building up rapidly, and we believe and, interestingly enough, the Russians also believe that the next agreement must be a multilateral agreement. Now, when the Russians say that, they mean five countries. They mean the Brits and the French as well. When we say that, we mean three because China is building up and France and the UK are not.

Senator CRUZ. And elaborate on the down sides for U.S. national security to China being excluded from New START and able to operate completely free from it.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Well, the most important down side is we are dealing with a completely nontransparent regime in Beijing that seems increasingly comfortable with rewriting international rules to suit themselves, underwritten by the threat of force, either actual or implied. And we see them doing this. They just did this recently with the Indians. We have seen them doing this in the South China Sea, what they are doing in Hong Kong, you name it. By the

way, we keep emphasizing to the Russians that there are 150 million Russians and there are 1.5 billion Chinese.

Senator CRUZ. Mr. Trujillo, let me shift to you and two questions. Thank you for your good work at the OAS.

Two questions. What do you see as the most significant challenges in the region, number one? And secondly, I would like you to address in particular the CITGO 6 which is a significant concern of me and many other members. And I would like for you to address what efforts are being made to bring the CITGO 6 home.

Mr. TRUJILLO. Thank you, Senator.

I think the biggest political threat are obviously the malign actors that exist in the hemisphere, whether it is Russia, China, and even Cuba, and their influence on the hemisphere. I think that is significant.

And the other significant threat that we are facing is the post-COVID world. A GDP decline of, on average, 9 percent is what they are expecting across the hemisphere. How do we deal with making sure economies survive and countries can prosper given some of these economic threats? That is a very high level.

The CITGO 6—I commit to doing everything I possibly can, if I am confirmed by the Senate, to make sure we can safely return them to the United States.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cruz.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a series of questions for Mr. Billingslea. I will submit them for the record, but I have one that I want to engage with him here at the hearing.

Mr. Billingslea, you have repeatedly dodged the question of whether you personally advocated for certain enhanced interrogation techniques or took any steps to oppose them. In responses to my questions, you stated only that, quote, you were not in the position of deciding on those matters. It sounds a little bit like the Nuremberg defense. But you were a senior officials at the Department of Defense overseeing the recommendations and implementation of interrogation techniques.

So here at this hearing on the record, under the pain of perjury, I want to ask you again, did you ever advocate, in writing or otherwise for or against the use of the following interrogation techniques against detainees at Guantanamo Bay: placing a hood, a blindfold over a detainees head during questioning; threatening to transfer detainees to a third country where they would fear torture or death; 20-hour interrogations; forcibly shaving a detainee's hair or beard; keeping detainees awake for up to 4 days in succession; stripping detainees naked; using military working dogs to frighten detainees during interrogation?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, I never advocated for any technique that was characterized to me as torture.

Senator MENENDEZ. That was characterized to you as torture. Did you not recognize them as torture yourself?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, there was a working group that comprised lawyers from across the spectrum. There was a separate group comprised of professional interrogators. I am neither a law-

yer now a professional interrogator. And I had to rely upon the best advice given in both sides of that equation in an effort to create a process because when I came in as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, not as an Assistant Secretary of Defense or an Under, as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense—Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense at the Pentagon are not empowered to make unilateral decisions like you are suggesting. My role was to create order out of a very chaotic process where we had——

Senator MENENDEZ. Order out of a chaotic process of torture.

You know, I have a memo here that you wrote to the Secretary of Defense where you state that these techniques are, "not controversial from either a legal"—and you are not a lawyer, but you said from either a legal "or policy standpoint." And yet, the Judge Advocate Generals from multiple armed services, as well as professional interrogators from the FBI and CIS, all made it known at the time that they believed these techniques constituted torture, that they were illegal, and that they had significant negative policy implications.

U.S. law now expressly classifies these techniques as torture.

And there are other memos, which we both know about, but which I cannot reference in an open setting, which is why I have asked them to declassified.

Yet, you continue to insist some 30 times in your recent responses to questions for the record and now here that you have never advocated for torture, that all you did was create, "a transparent process." Mr. Billingslea, that is disingenuous at best.

The record shows that you recommended implementing these techniques. You made your opinion known, and importantly, your opinion mattered. As a matter of fact, you said in part of this memo that there were other elements that were not included that should have been included.

When I come to ask you in your new position whether you argued for taking human rights into account before approving the export of more bombs to Saudi Arabia to drop on Yemen, or whether you advocated for stronger U.S. protections in an arms treaty with Russia, I am wondering whether we will get the truth. Maybe you will simply throw up your hands and say, well, I am not the decider.

And that is why I have dwelt so much on this, because I could talk to you about all the policy issues that will be in your portfolio, but I have to believe what you tell me. And based upon this——

So, Mr. Chairman, I ask that a number of letters and other documents related to the torture issue that I have referred to be entered into the record. And I will submit electronic copies for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Those will all be admitted, assuming that there is no classification problem.

Senator MENENDEZ. They are not.

The CHAIRMAN. If they are not, they will be admitted.

[The information referred to above is located at the end of this hearing transcript.]

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Coons, I understand you also wish to trespass upon the generosity of the chairman. Is that true?

Senator COONS. This rare opportunity to conduct oversight in a nominations hearing is just too intriguing for me to pass up.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, please have at it.

Senator COONS. I know there is an active vote, so I will do my best to be focused.

Just briefly, if I might, Mr. Trujillo, on the issue I raised before about TPS, as someone who advocated for asylees from Haiti many, many years ago as a young lawyer, actually under the supervision of Harold Koh, I will just emphasize the point that TPS provides some stability and security. It gives people granted temporary protected status the ability to work and to be here with some security. And the alternative, which is we just will not deport for today, does not meet I think the urgency of our standing with the Venezuelan people in this moment.

If I might, Mr. Billingslea, just two quick questions. There was a report in the *Washington Post* the administration is considering restarting explosive nuclear testing for the first time in 3 decades. And according to open source public reporting, there is no scientific or technical reason to do this. This would just be to gain some leverage.

Do you agree with the assessment there is no scientific or technical benefit to explosive nuclear testing?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, I have actually said publicly that I am unaware of any reason to engage in nuclear testing at this stage.

Senator COONS. So would you support a U.S. return to explosive nuclear testing for any non-scientific reason?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. I am sorry. It is just for the purpose of doing it?

Senator COONS. And I guess someone in the White House thinks it might give us some leverage if we were to resume nuclear testing.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Well, Senator, I think we would only test in the event that we had a safety or a reliability issue or if there were some urgent need to develop some kind of new design. And I am not aware of any three of those being the case at this time.

Senator COONS. So you would oppose testing, explosive nuclear testing, for just purely leverage and negotiations reasons.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. I think it is important that we make clear to the Russians and the Chinese that it is not okay to tell the world that you are not engaged in testing with yield when in fact you are.

Senator COONS. Right.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. That is different than linking it to the CTBT or to various moratorium. But we are not engaged in testing with yield, and we know the Russians are and we have grave doubts about the Chinese.

Senator COONS. And we should not be would be my concluding point.

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, I think that is a valid point. Again, I am unaware of any reason to test at this stage.

Senator COONS. Briefly about Open Skies, the 1992 Open Skies Treaty, it gives short notice on armed observation flights and helps avoid miscalculations and delivers quality photographic evidence

that—developments in technology have made this less urgent, of course, than it was then. But our allies count on it.

How is the administration addressing European concerns about our withdrawal from Open Skies? And are we more secure in a world where we do not have legally binding constraints in Russian strategic forces?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, that is a great question. And again, I was not part of the decision-making process on that or the consultations that happened with the Europeans. I do understand that there was a fairly exhaustive outreach that involved questionnaires that were soliciting input from various allies and friends.

I did participate in a discussion with the North Atlantic Council because I care very deeply about NATO given my background with them, though I did not lead that part of the discussions. I was more focused on the situation with New START.

I believe that we must work with our allies, but I think we have to be crystal clear that it is the Russians who have, in effect, shredded conventional arms control in Europe, starting with suspension of the CFE Treaty, which they backed out of in effect despite the fact that we revised it multiple times. This body approved changes to that treaty to accommodate their existing violations in the——

Senator COONS. If the Russians have shredded conventional nuclear arms control, why would we welcome them back into the G–7?

Mr. BILLINGSLEA. Senator, that is beyond my purview, and I could not give you an answer to that.

Senator COONS. I will simply assert that it is not wise, until we see a change in Russian behavior, for us to welcome them back into the community of nations.

I have already exceeded the tolerance of the chairman I suspect, and I appreciate your graciousness today.

Thank you to all three of you. I appreciate the opportunity we have had today to question you.

I appreciate the forward progress we are making in this committee. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Coons. I appreciate your thoughts in that regard.

Well, a robust hearing to say the least. Thank you so much, all of you, for being involved.

First of all, the letters of support submitted by Senator Moran will be included in the record.

[The information referred to above is located at the end of this hearing transcript.]

The CHAIRMAN. For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Wednesday, including for members to submit questions for the record.

With that, I want to thank all of you for your patience, thank all of you for your willingness to serve and your families for also embracing the sacrifices that that takes. So thank you very much.

And with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

EITs at Guantanamo

Question. Please provide only YES or NO answers to the following questions:

- Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the enhanced interrogation technique (EIT) known as "hooding", which involved placing a hood or blindfold over the detainee's head during questioning?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 142 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 143 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 144 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 145 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "threat of transfer", which involved threatening to transfer the subject to a 3rd country that the subject is likely to fear would subject him to torture or death?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 146 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 147 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 148 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 149 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "use of prolonged interrogations", which involved the continued use of a series of approaches that extend over a long period of time (e.g., 20 hours per day per interrogation)?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 150 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 151 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 152 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 153 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "forced grooming", which involved forcing a detainee to shave their hair or beard?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 154 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 155 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 156 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 157 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "sleep deprivation", which involved keeping the detainee awake for an extended period of time, up to 4 days in succession?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 158 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 159 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 160 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 161 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "isolation", which involved separating a detainee from others for up to 96 hours?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 162 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 163 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 164 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 165 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "sound modulation"?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 166 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 167 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 168 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services

Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 169 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "face slap/stomach slap", which involved a quick glancing slap to the fleshy part of the cheek or stomach, used as a shock measure?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 170 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 171 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 172 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 173 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "removal of clothing," which involved potential removal of all clothing, to be done by military police if not agreed to by the subject?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 174 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 175 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 176 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 177 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Did you ever recommend for use in detainee interrogations at Guantanamo the EIT known as "increasing anxiety by use of aversions", which involved introducing factors that create anxiety, such as military working dogs?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee's report makes clear, all of the interrogation techniques recommended by the Working Group were determined to be available for request. I signed a memo that recommended that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require notification to the Secretary. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 178 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record.

Question. If so, were you aware of the legal and policy objections of military JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators (FBI, NCIS, etc.) to this technique?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 179 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Were you aware that some JAGs and law enforcement professional interrogators believed that this technique constituted torture?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 180 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. The Senate Armed Services Committee's report clearly documents a wide range of differing views that were expressed at this time on this topic.

Question. Do you now consider this technique to be abusive?

Answer. I stand by my previous response to this QFR as contained in Answer 181 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record. As I testified previously, I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade after 9/11, which limits use of interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. [Please answer yes or no.] Do you think you did the right thing by recommending the above techniques for approval?

Answer. As I have testified previously, it was critically important—in the days following the horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11—that a structure be applied to how detainee operations at Guantanamo were conducted.

I have also made clear that I strongly support the law enacted by Congress, more than a decade later, that restricts interrogation techniques to those contained in the Army Field Manual.

Question. Do you know of any documents that can positively support your assertion that you never advocated for abusive interrogation techniques or torture? (please note for your answer that the SASC report references a memo where you recommended the use of abusive interrogation techniques)

Answer. The Senate Armed Services Committee report was conducted on a bipartisan basis with access to the full documentary record. At no point in that report am I accused of advocating for torture.

Question. You have said several times that you were not in the position of deciding or influencing decisions on interrogation techniques, and your role was only to create a transparent process. You also wrote in response to QFRs from your previous hearing that "I raised clear objections [to waterboarding] in meetings with the [DOD] Office of the General Counsel" and "My office made clear our policy objections [to waterboarding], contributing to that red color coding"—with the red color coding meaning it was not recommended by the Working Group that you were a member of. Putting aside the fact that you cannot produce any written documents to prove that assertion, you nonetheless state that your opposition to waterboarding resulted in it not being recommended for approval.

- If you assert that you exercised the power of your position to influence the outcome of the decision with regards to waterboarding, how can you simultaneously assert that could not exercise the power of your position to influence the outcome of the decision with regards to hooding, forced grooming, removal of clothing, sleep deprivation, and several other abusive detailed above?

Answer. I did raise objections regarding the potential use of waterboarding. Further, as the Senate Armed Services Committee report documents, I also expressed concern that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require the Secretary of Defense first be notified. Additionally, when some techniques were requested by the Combatant Command, I reverified with the Office of the General Counsel that they were determined to be legal.

Question. For a QFR from your previous hearing, you answered in that QFR as well as others that "as neither a lawyer nor an expert in interrogation techniques, I depended upon the Office of the General Counsel to determine the legality of proposed measures." If the OGC had determined that waterboarding was legal, would you have supported it? If not, why would you have disagreed with the OGC about that particular abusive technique, but not any of the other abusive techniques like hooding, threat of transfer, 20-hour interrogations, forced grooming, sleep deprivation, face slap/stomach slap, removal of clothing, and increasing anxiety by use of aversions?

Answer. As I noted in my response to the previous question, I expressed concern that a number of techniques not be simply delegated to the Combatant Commander, but instead require the Secretary of Defense first be notified. Additionally, when some techniques were requested by the Combatant Command, I re-verified with the Office of the General Counsel that they were determined to be legal.

Question. For QFR #139 from your previous hearing, you wrote that you "relied upon descriptions provided at the time by interrogation specialists and upon the determinations by counsel of which techniques were legally permissible."

- On October 2, 2002, the chief counsel of the CIA's counter-terrorism center sanctioned the use of waterboarding for an interrogation at Guantanamo. On January 23, 2003, the former chief of Guantanamo's interrogation control element—an interrogation specialist—told the Working Group, of which you were a member, that waterboarding was an effective technique. If an interrogation specialist had described waterboarding as effective, and counsel had determined it was legal, and you relied on the descriptions of interrogation specialists and counsel, why did you oppose waterboarding?

Answer. As the Senate Armed Services Committee report notes, waterboarding was the only interrogation technique evaluated as "red" in the Working Group's assessment. Per the report, "that 'red' designation meant that the Working Group determined there was a major issue."

Question. [Please answer only yes or no.] While on the Working Group, did you approve of the interrogation techniques in the draft Working Group report that was circulated on January 27, 2003?

Answer. I don't recall an approval process associated with that document. The Senate Armed Services Committee report indicates that document was considered a draft.

Question. [Please answer only yes or no.] While on the Working Group, did you approve of the interrogation techniques in the draft Working Group report that was circulated on February 04, 2003?

Answer. I don't recall an approval process associated with that document. The Senate Armed Services Committee report indicates that document was considered a draft.

Question. [Please answer only yes or no.] While on the Working Group, did you approve of the interrogation techniques in the draft Working Group report that was circulated on March 06, 2003?

Answer. I don't recall an approval process associated with that document. The Senate Armed Services Committee report indicates that document was ultimately also considered a draft.

SO/LIC Oversight of Afghanistan and Iraq Special Mission Units

Question. For QFR #194 from your previous hearing, you answered that you did not have civilian oversight of Special Mission Units in Iraq of Afghanistan because "[g]eographic combatant commanders, such as U.S. Central Command, maintain chain of command responsibility for military units operating within their area of responsibility. For a wide range of reasons, historically, the civilian staff with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Policy) do not intercede within the military chain of command."

Yet, in your response to QFRs 111, 113, and 114, you stated that, after hearing about a wide range of concerns including "interrogation topics" and "a complete disregard for civilian oversight" (emphasis added) at Guantanamo—which is under U.S. Southern Command's chain of command—you took several actions, including asking for information and creating a DASD for Detainee Affairs.

- If, as you state, SO/LIC did not provide civilian oversight of the SMUs because OSD civilian staff "do not intercede within the military chain of command" then how was it that SO/LIC provided civilian oversight of military detainee oper-

ations at Guantanamo, which were within the military chain of command? Please explain the discrepancy in your answers.

Answer. There is no discrepancy. OSD Policy is constituted with many different offices and functions which mirror or overlap with Combatant Command geographic or functional responsibilities. That does not mean that OSD intercedes in the military chain of command. Rather, it means that OSD is properly structured to give the best possible policy advice to the Secretary. After 9/11, I viewed it as essential that the Secretary be similarly supported and I received approval to create a DASD for Detainee Affairs.

Question. For QFR #206 from your previous hearing, you did not answer the question. Instead, you stated that SMUs fell under the military chain of command, as if that were the reason why you could not be aware of whether they were conducting interrogations. As you stated in response to an earlier QFR, SO/LIC received and requested information about "interrogation topics" at Guantanamo, which fell under the military chain of command; it then follows that that you could also have received or requested information about SMU interrogations. In addition, you answered that you were not aware of "interrogation techniques used by SMUs", but that was not the question. Please provide a yes or no answer to the original question: While at SO/LIC, were you aware that SMUs in Afghanistan and Iraq were conducting their own interrogations?

Answer. I would have been shocked if SMUs were not conducting battlefield interrogation of captured unlawful enemy combatants. Military units conduct interrogations in a number of different circumstances, the parameters for which are set forth in the Army Field Manual.

Question. For QFR #209 from your previous hearing, your answer "not to my recollection" implies that you could have potentially been aware of or approved the January 2003 SOP created by the Afghanistan SMU TF. Please explain the discrepancy between your answer here and your earlier answers to questions about SMUs, where you stated that SO/LIC could not receive or request information about SMU interrogations because they were under the military chain of command. If, as you previously stated, SO/LIC could not receive or request information about SMU interrogations because they were under the military chain of command, then how could you have potentially been aware of or approved the Afghanistan SMU TF's interrogation SOP?

Answer. There is no discrepancy in my answers. I stated in Answers 194 and 195 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record that OSD Policy does not intercede within the military chain of command. Requesting and/or receiving information from the Joint Staff or the SOCOM Commander is not the same as interceding. That said, I stand by my response, contained in Answer 209 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record that I have no recollection of being aware of the referenced interrogation SOP created by "Afghanistan SMU TF."

Question. For QFR #211 from your previous hearing, your answer "not to my recollection" implies that you could have potentially been aware of or approved the January 2003 SOP created by the Iraq SMU TF. Please explain the discrepancy between your answer here and earlier answers to questions about SMUs. If, as you previously stated, SO/LIC could not receive or request information about SMU interrogations because they were under the military chain of command, then how could you have potentially been aware of or approved the Iraq SMU TF's interrogation SOP?

Answer. There is no discrepancy in my answers. I stated in Answers 194 and 195 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record that OSD Policy does not intercede within the military chain of command. Requesting and/or receiving information from the Joint Staff or the SOCOM Commander is not the same as interceding. That said, I stand by my response, contained in Answer 211 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record, that I have no recollection of being aware of the referenced interrogation SOP created by "Iraq SMU TF."

Question. For QFR #214 from your previous hearing, you stated that you learned of a death at Bagram and asked the SOCOM commander to investigate. If, as you stated in your response to earlier QFRs, you did not exercise any civilian oversight over SMUs because they were in the military chain of command, how then were you able to request that the SOCOM commander investigate the death of a detainee in military custody at Bagram? Please explain the discrepancy in your answers.

Answer. There is no discrepancy in my answers. I stated in Answers 194 and 195 of your September 19, 2019, Questions for the Record that OSD Policy does not intercede within the military chain of command. Requesting and/or receiving informa-

tion from the Joint Staff or the SOCOM Commander is not the same as interceding. As I testified, I recall learning of a death at Bagram and asked the SOCOM Commander to investigate. SO/LIC respects the chain of command associated with special operations forces, and does not bypass it.

New START Extension

Question. In April last year, President Trump initiated a new arms control effort aimed at persuading China to join a trilateral arms-control pact limiting its capabilities and bringing Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons currently unregulated by treaties under new limits. This effort was designed to replace the New START treaty which President Trump called a one-sided deal. Yet, here we are only seven months before the New START Treaty is slated to expire, with China refusing to engage in talks and Russia unwilling to discuss non-strategic nuclear systems unless the United States puts a variety of other things on the table. In light of zero progress being made on trilateral arms control, what is the administration's position on New START? Should the treaty be extended?

Answer. I would not assess that we have made "zero progress." The first round of Vienna talks were positive. The two sides had detailed discussions on a full range of nuclear topics, including China's secretive, non-transparent nuclear build-up, and potential areas of cooperation with Russia. And as I mentioned in the hearing, expert level working groups are meeting for a follow up round next week. We are willing to contemplate an extension of New START, but only under select circumstances. We are open to various options, provided that nuclear arms control reflects the changing security environment.

Question. In April last year, President Trump initiated a new arms control effort aimed at persuading China to join a trilateral arms-control pact limiting its capabilities and bringing Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons currently unregulated by treaties under new limits. This effort was designed to replace the New START treaty which President Trump called a one-sided deal. Yet, here we are only seven months before the New START Treaty is slated to expire, with China refusing to engage in talks and Russia unwilling to discuss non-strategic nuclear systems unless the United States puts a variety of other things on the table. Is the administration willing to allow New START to expire if China, with a nuclear force far smaller than Russia's, refuses to join the negotiations?

Answer. The first round of Vienna talks were positive. The two sides had detailed discussions on a full range of nuclear topics, including China's secretive, non-transparent nuclear build-up, and potential areas of cooperation with Russia. And as I mentioned in the hearing, expert level working groups are meeting for a follow up round next week. We are willing to contemplate an extension of New START, but only under select circumstances. We are open to various options, provided that nuclear arms control reflects the changing security environment.

Question. In April last year, President Trump initiated a new arms control effort aimed at persuading China to join a trilateral arms-control pact limiting its capabilities and bringing Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons currently unregulated by treaties under new limits. This effort was designed to replace the New START treaty which President Trump called a one-sided deal. Yet, here we are only seven months before the New START Treaty is slated to expire, with China refusing to engage in talks and Russia unwilling to discuss non-strategic nuclear systems unless the United States puts a variety of other things on the table. If the administration insists on bringing new issues to the table, is the United States willing to discuss other strategic issues Russia has raised as part of a negotiating process?

Answer. Certainly. As for the issues that Russia may bring in a negotiating process, we cannot stop their side from raising particular issues. We will listen and discuss these topics as they arise.

Question. In April last year, President Trump initiated a new arms control effort aimed at persuading China to join a trilateral arms-control pact limiting its capabilities and bringing Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons currently unregulated by treaties under new limits. This effort was designed to replace the New START treaty which President Trump called a one-sided deal. Yet, here we are only seven months before the New START Treaty is slated to expire, with China refusing to engage in talks and Russia unwilling to discuss non-strategic nuclear systems unless the United States puts a variety of other things on the table. If the treaty is not extended, what plans does the administration have to deter Russia when Russia has the ability to rapidly upload thousands of new warheads onto strategic systems that threaten the U.S.?

Answer. We must be very clear to the Russians that the United States intends to take whatever actions are necessary to safeguard American national security and to protect the American people, as well as that of our allies and partners. If Russia decides to upload thousands of new warheads onto strategic systems, the United States will take appropriate steps.

Question. The administration has, despite pushback from our allies, announced that it will withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty. Additionally, the administration has gone about withdrawal in a way that violates U.S. law. How will the U.S. contend with the fact that Open Skies will likely remain in force and that Russia will be able to fly over our bases and other assets in Europe without U.S. input?

Answer. Russia and other States Parties to the Treaty have been able to fly over U.S. facilities abroad throughout the duration of the Treaty, so this is not a new challenge. As the administration explained to the Congress in May, the United States is working with Allies and partner countries that host our forces on arrangements for informing us when overflights are notified that could impact U.S. forces.

Question. The administration has, despite pushback from our allies, announced that it will withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty. Additionally, the administration has gone about withdrawal in a way that violates U.S. law. What responses specifically have you received from allies in Europe?

Answer. The United States discussed extensively with Allies and partners our concerns about Russian compliance with Open Skies and made clear that withdrawal was a possibility. While many Allies regard the Treaty on Open Skies as an essential part of the European security architecture, they understand that Russia bears responsibility for the erosion of that architecture through its repeated violations of its arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament commitments and obligations, not to mention its contravention of Helsinki Final Act principles. While some may not agree with our decision, they all share our concerns over Russia's violations. We continue to work closely with them to find common ground to move forward collectively.

Question. The administration has, despite pushback from our allies, announced that it will withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty. Additionally, the administration has gone about withdrawal in a way that violates U.S. law. Why was there no meaningful consultation with this committee or the Senate before making this announcement to withdraw from a treaty that had senate advice and consent?

Answer. I understand that the administration has conducted meaningful consultations with Congress, including expert-level briefings, responses to questions for the record, and conversations with senior officials, including Assistant Secretary Ford, the official performing the functions of the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, both before and since making the announcement of our intent to withdraw from the Treaty.

China and Arms Control

Question. On a number of occasions, I noted that I welcome efforts to expand the scope of arms control to include China. My concern is that the administration isn't serious about this effort, and is instead using the difficulty of engaging China on strategic issues as an excuse to destroy our current bilateral and multilateral arms control efforts. What are the latest developments in our efforts to engage China in arms control dialogue? What issues is the administration seeking to engage China on?

Answer. We are serious about this effort. The United States has extended an open invitation to China to engage in trilateral arms control negotiations and bilateral discussions on nuclear arms control and risk reduction. I am cautiously optimistic that we will find a mechanism for discussing nuclear arms control with the Chinese Communist Party. We need to discuss China's crash nuclear build-up.

Question. On a number of occasions, I noted that I welcome efforts to expand the scope of arms control to include China. My concern is that the administration isn't serious about this effort, and is instead using the difficulty of engaging China on strategic issues as an excuse to destroy our current bilateral and multilateral arms control efforts. What lines of effort have you committed to bring China to the table?

Answer. Senator, I cannot discuss our diplomatic strategy to bring China to the table in this venue. However, as I demonstrated by testifying before the committee in a classified setting prior to engaging the Russians in Vienna, I am committed to close and recurring consultations with the committee.

Question. On a number of occasions, I noted that I welcome efforts to expand the scope of arms control to include China. My concern is that the administration isn't serious about this effort, and is instead using the difficulty of engaging China on strategic issues as an excuse to destroy our current bilateral and multilateral arms control efforts. It has been over a year since this initiative started; has anything concrete been achieved during this period?

Answer. The first round of Vienna talks with Russia were positive. The two sides had detailed discussions on a full range of nuclear topics, including China's secretive, non-transparent nuclear build-up, and potential areas of cooperation with Russia. And as I mentioned in the hearing, expert level working groups are meeting for a follow up round next week. We need to make progress in the crucial areas of addressing the incredibly worrisome crash nuclear program of China, a number of greatly concerning Russian behaviors that have been engineered to occur outside of the New START Treaty's constraints, and having an effective verification regime that can provide a high level of confidence that there is compliance with the commitments undertaken by all three parties to a future agreement.

Question. On a number of occasions, I noted that I welcome efforts to expand the scope of arms control to include China. My concern is that the administration isn't serious about this effort, and is instead using the difficulty of engaging China on strategic issues as an excuse to destroy our current bilateral and multilateral arms control efforts. China's nuclear arsenal is far smaller than that of the United States and Russia, with only approximately 300 warheads and 100 strategic systems. How have you attempted to convince China entering into an arms control dialogue is in its best interests?

Answer. The United States has extended an open invitation to China to engage in trilateral arms control negotiations and bilateral discussions on nuclear arms control and risk reduction. China is required under the NPT to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. What China wants is to be afforded great power status. There is no better way to be seen as a great power than for China to sit down with the United States and Russia to negotiate.

Verification Measures for New START Treaty

Question. Has the State Department been using the monitoring and verification tools provided to it in the New START treaty to verify that Russia is in compliance with the treaty?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do the counting rules of the New START treaty for delivery platforms and nuclear warheads provide the United States increased flexibility for its nuclear posture in comparison to the START treaty?

Answer. The shift from attributing the number of warheads on types of treaty-accountable intercontinental-ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles under the START Treaty to counting the actual number of warheads deployed on treaty-accountable intercontinental-ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles under the New START Treaty provides the United States with flexibility.

Question. What verification measures were put in place for the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) signed by Russia and the United States in 2002?

Answer. The SORT Treaty did not mandate verification measures. Russia and the United States agreed in Article II of the SORT Treaty that the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) would remain in force in accordance with its terms. Additionally, the SORT Treaty mandated the convening of a Bilateral Implementation Commission on a biannual basis.

Violations of Arms Export Control Regulations

Question. For a year and a half, I have been trying to get State to provide information to the committee concerning whether or not State is conducting investigations over numerous public allegations of violations of arms export control regulations—especially by Americans acting as mercenaries or providing military services to foreign governments without authorization. I have been told that, essentially, it is none of my business, and that State/PM will tell us if and when an investigation is concluded. This is obviously unsatisfactory, and it prevents the committee from exercising oversight to ensure that PM is actually undertaking such investigations, or simply ignoring the allegations. By way of example, my own staff uncovered an export violation by General Atomics, of which they themselves claim not to have

been aware. General Atomics made a voluntary disclosure of the violation to State/PM in February; however, PM tells my staff that the investigation is still ongoing, 5 months later, even though a confession is in hand—and PM is, incidentally, seeking to clear another license for the same company for the same product to the same country, without being certain that the company has fixed its export control failures beforehand. If you are confirmed, do you commit that PM will give to the Ranking Member's staff full and timely information about what potential export control violations are being investigated, and that you will ensure that such investigations are indeed pursued upon receipt of credible information of such potential violations, and will be conducted in a vigorous and timely manner?

Answer. I appreciate the critical importance of congressional oversight. If confirmed, I will work to ensure effective communication between the Department and Congress to enable Congress to perform its oversight role. Furthermore, if confirmed, I will seek to maintain the integrity of the Department's investigations into potential export control violations, which includes pursuing investigations of potential export control violations in a vigorous and timely manner.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. While serving as the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, I was one of the administration's foremost champions of human rights and combatting corruption. In that capacity, I advocated for and drove the implementation of more than 700 sanctions using human rights and corruption-related authorities. I have traversed the globe pursuing human rights abusers and their finances, and a number of them have found their access to the international financial system cut off due to these actions. I have prioritized, in particular, actions against the Maduro regime in Venezuela, and the Ortega regime in Nicaragua. I also have worked closely with the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to impose sanctions on the Iranian regime officials engaged in repression of the Iranian people. Further, I worked closely with The Sentry on a range of human rights and corruption issues in Sub-Saharan Africa. I also worked with all Gulf States to stop the export of North Korean labor, which helps finance its WMD programs.

I am gratified that a number of human rights and democracy activists, as well as courageous numbers of the Venezuelan opposition, wrote letters to the committee in support of my previous nomination. In particular, I am humbled that Venezuelan President Juan Guaido took the time to write in support of my previous nomination while evading persecution at the hands of the Maduro regime.

I am honored that these incredible men and women, who so valiantly speak out against the brutality of the former Maduro regime in the hope of a better future for the Venezuelan people supported my previous nomination.

If confirmed by the Senate, I will bring to the role of Under Secretary a strong moral and ethical voice that will advance our strategic interests and a proven track record of leadership on human rights.

Question. If confirmed, what would be your priorities for determining which countries are able to purchase U.S. weapons?

Answer. If confirmed, I would direct comprehensive arms transfer reviews, consistent with U.S. legal authorities, that weigh a wide range of foreign policy, economic security, and national security objectives the United States seeks to advance through defense trade. If confirmed, I would ensure the Department continues to carefully consider the effect each potential transfer has on responding to legitimate U.S. and recipient country security needs; protecting the U.S. military technology edge; providing additional U.S. access and influence with partners; maintaining nonproliferation objectives; and respect for human rights.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to making human rights a priority in U.S. arms sales negotiations?

Answer. Yes. Among other diplomatic, commercial, and security considerations, human rights are a criterion in considering arms transfers, as reflected in U.S. law and the President's Conventional Arms Transfer Policy. If confirmed, I will effectuate and continue to comply with this Policy.

Question. If confirmed, how would you seek to hold countries accountable in the event that U.S. resources are used to harm civilians?

Answer. Prevention of civilian casualties globally, regardless of the origin of the resources used, is a U.S. foreign policy priority. I will, if confirmed, seek to advance this objective, including in my engagements with senior foreign officials. The United States has a special responsibility and unique levers of influence when U.S. resources are implicated. The Leahy laws restrict U.S. assistance to any foreign security force unit where there is credible information that the unit committed a gross violation of human rights. Additionally, as reflected in the President's Conventional Arms Transfer Policy, human rights concerns must be considered prior to making arms transfer decisions, and, if confirmed, I will continue to follow the Policy. I also would, if confirmed, prioritize security assistance to key nations to reduce the dangers to innocent civilians posed by remnants of war.

Question. Do you commit to providing information to this committee regarding U.S. arms sales?

Answer. Yes, I agree to accommodate all congressional requests for information by supplying the requested information to the fullest extent, consistent with applicable statutes, the U.S. Constitution, and Department of State procedures.

Question. 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. That was certainly my experience at Deloitte, and within the Federal Government as well. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will encourage promoting diversity and inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new centralized exit survey. I will promote and encourage all employees to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors under your direction at the State Department are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will support the requirement of all hiring managers to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. Yes, 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. 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, 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I also own interest in a few individual stocks in companies that may have a presence abroad. I am committed to ensuring my official ac-

tions will not give rise to a conflict of interest, and I will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question. Saudi Arabia is proceeding with construction on its first nuclear research reactor without having updated its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. The outdated small quantities protocol that Saudi Arabia has in place makes it more difficult for the agency to verify the design of the reactor and is inadequate for monitoring the country's nuclear activities, particularly given Saudi Arabia's past threats to pursue nuclear weapons. What is the administration doing, and what will you do if confirmed, to encouorage Saudi Arabia to update its small quantities protocol with the IAEA to allow for more intrusive and thorough monitoring f its nuclear program?

Answer. Saudi Arabia's research reactor will be subject to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, consistent with Saudi Arabia's obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The United States calls on all states to fully meet their obligations under the NPT and IAEA safeguards agreements. If confirmed, I will encourage Saudi Arabia to rescind the Small Quantities Protocol (SQP) to its safeguards agreement and simultaneously adopt the IAEA's Additional Protocol (AP). While the SQP will cease to apply once the fuel is received, rescinding the SQP and adopting the AP before then would demonstrate Saudi Arabia's intent to undertake civil nuclear activities in an open and transparent manner. As I testified, I also will pursue the "gold standard" in negotiations with Saudi Arabia on a 123 Agreement, which de facto includes adoption of the Additional Protocol.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. If confirmed, or so long as you hold your current position, can you commit that you will oppose actions to withdraw from, or no longer implement U.S. obligations under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) prior to February 5, 2021? If not, what are the "extraordinary events" that would lead you to support withdrawal under Article XIV?

Answer. As stated in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the United States remains committed to the continued implementation of the New START Treaty and verifying Russian compliance. We are not considering withdrawing from New START, which has a term of ten years and we are determined to implement it fully for so long as it remains in force.

Question. You have said that it is not realistic for China to enter the New START Treaty as a third-party as it may create an unwelcomed incentive for China to expand its nuclear arsenal to match or get closer to the same Central Treaty Limits to which the United States and Russia are bound. In light of this, why is a decision on the extension of the New START Treaty preconditioned on China joining trilateral arms control negotiations? What incentives will the United States offer China to convince it to participate in this process? Has China indicated a willingness to engage in this process to date?

Answer. We are willing to contemplate an extension of New START, but only under select circumstances. We need to make progress in the crucial areas of addressing the incredibly worrisome crash nuclear program of China, a number of greatly concerning Russian behaviors that have been engineered to occur outside of the New START Treaty's constraints, and having an effective verification regime that can provide a high level of confidence that there is compliance with the commitments undertaken by Russia and China in a future agreement. China will face international condemnation if it refuses to meet the imperative to pursue negotiations.

Question. You have said that the New START verification regime "has very little of what the original START treaty contained and has significant loopholes in the way verification is physically conducted, which the Russians have been exploiting." However, the State Department's December 2019 Section 1247 Report, On The Reasons That Continued Implementation Of The New START Treaty is in The National

Security Interest Of The United States, states in part that: "The New START Treaty's limits on Russia's strategic nuclear force, establishment of data exchanges including the locations, numbers, and technical characteristics of weapons systems and facilities, and its verification provisions, which grant the United States access to Russian facilities containing deployed or non-deployed strategic systems, currently contribute to the national security of the United States." Specifically, what are the "significant loopholes" that the Russians are exploiting with regards to the deployment and non-deployment of treaty accountable strategic systems?

Answer. We need to restore the principle that arms control agreements be effectively verifiable. The New START Treaty suffers from some serious verification inadequacies, of which I will offer two examples. First, over the past decade since New START has been in force, Russia has not been required to provide telemetry on any of their new systems under development, and they certainly have not. Second, there are exploitable loopholes with onsite inspection procedures, such as the length of time given before inspectors are allowed to the location in question.

Question. The New START took two years to negotiate and ratify. As we are only six months away from treaty expiration, is it feasible to "open up" or amend the New START Treaty or negotiate an entirely new treaty and for the Senate to give its advice and consent on a resolution of ratification before February 5, 2021? If you do believe it is feasible, can you refer to past bilateral arms control treaty where negotiation and conclusion was completed in six months?

Answer. There are a number of implementation measures that could be pursued quickly and that might address some of the outstanding verification deficiencies within New START should a decision to pursue those be made. We are willing to contemplate an extension of New START, but only under select circumstances. How our concerns are addressed will likely impact the outlook on extension. As our goal is to include China in a new agreement, the United States does not want to "open up" or amend New START to include China into New START. New START is by its terms a bilateral agreement.

Question. You have expressed concern about the lack of transparency in China's strategic nuclear doctrine and in regards to the composition of its strategic forces. Would an expiration of the bilateral New START Treaty, and the loss of publically available aggregate information on U.S.-Russian nuclear-force structure (not to mention a possible U.S. and Russian expansion of their strategic forces above 1,550) make it more or less likely that China would engage in meaningful transparency and confidence building measures?

Answer. A responsible power, committed to principles of fairness and reciprocity and seeking to reduce nuclear danger, should welcome any opportunity to engage in good faith negotiations on these important topics. And China is required under the NPT to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. The United States will continue to extend an open invitation to China to engage in arms control negotiations.

Question. You have stated that it is the U.S. desire to put limits on all types of nuclear weapons of Russia, including non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNW). As you told Senator Barrasso in yesterday's hearing that the United States "will not accept limitations on missile defense," how will you overcome Russia's longstanding precondition that the United States and NATO make changes to the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) to missile defense? Additionally, is the United States prepared to repatriate U.S. nuclear weapons stationed in NATO countries—as part of a new treaty/agreement with Russia capturing this class of weapons—and have you briefed NATO allies on the ways in which that would change NATO's nuclear deterrence policy and forces?

Answer. The President has made clear the United States will not accept legally-binding, treaty-based limits on U.S. missile defenses. However, Russia is a sovereign country; we cannot prevent it from raising missile defenses, and we will listen and discuss our position on missile defense if it arises. It would be disadvantageous for the United States to publicly discuss its tactics in pursuit of a new arms control agreement. I understand that any changes to NATO's nuclear posture would be made by the Alliance, rather than by the United States.

Question. If confirmed, or so long as you hold your current position as Ambassador, can you commit that you will not support any action to un-sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) or withhold obligating funds to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)?

Answer. The United States has made clear that it does not intend to pursue ratification of the CTBT. The United States continues to support the comprehensive Nu-

clear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Preparatory Commission as well as the International Monitoring System and International Data Centre. The President's budget fully funds the U.S. assessment to the Preparatory Commission.

Question. Would entry into force of the CTBT, unlocking the on-site inspection measures of the Treaty, be a helpful way to verify Trump administration concerns that China and Russia may have violated the zero-yield scope of the Treaty? Short of entry-into-force of the CTBT, if confirmed, would you support reciprocal site visits to China, Russia, or any other country's (former) test sites to build confidence that no country is violating the Treaty by carrying out low-yield nuclear explosives tests?

Answer. Given the believed very low yield of the Russian explosive nuclear testing, it is unlikely that the International Monitoring System would ever detect such tests, so the on-site inspection mechanism would likely never be triggered. Nor would such inspections likely be able to address our concerns about Chinese testing activities. The United States has long been interested in conducting reciprocal nuclear test site visits and has suggested this possibility to both China and Russia numerous times, to no avail.

Question. What advancements have been made to the CTBTO's verification architecture—namely the International Data Centre (IDC) and International Monitoring System (IMS)—since the U.S. Senate's last consideration of the CTBT in 1999?

Answer. At the time of Senate consideration of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1999, there were no certified International Monitoring System (IMS) facilities; today there are 300 such facilities. The International Data Centre was in its infancy and was only beginning to establish a capability to receive, process, and distribute data. Today it regularly receives, processes, analyzes, and distributes data from the 300 IMS facilities. The system has accurately detected and analyzed six North Korean explosive nuclear tests. That said, the Senate rejected the CTBT on verification grounds, among other concerns, and those problems persist.

Question. Were you one of the senior Trump administration officials who reportedly advocated for a U.S. "demonstration" nuclear-weapons test in a May meeting of the National Security Council? If confirmed, can you commit that you will not support conducting a nuclear-test explosion primarily to obtain diplomatic leverage in negotiations with Russia and/or China?

Answer. I will not comment on internal deliberations of the administration. The administration's policy on this has been well established in the Nuclear Posture Review, and it has not changed. I have testified that I am unaware of any compelling safety or reliability reason to resume nuclear explosive testing at this time.

Responses to Additional Questions for the Record Submitted to Hon. Marshall Billingslea by Senator Jeff Merkley

Question. Russia has offered to extend the New START Treaty, the last remaining arms control agreement between the United States and Russia limiting the world's two largest nuclear arsenals, set to expire in February 2021. However, the administration has refused to commit to extending New START on the grounds that it is instead pursuing a trilateral arms control agreement that includes both Russia and China. What evidence do you have to suggest that a new trilateral agreement with Russia and China can be concluded before the New START Treaty expires on February 5, 2021?

Answer. The first round of Vienna talks were positive, though only Russia attended. Our discussions with Russian counterparts covered the full-range of nuclear topics, including China's secretive, non-transparent nuclear build-up, and identified potential areas of cooperation. Based on that substantive discussion, we have agreed on a detailed agenda that will guide the work of expert level working groups, which will meet during the week of July 27, 2020. While China did not attend the first round of Vienna talks, I remain cautiously optimistic that we will have a substantive discussion on nuclear arms control in the future.

Question. How and when do you expect that a new trilateral agreement to replace the New START Treaty will be negotiated, ratified, and implemented?

Answer. We need to make progress in the crucial areas of addressing the worrisome, crash nuclear build-up of China, a number of greatly concerning Russian behaviors that have been engineered to occur outside of the New START Treaty's constraints, and reconstitution of an effective verification regime that can provide a high level of confidence that there is compliance with the commitments undertaken

by all three parties to a future agreement. China risks international condemnation if it refuses to engage in good faith arms control negotiation. We are looking at the full range of options to get a successful outcome with China, as well as Russia, but it is premature to speculate about any timelines associated with a trilateral agreement. That said, if we wait to negotiate a legally-binding treaty for Senate consideration until after China has fully built up its nuclear arsenal, we will have waited too long.

Question. China, which has a far smaller nuclear arsenal than the United States and Russia, has repeatedly refused to join trilateral talks. What evidence do you have to suggest that China will come to the table?

Answer. As I testified before the committee in closed session, China is engaged in a crash build-up. The United States continues to press that China to engage with both U.S. and Russia on arms control and nuclear risk reduction, as are an increasing number of other nations. It is in China's best interest to do so. In the interim, the United States will continue to highlight China's secretive nuclear build-up. We see clear indications that the Chinese Communist Party is reacting to the international pressure we are generating.

Question. You reportedly stated that "it is incumbent on the Chinese. to recognize that they have an obligation to negotiate with us and the Russians in good faith. And we intend to hold them to that obligation." By what means do you intend to hold China to its ostensible obligation to do so?

Answer. China is required under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. We are looking at the full range of options to get a successful outcome with China, as well as Russia, but it is premature to speculate right now further about the kinds of leverage that we have and may employ. I remain optimistic that persuasive tools will bring China to the table.

Question. What discussions have you had to date with Chinese officials regarding arms control or strategic stability?

Answer. Senator, I cannot comment publicly on the state of these discussions. I appreciate the previous discussion we had, and can speak to this issue further in a classified setting.

Question. In your nomination hearing, you cited the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures regarding China's nuclear arsenal. Has the administration proposed specific transparency or confidence building measures to the Chinese and if so what are they?

Answer. The United States has invited China to discuss arms control and nuclear risk reduction in both bilateral and trilateral formats. While I cannot provide details on negotiating strategy in this venue, we would seek to discuss the types of specific transparency and confidence building measures both with China and Russia.

Question. Is there a point at which, if insufficient progress is made on a new trilateral arms control agreement or during consultations with Russia, you would commit to extending New START so as to ensure the world's two largest nuclear arsenals do not go unconstrained?

Answer. Senator, as you and I discussed previously, all options are on the table regarding New START. We are in the middle of talks with Russia and continue to call on China to come to the table. It would be disadvantageous for the United States to publicly discuss our negotiating strategy in this venue, but I commit to staying in close contact with you on this matter.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. C.J. MAHONEY BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. The administration has secured a number of important commitments from Mexico to modernize and bolster the United States' relationship with our largest trading partner. However, some in the U.S. business community are expressing concern that Mexico has not yet fully implemented a number of commitments to the agreement despite its entry into force on July 1. There are also a growing number of concerns related to Mexico's declining investment environment generally and, in particularly, some in the business community are claiming that the Mexican government appears willing to terminate significant contracts with private, foreign companies for what appear to be political reasons. For example, some have argued that

Mexico may be discriminating against U.S. digital media companies through the strict interpretation by the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (IFT) of the so-called "six-minute rule" for U.S. Pay-TV providers, possibly in violation of USMCA. Another company has raised concerns regarding Mexico City's recent termination of a multi-billion dollar concession to a subsidiary of a private American company, Libre LLC, for the provision of taxi hailing services, arguing that such a cancellation may violate USMCA and thereby raising questions regarding Mexico's status as a reliable supply chain partner. What are your thoughts on these concerns?

Answer. In my capacity as Deputy USTR, I met with stakeholders on both the "six-minute rule" and the Libre issues. I agree with you that both issues raise concerns. The USMCA contains strong protections for U.S. producer and investor interests. Protecting and advancing the interests of U.S. producers and investors is a top administration priority. If confirmed, I will utilize the tools provided in the USMCA, as well as the resources of the State Department, other U.S. Government agencies, and U.S. law to work to ensure American business are protected from unfair trade practices.

Question. Is there a growing problem with the business environment in Mexico?

Answer. Protecting and advancing the interests of U.S. producers and investors is a top administration priority. The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement provides a strong foundation for advancing U.S. business interests and a strong base for increasing confidence in the North American production platform. If confirmed, I will continue to engage with the Mexican government to emphasize the importance of the rule of law and contract sanctity, and work to ensure the business investment environment remains strong for U.S. investors and the Mexican people.

Question. If confirmed, what actions do you intend to take to ensure that the USMCA agreement is vigorously enforced and, specifically, to expeditiously resolve these and related concerns by the U.S. business community?

Answer. As one of the principal negotiators of USMCA, I am deeply invested in ensuring that the agreement is implemented as intended and vigorously enforced. The USMCA contains strong protections for U.S. producer and investor interests. Protecting and advancing the interests of U.S. producers and investors is a top administration priority. If confirmed, I will utilize the tools provided in the USMCA, as well as the resources of the State Department, other U.S. Government agencies, and U.S. law to protect the rights of American businesses.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. C.J. MAHONEY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, I oversaw the completion of a high-standard, anti-corruption chapter in the USMCA and personally negotiated several key labor provisions, including first-of-its-kind language requiring the parties to address acts of violence against workers and an innovative rapid response enforcement mechanism. These provisions hopefully will become part of the new template for U.S. free trade agreements and have already helped to strengthen the independent labor movement in Mexico. As the principal administration official responsible for the African Grown and Opportunity Act (AGOA) program, I led efforts to suspend Mauritania and Cameroon's eligibility due to human rights violations. These actions sent a strong signal to other AGOA countries that the United States is serious about enforcing the program's eligibility criteria.

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will also ask the staff of the Office of the Legal Adviser for their opinions on whether the Office can be doing more to foster diversity and inclusion within the Office and will support additional efforts toward these goals. I will encourage diversity and inclusion in recruitment efforts and promoting equal opportunity through standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and leave without pay

options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized exit survey. I will encourage all employees to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course and will set an example by committing to taking it myself.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors under your direction at the State Department are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will encourage habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote diversity and inclusion best practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will support the requirement of all hiring managers to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course and will set an example by committing to taking it myself.

Question. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and that of 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. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have financial interests in any country abroad?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, including funds that hold interests in foreign companies, companies with a presence overseas, and companies that have interests in various foreign countries, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. My spouse is also the beneficiary of certain family trusts, but neither of us is aware of the trusts' financial holdings. My understanding is that they consist of widely diversified mutual funds. I divested from all individual stock holdings when I joined USTR. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and I will remain vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. C.J. MAHONEY BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER A. COONS

Question. According to public reporting, a July 7, 2020 U.S. Department of State memorandum stated that Hazem el-Beblawi, a former Egyptian interim prime minister and current International Monetary Fund (IMF) board member who lives in the United States, should be granted "full immunity." The memorandum comes in response to a lawsuit filed by Mohamed Soltan, an Egyptian-American dual citizen who was subject to torture in prison in Egypt. The lawsuit claims that Mr. el-Beblawi directed Mr. Soltan's torture. Is it your understanding that IMF officials or officials from other international organizations headquartered in the United States are accorded immunity?

Answer. My understanding is that Mr. Hazem El-Beblawi is the Principal Resident Representative of Egypt to the IMF. Pursuant to Article V, Section 15(4) of the Agreement Between the United Nations and the United States Regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, principal resident representatives of members of a "specialized agency" are entitled to the same privileges and immunities as are accorded to diplomatic envoys accredited to the United States. The Agreement between the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund establishes that the

IMF is such a "specialized agency." In the United States, the privileges and immunities of diplomatic envoys (now called "diplomatic agents") are those provided under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relation (VCDR). Therefore, Mr. El-Beblawi, as the Principal Resident Representative of Egypt to the IMF, enjoys the same privileges and immunities in the United States as would a diplomatic agent under the VCDR.

I note, however, that I am aware of the allegations in Mr. Soltan's complaint, which I find quite troubling. I have appreciated the relationship that I have had with your office over the past two-and-a-half years at USTR and commit to making myself available to you and your staff in the future to discuss this and other issues of concern.

Question. According to public reporting, a July 7, 2020 U.S. Department of State memorandum stated that Hazem el-Beblawi, a former Egyptian interim prime minister and current International Monetary Fund (IMF) board member who lives in the United States, should be granted "full immunity." The memorandum comes in response to a lawsuit filed by Mohamed Soltan, an Egyptian-American dual citizen who was subject to torture in prison in Egypt. The lawsuit claims that Mr. el-Beblawi directed Mr. Soltan's torture. How unusual is it to grant immunity to an IMF official retroactively?

Answer. My understanding is that Mr. El-Beblawi was not granted immunity retroactively. The Department provided a certification to the Government of Egypt confirming the immunity Mr. El-Beblawi enjoys under international law, consistent with his status as the Principal Resident Representative of Egypt to the IMF. Such a certification does not itself grant immunity. I am informed, as set forth in the certification,that the official records of the Department indicate Mr. El Beblawi was notified to the Department as assuming his duties as Principal Resident Representative of Egypt to the IMF, effective November 2, 2014, and he continues to serve in such capacity. I further understand issuing such a certification is the Department's standard practice in any case in which a foreign government requests confirmation of a diplomat's immunity.

Question. According to public reporting, a July 7, 2020 U.S. Department of State memorandum stated that Hazem el-Beblawi, a former Egyptian interim prime minister and current International Monetary Fund (IMF) board member who lives in the United States, should be granted "full immunity." The memorandum comes in response to a lawsuit filed by Mohamed Soltan, an Egyptian-American dual citizen who was subject to torture in prison in Egypt. The lawsuit claims that Mr. el-Beblawi directed Mr. Soltan's torture. Do you consider immunity to be absolute and unconditional? Are there circumstances in which immunity should be withdrawn? Do you believe allegations of torture against a U.S. citizen are an example of one such circumstance?

Answer. Any immunity that an individual might enjoy in the United States depends on that individual's status and the relevant instrument(s) providing for immunity. The immunity enjoyed by diplomatic agents under the VCDR includes complete immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the United States, as well as immunity from the civil and administrative jurisdiction of the United States, with limited enumerated exceptions that do not include allegations of torture and otherwise do not apply in this matter. The VCDR does not permit unilateral withdrawal of immunity, even in the present circumstances. The immunities provided for under the VCDR also protect U.S. diplomats overseas from being brought into foreign courts on the basis of allegations, founded or unfounded, of wrongdoing.

Question. According to public reporting, a July 7, 2020 U.S. Department of State memorandum stated that Hazem el-Beblawi, a former Egyptian interim prime minister and current International Monetary Fund (IMF) board member who lives in the United States, should be granted "full immunity." The memorandum comes in response to a lawsuit filed by Mohamed Soltan, an Egyptian-American dual citizen who was subject to torture in prison in Egypt. The lawsuit claims that Mr. el-Beblawi directed Mr. Soltan's torture. Do you think the U.S. Department of State should be weighing in on immunity for former foreign government officials in a U.S. civil suit that alleges gross violations of human rights?

Answer. My understanding is that, in this case, the Department provided a certification to the Government of Egypt confirming the immunity that Mr. El-Beblawi enjoys under international law, consistent with his status as the Principal Resident Representative of Egypt to the IMF. I further understand this is the Department's standard practice when a foreign government requests confirmation of a diplomat's immunity, and the Department did not submit any views in the U.S. civil suit.

Question. Do the authorizations for use of military force passed by Congress in 2001 and 2002 authorize the use of military force against Iran?

Answer. If confirmed, I will take this responsibility very seriously and will advise the Secretary of all applicable obligations under domestic and international law. I understand the administration has not, to date, interpreted the 2001 AUMF as authorizing military force against Iran, except as may be necessary to defend U.S. or partner forces as they pursue missions authorized under the 2001 AUMF. I also understand the administration also has not, to date, interpreted the 2002 AUMF as authorizing military force against Iran, except as may be necessary and appropriate to promote stability in Iraq and address terrorist threats emanating from Iraq, and in light of the fact that U.S. forces deployed pursuant to the authorization have come under attack from Iranian-sponsored militias in Iraq.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. C.J. MAHONEY BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question. In November 2019, Secretary of State Pompeo announced that the United States would "no longer recognize Israeli settlements as per se inconsistent with international law" and rescinded a 1978 legal opinion that then-Legal Adviser Herbert Hansell provided to Congress reaching a contrary conclusion. Per our exchange during your hearing, will you commit to providing this report in unclassified form to SFRC within a month of your confirmation so that it may be provided to the public?

Answer. As a general matter, I understand Secretary Pompeo was stating the position of the U.S. Government that the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not per se consistent or inconsistent with international law, and that legal conclusions relating to individual cases of settlement activity must depend on an assessment of specific facts and circumstances surrounding the activity in question. I also understand the U.S. Government is expressing no view on the particular legal status of any individual settlements. As I indicated during the hearing, I have not seen the memorandum to which you refer but, if confirmed, I look forward to assessing it and working with you and the committee on this issue.

Question. In Section 1261 of last year's NDAA, Congress directed President Trump to provide Congress with a report on the "legal and policy frameworks" underlying decisions regarding the use of force by March 1, 2020, and to release the unclassified version of that report to the public. It has failed to do so, without explanation. What is the administration's legal basis for withholding this report? Will you commit to pushing for full compliance with this reporting requirement?

Answer. I would refer any questions about the status of this particular report to the White House. However, if confirmed, it will be my responsibility as the Legal Adviser to advise the Department on compliance with all applicable congressional reporting requirements.

Question. The administration has acknowledged the existence of an Office of Legal Counsel opinion outlining the legal basis for the January 2, 2020, strike that killed Qassem Soleimani, but has thus far declined to release it publicly, as it and prior administrations have routinely done with other legal opinions regarding the use of force. Will you commit to publicly releasing this opinion?

Answer. I have to refer any questions concerning Office of Legal Counsel opinions to the Department of Justice. However, I am committed, if confirmed, to continuing the Department of State's efforts to keep Congress informed on such important issues as required by law.

Question. In its May 2018 legal opinion outlining the justification for the April 2018 airstrikes on Syria, the Office of Legal Counsel noted that, "in evaluating the expected scope of hostilities, we also considered the risk that an initial strike could escalate into a broader conflict . . . and the measures that the United States intended to take to minimize that risk." Do you believe the decision to move forward with the Soleimani strike, in part under the President's Article II authority, was consistent with the views expressed in the OLC memorandum for the Syria airstrikes that there would not be a significant risk of escalation to require Congressional authorization?

Answer. I was not involved in the decision to undertake the military operation targeting General Soleimani on January 2, and I am not aware of the sensitive intelligence or other information upon which the legal and policy analysis at the time

was based. However, I understand the domestic and international law bases for the strike were outlined for Congress in a report consistent with the War Powers Resolution on January 4, 2020, in a letter submitted to the U.N. Security Council consistent with Article 51 of the U.N. Charter on January 8, 2020, and in a report consistent with Section 1264 of the FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act dated January 31, 2020.

Question. Open Skies Treaty: In Section 1234 of the most recent NDAA, this Congress directed the administration to provide it with 120 days' advance notice before initiating any withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty. Secretary of State Pompeo disregarded this provision when he announced the Trump administration's intent to withdraw on May 21, 2020. What was the legal basis for disregarding this Congress's express direction? Do you view this withdrawal as legally effective, given that the Trump administration has failed to comply with the prerequisites that Congress has set forth in statute?

Answer. I understand Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Esper sent a joint letter to Congress on May 22, 2020, explaining that, based on consultations with the Justice Department, and consistent with the President's signing statement on section 1234(a), Congress may not impose a delay such as section 1234(a) would require before the President exercises his constitutional authorities to withdraw from a treaty in accordance with its terms, as he did here. I share the administration's view that U.S. notice of intent to withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies is legally effective.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. C.J. MAHONEY BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the U.S. Holocaust Museum, and a number of reputable nongovernmental organizations have found that crimes against the Rohingya ethnic minority amount to genocide. If confirmed, will you advocate that the State Department make a formal determination on Burma's genocide of the Rohingya?

Answer. I am appalled by the Burmese military's human rights abuses against Rohingya and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups. I understand the process for deciding whether and when to make a determination that certain acts amount to genocide has historically been reserved within the Executive Branch to the Secretary of State. If confirmed, I will consult with experts within the Department and others as appropriate, assess all available information, and provide the Secretary with my best advice to continue to advance justice and accountability for atrocities and other abuses committed across Burma, including those against Rohingya.

Question. The 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) authorized U.S. military force to defend against Saddam Hussein's regime and enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions pertaining to Iraq. Would the fact that Saddam Hussein is no longer a threat to the United States and that Iraq has a new government render the 2002 AUMF invalid as a justification for military action?

Answer. No. Under the 2002 AUMF, "the President is authorized to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate to . defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq." Although the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's regime was the initial focus of the statute, I understand the United States has long relied upon the 2002 AUMF to authorize the use of force for the purpose of establishing a stable, democratic Iraq and addressing terrorist threats emanating from Iraq. I also understand this administration has previously explained that such uses of force need not address threats from the Iraqi government apparatus only but may address threats to the United States posed by militias, terrorist groups, or other armed groups in Iraq.

Question. The Trump administration has signed Safe Third Country Agreements, also known as Asylum Cooperative Agreements, with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador mandating the return of asylum seekers to these countries to await decisions on their asylum cases. Given that the State Department's own Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador reference dangers of rape, forced disappearances, femicide, unlawful killings and torture by gang members and security forces, a lack of judicial independence, and collusion among police and/or judicial elements with organized crime, do you support

the administration's determination that these countries are capable of guaranteeing asylum seekers adequate protection and access to full and fair procedures to process asylum requests as required by Section 1158 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S. Code § 1158)?

Answer. The INA's "Safe Third Country" exception requires a bilateral or multilateral agreement with the recipient country and a determination by the Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security that persons transferred pursuant to the agreement will not be persecuted on protected grounds in the receiving country; and will have access in the receiving country to a full and fair procedure for determining their protection claims. I understand the State Department does not participate in making either determination. However, I understand the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) use State Department human rights reports in determining whether a person would more likely than not be subject to persecution or torture in the receiving country. If confirmed, I will work with DOJ and DHS to ensure they have any information they request to make these determinations.

Question. If so, what evidence do you have to suggest that such a determination complies with that statute?

Answer. The Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security make the determination whether a bilateral agreement complies with the "Safe Third Country" exception to the Immigration and Nationality Act, and I understand the Attorney General and Acting Secretary of Homeland Security have made this determination with respect to the Guatemala and Honduras asylum cooperative agreements. I also understand the State Department does not participate in making these domestic law determinations.

Question. Do you believe that these agreements satisfy obligations under international law regarding returning individuals to countries in which they risk being unlawfully killed or tortured? If so, on what legal basis?

Answer. I believe the United States should comply with its international law obligations with respect to asylum seekers. I have not been involved in the negotiation or implementation of these agreements. As noted, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Office of the Legal Adviser is involved in interagency conversations about their implementation. I will also consult with experts in the Department and others in the interagency on these matters and advise the Secretary as appropriate.

Question. Secretary Pompeo's Commission on Unalienable Rights, which has the stated mission of advising the Secretary of State on the role of human rights in American foreign policy, released its first draft report findings last week. The Commission's draft report takes a broadly negative view on binding human rights treaties, noting that, "The question of whether to consent to binding international legal obligations is separate from the question of whether in general a moral imperative or political principle is within the scope of the law of human rights. Not every moral imperative and political priority need be translated into juridical form to demonstrate U.S. seriousness of purpose regarding human rights." Do you agree with the Commission's implication that human rights treaties should not be considered binding on the United States?

Answer. I believe that the United States should be a leader in advancing the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and will support the work of the Office of the Legal Adviser in advancing the Department's human rights agenda.

The United States is a party to a number of important human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and two Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The United States has a legal obligation to comply with these treaties, subject to the reservations, declarations, and understandings pursuant to which the United States ratified them. This is consistent with the Commission's draft report, which commends the U.S. approach of "accept[ing] formally those principles to which it is prepared to adhere in practice and to be held accountable for by other nations in international law." If confirmed, I would consider it an important part of my role to advise the Department regarding compliance with these and other treaty obligations.

Question. Do you believe that Israel's proposed annexation of territory in the West Bank is consistent with international law?

Answer. I understand that since 1946, there have been nearly 700 U.N. General Assembly resolutions and more than 100 U.N. Security Council resolutions related

to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that these resolutions have not brought a comprehensive and lasting peace. I understand the administration is urging states not to simply cite historical legal and policy positions but instead to consider President Trump's Vision for Peace thoughtfully and to engage on the concepts proposed in the Vision, which is the best and most realistic framework to inform negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. If confirmed, I look forward to helping the Office of the Legal Adviser to support the administration's work on Israeli-Palestinian issues.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. C.J. MAHONEY BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. In June, President Trump suspended U.S. payment of dues to the World Health Organization (WHO). On July 6, 2020, the Secretary of State provided formal notice to the U.N. of its decision to withdraw from the WHO Constitution, the treaty that established WHO, effective after one year.

Congress enacted a joint resolution signed by President Truman in 1948, to accept membership in WHO. The Joint Resolution stated: "the United States reserves its right to withdraw from the organization on a one-year notice: provided, however, that the financial obligations of the United States to the organization shall be met in full for the organization's current fiscal year."

- Do you agree that Congress has clearly stated that the United States' financial obligations to The WHO must be paid fully through 2020 and 2021 until the one-year waiting period for withdrawal expires?

Answer. I am aware of the 1948 joint resolution. And I understand that the Secretary is committed to implementing the administration's policy for WHO withdrawal and funding in a manner that is consistent with applicable law and to working with Congress in this matter. I share that commitment. If confirmed as Legal Adviser, I will solicit detailed input from the career staff in the office before offering advice on this issue to the Secretary.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Mexico is one of our most important trading partners. However, many in the U.S. business community are raising concerns over what they consider to be a declining business environment in Mexico and that Mexico may not be honoring fully its obligations under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). By way of example, some point out that Mexico may be discriminating against U.S. digital media companies through the strict interpretation by the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (IFT) of the so-called "six-minute rule" for U.S. Pay-TV providers, possibly in violation of USMCA. Others have raised concerns over what they claim is Mexico's apparent willingness to terminate significant contracts with private, foreign companies for what appear to be political reasons. They point to Mexico City's recent termination of a multi-billion dollar concession to a subsidiary of a private American company, Libre LLC, for the provision of taxi hailing services, arguing that such a cancellation may violate USMCA and thereby raising questions regarding Mexico's status as a reliable supply chain partner. Do you share these concerns?

Answer. The USMCA contains strong protections for U.S. producer and investor interests. Protecting and advancing the interests of U.S. producers and investors is a top administration priority. If confirmed, I will utilize all the tools provided in the USMCA, as well the full offices of the State Department, U.S. law, and other U.S. Government agencies to work to ensure American businesses are protected from unfair trade practices.

Question. What actions do you intend to take, if confirmed, to ensure a fair business environment for trade and investment in Mexico for U.S. firms?

Answer. The USMCA contains strong protections for U.S. producer and investor interests. Protecting and advancing the interests of U.S. producers and investors is a top administration priority. If confirmed, I will utilize all the tools provided in the USMCA, as well the full offices of the State Department, other U.S. Government agencies, and U.S. law to protect the rights of American businesses.

Question. What actions do you intend to take to encourage Mexico to expeditiously resolve these concerns and comply with its international commitments?

Answer. The USMCA contains strong protections for U.S. producer and investor interests. Protecting and advancing the interests of U.S. producers and investors is a top administration priority. If confirmed, I will utilize all the tools provided in the USMCA, as well the full offices of the State Department, other U.S. Government agencies, and U.S. law to protect the rights of American businesses.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. On July 16, 2019, you requested that the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, open an investigation regarding the source of an "orchestrated misinformation campaign" that you believed had originated from "someone from the OAS Secretariat."

- What was your basis to believe that there had been an "orchestrated misinformation campaign"?

Answer. The United States Mission in Honduras informed me that rumors were circulating among the OAS donor community that the purpose of my trip was to "water down or end" MACCIH's mandate. When I arrived in Honduras, I was met with the same rumor which were printed in local newspapers. Also, upon my arrival I received an email from Assistant Secretary Breier that civil society and staff members from the Hill were inquiring regarding the purpose of my trip.

Question. What was your basis to believe it had originated from the OAS?

Answer. The United States Mission in Honduras informed me that rumors were circulating among the OAS donor community.

Question. In your July 16, 2019 letter, you stated that you had "evidence to suggest that the source of the information is located within the staff of the General Secretariat or among those working for MACCIH (the OAS Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras). What was that evidence?

Answer. The United States Mission in Honduras informed me that rumors were circulating among the OAS donor community, along with the information.

Question. Your letter to Secretary Almagro cited "an unprecedented degree of public and media rumormongering" as the basis for opening an investigation. Do you believe that public rumors and media stories are a sufficient basis for triggering investigations into career employees?

Answer. The letter I sent to Secretary General Almagro did not request an investigation into a career employee. Out of respect for the independence and autonomy of the OAS, I requested that the OAS conduct an independent investigation into the matter.

Given that the misinformation had created mistrust among the different parties and put in jeopardy the renewal of MACCIH, I found it important that the OAS investigate the matter to prevent it from occurring again.

Question. Are you aware of any credible evidence that the American citizen OAS employee who was the target of the OAS OIG investigation that resulted from your letter was in fact responsible for the "orchestrated misinformation campaign"? If not, have you communicated that to the OAS Secretary General? If not, why not?

Answer. The OAS Inspector General is an independent entity within a sovereign international organization. Any individual identified through their investigations is entitled to confidentiality, due process, and a free, fair, independent investigation. Due to the independence of the OAS and their Inspector General, I did not request a copy of the investigation or its findings. I only became aware of the findings of the investigation during a meeting with Senate Minority staff. I did not have access due to confidentiality that governs an independent inspector general review. I have therefore not discussed the employee's matter with Secretary General Almagro.

Question. During several conversations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee minority staff, it was brought to your attention that multiple institutions, offices, and entities would have had knowledge of your travel to Tegucigalpa, including personnel at the U.S. Mission to the OAS, personnel in the State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and personnel in the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa. Did you ask any of these institutions, offices, or entities to conduct an investigation of the source of the "misinformation campaign"? If not, why not?

Answer. I was informed that the misinformation was circulating among the Ambassadors of the OAS donor community. The bureau of Western Hemisphere and staff at the embassy would likely not have contact with the Ambassadors of OAS donor countries located in Tegucigalpa. Also, I have no reason to believe the U.S. Government personnel would deliberately release confidential information.

Question. In early March 2020, you conducted an in-person meeting with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Staff. During this meeting, you discussed the investigation that you requested that OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro carry out and you expressed an opinion that the OAS Inspector General's Office did not maintain the highest professional standards. Why did you send your July 16, 2019 letter to the OAS Secretary General requesting an investigation if you did not believe that the OAS Inspector General's Office upheld high professional standards?

Answer. This question mischaracterizes my opinion about the OAS OIG. I believe my comments at the time did not describe the OAS Inspector General as lacking professionalism but rather lacking the resources and tools necessary to conduct an investigation at the same level as is customarily done by a Federal agency Inspector General. In my dealings with the OAS Inspector General they have always exhibited professionalism despite their limited staff and budget. The OAS OIG is the independent oversight office for the organization.

Question. As you know, your letter resulted in an investigation by the OAS Inspector General's Office (OIG), which recommended the summary dismissal of a U.S. citizen who had served for 27 years as an employee of the OAS General Secretariat. Yet final action is currently pending with the General Secretariat, and the employee has appealed. Please describe in detail all conversations and written correspondence you have had with OAS Secretary General Almagro and others in the OAS General Secretariat regarding the aforementioned case, both before and after your July 16, 2019 letter.

Answer. The only written correspondence which I have had regarding the aforementioned was the July 16 letter. In response to that letter, I was interviewed by the OAS Inspector General a few days later. That is the only communication that I have had with the OAS regarding the aforementioned case. I was informed a few months ago that members of the Minority Staff had requested to meet with the Secretariat regarding the matter.

Question. In your early March 2020 in-person meeting with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Staff, you committed to review the OAS OIG report and relevant documents, and meet with the American citizen OAS employee who was the subject of the report. However, I understand that to date, you have not done so. Have you reviewed any of the documents from the OAS OIG report and the file on this matter, including emails, correspondence, reports, statements, and supporting letters? If so, please specify the relevant documents that you reviewed.

Answer. I was unable to review the matter after being informed by the State Department that any inquiry into the conduct of the OAS Inspector General should be conducted through official channels only, namely, the U.S. Mission to the OAS.

Question. During your tenure as U.S. Permanent Representative to the OAS, how many times have you met with the American citizen OAS employee that was the subject of the OAS OIG report? Please provide the dates and subject matter of all meetings.

Answer. I recall formally meeting the employee once at the State Department in Mid to late 2018. The employee briefed my team and myself on the work which his Secretariat was conducting. I also recall casually speaking with the employee during the Embassy of Guyana's Christmas party in 2018 and exchanging pleasantries at the OAS at different meetings.

Question. Your July 2019 trip to Honduras occurred at the same time as travel to Honduras by a senior official from the Secretary General's office. Did you have any conversation with this OAS official about what you perceived to be an "orchestrated misinformation campaign" taking place during your trip?

Answer. I recall at some point during the trip meeting with him and discussing the situation which we were both confronted with when we arrived in Honduras.

Question. Either during your July 2019 trip to Honduras or upon return to the United States, did you have any communications, including in-person discussions, phone calls, emails, text messages, or other forms of communication (whether initiated by you or by anyone else) with any officials or employees of the OAS about the investigation that you intended to request?

Answer. Besides the communication described above, I cannot recall with certainty any such communication described in your question.

Question. Did you have any communications, including in-person discussions, phone calls, emails, text messages, or other forms of communication (whether initiated by you or by anyone else) with any officials or employees of the OAS after your July 16, 2019 letter about the investigation that you requested?

Answer. Besides what is mentioned above, no.

Question. In your answers to pre-hearing Questions for the Record, you responded, "I was informed by the State Department that any inquiry into the conduct of the OAS Inspector General should be conducted through official channels only, being the U.S. Mission to the OAS."

- Please describe in detail what you are referring to when you refer to "official channels, being the U.S. Mission to the OAS."

Answer. It was my understanding that the request from Congress would be treated as an official Legislative Request and handled accordingly, which in this case meant Legislative Affairs working with the relevant Bureaus to contact the Deputy Chief of Mission in our Mission to the OAS to make a formal request to the OAS for a confidential OAS internal report.

Question. As the head of the U.S. Mission to the OAS, do you not consider yourself an official channel of communication with the OAS?

Answer. I do consider myself an official channel, but I am not the only official channel. It is my understanding that officials at the State Department have reviewed the OAS OIG report in question and have determined that no further action was necessary.

Question. What is your understanding of the process that took place to request the documents from the OAS IG? Please describe which offices participated in the process.

Answer. My understanding is that the documents regarding this matter were requested and reviewed and that no further action was necessary. I am not personally aware of which offices were involved in the process.

Question. In your answers to pre-hearing Questions for the Record, you responded, "I have no reason to believe the U.S. Government personnel would deliberately release confidential information." Please describe in detail what confidential information you are referring to. (Note: If you need to respond via classified channels, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has the appropriate systems in place to receive classified responses from the Department of State.)

Answer. All information in preparation for my trip to Honduras was marked Sensitive but Unclassified. This information is treated confidentially to protect the safety of the trip participants. There are no classified records related to this trip.

Question. During your July 17, 2020 courtesy call with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Staff, you stated that you had never recused yourself from matters related to the investigation that you requested or the OAS IG investigation and results. Can you please confirm that you never recused yourself from these matters?

Answer. It was my understanding that the request from Congress would be treated as an official Legislative Request and handled accordingly, which in this case meant Legislative Affairs working with the relevant Bureaus to contact the Deputy Chief of Mission in our Mission to the OAS to make a formal request to the OAS for a confidential OAS internal report. As this process was followed, I have not been involved in its review. I have not been asked to formally recuse myself from this matter.

Question. Given that during your July 17, 2020 courtesy call with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Staff, you stated that you had never recused yourself from matters related to this incident, can you please explain why you never read the files received from the OAS IG regarding the investigation you requested?

Answer. It was my understanding that the request from Congress would be treated as an official Legislative Request and handled accordingly, which in this case meant Legislative Affairs working with the relevant Bureaus to contact the Deputy Chief of Mission in our Mission to the OAS to make a formal request to the OAS for a confidential OAS internal report. As this process was followed, I was not responsible for reviewing or responding to the legislative request, and I did not find it appropriate to review OAS investigation reports.

Question. Given that during your July 17, 2020 courtesy call with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Staff, you stated that you had never recused yourself from matters related from this incident, can you please explain why you were not available to discuss this matter with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Staff, despite repeated requests from my office to discuss this matter in April, May, and June of this year?

Answer. I am unaware of any request soliciting that I personally discuss the matter with Senate Minority Staff in April, May, or June of 2020.

Question. During your July 17, 2020 courtesy call with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Staff, you acknowledged that, as the head of the U.S. Mission to the OAS, you have the authority to conduct advocacy on behalf of U.S. citizen employees of the OAS. Can you please explain why you conducted no advocacy on behalf of the individual who was targeted by the investigation that you requested?

Answer. The OAS Inspector General is an independent entity within a sovereign international organization. Any individual identified through their investigations is entitled to confidentiality, due process, and a free, fair, independent investigation. Due to the independence of the OAS and their Inspector General. It is my understanding that the case is still being reviewed through the appropriate OAS channels. Any U.S. Government advocacy at this point could be interpreted as improper interference in an independent OAS Inspector General investigation and its subsequent reviews. I was also advised that the documents related to this case had been received, reviewed and that no further action was necessary.

Question. During your July 17, 2020 courtesy call with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority, you stated that the State Department had requested the files from the OAS IG regarding the investigation that you requested, reviewed the files, and determined that no further action was required.

- Can you please describe who reviewed the files?

Answer. I am unaware who reviewed the file.

Question. Can you please describe who reached the determination that no further action was required regarding this incident?

Answer. I am unaware of who reached that determination.

Question. Since your prior answer on July 14, 2020 to pre-hearing Questions for the Record that you had not read either of the State Department Inspector General reports regarding political retaliation, have you now read the two reports released August 2019 and November 2019?

Answer. I have read and reviewed the August 2019 report regarding the Bureau of International Organizations, as referenced in your previous questions.

Question. What is your assessment of the matters described in those two reports?

Answer. No individual should be treated differently because of their perceived political affiliations or views. Every person is entitled to equal protection and a work environment that is free from harassment and hostility.

Question. Based on the findings in those reports, what steps will you take, if confirmed, as Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs to promptly address and respond to, and prevent the occurrence of, any similar instances of retaliation or improper personnel practices?

Answer. As previously documented in the State Department's USOAS Inspector General Report, I will continue to foster an environment in which all employees are valued and respected. I will also work to foster an environment in which all individuals are respected and treated fairly, dissenting opinions are valued and considered.

Question. A former State Department Employee, Mari Stull, was hired by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). Prior to joining IICA, Ms. Stull had been the subject of a State Department Inspector General investigation regarding alleged political retaliation against career employees, and declined to be interviewed for that investigation. Did you play any role in recommending Ms. Stull for her position at the IICA or assist in her obtaining employment at the IICA?

Answer. IICA is an independent regional International Organization whose oversight and funding are overseen by the State Department's Bureau of International Organizations. Although it is a member of the Inter-American system, its leadership and Director are separate and independent from the OAS and the U.S. Mission to the OAS. The U.S. Mission to the OAS does not have any oversight over IICA or its funding. I did not communicate with IICA on behalf of Ms. Stull's candidacy for employment.

I recall that at some point in 2018, Ms. Stull informed me that she was seeking to leave the U.S. Government and would consider employment at IICA. Ms. Stull indicated that she had previously worked at IICA and had a degree in agriculture. At a subsequent OAS social function in 2018, Ms. Stull shared her interest in working with IICA with a member of the Secretary General Almagro's staff. After this conversation, the individual asked me if I had worked with Ms. Stull. I informed him that we had worked together at the State Department for a few months. This staff member does not work for IICA or report to IICA. The OAS staff member subsequently told me that Ms. Stull was trying to meet with him, but he was too busy and was unable to meet. A few months later I was informed that Ms. Stull was offered a position at IICA and was leaving the U.S. Government. Ms. Stull left the U.S. Government in January of 2019. I believe the above referred OIG report was published in August of 2019.

Question. Did you have any communications, including in-person discussions, phone calls, emails, text messages, or other forms of communication (whether initiated by you or by anyone else) related to Ms. Stull's candidacy for employment at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture? If yes, please detail the date of such communication, with who you communicated, and the nature of your communication?

Answer. I did not have any communication with IICA on behalf of Ms. Stull's candidacy for employment. My limited communication is described above.

Question. Are you aware of any State Department official that had any communications, including in-person discussions, phone calls, emails, text messages, or other forms of communication related to Ms. Stull's candidacy for employment at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture? If yes, please detail the date of such communication, the individuals involved in the communication, and the nature of the communication.

Answer. I did not communicate with IICA regarding Ms. Stull's candidacy for employment and do not have personal knowledge of other State Department officials communicating with IICA regarding Ms. Stull's employment. Any inquiries regarding other State Department officials would need to be directed to the State Department.

Question. Did you order or direct or otherwise cause any member of the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States (USOAS) (i.e., State Department officials and employees, including political appointees) to participate in, or are you aware of whether any member of USOAS participated in, any communications, including in-person discussions, phone calls, emails, text messages, or other forms of communication (whether initiated by a member of USOAS or by anyone else) related to Ms. Stull's candidacy for employment at the IICA? If yes, please detail the date of such communication, who participated in such a communication, and the nature of the communication.

Answer. Besides what is mentioned above, I am unaware of any additional communication.

Question. Please describe how you know Ms. Stull, including the date of your first communication, the frequency of your contact since that first communication, the date of the last communication that you had with her, and a description of all relevant initiatives and/or projects that you have worked on together.

Answer. I met Ms. Stull after joining the State Department around June of 2018. At the time Ms. Stull worked as a Senior Adviser at the Bureau of International Organizations (IO). The IO Bureau often reviews OAS issue papers. I have not personally worked on any projects with her since she joined IICA. On June 17th 2020, Ms. Stull emailed and informed me that IICA was delivering remarks at the OAS.

Question. Please describe how long you have known Ms. Stull, the date of the last communication that you had with her, and a description of all relevant initiatives and/or projects that you have worked on together a both while she was employed by the State Department and in her current capacity at IICA.

Answer. See above.

Question. Please detail all contact that you and any member of USOAS have had with Ms. Stull since she assumed her current position at the IICA.

Answer. See above. I recall meeting with IICA Director Otero on three occasions in which Ms. Stull was present: at the State Department, for lunch and at the OAS. I do not have knowledge of which members from my Mission have had contact with

Ms. Stull, nor am I aware of whether other members of USOAS have met with her. IICA has sent multiple emails, either through Ms. Stull or others, to my Mission.

Question. Please indicate whether you have read the August 2019 report of the Department of State Inspector General entitled "Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs".

Answer. I have read the August 2019 report regarding the Bureau of International Organizations.

Question. I found the abusive personnel practices detailed in the above-mentioned State Department Inspector General report, including those committed by Mari Stull, to be repugnant and cancerous for the Department and career employees across the U.S. Government. Do you agree?

Answer. I agree that the behavior detailed in the OIG report is contrary to the State Department's stated leadership principles and expectations.

Question. Please indicate whether you believe it is appropriate to discipline, isolate, transfer, demote, refuse to promote, or take any other adverse action against a career government official or employee because of the political beliefs of that employee.

Answer. I do not believe it is appropriate to treat anyone differently because of their political beliefs.

Question. Please indicate whether, if confirmed, you will foster an environment in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs in which career officers are expected and able to provide you with their best professional judgment and advice without fear of reprisal, even in situations in which their professional judgment or advice may not be consistent with the political interests or policies of the Trump administration. If yes, please describe the specific steps you will take to foster such an environment.

Answer. As previously documented in the State Department's USOAS Inspector General Report, I will continue to foster an environment in which all employees are valued and respected.

Question. In June 2018, White House advisor Peter Navarro, referring to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada said, "there is a special place in hell for any foreign leader that engages in bad faith diplomacy with President Donald J. Trump." Do you agree with Mr. Navarro's insulting insinuation that there is a special place in hell for Prime Minister Trudeau? Do you believe this is how U.S. officials should talk about our allies?

Answer. I support constructive engagement with our allies, including Canada. The United States†Canada relationship is one of enduring strength built on broad and deep ties between our peoples, shared values, extensive trade, strategic global cooperation, and a robust defense partnership. I believe working closely with our allies and partners to support U.S. policy objectives is essential. If confirmed, I hope to continue to strengthen our relationship with Canada.

Question. From May 2018 to May 2019, the Trump administration imposed Section 232 tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum, invoking threats to U.S. national security. Do you believe Canadian steel and aluminum represent threats to U.S. national security, especially given longstanding linkages between our defense sectors?

Answer. With $725 billion in annual bilateral trade in goods and services, the United States and Canada share the largest trade relationship in the world. With USMCA in force, we work closely with our Canadian and Mexican partners to ensure that North American supply chains remain robust. Our North American partnership is vital for a quick economic recovery. Protecting American workers has always been a priority of this administration.

I refer you to the Department of Commerce and USTR for specifics on the status of 232 aluminum tariffs on Canada.

Question. Press reports indicate that the Trump administration is considering imposing a new round of tariffs on Canada, just weeks after the formal start of the USMCA. Do you believe that the U.S. should impose tariffs on aluminum from Canada, a key U.S. national security and economic partner?

Answer. With $725 billion in annual bilateral trade in goods and services, the United States and Canada share the largest trade relationship in the world. With USMCA in force, we work closely with our Canadian and Mexican partners to ensure that North American supply chains remain robust. Our North American partnership is vital for a quick economic recovery. Protecting American workers has always been a priority of this administration.

I refer you to the Department of Commerce and USTR for specifics on the status of 232 aluminum tariffs on Canada.

Question. If the Trump administration imposes new tariffs on Canadian aluminum, it is likely that Canada's government would retaliate. What is your assessment of the impact to the U.S. economy of a trade war with Canada?

Answer. The United States and Canada enjoy one of the most extensive and integrated economic relationships in the world. The almost 400,000 people and nearly $2 billion worth of goods and services that cross our border daily are testament to the strength of our trade relationship, which has allowed us to resolve challenges and differences in the past and will in the future.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) entered into force on July 1, 2020. The USMCA will ensure that North America remains the world's economic powerhouse and will create high-paying jobs for Americans, Canadians, and Mexicans, and grow the North American economy.

Question. Since the CDC's March 20 order, the U.S.-Canada border has been largely closed despite the historical integration of cross-border communities. If confirmed, what strategy will you pursue to re-open the U.S.-Canada border? Will this strategy be informed by guidance from scientists and medical professionals?

Answer. The United States and Canada continue close cooperation in responding to the global pandemic of COVID–19. This involves engagement at the highest levels by President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and Deputy Secretary Biegun, as well as across the interagency, by health officials, at our diplomatic missions abroad, and along our border.

If confirmed, I will work with all relevant agencies and counterparts, including public health officials and the Department of Homeland Security, to facilitate the safe re-opening of the U.S-Canada border at the appropriate time.

Question. In December 2018, acting on a U.S. extradition request, Canadian authorities detained Huawei CFO Meng Wenzhou. Since then, Canada has faced a barrage of retaliation from China, including tariffs on Canadian products and arresting two Canadian citizens, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. President Trump previously referred to Ms. Meng as something that could be traded with China as part of ongoing negotiations. Do you believe that U.S. extradition requests should be the subject of negotiation requests between the U.S. and China?

Answer. Like all cases brought by the U.S. Department of Justice, the criminal prosecution against Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou is based solely on the facts and law.

Question. Given ongoing legal arguments in Canada, which have featured President Trump's comments, do you believe that the President's comments have strengthened the U.S. legal case for Ms. Meng's extradition to the United States??

Answer. Per the filings unsealed in Canada, Meng and others allegedly broke the law. Specifically, they are accused of putting financial institutions at risk of criminal and civil liability in the United States by deceiving them about the nature and extent of Huawei's business in Iran. Meng and others allegedly falsely stated that Skycom was an unaffiliated business partner, rather than disclosing that it was Huawei's Iranian affiliate.

Like all cases brought by the U.S. Department of Justice, the criminal prosecution against Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou is based solely on the facts and law.

Question. What specific steps would you suggest that the U.S. can take to support our ally Canada in dealing with the People's Republic of China and helping to secure the release of Michael and Michael?

Answer. The United States should continue to publicly call on China to end the arbitrary and unacceptable detentions of Canadian citizens Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig and reject China's use of coercion as a political tool. Recognizing the PRC's strategy of using arbitrary detentions as political leverage is not a one-country problem, I support working with our allies and partners, including Canada, to explore multilateral tools that can impose real costs and pressure on the Chinese government for its use of arbitrary detentions.

Question. In June 2018, White House advisor Peter Navarro, referring to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada said, "there is a special place in hell for any foreign leader that engages in bad faith diplomacy with President Donald J. Trump." Do you agree with Mr. Navarro's insulting insinuation that there is a special place in hell for Prime Minister Trudeau? Do you believe this is how U.S. officials should talk about our allies?

Answer. I support constructive engagement with our allies, including Canada. The United States-Canada relationship is one of enduring strength built on broad and deep ties between our peoples, shared values, extensive trade, strategic global cooperation, and a robust defense partnership. I believe working closely with our allies and partners to support U.S. policy objectives is essential. If confirmed, I hope to continue to strengthen our relationship with Canada.

Question. During your tenure as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the OAS, what specific steps have you taken to fulfill President Trump's promise that the Government of Mexico would pay for the border wall between the United States and Mexico?

Answer. As the United States Ambassador to the OAS, I have worked with Mexico on a variety of political, security, human rights and development issues, as well as on reform of the OAS itself. Issues concerning the border wall have been handled by other offices in the State Department, DHS, and other agencies and offices in the administration.

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, will you formulate a diplomatic strategy to ensure that the Government of Mexico would pay for the border wall between the United States and Mexico, as President Trump has promised?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to maintain an ongoing dialogue with Mexico to ensure close coordination with respect to our joint efforts to secure and modernize the border. Border infrastructure is one part of a comprehensive approach to improve security at our southern border. Mexico, like the United States, has devoted major resources to combat irregular migration and the trafficking of contraband and drugs that affect both countries.

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, what steps will you take ensure that the Government of Mexico would pay for the border wall between the United States and Mexico, as President Trump has promised?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize cooperation with Mexico to manage and protect our nearly 2,000-mile border and to combat shared threats posed by transnational criminal organizations. In close coordination with other departments and agencies, I will commit to coordinating, developing, and expanding efforts to secure and modernize the border. I will also work with Mexico to advance our shared economic interest of improving efficiencies at ports of entry to ensure the flow of legitimate commerce and travelers.

Question. Since January 2017, President Trump has built new sections of border wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. What has been the impact of these border wall sections on specific transnational criminal organizations in Mexico and specific drug trafficking routes from Mexico into the United States. (Note: Please identify specific Mexican TCOs in your response.)

Answer. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration's 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment, Mexican TCOs transport the majority of illicit drugs into the United States across the Southwest border using a wide array of smuggling techniques. I am not in a position to say which TCO activities may have been affected by the presence or absence of particular sections of border security and would refer you to the Department of Justice and DHS. I would note that these Mexican drug trafficking organizations operate like businesses—they are highly mobile, maintain sophisticated cross-border networks, and are involved in a wide range of organized criminal activities—so we work with Mexico to support efforts to attack each part of their business model. We work with Mexico to disrupt drug production, secure borders, deny illicit revenue, and reduce the impunity and corruption that enables the transnational crime that threatens our health, safety, and security.

Question. What is your assessment of the number of subterranean tunnels used by Mexican TCOs have been used to trafficking illicit narcotics into the United States that have been found under the U.S.-Mexico border since 2017?

Answer. Mexican TCOs are highly networked and nimble and will use any means necessary to continue illicit operations that cross the border into the United States. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration's 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment, tunnels destroyed by U.S. law enforcement authorities along the southwest border are primarily found in California and Arizona, and are primarily associated with the Sinaloa Cartel. I would refer you to the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security for more specific data.

Question. What is your assessment as to whether the new sections of border wall built by President Trump prevented Mexican TCOs from building subterranean tunnels Mexico into the U.S. for trafficking illicit drugs?

Answer. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration's 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment, tunnels destroyed by U.S. law enforcement authorities along the southwest border are primarily found in California and Arizona, and are primarily associated with the Sinaloa Cartel. I would refer you to the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security on specific assessments on how the border wall has affected TCOs' building of tunnels.

Question. According to the DEA's 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment: "Mexican TCOs transport the majority of illicit drugs into the United States across the SWB using a wide array of smuggling techniques. The most common method employed involves smuggling illicit drugs through U.S. POEs in passenger vehicles with concealed compartments or commingled with legitimate goods on tractor-trailers." What is your assessment as to whether the new sections of border wall built by President Trump have prevented Mexican TCOs from using passenger vehicles or tractor-trailers to traffic illicit narcotics from Mexico into the U.S.?

Answer. Mexican drug trafficking organizations operate like businesses—they are highly mobile, maintain sophisticated cross-border networks, and are involved in a wide range of organized criminal activities—so we work with Mexico to support efforts to attack each part of their business model. We work with Mexico to disrupt drug production, secure borders, deny illicit revenue, and reduce the impunity and corruption that enables the transnational crime that threatens our health, safety, and security. I refer you to the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security for an assessment of how new border wall sections have affected TCOs' use of passenger vehicles or tractor-trailers to traffic illicit narcotics from Mexico into the United States.

Question. What is your assessment of implementation to date of the U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration?

Answer. Mexico committed to offer work authorization and access to healthcare and education according to the principles of the June 2019 U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration. The Declaration also noted that the United States would expand the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) along the border, and Mexico committed to the deployment of its National Guard forces to increase its own border enforcement and security. The Declaration also sought to emphasize economic development through investment in southern Mexico and Central America to address the drivers of irregular migration. Following the September 10, 2019, meeting with Vice President Pence, Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard stated Mexico would continue to uphold the commitments included in the Joint Declaration. It is my understanding that these have been a very substantial decrease in the number of encounters at the southwest border. It is also my understanding that more remains to be done in implementing the economic development component. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting and working with interagency partners on this strategy.

Question. Do you believe the United States has upheld its commitments under the U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration? If so, how? Please cite specific outcomes as a result of U.S. actions that have benefited Mexico.

Answer. The United States has upheld its commitments under the Joint Declaration. The United States has increased its capacity to process asylum-seekers under the Migrant Protection Protocols expeditiously. The United States is also strengthening bilateral cooperation to support private sector investment and foster development in Mexico and Central America.

Question. Do you believe Mexico has upheld its commitments under the U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration? If so, how? Please cite specific outcomes as a result of Mexican actions that have benefited the U.S.

Answer. It is my understanding that Mexico has upheld its commitments under the Joint Declaration. Mexico has stepped up its enforcement efforts at the border. Following the June 2019 U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration, Mexico agreed to an enforcement surge to curb illegal migration to the United States, including the deployment of more than 25,000 National Guard and other security forces throughout Mexico, including along Mexico's southern and northern borders. National Guard efforts have contributed to an approximate 84 percent drop in apprehensions of irregular migrants at the U.S. southern border since May 2019. In January 2020, the Mexican National Guard played a key role in enforcing Mexican immigration laws when a 2,000-person migrant caravan from Honduras arrived at the Mexico-Guatemala border.

Question. If confirmed, during your first 30 days as Assistant Secretary, do you commit to provide the committee with copies of all assessments, annexes, appendices, and implementation plans or reports related to the U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration, including cables and email reports exchanged with U.S. Embassy Mexico City?

Answer. I understand your interest in Department records related to the U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration, and that there has been an effort by the Department to address your interest and to seek a mutually agreeable accommodation relating to these requests. I also understand that, to date, the Department and the committee have been unable to reach such an accommodation. If confirmed, I commit to support the Department's ongoing efforts to engage with the committee in order to reach an accommodation.

Question. If confirmed, during your first 30 days as Assistant Secretary, do you commit to provide the committee with copies of all agreements—and their accompanying annexes, appendicles, implementation plans, and related instruments—signed between the United States and Mexico since the start of 2017?

Answer. I understand your interest in agreements between the United States and Mexico. I understand that there has been an effort by the Department to address your interest and to seek a mutually agreeable accommodation relating to these requests. I also understand that, to date, the Department and the committee have been unable to reach such an accommodation. If confirmed, I commit to support the Department's ongoing efforts to engage with the committee in order to reach an accommodation.

Question. The "Remain in Mexico" policy (Migrant Protection Protocols) has forced over 60,000 asylum seekers to wait in dangerous Mexican border regions, where the State Department has advised Americans against traveling, COVID–19 is surging, and Human Rights First has documented over 1,100 cases of murder, rape, torture, kidnapping, and other violent assaults against asylum seekers and migrants. If confirmed, how will you ensure the protection and health of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in Mexico as a result of U.S. policies? How will you work with Mexican authorities and DHS to ensure refugees and asylum seekers are protected against these heinous crimes?

Answer. The Department works closely with its international partners and Mexican authorities to respond to challenges as they arise. Mexico has stepped up in meaningful ways, including by establishing shelters for Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) returnees in Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana, and Matamoros, where they provide medical, food, and other services. Mexico also promised access to work authorization for all individuals returned under MPP and is working with employers and banks to facilitate access to jobs. If confirmed, I would urge Mexico to continue assisting migrants returned to Mexico.

Question. Since the United States effectively closed its land borders to asylum seekers as a result of CDC's March 20 order, the Department of Homeland Security has expelled over 43,000 asylum seekers and migrants without due process to Mexico, where shelters run by the Government, churches, and humanitarian agencies are filled, and local capacity to test for COVID–19, provide medical care, and quarantine migrants with the virus is limited. If confirmed, what specific diplomatic actions will you take and what foreign assistance will you strengthen in Mexico to improve protection of asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants, including to prevent and treat COVID–19?

Answer. At this time, I understand there to be sufficient shelter space available in most locations along Mexico's northern border. The Department has provided nearly $1.9 million in COVID–19 response funding in Mexico to date. With these funds, our international humanitarian partners are assisting government and private shelters to respond to and mitigate the spread of COVID–19, including by establishing "filter hotels" where newly arriving and particularly vulnerable migrants can quarantine for a minimum of 15 days in order to then be placed in a traditional shelter, thereby limiting risk of exposure and spread of infection. If confirmed, I would urge Mexico to continue assisting migrants returned to Mexico.

Question. In May, the Trump administration indefinitely extended its March 20 order expelling all undocumented migrants seeking entry at U.S. land borders. Among over 43,000 individuals expelled to date, at least 2,175 were unaccompanied children, according to Customs and Border Patrol. The New York Times has reported that children are being returned to Mexico under the policy, without any notification being provided to their families and in some cases without telling them where they are being sent to. Under domestic law, the U.S. must comply with trafficking screenings and other procedures mandated by the Trafficking Victims Pro-

tection Reauthorization Act. Yet, under CDC's March 20 order, these critical protections—which are meant to prevent children from being trafficked—are seemingly being ignored. Only 39 children out of the 1,001 expelled in May were given access to these critical protections, according to a June 18 report by CBS News. Do you believe the United States bears responsibility for the protection of asylum seekers, including unaccompanied children, we have expelled to Mexico?

Answer. The Department, through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), scaled up humanitarian support in Mexico significantly, providing nearly $105 million since Fiscal Year 2019 to support refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable migrants, including $1.9 million for COVID response. With these funds, our partners help build Mexico's asylum capacity and support protection efforts, including with direct humanitarian assistance, legal assistance, and psychosocial support. PRM funds also support shelter capacity and provide assisted voluntary return for vulnerable migrants who wish to go home but lack the resources to do so on their own.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take with the Department of Homeland Security to ensure the United States does not expel children into conditions where they are at risk of human trafficking in violation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act?

Answer. Traffickers prey on unaccompanied children in the United States, as they do elsewhere in the world. The Department of State works and collaborates with other U.S. federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, yearround through the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor & Combat Trafficking in Persons to advance a whole-of-government response to human trafficking. I support combating trafficking in persons throughout the Western Hemisphere, pursuant to the TVPA, and will work with my State and interagency colleagues, to protect all potential victims. For questions on specific enforcement actions, I defer to our colleagues at the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to protect and assist children expelled to Mexico by the United States?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Homeland Security and the Government of Mexico to help ensure appropriate measures are taken to protect and assist any children expelled to Mexico from the United States.

Question. At least three cases of COVID–19 have been reported to date at the camp in Matamoros where over 2000 asylum seekers are waiting to cross into the United States for their immigration court hearing as a result of the Migrant Protection Protocols. In addition to COVID–19, these asylum seekers face threats of kidnapping and other violent crimes. How would explain to asylum seekers in Matamoros why the United States cannot offer them protection from persecution and threats of violent crimes, why they should not be allowed to reunite with family members in the United States while pursuing their asylum claims, and why they do not have accurate and reliable information about their asylum proceedings in U.S. immigration court?

Answer. It is my understanding that as of late July, between 1,200-1,500 people remain in the informal Matamoros camp. International organizations, local NGOs, and local authorities continue to offer shelter to these migrants. Through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), the Department is supporting provision of basic assistance at the camp, including access to medical resources. PRM partners also work to disseminate information about both the U.S. and Mexican asylum systems, and offer referrals for specialized support as needed.

Question. As the grandson of Cubans who escaped communist dictatorship and found refuge in the United States decades ago, do you agree with the Trump administration that Cuban refugees and asylum seekers should be forced to wait in Mexico, summarily expelled to Mexico, or potentially transferred to Guatemala to seek protection there rather than in the United States?

Answer. As a party to the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the United States must uphold its obligations with regard to all persons in need of international protection, regardless of their nationality.

Question. Do you agree that Cuban refugees and asylum seekers who seek protection at the U.S.-Mexico border should be turned away without due process?

Answer. I am not aware of Cuban refugees or asylum seekers being turned away from the U.S. southern border without the opportunity to apply for asylum or another form of protection in the United States. I understand that under the Migrant

Protection Protocols (MPP), the Department of Homeland Security may issue immigrants a notice to appear for an immigration court date in the United States and return them to Mexico to wait there for the duration of their U.S. immigration proceedings. As with any individual placed in removal proceedings under Section 240 of the INA, MPP returnees have the opportunity to claim asylum or another form of protection in front of a U.S. immigration judge. Individuals who claim fear of Mexico and who USCIS determines are more likely than not to be persecuted or tortured in Mexico are not eligible for return under MPP.

Question. Mexico's National Search Commission reported in January that more than 61,000 people have disappeared, including more than 5,000 in 2019. Most of these disappearances are committed by narco-traffickers and criminals, many working with corrupt police or politicians. The disappearance of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College remains deeply troubling five years on. If confirmed, what specific actions will you take to help Mexico recover those forcibly disappeared, achieve justice for their families, and reverse this horrifying trend?

Answer. If confirmed, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs would continue the United States' commitment to supporting President Lopez Obrador's efforts to search for missing persons, identify the remains of the deceased, provide closure to families, and prosecute offenders. Through the Merida Initiative, the Department continues to assist Mexico's law enforcement and justice sector institutions to enhance the capabilities of Mexican authorities to investigate and prosecute such cases. U.S. foreign assistance helps build the capacity of national and state authorities to search for the missing utilizing family-inclusive approaches, conduct forensic analysis, centralize DNA data, and identify the deceased.

Question. July 2020 reports by the Washington Post indicate that Mexico added more than 11,000 people to its official count of disappeared persons, bringing the total to more than 73,000. These news figures indicate that in 2019, the first year of President Lopez Obrador's government, the number of additional disappearances was the second-most on record. What is your assessment of why the number of disappearances increased so greatly last year?

Answer. In July 2020, the National Search Commission reported, based on a review of cases within state-level prosecutorial offices, the official count of disappeared and missing persons in Mexico has risen to more than 73,000 people. Since President Lopez Obrador assumed office December 1, 2018, 7,516 cases of missing and disappeared persons have been opened nationwide.

Question. Mexico's homicide rate reached a record high of over 35,000 murders in 2019, with drug cartels and other organized criminal groups as major perpetrators of violent crime. Violent crimes range from mass killings and disappearances to targeted assassinations and shooting down a military helicopter. The brutal murder of three women and six children with dual U.S.-Mexican citizenship in a Mormon community in Sonora demonstrated the urgency of Mexico's violent crime problem for the United States. Do you believe that Mexican President Obrador is taking sufficient and appropriate action to improve public security and end impunity for violent crimes, including state involvement?

Answer. Following engagement by U.S. senior leadership, Mexico has made concerted efforts to implement its commitments to combat transnational criminal organizations (TCO). Among other priorities, the United States needs to see progress on legislation and implementation of a new judicial wire intercept program, increased control of precursor chemicals used to produce fentanyl and other drugs in Mexico, and more maritime interdictions. We also need continued action on extraditions; maintenance of a high operational tempo in targeting TCO supply chains, drug production, and financial infrastructure; and coordination on border actions. One of the Lopez Obrador administration's top stated priorities is to address corruption and impunity.

Question. If confirmed, how will you leverage U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance to reduce violent crime in Mexico?

Answer. If confirmed, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs under my leadership will continue to work actively with the Government of Mexico to address violent crime. We will continue engagement with Mexico through the established High-Level Security Group, ensuring that whole of government approaches are implemented to ensure sustainability. We will continue to use Merida Initiative programming and other U.S. foreign assistance to expand the capacity of law enforcement and judicial officials to investigate and prosecute criminal activity, as well as address crimes affecting vulnerable populations. We stand ready to support the Mexican National Guard to help increase its capacities to combat crime.

Question. Please provide the committee with All Circular-175 ("C-175") packages, including action memoranda to enter and conclude negotiations, memoranda of law, and relevant attachments to such memoranda for Asylum Cooperative Agreements between the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Answer. I understand your interest in the Asylum Cooperative Agreements between the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and that there has been an effort by the Department to address your interest and to seek a mutually agreeable accommodation relating to these requests. I also understand that, to date, the Department and the committee have been unable to reach such an accommodation. If confirmed, I commit to support the Department's ongoing efforts to engage with the committee in order to reach an accommodation.

Question. Please provide the committee with all implementation plans or arrangements related to Asylum Cooperative Agreements between the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Answer. I understand your interest in Department records related to Asylum Cooperative Agreements between the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. I understand that there has been an effort by the Department to address your interest and to seek a mutually agreeable accommodation relating to these requests. I also understand that, to date, the Department and the committee have been unable to reach such an accommodation. If confirmed, I commit to support the Department's ongoing efforts to engage with the committee in order to reach an accommodation.

Question. Please provide the committee with any/ all determinations by the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security that Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador each provide "a full and fair procedure for determining a claim to asylum or equivalent temporary protection," and that in each country an "aliens' life or freedom would not be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion," as required by 8 U.S.C. δ 1158.

Answer. I understand your interest in these determinations made by the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security. I understand there has been an effort by the Department to address your interest and to seek a mutually agreeable accommodation relating to these requests. I also understand that, to date, the Department and the committee have been unable to reach such an accommodation. If confirmed, I commit to continue to engage with the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice, as well as the committee, in order to reach an accommodation.

Question. Please provide the committee with all assessments, reporting, or analysis by the Department and/ or Embassy officials on conditions in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador related to each country's asylum capacity and procedures, ability to protect refugees in compliance with international legal standards, respect for the principle of non-refoulement, political and judicial support for the ACA, and views of non-governmental and international organizations.

Answer. My understanding is the Department has briefed Congress, including the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on these issues. If confirmed, I would commit to working with my Department and interagency colleagues to continue sharing information with Congress.

Question. The United States has been supporting Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to build their asylum capacity through contributions to international organizations, yet moving rapidly to transfer hundreds of asylum seekers to these countries far beyond their current asylum capacity. Do you believe it is appropriate to build the plane while flying it when individuals' lives, freedom, and persecution are at stake?

Answer. The United States has not yet begun implementation of the Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs) with Honduras or El Salvador. Implementation of the U.S.-Guatemala ACA has been paused since mid-March due to the COVID–19 pandemic. The goal of both the United States and Guatemala is to implement this agreement gradually so as not to overwhelm Guatemala's capacity to receive transferees as it strengthens its asylum system.

Question. Do you believe that the United States' Asylum Cooperative Agreements with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador comply with our obligations under U.S. and international law to protect refugees? Please explain.

Answer. The Asylum Cooperative Agreements allow the United States to transfer individuals who express an intent or interest in seeking protection in the United States to a partner country where the Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security have determined the agreements comply with the "Safe Third Country" ex-

ception to the Immigration and Nationality Act. I understand the State Department does not participate in making that domestic law determination.

Question. Has the Department of State or Homeland Security approached any other countries to propose negotiation of additional Asylum Cooperative Agreements? If so, which countries and at what stage are these negotiations?

Answer. The Department of State, in collaboration with DHS, is working with governments in the region to achieve the shared goal of reducing illegal immigration to the United States. It is my understanding the U.S. Government is not currently negotiating an Asylum Cooperative Agreement with any other government in the Western Hemisphere.

Question. If confirmed, would you pursue Asylum Cooperative Agreements with any other countries? If so, which countries?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to work with the Department of Homeland Security and interagency to achieve the shared goal of reducing illegal immigration to the United States. I understand the U.S. Government is not currently negotiating an Asylum Cooperative Agreement with any other government in the Western Hemisphere.

Question. Please provide the committee with All Circular-175 ("C-175") packages, including action memoranda to enter and conclude negotiations, memoranda of law, and relevant attachments to such memoranda for agreements on H2A and H2B visa programs between the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Answer. I understand your interest in agreements on H2A and H2B visa programs between the United States, Honduras, and El Salvador. I understand there has been an effort by the Department to address your interest and to seek a mutually agreeable accommodation relating to these requests. I also understand that, to date, the Department and the committee have been unable to reach such an accommodation. If confirmed, I commit to support the Department's ongoing efforts to engage with the committee in order to reach an accommodation.

Question. Please provide the committee with all implementation plans or arrangements related to agreements on H2A and H2B visa programs between the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Answer. The bilateral agreements signed between the United States and Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras will facilitate increased transparency, accountability, and the safety of temporary workers from these countries. The agreements promote regular, orderly, and secure temporary migration and strengthen cooperation mechanisms to prevent, report, and investigate fraud and abuse. The agreements are intended to complement existing U.S. laws and strengthen the protections for U.S. workers and potential H-2 workers by ensuring workers are less vulnerable to criminal actors. U.S employers will also benefit from this additional transparency and accountability.

Question. President Trump withheld foreign assistance for over a year until he deemed that El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras had sufficiently reduced irregular migration to the United States. Since U.S. foreign assistance resumed in April, congressional notifications indicate that every program has reducing irregular migration as a major objective. How has U.S. assistance to these countries been effective in addressing the root causes of migration and displacement, such as violence and insecurity, human rights abuses, corruption, and poverty?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department, our U.S. embassies, USAID, and other partners to ensure U.S. assistance programming continues to be aligned with the Department's policy goals to address the economic, security, and governance drivers of migration. While we recognize U.S. assistance can be an effective tool to address these root causes, and some progress has been made, political will of each government is essential to make further progress in these areas. I will continue to engage diplomatically with El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras as well as support our assistance programs, to help create an enabling economic environment that attracts private sector investment, thereby creating more economic opportunities for individuals in those countries that may otherwise seek to illegally immigrate to the United States.

Question. If confirmed, will you pursue the President's anti-immigrant agenda as the centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy toward the region? If not, how will you ensure the President's myopic focus on immigration doesn't undermine other priorities?

Answer. Migration cooperation plays an important role in U.S. foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I would continue to support and advance the

administration's priorities in the region, which include reducing illegal immigration through a regional approach to shared responsibility and working with countries in the region to increase prosperity opportunities.

Question. In your view, what is the proper role of the Department of Homeland Security in U.S. foreign policy, and how does this role relate to that of the State Department?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for the protection of our nation's borders and people from transnational threats. In this regard, DHS plays an important role in curbing illegal immigration, trafficking of illicit goods and persons, as well as other various immigration related issues. The role of the State Department in these efforts is to ensure our allies and partners in the region continue to have positive and effective relations with the United States, including effective working relations between DHS and their agency counterparts in the countries in the region.

Question. If confirmed, what objectives would you prioritize for U.S. foreign assistance to Central America?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department, our U.S. embassies, USAID, and other partners to ensure U.S. assistance programming continues to be aligned with the Department's policy goals to address the economic, security, and governance drivers of irregular migration. I will prioritize U.S. assistance that helps El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to build capacity of their institutions, police, and judicial systems; combat systemic corruption; establish necessary legal frameworks; and help to reduce barriers to private sector investment. In addition, I will work with interagency partners to continue U.S. assistance that can build stronger asylum systems in support of the Asylum Cooperative Agreements and U.S. national security interests.

Question. If non-governmental regional experts are correct, the economic challenges posed by the COVID–19 pandemic are likely to increase migrant flows toward the United States from Central America and Mexico. If confirmed, would you support another suspension of U.S. foreign assistance if this scenario occurs?

Answer. U.S assistance has been effective in addressing some of the root causes of irregular migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras; however, the challenges are enormous and, in recent months, exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic. I believe U.S. assistance will continue to help address the economic, security, and governance challenges facing Central America. Our cooperation with Mexico is long-standing and covers a broad range of issues including counternarcotics and migration. If confirmed, I commit to engaging diplomatically with Central America and Mexico to address any migration issues that could arise as a result of the pandemic.

Question. In your confirmation hearing, you agreed that the United States should not deport individuals who have tested positive for COVID–19, and acknowledged reports that the United States has deported dozens of COVID–19 individuals to countries in Central America, where public health infrastructure is weak. If confirmed, what specific actions will you take to ensure that the United States ceases any deportations of COVID–19 individuals to countries in the Western Hemisphere region?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to work with the Department of Homeland Security to seek to adjust health protocols and testing based on the unique situation in each receiving country. In addition, we will continue our substantial efforts in the receiving countries to work to ensure that adequate reception and quarantine protocols are followed.

Question. If confirmed, will you increase U.S. assistance to address the COVID–19 pandemic in Central America?

Answer. The COVID–19 pandemic has wide-ranging impacts on many countries throughout the hemisphere, including Central America. The Department and USAID have already provided $24.05 million in COVID–19 supplemental assistance to all seven of the countries in Central America for projects ranging from providing sanitizer to schools in Costa Rica to establishing teams in the highlands of Guatemala to work with small business owners affected by the pandemic. I understand USAID has also redirected existing assistance to support the countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to be more responsive to COVID–19. If confirmed, I will support considering requests for assistance to Central America to address the economic, governance, and security issues driving corruption, weak institutions, and irregular migration, all of which will be impacted by the pandemic.

Question. The Trump administration publicly announced that it sent ventilators to Honduras and El Salvador but has said nothing on Guatemala. As of July 21st, Guatemala had the highest number of COVID positive individuals of the three countries with 39,039 in Guatemala; 34,611 in Honduras; and 12,582 in El Salvador. Can you explain why it was announced that Honduras and El Salvador received ventilators and not Guatemala?

Answer. It is my understanding that Honduras and El Salvador requested and received USAID facilitation in the purchase of their ventilators, and this is the reason why progress on only these two purchases was initially reported. At that point, the Government of Guatemala had chosen to pursue their own open-sourced order, for which USAID provided technical assistance and facilitation through its implementing partners. My understanding is the administration received a recent request from the Government of Guatemala, which is in the process of being addressed.

Question. Has Guatemala received ventilators from the Trump administration in order to strengthen its response to the COVID–19 pandemic?

Answer. I understand the administration recently received a request from Guatemala for ventilators which is in the process of being addressed. Guatemala had previously requested and received other medical supplies to strengthen its response to the pandemic.

Question. Are there plans to send ventilators to Guatemala in order to strengthen its response to the COVID–19 pandemic? If so, how many and when?

Answer. I understand the administration recently received a request from Guatemala which is in the process of being addressed.

Question. I am very concerned with the U.S. decision to walk away from multilateral anti-corruption tools such as CICIG in Guatemala and MACCIH in Honduras. How will you strengthen the rule of law and address corruption in Central America? What tools will you use?

Answer. I understand that in January, Guatemalan President Giammattei created an anti-corruption commission in Guatemala to identify corruption within the Executive Branch, and the Honduran attorney general announced the creation of a new anti-corruption unit within the public ministry (UFERCO) that has taken over investigations MACCIH helped support. I am encouraged by the efforts of the authorities in Guatemala and Honduras to create these new anti-corruption units. If confirmed, I will continue to support U.S. foreign assistance programming in these countries that can support capacity building of these units. If confirmed, I am also committed to using all available deterrence tools at the Department's disposal to seek to ensure there are consequences for anyone involved in and benefiting from significant acts of corruption.

Question. On February 9, Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele sent soldiers to the Legislative Assembly to intimidate legislators into approving a $109 million loan from the Central American Development Bank to fight crime. Subsequently, his actions have resulted in multiple stand offs with the Supreme Court related to rulings on quarantine regulations that had been struck down by the court from March to May 2020. What is your assessment of this type of behavior and of President Bukele's commitment for the separation of powers in El Salvador?

Answer. The United States supports democracy, rule of law—including the separation of powers—and the strengthening of democratic institutions in El Salvador. President Bukele entering the Salvadoran legislature with armed security forces was wrong. We were heartened the following day he declared he would abide by the supreme court ruling regarding that issue and followed through with his actions. The Department has publicly called on all branches of the Salvadoran Government to work together for solutions consistent with the constitution of El Salvador on how best to improve security, protect the health of its citizens during the COVID–19 pandemic, and foster economic growth. If confirmed, I will continue along this avenue.

Question. President Bukele said publicly on May 18 on a national TV broadcast that he was considering "not paying the salaries" of legislators and Supreme Court judges to "prioritize medicine, food, and salaries of those fighting Covid-19". What, in your view, would be the consequences of Mr. Bukele following through with his threats? How would this affect the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and El Salvador?

Answer. The United States and El Salvador enjoy a strong bilateral relationship. The Department has stated publicly all branches of the Government of El Salvador should work together to protect the health of Salvadorans and stop the spread of

COVID–19. The administration has committed significant funds to support the Salvadoran response to this pandemic. If confirmed, I will continue to work with El Salvador to strengthen our bilateral relationship.

Question. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to advocate for the importance of governance and the rule of law in El Salvador, particularly at a time when we are witnessing the challenges described in the previous two questions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the continued efforts of the Department of State and the Department of Justice, as well as of the Organization of American States and other international and multilateral bodies, to increase adherence to the rule of law in El Salvador. Together, we will promote accountability for the Government of El Salvador to meet its objectives, including through the Commission Against Corruption and Impunity in El Salvador (CICIES).

Question. Nearly 500,000 Salvadorans were internally displaced by violence in 2019. In January, El Salvador's congress passed landmark legislation to protect and assist internally displaced persons, but the COVID–19 pandemic has exacerbated challenges with devoting resources to the law's implementation. If confirmed, how will you support El Salvador's efforts to address internal displacement?

Answer. In support of El Salvador's goals to bolster its protection capacity under the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework, the Department provides funding to international humanitarian organizations to help the Government of El Salvador mitigate and respond to forced displacement by addressing causes and providing support for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). If confirmed, I would encourage El Salvador to continue to address IDP issues and sustain State Department support for these efforts.

Question. According to the State Department, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that El Salvador can adjudicate approximately five asylum cases per year with its current personnel and resources. At the same time, El Salvador has one of the world's highest homicide rates, with gang violence driving nearly 500,000 Salvadorans to flee their homes inside El Salvador, and another 178,000 to flee abroad as refugees and asylum seekers in 2019. Nearly 200 individuals deported from the United States have been killed upon return to El Salvador, according to human rights groups. Given these conditions, do you believe that El Salvador provides conditions of safety and a "full and fair" asylum process to adequately protect asylum seekers and refugees transferred under its Asylum Cooperative Agreement with the United States?

Answer. Before the U.S.-El Salvador Asylum Cooperative Agreement (ACA) can enter into force, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice must first determine that individuals transferred to El Salvador pursuant to the agreement would have access to full and fair procedures for determining their protection claims. The agencies must also determine that the individual's life or freedom would not be threatened in the receiving country on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

Question. According to the State Department, El Salvador has no dedicated budget or full-time staff assigned to asylum adjudications, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that El Salvador has the capacity to adjudicate five asylum cases per year. Do you believe that El Salvador's high levels of violence and barely-existent asylum capacity are adequate to protect asylum seekers transferred there by the United States under its Asylum Cooperative Agreement?

Answer. As a cooperating country to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, the United States provides humanitarian aid and capacity building support through our international organization partners in El Salvador. This assistance is complementary to the Asylum Cooperative Agreement (ACA) and supports the strategic objectives of this regional framework and the goals of its member countries, including El Salvador. This assistance supports El Salvador's efforts to build its asylum capacity and enhances protection resources available to asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, and other vulnerable migrants, including ACA transferees who request protection or wish to return to their home countries.

Question. According to the State Department, Guatemala adjudicated only 112 asylum claims in 2019. This capacity compares to the 939 asylum seekers, including 357 children, whom the United States transferred to Guatemala in just four months. Do you believe that Guatemala's high levels of violence and weak asylum capacity are adequate to protect the 939 asylum seekers already sent there by the United States?

Answer. As a cooperating country to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, the United States provides humanitarian aid and capacity building support through our international organization partners in Guatemala. This assistance is complementary to the Asylum Cooperative Agreement (ACA) and supports the strategic objectives of this regional framework and the goals of its member countries, including Guatemala. This assistance helps Guatemala to increase its asylum capacity and enhances protection resources available to asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrants, including ACA transferees who request protection or wish to return to their home countries.

Question. Guatemala has suspended implementation of the Asylum Cooperative Agreement during the COVID crisis. If confirmed, will you respect Guatemala's determinations on the appropriate timing and scope for the resumption of implementation?

Answer. The United States and Guatemala agreed to pause implementation of the U.S.-Guatemala Asylum Cooperative (ACA) due to the COVID–19 pandemic. If confirmed, I would work with Guatemala on the appropriate timing and scope for the resumption of the ACA implementation.

Question. Guatemala has sought to limit the number of deportees it receives from the United States since dozens of deportees tested positive for COVID–19 upon arrival. Guatemalan authorities are so concerned about the U.S. exportation of COVID–19 that they requested diagnostic support from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If confirmed, will you support Guatemala's interest in limiting U.S. deportation flights?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with the Department of Homeland Security on any requests from Guatemala regarding U.S. removal flights.

Question. Guatemalan President Giammattei said in May, "Guatemala is an ally of the United States, but I don't believe the U.S. is an ally to Guatemala because they don't treat us like one." If confirmed, how would you reassure Guatemala's leaders that the United States is their ally and that we seek to pursue mutual interests?

Answer. Our bilateral relationship with Guatemala is close and strong and if confirmed, I would work to build on that foundation. There is a common bond between our two countries based on our shared beliefs in democracy and human rights and shared priorities of economic prosperity and citizen security. The United States has also proven a reliable partner to Guatemala in times of crisis, including most recently by providing more than $8.4 million in COVID–19 supplemental assistance for Guatemala, including $6 million in International Disaster Assistance for risk-communications and interventions in water, sanitation, and hygiene and more than $2.4 million in health funding.

Question. As you know, many of my colleagues and I have been strong supporters of the partnership between the United States and Guatemala. Crucial to this partnership is support for the rule of law and strong, independent, and transparent institutions. I've been troubled by recent developments suggesting that criminal elements have been working to manipulate the selection of judges in Guatemala. I'm also troubled by reports of political attacks against sitting judges in the country's highest court and efforts of undemocratic actors to remove these judges and undermine their efforts to uphold the rule of law. What is your assessment of these troubling developments?

Answer. I too am concerned about effects of criminal elements to manipulate the selection of judges. I support the rule of law and judicial independence in Guatemala. A strong and stable system for ensuring the rule of law is important for attracting investment, providing social stability, addressing criminality and impunity, and ensuring respect for human rights in Guatemala. If confirmed, I commit to remain actively engaged with Guatemalan and civil society interlocutors on these issues, and to publicly express support for judicial independence and the rule of law, including the importance of respect for Guatemala's constitution. I will ensure the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs continues those efforts to support the rule of law.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to support the integrity of Guatemala's judicial institutions and prioritize U.S. efforts to strengthen institutions that uphold the rule of law?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to eliminate corrupt influences in Guatemalan institutions through our diplomatic engagements with Guatemalan authorities, public messaging, and programs supporting the rule of law. If confirmed, I will also

work to consistently encourage the Guatemalan Government to combat systemic corruption in all branches of government and to maintain the integrity and independence of the Guatemalan courts, including the Constitutional Court. In addition, if confirmed, I am committed to using all available deterrence tools at the Department's disposal to work to enforce consequences for anyone involved in and benefiting from significant acts of corruption in Guatemala.

Question. According to the State Department, Honduras adjudicated a total of 46 asylum claims in 2019, and has no dedicated budget or full-time staff assigned to its asylum office. Do you believe that Honduras's high levels of violence and weak asylum capacity are adequate to protect asylum seekers transferred there by the United States under its Asylum Cooperative Agreement?

Answer. As a cooperating country to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, the United States provides humanitarian aid and capacity building support through our international organization partners in Honduras. This assistance is complementary to the Asylum Cooperative Agreement (ACA) and supports the strategic objectives of this regional framework and the goals of its member countries, including Honduras. This assistance supports the Government of Honduras to build its asylum capacity and enhances protection resources available in these countries to asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, and other vulnerable migrants, including ACA transferees who request protection or wish to return to their home countries.

Question. In 2019, in the U.S. drug trafficking case against Honduran national Juan Antonio Hernandez, court filings made reference to an unidentified co-conspirator (CC-4), stating that "CC-4 was elected President of Honduras in late 2013." For the congressional record, can you please state who was elected President of Honduras in late 2013?

Answer. Juan Orlando Hernández was elected president of Honduras in 2013.

Question. What is your understanding of the involvement of President of Honduras in drug trafficking?

Answer. The Department refers any questions about the court filings in the trials concerning Tony Hernández, Geovanny Daniel Fuentes Ramirez, and Juan Carlos Bonilla Valladares to the Department of Justice.

Question. If you received information that an elected official in Honduras was involved—whether directly or as an accomplice—in drug trafficking, what specific steps would you take?

Answer. If confirmed, I would refer information implicating officials in drug trafficking to the Department of Justice.

Question. Do you believe that Kingpin sanctions should be used against elected officials in Honduras who have been involved in drug trafficking?

Answer. I understand the Department, in cooperation with the Department of the Treasury, works to investigate and impose sanctions, as appropriate, to promote accountability for a variety of crimes, including drug trafficking through the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act and on corruption through the Global Magnitsky sanctions program. The Department also applies visa restrictions and publicly designates corrupt officials and their family members, as appropriate, under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act. It is my understanding that the tools are applicable to foreign officials. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to utilize the tools at the U.S. Government's disposal to block assets and deny access to the United States to officials involved in corruption and drug trafficking.

Question. On April 21, 2020, I—along with Senators Inhofe, Rubio, Scott and Leahy— sent a letter to Secretary Pompeo requesting the referral of all U.S. citizen claims against Honduras to the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission (FCSC) of the U.S. Department of Justice. We reference several such claims, some of which have lingered for decades and, in some cases, allege damages in the tens of millions of dollars. These include the claim of a cement company, CEMAR, formerly owned by a U.S. claimant. Also, mentioned is a Honduran cement duopoly that was responsible for the demise of CEMAR, as corroborated in U.S. and Honduran official findings. It is our understanding that a member of this duopoly, CENOSA is supplying the cement for the new $500m U.S. Embassy under construction in that country. Equally troubling is the fact that Honduran officials and businessman, including CENOSA principals, have been convicted in U.S. courts of drug trafficking, money laundering, and other federal crimes.

Do you support the referral of all U.S. citizen claims against Honduras to the FCSC? If you are confirmed, would you assure this committee that your office will submit a plan for the resolution of outstanding confiscation claims—including those of CEMAR and other U.S. claimants—within your first 30 days in your position?

Answer. I understand the Department has urged the Honduran Government at the highest levels to resolve outstanding disputes. Regarding your request to refer U.S. citizen claims against Honduras to the FCSC, the Department notes that such a referral would not provide an avenue of redress to claimants absent a negotiated claims settlement. Indeed, the United States negotiates BITs and other investment treaties with countries to enable U.S. investors to seek compensation for wrongful acts directly from these countries. The Department will continue to work to resolve outstanding confiscation claims.

Question. U.S. firms and citizens continue to report that malfeasance and a lack of accountability in the Honduran Government, including in the Honduran judiciary, are significant concerns and a constraint to successful investment in Honduras (Note: See USTR ANNUAL NTE REPORT 2019—HONDURAS). Many longstanding legal claims against Honduras remain unresolved despite appropriations laws from 2016 to present conditioning aid to that country on, among other things, fighting corruption and the resolution of U.S. citizens' claims... With the refusal of the Honduran Government to renew the OAS anti-corruption commission, what steps will you take to improve the investment climate in Honduras? If you are confirmed, would you prioritize the prompt resolution of U.S. citizens' claims against Honduras that have lingered for many years or even decades?

Answer. I remain committed to the fight against corruption and to the promotion of transparency, accountability, and rule of law in Central America. If confirmed, I will continue to support the efforts of Central American Governments to address corruption in their countries. The U.S. Government is supporting the efforts of the newly-established Special Fiscal Unit Against Corruption Network (UFERCO) in Honduras. If confirmed, I will continue to look for ways to strengthen anti-corruption efforts.

Question. On January 13, Chairman Risch and I wrote to Secretary Pompeo asking that he takes steps to align U.S. diplomacy and sanctions related to Nicaragua in order to establish a unified strategy with the objective of creating the conditions for free, fair, transparent and democratic elections in 2021. What specific steps will you take to align U.S. diplomacy and sanctions in support of democratic elections in Nicaragua in 2021?

Answer. Your letter was well received, and I know from my role in USOAS that the administration has a comprehensive strategy that aligns bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and sanctions, as well as our support for the Nicaraguan pro-democracy coalition. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the international community more generally to press for robust electoral reforms outlined by Nicaraguan civil society. The United States continues to call out the Ortega regime's blatant corruption and disregard for human rights. On July 20, the United States imposed additional financial sanctions, sending a clear message to the Ortega regime that the pressure will continue until respect for the democratic human rights of the Nicaraguan people are restored. If confirmed, I will work to advance this coordinated diplomatic and economic pressure.

Question. What is your assessment of the Cuban Medical Professional Parole program, which was started in August 2006 and ended in January 2017? Did you consider it a valuable foreign policy initiative?

Answer. I understand that from 2006 to 2017, the Cuban Medical Professional Parole (CMPP) program allowed 16,206 Cuban doctors and their families to apply to take refuge in the United States. The Obama administration in its last weeks in office agreed with Cuba to end the program to provide parole to the doctors who wished to escape from the program. In return, Cuba agreed to consider accepting the return of other categories of Cuban nationals subject to final removal from the UnitedStates by DHS.

Question. If confirmed, will you use your position as Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs to advocate that the U.S. Government re-establish the Cuban Medical Professional Parole program?

Answer. I understand the authority to reinstate the program resides with DHS and the most recent agreement signed as part of the Migration Accords specifically commits the United States to eliminating the CMPP. That said, I will commit to reviewing the program with our DHS partners to determine the extent to which it is achieving our foreign policy goals.

Question. Over the past 15 years, with a limited number of exceptions, the U.S. Executive branch has traditionally requested $20 million annually from the U.S. Congress for programs to support democracy activists, human rights defenders, and independent civil society. However, in the last 3 years, the Trump administration has repeatedly requested less than $20 million for Cuba democracy programs. What is your understanding of why the Trump administration has requested less than $20 million for these programs during the last 20 years?

Answer. U.S. Cuba policy currently supports democracy and human rights on the island and the United States' intention to demonstrate solidarity with the Cuban people in the face of a repressive regime. Direct U.S. assistance to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is important. U.S. assistance supports independent civil society initiatives that promote democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of expression and association. It is my understanding that the request levels in the past years have been based on assessment of the best balance among worldwide assistance requirements. If confirmed, I will review the records and advocate for sufficient funding for these important programs.

Question. If confirmed, will you advocate for the Trump administration to request $20 million from Congress for Cuba democracy programs?

Answer. The administration's Cuba policy makes clear the intent to support the Cuban people by advancing human rights and democracy in Cuba. Annual funding requests are formulated to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

Question. Should the Cuban Government profit off of Cuban confiscated property that they claim to own in the US?

Answer. The Cuban Government should not profit off of property that it improperly confiscated in Cuba. U.S. policy currently takes a stance on such confiscated property, no longer suspending Title III of the LIBERTAD Act of 1996 and stepping up enforcement of Title IV of that Act.

Question. Are you aware that the State Department provided foreign policy guidance to OFAC to allow the Cuban Government to renew an expired trademark registration for Havana Club rum that was denied previously?

Answer. I understand that in 2015 the State Department provided foreign policy guidance to OFAC in connection with a license request by a Cuban state owned enterprise in connection with the Havana Club trademark registration, following which the company renewed its trademark registration at USPTO.

Question. Do you commit to providing new foreign policy guidance to OFAC to deny the Cuban Government its trademark registration for Havana Club rum?

Answer. While I understand the Department does not discuss the details of its foreign policy guidance to the Treasury Department, and I would not want to prejudice any possible action, I commit to reviewing whether new foreign policy guidance would be appropriate in this and any other case as necessary to ensure the administration's policy on Cuba.

Question. The consolidation of peace in Colombia is a bipartisan goal and progress towards this will be a historic achievement. Yet peace accord implementation has faced challenges and human rights defenders and community leaders who have put their lives on the line to build peace are being threatened and killed. Consolidation of peace is also needed if Colombia is to continue its generous role towards Venezuelan refugees. If confirmed, what steps would you take to encourage the Duque administration to fully implement the peace accords and protect human rights defenders?

Answer. It is my understanding that the United States continues to support Colombia's implementation of the 2016 peace agreement as it continues the essential long-term work of extending security, state presence, and economic development throughout the country. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance programming that has supported Colombia's progress since the signing of the accord. I share your concern over the persistent killings of human rights defenders. If confirmed, I will engage with the Colombian Government and civil society to support and encourage Colombia's efforts to investigate and prosecute those responsible for these killings, and to deter future violence.

Question. The political, economic, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has driven more than five million Venezuelans to flee their country. In the region, Colombia has been the largest recipient of Venezuelan migrants and refugees. While the Trump administration has made efforts toward addressing this crisis, I am con-

cerned that this amount does not meet the magnitude of the crisis. What is your assessment of the amount needed to meet the current needs of countries like Colombia, where the capacity of schools and hospitals are overwhelmed by the influx of Venezuelan refugees?

Answer. The nearly 1.8 million Venezuelan refugees currently sheltering in Colombia do create a significant challenge for the Colombian Government, especially in terms of resources and social services. To assist, the U.S. Government has contributed over $267 million in health and humanitarian assistance and over $77 million in development and economic assistance since FY 2017, making Colombia the largest regional recipient of assistance for the Venezuela response. This funding complements Colombia's own existing efforts to assist Venezuelan refugees and the communities that host them. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage other donors to contribute more assistance to Colombia and other host countries to address the Venezuelan regional crisis.

Question. While I understand that the current priority focuses on eradication, given the alarming levels of coca cultivation we continue to see in Colombia, we cannot expect to achieve long-term success without a balanced approach, such as emphasis on money laundering and financial crimes. If confirmed, what steps would you take to advocate for a more comprehensive approach to our counternarcotics strategy in Colombia?

Answer. I understand the United States continues to work with Colombia on a comprehensive approach to counternarcotics, rural development, and rural security, with the goal of reducing coca cultivation and cocaine production to half of 2017 levels by the end of 2023. We believe that the most effective way to reach this joint goal is through an integrated approach that includes manual eradication, alternative development, new technologies, and targeted aerial eradication. We need to continue bolstering Colombia's investigatory capabilities to address international money laundering and financial crimes. If confirmed, I will work with partners including the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) to ensure that the United States deploys all possible tools to assist Colombia.

Question. While there has been bipartisan support for elements of the administration's approach in Venezuela—including through my VERDAD Act, which was signed into law last year—progress remains limited. The Maduro regime is taking steps to hold fraudulent legislative elections later this year, packing the electoral counsel and dismantling opposition parties. If Maduro—with the support of the Cuban regime and Putin's Russia—continues undeterred, he will be poised to lock down a criminal dictatorship for years to come. Given the scope of Venezuela's humanitarian crisis, this result would be disastrous. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to ensure that a free, fair, transparent and democratic electoral process takes place in Venezuela this year, one in which leaders from the interim government and the political opposition are able to successfully compete?

Answer. The Maduro regime's announcement of new parliamentary elections on December 6 is a continuation of his efforts to undermine democracy in Venezuela. If confirmed, I will continue to engage robustly with our partners in the international community to ensure we maintain pressure on the illegitimate Maduro regime and support for Venezuela's democratic actors. A centerpiece of this effort will be securing Venezuelan and international support for the Democratic Transition Framework for Venezuela. This initiative proposes to establish a broadly acceptable transitional government to oversee free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections. It shows those in the Maduro camp that he is the obstacle to the resolution o the crisis on terms acceptable to them, including lifting sanctions. At the same time, I anticipate continuing to deploy sanctions to force the Maduro regime to engage in a political solution, as well as ensure the Department proactively identifies and targets new sources of regime income, such as illicit gold.

Question. While there is broad bipartisan support for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela, U.S. efforts and those by our diplomatic partners have not achieved our desired goal. What do you think the Trump administration could have done differently in the last 18 months in order to increase our overall chance for success?

Answer. Venezuela remains in a deep crisis under the illegitimate regime of Maduro. Dismantling the dictatorial regime's grip on the country is difficult. Maduro's deceit in pretending to enter into negotiations, although he had no intention of making changes, made progress difficult for both the opposition and the international community. If confirmed, I will remain steadfast in our support for a political resolution to Venezuela's crisis. Our proposed Democratic Transition

Framework for Venezuela illustrates a path to establish a broadly acceptable transitional government to oversee free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections.

Question. While there is broad bipartisan support for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela, U.S. efforts and those by our diplomatic partners have not achieved our desired goal. What changes to you think the Trump administration could make in the next 6 months in order to increase our overall chance for success?

Answer. Venezuela's multifaceted crisis, compounded by the COVID–19 pandemic, is increasingly dire. Many in the illegitimate Maduro regime are beginning to realize they need to take advantage of the off-ramps offered before things get worse for them. If confirmed, I will continue our robust support of Venezuela's democratic actors as they seek to restore democracy to Venezuela. As I have at the OAS, I will support means by which the international community and Venezuelan actors can pressure Maduro to leave power and allow a broadly acceptable transition government to organize free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections as outlined in our Democratic Transition Framework.

Question. What is, in your opinion, the worst case scenario for Venezuela, and how does it affect U.S. national security interest?

Answer. The worst outcome would be that Venezuela continues to deteriorate and democracy, economic stability, and rule of law are not peacefully restored in Venezuela. The illegitimate Maduro regime has destroyed Venezuela's institutions, economy and infrastructure through his abuse of state power and by welcoming malign support from outside nations, including Cuba, Russia, Iran, and China. Depending on the nature of such support, these partnerships may also end up compromising U.S. national security. These nations enable his reign of terror to continue through additional financial support. The regime's various tactics of public intimidation, including torture, are enabling a despot at the expense of the Venezuelan people. The illegitimate Maduro regime harbors traffickers and other transnational criminal organizations as well as providing a foothold in the hemisphere to Russia and other malign actors. In addition, millions of fleeing Venezuela are overburdening neighboring countries and threaten regional security.

Question. With regards to Cuba's meddling in Venezuela, can you outline your strategy to increase the cost to Havana of propping up Maduro's repressive apparatus and thwarting the international pressure being applied by the international community?

Answer. The Department and White House have condemned Cuban interference in Venezuela and if confirmed, I would encourage our partners to do the same. Among financial and travel restrictions on Cuban individuals and/or entities supporting the illegitimate Maduro regime, the U.S. Government has designated firms, vessels, and state-owned enterprises participating in the transport of Venezuelan oil to Cuba, giving away a natural resource at the expense of the Venezuelan people. If confirmed, I would also seek additional opportunities to implement appropriate measures in connection with Cuban individuals and/or entities responsible for funding or otherwise enabling the Maduro regime.

Question. With regards to Russia's meddling in Venezuela, can you outline your strategy to increase the cost to Moscow of propping up Maduro's repressive apparatus and thwarting the international pressure being applied by the international community?

Answer. The Department and White House have condemned Russian interference in Venezuela and I would encourage our partners to do the same. Moreover, the U.S. Government has targeted firms, vessels, and state-owned enterprises engaging in transactions involving Venezuelan oil, including Rosneft Trading SA, to indicate that we no longer are merely messaging on Russia's interference, we are taking action. If confirmed, I would seek additional opportunities to implement appropriate measures in connection with Russian individuals and/or entities responsible for funding or otherwise enabling the illegitimate Maduro regime.

Question. In July 2018, the House of Representatives passed legislation (HR.549) that would designate Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Both the House legislation and my bill (S.636) have not advanced in the U.S. Senate due to Republican objections. If confirmed, would you advocate that Republican Senators support approval of S.636 or HR.549?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with Congress and DHS, as appropriate, on issues related to TPS.

Question. Regardless of Congressional action, the Trump administration has all of the authority it needs to designate Venezuela for TPS. What is your under-

standing of why the Trump administration has chosen not to exercise its authority and designate Venezuela for TPS?

Answer. The decision on whether to designate a country for TPS is made by the Secretary of Homeland Security.I understand that, as part of the decision process, the Secretary of Homeland Security consults with other agencies. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure the Secretary of State has the information he needs to properly inform the DHS decision, as appropriate.

Question. While the ultimate decision to designate a country for TPS lies with DHS, the State Department plays an active role in the interagency decision making process. If confirmed, would you advocate, on behalf of the State Department, that the Trump administration designate Venezuela for TPS?

Answer. I understand that, as part of the decision process to designate a country for TPS, the Secretary of Homeland Security consults with other agencies.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Secretary of State has the information he needs to properly inform the DHS decision, as appropriate.

Question. More than 5 million Venezuelans have fled to countries across Latin America and the Caribbean. Colombia, a U.S. ally, hosts 1.8 million Venezuelans. Peru hosts over 830,000 Venezuelans. Here in the United States, an estimated 200,000 Venezuelan nationals would benefit from TPS according to the Congressional Budget Office. What signal does it send to our partners in Latin America and the Caribbean that are currently hosting the vast majority of Venezuelan refugees and migrants that the U.S. is unable to provide TPS to 200,000 Venezuelans currently in the United States?

Answer. I understand that, as part of the decision process to designate a country for TPS, the Secretary of Homeland Security consults with other agencies. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Secretary of State has the information he needs to properly inform the DHS decision, as appropriate.

If confirmed, I will also work with my colleagues at the appropriate agencies to coordinate our response to the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, including boosting affected countries' long-term capacity to respond to the influx of Venezuelans, strengthening and expanding social services, providing technical support to national migration authorities, and creating new economic opportunities in communities hosting Venezuelans..

Question. During your confirmation hearing, you stated that "individuals should not be returned to Venezuela in the current circumstances." However, you did not express support for providing Venezuelans in the U.S. with TPS. Please explain why you support a policy that leaves Venezuelans in the U.S. without protections, legal status, or the eligibility to receive work authorization so that they can support themselves and their families?

Answer. The Department of State is focused on ending the crisis and getting Venezuela back on the road to stability for the benefit of all Venezuelans.

The United States is the largest donor to relief efforts for the Venezuela humanitarian crisis. This assistance provides life-saving aid and critical basic services—including shelter for the most vulnerable, emergency food and health assistance, safe drinking water, protection from violence and exploitation, and work and education opportunities—throughout the region to those who have fled repression and chaos in Venezuela.

Question. The exodus of 5.2 million Venezuelans to countries across Latin America and the Caribbean is now the source of the second largest displacement crisis in the world—second only to Syria. Although the United States is the largest donor in support of the vast humanitarian needs resulting from the Venezuela crisis, the majority of humanitarian needs remain unmet, and these needs continue to increase as the COVID–19 pandemic surges across the region. If confirmed, what actions will you take to increase humanitarian assistance and protection for Venezuelans?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the provision of additional U.S. humanitarian assistance and support to protection programs for Venezuelans—wherever they may be. I will also continue bilateral and multilateral engagement with other prospective donors to encourage greater burden-sharing and increased international contributions. To date, the United States has provided more than $856 million in humanitarian and development assistance to support programs inside Venezuela and across 16 neighboring countries. In addition to COVID–19 aid, the United States is providing $13.7 million in humanitarian funding to help Venezuela and $20.6 million to help Colombia, which hosts nearly 1.8 million Venezuelan refugees.

Question. If confirmed, what strategy will you pursue to increase access for humanitarian organizations inside Venezuela? Please be specific.

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with my USAID colleagues to keep pressing the United Nations, as well as the illegitimate Maduro regime, for increased humanitarian aid access for Venezuelans in need. The humanitarian community has been attempting to coordinate with the illegitimate Maduro regime for a significant time period to facilitate a mechanism for registration of international humanitarian organizations and temporary entry as international entities, but so far nothing has come to fruition. I will press the U.N. to be more forceful in this regard. In the meantime, humanitarian organizations of all kinds are at times able to register locally and gain access this way, but local registration remains an arduous process.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to avoid politicization of U.S. humanitarian assistance in the Venezuela context? What policy will you pursue on branding of U.S. humanitarian assistance? Please be specific.

Answer. If confirmed, I will honor and uphold the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence that guide our operations and assistance in the Venezuela context. I look forward to working with my USG humanitarian assistance colleagues, such as in USAID and PRM, on the branding of U.S. humanitarian assistance but to date, I understand due to security concerns and the protection and wellbeing of our implementers, USG-origin aid is unbranded.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to make public statements clarifying the Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control's guidance on U.S. sanctions related to Venezuela to ensure these sanctions do not impede humanitarian organizations?

Answer. U.S. policy is to ensure the Venezuelan people have access to food and medicines, which is why the United States maintains broad exemptions and authorizations under its Venezuela sanctions program that allow for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the commercial sale and export of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, and medical devices, to Venezuela. We will continue to seek opportunities to highlight these exemptions and authorizations and work with stakeholders, including international organizations, foreign companies, and financial entities, to prevent over compliance.

Question. If confirmed, what specific actions will you take to significantly increase humanitarian and development support for the needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants by other donors?

Answer. In order to increase humanitarian and development support for Venezuelan refugees by other donors, if confirmed, I will seek to engage in the diplomatic and multilateral context through existing consultative mechanisms, including the Quito Process and UN-sponsored donor conferences, to enable continued progress on host-countries' economic and social development agendas and to shore up necessary resources to fill gaps. Incorporating Venezuelan refugee populations into development programs is key to the successful integration of these populations into local communities and economies.

Question. While the ultimate decision to designate a country for TPS lies with DHS, the State Department plays an active role in the interagency decision making process. If confirmed, would you advocate, on behalf of the State Department, that the Trump administration designate Venezuela for TPS?

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Question. If confirmed, will you prioritize the integration of Venezuelan refugees into U.S. development programs for host countries?

Answer. I support a combined humanitarian and development approach to simultaneously improve the conditions of Venezuelan refugees and migrants and enable continued progress on host-countries' economic and social development agendas. I will work to advance the integration of Venezuelans into development programs, which can minimize the strains on public services, infrastructure, social cohesion, and the broader economy that may result from hosting large numbers of Venezuelans, and to ensure that strengthened coherence between humanitarian and development actors is a top priority in the U.S. response to the Venezuela regional crisis.

Question. If confirmed, will you advocate for U.S. funding of the World Bank's Global Concessional Financing Facility projects in support of refugees and host communities in Colombia and Ecuador?

Answer. Yes. I understand the Department favors supporting Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF) projects that benefit both refugees and their hosting communities, and I look forward to supporting the Department's objectives. I understand the Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration is working to support a GCFF housing project in Colombia with $25 million of ESF funds from the FY 2019 appropriation and I look forward to working with them, if confirmed.

Question. Last year, the Moreno Government reached initial agreement on a $4 billion IMF package, which would be in addition to $6 billion in support from the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, and other financial institutions. These funds will help Ecuador create conditions for a more inclusive economy, protect vulnerable sectors of the population, and increase competitiveness. It is clear that the COVID–19 pandemic will further exacerbate the damage to an already weak economy and magnify the country's need for economic relief. What does the magnitude of this financial package say about the scope of the economic challenges that President Moreno inherited from his predecessor?

Answer. Ecuadoran President Lenin Moreno inherited challenging economic problems from his predecessor. President Moreno has set Ecuador on a more democratic, market oriented path for the long term benefit of the Ecuadoran people. The United States has supported Ecuador and increased bilateral cooperation across various issues of mutual interest to increase economic growth. The United States and Ecuador resumed active engagement on trade issues with the reactivation of the bilateral Trade and Investment Council in November 2018 after a nine-year lapse. If confirmed, I will work closely with Treasury and international institutions in support of Ecuador.

Question. What is your assessment of the Moreno Government's ability to successfully manage and implement this major financial package, in light of the COVID–19 pandemic and as the country prepares to hold presidential elections in early 2021?

Answer. The Moreno administration is working to meet its responsibilities to the Ecuadoran people and its creditors despite the fierce economic impact of COVID–

19. My assessment is that the Government faces huge challenges created by the previous regime and is doing a very professional job of managing them in negotiating and implementing a financial package. In addition, the Department of State and interagency partners continue to support Ecuador during health and economic challenges. The Department of State and USAID have provided nearly $14 million in COVID-related assistance to strengthen Ecuador's health system, provide emergency food relief, technical assistance and training, and humanitarian assistance to support refugees and host communities. USAID has also delivered 50 ventilators at a time of critical need, saving lives and helping Ecuador respond to the COVID–19 pandemic.

Question. Venezuela's widespread humanitarian crisis has prompted more than 5 million Venezuelan migrants to flee their country and, in turn, has placed significant strain on neighboring countries. Ecuador has received over 300,000 Venezuelan migrants, and hundreds of thousands more have passed through the country during the last two years in transit to other countries. What is your assessment of Ecuador's ability to manage this massive influx of Venezuelan refugees?

Answer. Ecuador hosts nearly 363,000 Venezuelans and more than 69,000 (mostly Colombian) registered refugees, straining social and health services. Despite severe economic difficulties, President Moreno continues to be supportive of Venezuelan refugees remaining in and transiting through Ecuador. Since 2017, the United States has contributed nearly $81 million in humanitarian aid to assist with emergency response efforts to address the influx of Venezuelans. The Department's programming continues to support beneficiaries through cash-based assistance and is exploring how to provide food assistance and other support to shelters. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Ecuadorans as we confront this regional crisis.

Question. If confirmed, what type of cooperation with the Moreno Government would you prioritize in order to support their efforts to address the Venezuelan migration crisis and uphold their international commitments?

Answer. I understand that as of August 2019, Ecuador began requiring a humanitarian visa for Venezuelans, and the United States continues to engage on protection for and assistance to vulnerable populations. Additionally, Venezuelans are facing acute challenges in meeting critical needs since Ecuador instituted the March 11, 2020, state of emergency restricting movement and large gatherings to fight COVID–19. PRM programming continues to support refugees and migrants remotely through cash-based assistance and is exploring how to provide food assistance as well as other material support to shelters. PRM is also re-programming existing NGO funding to assist in providing lodging and food assistance for the most vulnerable Venezuelans.

Question. Ecuador continues to struggle with high levels of corruption. Earlier this year, former President Rafael Correa was among 20 people, including his vice president, Jorge Glas, accused and convicted of using their public office to favor certain contracts in exchange for large amounts of money. Most recently, the U.S. Department of Justice indicted two Ecuadorian executives—residents of Miami, Florida—due to their links to Ecuador's state-owned petroleum company Petro-Ecuador and several money laundering and other Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations. If confirmed, what steps would you take to strengthen transparency and accountability efforts in the region and specifically in Ecuador?

Answer. Ecuadoran President Lenin Moreno has made fighting corruption one of his top priorities and has supported prosecuting top government officials implicated in corrupt acts. If confirmed, I will support the Department of State's cooperation with Ecuador on anti-corruption efforts. For example, the Department has ongoing Fiscal Transparency Innovation Fund projects worth $1.5 million focused on increasing transparent management of public funds. If confirmed, I will also support increased cooperation on anti-money laundering efforts to limit the movement of illicit proceeds from corrupt activities.

Question. Since President Moreno took office in May 2017, Ecuador has increased its cooperation with the U.S. Government on counternarcotics efforts, resulting in multiple seizures at sea and the interdiction of tons of cocaine heading to the US. The U.S. and Ecuador have also expanded law enforcement and security cooperation efforts, including the Ecuadorian Government's invitation by the for the United States to reestablish an Office of Security Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Quito and the visit of USNS Comfort to Ecuador in October of last year. If confirmed, what next steps would you look to take with the aim of further deepening security cooperation with Ecuador?

Answer. Ecuador faces growing threats from narcotrafficking and transnational crime. If confirmed, I will collaborate with other bureaus in the Department of State and with our interagency partners on increasing security cooperation with Ecuador. The United States Government is working closely with Ecuadoran authorities to strengthen law enforcement and justice sector capacities. INL, OSC, DHS, and DEA programing directly enable Ecuadoran efforts to detect and interdict cocaine shipments, enhance information sharing, facilitate investigations and prosecutions of criminal cases, improve border and port security, and advance U.S. counternarcotics goals in the region. If confirmed, I will continue support for this successful work.

Question. Weak rule of law is, by most experts' estimation, the single most pressing issue in Latin America and the Caribbean. In your estimation, what role should the U.S. Government play in strengthening the rule of law and combating corruption in the hemisphere?

Answer. The United States should play a leading role in strengthening the rule of law and combating corruption in the hemisphere. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging through mechanisms such as the Open Government Partnership and the Summit of the Americas process to highlight the importance and ways of combatting corruption.

Question. Will you call out authoritarian governments on the right and left? What tools will you use to respond to authoritarian governments?

Answer. If confirmed, yes, I will call out authoritarian governments on the right and left. Some of the tools available to do that are the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, press statements, and social media. Tools available to make clear that there are consequences for authoritarian behavior include, where applicable, imposition of visa restrictions and economic sanctions under various legal authorities, such as Executive Order 13818, which implements the Global Magnitsky Act.

Question. Will you ensure that our Embassy in Ottawa and consulates across Canada prioritize the return of ballots as an essential service in order to ensure that ballots are returned to voters' home states in a timely manner?

Answer. The U.S. Department of State is committed to providing voting information and assistance to U.S. citizens in Ottawa at our Embassy and Consulates across Canada. The health and safety of U.S. citizens and our staff are our primary concerns. We have recently sent guidance to our posts to ensure they provide clear messaging that voters may return their voted ballots via international mail, private commercial courier services such as FedEx or DHL, or by drop off at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate that is at or above Phase 1 in the Diplomacy Strong reopening process.

Question. Will you commit that our missions across Canada will provide public information to eligible U.S voters on how to securely and safely cast their ballots during a pandemic?

Answer. The Department is providing and will continue to provide U.S. citizens in Canada and across the globe with the information they need to vote.

Question. If consular services are still curtailed in the fall, will the return of ballots be prioritized as an essential service?

Answer. The Department will provide ballot return services for U. S. citizens at U.S. embassies and consulates that are at or above Phase 1 of the Diplomacy Strong reopening process. We will provide guidance for ballot return via private courier service, or international mail to U.S. citizens if posts remain at Phase 0. We will continue to monitor the situation as it progresses worldwide and make adjustments to our policy, if warranted.

Question. If additional consular officers are needed to ensure the ballots of overseas voters in Latin America and the Caribbean can be safely and securely returned, is there a plan to shift resources to this vital American Citizen Service?

Answer. Our U.S. embassies and consulates will allocate the personnel necessary to assist with ballot return at our posts that are at or above Phase 1 of our reopening process.

Question. Will you issue guidance to Embassies on procedures for receiving and returning ballots during the pandemic? Will you put new procedures in place that will allow "no contact" ballot drop-offs at all embassies and consulates to reduce potential exposure to the coronavirus?

Answer. The situation at each post is different, and procedures for safely receiving and returning ballots will be provided to our U.S. citizens on the websites of all of

our overseas posts. Posts that are at or above Phase 1 of our reopening process will provide a drop box or a face-to-face means to receive ballots.

Question. Will you advise U.S. Embassies and Consulates in Latin America and the Caribbean to plan voter education or information campaigns to advise eligible U.S. voters living overseas on how to securely and safely cast their ballots in a timely fashion, the steps their embassy or consulate is taking to ensure their right to vote remains upheld, and information on how the Department is working to ensure their ballot is being forwarded to their home state even if coronavirus restrictions remain in place?

Answer. The Department is and will continue to provide U.S. citizens across the globe with the information they need to vote. All posts at or above Phase 1 of our reopening process will be provided a drop box or face-to-face option to return their completed ballots. U.S. citizens in countries where posts remain at Phase 0 will be provided guidance on returning their ballots.

Question. Since the election of President Trump, the State Department has largely refused to show up at hearings of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and has questioned the commission's authority to even hear cases related to the United States. What is your opinion of whether or not the IACHR has authority to hear cases related to the United States?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), including through robust financial support. The United States continues to engage with and appear before the IACHR, and I agree that the IACHR has the authority to engage on certain petitions related to the United States. As part of this ongoing engagement, the United States has taken the position that it reserves its right to object to the IACHR's competence to opine on specific matters.

Question. What guidance did you personally provide to U.S. Government colleagues regarding whether U.S. officials should attend IACHR hearing related to the United States?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), including financial support. The United States has continued to engage with and appear before the IACHR, and if confirmed, I will continue to support U.S. officials attending appropriate IACHR hearings and other events related to the United States. I have also underscored to the IACHR our ongoing efforts to attend IACHR sessions, while bearing in mind the challenges of engaging extensively on subjects which are often complex, fast-changing, the subject of domestic litigation or congressional consideration, or of great political sensitivity.

Question. Despite the Trump administration's position regarding IACHR cases related to the United States, the Inter-American system has been instrumental in denouncing human rights abuses in Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, findings often cited by the Trump administration officials. What is your personal assessment of the IACHR's work related to Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela?

Answer. The reporting of the IACHR has been extremely helpful in shedding light on the human rights violations and abuses committed in Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua and giving a voice to the victims. Even instances where the IACHR team has been denied entry, such as to Venezuela in February, help to maintain an international focus on the fact that violations and abuses continue. The petition-based efforts of the IACHR help to ensure that governments are held accountable, thereby providing avenues for justice on the part of victims.

Question. If confirmed, what commitment can you make that you will fight against efforts by U.S. lawmakers to tarnish the IACHR's legitimacy?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), including through financial support that enjoys bipartisan Congressional support. The IACHR remains an important part of the Inter-American system for the protection and promotion of human rights, and contributes to broader OAS efforts related to the collective defense of democracy. If confirmed, I plan to continue the United States' general support of the IACHR. I look forward to advancing efforts to protect the autonomy, independence, and relevance of the IACHR.

Question. If confirmed, what commitment can you make that you will push to restore U.S. engagement with the IACHR and the inter-American system more broadly, including in regard to cases related to the United States?

Answer. The United States strongly supports the work and programming of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), including through financial support. The IACHR is an important part of the Inter-American system for the promotion and protection of human rights, and contributes to broader OAS efforts related to democratic governance. If confirmed, I plan to continue United States engagement with the IACHR, including on matters related to the United States. I recognize the utility of the U.S. presence in IACHR hearings, and the Commission has similarly acknowledged the importance of U.S. viewpoints relative to its work in the region.

Question. Latin America is currently the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic. Last week, Latin America overtook North America in the number of fatalities. In April, the IMF predicted economies in Latin America and the Caribbean would contract by 4.2%. A few weeks ago, however, they revised that prediction, more than doubling it to an estimated 9.4% contraction region-wide for 2020. The health, political, and economic impacts will be severe with incredible consequences for migration, political stability, poverty, corruption, and civil liberties. Our geographic proximity will demand that our public health approach be in sync with our neighbors', and so too will our economic recovery require coordination with theirs. How will you work with countries in the region to coordinate a public health approach?

Answer. The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have provided nearly $120 million in supplemental and humanitarian-assistance funds to support the response to COVID–19 in Latin America and the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will continue to work with and support the U.S. Government's efforts to share and coordinate best practices with both governments and civil society to manage all aspects of the pandemic, including to control infections in health facilities, improve patient care, and undertake sound public-health measures, along with support through technical assistance, medical equipment, health supplies, and funding.

Question. Various estimates point to the calamitous effect of COVID–19 in Latin America. These are focused primarily on the economic and social consequences. What social and economic consequences to expect in Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of the COVID–19 pandemic?

Answer. The economic and social consequences of COVID–19 in Latin America have been severe. Latin America and the Caribbean are seeing the region's worst recession on record, with an economic contraction nearly twice the world average. The World Bank and IMF estimate the region's economies will shrink by 7.2 to 9.8 percent in 2020, the region's worst recession on record and nearly double the forecasted 4.9 percent global contraction. The IMF and World Bank predict a modest recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2021, but this recovery may be marred by debt crises, and pension system shortfalls. If confirmed, I will work with our partners in the region to confront this crisis.

Question. Please describe in detail the nature of the programs that you think need to be put in place to strengthen United States leadership during the COVID–19 pandemic and post-pandemic reconstruction period, and ensure that non-hemispheric actors, such as the People's Republic of China, are not seen as a partner of choice.

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Department's multi-pronged strategy for countering the malign aspects of China's engagement and ensuring the United States remains the preferred partner for the region. I will work with U.S. agencies and the private sector to provide alternatives to unfair and opaque economic practices and will promote solutions rooted in transparency and the rule of law, such as those offered by the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and the Growth in the Americas/America Crece initiative. I will also discourage partners from adopting digital infrastructure solutions involving untrusted vendors such as Huawei.

Question. Due to the COVID–19 pandemic, there likely will be political consequences as a result of the projected economic downturn in the region. Additionally, as a result of the increase in poverty levels and reduction of foreign direct investment, can you please outline the main areas of political concerns of the Trump administration in the region and your plans to address these concerns in order to avoid extreme swings that might endanger democracy or deepen economic pain?

Answer. Even after the region addresses the immediate challenge of confronting the COVID–19 pandemic, the economic recovery will be long and fraught with political and social challenges. I believe strongly that governments that maintain a strong commitment to democracy, human rights, and an open, transparent conversa-

tion with the public will overcome the challenges. And those who depart from the hemisphere's tradition of democracy will face the consequences as we have seen in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

If confirmed, I will continue to support U.S. efforts at international financial institutions to promote a speedy economic recovery and manage the political and social risks in the process.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I am proud of all my work defending democracy and human rights throughout the Americas, especially while serving in my capacity as Permanent Representative at the OAS.

I am particularly pleased with our efforts to restore and revitalize the OAS' leadership role in the promotion and defense of democracy and human rights, and standing up for the core values it is meant to uphold. I have supported and attended civil society forums throughout the Americas over the last two years, including those organized and sponsored by our Mission to the OAS, as well as human rights hearings and forums at the IACHR, at the Summit of the Americas, and at OAS General Assemblies.

I am also proud of my work as Chairman of the OAS LGBTI core group, which was recognized for its efforts during my chairmanship by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). I am particularly proud of my human rights work in Nicaragua. In May of 2018, shortly after the Nicaraguan uprising, I traveled to Nicaragua and met with the victims of the Ortega regime.

I also met and supported victims of the Ortega regime in Washington, and in El Salvador during the visit of the Special OAS High Commission on Nicaragua, which was organized and led by the U.S. Mission. In addition to sponsoring various OAS Special Permanent Council sessions, the U.S. Mission has sponsored, drafted, and passed multiple resolutions regarding human rights abuses and the humanitarian situations in Venezuela and Nicaragua. I have also attended hearings at the IACHR regarding human rights abuses by the Ortega regime, including during sessions held in Colorado, and supported Nicaraguan civil society at the United Nations Security Council. The United Nations Security Council meeting was made possible due to our Mission's support for the IACHR's investigatory work in Nicaragua, as well as multiple U.S.-supported resolutions condemning the violations of human rights in Nicaragua invoking Article 54 of the United Nations' Charter and the OAS' Inter-American Democratic Charter.

The United States strongly supports the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), including through financial support. The IACHR is an important part of the Inter-American system for the promotion and protection of human rights, and contributes to broader OAS efforts related to democratic governance. If confirmed, I pledge to continue United States engagement with the IACHR, including on matters related to the United States. I recognize the utility of the U.S. presence in IACHR hearings, and the Commission has similarly acknowledged the importance of U.S. viewpoints relative to its work in the region.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in the Western Hemisphere? What are potential obstacles to addressing those issues?

Answer. The persistence of authoritarian regimes in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua is the source of the most glaring human rights issues in the Western Hemisphere, including reports of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, political prisoners, lack of respect for the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, including for members of the press, and a lack of genuinely free and fair elections. Elsewhere in the Hemisphere, there are threats and violence against journalists that go unpunished, undermining freedom of the press; threats to freedom of assembly and association as human rights defenders, civil society and indigenous community leaders are killed in retaliatory attacks that too often go unpunished; direct limits to press freedom in some cases; unlawful killings and reports of torture by security forces in some countries; weak institutions and rampant corruption, including in the judiciary, which encourages impunity.

A lack of political will to address the problems is a significant obstacle to addressing the issues. In some countries, civil society is relatively underdeveloped or is actively threatened by governments or criminal groups.

Question. How will you ensure that the U.S. becomes more involved in protecting human rights defenders and strengthening the mechanisms that prosecute those who threaten them?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that our embassies are aware that the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor's global rapid response and emergency assistance mechanisms are available tools to support human rights defenders or members of civil society in real-time, who are under threat or attack for their work. If confirmed, I will also ensure that my bureau and our embassies engage host governments on the importance of protecting human rights defenders, and of strengthening impartial justice systems in order to prosecute those responsible for attacks.

Question. If confirmed, how would the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs under your leadership work with the Colombian Government to ensure the protection of human rights defenders?

Answer. If confirmed, I would engage with the Colombian Government and its National Protection Unit to work to ensure that these crucial individuals are being provided the best possible protection in the immediate turn. Of equal importance, if confirmed, I will engage with the Colombian Government and civil society to support and encourage Colombia's efforts to investigate and prosecute those responsible for attacks on human rights defenders, and to deter future violence against them. Colombia's challenge is to establish state presence to provide security services, education, infrastructure, local governance, and victims' assistance to deny criminal groups a foothold. U.S. foreign assistance, as well as law enforcement, military, intelligence, and judicial cooperation will all continue to play a role in this effort.

Question. How would you define human rights? Are there any rights frequently referred to as "human rights" that you believe should not be priorities for U.S. international engagement?

Answer. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays out the human rights that are priorities for U.S. international engagement.

Question. Last year, in a meeting with LGBTI rights advocates, you reportedly used air quotes whenever you referred to "human rights." If this occurred, what were those air quotes meant to signify? Do you believe that issues impacting LGBTI populations are human rights issues?

Answer. I do not recall ever using air quotes when referring to human rights. I have also checked with members of my staff which handle the relevant policy portfolios and would have been present at said meeting with the Equal Rights Coalition, and they do not recall me using air quotes. I believe issues impacting LGBTI persons' rights are human rights issues and should be recognized and addressed as such. Throughout my tenure at the OAS, I have worked to promote equality under the law, inalienable rights, and an environment that is free from discrimination and violence for the LGBTI community. This has been represented by continued U.S. engagement in the OAS LGBTI Core Group, and our co-sponsorship of the annual OAS General Assembly text on LGBTI rights.

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will encourage promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized exit survey. I will promote and encourage all employees to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors under your direction at the State Department are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing men-

toring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will support the requirement of all hiring managers to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have financial interests in any country in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, including a foreign stock index fund, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. Additionally, aside from my financials interest in the United States, my father has financial interests in Mexico and Argentina. My father owns four condominiums in Mexico and one condominium in Argentina. These properties are used as vacation rentals. I am committed following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. In your view, how much should domestic immigration priorities influence the State Department's approach to Latin America?

Answer. In my view, bilateral and regional migration cooperation play an important role in U.S. foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere, as it impacts both our mutual security and prosperity. As such, domestic immigration priorities should play a role in influencing the Department's approach to the region. And I would note our approach to the region in terms of promoting democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, economic prosperity and opportunity, and security all influence our domestic immigration situation.

Question. How do you plan to build trust and foster cooperation with Mexico and Central America in light of harsh U.S. immigration policies and the deportation of migrants with coronavirus?

Answer. The United States has strong ties and cooperation with Mexico and Central America on a wide range of issues, including migration cooperation. If confirmed, I would continue to strengthen our partnerships to foster enhanced cooperation in the region.

Question. The U.S. signed Asylum Cooperative Agreements with Northern Triangle countries to accept migrants for the United States, despite these countries' lack of capacity to process asylum seekers or to keep them safe. Is the Department tracking outcomes for these migrants?

Answer. Implementation of the U.S.-Guatemala Asylum Cooperative Agreement (ACA) has been paused since mid-March due to the COVID–19 pandemic. Likewise, implementation of the U.S.-Honduras ACA has yet to begin due to COVID–19. The El Salvador ACA has not yet entered into force. From the time the Guatemala ACA entered into force on November 15, 2019, until transfers were paused in mid-March, the Department of Homeland Security transferred 948 Salvadoran and Honduran nationals to Guatemala. The Department is tracking outcomes through our international organization partners for those who have applied for asylum and those who have requested assisted voluntary return.

Question. How many migrants have been killed or assaulted after being deported from the U.S.?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security deports hundreds of thousands of individuals to their home countries every year. The Department does not track individual cases. USAID, through the International Organization for Migration (IOM), assists El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras with safe reception and reintegration of nationals returned to these countries.

Question. How can we expect countries that are unable to care for their own citizens to provide economic and physical security for asylum seekers?

Answer. El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras committed to strengthening their asylum systems based on their commitments under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (MIRPS). Each government also developed a national action plan under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. The Department also continues to provide assistance to improve economic, security, and governance conditions. Under U.S. law, before an Asylum Cooperative Agreement can enter into force, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) must determine that individuals transferred from the United States will have access to full and fair asylum procedures or equivalent temporary protection in the receiving country. Prior to transfer, DHS and DOJ must also determine that the individual's life or freedom would not be threatened in the receiving country on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. I understand DHS and DOJ have made these determinations for Guatemala and Honduras.

Question. If conditions in their home countries have not changed and migrants are sent back to the region from which they fled, what makes the Department think that they will not leave to seek asylum in the U.S. again?

Answer. The Asylum Cooperative Agreements allow the United States to transfer individuals who express an intent or interest in seeking protection in the United States to a partner country where DHS and DOJ have determined they will have the opportunity to file a protection claim with that government.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to work with Northern Triangle countries to improve protections for returned migrants?

Answer. As a cooperating country to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (MIRPS), the United States provides humanitarian aid and capacity building support through our international organization partners in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Although independent of the agreements themselves, this assistance is complementary to the Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs) and supports the strategic objectives of this regional framework and the goals of these member countries. This assistance supports asylum capacity and enhancing protection resources available in these countries to asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrants, including ACA transferees who request protection or wish to return to their home countries.

Question. Since the mandate of the UN-back International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) was not renewed, there has been increasing impunity and corruption in the country's judicial system. What role, if any, should the U.S. play in ensuring judges are selected and appointed fairly in Guatemala?

Answer. The Department has strongly supported the rule of law in Guatemala. A key element to any rule of law-based system is promotion of an impartial and independent judiciary, chosen through an open and transparent selection process. If confirmed, I will remain actively engaged on this issue, through public messaging and directly with Guatemalan interlocutors, as well as through support for our programs which help to strengthen Guatemala's institutions, including Guatemala's independent judiciary. If confirmed, I would also offer continued support for efforts to improve transparency in Guatemala's judicial selection process and encourage the merit-based appointment of qualified judges who demonstrate the integrity needed to uphold the rule of law.

Question. What role do you believe the State Department can play in strengthening the rule of law in Guatemala, and in the region more broadly?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department and our U.S. Embassy to continue supporting the rule of law in Guatemala, including through our programs, which help to strengthen Guatemala's institutions. I will commit to remain actively engaged with Guatemalan Government and civil society interlocutors on these issues, and to publicly express support for judicial independence and the rule of law, including the importance of respect for Guatemala's constitution. I will also ensure the Department continues its efforts to support the rule of law throughout the region.

Question. Private sector involvement and contributions have been instrumental for increasing governments' health response capacity across the region. As the economic impact of the pandemic continues to worsen, in what ways can the State Department support the private sector in the Western Hemisphere in order to ensure

their capabilities and resources remain available to support post-COVID economic recovery?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's advocacy for a robust private sector role in the economic recovery from COVID–19, and that includes building on our efforts to keep open and to strengthen the supply chains so essential recovery. I will promote the U.S. Government's Growth in the Americas or América Crece initiative that helps spur growth across our hemisphere by promoting private investment, American investment, in energy and other infrastructure. The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) plays and essential role in that effort, and plans to leverage at least $12 billion in private investment in the region, with a particular focused on health sector investments through the Health and Prosperity Initiative it announced in May.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. As the United States' Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (OAS), did Secretary Pompeo consult with you before reducing funding to the OAS by invoking the Siljander amendment? If yes, can you explain the administration's legal justification for using the Siljander amendment in this context? If no, do you agree with the Secretary's decision to reduce funding for the Organization of American States based on his interpretation of the Siljander Amendment? Given your legal background, would you not agree that the administration's actions to force countries at the United Nations to accept the administration's position to limit women's access to health care and to not even utter the term "reproductive health" in international agreements and resolutions are also in violation of the Siljander amendment?

Answer. The State Department is committed to ensuring that OAS activities implemented with U.S. funds are consistent with U.S. law, including the Siljander Amendment. With this in mind, and in light of U.S. concerns regarding certain Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) activities related to abortion, Secretary Pompeo announced on March 26, 2019, following consultations with me and other senior officials, that the Department would include a provision in foreign assistance agreements with the OAS that explicitly prohibits the use of funds to lobby for or against abortion. To ensure this message was heard by the OAS, the Secretary announced the Department's reduction of the FY 2019 U.S. assessed contribution to the OAS by an amount equivalent to the U.S. proportional share of possible OAS costs associated with the abortion-related activities.

Question. Could you describe the prospects for success of that framework considering that after three years of the administration's policy on Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro is still in power and that country is experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world? In your opinion, what more can be done to bring about a peaceful transition of power in Venezuela?

Answer. Venezuela's multifaceted crisis, compounded by the COVID–19 pandemic, is increasingly dire. Many in the illegitimate Maduro regime are beginning to realize they need to take advantage of the off-ramps offered before things get worse for them. If confirmed, I will continue our robust support of Venezuela's democratic actors as they seek to restore democracy to Venezuela. As I have at the OAS, I will support means by which the international community and Venezuelan actors can pressure Maduro to leave power and allow a broadly acceptable transition government to organize free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections as outlined in our Democratic Transition Framework.

Question. Mr. Trujillo, have you been briefed on Turkey's illicit activities with the Maduro regime?

Answer. I have been briefed on Turkey's relationship with the illegitimate Maduro regime and the sanctions actions the administration has taken in response.

Question. Given the numerous actions the Department has taken against Venezuela and Russia, Cuba and Iran in connection to such illicit activities, does the one sanction related to Turkey suffice? Are there plans to further disrupt the corrupt Venezuela -Turkey links through the use of sanctions and other potential actions? What do you think should be done?

Answer. The State Department, working with our interagency partners, has taken strong steps against the illegitimate Maduro regime, particularly on the regime's

ability to trade gold. As we see evidence of inappropriate international links continuing, if confirmed, I will continue to work with our interagency partners to develop responses to break these links.

Question. If confirmed, will you push for Turkey's illicit activities in Venezuela to be addressed? How do you plan to do so?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to work with my State Department colleagues to engage diplomatically with Turkey on halting its inappropriate activities with Venezuela.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question. U.S. companies operating in the region continue to report unjustified delays or denials of tax refunds to which they are lawfully entitled. In some cases, such as El Salvador, progress has been made due in large part to the adoption of legislation clarifying that over-collected taxes can be applied as tax credits to other taxes. Other countries are now beginning to consider legislative proposals to the same effect. It is imperative governments in the region treat U.S. entities and affiliates operating in these countries in a fair and transparent manner, especially U.S. companies who are providing essential services during the COVID–19 pandemic. What will you do to encourage the Northern Triangle governments to promote a culture of tax compliance among their citizens and businesses, and what steps will you take to ensure that these governments fulfill the legal and financial obligations necessary to foster an attractive investment environment and stimulate economic growth, including the timely refund of excess taxes paid by U.S. companies?

Answer. A critical part of the Department of State's mission is the promotion of free and fair investment policies in support of U.S. jobs, economic growth, and prosperity. No U.S. company operating overseas should face delays or denials of tax refunds or other benefits to which they are lawfully entitled. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all governments in the region treat U.S. companies fairly. If confirmed, I will also work to encourage tax compliance and an attractive investment climate, working with the DFC.

Question. U.S. companies operating in the region continue to report unjustified delays or denials of tax refunds to which they are lawfully entitled. In some cases, such as El Salvador, progress has been made due in large part to the adoption of legislation clarifying that over-collected taxes can be applied as tax credits to other taxes. Other countries are now beginning to consider legislative proposals to the same effect. It is imperative governments in the region treat U.S. entities and affiliates operating in these countries in a fair and transparent manner, especially U.S. companies who are providing essential services during the COVID–19 pandemic. Will you commit to working with U.S. embassies in the Caribbean and Central America, as well as U.S. companies operating in the region, to advocate for legislation that helps to promote a secure, fair, efficient, and consistent process of law for U.S. businesses?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with U.S. embassies and U.S. companies to promote a secure, fair, efficient, and consistent environment for U.S. businesses.

Question. In accordance with appropriations laws from 2016 to the present, aid to Honduras is conditioned on the State Department certifying (among other things) that Honduras has taken reasonable steps towards resolving commercial disputes with U.S. citizens, including property claims such as expropriations. One of my constituents, Oscar Cerna, states that his long-standing claim against Honduras (regarding the taking of his CEMAR cement plant) remains unresolved. We understand there are several other U.S. citizens with outstanding claims.

- Will you commit to the enforcement of our appropriations laws regarding these U.S. citizens and to the prompt resolution of their outstanding claims and if confirmed, to having State Department staff provide my office an update on Oscar Cerna's case?

Answer. I appreciate and share your commitment to support U.S. investor and property interests in Honduras. I understand the Department has urged the Honduran Government at the highest levels to resolve outstanding disputes. Consistent with policy and principles of international law, we advocate for a fair, transparent, and expeditious resolution. The Department will continue to assist in resolution of

outstanding U.S. citizen claims. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to continue to track the status of Oscar Cerna's case and will provide your office an update.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. The United Nations has sounded the alarm on the "staggering number" of killings of human rights defenders since the 2016 peace agreement was signed, noting a "vicious and endemic cycle of violence and impunity." If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that this issue is addressed and that the Colombian Government adheres to its commitments to investigate and prosecute those responsible?

Answer. I share your concern over these killings, and I believe that protecting Colombia's social leaders and strengthening rule of law institutions are essential to the achievement of a just and lasting peace. If confirmed, I will engage with the Colombian Government and civil society to support and encourage Colombia's efforts to investigate and prosecute those responsible for these killings, and to deter future violence. Colombia's challenge is to establish state presence to provide security services, education, infrastructure, local governance, and victims' assistance to deny criminal groups a foothold. U.S. foreign assistance, as well as law enforcement, military, intelligence, and judicial cooperation will all continue to play a role in this effort.

Question. If confirmed, would you raise concerns about the feasibility of implementing Safe Third Country Agreements, also known as Asylum Cooperative Agreements, with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, given these countries' lack of capacity to process asylum claims and protect asylum seekers' safety?

Answer. If confirmed, as appropriate, I would discuss bilateral opportunities and challenges with our partners in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, including any implementation challenges related to the Asylum Cooperative Agreements.

Question. If confirmed, would you seek to ensure that sanctions against the Maduro regime do not exacerbate the collapse of Venezuela's economy and health system in the midst of the COVID–19 pandemic?

Answer. The economic crisis in Venezuela has been driven by the corruption, failed policies, and complete incompetence of Maduro since he came to power in 2013. Maduro has plundered the country's natural resources, and driven a once prosperous nation into economic ruin with an authoritarian rule and socialist economic policies, all while enriching himself, his family, and his closest supporters. U.S. sanctions on Maduro and his cronies have been targeted and designed to ensure the flow of humanitarian goods and services to the Venezuelan people.

Question. President Trump has indicated on multiple occasions that the United States has a potential "military solution" to Venezuela's political crisis. What goals would a military solution accomplish in Venezuela, and do you believe that a military solution is the most effective strategy for achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives in the country?

Answer. There has already been a military intervention in Venezuela—by the Cubans and by the Russians, who are there at the behest of an illegitimate Maduro with dictatorship goals. The United States remains resolute in supporting a peaceful transition to democracy and freedom in Venezuela. However, the Trump administration has made clear the United States will use every appropriate tool to end Maduro's hold on Venezuela, support the Venezuelan people's access to humanitarian assistance, and ensure a democratic transition in Venezuela. At the State Department, we are focused on deploying all of our diplomatic and economic options to support Interim President Guaido and the National Assembly in a peaceful transition to democracy and freedom in Venezuela.

Question. Since the Trump administration began reasserting strict controls over U.S. travel and trade to Cuba, most recently adding a Cuban subsidiary that processes remittances to the administration's list of restricted Cuban entities, the Cuban Communist Party has backpedaled on the country's short-lived economic and political liberalization that accompanied President Obama's temporary détente in U.S.-Cuban relations, including by passing a new constitution that consolidated the continuation of one-party rule, adopting measures to limit freedom of speech and expression online, and imposing new restrictions on private enterprise. Do you believe

strengthening and continuing the U.S. embargo supports the ostensible U.S. foreign policy goals of improving the lives and rights of the Cuban people and fostering Cuba's liberalization, and if so, on what grounds?

Answer. The Cuban regime's prime goal is maintaining Communist Party control. U.S. policy toward Cuba is articulated in NSPM-5, which describes our aims to support the Cuban people while holding the Cuban regime accountable for its human rights violations and abuses at home, as well as its destabilizing interference elsewhere in the region. This entails applying economic pressure on the Cuban regime as a means to restrict the regime's ability to repress its people and support the illegitimate regime of President Maduro in Venezuela. At the same time, in keeping with NSPM-5, we also seek to promote policies that will advance the lives and livelihoods of individual Cubans.

Question. In your estimation, does the U.S. embargo on Cuba fuel the Cuban Government's narrative blaming the United States for the country's economic despair?

Answer. The Cuban regime has mismanaged Cuba's economy for decades and proven itself unable to address the Cuban people's most basic needs. It is that mismanagement, not U.S. sanctions, which is responsible for Cuba's economic despair. The U.S. embargo is consistent with our policy to end economic practices that disproportionately benefit the Cuban Government or its military, intelligence, or security agencies or personnel at the expense of the Cuban people.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. CARLOS TRUJILLO BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. The U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration agreed in June 2019 included the United States' commitment "to accelerate adjudication of asylum claims," yet the "Remain in Mexico" policy has forced over 60,000 asylum seekers to wait in dangerous Mexican border regions, and the effective closure of our southern border to refugees and asylum seekers in the name of COVID–19 has resulted in the expulsion of over 40,000 asylum seekers from the United States into Mexico.

These asylum seekers include Central Americans fleeing targeted killings and torture, as well as Cubans, Nicaraguans, Venezuelans, and others seeking protection in the United States. Yet they are pushed back by U.S. officials to areas of Mexico where the coronavirus is surging and they face alarming levels of criminal violence, such as murder, kidnapping and rape. Human Rights First has documented at least 1,114 publicly reported cases of murder, rape, torture, kidnapping, and other violent assaults against asylum seekers and migrants forced to return to Mexico by the Trump administration.

- If confirmed, how will you ensure the protection and health of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in Mexico as a result of U.S. policies?

Answer. The Department works closely with Mexico and international partners to promote access to protection and support for refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable migrants. The Department funds international partners to help Mexico enhance its asylum capacity, support protection efforts, assist shelter efforts, and provide assisted voluntary returns to migrants who wish to return to their home countries. If confirmed, I would urge Mexico to continue assisting returned migrants and support sustained Department funding to support refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable migrants in Mexico.

Question. How will you work with Mexican authorities and DHS to ensure refugees and asylum seekers are protected against these heinous crimes?

Answer. As a part of the June 2019 U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration, Mexico committed to offer jobs, healthcare, and education to migrants returned to Mexico pursuant to the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). Mexico has also established shelters for MPP returnees, where it provides medical care, food, and other services, and is working with employers to facilitate access to jobs. If confirmed, I would collaborate with the Department of Homeland Security to work to ensure Mexico continues to support returned migrants.

Material Received by the Committee Relating to the Nominations and Other Issues

Correspondence Regarding the Nomination of Hon. Marshall Billingslea, Nominated to be Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights

LETTER OF APRIL 26, 2019—HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ TO HON. PATRICK M. SHANAHAN

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6225

April 26, 2019

The Honorable Patrick M. Shanahan
Acting Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Acting Secretary Shanahan:

I write to you concerning the nomination of Marshall Billingslea to be Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, which is pending before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Previously, Mr. Billingslea served in the Pentagon as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict from 2002-2003.

An understanding of Mr. Billingslea's role on detainee policy during that period is critical to the Committee's consideration of his nomination given that, if confirmed, he will be the senior State Department official responsible for human rights. Shortly after Mr. Billingslea was nominated for the Under Secretary position, my staff requested that the Department of Defense provide all memos that Mr. Billingslea authored or approved regarding general detainee or interrogation policy, or the interrogation of individual detainees. My staff also requested to review portions of the Church Report on detainee interrogation and incarceration.[1]

On November 19, 2018, the State Department responded to this request by informing Committee staff that DOD had identified 12 memos responsive to their request, adding that "[s]ome of the memos refer to attachments but DOD has been unable to locate the referenced attachments given the age of the records." Two days later, my staff asked the State Department to "ask DOD to advise on the process that they used to search for the 'missing' attachments" and also "request[ed] that the effort to locate those attachments be renewed and redoubled so that the memos can be reviewed in their full context." As far as I am aware, this request has not been satisfied. On November 28, former Committee Chairman Corker wrote a letter (attached) to Secretary Mattis requesting that DOD provide the identified memos, in classified form, and the Church Report "in its entirety, as it has been provided to the Senate Armed Services Committee."

Based on my staff's review of the documents that DOD has made available to the Committee, it does not appear that these requests have been fully honored. First, at least one of the memos was missing at least one page, and was provided to the Committee in declassified form, with

[1] *Review of Department of Defense Detention Operations and Detainee Interrogation Techniques*, also known as the "Church Report," (March 7, 2005).

significant redactions.[2] Second, DOD did not produce a key classified annex that accompanied the Church Report which was provided to the Senate Armed Services Committee.[3] Finally, a number of the memos referenced other documents that were not provided for review.

The documents that have not been provided to date are potentially directly relevant to a complete understanding of Mr. Billingslea's role regarding detainee interrogation policy at a critical time. I therefore am renewing the request for DOD to produce the entire Church Report and to execute a search of its records that is designed to recover the "missing" documents in their original form. It is deeply disturbing that documents from the last decade—and on a complex and highly controversial national security matter no less—could somehow disappear.

If DOD is unable to find the "missing" documents, I request a written statement from the DOD official responsible for compliance with the Federal Records Act which contains the following:

1. A certification that DOD has exhausted all means available to the Department and has nonetheless been unable to locate the "missing" documents;
2. A detailed description of the search process that DOD undertook to produce the original 12 memos and to attempt to find the referenced "missing" documents; and
3. Whether DOD is aware of any other DOD records relating to detainee or interrogation policy from the same time period that are also "missing."

I look forward to your response no later than May 13, 2019

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
Ranking Member

[2] The memo is "Detainees at GTMO," Oct. 11, 2002. The missing page is evident from a publicly available, declassified version.
[3] *See* U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Inquiry into the Treatment of Detainees in U.S. Custody* at 148 n. 1150 (Nov. 20, 2008) (referencing a separate, classified annex that discussed [Special Mission Unit] interrogation practices in both Afghanistan and Iraq).

LETTER FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MARK T. ESPER REGARDING MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2019

JAMES E. RISCH, IDAHO, CHAIRMAN

MARCO RUBIO, FLORIDA
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO
MITT ROMNEY, UTAH
LINDSEY GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHNNY ISAKSON, GEORGIA
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CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6225

October 10, 2019

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Esper:

The U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is currently considering the nomination of Marshall Billingslea for Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, the top human rights position in the U.S. government. As you may know, Mr. Billingsea served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC) from 2002 to 2003, where he had a significant role in the development and implementation of detainee and interrogation policy.

At his nomination hearing on September 19, 2019, Mr. Billingslea—whether intentionally or not—appears to have misrepresented his role in the development and implementation of detainee and interrogation policies. Members of the Committee were unable to fully address these apparent misrepresentations because many of the underlying records related to Mr. Billingslea's role in Bush-era torture policies remain classified and therefore could not be discussed at a public hearing. Given that these materials are almost two decades old—and that more sunlight, not less, is critical when it comes to this regretful episode in our nation's history—I urge you to declassify all records related to Mr. Billingslea and detainee or interrogation policy.

Further, as part of the process of vetting Mr. Billinglea's nomination, Committee staff and I requested that DOD provide all memoranda that Mr. Billingslea authored or approved on detainee or interrogation policy. We first made this request almost a year ago, but DOD has yet to comply in a serious or reasonable manner.

From the outset, DOD has maintained that certain documents responsive to this request were "missing," but the Department has refused to provide any details. The Department has not informed the Committee how many documents are "missing," or the titles of those documents. Similarly, it has refused to provide any meaningful details on how it searched for the "missing" documents and instead has relied on wholly unsupported platitudes about the "comprehensive" nature of its search. As a result, the Committee has no basis to assess whether there was, in fact, a good-faith search.

As it turns out, however, the "missing" documents are not the only problem. At a meeting with Committee staff and at his nomination hearing, Mr. Billingslea indicated that there should be

additional memoranda relevant to his involvement with detainee or interrogation policies, yet DOD has never produced those records to the Committee or even acknowledged their existence.

For example, Mr. Billingslea said that he approved multiple memoranda proposing interrogation plans for individual detainees, yet DOD provided the Committee with only one such memo—a document that the Committee was aware of beforehand and specifically requested. Further, at his nomination hearing, Mr. Billingslea said that he attempted "to document human rights abuses that [were] being alleged by these detainees [at GTMO]." DOD did not provide the Committee with any such memoranda. In addition, Mr. Billingslea told the Committee that "there had been a death in one of these facilities and I escalated that issue personally to the Special Operations Combatant Commander and asked in effect, 'what is going on here?'" Again, DOD did not provide the Committee with any such memoranda.

Therefore, in addition to my request that DOD declassify all records related to Mr. Billingslea and torture, I also request that DOD renew the search of its records and finally produce to the Committee all memoranda that Mr. Billingslea authored or approved on detainee or interrogation policy. I also renew my request, made to then Acting Secretary Shanahan in a letter dated April 24, 2019, for the following items related to the "missing" documents:

1. A certification that DOD has exhausted all means available to the Department and has nonetheless been unable to locate the "missing" documents;
2. A detailed description of the search process that DOD undertook to produce the original 12 memos and to attempt to find the referenced "missing" documents; and
3. Whether DOD is aware of any other DOD records relating to detainee or interrogation policy from the same time period that are also "missing."

This matter is critical to both the Billingslea nomination and to ensuring an accurate historical record. As such, I appreciate your prompt attention and response.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
Ranking Member

LETTER FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ TO SECRETARY POMPEO DETAILING OUTSTANDING REQUESTS REGARDING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

JAMES E. RISCH, IDAHO, CHAIRMAN

MARCO RUBIO, FLORIDA
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MITT ROMNEY, UTAH
LINDSEY GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
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CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
TIM KAINE, VIRGINIA
EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
JEFF MERKLEY, OREGON
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6225

June 4, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Secretary Pompeo,

In your May 28 letter to me you "implore[d] [me] and [my] staff to confront foreign policy issues of concern and interest to [me] and [my] constituents on an intellectual level and on the merits." Thank you for this invitation; as you well know, I have been seeking to do exactly that for the duration of your tenure.

Indeed, for months, I have asked, repeatedly, questions about some of the most serious foreign policy and national security issues facing our nation and the world. I have asked those questions of you personally, of senior officials at the Department, and through my staff to various appropriate officials in the Administration. Despite the pressing nature of some of these concerns—including the Administration's early response to COVID-19; the basis for withdrawing funding to the WHO; the ongoing commitment to global health priorities; the deporting of individuals from our country with COVID-19; the justification for additional arms sales to Saudi Arabia; the grounds for dismissing an independent Inspector General; details about agreements with third countries on asylees and refugees—my requests for substantive engagement on critical matters of foreign policy have gone largely ignored or woefully unaddressed.

You also note that your "job is to lead an organization focused on the execution of President Trump's foreign policy priorities on behalf of the United States." I would argue that part of that job is to explain to the American people—and their elected representatives in Congress—exactly what those priorities are.

I understand that Chairman Risch, with my full support, has been trying to get you to testify in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since February, including by appearing remotely, on the budget request for the State Department. Additionally, given that we are currently facing a global pandemic that threatens some of the world's most vulnerable populations, witnessing increased tension with China, and instability that threatens U.S. interests across the world, there are any number of topics that would normally trigger a Secretary of State testifying before Congress. Moreover, you have only publicly appeared in front of this Committee three times; the last time being April 10, 2019. Again, I would welcome you to come testify on any topic of your choosing.

Indeed, when you were yourself a member of Congress, you extolled Congressional oversight as a critical function of this country. In March 2014, you stated that our system of checks and balances, including Congress, "is the best [system] devised by humankind for a way to provide oversight on a country's

incredibly important intelligence operations."[1] Surely the same logic would apply to our foreign policy operations. In March 2016, you told a newspaper that the State Department "ought" to "respond to a legitimate inquiry from the legislative branch, duly authorized by statute and cooperate."[2] I could not agree more.

As our country's shining light as the beacon of freedom and democracy continues to dim under this Administration, it would behoove our standing in the world and strengthen our own democratic fabric if the nation's leading diplomat would engage on these and other issues.

In the spirit of your request, below is a representative, non-exhaustive list of requests I have sent over the last year on foreign policy matters of grave concern to me and my constituents, to which the State Department has failed to respond to fully or at all and about which you have yet to come to Congress to testify. I look forward to your prompt engagement on these matters, and to having you testify before the Committee in short order.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
Ranking Member

Outstanding Requests regarding U.S. Foreign Policy:

1. Legal analysis and determination for the Trump administration's decision not to make a legally-required determination under the Global Magnitsky Act regarding the role of Mohammed bin Salman in the murder of *Washington Post* journalist and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi, including relevant records and information – requested **Feb. 14, 2019**

2. Information on the Administration's climate change policy following reports that the NSC was pursuing the establishment of a commission to undermine the utilization of climate science in national security planning – requested **Feb. 20, 2019**

3. Information on the Trump administration's climate leadership plans in light of U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement – requested **Feb. 28, 2019, Sept. 27, 2019 and earlier.**

4. Answers regarding reports that the U.S. government committed to paying $2 million to North Korea to secure the release of Otto Warmbier – requested **May 3, 2019**

5. Records and information related to the State Department's role in delaying security assistance to Ukraine and facilitating meetings between the President's personal agent, Rudy Giuliani, and Ukrainian officials – requested **Sept. 24, 2019**

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[1] Darren Samuelsohn, "Hill draws criticism over NSA oversight," *Politico*, Mar. 2, 2014,
[2] Susan Crabtree, "Scandals surround Clinton's gatekeeper at State," *Washington Examiner*, Oct. 19, 2016,

6. Adequate answers and documents responsive to 31 outstanding questions for the record from the September 25, 2019, Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Mexico and Central America, including all agreements and arrangements and associated documentation between the U.S. and Mexico and the U.S. and the Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) – requested **Sept. 27, 2019**

7. Information on your role and the State Department role in the July 25 Trump-Zelenskyy call and surrounding events – requested **Sept. 27, 2019**

8. Communications, information, and any legal opinion relating to the July 2019 Joint Department of Health and Human Services and State Department letter to more than 70 countries urging them to oppose abortion access – requested **Oct. 28, 2019**

9. Written details and briefing on the State Operations Center and reports that the Department was limiting it to document calls with foreign leaders – requested **Dec. 6, 2019**

10. Information on the State Department's birthright citizenship initiative – requested **Jan. 24, 2020**

11. Briefing with Assistant Secretary Ford to discuss State's Cyber Office **–** requested **Feb. 2020**

12. Documents showing the division of non-security assistance in Iraq between U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and State Department and of all non-security assistance and staffing for religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria – requested **Feb. 3, 2020 with several follow ups, most recently on June 1, 2020**

13. Information fully responsive to my questions, asked with Senator Warren and 23 other Democratic Senators, to you, Attorney General Barr, and Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf, about the negotiation and implementation of three international "Asylum Cooperative Agreements" (ACAs, or Safe 3rd Country agreements) in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras – requested **Feb. 5, 2020**

14. Clarification as to whether Turkey's purchase of the S-400 will be included in the calculation of Turkey's progress towards its two percent Wales commitment – requested **Feb. 28, 2020**

15. Information about the Trump administration's strategy for countering Russian interference in African elections; and a description of all activities funded by State or USAID specifically aimed at countering Russian interference in African elections, with funding amounts – requested **Mar. 3, 2020**

16. Explanation from the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) of the Administration's policy toward asylum seekers in response to the coronavirus outbreak, and a detailed explanation from the Office of the Legal Adviser Office of Human Rights and Refugees (L/HRR) of how this policy comports with domestic and international legal obligations toward asylum seekers – requested **Mar. 18, 2020**

17. Information about Global Engagement Center operations – requested **Mar. 23, 2020**

18. Information and document request regarding the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and China COVID-19 cables – requested **Mar. 24/30, 2020**

19. Briefing on COVID-19 origins – requested **Apr. 2, 2020**

20. Briefing on Open Skies Treaty – requested **Apr. 3, 2020**

21. Explanations for the role of the U.S. in the Serbia-Kosovo talks, why the U.S. has not imposed sanctions on Serbia pursuant to the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), and whether the suspension of the Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) Kosovo programs is in keeping with the MCC's mission – requested **Apr. 13, 2020**

22. Briefing on Chinese nuclear testing – requested **Apr. 16, 2020**

23. Information about the State Department's response to warning signs in the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak – requested **Apr. 16, 2020**

24. Information from the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO) about how suspension/cessation of the World Health Organization (WHO) contributions is affecting engagement related to COVID-19 and health programming on the ground in Mozambique – requested **Apr. 23, 2020**

25. Legal opinion related to Iran that was provided to one or more Republican Senators before Biegun's confirmation as Deputy Secretary of State – requested **Apr. 27, 2020**

26. Briefing on State's plans to address the growing threat of foreign white supremacist terror, and request for you to immediately provide clarity on the employment status of Mr. Matthew Gebert following his August 2019 suspension, as well as for you to call out bigotry and unequivocally reject the promotion of hatred – requested **Apr. 28, 2020**

27. Information on whether State is conducting a review of our response to COVID-19, whether the findings of the review we are asking WHO to conduct will be used to inform the U.S. response, whether the U.S. is providing staff to assist WHO with the review, and a copy of Ambassador Bremberg's remarks as delivered at the WHO Executive Board meeting in February 2020 – requested **May 1, 2020**

28. Information on COVID-19 testing for migrants before deportation, medical treatment for those who test positive, and ending deportations of individuals who have tested positive or exhibited symptoms of COVID-19, as well as the results of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) review of the impact of deporting individuals that have tested positive for COVID-19 upon arrival in Guatemala – requested **May 1, 2020**

29. Briefing on the failed mercenary incursion into Venezuela that occurred on May 3, 2020, and resulted in the capture of two American citizens, as well as related potential violations of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) – requested **May 4, 2020**

30. Documents relating to the State Department's engagement with the WHO in the face of the COVID-19 global pandemic – requested **May 5, 2020**

31. Documents related to origins of, and early preparation for, COVID-19, including all cables regarding the CDC and China, the WHO, and the Department's pandemic preparedness or response plan – requested **May 7, 2020**

32. Briefing on the inadequate report received from the Department, pursuant to the VERDAD Act, on the Maduro regime's potential involvement in crimes against humanity. The VERDAD Act includes a statutory requirement that a briefing on this report be provided within 15 days – requested **May 7, 2020**

33. Briefing on Ethiopia security sector engagement – requested **May 8, 2020**

34. Briefing from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor about accountability for abuses by Cameroon security forces – requested **May 8, 2020**

35. Information on the Administration's asylum ban justified, in part, on conditions related to COVID-19 – requested **May 12, 2020**

36. Information and briefing on rescissions at the Department – requested **May 12, 2020**

37. Information regarding "non-public" disclaimer language from the Department's Office of the Legal Adviser – requested **May 12, 2020**

38. Update on the economic and political situation in Jordan – requested **May 13, 2020**

39. Briefing with Special Envoy Billingslea on arms control issues – requested **May 14, 2020**

40. Briefing on the Sacoolas case and Interpol – requested **May 15, 2020 (following-up on 2019 requests)**

41. Further information on the status of Egyptian purchase of Su-35, in violation of CAATSA - requested **May 19, 2020**

42. Further information on the Unalienable Rights Commission purpose, membership selection, and expected outputs – requested **May 20, 2020**

43. Information about U.S. engagement with civil society organizations that are monitoring the implementation of African Development Bank (AfDB) and World Bank projects in Zimbabwe – requested **May 27, 2020**

44. Impact of COVID-19-related travel restrictions on Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchanges J1 Visa programs – requested **May 27, 2020**

45. Determinations that allowed the Asylum Cooperative Agreements to enter into force – requested **May 27, 2020**

46. Information on U.S. objections to the concept of "discrimination" and its understanding of how the concept of "equal protection of the laws" applied in an OAS declaration in support of LGBTI rights – requested **May 28, 2020**

47. Information about how State's African Affairs Bureau is planning to mitigate loss of credibility and moral authority on messaging on democracy and governance, respect for human rights, and accountability for security sector abuses in Africa given U.S. police abuses and President Trump's tweets – requested **June 1, 2020**

Outstanding Requests regarding State Department Management and Operations:

1. Information regarding Special Representatives and Special Envoy Status – ongoing series of requests, dating back to **2019**

2. Information and records on how State protected and defended Ambassador Yovanovitch, why she was removed early, and what State is doing to ensure State Department personnel know their rights under federal whistleblower laws – requested **Oct. 10, 2019**

3. Briefing by Under Secretary for Management on steps taken to address retaliation at the Department, including in the IO bureau – requested **Oct. 11, 2019**

4. Explanation of the steps taken to investigate the alleged surveillance of Ambassador Yovanovitch – requested **Jan. 15, 2020 and Jan. 29, 2020**

5. Request for interviews related to joint political retaliation investigation on – requested **Feb. 24, 2020**

6. Clarification of Diplomatic Security policy on background investigations – requested **Mar. 4, 2020**

7. Follow-up information on diversity issues at the State Department – requested **Mar. 25, 2020**

8. Update on staffing at the U.S. Consulate in Thessaloniki, Greece – requested **Mar. 25, 2020**

9. Information on whether the Department weighed in on Mari Stull's candidacy to be the Washington D.C. Representative of the OAS Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and what details the State Department provided to IICA about retaliation allegations against Stull – requested **Mar. 27, 2020**

10. Information about the Department's review of Ambassador McCarter's tweets referring to COVID-19 as the Wuhan Flu and any directives from State to Ambassadors to avoid the term – requested **Apr. 22, 2020**

11. Information request to Ambassador McCarter about the review process of his tweets referring to COVID-19 as the Wuhan Flu – requested **May 6, 2020**

12. Documents related to the firing of State Department Inspector General Linick – requested **May 16, 2020**

13. Details regarding the firing of State Department Inspector General Linick and appointment of Acting Inspector General Akard – requested **May 16 and 18, 2020**

14. Legal basis for appointing Lee Rizzuto as "Principal Officer" for U.S. Consulate General in Bermuda – requested **May 27, 2020**

LETTER FROM MARK R. JACOBSON CLARIFYING MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES AT GUANTANAMO BAY

Mark R. Jacobson
Amherst, MA

September 20, 2019

The Honorable James E. Risch, Chairman
The Honorable Bob Menendez, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez,

I am writing to clarify the context of my letter of June 22, 2017 to the Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, regarding the nomination of Mr. Marshall Billingslea to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing in the United States Department of the Treasury. This letter, as you are aware, was mentioned in hearings before your committee on September 19, 2019.

I wrote this letter in 2017 in response to a particular set of news articles published in the 2004-2007 period that I felt overstated Bilingslea's "central" or "directing" role in the development of interrogation techniques at Guantanamo Bay. I was concerned, based on what the Senate Armed Services Committee investigation (completed April 2009) had uncovered, that those articles when taken alone overplayed Bilingslea's role as opposed to that of more senior leaders and could potentially let those more senior leaders off the hook.

In terms of any other issues regarding Mr. Billingslea's involvement with the detention and interrogation policies I stand by the findings and text of the Senate Armed Services Committee report.

I may be reached at mark.jacobson01@gmail.com or 202-604-2206 with any further questions you or your staff may have.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Jacobson

EXCERPTS FROM THE "INQUIRY INTO THE TREATMENT OF DETAINEES IN U.S. CUSTODY," A REPORT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES, NOVEMBER 20, 2008

[redacted]

stimuli, removal of clothing, use of detainee phobias such as dogs, and the one Category III technique the Secretary had authorized, which included grabbing, poking, and light pushing.

E. JPRA Briefs Members of the Working Group on SERE Techniques (U)

[redacted] Prior to issuing a final report on April 4, 2003, members of the Working Group again sought information from JPRA on SERE techniques. The JAG of the Air Force, Maj Gen Thomas Fiscus, and two other military officers, visited JPRA and were briefed on SERE physical pressures.[1000] At the briefing, JPRA described its previous support to "high value target" interrogations, discussed the processes and procedures used in SERE training, and reviewed the "application of physical pressures in an operational environment."[1001] JPRA Chief of Staff Daniel Baumgartner told Maj Gen Fiscus that JPRA had previously provided information on techniques used in SERE schools to DoD Deputy General Counsel Richard Shiffrin.[1002]

F. The Working Group Finalizes Its Report and the Secretary of Defense Issues a New Interrogation Policy For GTMO (U)

[redacted] On March 28, 2003, the Secretary of Defense met with a number of senior advisors including Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, DoD General Counsel Jim Haynes, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Richard Myers, to discuss the interrogation techniques being considered by the Working Group.[1003] After that meeting, the Secretary decided to expressly authorize 24 interrogation techniques, including five that were not listed in the Army Field Manual (one of these five was classified as an "exceptional" technique).[1004]

[redacted] The Joint Chiefs of Staff met on March 31, 2003, and were briefed about Secretary Rumsfeld's decision. According to CAPT Dalton, the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the "Chiefs recognized that the approved strategies would not hamper the combatant commander in the accomplishment of his mission, because the door was open to request additional strategies on a case-by-case basis if needed in compelling cases."[1005]

[redacted] The last and final version of the Working Group report was issued on April 4, 2003. The report was similar to the March 6, 2003 version, except that it did not recommend waterboarding or list the three other exceptional techniques that the Working Group could not evaluate fully – stress positions, deprivation of light and auditory stimuli, and water

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[1000] Committee staff interview of Lt Col Daniel Baumgartner (August 8, 2007).

[1001] JPRA Power Point presentation, *Project 22B* (June 2003).

[1002] Committee staff interview of Lt Col Daniel Baumgartner (August 8, 2007).

[1003] [redacted] "According to the Secretary's daily schedule, the advisors at the meeting included Mr. Haynes, Gen Myers, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, Stephen Cambone, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Douglas Feith, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, Marshall Billingslea, and CAPT Dalton." *Church Report* at 136. By the time the Secretary met with his advisors, the Working Group had removed waterboarding from consideration. Ibid. at 135-6.

[1004] Ibid. at 136.

[1005] Memo from RADM Jane Dalton to VADM Church, *Request for Information* (August 10, 2004) at 5.

[redacted]

[redacted]

immersion/wetting down.[1006] At the direction of the DoD Principal Deputy General Counsel Daniel Dell'Orto, the April 4, 2003 report was not circulated to the participants of the Working Group.[1007]

(U) In fact, when it came to finalizing the report, some participants of the Working Group who had raised objections to the report were excluded from the process and did not even know that the report had been completed.[1008] According to Alberto Mora, the Navy General Counsel, "Neither I, [the Navy Office of the General Counsel], nor – to my knowledge – anyone else in the [Department of Navy] ever received a completed version of the Working Group report. It was never circulated for clearance. Over time, I would come to assume that the report had never been finalized."[1009] Mr. Mora said that he only learned of the final report nearly a year later while watching a "televised congressional hearing on the Abu Ghraib scandal."[1010]

[redacted] On April 5, 2003, Gen Myers forwarded a memo proposing that the Secretary of Defense authorize 24 of the interrogation techniques reviewed during the Working Group process.[1011] In response, Marshall Billingslea, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/ Low-Intensity Conflict sent a memo to the Secretary of Defense raising concerns about the omission of certain techniques and recommending that the Secretary approve all 35 techniques "endorsed by the Working Group."[1012] Mr. Billingslea's memo stated:

> The current memo omits some interrogation techniques that are not controversial from either a legal, or policy standpoint. For instance, blindfolding ('hooding'), lightly touching a detainee, and threatening transfer to a 3rd country all seem reasonable techniques to approve.
>
> The draft memo also omits some techniques which the Working Group found to be legally-permissible, but which should be done only with appropriate oversight. While the Working Group felt that the Combatant Commander could approve these measures, we recommend requiring that you be notified prior to their use.
>
> The measures in question include using prolonged interrogations, prolonged standing in non-stress positions, forced grooming, requiring physical exercise, face/stomach slaps to cause surprise but not pain or injury, etc.

[1006] Department of Defense, *Working Group Report on Detainee Interrogations in the Global War on Terrorism: Assessment of Legal, Historical, Policy, and Operational Considerations* (April 4, 2003).

[1007] *Church Report* at 136.

[1008] SASC Hearing (June 17, 2008) (Testimony of Alberto Mora); Military Justice and Detention Policy in the Global War on Terrorism, Senate Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Personnel, 109th Cong. (July 14, 2005) (Testimony of MG Thomas Romig).

[1009] Mora, *Statement for the Record* at 20.

[1010] Ibid.

[1011] *Church Report* at 137.

[1012] Memo from Marshall Billingslea to Secretary Rumsfeld, *Interrogation Methods for GTMO* (April 10, 2003).

[redacted]

Finally, we recommend delegating certain techniques to General Miller at GTMO.[1013]

(U) On April 16, 2003, the Secretary of Defense authorized the Commander of SOUTHCOM to use 24 interrogation techniques.[1014] Of the 24 techniques, four – Mutt and Jeff, incentive/removal of incentive, pride and ego down, and isolation – required that the SOUTHCOM Commander make a determination of "military necessity" and notify the Secretary in advance of using them.[1015] The Secretary authorized the use of the other 20 techniques with all detainees at GTMO so long as GTMO personnel adhered to certain safeguards. Those authorized techniques included dietary manipulation, environmental manipulation, sleep adjustment, and false flag, none of which were listed in the Army Field Manual.

(U) In addition to expressly authorizing the 24 techniques listed in his April 16, 2003 memorandum, Secretary Rumsfeld wrote in his memo: "If, in your view, you require additional interrogation techniques for a particular detainee, you should provide me, via the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a written request describing the proposed technique, recommended safeguards, and the rationale for applying it with an identified detainee."[1016]

(U) CAPT Dalton told the Committee that all of the techniques recommended by the Working Group were available for request.[1017] That understanding was shared by the Joint Chiefs, who she said believed that the door was open to request additional strategies on a case-by-case basis if needed in compelling cases."[1018] The GTMO Commander would soon seek and receive authority to use additional techniques that went beyond the 24 expressly approved in the Secretary's April 16, 2003 memo.

IX. Aggressive Interrogations at GTMO (U)

A. Allegations of Detainee Mistreatment (U)

[redacted]As the final Working Group report was being generated, and on the heels of SOUTHCOM and GTMO's press for additional interrogation authorities, a Commander's inquiry was initiated at GTMO following allegations that, between March and April 2003, interrogation personnel and military police had forced detainees to engage in physical training.[1019]

[1013] Ibid.

[1014] Memorandum from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to GEN James T. Hill, *Counter-Resistance Techniques in the War on Terrorism* (April 16, 2003) (hereinafter "Secretary Rumsfeld to GEN Hill (April 16, 2003)").

[1015] Secretary Rumsfeld to GEN Hill (April 16, 2003).

[1016] Ibid.

[1017] Committee staff interview of RADM Jane Dalton (April 10, 2008) at 225.

[1018] Memo from RADM Jane Dalton to VADM Church, *Request for Information* (August 10, 2004) at 5.

[1019] Memo for Record from ACS Contractor, *Possible Inappropriate Activities* (undated).

Correspondence Opposing the Nomination of Hon. Marshall Billingslea

LETTER OPPOSING THE BILLINGSLEA NOMINATION AND URGING RATIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRIVACY CONVENTION 108+

epic.org

Electronic Privacy Information Center
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https://epic.org

September 18, 2019

The Honorable Jim Risch, Chairman
The Honorable Bob Menendez, Ranking Member
US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Marshall Billingslea

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

We write to you regarding your upcoming nomination hearing of Marshall Billingslea to be Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights.[1] This is a critical position in the U.S. government for human rights and should be filled by a person with a deep regard for international law and fundamental rights, such as a constitutional scholar. Mr. Billingslea simply lacks the necessary qualifications for this post. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee should reject this nomination.

EPIC has long been interested in the work of the office of Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. EPIC's original *Privacy and Human Rights report*[2] was based on the annual human rights report of this office, which follows from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and includes explicit reporting on privacy. Over many years, we have worked with nominees from both parties who have advanced a human rights agenda on behalf of the United States. It is crucial to fill this position with an individual who respects and understands international law and human rights.

In the 21st Century, the United States must lead in defending rule of law and human dignity around the world. Supporting international law is a necessary condition for securing human rights but is also essential to the national security and international influence of the United States. As the National Security Strategy states: "government must do a better job of protecting data to safeguard information and the privacy of the American people."[3]

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[1] *Nominations*, 116th Cong. (2019), S. Comm. on Foreign Relations, https://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/nominationsa (Sept. 19, 2019).
[2] EPIC, *Privacy & Human Rights: An International Survey of Privacy Laws and Practices 1999*, https://epic.org/bookstore/phr1999/; *see also* EPIC, *Privacy & Human Rights: An International Survey of Privacy Laws and Practices 2016*, https://epic.org/phr06/.
[3] White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Dec. 2017), https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905-1.pdf.

The United States should ratify the International Privacy Convention 108+, the most-well established legal framework for international privacy protection.[4] The Convention is recently modernized to establish such new challenges as biometric identification, algorithmic transparency, and the role of supervisory authorities.[5] Because of the global reach of new technologies, international agreements provide the best opportunity to establish data protection standards.[6] The Privacy Convention would establish a global bias to safeguard personal information and enable the continued growth of the Internet economy. Many US companies have already indicated their support for the General Data Protection (GDPR) of the European Union.[7] But there is no mechanism for the United States to accede to the EU Regulation. However, the United States is an Observer to the Council of Europe and has formally ratified COE conventions in the past, most notably the Cybercrime Convention.[8] The Privacy Convention provides the opportunity for the United States to back a well known and well regarded international framework that would both protect privacy and preserve cross border data flows.

EPIC renews our request to your Committee that the United States begin the ratification process for Council of Europe Convention 108.[9] As we wrote in 2010, "The protection of privacy is a fundamental human right. In the 21st century, it may become one of the most critical human rights of all. Civil society organizations from around the world have recently asked that countries which have not yet ratified the Council of European Convention 108 and the Protocol of 2001 to do so as expeditiously as possible."[10]

There is today a growing consensus on both sides of the Atlantic, supported by consumer groups and business leaders, to recognize that privacy is a fundamental human right. Our laws should reflect that, and the individuals confirmed to senior positions should as well.

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[4] *See generally*, EPIC, Council of Europe Privacy Convention (2015), https://epic.org/privacy/intl/coeconvention/.

[5] Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, May 2018, ETS No. 108.

[6] Brief for EPIC and Thirty-Seven Technical Experts and Legal Scholars as Amici Curiae in Support of Respondent 12-20, *United States v. Microsoft*, No. 17-2 (Jan. 18, 2018), https://epic.org/amicus/ecpa/microsoft/US-v-Microsoft-amicus-EPIC.pdf.

[7] Rachel England, *Tim Cook calls for GDPR-style privacy laws in the US*, Engadget (Oct. 24, 2018), https://www.engadget.com/2018/10/24/tim-cook-calls-for-gdpr-style-privacy-laws-in-the-us/; Isobel Asher Hamilton, *Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella made a global call for countries to come together to create new GDPR-style data privacy laws*, Business Insider (Jan. 24, 2019), https://www.businessinsider.com/satya-nadella-on-gdpr-2019-1.

[8] TechNet, *Senate Ratifies Convention on Cybercrime*, Aug. 3, 2006 ("The Senate ratified by unanimous consent without amendment Treaty 108-11, which is titled "Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime." This convention requires the nations that are parties to it to enact laws criminalizing certain activity in the nature of computer hacking, and other cyber crimes."), http://www.techlawjournal.com/topstories/2006/20060803b.asp

[9] See Letter from EPIC to Secretary Clinton Re: US Ratification of COE Convention 108 (Jan. 28, 2010), https://epic.org/privacy/intl/EPIC_Clinton_ltr_1-10.pdf; Letter from EPIC to Senator Corker and Senator Menendez, Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Apr. 13, 2018), https://epic.org/EPIC-SFR-Pompeo-April2018.pdf.

[10] Id. *See* The Public Voice, *The Madrid Privacy Declaration* (2009), http://www.thepublicvoice.org/Madrid-declaration/.

We ask that this Statement from EPIC be entered in the hearing record. We look forward to working with you on these issues of vital importance to the American public.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Marc Rotenberg*
Marc Rotenberg
EPIC President

/s/ *Caitriona Fitzgerald*
Caitriona Fitzgerald
EPIC Policy Director

/s/ *Eleni Kyriakides*
Eleni Kyriakides
EPIC International Counsel

LETTER SUBMITTED BY VARIOUS NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING THE BILLINGSLEA NOMINATION

September 17, 2019

Dear Senators:

We are a group of non-governmental organizations that advocate for human rights, civil rights, and government accountability. We are writing to express our opposition to President Trump's nomination of Marshall Billingslea to be Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights at the Department of State, given Mr. Billingslea's well-documented history of advocating for the use of torture and other unlawful interrogation practices. We urge you not to advance Mr. Billingslea's nomination.

The Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights is the senior-most executive branch official directly responsible for forming and implementing U.S. government policy on promoting universal human rights, preventing mass atrocities, aiding refugees and victims of conflict, fighting corruption, combatting human trafficking, and countering terrorism, among other tasks.[1] He or she routinely and directly engages with foreign governments, civil society, media, and victims of human rights violations on these topics and is expected to explain to these audiences why the U.S. government rejects torture and other forms of ill-treatment as a matter of law and policy. He or she also maintains oversight of many hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of foreign assistance aimed at aiding refugees, protecting human rights defenders, supporting torture survivors, assisting survivors of human trafficking, and otherwise helping civilians exposed to the ravages of war and government abuse. Accordingly, he or she must be a strong advocate for policies and assistance accounts that seek to protect and promote human rights within the interagency policy and budgetary formulation processes.

Mr. Billingslea lacks relevant background and experience concerning the vast majority of tasks that fall under the purview of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights,[2] a position into which recent Democratic and Republican administrations have appointed senior officials with extensive backgrounds in human rights, development, and refugee policy. Moreover, and most importantly, we are deeply troubled at the possibility that someone with a record of endorsing torture and other ill-treatment will be the face of American efforts to advance justice and human rights abroad.[3]

According to a bi-partisan report on detainee treatment unanimously adopted by the Senate Armed Services Committee ("SASC Report"), Mr. Billingslea encouraged the use of interrogation methods that amounted to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment while he served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special

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[1] The holder of the office oversees seven State Department bureaus and offices, including, but not limited to, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSo), Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), and Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). The holder of the office has also recently been tasked with jointly serving as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues.

[2] "U.S. Department of the Treasury," Marshall Billingslea,https://www.treasury.gov/about/organizational-structure/Pages/marshall_billingslea.aspx

[3] Human Rights First, "Marshall Billingslea, Nominee for Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, Linked to Torture," https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Billingslea_Fact_Sheet.pdf (October 2018).

Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict Under Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld during the administration of President George W. Bush.[4]

To support their use, Billingslea falsely claimed, in a memo addressed to the Secretary of Defense, that a defense department working group, of which he was a member, "endorsed" the use of a number of techniques amounting to torture or other ill-treatment.[5] In fact, the working group report included senior civilian and military lawyers who opposed torture[6], and the final report had been completed without the knowledge of the working group's dissenting members.[7]

Mr. Billingslea also pushed for additional torture techniques to be used on a specific detainee, Mohamedou Ould Slahi.[8] Slahi was a Mauritanian man detained at the Guantánamo Bay detention camp without charge from 2002 until his release on October 17, 2016. According to the SASC report, Mr. Billingslea forwarded a memo notifying Secretary Rumsfeld that JTF-GTMO intended to isolate Slahi and recommending that he approve the use of "sleep deprivation" and "sound modulation at decibel levels not harmful to hearing,"[9] both of which amount to a breach of the absolute prohibition on torture and other ill-treatment.[10] Secretary Rumsfeld approved the techniques, which were subsequently used on Slahi. In 2004, the Marine officer charged with prosecuting Slahi in a military commission determined that statements elicited from Slahi were obtained under torture and resigned his position so as not to participate in the proceedings.[11]

All the undersigned organizations have serious concerns about Mr. Billingslea's record,[12] his possible involvement in violations of U.S. and international law, and how this will affect his ability to perform the duties he would be tasked with in this position. For the abovementioned reasons, we oppose Mr. Billingslea's nomination and urge you not to advance his nomination.

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[4] Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, "Inquiry into the Treatment of Detainees in U.S. Custody," ("SASC Detainee Treatment Report") (2008), https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Detainee-Report-Final_April-22-2009.pdf.

[5] SASC Detainee Treatment Report, p. 131.

[6] Throughout the working group's deliberations of the working group, several of its members, including top lawyers for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, had raised objections to the its draft report. Then-General Counsel of the Navy Alberto Mora described the legal standard the group was using to determine the legality of the interrogation techniques as a "travesty of the applicable law." SASC Detainee Treatment Report, p. 138. And in a statement backed by several other top military lawyers, then- Deputy Judge Advocate General of the Air Force Major General Jack Rives objected that "[s]everal of the more extreme interrogation techniques, on their face, amount to violations of domestic criminal law and [the Uniform Code of Military Justice]." Memorandum for SAF/GC, Feb. 5, 2003, available at: https://balkin.blogspot.com/jag.memos.pdf

[7] SASC Detainee Treatment Report, p. 131.

[8] Ibid, p. 137.

[9] A handwritten note on the memo Mr. Billingslea forwarded stated that "OGC concurs that this is legal. We don't see any policy issues with these interrogation techniques. Recommend you authorize." SASC Detainee Treatment Report, p. 138.

[10] The Army Field Manual in use at the time described sleep deprivation as "mental torture." DEP'T OF THE ARMY, FM 34-52 INTELLIGENCE INTERROGATION (1992), 1-8. The technique of "sound modulation," which included s playing harsh music loudly and on repeat for long periods of time in order to mentally "break" a detainee and to prevent him from sleeping. Kelsey McKinney, "How the CIA used music to 'break' detainees" Vox, www.vox.com (December 11, 2014).

[11] Jess Bravin, *The Terror Courts, Rough Justice at Guantanamo Bay*, (Yale University Press, 2013) p. 152

[12] Many of the undersigned organizations do not as a matter of policy take positions for or against political nominees.

Sincerely,

9/11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
Access Now
American Jewish World Service
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain
Amnesty International USA
Bridges Faith Initiative
Center for American Progress Action Fund
Center for Justice and Accountability
Common Defense
Council for Global Equality
Defending Rights & Dissent
Electronic Privacy Information Center
Government Information Watch
Human Rights First
Human Rights Watch
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Open Society Policy Center
Restore The Fourth
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
VoteVets
Win Without War

LETTER FROM THOMAS J. ROMIG, MAJOR GENERAL, USA, RETIRED OPPOSING THE BILLINGSLEA NOMINATION

September 19, 2019

Dear Senator:

I retired from the US Army in 2005 after 34 years of service, including six years as a military intelligence officer and, following law school, 25 years in the US Army JAG Corps. During my last four years in the Army, I served as the 36th Judge Advocate General of the Army. During that time, I, and several other military lawyers, spoke up against proposals to abuse and torture detainees by using so-called "enhanced interrogation methods."

During meetings on the matter, I encountered Mr. Marshall Billingslea, who at the time was in the very influential role of Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict at the Pentagon. I write to you today because I understand that Mr. Billingslea has been nominated to serve as Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights—a position that requires moral courage, leadership, and credibility on human rights.

Yet during the critical test of our nation's moral courage after 9/11, Mr. Billingslea failed. He not only failed to stand up for what was right, but he also went out of his way to advocate for using abusive interrogation techniques against detainees in our custody. And he advocated for such abuses despite being told that his positions were wrong, counterproductive, and unlawful by a group of senior military lawyers with over 100 collective years of military experience and nearly that many years of military law experience.

To put it mildly, I believe that Mr. Billingslea is one of the worst possible candidates for this critical senior leadership role overseeing human rights policy for the Department of State.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Romig, Major General, USA, Retired
Former Dean and Professor of Law

LETTER FROM JOE BRYAN OPPOSING THE BILLINGSLEA NOMINATION

September 20, 2019

Hon. James E. Risch,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510-6225

Hon. Robert Menendez
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC, 20510-6225

DEAR CHAIRMAN RISCH AND RANKING MEMBER MENENDEZ: I am writing regarding the nomination of Marshall Billingslea to be Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. I believe that Mr. Billingslea's record relating to the treatment of detainees in U.S. custody makes him the wrong person to represent the United States in that position and I oppose his confirmation.

I was a member of the professional staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) from 2007 until 2014 and led the committee's investigations team during that period. In 2008, the committee approved a report of its bipartisan investigation into the treatment of detainees in U.S. custody. Among other matters, that report described Mr. Billingslea's role in decisions relating to detainee treatment during his time as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict.

In his September 19, 2019 testimony before your committee Mr. Billingslea referred to a statement, which he attributed to a third party, that he has "never supported torture nor anything resembling torture." The record established in the SASC investigation does not support that assessment. As described on page 131 of the committee's report, Mr. Billingslea recommended that then-Defense Secretary Rumsfeld authorize interrogation techniques that included, among other measures, hooding detainees, slapping them, and threatening to transfer them to a third country that the detainee was likely to fear would subject him to torture or death. As detailed on page 138 of the committee's report, Mr. Billingslea also recommended approval of an interrogation plan for a particular detainee, Mohamedou Ould Slahi, that included such techniques as sleep deprivation and subjecting the detainee to sound modulation.

Mr. Billingslea testified to your committee that he "had to rely on lawyers up and down the chain of command to tell us that these things were legal." However, senior military lawyers repeatedly raised concerns about the legality of interrogation techniques that Mr. Billingslea endorsed. As described on pages 67-69 of the committee's report, long-prior to Mr. Billingslea's recommendation, Judge Advocates General from the military services had raised serious concerns regarding the legality of many techniques. Further, as reflected in pages 126-27 of the SASC report, just months prior to an April 10, 2003 memo from Mr. Billingslea to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld endorsing the use of certain techniques, top military lawyers had objected to many of them on both legal and policy grounds.

Mr. Billingslea stated during his confirmation hearing that "support for civilian security, democracy and human rights is crucial to advancing vital American interests." I agree. But our ability to effectively advocate for the protection of human rights around the world rests on the example we ourselves set and the credibility of those whom we select as our messengers. I believe that Mr. Billingslea's record fails that test, and I oppose his confirmation.

Sincerely,
Joe Bryan, Former Professional Staff,
Senate Armed Services Committee

Letters Regarding the Nomination of Hon. C.J. Mahoney, of Kansas, Nominated to be Legal Advisor of the U.S. Department of State

LETTER FROM HON. SENATOR BOB DOLE SUPPORTING HON. C.J. MAHONEY'S NOMINATION TO BE LEGAL ADVISOR OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SENATOR BOB DOLE
THE ATLANTIC BUILDING
950 F STREET, N.W., 10TH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

January 13, 2020

The Honorable James Risch
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20002

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

I am writing to offer my endorsement to the nomination of C.J. Mahoney for Legal Adviser at the Department of State.

C.J. and I share the same hometown of Russell, Kansas. I have known him for his entire life and have also known four generations of his family. As the student body President of Russell High School in 1996, C.J. seconded my nomination for President at the Republican National Convention. We have remained in close contact ever since.

Based on his academic and professional credentials, I firmly believe C.J. possesses all the necessary qualifications to serve effectively as the Legal Adviser to the Department of State. I also know C.J. as a person of outstanding character who can be trusted to serve honorably, just as he has served as the Deputy United States Trade Representative over the past two years.

C.J. has a demonstrated record of professionalism and bipartisanship through his leadership on the USMCA. Within days of the White House announcing his nomination, Mexico's Chief Negotiator on the USMCA and Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. both issued public statements praising the nomination. C.J. has worked extensively with both Democratic and Republican Members of Congress, as well as their staff members, on the implementing legislation and amendments to the USMCA that allowed the agreement to attract overwhelming bipartisan support in both Houses.

In 2018, the Senate approved C.J.'s nomination to be Deputy USTR by unanimous consent. His record since that time has only bolstered the case for his swift confirmation as Legal Adviser. I hope that the Committee will act promptly, and I thank you for your attention to my letter. Keep up the good work.

God Bless America,

BOB DOLE

LETTER FROM FORMER LEGAL ADVISORS TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE SUPPORTING HON. C.J. MAHONEY'S NOMINATION TO BE LEGAL ADVISOR OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

February 18, 2020

The Honorable James Risch, Chairman
United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Menendez, Ranking Member
United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Nomination of Curtis J. Mahoney to be State Department Legal Adviser

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

We are former Legal Advisers to the U. S. State Department. We write to provide our bipartisan endorsement of President Trump's nomination of Curtis J. (CJ) Mahoney to this position and to encourage his prompt confirmation.

Mr. Mahoney's academic background (including judicial clerkships), private practice as a lawyer and public service as a Deputy U. S. Trade Representative combine to make him highly qualified to be the nation's top international lawyer:

- Academic Background: Mr. Mahoney graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard College in 2000, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He won the Bennett Prize for Best Thesis in American Government. After three years at McKinsey, he attended Yale Law School, from which he graduated in 2006. At Yale, he was Editor-in-Chief of the *Yale Law Journal* and won the Emerson Prize for his *Yale L. J.* Note "*Treaties as Contracts: Textualism, Contract Theory, and the Interpretation of Treaties*". After clerking for Judge Alex Kozinski on the Ninth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals, he clerked for Justice Anthony Kennedy on the U. S. Supreme Court. From 2015-18, he held a faculty-appointment as a Visiting Clinical Lecturer at Yale Law School, where he conducted a seminar on international arbitration.
- Private Practice: Mr. Mahoney joined the preeminent DC law firm Williams & Connolly after clerking, becoming a partner in 2015. At Williams & Connolly, he became a real star in the world of international arbitration. It is hard to imagine a private sector area more relevant to the job of State Department Legal Adviser.
- Public Service: Since his confirmation by unanimous consent on March 1, 2018, he has served as Deputy US Trade Representative. In that role, he played a major role in the negotiation of the US-Canada-Mexico Agreement.

With this background, we believe Mr. Mahoney has the experience and credentials that are essential for a successful Legal Adviser. It is critically important that the State Department have a Senate-confirmed Legal Adviser to represent the Secretary of State in interagency discussions and speak with authority on behalf of the United States on matters of international law. Given that the State Department has not had a Senate-confirmed Legal Adviser since May 2019, we strongly urge that your Committee promptly approve his nomination and send it to the Senate for an expeditious confirmation.

February 18, 2020

Very truly yours,

Davis R. Robinson

Edwin D. Williamson

Brian Egan

Abraham D. Sofaer

John B. Bellinger III

Jennifer G Newstead

LETTER FROM FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS EXPRESSING BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR HON. C.J. MAHONEY'S NOMINATION TO BE LEGAL ADVISOR OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

LAW OFFICES
WILLIAMS & CONNOLLY LLP
725 TWELFTH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005-5901
(202) 434-5000
FAX (202) 434-5029

January 9, 2020

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
SR-483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

The Honorable Bob Menendez
Ranking Member, Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

We write to support the confirmation of Amb. Curtis Joseph ("C.J.") Mahoney, currently Deputy United States Trade Representative, as Legal Adviser of the United States Department of State.

We are all former law colleagues of C.J. at Williams & Connolly LLP. As partners or senior counsel at the firm, we have firsthand knowledge of his extraordinary qualities, as both a superb lawyer and a person of impeccable integrity, that make him a distinguished nominee for this position. It should be noted that we are a diverse group with multiple and differing political perspectives. We have worked on opposing political campaigns; some of us have served in Democratic, and others in Republican, administrations. We have supported and, at times as lawyers, represented lawmakers and government officials hailing from both sides of the aisle. No matter our political differences, however, we are on one point unanimous: We support C.J. Mahoney's confirmation as Legal Adviser.

C.J. has had a distinguished career, consistently marked by high achievement. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School and served as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Yale Law Journal*. He was a law clerk for Justice Anthony Kennedy of the Supreme Court of the United States.

After clerking, C.J. joined Williams & Connolly and became a partner. While handling a broad range of matters, C.J. focused his career primarily on international litigation and arbitration and soon became recognized as a star in that field. He acquired extensive experience in international dispute resolution and gained a deep knowledge of the applicable treaties, laws and rules. He also held a faculty–appointment as a Visiting Clinical Lecturer at Yale Law School, where he taught a seminar on international arbitration.

He was later nominated by the President to be Deputy United States Trade Representative and was confirmed unanimously by the U.S. Senate in March 2018. In that important role he has been instrumental in the negotiation of many trade agreements, including the U.S.–Mexico–Canada Trade Agreement.

We believe that his fundamental integrity, his impressive intellectual ability, and his strong interpersonal skills, combined with his legal experience, talent, and knowledge, equip C.J. to be an outstanding Legal Adviser. He is widely respected for his sound and independent judgment. He believes deeply in the rule of law. We are confident that he will diligently pursue the interests of the United States and will be an exemplary public servant in this important role.

For these reasons, we unreservedly recommend that he be confirmed as Legal Adviser. Each and every one of us stands ready to respond to any questions that you may have. Thank you for considering our views.

Yours sincerely,

Partners

Brendan V. Sullivan, Jr.
Robert B. Barnett
John K. Villa
Peter J. Kahn
Michael S. Sundermeyer
Bruce R. Genderson
F. Lane Heard III
Gerson A. Zweifach
Mark S. Levinstein
Daniel F. Katz
William R. Murray, Jr.
Stephen D. Raber
Heidi K. Hubbard
George A. Borden
Robert J. Shaughnessy
David S. Blatt
Dane H. Butswinkas
Charles D. Niemeier
R. Hackney Wiegmann
Robert M. Cary
Kevin M. Hodges
David M. Zinn
Joseph G. Petrosinelli
Steve M. Farina
Kevin M. Downey
Thomas G. Hentoff
Paul B. Gaffney
Emmet T. Flood
Kenneth C. Smurzynski
John E. Schmidtlein
Craig D. Singer
J. Andrew Keyes
Enu Mainigi
Michael F. O'Connor
Margaret A. Keeley
Tobin J. Romero
William T. Burke
John E. Joiner
Nicholas J. Boyle
Adam L. Perlman
David A. Forkner
Jonathan M. Landy
Christopher N. Manning
Ryan T. Scarborough
Thomas H. L. Selby
Kevin Hardy
Edward C. Barnidge
Joseph M. Terry
F. Greg Bowman
Ana C. Reyes
Jonathan B. Pitt
David I. Berl
Edward C. Reddington
Daniel P. Shanahan
Richmond T. Moore
Kenneth J. Brown
Lance A. Wade
Charles Davant, IV
Dov P. Grossman
Holly M. Conley
Matthew V. Johnson
Carl R. Metz
John McNichols
David S. Kurtzer-Ellenbogen
Paul E. Boehm
Stephen J. Fuzesi
Katherine M. Turner
Stanley E. Fisher
John S. Williams
C. Bryan Wilson
Samuel B. Davidoff
Amanda M. MacDonald

Beth A. Stewart
Steven M. Pyser
Grant A. Geyerman
David M. Krinsky
Simon A. Latcovich
Benjamin M. Greenblum
Sarah F. Kirkpatrick
Adam D. Harber
Ashley W. Hardin
Neelum J. Wadhwani
R. Kennon Poteat, III
Amy M. Saharia
Jessica B. Rydstrom
Thomas S. Fletcher
Steven M. Cady
Liam J. Montgomery
Christopher J. Mandernach
Colette T. Connor
Katherine A. Trefz
David R. J. Riskin
Sarah M. Harris
Jessica L. Pahl
Matthew B. Nicholson
Elise M. Baumgarten
Carol J. Pruski

Senior Counsel
Paul Martin Wolff
William F. McDaniels
Jerry L. Shulman
Terrence O'Donnell
Stephen L. Urbanczyk
Philip J. Ward
F. Whitten Peters
James T. Fuller, III
John J. Buckley, Jr.
Douglas R. Marvin
Paul Mogin
Lon E. Musslewhite
Barry S. Simon
Kevin T. Baine

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:23 a.m. in Room SD–106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Gardner, Portman, Menendez, Shaheen, Murphy, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today the committee will hold the nominations hearing for four important positions. Our nominees today are: Ms. Lisa Kenna, to be Ambassador to Peru; Ms. Leora Levy, to be Ambassador to Chile; the Honorable Aldona Wos, to be Ambassador to Canada; and Mr. William Popp, to be Ambassador to Guatemala.

One of our own, Senator Chris Murphy, will be introducing his fellow—what do you call a Connecticut person, Chris? Connecticuteur? What is it?

Senator MURPHY. Nutmeggers.

The CHAIRMAN. Nutmeggers. I like that. All right.

He will be introducing another person from Connecticut, Ms. Leora Levy.

So with that, we will postpone our opening statements and give Senator Murphy the opportunity make the introduction. Senator Murphy?

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

Senator MURPHY. It is a raging debate, frankly, Mr. Chairman, as to what you call those of us from Connecticut. I grew up thinking it was Connecticutian. Others say Connecticuter. Nutmeggers is probably the safest. So maybe we have helped everybody learn something today.

I am really excited, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce to the committee Leora Levy, who is the nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Chile. Leora and I had the chance to sit down in my office a few months back, and I am glad that she is now before the committee for confirmation.

She was born in Havana, Cuba. She fled to America with her family in 1960, and she spent a lot of her childhood in North Carolina but came to Connecticut in 1988.

Before, though, coming to Connecticut, she went to Brown University and began a career on Wall Street where she became one of the first female commodity traders. And we were very glad that when she and her family located to Connecticut, she became incredibly involved in philanthropic endeavors. She has been very involved in the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, but in Connecticut has been on the board and co-chair actually of the board of the Bruce Museum of Art and a director of Soldiers Strong, which is a Connecticut-based organization that works with paralyzed veterans.

She is the finance chairman—has been the finance chairman of the Connecticut Republican Party. Admittedly I think she has raised a decent amount of money for my political opponents over the years. Though maybe politics does not stop exactly at the water's edge any longer, I think it really is important for us to support folks who have the qualifications that she does regardless of political party and political affiliation.

So thank you to the chairman for bringing her before the committee today. I look forward to her testimony and our committee's questions.

And can I just add? Senator Blumenthal was planning to be here to also offer an introduction, but he is caught up between another committee and votes on the floor. So he asks me to send his regards.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. It frequently happens here.

So today we will consider the nominations of these four individuals to serve our nation in four important posts in the western hemisphere. I welcome each of you to the committee and thank you each for your commitment to public service and, importantly, your family who will share in your sacrifices.

First, we have Ms. Lisa Kenna, nominated to be Ambassador to Peru. Ms. Kenna is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service who serves as the Executive Secretary of the Department of State. Her diplomatic career has included assignments in Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Before joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Kenna practiced law.

Peru and the U.S. are approaching 200 years of diplomatic relations. Our partnership rests on shared interests in democracy, respect for human rights, mutually beneficial trade and security. All of us encourage the administration to continue collaborating with Peru to confront the pandemic and promote transparent governance and investment rules, quality infrastructure, and effective law enforcement.

I look forward to hearing about your plans to steer this important diplomatic relationship through any challenges that might occur ahead.

Ms. Levy has already been introduced, but she will go to Chile. Chile is one of our closest partners in Latin America and, as a successful free market democracy, is a beacon of hope in the region. Chile has had a free trade agreement with the U.S. since 2004 and is the only Latin American country in the visa waiver program.

Many of us are concerned about Chile's participation in the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. Chilean institutions have repelled the worst aspects of China's state-directed financing for now, but that can change as Chile seeks to finance growing demands for public services. I look forward to hearing from you on the best course of action to strengthen U.S. interests in Chile.

Third, we have Dr. Aldona Wos, nominated to be Ambassador to Canada. Dr. Wos is Vice Chair of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships. She previously served as U.S. Ambassador to Estonia, a position for which she was confirmed unanimously by the Senate in November 2004. She is also a licensed physician with a distinguished career in health care and has served as Secretary of Health and Human Services for the State of North Carolina.

Canada is a top trading partner, a NATO ally and a critical partner in the defense of democratic principles around the globe. In 2027, we will celebrate 200 years of formal diplomatic relations. Every day billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of people cross the U.S.-Canadian border, the longest undefended border in the world. Whether it is competition with China, Russian belligerence in the Arctic, the homeland defense mission against ballistic missile threats or cybersecurity, we must ensure our unique relationship with Canada adapts to emerging strategic challenges and opportunities. In the short term, our pandemic response must account for the particular characteristics of and minimize the economic cost to communities on both sides of our shared borders.

On a parochial matter, Ambassador Wos, I want to specifically call your attention to the current negotiations over the Columbia River Treaty. I have been closely engaged in that with my partner, Senator Maria Cantwell, and between the two of us, we have partnered with the State Department as negotiations continue over the Columbia River Treaty. This treaty is of primary importance to the people of Idaho and to the Pacific Northwest. It will greatly impact our water and our economy. I am following it very closely, as is Senator Cantwell, and we are working closely together on that issue. I ask that you make the successful and speedy conclusion of those negotiations a top priority of your service, should you be confirmed. I look forward to hearing your views on ways we can better address our shared challenges.

Fourth, we have Mr. William Popp, nominated to be Ambassador to Guatemala. Mr. Popp is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He most recently served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. embassy in Brazil. Before his time in Brazil, Mr. Popp served in several economic-related diplomatic posts. As fellow democracies, the U.S. and Guatemala share an interest in responding to our citizens? expectations for good governance, economic prosperity, and public safety, including through effective border security and an orderly migration system. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on advancing this important partnership.

With that, Senator Menendez.

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I am forced to note that this is another in a series of hearings that you have noticed unilaterally and over Democratic objections.

Earlier this week, I mentioned more than 60 oversight requests I sent to Secretary Pompeo, requests that have almost entirely gone unanswered. After 4 years, the administration's policy on oversight requests is crystal clear: a complete rejection of Congress? constitutional authority in foreign affairs and corresponding responsibility to conduct oversight. And unless they absolutely have to engage with us, they will not.

The only way to change that dynamic is if we stick up for ourselves, we do not let ourselves be bullied either by the President or the Secretary of State. Unfortunately, that is not happening.

Ms. Kenna, a senior aide to Secretary Pompeo and one of the nominees on today's panel, is a case in point. Chairman Engel and I have joint outstanding requests to interview Ms. Kenna in relation to two separate and corrosive episodes. The first relates to the political targeting of career employees at the State Department by Trump appointees, and the second concerns the firing of the State Department Inspector General while he had an active investigation into Secretary Pompeo. The Department is stonewalling as usual. They will not authorize Ms. Kenna to sit for an interview. So as a last resort, we urged you not to move forward with the nominations hearing for her.

Now, I sympathize with Ms. Kenna. The Department has put her in a terrible position, but why should we move forward with a nominee when the Department of State is refusing to authorize her to speak with Congress on critical oversight matters. The stonewalling is particularly egregious here given that the Secretary of State is seeking to hide his own possible wrongdoing in connection with the firing of Steve Linick. This undermines our role and our ability to do our jobs on behalf of the American people and it should not have happened regardless of how much pressure the Secretary has put.

I need to make one last point before I turn to some country-specific issues.

Mr. Chairman, you have frequently indicated that my objections to your handling of certain nominations are related to political or policy differences. And I am honestly not sure what you mean by that. Is asking for an interview with Ms. Kenna to find out what she knows about the firing of the State Department Inspector General a political or policy difference? Is urging Michael Pack to acknowledge and fix his false statements to the committee and the IRS a political or policy difference? Is asking for more information concerning allegations that Doug Manchester engaged in blatantly sexist behavior and created a hostile work environment for female employees a political or policy difference? I do not think so.

Now, we are reviewing the nomination for Canada at a particularly turbulent time in U.S.-Canada relations. The Trump administration's approach has included the levying of tariffs due to supposed national security considerations, a half-baked attempt to

block the export of protective masks during the pandemic, and the occasional insult hurled by a White House senior advisor at Prime Minister Trudeau. I think we can agree that these are the tactics we aim at an economic adversary, not at one of our top trading partners. That is how we treat our enemies, not an ally whose sons and daughters have fought and died alongside American soldiers in multiple theaters over the last century.

But amidst this chaos, there have been some positive advances. Thanks to Democratic leadership, we were able to include stronger provisions on labor and environmental standards in the new U.S.-Canada-Mexico Free Trade Agreement, provisions that will directly benefit American workers and families.

So I hope to hear a new approach from our nominee on how we can actually strengthen our alliance and economic partnership with Canada.

I am pleased that at my request the nominee for Guatemala has been added to this panel. The challenges in Guatemala require steady leadership, but again I have been deeply troubled by the President's policies. For a year, the administration suspended foreign assistance to Guatemala, the very funding we need to advance our national interests and address the violence and poverty forcing people to flee their country. We coerced the Guatemalan Government into a supposed safe third country agreement so that we can transfer asylum seekers from the United States to pursue protection in Guatemala, an agreement that endangers the lives of vulnerable people and appears to conflict with U.S. law. And we have deported dozens of COVID-positive individuals back to Guatemala during the pandemic and threatened Guatemalan officials with visa sanctions if they refuse the flights.

It is disturbing yet hardly surprising that the Guatemalan President said in May, quote, I don't believe the U.S. is an ally to Guatemala because they don?t treat us like one.

So I look forward to our nominee's thoughts on that.

Aside from the oversight matters I mentioned, I am also pleased we are reviewing a nomination for review, a close diplomatic, economic, and security partner in addressing the political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela even as they have experienced their own political turmoil in the last 2 years and struggled with COVID–19.

And lastly, I am looking forward to having a conversation with Ms. Levy about some of her previous comments that she has made. I want to understand if that is the nature of what we can expect if she were to be confirmed as the United States Ambassador.

With that, I look forward to the nominees? testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. To each of the nominees, thank you again for your willingness to serve.

Your full statement will be included in the record. So we would ask that you keep your remarks to about 5 minutes, and then you will be asked to answer questions. We will start with Lisa Kenna. The floor is yours for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF LISA S. KENNA, OF VERMONT, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PERU

Ms. KENNA. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished 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 Peru. I thank the President and Secretary Pompeo for placing their trust in me. And if confirmed, I will work diligently with members of this committee and other Members of Congress to advance American interests, strengthen cooperation with our friend Peru across all sectors, and to further promote our shared values of democracy, prosperity, and greater security throughout the region.

I would like to thank my two daughters, Amelia and Isabel, who are here with me today for understanding and supporting my commitment to public service. These two young women are the embodiment of resilience, and I could not be more proud of who they are and what they represent. I also thank my sister Julie; my mother-in-law, Connie Kenna; and my incredible group of professional colleagues and friends and family for the support they have given me and Amelia and Isabel, particularly in the many years since the death of my husband Roger and my mother Marjorie who were so central to my life.

I am blessed to come from a family that believes in serving our country and others. My mother was raised by her own single mother on a tiny farm in Indiana and dedicated her life to caring for nursing home residents as a volunteer social worker for 40 years. My father served for decades as a pilot in the Air Force. I myself began my government service in my final year of college and have served faithfully across both Republican and Democratic administrations ever since. The longer I have been in public service, the more I am convinced that America is the world's most exceptional nation.

Over the past 5 years as a senior staffer for three different secretaries of state, I have had the great privilege of working on virtually every issue of foreign policy consequence, including those concerning the western hemisphere and Peru specifically. If confirmed, I will maintain the United States? vital relationship with Peru which has long been one of our closest partners in the region.

Recently, Mission Peru has performed heroically to sustain our strong partnership and serve our fellow Americans in these challenging times. As you know, when the Government of Peru closed its borders to stem the spread of COVID–19, thousands of American citizens requested support in returning to the United States. The State Department and my team in the Operations Center that staffed the Repatriation Task Force worked closely with Peruvian authorities, local partners, and airlines to repatriate over 12,000 American citizens and legal permanent residents. We will not rest until the last American who wishes to return home from Peru has the opportunity to do so.

In terms of further fighting the virus, President Trump and President Vizcarra recently affirmed their intention to intensify cooperation, and the United States has offered additional support to meet Peru's health care needs. As we move to reopen our econo-

mies, we hope to again focus on more traditional areas of cooperation, including security, democratic governance, trade, and cultural and educational ties.

We must also expand our joint efforts to tackle the scourge of transnational organized crime that threatens both of our countries, including by cutting off the sources of illicit financing. American investments to dismantle the narcotics trade and reduce the cultivation and production of coca and cocaine have paid some dividends. Although there is considerably more work to be done, the Government of Peru has committed to eradicating coca with U.S. support in the country's highest-yield areas.

Illegal mining, which is linked to narcotrafficking and transnational criminal networks, endangers public health, damages Peru's environment, and promotes human trafficking. To better fight the problem together, our governments signed an agreement in 2017 that will provide economic development alternatives and enhance Peru's capacity to prosecute cases connected with illegal mining.

The U.S. and Peru are also growing our shared support for a peaceful return to democracy in Venezuela. Maduro's manmade crisis has driven millions to flee their country. And Peru, as founder of the Lima Group, has shown leadership in generously hosting nearly 1 million displaced Venezuelans and frequently calling out the regime for its flagrant human rights abuses.

Trade, tourism, and educational exchanges have drawn our two countries closer together in recent years. Before the COVID–19 pandemic, the annual number of U.S. visitors to Peru exceeded 580,000, and the United States remains a primary destination for Peruvian students seeking to study abroad.

So too are we growing closer in trade. 2019 marked the 10th anniversary of the U.S.-Peru Trade-Promotion Agreement, a cornerstone of our bilateral relationship that sets high standards for both countries concerning market access and protections for both investments and the environment. If confirmed, I will continue to build the important bonds, economic and otherwise, for the peoples of both countries.

I would look forward to working with this committee to achieve our shared goals, and I am happy to answer all of your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kenna follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LISA KENNA

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, It's an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Peru. I thank the President and Secretary Pompeo for placing their trust in me. If confirmed, I will work diligently with this committee and other Members of Congress to advance American interests, strengthen cooperation with our friend Peru across all sectors, and further promote our shared values of democracy, prosperity, and greater security throughout the region.

I would like to thank my two daughters—Amelia and Isabel—for accepting my commitment to public service. I also thank my sister Julie, my mother-in-law Connie Kenna, and my incredible group of friends for the support they've given me, Amelia, and Isabel, particularly in the many years since the deaths of my husband Roger and my mother Marjorie who were so central to my life.

I am blessed to come from a family that believes in serving our country and other people. My mother was raised by her own single mother on a tiny farm in Indiana

and dedicated her life to caring for nursing home residents as a volunteer social worker for 40 years. My father served for decades as a pilot in the Air Force. I myself began my government service in my final year of college and have served faithfully across both Republican and Democratic administrations ever since. The longer I've been in public service, the more I am convinced America is the world's most exceptional nation.

Over the past five years, as a senior staffer for three different secretaries of state, I've had the great privilege of working on virtually every issue of foreign policy consequence, including those concerning the Western Hemisphere, and Peru specifically. If confirmed, I will maintain the United States' vital relationship with the Republic of Peru, which has long been one of our closest partners in the region.

Recently, Mission Peru has performed heroically to sustain our strong partnership and serve our fellow Americans in these challenging times. As you know, when the Government of Peru closed its borders to stem the spread of COVID–19, thousands of American citizens requested assistance to return to the United States. The State Department, and my team in the Operations Center that staffed the Repatriation Task Force, worked closely with Peruvian authorities, airlines, and local partners to repatriate over 12,000 U.S. citizens and Legal Permanent Residents. We will not rest until the last American who wants to return from Peru has an opportunity to do so.

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I look forward to working with the committee to achieve these shared goals, and I am happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Kenna.

We will now hear from Ms. Levy.

STATEMENT OF LEORA ROSENBERG LEVY, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE

Ms. LEVY. Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before this committee seeking your confirmation to be the next United States Ambassador the Republic of

Chile. I am humbled and grateful to have the trust and confidence of President Trump and Secretary Pompeo. If confirmed, I will work every day to be a champion of American diplomacy.

I would like to recognize my family: my husband Steve and son David behind me; and my sons, Michael and Ben, who could not be with me today but are here in spirit; and my parents, Zava and Tom Rosenberg, who brought me to America and instilled in me a fierce love for our country and our freedoms. Their love and support have enabled me to pursue this lifelong dream to serve my country.

I was born in Cuba and escaped Castro's Communist revolution with my family in 1960. My family history also includes the perilous escape of my mother and her parents from Lithuania to Cuba in 1940.

At Brown University, I majored in international relations and passed the Foreign Service exam as a senior. But I took a different path and became one of the first women commodity traders on Wall Street as an international sugar trader, steel trader, and copper concentrates traffic executive, shipping hundreds of thousands of tons of copper concentrates from Chile to ports around the world.

As a patriot, civic leader, philanthropist, and businesswoman, my leadership experience and demonstrated ability to achieve results make me a strong candidate to represent the American people as a U.S. ambassador. If confirmed, I would be proud to lead the embassy in Santiago with representatives from seven cabinet-level agencies and outstanding locally employed staff who make it possible to advance U.S. interests and values delivering important results for the American people.

Chile is one of our strongest allies in the hemisphere. The United States and Chile hold deeply shared values and commitments to democratic governance, regional security, human rights, rule of law, and free markets to create economic opportunity and prosperity for all. In a recent telephone call, President Trump thanked President Pinera for Chile's unwavering support for democracy and freedom in the region. As the United States, Chile, and many countries around the world battle the COVID–19 pandemic, President Trump also offered U.S. assistance to help Chile provide critical care to its citizens. The President praised Chile's proactive and balanced approach to protecting the health and livelihoods of Chileans. If confirmed, I would strive to enhance this cooperation between our countries in the fight against COVID–19.

Having followed developments of the civil unrest in Chile since October 2019, it is encouraging to see that the Chilean Government, opposition parties, civil society, and groups who feel disenfranchised have made steady progress toward resolving outstanding issues through civil discourse, balanced legislation, and the rule of law grounded in strong democratic institutions, as they approach an October referendum on the question of whether to write a new constitution.

Chile has been a regional model of the transformational possibilities of democratic governance and free markets to achieve stable economic growth and enduring prosperity. Both the United States and Chile support free, fair, and reciprocal trade. Since our free trade agreement went into effect in 2004, bilateral trade has tri-

pled. Supporting U.S. businesses in Chile and Chilean businesses investing in the United States will further enhance economic opportunity and prosperity for both countries.

Chile is home to the oldest and largest Fulbright program in the hemisphere. The 2,700 Chileans who study at U.S. colleges and universities contribute to our mutual understanding and provide substantial support to our higher education sector. Thousands of American travelers visit Chile to discover its rich culture and marvel at its natural beauty every year. Prior to the pandemic, the number of Chileans visiting the U.S. increased more than fourfold in the last 5 years. When it is once again safe to travel, I would, if confirmed, work to encourage even more robust and wide-ranging trade, tourism, and people-to-people engagements between our countries.

From collaboration in science and technology to educational and cultural exchanges, investment in sustainable energy, support for entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprises, and the promotion of democratic values, U.S.-Chile cooperation benefits both of our countries and reaffirms the United States as Chile's likeminded, reliable partner of choice.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Chilean Government and Chilean people to build upon our strong relationship and to promote our shared values. I would also look forward to working with your committee, your colleagues, staff, and all U.S. stakeholders to advance the interests of the United States and to deepen the bonds between our countries. If given the honor of serving as U.S. Ambassador to Chile, my top priority will always be the safety and security of embassy staff and all Americans in Chile.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Levy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEORA LEVY

Good morning, thank you Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before this committee seeking your confirmation to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Chile. I am humbled and grateful to have the trust and confidence of President Trump and Secretary Pompeo. If confirmed, I will work every day to be a Champion of American Diplomacy.

I would like to recognize my family—my husband Steve and sons David, Michael and Ben; and my parents, Zava and Tom Rosenberg, who brought me to America and instilled in me a fierce love for our country and our freedoms. Their love and support have enabled me to pursue this lifelong dream to serve my country.

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If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Chilean Government and the Chilean people to build upon our strong relationship and to promote shared values. I would also look forward to working with your committee, your colleagues, staff, and all U.S. stakeholders to advance the interests of the United States and to deepen the bonds between our countries. If given the honor of serving as U.S. Ambassador to Chile, my top priority will always be the safety and security of Embassy staff and all Americans in Chile.

Thank you, I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Levy.

We will now turn to Dr. Wos.

STATEMENT OF HON. ALDONA Z. WOS, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO CANADA

Ambassador WOS. Thank you. Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez and distinguished members of this committee, I am honored to be with you here today as President Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Canada. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for their trust and confidence in me to lead our engagement with our neighbor and important ally Canada.

I am appreciative of the time that the members of this committee and staff have spent with me.

The United States-Canada relationship is one of enduring strength. It is built on broad and deep ties between our peoples, shared value, extensive trade, strategic global cooperation, and defense partnerships.

If confirmed, my priorities will be to actively support our national security, encourage economic growth and prosperity, and promote resilience at Mission Canada.

Canada is one of our most important partners and allies. As a member of NATO, the organization of America States, the United Nations, and many other forums, Canada has served valiantly to advance missions in Iraq, the Baltics, and Central and Eastern Europe. If confirmed, I will encourage Canada to continue to provide critical capabilities to the alliance by meeting the commitments that all NATO leaders agreed to in the 2014 Wales Pledge. As the former United States Ambassador to Estonia, I have firsthand witnessed the value of NATO.

The United States and Canada share continental security through NORAD, the only bi-national military command in the world. To date, we take on many international priorities, including issues concerning China, Russia, the Ukraine, Iran, Venezuela, counterterrorism, and the Arctic. Canada is also one of our closest intelligence partners and a member of the Five Eyes alliance.

If confirmed, I will build on our existing bilateral cooperation to counter China's malign activities and to continue to raise concerns regarding authorization of access to the 5G networks by Huawei and other untrusted vendors. I will make clear the United States Government's deep concern over China's retaliatory and arbitrary detention of two Canadian citizens.

The United States-Canada bilateral trade and investment relationship is one of the world's largest. Each year we exchange over $700 billion in goods and services. Canada is the largest market for export goods for 30 States.

Prior to the pandemic, about 400,000 people and $2 billion worth of goods and services crossed our borders daily. More than 14 million Americans crossed the world's longest land border to visit Canada each year.

Our countries share highly integrated supply chains, electrical grids, and energy transmission. The USMCA will strengthen and expand our economies in the digital age. And we must continue to promote transparent and reliable sources of critical minerals through open and sustainable supply chains.

Throughout the pandemic, our governments have worked together at the highest level. My experiences battling emerging health threats such as HIV and AIDS as a doctor in New York City and the Ebola virus threats as Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services revealed the importance of collaboration and communication with all stakeholders to ensure the health and welfare of our citizens.

For me, Mission Canada is personal. I was born under imposed Communist rule to parents Wanda, a slave labor survivor, and Paul, Pablo, a righteous gentile and a concentration camp survivor. We left everything behind in our native Poland seeking political freedom, and we emigrated to the United States on board the MS Batory. In 1961, we landed in Montreal, Canada.

The United States by way of Canada gave us freedom, dignity, and the opportunity to work towards a secure and prosperous future.

As a naturalized citizen, I have deep respect for our fundamental American values of freedom and democracy.

I will use what I have learned through my diverse life experiences to represent the interests of the United States and all its citizens with strengthening our critical alliance with Canada.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family for their unwavering love and support and to introduce my son Andrew who was able to accompany me here today.

To the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering all your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Wos follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ALDONA ZOFIA WOS

Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez, I am honored to be with you today as President Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Canada. I am grateful to President Trump, and Secretary Pompeo, for their trust and confidence in me to lead our engagement with our neighbor, and important ally, Canada.

I am appreciative of the time that members of this committee and staff have spent with me. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you.

The U.S.-Canada relationship is one of enduring strength. It is built on broad and deep ties between our peoples, shared values, extensive trade, strategic global cooperation, robust defense partnerships, and good governance.

If confirmed as Ambassador, my priorities will be to actively support our national security, encourage economic growth and prosperity, and promote resilience at Mission Canada.

We share over 5,525 miles of the world's longest border, of which 40 percent is water, and hundreds of land and sea border crossings. Our partnership in the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty is considered a model for cross-border cooperation on water issues. More than 14 million Americans visit Canada each year, relying on our Customs and Border Protection and the Canada Border Services Agency, which work tirelessly to safeguard our citizens, while ensuring the free flow of legitimate goods.

Canada is one of our most important partners and allies, as a member of NATO, the Organization of American States, the United Nations, and many other bilateral, regional, and global forums. If confirmed, I will encourage Canada to honor its NATO commitments. While serving as Ambassador to Estonia, I witnessed firsthand the significance and value of NATO.

The U.S. and Canada share continental security through the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the only bi-national military command in the world. Together, we tackle many international priorities, including issues concerning China, Russia/Ukraine, Iran, Venezuela, counterterrorism, peacekeeping, and the Arctic. Canada is one of our closest intelligence partners, a member of the Five Eyes alliance. The United States and Canada are vigilant in protecting our cyber security. Serving in Estonia, I saw the importance of a robust cyber security system, and subsequently we all witnessed the devasting cyber-attacks Estonia suffered.

If I am confirmed, one of my priorities will be to build on our existing bilateral cooperation with Canada to join in countering China's malign activities and continuing to raise concern regarding authorization of Huawei's and other untrusted vendors' access to 5G networks. Additionally, I will make clear the U.S. Government's deep concern over China's retaliatory and arbitrary detention of two Canadian citizens, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor.

The U.S.-Canada bilateral trade and investment relationship is one of the world's largest and most comprehensive, supporting millions of jobs. Each year, we exchange over $700 billion in goods and services. Prior to the COVID–19 pandemic, almost 400,000 people and $2 billion worth of goods and services crossed our borders daily. Canada is the largest market for export goods for 30 states, including my home state of North Carolina.

Our countries share highly integrated supply chains, electrical grids, and energy transmission. Canada is the United States' leading supplier of energy, including crude oil, electricity, and uranium. The ongoing COVID–19 crisis has shown us that, now more than ever, we must promote a transparent and reliable source of critical minerals and open and sustainable supply chains.

I am looking forward to the implementation and future successes of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which will drive growth and economic prosperity for all of North America.

The modernizations of the USMCA will strengthen and expand our economies in the digital age. I am dedicated to ensuring the USMCA's success by working with partners across government.

If I am confirmed as Ambassador, in addition to strengthening our economic prosperity, I will work with our Canadian counterparts to continue to modernize NORAD. I will also work to improve information sharing between U.S. and Canadian law enforcement and border agencies. I appreciate the continued cooperation and collaboration with Canada on Arctic issues, such as health, search and rescue, energy, science, economic development, and security. If confirmed, I will work to build resilience and preparedness at Mission Canada.

Throughout the COVID–19 pandemic, our governments have worked closely together at the highest levels. My experiences battling unknown emerging health threats such as HIV/AIDS while caring for patients as a doctor in NYC—and later, the Ebola virus threat in North Carolina as Secretary—have shown me the importance of collaboration and communication with all stakeholders in an ever-changing unknown environment. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue the collective efforts to secure the welfare and safety of our citizens, while maintaining our open supply chains.

For me, Mission Canada is very personal. I was born under imposed Communist rule to parents who were slave labor and concentration camp survivors. We left everything behind in our native Poland, seeking political freedom. In 1961, we emigrated to the United States aboard the MS Batory and landed in Montreal, Canada. My father, Paul Wos, a Righteous Gentile, and mother, Wanda Wos, instilled in me the importance of freedom, democracy, and respect for others.

The United States, by way of Canada, gave me, and my family, freedom, dignity, and the opportunity to work towards a secure and prosperous future.

As a naturalized citizen, I have a deep respect for our fundamental American values—freedom, democracy, free enterprise and religious freedom—as they have guided my path in both the private sector and public service.

As a Medical Doctor practicing in NYC at the height of the AIDS epidemic; a former U.S. Ambassador to Estonia; and former Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, responsible for 18,000 employees and a $20 billion budget, I brought my bicultural background and diverse life skills to address many complex and impactful challenges, including advocating for and representing the interests of the United States and all its citizens.

If confirmed, I will continue my public service for our country and its citizens, which I love.

I would like to thank my family—my life partner and amazing husband, Louis DeJoy, and our twins, Ania and Andrew, for their unwavering love and support.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Dr. Wos.

We will now turn to Mr. Popp.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM W. POPP, OF MISSOURI, 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

Mr. POPP. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala.

I would like to begin by recognizing my family. In particular, I want to thank my wife of 21 years Milena and my daughter, Alicia Pilar. I am grateful to both of them for joining me in the privilege, joys, and sacrifices of serving our nation overseas.

As a career Foreign Service officer, I have been honored to represent the United States in six postings across Latin America and Africa. From Nicaragua to Angola, Colombia to Brazil, Kenya, back

to Brazil, I have advanced U.S. interests and worked with partner nations to achieve shared goals. Most recently, I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Brazil, our sixth largest diplomatic mission in the world, including 21 months as Chargé d'affaires. If confirmed, I believe this experience will be valuable in leading our mission and deepening our partnership with Guatemala.

The United States and Guatemala share a historic relationship, strong economic ties and mutual security interests, as well as deep people-to-people bonds. As close neighbors and democratic nations, we both gain immensely from enhanced cooperation.

Since his inauguration in January, President Giammattei has prioritized partnering with the United States. He has demonstrated commitment to increasing security, curbing irregular migration, fighting corruption, supporting private sector-driven growth, and supporting democracy.

We are at a moment of important opportunity to maximize our partnership. At the same time we face the tremendous challenge of COVID–19. More than ever, it is vital that we work together.

First, protecting our citizens? security, combating crime, and addressing the regional challenge of irregular migration must be priorities. It is key to work together to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, increase border security, strengthen justice institutions, and highlight the dangers associated with the long journey to the U.S. border. With U.S. partnership, Guatemala is making progress. New courts have been established for prosecuting human traffickers, extortion cases, and femicide. Strong cooperation with the Guatemalan Navy Special Forces has reduced maritime narcotics trafficking. And migrant encounters of Guatemalans at the U.S. southern border have significantly fallen over the last year. Notwithstanding this progress, more capacity building is needed as well as the sustained commitment of all branches of the Government of Guatemala.

Second, it is vital that we broaden prosperity for both countries by unleashing private investment, expanding trade, and increasing formal sector employment. With one of the youngest populations in the world, the lowest tax revenue collection rate in the Americas, and nearly 60 percent of the population living in poverty, generating opportunities for Guatemalan youth, women, and the indigenous community is imperative. Our assistance is an important part of the solution, but so is working with the public and private sectors to create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. If confirmed, I will seek to create more opportunities that benefit both Guatemalan and U.S. businesses.

Third, it is crucial to promote the rule of law, fight corruption, respect human and labor rights, and end impunity. U.S. assistance is strengthening Guatemala's judicial institutions, and President Giammattei has taken an important step to establish a new anti-corruption commission in the executive branch. Together we are fostering a dialogue with indigenous communities and civil society in Guatemala. We should deepen efforts to build the integrity of public institutions and enhance access to justice, as well as bolster space for civil society. A more just and inclusive Guatemala will help address challenges for both our countries.

Finally, Guatemala is an ally in creating a hemisphere for freedom. President Giammattei's recognition of Venezuela's legitimate government and democratically elected National Assembly, as well as his breaking of ties with the illegitimate Maduro regime and his reinforcement of relations with Taiwan are powerful statements. Closer U.S.-Guatemala cooperation will benefit our citizens as well as increase freedom more broadly.

In conclusion, if confirmed, I will work steadfastly to advance U.S. interests and values. That begins with protecting the over 60,000 U.S. citizens who reside in Guatemala, as well as the thousands who visit each year. It also means pursuing a shared agenda with Guatemalan partners for security, prosperity, good governance, and democracy.

If confirmed as Chief of Mission, I will lead the nearly 550 American and Guatemalan professionals in Mission Guatemala to advance this agenda by creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace. I will vigilantly safeguard resources and maximize effectiveness across U.S. agencies to build a more secure and prosperous future with Guatemala.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Popp follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM W. POPP

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala.

I would like to begin by recognizing my family, without whose support I would not be here. In particular, I want to thank my wife of 21 years, Milena, and my daughter Alicia Pilar. I am grateful to both for joining me in the privilege, joys, and sacrifices of serving our nation overseas.

As a career Foreign Service Officer, I have been honored to represent the United States in six postings across Latin America and Africa. From Nicaragua to Angola, Colombia to Brazil, and Kenya back to Brazil, I have advanced U.S. interests and collaborated with partner nations to achieve shared goals. Most recently, I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Brazil, our sixth-largest diplomatic mission in the world. This assignment included serving as Chargé d'Affaires for 21 months, helping to drive an unprecedented expansion in bilateral relations. I believe, if confirmed, this experience will be valuable in constructively leading our Mission and deepening our partnership with Guatemala.

The United States and Guatemala share a historic relationship, strong economic ties, mutual security interests, and deep people-to-people bonds. As close neighbors and democratic nations, we both gain immensely from enhanced and sustained cooperation.

Since his inauguration in January, President Giammattei has prioritized partnering with the United States. He has demonstrated commitment to increasing security, curbing irregular migration, fighting corruption, and supporting private sector-driven growth. He has also underscored Guatemala's commitment to democracy, stood up for freedom in Venezuela, and reinforced relations with Taiwan.

As such, we are at an important moment of opportunity to maximize our partnership for security, prosperity, good governance, and democracy. At the same time, we face the tremendous challenge of COVID–19, with its painful human toll and economic impact. More than ever, it is vital that we work together.

First, protecting our citizens' security, combating transnational crime, and addressing the regional challenge of irregular migration must be priorities. To protect U.S. and Guatemalan citizens, and our respective homelands, it is key for us to work together to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, increase border security, strengthen justice institutions, and highlight the dangers associated with the long journey to the U.S. border. With U.S. partnership, Guatemala is making progress. New courts have been established for prosecuting human traffickers, extortion cases, and femicide. Strong cooperation with the Guatemalan Navy Special

Forces has reduced maritime narcotics trafficking. And migrant encounters of Guatemalans at the U.S. southern border have significantly fallen since the peak of the humanitarian and security crisis in May 2019. Notwithstanding this progress, more capacity building is needed as well as the sustained commitment of all branches of the Government of Guatemala.

Second, it is vital that we broaden prosperity for both countries by unleashing private investment, expanding trade, and increasing formal sector employment. With one of the youngest populations in the world, the lowest tax revenue collection rate in the Americas, and nearly 60 percent of the population living in poverty, generating opportunities for Guatemalan youth, women, and the indigenous community is imperative. Our assistance is an important part of the solution, but so is working with the public and private sectors to create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive, especially small and medium enterprises. If confirmed, I will seek to create more opportunities that benefit both Guatemalan and U.S. businesses.

Third, underlying security and prosperity is the crucial need to promote rule of law, fight corruption, respect human and labor rights, and end impunity. U.S. assistance is strengthening Guatemala's judicial institutions, and President Giammattei has taken an important step to establish a new anti-corruption commission to uncover corruption within the executive branch. Together, we are fostering dialogue with indigenous communities and civil society in areas of high migration. We should deepen these efforts to build the integrity of public institutions, enhance access to justice, and bolster space for civil society. A more just and inclusive Guatemala will have a positive effect on the challenges both our countries face.

Finally, Guatemala is an ally in the defense of democracy and creating a hemisphere of freedom.

President Giammattei's recognition of Venezuela's legitimate government and the democratically-elected National Assembly, his breaking of ties with the illegitimate Maduro regime, and his reinforcement of relations with Taiwan in the face of pressure from the PRC are powerful statements. Closer U.S.-Guatemala cooperation will benefit our citizens as well as increase freedom more broadly.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, if confirmed, I will work steadfastly to advance U.S. interests and values. That begins with protecting the over 60,000 U.S. citizens who reside in Guatemala, as well as the thousands who visit each year. It also means pursuing a shared agenda with our Guatemalan partners for security, prosperity, good governance, and democracy.

If confirmed as Chief of Mission, I will lead the nearly 550 American and Guatemalan professionals who comprise Mission Guatemala to advance this agenda by creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace. I will vigilantly safeguard resources and maximize effectiveness across U.S. agencies to build a more secure and prosperous future with Guatemala.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. And, again, thank you to all of our witnesses.

We are in the middle of three votes on the floor. I think all of us have voted on the first one. What I am going to do is get down to the end of the second one, and we will recess while we all go down and vote on the second one and the beginning of the third. And then we will be done with the three votes.

In the meantime, we will start questions. With that, Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, a procedural question if I may. Are we not close to the end of the second vote?

The CHAIRMAN. Fifteen minutes left, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Oh, 15 minutes left. Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Kenna, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, while I am pleased that we have a nominee for Peru, I am dismayed that you are appearing at this hearing without having complied with a request by Chairman Engel and I, outstanding since February, to be interviewed on critical matters. And while I put the onus of the responsibility on the State Department, the failure to comply with a

congressional request on critical oversight matters is also a reflection on you, one that I hope you can correct.

So let me start off by asking, will you commit to complying with all outstanding congressional requests for an interview and testimony, which include political retaliation and events surrounding the firing of the State Department Inspector General?

Ms. KENNA. Senator, thank you for your comments.

I am happy to appear and to cooperate and to comply with the requests. I have already offered a date, August 7th, to the committees for that interview.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. That is the first of my knowledge. And when you say to the committee, this is a joint request. So I want you to understand that as far as I am concerned, yes, Chairman Engel has a request and I have a request as the ranking member to join in that.

Ms. KENNA. I understand that, Senator, and it is my understanding as well that this was a joint request, and our offer was to the joint committee.

Senator MENENDEZ. So you are committing to appearing to answer all of these questions on August the 7th. Is that correct?

Ms. KENNA. That was my offer, yes. The offer was extended by the State Department to the committees. I believe it was part of a larger package.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. I am going to review that because at 10:11 today, 4 minutes before this hearing began, which is a complete insult to send us a message 4 minutes before the hearing began, the State Department said that you were ready to answer questions today, which of course in a 5-minute interval that I have and with 4 minutes? notice would not deal with the breadth and scope of issues that we seek to review with you. So I am going to hold you to that commitment to August 7, and I am going to judge the ability of proceeding with your nomination based upon your conformance with that.

While I have you here, let me ask you. You served in the Secretary's office during some of the most questionable events in U.S. foreign policy. Chief among them was the administration's withholding of U.S. security assistance to Ukraine. As we all now know, our U.S. policy towards Ukraine was hijacked by unofficial channels influenced by rogue actors with their own financial interests at heart and Russian disinformation that was peddled into the highest levels of the State Department. But you were there in the middle of it at the time. As Ambassador Sondland infamously testified, everyone was in the loop about Rudy Giuliani's involvement in Ukraine. And when he said everyone, he specifically named you.

Now, you have been a career Foreign Service officer for 20 years. You are no novice to the Secretary's office of how foreign policy is run. Was there ever any point where you stopped and thought to yourself this is not okay?

Ms. KENNA. Thank you for you question, Senator.

I was not part of any policy discussions on Ukraine. So it is true that I was copied on some emails that Ambassador Sondland sent. I understand I was copied largely because I was being asked to handle follow-up in terms of requesting phone calls. Certainly

when he says everyone was in the know, that would not include me. I was not a part of policy discussions on Ukraine.

Senator MENENDEZ. Were you a part of policy discussions on anything?

Ms. KENNA. Sorry.

Senator MENENDEZ. Were you a part of policy discussions on anything?

Ms. KENNA. Part of my role as the Executive Secretary is to review memoranda both for information and for decision that go to the Secretary of State to ensure that they have received proper review by other offices in the Department. I rarely joined policy discussions.

Senator MENENDEZ. Interesting.

What about when Ambassador Yovanovitch was recalled early for no reason other than she was subject to false attacks? Did you think that that was okay?

Ms. KENNA. It was a very painful and difficult time, Senator. I absolutely respect Ambassador Yovanovitch, who is one of our strongest career ambassadors. She is a consummate professional. It was very difficult to see what she went through at that time.

So it is my understanding that she was recalled because the President lost confidence in her, and every ambassador understands that we serve at the pleasure of the President. That does not mean that that experience was not very, very painful.

Senator MENENDEZ. So if you achieve this goal and somebody loses confidence with you simply because of politics, do you accept that as a career Foreign Service officer that that is the way you should be dispelled?

Ms. KENNA. We have no other choice, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Really.

Ms. KENNA. We serve at the——

Senator MENENDEZ. So let me ask you this. As Executive Secretary, you see essentially all the memos and paper that go to the Secretary. Correct?

Ms. KENNA. Nearly all, yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. And you are aware of the calls coming into the Secretary's office and the calls that he makes through you. Is that correct?

Ms. KENNA. I am aware of the vast majority of them, yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. You were fully aware that Rudy Giuliani was communicating with and providing documents to the Secretary in March of 2019. Is that correct?

Ms. KENNA. I was not aware of what the documents were about, no.

Senator MENENDEZ. But that he was providing documents. You were aware of that.

Ms. KENNA. I was aware that he delivered a package. I was not aware of the contents nor did I review that package.

Senator MENENDEZ. So as you sat in the Secretary's office, you were aware that Rudy Giuliani was bringing documents to the Secretary not long before Ambassador Yovanovitch was recalled early from Kiev, and you thought nothing of it.

Ms. KENNA. At the time, I did not know what the documents were about.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, what do you make of it now?

Ms. KENNA. It is deeply disturbing.

Senator MENENDEZ. Is there anything you would have done in hindsight that you would have wished you had done?

Ms. KENNA. Senator, my role as Executive Secretary is to run the Operations Center, which staffs the task forces that mitigate crises ranging from natural disasters, to COVID–19, to threats of violence against our embassies. I run the unit that reviews the memos that go to the Secretary. I do my best every day to run a professional operation that is based on integrity and respect for processes. I am not a policy advisor to the Secretary of State, and I was not included in discussions regarding the recall of Ambassador Yovanovitch or our general policy about Ukraine.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I have many other questions for Ms. Kenna, and I have questions for the other panelists. My time is well over. I will wait for a second round.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Portman?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for having this hearing. Once again we have an opportunity to help fill some positions that are crucial for our country's national security, in this case some key ambassadorships, and I appreciate your willingness to step forward.

I do have some questions for you. Ms. Levy, I would like to start with you. I really appreciated the opportunity to talk to you at least by phone in these virtual days about your views on Chile. And we talked a lot about issues and politics and policy. I have had the opportunity to visit, as you know, a few times. We talked about that. I know you know the country well. You know the culture. You know the language. Se puede hablar español, verdad?

Ms. LEVY. Si. Yo hablo español. Soy Cubana—Cubana Americana.

Senator PORTMAN. [Spanish spoken.] Well, you were born in Cuba.

Ms. LEVY. Yes, I was.

Senator PORTMAN. And came to the United States with your family, as you said.

I think it is really important we have somebody in these countries right now who really gets it, understands the culture, the language, and can immediately hit the ground running.

One of my concerns has been Chinese influence, as you know, in Latin America and particularly in Chile. I know the fruit growers, as an example, are interested in an arrangement with China, and there are other discussions of additional investments. And I think it is important that the United States have a strong position and that our presence is assertive and helpful to the Chilean people.

I know that President Piñera has worked well with this administration, and I know that their commitment to human rights, to democracy, to free markets really lines up with us better than other countries, including China.

So I wonder if you have any thoughts on that, how we can ensure that the U.S. presence—and this would go really to the other members of the panel also because all of you will be dealing with this issue. How can we be sure that the relationships, the shared values

that we have with these countries are emphasized to increase America's role in these countries? Maybe you can speak to that a little bit.

Ms. LEVY. Thank you very much for that important question, Senator Portman.

Yes. In fact, China's increasingly aggressive diplomatic posturing and what I call their hegemonic economic encroachment in Chile, in the region, and in other countries throughout the world will be a challenge for the next ambassador. And if confirmed as Ambassador to Chile from the United States, I will make it one of my priorities to engage in productive dialogue with our ally and partner Chile about the shared values that we hold as citizens in free countries, politically free, economically free. We value the rule of law. We value the citizens? rights to petition their government and to governments who respond to their citizens? wishes, not the other way around. Human rights. That is something that the United States and Chile both hold dear, and you cannot say the same for China.

It is evident from the success of our free trade agreement since 2004, which has tripled the trade between our countries, as well as new exciting programs like America Crece which supports U.S. investment in infrastructure and energy projects in Chile, as well as the very exciting public-private partnership in science and technology which harnesses the efforts of governments, the private sector, academia, as well as armed forces, in creating new and exciting scientific and technological projects in Chile.

Those are all platforms and tools that the next ambassador will be able to use to not only increase the trade and the mutual benefits of trade between our countries and also increase the closeness of our partnership. And those are the tools that I look forward to using in order to improve—sorry—to strengthen our already very robust and close relationship.

Thank you very much for that question.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Ms. Levy.

Just quickly to Ms. Kenna, the opioid epidemic has obviously hit America hard, as well as crystal meth and other drugs coming in, including cocaine. Unfortunately, Peru is one of those countries. I visited Peru. I think Peru and the United States have so much in common and the opportunity to increase that relationship in positive ways and to improve it.

But in terms of tackling the scourge of transnational organized crime, can you give us a sense of what you would do as Ambassador?

Ms. KENNA. Yes. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

This is obviously a core priority, and we have seen recently that the statistics concerning drug production have not improved for 2019. And unfortunately, with the onset of the COVID–19 pandemic, it is likely that we are going to face a similar situation in 2020.

So if confirmed, I would make it my priority to support the Government of Peru to deal with the COVID–19 pandemic just as quickly as possible so that we could get back to focusing on issues such as transnational organized crime and our counternarcotics effort.

So the U.S. is supporting Peru in the counternarcotics effort in a number of ways, most specifically with interdiction, eradication, and alternative development. We have seen Peru playing a leading role in terms of financing that effort in recent years. We would want to continue that trend while the United States would continue its role in terms of providing technical assistance, training, and intelligence sharing.

What I understand is that the political will is there to take on this challenge. We know that President Vizcarra committed to pacifying the VRAEM Region by 2021, which is a high-yield area for drugs. And so we would want to support the President's efforts in that respect. I understand that September and October of this year is another critical opportunity for the Peruvian Government in terms of resuming its operations in that high-yield area.

Illegal mining and illegal logging are other areas that are linked to transnational organized crime. So our support in all of those areas is going to be critical. We are working with the Peruvians to increase their police presence in areas that are currently undergoverned, and we support their efforts to restore areas that have been subject to environmental deforestation. And we are also working as an interagency group right now here in Washington to explore ways that we could better track the flow of the finances that are going to illegal mining, illegal logging, and counternarcotics because that is so critical to ensuring that those funds do not reach the criminal networks.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Ms. Kenna. I appreciate it. And I think those are all critical issues.

My time has expired, and I know members need to run and vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Portman.

As advertised, we are going to take a brief recess while I go down and vote. They tell me I am the last one. So I am going to go down and vote, be back as quickly as I can. Feel free to visit amongst yourselves, wear your masks, keep a social distance, and we will take it back up again as quickly as I can get back here.

The committee will be at ease, subject to call of the chair.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. By popular demand, Senator Portman is going to chair the committee while I go vote. So carry on. And Senator Portman, we will have the list here. And Senator Shaheen, it is up to you. You have the floor.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Portman for making that alteration.

I would like to begin with asking each of you—I want to pick up on the concerns that Senator Menendez raised about the work environment at the Department of State. And I share the concern about the OIG report, that some political appointees have acted improperly toward career officials on the basis of their perceived political or ideological views. And so I wonder if each of you would answer me the question, if confirmed, will you commit to treat career employees in a manner that is consistent with federal laws, regulations governing the management of State Department personnel? And I will begin with you, Ms. Kenna. I heard you say that you try and act professionally in your current role, but I wonder if you could just answer that with a simple yes or no.

Ms. KENNA. 100 percent, Senator. Yes, you have my commitment. I operate my office with absolute respect for every single individual every day. We are an office that embraces inclusivity and differences and diversity, and you have my commitment.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ms. Levy?

Ms. LEVY. Thank you for that question, Senator.

Absolutely yes. I appreciate the question tremendously because I wanted to incorporate into my remarks but did not have enough time to incorporate it, and I would really like to say what an honor and a privilege it has been to work with the professional career officers both in the State Department and the Foreign Service Institute. Every single person with whom I have interacted and worked has been dedicated to America, to the United States, to promoting American foreign policy, and to teaching me, as best they can, to be able to take this role as U.S. Ambassador to Chile. I have nothing but praise for them, and I look forward to continue learning. Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Dr. Wos?

Ambassador WOS. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, absolutely. I commit to treating every person at Mission Canada and, of course, the Department of State with enormous respect. And I have sheer admiration for them, and I will continue to do so as I have previously in my professional career. Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Popp?

Mr. POPP. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, absolutely. I have done so throughout my career over multiple assignments overseas and in Washington and would absolutely continue to do so, if confirmed.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you all very much.

Dr. Wos, I would like to begin with questions for you because New Hampshire has a very strong historic relationship with Canada. We have about a third of our citizens who are descendants of French Canadians who have come down to the United States. We have a very strong trading relationship back and forth every day across the border with Canada. And obviously, there are currently significant strains on that trading relationship, and we have a number of companies, also hospitals and medical providers in northern New Hampshire who are affected by the border closures because of COVID–19.

So can you talk about what we might be able to do that would better engage the Canadian Government and relevant U.S. agencies to ease some of the restrictions that have been detrimental to U.S. businesses in our northern border regions?

Ambassador WOS. Senator, thank you very much for that rather complicated question.

Because of the nature of the pandemic that we all face, it is currently, by mutual decision, beneficial to both our countries to continue to have restrictions at our border. But those restrictions are mostly for tourists and recreational activities of travel through the border.

It is critical for both our countries to continue to have our goods and services be able to flow freely through the borders. Prior to the

pandemic, we would have over $2 billion worth of goods and services across it. And our goal is to continue to make it as easy as possible for trade. And we also need to make sure that we have an ability to have our critical supplies for our supply chains go back and forth between our borders.

It is not only a State Department but it is across our agency at the highest level of government that we all have the same goal to increase trade, increase our economies, and increase our trade between the borders.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I would urge you—I am out of time, but I would urge you to continue to work very hard on that issue because it is having an impact on my State and I know other States that border Canada and really depend on that trade. As you pointed out, one of our oldest and best neighbors—it is unfortunate to have not just COVID–19 but some of the tariff issues interfere with that relationship in the way that it has. Thank you.

Senator PORTMAN [presiding]. Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much.

Thank you to all of our witnesses for their testimony today.

I wanted to start with you, Mr. Popp. I wanted to talk to you for a moment about the issue of corruption and freedom of the press in Guatemala. The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala was widely considered one of the most successful efforts there to curb criminal threats to democratic rule, but about a year ago, it was effectively disbanded. And since then, you have seen a rise in attacks, malicious lawsuits against prosecutors, judges, civil society actors, but we have also lost a tremendous tool with respect to promoting the rule of law and fighting corruption.

What do you foresee as our ability to try to reconstruct some of the entities that had been successful? What is the ability for Congress to appropriate funds to State Department accounts that would assist you in those efforts there?

Mr. POPP. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

It has, as you know, been a challenge in Guatemala for some time around corruption, rule of law issues, impunity. And I believe it is critical that the United States continue to partner with not only Guatemalan Government institutions but also civil society, the private sector, and institutions across the country to deepen the capacity of those that are fighting for access to justice, ending of impunity, and increasing the transparency within Guatemala. It is good for business. It is good for access for Guatemalans to achieve justice.

And the U.S. Government with support from Congress has obviously provided assistance to Guatemala for some time to help develop that capacity. I believe that it is critical to continue to build support for institutions and the prosecutors that have made some progress on combating corruption in Guatemala. There is much more to be done. If confirmed as Ambassador, I think there is much that can continue to be done, including using our voice as the U.S. Government in support of those actors that play such a crucial role in civil society and outside of government, including independent media, to call for transparency and to end impunity.

I also believe that there are tools that the Congress has given us, including visa revocations, Global Magnitsky sanctions, and other

tools that might be necessary to use at times to underscore the importance of access to justice in Guatemala.

Senator MURPHY. I sometimes worry about our overuse of those punitive measures, and so I hope that you will keep in touch with this committee about ways in which we can help support and fund some of the domestic initiatives to root out corruption.

Ms. Kenna, thank you for being here. I was glad to introduce one of my constituents, but I should note your Connecticut connections, having attended the University of Connecticut and spent some time in New Haven. So glad to have at least two folks with Connecticut connections before us today.

Ms. Kenna, I am deeply concerned about the overclassification of information. I think it is a problem that has become worse in this administration but, frankly, has been a tool that Presidents of both parties have used. And there are very strict requirements as to what information can be classified, and it all is connected to whether the disclosure of that information would be damaging to the security of the United States.

But I want to ask you a question because I understand you may have sent a communication in your role as Executive Secretary for internal deliberations regarding sensitive decisions being made by the Department to be classified regardless of whether it met the actual requirements in statute regarding classification of national security data.

Did you send a communication suggesting that internal communications within the agency regarding sensitive decision-making be classified?

Ms. KENNA. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I am not familiar with the particular message that you are referring to. So I would have to go back and take a look for that.

What I would say in terms of classification is we adhere to the law, and that is our goal.

Senator MURPHY. But you would agree that internal deliberations, regardless of how sensitive they be, are not inherently allowed to be classified. There is a strict set of requirements as to what is classified, and things that are politically embarrassing or politically sensitive are not in that set of criteria.

Ms. KENNA. Well, I would not think that simply because something is politically sensitive, that would not make it classified, no. So my role as Executive Secretary is to ensure that we have processes in place so that those determinations can be made by the proper authorities. And so when we get requests for guidance or when I have questions myself, I make sure that I go to the experts.

Senator MURPHY. I hope that if I have further questions for the record on this topic, that you will respond to them.

Ms. KENNA. Thank you, Senator. I will.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much.

Ms. KENNA. Thanks.

Senator PORTMAN. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Portman.

Ms. Kenna, I want to follow up on an issue that you were discussing with Senator Menendez. So my understanding is as Executive Secretary, you do review correspondence coming in to the Secretary of State?

Ms. KENNA. I review, yes, many memos, correspondence coming in. Yes, Senator.

Senator KAINE. And you testified that you were aware of a package of documents that came in from Rudy Giuliani but you did not review them. Why did you not review that package?

Ms. KENNA. It is not my specific role to review every document before it goes into the Secretary's office. My role is to—my office reviews the decision memos, the information memos, the letters that the Secretary is going to sign, other memos that are going to the Deputy Secretary and our Under Secretaries of State. So it is not my responsibility, however, to review every single package or document before it goes into the Secretary's office.

Senator KAINE. Were you told not to review correspondence from Rudy Giuliani?

Ms. KENNA. No, Senator, I was not.

Senator KAINE. Describe for me the kinds of correspondence that you do not review. So you have told me the kinds that your office does review. So if something comes into the office, I guess there is a go/no go decision. This is something that we review. This is something that we do not review. So describe for me the kinds of materials you do not review.

Ms. KENNA. Sure. If something would be marked ?eyes only? for the Secretary, I would not review it. If it is in a sealed envelope—you know, occasionally we get things from other cabinet secretaries, from the President that are marked ?eyes only.? If something is marked ?personal and confidential? I would not review it.

Senator KAINE. What was the Giuliani package? A sealed envelope, eyes only, or personal only?

Ms. KENNA. I do not know, sir. I am sorry.

Senator KAINE. Do you have a recollection of that package coming in?

Ms. KENNA. I have a recollection, yes, of the package arriving at the State Department. I cannot recall exactly how.

Senator KAINE. And do you have a recollection of your thinking about whether this was something you should review or should just go directly to the Secretary?

Ms. KENNA. I did not, no. In that particular case, no one brought it to me and said here is this package.

Senator KAINE. So you were not in a position to make a decision about what to do with that package. It just got right to the Secretary without routing through the Executive Secretary's office.

Ms. KENNA. Yes.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Mr. Popp, I want to ask you a question to follow up on Senator Murphy because this one troubles me. The CICIG was established by the U.N. and the Guatemalan Government with significant positive pressure from the United States under the administration of George W. Bush because of the massive corruption and impunity challenges in Guatemala. And in that sense, it was a little bit similar to the MACCIH, which was established in Honduras during the Obama administration between the U.S., the Honduran Government, and the Organization of American States.

So in the last year, the Honduran president has pulled the plug on MACCIH and the Guatemalan president has pulled the plug on

CICIG. And in both instances, it has been widely reported that the U.S. basically gave them a green light to do that, that the effort of the U.S. to help establish these anti-corruption investigative tribunals, which were bipartisan, that the Trump administration basically decided that it is okay, you can terminate them.

In the case of Guatemala, it has been widely reported that because Guatemala agreed to move their embassy to Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and also because I think they were helpful with U.S. policy regarding Taiwan that the Trump administration basically said do whatever you want with CICIG and we do not care.

And in the instance of Honduras, while the State Department was advocating for MACCIH to be re-upped with the OAS, the DHS was in Honduras trying to cut a third party deal so that asylees and refugees from Honduras to the United States could be immediately returned to Honduras.

So in both of those countries—I lived in Honduras for a while and still have some pretty strong ties in that region. In both of those countries, it is widely seen that anti-corruption efforts which were paying off that had been established with strong U.S. support were basically abandoned with U.S. consent.

Now, I get that in the relationship between the United States and other countries there are some trades. We want this; they want that. But I do not know that abandoning anti-corruption efforts that were hard fought and were initiated with U.S. support is ever something we should trade away. And it appears that that is what we have done in Guatemala and Honduras. And since corruption is one of the things that often drives bad living conditions and then leads to people leaving their countries to come to the United States, it is actually not just bad for those countries. It can be very counterproductive for us.

Tell me in your background—and you have been a longstanding career professional—why I should believe, if you are Ambassador to Guatemala, that you will really carry an anti-corruption banner in a dramatic and public way to help Guatemala deal with what is a very serious issue.

Mr. POPP. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I agree. It is an extremely important issue for Guatemala—corruption. And it is true in many countries, including several that I have served in. Corruption has a pervasive, corrosive impact, and it is very, in my view, shortsighted and imprudent to separate the corruption fight in any of the countries, including particularly Guatemala, from other issues. By not addressing corruption, you are undermining oftentimes your other goals and U.S. national interests.

So if confirmed as Ambassador, I would firmly commit, as I have done in several other countries, to work assiduously to speak out against corruption, to engage not only entities and individuals within the host government that are fighting for corruption—fighting against corruption, but also other actors in society that have a vested interest in carrying the fight against impunity, for transparency, and access to justice. And I think a U.S. ambassador could play a very effective role in helping not only guide mission strategy on using assistance to build capacity, but also speaking out for what is oftentimes unacceptable behavior around corruption, as

well as use the tools that are provided through technical assistance, through at times punitive measures, if necessary. But I have worked in a number of countries where this has been challenged, and to me the thing that works the best is being engaged, being consistent, and using all those tools and working with all those partners, including our international partners, whether it be the U.N. agencies or other countries that are engaged in the fight against corruption.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Popp.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chairman [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Kenna, let me return to you. I would like to recap the commitment you made earlier to make sure we are clear for the record. I appreciate that you are willing to appear for an interview, but I want to clear a few things up.

I understand that State offered a date of August 7th, which you referred to, to the House and they rejected the terms because they are tied to your appearance to Under Secretary Bulatau's appearance before the committee and because they tried to exclude staff from the interview.

So once again, to be clear, do you commit to appear for an interview with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the House Foreign Affairs, the House Oversight, as requested with staff on political retaliation and the firing of the IG Linick? Period.

Ms. KENNA. Yes, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay.

And regardless of what Under Secretary Bulatau does or does not do. Right?

Ms. KENNA. Yes. I am going to have to defer a little bit to my State Department colleagues to work out the modalities. I think the reason why they proposed that Under Secretary Bulatau go first was because I had absolutely no knowledge of the Inspector General's firing, no role in it whatsoever, had no discussions with anyone about his firing. And Under Secretary Bulatau was the primary point of contact on that——

Senator MENENDEZ. Regardless of what may be a reason, it seems to me that a request from Congress in oversight cannot be conditioned in a way that undermines the very essence of the request. So I understand when you say you will have to defer to—I do not want to hear at the end of the day that the commitment you are making to appear then can be quashed by some actions of the Department. You are committed to appear. Period.

Ms. KENNA. I am committed to appear. I want to cooperate.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that, and I look forward to that.

Now, while you are here, let me ask you one question. You just alluded to it. You were aware that the State Department Inspector General had requested records into the potential misuse of resources by Secretary Pompeo. Were you not?

Ms. KENNA. The Inspector General has requested to interview me in conjunction with an investigation into the misuse of resources. That is correct.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay.

And did you discuss that request with the Secretary?

Ms. KENNA. I did not.

Senator MENENDEZ. Did you discuss it with Under Secretary Bulatau?

Ms. KENNA. No, I did not. Are you referring to in advance of the firing of the Inspector General, Senator?

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes. Did you discuss the request that the IG made of you to interview you with either the Secretary or Under Secretary Bulatau prior to his firing?

Ms. KENNA. No, Senator. The Inspector General came to me and requested an interview after the Inspector General was fired. That request came after. I advised the Inspector General that I am very happy to be interviewed, and we have a date for that interview.

Senator MENENDEZ. To your knowledge, was the Secretary aware of the existence of the investigation?

Ms. KENNA. To my knowledge, he was not, certainly not through me because I was not aware of that investigation.

Senator MENENDEZ. Was he aware that the IG's office had requested documents?

Ms. KENNA. No, not to my knowledge, certainly not from me.

Senator MENENDEZ. As you know, the appropriate use of resources has been a topic of scrutiny at the State Department. Were you ever instructed to engage in any use of resources you did not think appropriate?

Ms. KENNA. Senator, I try to run the Executive Secretariat with utmost integrity. When I have questions about the appropriate use of resources, we have a system in place where I refer to our experts, and we have a number of offices that are responsible for that. They give us guidance, and it is my commitment to follow that guidance each and every time.

Senator MENENDEZ. So let me repeat my question. I appreciate your answer. Were you ever instructed to engage in the use of any resources you did not think was appropriate?

Ms. KENNA. Senator, are you asking if I have knowingly misused resources? Is that your question?

Senator MENENDEZ. No. Were you ever instructed, meaning you were told by a superior, to use resources that you did not think was appropriate?

Ms. KENNA. No, Senator. I was not instructed to misuse resources.

Senator MENENDEZ. Have you ever personally witnessed any such inappropriate use of resources?

Ms. KENNA. Senator, what I have witnessed is that the use of resources is generally consistent with what I have seen in terms of the support we have provided to every Secretary of State since I have been in this office. But as I said, when I have had questions, I have asked for guidance, and I follow that guidance.

Senator MENENDEZ. So evidently there were times that you did have questions.

Ms. KENNA. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. So let me ask you one final thing before I just move to Ms. Levy.

As you know, there have been concerning reports under this administration of attacking and retaliating against career public serv-

ants at the State Department. Some have been reassigned based upon assumptions about their political affiliation or national origin. Others have been labeled disloyal or called radical unelected bureaucrats by senior administration officials. And I cannot think of anything that is more cancerous for the Department or career employees across the Government.

Are you familiar with some of these allegations?

Ms. KENNA. Senator, yes. Thank you for the question. I am familiar with the investigation into those reports and the Office of the Inspector General's report.

Senator MENENDEZ. And in your time in the Secretary's office, did you ever hear any career employee referred to as, quote, Obama holdovers or a reference that they could not be trusted because they had worked for the Obama administration?

Ms. KENNA. No, Senator. No one has said that to me in the Secretary's office.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me turn to Ms. Levy, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

You have a colorful history of public remarks prior to your nomination. In 2010, in an interview you publicly stated, "I feel very strongly that Harry Reid and the Democratic Party are destroying our country and destroying our way of life. My family escaped the Communist revolution in Cuba and, through hard work, made a great life for ourselves in this country. Harry Reid is trying to deny that opportunity to others."

Now, as you may know, Senator Reid is a close personal friend of mine. And as you might imagine, I have strong opinions about using the Communist revolution in Cuba as a backdrop to attack Democrats and Senator Reid.

So I want to ask you, do you honestly believe the Democratic Party is trying to destroy the United States or your way of life?

Ms. LEVY. Thank you for that question and for the opportunity to clarify my remarks, Senator Menendez.

In 2010, I was a private citizen. I was not speaking in any official capacity. It was in the course of political elbow-throwing, and what I said then I do not believe today. I think it was in the heat of the moment and no personal offense was meant. It was simply policy disagreements.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, there is a difference between a policy disagreement and suggesting that someone's actions or views and the Democratic Party are destroying our country and destroying our way of life.

When and if you are confirmed as an Ambassador, you ultimately represent the nation as a whole. It does not mean you represent only the Republican Party when you are at that country post. It does not mean you only respond to Republican Members of Congress and their requests for what is going on in your country. It does not mean that you only treat those members of your staff who might very well be Democrats differently than you would treat those who are Republicans. I mean, to characterize it as, well, I was a private citizen, but it is the beliefs that you held. I am sure you would not have made such a statement if you did not hold those beliefs. Our ambassador are supposed to serve as representatives of all Americans.

Is this the type of comment, of diplomatic speech we would expect of you, if you are confirmed?

Ms. LEVY. Sir, if I am confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Chile, you will find in me a very likeminded partner. I will be a representative for all of the American people. Politics is one thing, and at least in the campaigns and in the political arena, when I have been involved, there are times that elbows are thrown. But once the election is over, we unite for the good of our community, for the good of our State, and the good of our country. And that is what is very important, and that is what is needed today. I have always been a consensus builder and a bridge builder in my community in the efforts I have led. I have run projects——

Senator MENENDEZ. Let us talk about that.

Ms. LEVY [continuing]. And large committees with people of all backgrounds and all——

Senator MENENDEZ. Let us talk about that consensus builder because I am familiar with throwing elbows. Sometimes you throw an elbow and you fracture a rib, though.

In 2016, you posted on Twitter a piece of literally fake news, claiming that Michelle Obama's mother was receiving a $160,000 a year pension from the Federal Government. Is that the type of social media that we can expect from you?

Ms. LEVY. No, sir. I retweeted something that turned out to be fake news. As soon as I learned it was fake news, I immediately—I apologized for it.

Senator MENENDEZ. Did you apologize in the same way that you posted it?

Ms. LEVY. Yes, on Twitter. I apologized for it. And I fell for fake news.

Senator MENENDEZ. As an ambassador, we cannot afford for you to fall for fake news.

Ms. LEVY. I agree. And I realized what a powerful tool Twitter and other forms of social media are. And my intention, if I am confirmed as Ambassador, is to work very closely with my public affairs team on posting positive and constructive things on Twitter and other social media platforms. I learned my lesson with that particular tweet, and if you go through other things, you will not find that sort of thing.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay.

Let me ask you about this one. In 2016, you published an op-ed in which stated that people are, "seriously troubled by the prospect of Donald Trump winning the Republican nomination." You added, "he is vulgar, ill-mannered, disparages those whom he cannot intimidate. His modus operandi is to try to intimidate people, then call them names, and calumniate about then, and then if those tactics do not work, to sue them."

Now, how do you reconcile that with your accepting the post nominated by the person who you so described?

Ms. LEVY. Senator Menendez, first of all, I honor and I thank you for your service to this country, and my desire is to serve the United States of America and the American people. I believe that the United States and the people of America deserve competent, strong, positive leadership, and that is what I intend to provide.

Again, that was in the course of a political campaign when I was supporting a different candidate. Elbows were thrown. When the election was over, we came together for the good of the American people. And I pledge to you that if I am confirmed, that is how I will conduct myself. I will be representing all of the people of the United States of America, every political persuasion, every idea, every thought. And it will be my honor to do that.

Thank you for your questions.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you for your answer.

I hope what is past is not prologue in this case. And we will be in the midst of another election as, if you are confirmed, being in post. So I would not expect that as the United States Ambassador to Chile that you would be engaged in the politics of our country as you are representing us abroad.

I have substantive questions for our two nominees to Canada and Guatemala, but Mr. Chairman, you have been generous with your time. I will submit them for the record. I am looking forward to substantive answers to my questions, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Friday, including for members to submit questions for the record.

Thank you again to all of you for your willingness to serve, to your families for the sacrifices that they will share with you, and we sincerely appreciate the generosity of your time in this meeting.

With that, the committee 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 LISA D. KENNA BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Peru hosts the second largest number of refugees and migrants after Colombia—nearly 830,000 as of June 5, 2020—yet many Venezuelans face serious protection challenges there. Peru's tightening of border and asylum restrictions are compounding concerns about gender-based violence, including sex trafficking of women and girls. NGOs are reporting concerns about disappearances, with an average of five disappearances per day during the COVID–19 pandemic, according to Peru's Ombudsperson. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to press the Peruvian Government to strengthen protection of Venezuelan refugees and asylum seekers?

Answer. Sustained levels of international help are necessary to support Peruvian efforts to address the Venezuela refugee crisis and uphold their international commitments. If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts that help strengthen the Government of Peru's capacity to provide protection, as well as identify and assist the most vulnerable Venezuelans. Regularization of status is critical for Venezuelan refugees and asylum seekers to access their rights and basic services and reduces their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate with the Government of Peru for the adoption of measures to register and regularize the status of undocumented Venezuelans.

Question. How will you prioritize this issue amidst Peru's struggles with the COVID–19 crisis and other challenges?

Answer. The coronavirus pandemic is imposing immense challenges for Peru. The Department of State works with partners such as UNHCR and IOM to re-program existing funding to provide direct assistance to Venezuelans affected by the COVID–

19 crisis, including delivery of cash assistance, temporary lodging, food, and hygiene kits targeted to reach the most vulnerable migrants. If confirmed, I will ensure this issue is a priority.

Question. INL Deputy Assistant Secretary Glenn stated publicly "illegal gold mining presents a direct threat to U.S. national security interests." This issue is a major challenge across the Andean region. In Peru, illegal gold mining fuels drug trafficking and trafficking in persons through corruption and transnational criminal organizations. It destroys biodiversity in the Peruvian Amazon and threatens the health of Peruvians, especially indigenous communities. Peru faces similar challenges with illegal timber harvesting, which is subject to the U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement's Annex on Forest Sector Governance. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to build on current efforts between the United States and Peru to combat illegal gold mining?

Answer. The United States and Peru have a strong partnership to tackle illegal gold mining and its links to organized crime. Illegal gold mining generates roughly $1-4.5 billion a year. In February 2020, Peru completed a successful operation to dismantle a major illegal mining operation, seizing $10 million in gold and including many officials who had received law enforcement and other training in the United States. State and USAID have worked closely with the Peruvians to support Peru's targeted and sustained effort to crack down on illegal mining in the Madre de Dios region of Peru. If confirmed, I will continue the whole-of-government approach we have taken to confront this challenge and seek to augment those programs, as well as regional cooperation to address this issue.

Question. How will you advance a comprehensive USG response to illegal mining in Peru?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure we take a comprehensive and coordinated U.S. Government approach to combat illegal mining in Peru. The Department of State and USAID have worked closely with the Peruvians to support their targeted and sustained effort to crack down on illegal mining in the Madre de Dios region. If confirmed, I will continue the joint efforts to increase cooperation to build transparent and traceable supply chains, promote alternative economic development, prevent and investigate illegal gold mining and related crimes, prevent illegal mining in protected areas, reduce mercury emissions, and provide technical assistance to prevent money laundering, human trafficking, and increase capacity for environmental prosecutions.

Question. How will you advance a comprehensive USG response to illegal logging in Peru?

Answer. We work in partnership with the Government of Peru to combat illegal logging and the associated illicit trade in timber and forest products from the Peruvian Amazon. Peru has improved forest sector governance, and U.S. programming through State, USAID, and other agencies supports Peru's efforts to improve timber traceability, inspection, and enforcement. If confirmed, I will continue to urge Peru to improve forest sector governance and to combat illegal logging.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?.

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that retaliation has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline in accordance with U.S. federal labor law and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. Throughout my career at the State Department, I have greatly benefited from the support and guidance of supervisors and colleagues who are committed to fostering a strong, diverse, and inclusive workforce at the Department. If confirmed, I commit to fostering an environment at U.S. Embassy Lima of respect, fairness,

equity, and inclusion, and one that is free of harassment and discrimination. I will promote opportunities for constructive dialogue about diversity and inclusion, including through training programs and opportunities like the Department's "Open Conversations" platform. I will ensure that our serving officers, locally employed staff, and other civil servants are supported by leadership at the Embassy and from the Department, and will encourage use of virtual recruitment tools to seek competitive applicants from all backgrounds, particularly underrepresented groups, for opportunities at the Mission.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. My most meaningful achievements to promote human rights and democracy occurred when I was the political counselor in Jordan. My office led an effort to curb human trafficking and assisted many hundreds of trafficking victims sheltering at their embassies in Amman to get travel documents and repatriate to their home countries. My team and I also launched and implemented the USG's first program in Jordan to deliver tons of flour and essential food supplies weekly across the border into southern Syria during the war 2013-2014 so that families could remain in place. This effort mitigated food insecurity and the impact of the refugee influx on Jordan. In my current role as the Executive Secretary, I ensure that briefing memos are comprehensive and include human rights priorities so that the Secretary can raise those issues in his meetings with foreign officials.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Peru? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The United States and Peru enjoy a partnership based on the shared values of democracy, economic prosperity, security, and human rights. Peru is committed to human rights as a matter of principle, at home and abroad. Problems remain, including isolated cases of torture; government corruption at all levels, including in the judiciary; sexual exploitation, including human trafficking; violence against women and girls; and forced labor. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Government of Peru and civil society to promote human rights, social inclusion, and poverty alleviation to make progress on these important challenges. If confirmed, I will also seek resources to support appropriate groups.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Peru? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The United States and Peru enjoy a partnership based on the shared values of democracy, economic prosperity, security, and human rights. Peru strongly supports democracy at home and abroad. Corruption undermines democratic institutions. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of Peru and continue efforts to fight corruption, further strengthen democratic institutions, and strengthen democracy throughout the region.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use assistance to support democracy and governance programs to help further our goal of strengthening democratic institutions and promote human rights, anti corruption, and institution building. The main objective of USAID's democracy and governance program in Peru is to support the implementation of Peru's National Anti-Corruption and Integrity Strategy. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Peruvian civil society to work with government entities at national and local levels. Strengthening accountability will be important to address practices that limit fair and open competition in public procurement and develop public-private integrity networks.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Peru? What steps will you take to proactively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meet with civil society members, human rights organizations, and other members of civil society and engage them and the Government on any efforts to use regulatory or legal measures to restrict their work. I would collaborate with other international partners and bring concerns about freedom of speech and association to the public eye if other attempts to engage did not bring about necessary results.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties?

Answer. I commit to meet with democratically oriented opposition figures and parties and to advocate for inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties to encourage genuine political competition.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Peru on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Peru?

Answer. My team will engage with Peru on freedom of expression, including by members of the press, and address any efforts to undermine freedom of expression. We also commit to meet with independent, local press in Peru.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, my team and I will actively engage civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non state actors.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Peru on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. My team will engage with Peru on labor rights, including independent trade unions. If confirmed as ambassador, I look forward to continuing and strengthening engagement with relevant Peruvian counterparts to protect the interests of labor groups and independent trade unions. Peru is a robust democracy, and its citizens share our commitment to democratic values, transparency, human rights, and a vibrant civil society. I intend to engage in productive dialogue with labor groups and trade unions on all sides, in addition to business leaders and the appropriate government authorities on this issue.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Peru, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Peru? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Peru?

Answer. Peru is taking notable steps to improve its human rights situation; however, problems remain, including violence and discrimination against LGBTQI persons. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Government of Peru and civil society to promote human rights and social inclusion for all people in Peru, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO LISA D. KENNA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. My most meaningful achievements to promote human rights and democracy occurred when I was the political counselor in Jordan. My office led an effort to curb human trafficking and assisted many hundreds of trafficking victims sheltering at their embassies in Amman to get travel documents and repatriate to their home countries. My team and I also launched and implemented the U.S. Government's first program in Jordan to deliver tons of flour and essential food supplies weekly across the border into southern Syria during the war 2013-2014 so that families could remain in place. This effort mitigated food insecurity and the impact of the refugee influx on Jordan. In my current role as the Executive Secretary, I ensure that briefing memos are comprehensive and include human rights priorities so that the Secretary can raise those issues in his meetings with foreign officials.

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

Answer. The United States and Peru enjoy a partnership based on the shared values of democracy, economic prosperity, security, and human rights. Peru is committed to protecting human rights as a matter of principle at home and abroad. However, challenges remain, such as isolated cases of torture; government corruption at all levels, including in the judiciary; discrimination of marginalized communities such as Afro-Peruvians, indigenous, and LGBTI persons; sexual exploitation; violence against women and girls; and human trafficking, including sex trafficking and forced labor. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Government of Peru and civil society to promote human rights, social inclusion, and on efforts to alleviate. If confirmed, I will also seek resources to support appropriate groups.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Peru in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The coronavirus pandemic has posed immense challenges for Peru, and it has limited many traditional engagements the United States would have with civil society and marginalized communities. We recognize movement restrictions, such as quarantines, have exacerbated gender-based violence. If confirmed, I would work to find new opportunities to continue collaboration with Peruvian authorities and with civil society to protect and promote human rights, strengthen current assistance programs, and support the Government's response to mitigate the immense human costs of the pandemic.

Question. 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 Peru? 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 am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non governmental organizations in the United States and in Peru. I would ensure the embassy appropriately implements and supports the Leahy laws through its well-structured interagency Leahy vetting process to ensure security assistance goes to only rights-respecting, accountable security forces. I also would en-

sure embassy personnel working to implement the law are able to receive any necessary training and support.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Peru to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Peru?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will actively engage on cases of political prisoners and those who have been unjustly targeted.

Question. Will you engage with Peru on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage with the Government of Peru and civil society on matters of human rights and governance as an important part of the U.S.-Peru relationship. If confirmed, I will work to support and strengthen our ongoing foreign assistance programs to address these priorities.

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will encourage promoting diversity and inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules and leave without pay options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new centralized exit survey. I will promote and encourage all employees to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors under your direction at the Embassy in Peru are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote diversity and inclusion best practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and explore how they can be bolstered. I will support the requiring all hiring managers take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Peru?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes a broad range of asset classes, some of which hold interests in companies with a presence in Peru. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which have a presence in Peru. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Peru specifically?

Answer. Political corruption threatens democratic governance and the rule of law, both generally and in Peru specifically. Pervasive corruption allows space for

transnational criminal organizations to operate multiple billion-dollar illicit industries, from production of illicit drugs to illegal logging and mining, human trafficking, and counterfeit currency. It inhibits governments' capacity to provide services and efficiently appropriate funds.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Peru and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Peruvian citizens see corruption as pervasive in all branches of national, regional, and local governments. Last fall, when President Martφn Vizcarra dissolved Congress, arguing it had blocked anti-corruption agenda, the public overwhelmingly supported his move. Based in part on his anti-corruption efforts, the 2020 Capacity to Combat Corruption Index ranked Peru fifth in Lain America and "one of the few positive stories in the region." The Peruvian criminal justice system has several former presidents under investigation for corruption, showing a strong commitment to address the challenge.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Peru?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work to strengthen the close partnerships we have established with Peruvian authorities to strengthen governance and to fight corruption. Our two countries have an established track record of working together closely to promote the rule of law. Peruvians themselves recognize corruption as corrosive and a threat to good governance and to democracy. The Peruvian public has consistently shown support for fighting corruption. That is a sound foundation for bilateral cooperation, and the Vizcarra administration has made fighting corruption a priority. Through our ongoing USAID and INL assistance programs, we help Peruvians meet that challenge.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO LEORA LEVY BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. In 2010, in an interview, you publicly stated, "I feel very strongly that Harry Reid and the Democratic Party are destroying our country and destroying our way of life. My family escaped the communist revolution in Cuba and through hard work made a great life for ourselves in this country. Harry Reid is trying to deny that opportunity to others." Would you like to apologize to Senator Reid? (if yes, please include your apology here and we will deliver it to Senator Reid.)

Answer. As I conveyed to you in the hearing, this comment was made as a private citizen. It was said in the heat of the moment and in the course of political elbow-throwing. No personal offense was meant. My intention was to express policy disagreements. I respect and thank Senator Harry Reid for his service to our country and send him a heartfelt wish for a full and speedy recovery as he battles pancreatic cancer, a terrible disease that has taken close members of my own family. What I said then, I do not believe today. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Chile, I will represent all Americans, regardless of political backgrounds or ideologies.

Question. Do you honestly believe that the Democratic Party is trying to destroy the United States?

Answer. As I conveyed to you in the hearing, this comment was made as a private citizen. It was said in the heat of the moment and in the course of political elbow-throwing. No personal offense was meant. What I said then, I do not believe today. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Chile, I will represent all Americans, regardless of political backgrounds or ideologies.

Question. Do you honestly believe that the Democratic Party is trying to destroy your way of life?

Answer. As I conveyed to you in the hearing, this comment was made as a private citizen. It was said in the heat of the moment and in the course of political elbow-throwing. No personal offense was meant. What I said then, I do not believe today. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Chile, I will represent all Americans, regardless of political backgrounds or ideologies.

Question. Given that our ambassadors are supposed to serve as representatives of all Americans, in your opinion, is this comment the type of diplomatic speech we should expect from you, if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Chile, I will be a representative for all Americans. I understand that with the privilege of serving comes the responsibility to ensure my actions and words do not represent my personal views, but those of the United States and the American people.

Question. In 2016, you posted on Twitter a piece of, literally, fake news, claiming that Michelle Obama's mother was receiving a $160,000 a year pension from the federal government. What do you believe is the impact on U.S. political discourse of tweeting disinformation, misinformation, and false information?

Answer. I apologized on Twitter when I learned of my unintentional error. I learned an important lesson about the traps and pitfalls on social media. As I conveyed to you in the hearing, if confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Public Affairs team at the Embassy to post positive and constructive things on Twitter and other social media platforms to promote U.S. foreign policy and U.S. interests as well as to protect and communicate important information to American citizens in Chile.

Question. In 2016, you published an op-ed in which you stated that people are "seriously troubled by the prospect of Donald Trump winning the Republican nomination." Why did you believe that people were troubled by this prospect?

Answer. At the time, I was supporting another candidate and making arguments to advance that candidacy. My opinion changed after hearing then-Candidate Trump speak in person at several events about why he was running for President, his love for America and his policy ideas.

Question. In 2016, you published an op-ed in which you made a series of statements regarding then-candidate Donald Trump, stating "He is vulgar, ill-mannered and disparages those whom he cannot not intimidate. His modus operandi is to try to intimidate people, then call them names and calumniate about them, and then if those tactics do not work, to sue them." Do you believe that President Trump has continued to demonstrate these characteristics since his inauguration?

Answer. No. The views expressed in that op-ed were at a time I was supporting and advocating for another candidate competing against President Trump. I would certainly not use these words to describe the President's conduct in office. President Trump has been a strong leader for America and for the American People. I am proud to be his nominee.

Question. Last October, Chile saw massive protests and social unrest. While some protestors engaged in acts of violence and vandalism, disturbingly, Chile's National Institute for Human Rights documented that Chilean security forces engaged in nearly 400 cases of torture and cruel treatment, nearly 200 incidents of sexual violence, more than 800 counts of excessive force, and 6 homicides. Human Rights Watch and others called for much-needed reforms in Chile's national police, the Carabineros. In normal times, the U.S. is a leading voice for the defense of human rights, even when it means providing constructive criticism to our friends. How will you approach the issue of human rights abuses by police forces in Chile?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to promoting respect for human rights, including by Chile's security forces. Chile is one of the Western Hemisphere's strongest democracies. We ground our partnership with Chile in shared values, and those include support for democracy, respect for human rights, and the promotion of economic opportunity.

Question. Do you believe that President Trump's aggressive tactics against protestors in Lafayette Square in June 2020 will limit your ability to be an effective advocate on the importance of addressing human rights abuses perpetrated by Chilean police?

Answer. If confirmed, I have no concerns about my ability to effectively advocate for the protection of human rights of all Chilean citizens, and condemn any human rights abuses perpetrated by Chilean police.

Question. Do you believe that the Trump administration's recent use of unmarked vehicles to detain demonstrators in Portland, Oregon will undermine the credibility of U.S. advocacy related to the importance of addressing human rights abuses perpetrated by Chilean police?

Answer. The United States is proud of the role we have played in advancing human rights across the globe.??Governments that take human rights seriously are transparent and welcome conversations about addressing concerns and making improvements.? As the Secretary said on July 17, "I challenge anyone in the world to

best our robust democracy, our vigorous debates, and our constant striving to be better."

Question. For several decades, Chile was held up as an example of how representative democracy, the rule of law, and pragmatic economic management could decrease poverty and grow the country's economy. However, last October, widespread social protests called into question the legacy of Chile's model democracy, as citizens expressed outrage at enduring inequality and slowing economic growth. And now, Chile is scheduled to hold a plebiscite in October that could lead to the drafting of a new constitution and a fundamental shaping of the Chilean social contract in order to better address citizen desires for better pension, health care, and education systems. What is your assessment of these developments?

Answer. Chile has built strong democratic institutions and a modern economy, yet many Chileans feel they have not benefitted from these advancements. Potential changes include enhanced social rights, a more flexible mechanism for any future constitutional and legislative reforms, and perhaps a somewhat greater role for the public sector. The legislative framework for the constitutional process indicates that, regardless of the outcome, Chile will maintain its character as a democratic republic. If confirmed, I would engage as appropriate to advocate in favor of any U.S. interests that the constitutional process could affect as it advances.

Question. What are the implications for U.S. foreign policy and U.S. businesses?

Answer. As Chile navigates its response to the grievances expressed by many of its citizens, including a possible new constitution and changes to Chile's social contract, if confirmed, I will be attentive to the concerns of U.S. businesses and will engage as necessary with the Chilean Government to protect and advance U.S. interests. The reform process taking shape in Chile, whether it is through a new constitution or other reforms, has the potential to promote greater stability, a stronger democracy, and broader access to economic opportunities for all Chileans. By partnering with Chile as it embarks on these reforms, we can advance our shared economic and security interests.

Question. What diplomatic support would you provide to the Chilean Government as it seeks to navigate citizen demands?

Answer. If confirmed, I would maintain and advance our strong and long-standing bilateral partnership with Chile. As a mature democracy that has faced its own struggles to live up to our democratic ideals over the course of our history, the United States can help Chile foster greater political inclusion and offer greater economic opportunity to more of its citizens. I would seek to offer U.S. assistance and capacity building to the Chilean Government and civil society organizations as they endeavor to enhance and consolidate the impressive democratic and economic advances Chile has made over the past three decades.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that retaliation has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline in accordance with U.S. federal labor law and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and accountability in Chile and ensuring that all members of my team feel empowered to contribute to our mission. I will ensure that we learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote best practices for inclusive hiring, including standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. If confirmed, I would make mentoring a priority;

when I was a young woman starting out in the corporate world, there were no others there to mentor me. I will both encourage my mission staff and require hiring managers to take the Department's Mitigating Unconscious Bias course. I will encourage greater connectivity for members of my team to share their experiences and their expertise with our Mission.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. My American Dream includes my maternal grandparents with their young daughter, my mother, escaping the Holocaust in Europe in 1940 to safe haven in Cuba, and my parents as adults fleeing the Communist revolution in Cuba bringing my sister and me to America in 1960 when I was three years old. These are the seminal experiences and memories that have shaped my life and my deep love for America. Human rights and democracy are American values that are especially important to me as a naturalized citizen who has a safe haven in America.

From the time I was a child in North Carolina, I have applied human rights and democracy as guiding principles of my life. As a child, I recognized that Jim Crow laws were wrong and disturbing. I made the personal decision in high school, to attend the integrated Charlotte-Mecklenburg public schools in a time of great tension. Other white children who had our economic and educational advantages chose to desert the public school system for private schools that were not integrated. I was able to cultivate friendships with other students from all backgrounds which has served me well in life since. Having personally experienced anti-Semitism and prejudice, I left the South to go to college in the North hoping to find an environment where people would be more open-minded and accepting of diversity.

I have also been active as a volunteer and, when my circumstances have allowed, as a philanthropist supporting human rights and religious freedom. During high school, I was a leader in our local B'nai B'rith Girls chapter and was a proud leader in the volunteer effort to free Soviet Jews and help them adjust to life as Americans in Charlotte.

In the 1990's, my husband Steve and I were active leaders with the United Jewish Appeal—Federation of New York in Operations Moses and Solomon, helping provide the financial resources to free Ethiopian Jewry from persecution and assist their resettlement in Israel, which former Senator and Ambassador Rudy Boschwitz (MN) negotiated as President George H.W. Bush's special envoy.

Should I be honored with confirmation, I am committed to be a strong advocate for American policies supporting human rights and democracy.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Chile These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Chile is one of the Western Hemisphere's strongest democracies. We have built our partnership on a foundation of shared values and support for democracy, protection of human rights, and promotion of economic opportunity. Chile's pressing challenges include expanding access to economic opportunity, enhancing democratic participation, and promoting greater social equality. Chile is now in the midst of a constitutional reform process agreed to by Chile's Government and all of Chile's major political parties. Additional challenges include strengthening intellectual property rights protections and adopting stronger sentencing guidelines for those convicted of human trafficking.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Chile? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed as ambassador, I would strive to support and strengthen Chile's democracy, which already serves as a model for the region. Drawing upon the expertise of the staff at U.S. Embassy Santiago, I would work closely with the Government of Chile to promote security, democracy, human rights, prosperity, and good governance, not only in Chile but within our hemisphere and across the globe. I expect and have confidence that the Government of Chile will continue in its general respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. Despite recent unrest, Chile remains one of the Western Hemisphere's strongest democracies. As a high-income country, it receives limited foreign assistance, but we work closely with the Government on democracy and governance, working together across the hemisphere. We ground our partnership in shared values and support for democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity. If confirmed, I will utilize all U.S. Government assistance at my disposal to support strengthening democracy and good governance in Chile.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Chile? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meeting with civil society members, human rights, and other NGOs in the United States and Chile. Democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity are all part of our countries' shared values and these are best safeguarded by a strong civil society. I will support all efforts to ensure there are no undue restrictions on civil society, including on those organizations that promote our mutual values.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Chile is one of the Western Hemisphere's strongest democracies and consistently holds free and fair elections. We have built our partnership on a foundation of shared values and support for democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity. If confirmed, I will meet with leaders from across the political spectrum, including those from opposition political parties. If confirmed, I will also promote social inclusion and diversity in political institutions and processes, particularly greater participation of women, minorities, and youth.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Chile on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Chile?

Answer. Chile has a dynamic democratic system, which shares the U.S. values of support for democracy and human rights, including freedom of expression, including by members of the press. If confirmed, I will work with our team at the embassy

to promote those shared values, including with respect to the press, and call out cases where they are infringed upon. If confirmed, I will regularly meet with all types of local press in Chile.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I look forward to continuing and strengthening engagement with relevant civil society and government counterparts in Chile to counter disinformation. I would also condemn any external actor that seeks to sow discord or undermine democratic processes with misinformation.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Chile on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue and strengthen engagement with relevant Chilean counterparts to protect the interests of labor groups and independent trade unions. Chile is a robust democracy that has demonstrated its commitments to democratic values, transparency, human rights, and a vibrant civil society. The Government's positive response to public demands for a constitutional reform shows that political leaders are generally responsive to the needs of their citizens, including in the realm of labor rights. I intend to engage in productive dialogue with labor groups and trade unions on all sides in addition to business leaders and the appropriate government authorities on this issue.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Chile, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Chile? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Chile?

Answer. If confirmed, promoting American values such as protecting and defending human rights, including the rights of LGBTQ persons, will be a pillar of my agenda. We have built our partnership with Chile on a foundation of shared democratic values and that includes upholding the human rights of LGBTQ persons. Chile has taken meaningful steps to advance the human rights of LGBTQ persons and ensure more equal and dignified treatment, as Chileans face many of the same challenges of discrimination as in many democratic societies. If confirmed, I commit to raising LGBTQ issues with Chilean officials and speaking out to assert U.S. values and defend human rights against any forms of abuse.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO LEORA LEVY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Nonpartisanship: You have a record of social media engagement that could be described as confrontational and partisan. The ability to work respectfully and cooperatively with people of diverse political ideologies is very important to me and is also critical to the responsibilities of an Ambassador. If confirmed, how would you ensure that your personal political views do not stand in the way of productive engagement with American and foreign leaders whose politics differ from yours?

Answer. An American Ambassador is a nonpartisan role representing the United States overseas, including working with career staff, political appointees, all elected officials and people of diverse interests, interacting with representatives of diverse factions of foreign governments and societies. I am very mindful of the ambassadorial role in providing objective, nonpartisan feedback to the Department of State from a foreign land. These principles will always be part of my mandate should I be honored with confirmation.

I have approached partisan political life with passion. Should I be confirmed, I hope to be a passionate diplomatic advocate for United States Foreign Policy and interests and an honest broker of ideas within Government.

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. My American Dream includes my maternal grandparents with their young daughter, my mother, escaping the Holocaust in Europe in 1940 to safe haven in Cuba, and my parents as adults fleeing the Communist revolution in Cuba bringing my sister and me to America in 1960 when I was three years old. These are the seminal experiences and memories that have shaped my life and my deep love

for America. Human rights and democracy are American values that are especially important to me as a naturalized citizen who has a safe haven in America.

From the time I was a child in North Carolina, I have applied human rights and democracy as guiding principles of my life. As a child, I recognized that the Jim Crow laws were wrong and disturbing. I made the personal decision in high school, to attend the integrated Charlotte-Mecklenburg public schools in a time of great tension. Other white children who had our economic and educational advantages chose to desert the public school system for private schools that were not integrated. I was able to cultivate friendships with other students from all backgrounds which has served me well in life since. Having personally experienced anti-Semitism and prejudice, I left the South to go to college in the North hoping to find an environment where people would be more open-minded and accepting of diversity.

I have also been active as a volunteer and, when my circumstances have allowed, as a philanthropist supporting human rights and religious freedom. During high school, I was a leader in our local B'nai B'rith Girls chapter and was a proud leader in the volunteer effort to free Soviet Jews and help them adjust to life as Americans in Charlotte.

In the 1990's, my husband Steve and I were active leaders with the United Jewish Appeal-Federation of New York in Operations Moses and Solomon, helping provide the financial resources to free Ethiopian Jewry from persecution and assist their resettlement in Israel, which former Senator and Ambassador Rudy Boschwitz (MN) negotiated as President George H.W. Bush's special envoy.

Should I be honored with confirmation, I am committed to be a strong advocate for American policies supporting human rights and democracy.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to advance U.S. policy to protect and defend human rights. Chile is one of the Western Hemisphere's strongest democracies. We ground our partnership with Chile in shared values, and those include support for democracy, respect for human rights, and the promotion of economic opportunity. Chilean authorities have investigated with great transparency troubling allegations of human rights violations during the civil unrest of 2019, welcoming visits by international organizations including Human Rights Watch, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

If confirmed, I hope that my actions will strengthen and reinforce the Chilean Government's commitment to respect for human rights as well as that of the Chilean People and groups in civil society. They will know that their ally and partner, the United States is a champion for the respect and protection of human rights and democracy.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Chile in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Chile has built strong democratic institutions and a modern economy, yet many Chileans feel they have not benefitted from these advancements. Protests that began in late 2019 have paused during the COVID–19 outbreak but could resume as Chilean authorities ease public health restrictions and the economic strains caused by the pandemic increase.

I expect and have confidence that the Chilean Government would respond with respect for human rights and the rule of law, and I hope that protesters would do the same.

Question. 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 Chile? 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, I am committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and local human rights non-governmental organizations in Chile. I am committed to supporting the implementation of the Leahy Laws and other similar efforts.

Embassy Santiago works with the Department of State to thoroughly vet all Chilean security forces identified to receive U.S.-funded security assistance to ensure that no individual or unit for whom credible information exists of involvement in a gross violation of human rights receives such aid until those allegations have been

investigated and, if warranted, resulted in prosecution and punishment. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program also includes a human rights component.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Chile to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Chile?

Answer. If confirmed as ambassador, I would make it my priority to deepen the historically strong partnership on human rights that exists between the United States and Chile. The Department of State's 2019 Human Rights Report on Chile found no reports of political prisoners or detainees, and that the Government of Chile took steps to investigate and prosecute officials who allegedly committed abuses. Chile is a reliable partner in defense of human rights in the Western Hemisphere, having demonstrated strong leadership to address the humanitarian and human rights crisis in Venezuela, where arbitrary detention and abuse are the norm. I support continued collaboration with Chile to prevent violations and abuses of human rights and to promote accountability for human rights violators and abusers.

Question. Will you engage with Chile on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I would make engagement on human rights, civil rights, and governance a central part of my tenure as ambassador. I would support Chile's leadership in spreading the benefits of democracy and good governance throughout the region, drawing on our close bilateral relations and shared values. I would strive to continue the Department of State's tradition of excellence on human rights reporting through the annual Country Report on Human Rights Practices. A vibrant, inclusive democracy that benefits all Chileans remains among the most important U.S. interests in Chile.

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will encourage promoting diversity and inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new centralized exit survey. I will promote and encourage all employees to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors under your direction at the Embassy in Chile are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will support the requirement of all hiring managers to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. 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. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Chile?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes a broad range of asset classes, some of which hold interests in companies with a presence in Chile. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which have a presence in Chile. I am committed to ensuring that my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Chile specifically?

Answer. Chile is known for its commitment to transparency, freedom of expression, and an independent judiciary and ranked 26 out of 180 countries on Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index, but recent corruption scandals have tarnished public trust and diminished Chile's reputation for institutional stability and respect for the rule of law. The administration of President Sebastián Piñera and the Chilean criminal justice system have acted against corruption and they have achieved convictions. They have shown that they understand that corruption can undermine democratic governance and rule of law and that individuals and governments that act without transparency, that escape accountability, and that act with impunity do so at the expense of a nation's citizens.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Chile and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Chile is known for its commitment to accountable and transparent governance, but both public corruption and corporate malfeasance cases have trended upward, leaving an impression that political and business elites may enjoy impunity under the justice system. Chilean authorities—including President Sebastián Piñera—have taken significant steps to change that, investigating allegations of corruption across government, including in the legislature, judiciary, military, and police; dismissing indicted public officials; and passing legislation to strengthen anticorruption measures. Chile's judicial system has handed down a significant number of convictions.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Chile?

Answer. Chile routinely scores high marks for good governance, openness, and rule-of-law. The United States works closely with Chile on bilateral programs—with the executive, the Government, the judiciary, and civil society—to enhance Chile's performance in these areas, and in a variety of fora that promote democracy, human rights, anticorruption, and good governance within our hemisphere and across the globe. Hemispheric collaboration strengthens these areas in Chile as well. If confirmed, I would ensure that we continue to support programs that would help Chile continue its good governance and anticorruption efforts.

Responses to Additional Questions for the Record Submitted to Hon. Aldona Zofia Wos by Senator Robert Menendez

Question. From May 2018 to May 2019, the Trump administration imposed Section 232 tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum, invoking threats to U.S. national security. Do you believe Canadian steel and aluminum represent threats to U.S. national security, especially given longstanding linkages between our defense sectors?

Answer. With $725 billion in annual bilateral trade in goods and services, the United States and Canada share the largest trade relationship in the world. With USMCA in force, we work closely with our Canadian and Mexican partners to ensure that North American supply chains remain robust. Our North American partnership is vital for a quick economic recovery. Protecting American workers has always been a priority of this administration.

I refer you to the Department of Commerce and USTR for specifics on the status of 232 aluminum tariffs on Canada.

Question. Press reports indicate that the Trump administration is considering imposing a new round of tariffs on Canada, just weeks after the formal start of the

USMCA. Do you believe that the U.S. should impose tariffs on aluminum from Canada, a key U.S. national security and economic partner?

Answer. The United States and Canada share the largest trade relationship in the world. During the COVID–19 pandemic, our integrated supply chains reminded us of how important trade is to our shared resilience. Protecting American workers has always been a priority of this administration and millions of U.S. and Canadian middle-class jobs depend on our economic partnership. I am confident that under the USMCA, we will find new ways to sustain and expand our mutually beneficial trade relationship, to benefit Americans and Canadians.

I refer you to the Department of Commerce and USTR for specifics on the status of 232 aluminum tariffs on Canada.

Question. If the Trump administration imposes new tariffs on Canadian aluminum, it is likely that Canada's Government would retaliate. What is your assessment of the impact to the U.S. economy of a trade war with Canada?

Answer. The United States and Canada enjoy the most extensive and integrated economic relationships in the world. The almost 400,000 people and nearly $2 billion worth of goods and services that cross our border daily are testament to the strength of our trade relationship, which has allowed us to resolve challenges and differences in the past and will again in the future.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) entered into force on July 1, 2020. The USMCA will ensure that North America remains the world's economic powerhouse and will create high-paying jobs for Americans, Canadians, and Mexicans, and grow the North American economy.

Question. Since the CDC's March 20 order, the U.S.-Canada border has been largely closed despite the historical integration of cross-border communities. If confirmed, what strategy will you pursue to re-open the U.S.-Canada border?

Answer. The United States and Canada continue close cooperation in responding to the global pandemic of COVID–19. This involves engagement at the highest levels by President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and Deputy Secretary Biegun, as well as across agencies, by health officials, at our diplomatic missions abroad, and along our border.

If confirmed, I will work with all relevant agencies and counterparts, including public health officials and the Department of Homeland Security, to facilitate the safe re-opening of the U.S-Canada border at the appropriate time.

Question. Will this strategy be informed by guidance from scientists and medical professionals?

Answer. As a trained medical doctor, I know firsthand the important role that medical and public health officials have in keeping communities safe. If confirmed, I will seek to strengthen ongoing collaboration between the medical and scientific communities in the United States and Canada as they work to address COVID–19.

Question. In December 2018, acting on a U.S. extradition request, Canadian authorities detained Huawei CFO Meng Wenzhou. Since then, Canada has faced a barrage of retaliation from China, including tariffs on Canadian products and arresting two Canadian citizens, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. President Trump previously referred to Ms. Meng as something that could be traded with China as part of ongoing negotiations. Do you believe that U.S. extradition requests should be the subject of negotiation requests between the U.S. and China?

Answer. Like all cases brought by the U.S. Department of Justice, the criminal prosecution against Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou is based solely on the facts and law.

Question. Given ongoing legal arguments in Canada, which have featured President Trump's comments, do you believe that the President's comments have strengthened the U.S. legal case for Ms. Meng's extradition to the United States?

Answer. Per the filings unsealed in Canada, Meng and others allegedly broke the law. Specifically, they are accused of deceiving numerous global financial institutions about the nature and extent of Huawei's business activities in Iran, thereby putting these financial institutions at risk of incurring criminal and civil penalties for processing transactions that violated U.S. laws or regulations. Meng and others allegedly falsely stated that Skycom was an unaffiliated business partner, rather than disclosing that it was Huawei's Iranian affiliate.

Like all cases brought by the U.S. Department of Justice, the criminal prosecution against Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou is based solely on the facts and law.

Question. What specific steps would you suggest that the U.S. can take to support our ally Canada in dealing with the People's Republic of China and helping to secure the release of Michael and Michael?

Answer. The United States should continue to publicly call on China to end the arbitrary detentions of Canadian citizens Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig and reject China's unacceptable coercive use of detentions as a political tool. Recognizing the PRC's strategy of using arbitrary detentions as political leverage is not a one-country problem. I support working with our allies and partners, including Canada, to explore multilateral tools that can impose real costs and pressure on the Chinese Government for its use of arbitrary detentions.

Question. According to federal data, there are 2.6 million registered U.S. voters overseas, including 660,000 eligible U.S. voters in Canada. The State Department, in coordination with the Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program (the FVAP), plays an essential role in helping overseas and military voters exercise their most fundamental democratic right, the right to vote. Will you ensure that our Embassy in Ottawa and consulates across Canada prioritize the return of ballots as an essential service in order to ensure that ballots are returned to voters' home states in a timely manner?

Answer. The U.S. Department of State is committed to providing voting information and assistance to U.S. citizens in Ottawa at our Embassy and Consulates across Canada. The health and safety of U.S. citizens and our staff is our primary concerns. We have recently sent guidance to our posts to ensure they provide clear messaging that voters may return their voted ballots via international mail, private commercial courier services such as FedEx or DHL, or by drop off at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate that is at or above Phase 1 in the Diplomacy Strong reopening process.

Question. According to federal data, there are 2.6 million registered U.S. voters overseas, including 660,000 eligible U.S. voters in Canada. The State Department, in coordination with the Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program (the FVAP), plays an essential role in helping overseas and military voters exercise their most fundamental democratic right, the right to vote. Will you commit that our mission across Canada will provide public information to eligible U.S. voters on how to securely and safely cast their ballots during the pandemic?

Answer. The Department is providing and will continue to provide U.S. citizens in Canada and across the globe with the information they need to vote.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that retaliation has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline in accordance with U.S. federal labor law and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and accountability in Canada and ensuring that all members of my team feel empowered to contribute to our mission. I will ensure that we learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote best practices for inclusive hiring practices including standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will both encourage my mission staff and require hiring managers to take the Department's Mitigating Unconscious Bias course. I will encourage greater connectivity for members of my team to share their experiences and their expertise with our Mission.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. ALDONA ZOFIA WOS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Furthering human rights and democracy for all has been at the heart of my public service. My lifelong commitment to these ideals began with the lessons that my parents taught me. My mother Wanda, a slave labor survivor, and Paul, a fighter in the Polish Home Army, a Righteous Gentile, and a concentration camp survivor, fought for freedom in the face of totalitarianism and pure evil. At age six, I fled Communist controlled Poland. I have continued their fight for freedom and democracy ever since emigrating to the United States, by way of Canada, in 1961.

One of my most meaningful achievements in the pursuit of these ideals has been through teaching the next generation that freedom and democracy cannot be taken for granted. Between 2000 and 2010, I organized multiple lectures titled the Polish Experience in WWII. Through these lectures, I sought to present the struggles of millions of families during World War II to ensure that the darkness of history would never repeat itself. My most memorable lectures were at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and First Presbyterian Church, where I was able to share these stories with over a thousand people on the week of the September 11th attacks. By presidential appointment, I was able to advance my engagement as a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

I was also incredibly proud of being able to further the ideals of freedom, democracy, and respect for all while serving as Ambassador to Estonia. I committed myself and the United States mission in Estonia to building relationships between native Estonians and native Russians. My most memorable accomplishment was organizing a soccer match in which two high schools—one mostly Russian and one mostly Estonian—joined as one unified team to take on Embassy personnel. In our estimation, these two schools, separated by a soccer field, had limited previous interaction due to cultural divides. At the end of my service, I lectured at over one-hundred Estonian high schools, presenting ideals of freedom, democracy, and respect for human dignity to the next generation. In addition, I fought to provide Estonian Gov-

ernment funding for the preservation of historical documents of the Old Believers, a sect of Eastern Orthodox Christians from the seventeenth century who fled to Estonia after religious persecution.

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to promote freedom, democracy, and human rights.

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

Answer. Canada is a global leader in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Part of that leadership has been to address domestic human rights issues in Canada. In 2019, the Government of Canada acknowledged the high rates of deadly violence against indigenous women. If confirmed, I will engage directly with both Government of Canada officials and indigenous women leaders to promote the empowerment of all members of the society, and to strengthen the ties between communities and civil society leaders in the United States and Canada.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Canada in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Canada's vibrant civil society on the full range of human rights issues. I will work to overcome the obstacles of distance by traveling throughout Canada's provinces and territories to engage directly with citizens representing the full range of Canadian society, including indigenous communities. As part of my regular public engagement via social media, I will emphasize that the United States remains Canada's full partner in promoting and protecting democracy and human rights.

Question. 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 Canada? 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 am committed to meeting with the full range of human rights, civil society, and non-governmental groups in both the United States and Canada. I strongly believe in the importance of the thorough vetting of all participants in U.S. security assistance and security cooperation programs. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that all security assistance is vetted in compliance with the Leahy Law and that security cooperation activities reinforce human rights.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Canada to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Canada?

Answer. Yes. I know of no political prisoners currently held in Canada.

Question. Will you engage with Canada on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Canada remains a leader in the promotion and protection of democratic values around the world. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the bilateral partnerships between the Governments of the United States and Canada to promote human rights, civil rights, and good governance globally.

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will encourage promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized Exit Survey. I will promote and encourage all employees to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors under your direction at the Embassy in Canada are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will support the requirement of all hiring managers to take the Mitigating Unconscious Bias course.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Canada?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes a broad range of asset classes, some of which hold interests in companies with a presence in Canada. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which have a presence in Canada. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Canada specifically?

Answer. I believe political corruption is a direct threat to the stability of any society, including the belief of citizens in the Governments elected to serve them. My own prior experience in public service has only increased my belief in the importance of strong institutions at all levels of society. Canada has a long tradition of political stability and democratic governance. I look forward to engaging directly with Canada's leaders as we work together to strengthen the strong bonds between our countries and our respective democratic institutions.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Canada and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Canada still rates low on international indexes measuring societal corruption, although the Government of Canada has publicly noted its commitment to combat financial crimes including money laundering. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with national and local law enforcement agencies in Canada and in finding ways to enhance their existing partnerships with counterparts in the United States, including through the sharing of best practices.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Canada?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek additional opportunities for Mission Canada to work with Canada's public sector and civil society to expand existing programs and to build new alliances between agencies and organizations committed to good governance and anticorruption, both at the national and local levels.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM W. POPP BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Support for the rule of law and strong, independent, and transparent institutions is essential to the U.S-Guatemala Partnership. However, recent devel-

opments suggest that criminal elements have been working to manipulate the selection of judges in Guatemala. There are also troubling reports of political attacks against sitting judges in the country's highest court and efforts of undemocratic actors to remove these judges and undermine their efforts to uphold the rule of law. What is your assessment of these troubling developments?

Answer. I am following developments closely and am committed to supporting the rule of law in Guatemala. A key element to any rule of law-based system is an impartial and independent judiciary, chosen through an open and transparent process. A strong and stable rule of law system is important for attracting investment, providing social stability, addressing crime, and ensuring all rights are respected.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to support the integrity of Guatemala's judicial institutions and prioritize U.S. efforts to strengthen institutions that uphold the rule of law?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Embassy team and public and nongovernmental institutions, to encourage respect for the Guatemalan constitution, and the importance of the separation of powers as a guarantor of the rights of Guatemalan citizens.

Question. It is no secret that the United States' Asylum Cooperative Agreement with Guatemala is not an agreement with a safe third country, and that Guatemala negotiated the agreement under duress. Guatemala continues to grapple with high levels of violence, and President Giammattei has acknowledged that his government lacks adequate asylum capacity. Indeed, the State Department has provided evidence to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Guatemala adjudicated only 112 asylum claims in 2019. This capacity compares to the 939 asylum seekers, including 357 children, whom the United States transferred to Guatemala in just four months. Do you believe that Guatemala's high levels of violence and weak asylum capacity are adequate to protect the 939 asylum seekers already sent there by the United States?

Answer. As a cooperating country to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, the United States provides humanitarian aid and capacity building support through our international organization partners in Guatemala. This assistance helps Guatemala to increase its asylum capacity and enhances protection resources available to asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrants, including Asylum Cooperative Agreement (ACA) transferees who request protection or wish to return to their home countries. The goal of both the United States and Guatemala is to implement this agreement gradually so as not to overwhelm Guatemala's capacity to receive transferees as it strengthens its asylum system. If confirmed, I will work closely with Guatemala to continue building Guatemala's capacity to receive, protect, and assist individuals transferred under the ACA.

Question. Prior to your nomination, the Trump administration suspended nearly all U.S. foreign assistance to Guatemala and the Northern Triangle countries. Now that funding is restarting, the administration has provided us with descriptions of new programs. The congressional notifications we've received so far present a departure from traditional USAID programming designed to strengthen governance, address security challenges, and advance programs to alleviate poverty and stimulate economic growth. Instead, the congressional notifications have an almost exclusive focus on migration/immigration. Given your distinguished career, can you please articulate your vision about the importance of a comprehensive approach to U.S. foreign assistance towards Guatemala in order to strengthen the rule of law, address security, uphold human rights, and advance inclusive economic growth?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Department, our U.S. embassy, USAID, and other partners to ensure U.S. assistance in Guatemala continues to align with our policy goals in addressing the economic, security, and governance drivers of migration. U.S. assistance can be an effective tool to address these root causes, and some progress has been made, but Guatemalan political will is essential to make further progress. If confirmed, I will engage the Guatemalan Government and support our assistance programs that help strengthen institutions, address corruption, improve security conditions, and uphold human rights to help create an enabling economic environment that attracts private sector investment and supports small business development, thus creating more opportunities for Guatemalans at home.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that retaliation has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline in accordance with U.S. federal labor law and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed as Chief of Mission, I will lead the nearly 550 professionals in Mission Guatemala to advance the U.S. agenda in a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace. I will continue to pursue the active leadership approach that I did as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to Brazil by ensuring our Embassy in Guatemala has a robust and proactive diversity council, Federal Women's Program, and professional development program that promote respect and diversity, not only in hiring and Mission operations, but also in our education, cultural, economic, and political programming.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. I have worked to support human rights and democracy across each of my six overseas diplomatic assignments, helping to ensure free and fair elections, increase space for civil society, establish police oversight mechanisms, and protect labor activists and independent media. I believe that some of my most meaningful achievements were in Kenya, where I worked closely with U.S. Government agencies, international partners, civil society, and Kenya's electoral commission to successfully prepare for and conduct free, fair, credible, and peaceful elections in 2017. If confirmed, I would seek to advance similar successful whole-of-Mission strategies with host government, civil society, and international partners in support of democracy and human rights.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Guatemala? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Challenges to democracy in Guatemala include corruption; impunity; insecurity; underfunded institutions; entrenched interests that resist any change that weakens their position; intimidation of prosecutors, judges, and media; and lack of economic opportunity which exacerbates poverty. If confirmed, I will continue to support democratic development in Guatemala through coordinated U.S. Government programs and outreach that aim to strengthen Guatemala's institutions, fight corruption, and strengthen civil society.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Guatemala? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to eliminate corrupt influences in Guatemalan institutions through our diplomatic engagements with Guatemalan authorities, public messaging, and U.S. assistance programs supporting anticorruption efforts and the rule of law. Entrenched corruption remains an obstacle to advancing democratic development in Guatemala, but if confirmed, I will also be prepared to use the tools Congress has made available including, Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Act, 2020, to hold corrupt actors accountable.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure U.S. assistance aligns with our important policy goals of supporting democratic institutions, fighting corruption, and upholding the rule of law in Guatemala. If confirmed, I will also ensure that U.S. Government funding is utilized in accordance with congressional earmarks to address the complex governance challenges facing Guatemala. U.S. assistance is a key tool we can use to help strengthen Guatemala's judicial institutions and support President Giammattei's newly established anti-corruption commission in the executive branch. If confirmed, I will make capacity building a key priority to help the Guatemalan Government address these critical issues.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Guatemala? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador to Guatemala, I will absolutely be committed to actively engaging with representatives of human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations, both in the United States and in Guatemala, to listen to their concerns and seek their advice on encouraging respect for human rights for Guatemalans. I will encourage my Guatemalan Government counterparts to ensure NGOs are able to operate in a safe, permissive environment and that regulations governing the operation of NGOs meet requirements under Guatemala's constitution and international best practices.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will make it a point to meet with people from across the political spectrum, and from all walks of Guatemalan life. As the United States Ambassador to Guatemala, it will be incumbent on me to interact with as diverse a group of Guatemalans as possible, across political, economic, geographic, social, and ethnic groups. If confirmed, I would engage not only with government and political parties, but also with civil society, independent media, community, labor and human rights organizations and activists. I would also reach out to youth, minority, and women's groups that Embassy Guatemala has engaged with on areas of entrepreneurship, rights promotion, education, and other key issues.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Guatemala on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or un-

dermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Guatemala?

Answer. Supporting an active and free press is a fundamental part of State Department programming overseas. If confirmed as Ambassador to Guatemala, I would work diligently with the Embassy team to promote the importance of a free press with Guatemalan officials, while using programming such as our International Visitor Leadership Program to support efforts to share with Guatemalan journalists best practices in investigative journalism. I fully believe that a free and fair press is critical to a healthy democracy, and will continue to support efforts to promote press freedom in Guatemala.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will work with our team at the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala to engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Guatemala. It is my understanding there is increased interest in the region by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the entities it controls. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Guatemalan Government to deter and counter malign influence by the PRC, and help Guatemala understand how to protect itself in its relationship with the PRC.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Guatemala on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Embassy team to engage diplomatically with the appropriate ministries in the Guatemalan Government on labor issues, including the right for labor groups to organize and to advocate for independent trade unions. In my past tours of duty, I have worked with labor activists, supported respect for labor rights, and contributed to the State Department's work in support of the Department of Labor's annual reports on labor conditions around the globe. I believe active dialogue with labor organizations and activists as well as accurate reporting on labor conditions is an important responsibility of the State Department and, if confirmed, I will lead the Embassy in prioritizing both outreach and reporting.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Guatemala, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Guatemala? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Guatemala?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the Department to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Guatemala, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is my understanding that LGBTQ people in Guatemala continue to face discrimination, and there currently is no legislation in place that specifically protects the rights of LGBTQ people. If confirmed, I will support U.S. assistance programs that seek to protect the human rights of, and respect for, all Guatemalans, including LGBTQ people. I would also seek to maintain a dialogue with LGBTQ activists, and support accurate and timely reporting on LGBTQ rights issues.

Responses to Additional Questions for the Record Submitted to William W. Popp by Senator Benjamin L. Cardin

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have worked to support human rights and democracy across each of my six overseas diplomatic assignments, helping to ensure free and fair elections, increase space for civil society, establish police oversight mechanisms, and protect labor activists and independent media. I believe my most meaningful achievements were in Kenya, where I worked closely with U.S. Government agencies, international partners, civil society, and Kenya's electoral commission to help successfully enable free and fair elections in 2017. If confirmed, I would seek to advance similar successful whole-of-Mission strategies with host government, civil society, and international partners in support of democracy and human rights.

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

Answer. Guatemala faces a number of pressing human rights challenges, including the need to protect human rights activists and indigenous communities, gender-based violence issues, human trafficking, and rights of LGBTI individuals. If confirmed, I will work diligently with the Guatemalan Government, national and international non-governmental organizations, and the many U.S. Government agencies that work in this area to assist Guatemala in developing its institutional, law enforcement and non-governmental capacities to address these concerns. I believe through such efforts, we can demonstrate to the Guatemalan Government and its people that the United States is a tireless and reliable partner on human rights issues in keeping with our nation's values.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Guatemala in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. For the important human rights issues cited in my previous response, obstacles may include underfunded institutions; entrenched interests that will resist any change that weakens their position; lack of economic opportunity that exacerbates poverty; resistance to change, even where clearly needed; impunity; corruption; and others. These obstacles are many of the same faced when working to promote democracy development and development of civil society. Challenges to working on human rights issues in Guatemala are similar to those advancing human rights in many nations.

Question. 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 Guatemala? 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 to Guatemala, I will be firmly committed to working with representatives of human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations, both in the United States and in Guatemala, to listen to their concerns and seek their advice on encouraging respect for human rights in Guatemala. Working with the Guatemalan Government, the United States has been fostering dialogue with indigenous communities and civil society. We should deepen efforts to build the integrity of public institutions, enhance access to justice, and bolster space for civil society. A more just and inclusive Guatemala will help address challenges both our countries face.

If confirmed, I will work with my team at the Embassy to ensure recipients of assistance and training are appropriately vetted in accordance with the Leahy law.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Guatemala to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Guatemala?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that both I and the Embassy team engage with the various elements involved with criminal justice in Guatemala, both governmental and non-governmental, to encourage further respect for human rights.

It is crucial the United States and Guatemala work together to promote rule of law, fight corruption, respect human rights, and end impunity. In addition to working directly with government institutions, engaging human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and those who have experienced human rights violations will also be key to addressing and improving Guatemala's human rights record.

Question. Will you engage with Guatemala on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. I believe Mission Guatemala should be guided by our longstanding values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity. Rule of law, eradication of corruption, and an end to impunity are key to security, stability, and prosperity, not only in Guatemala, but throughout the region and the world. If confirmed, I will stand ready to assist the Government of Guatemala in making positive improvements in these areas. I will also actively engage human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and those who have experienced human rights violations to address and improve respect for human rights in Guatemala.

Question. 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 as Chief of Mission, I will lead the nearly 550 professionals in Mission Guatemala to advance the U.S. agenda in a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace. I will continue to pursue the active approach that I did as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to Brazil by ensuring our Embassy in Guatemala has a robust and proactive diversity council, Federal Women's Program, and professional development program that will work together to promote respect and diversity, not only in hiring and Mission operations, but also in our education, cultural, economic, and political programming.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Guatemala are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. Promotion of an inclusive and diverse work environment is an important value and key imperative of the Department of State. If confirmed as Ambassador to Guatemala, I pledge to model and promote an inclusive culture and work environment among the embassy team in Guatemala City, including holding supervisors and staff accountable for their conduct, in keeping with State Department values.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Guatemala?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to ensuring my official actions will not give rise to a conflict of interest. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Guatemala specifically?

Answer. I believe there is a crucial need to promote rule of law, fight corruption, and end impunity in Central America. Systemic political corruption prevents countries from achieving their economic potential and ensuring access to justice. I understand that in Guatemala there is a history of political corruption, that U.S. assistance to Guatemala has supported robust anti-corruption efforts, and that the Department has also utilized the visa designation authorities provided by Congress via Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020. If confirmed, I will support the Guatemalan Government's anti-corruption efforts, ensure U.S. assistance in Guatemala addresses key anti-corruption priorities, speak out against corruption, and engage private sector and civil society partners to bolster rule of law.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Guatemala and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. I understand that although the Guatemalan Government has made progress in the fight against corruption, it remains a key challenge. I am encouraged by President Giammattei's creation in January 2020 of a new anti-corruption commission to identify corruption within the executive branch, which has already pursued allegations of misconduct related to the procurement of COVID–19 supplies, resulting in the removal of potentially corrupt Ministry of Health officials. While this case is a positive step, the Guatemalan Government must continue to ensure transparent, independent prosecution of cases, and support the entities with-

in the Public Ministry, such as the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Impunity (FECI), working to secure justice for corrupt actors who frequently operate with impunity.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Guatemala?

Answer. If confirmed, I will speak out against corrupt influences in Guatemalan institutions through our diplomatic engagements with Guatemalan authorities, public messaging, and U.S. assistance programs supporting anti-corruption efforts and strengthening of the rule of law. If confirmed, I would also offer continued support for efforts to improve transparency in Guatemala's judicial selection process and encourage the merit-based appointment of qualified judges who demonstrate the integrity needed to uphold rule of law. In addition, if confirmed, I will use all available deterrence tools at the Department's disposal to promote accountability for anyone involved in and benefiting from significant acts of corruption in Guatemala.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2020 (am)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:00 a.m., via video conference, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch, Johnson, Gardner, Romney, Portman, Young, Perdue, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Murphy, Kaine, and Booker.

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning, everyone. The hour of 9:00 a.m. having arrived, the unique meeting at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today the committee will hold a nomination hearing for five very important positions. Our nominees today are: Mrs. Jennifer Barber, to be the Representative on the Economic and Social Council of the U.N. and Alternate Representative to the General Assembly; secondly, Mr. Edward Burrier, to be Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the International Development Finance Corporation; Lieutenant General Keith Dayton, to be Ambassador to Ukraine; Ms. Julie Fisher, to be Ambassador to Belarus; and Mr. Alex Wong, to be Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the U.N. and Alternate Representative to the General Assembly.

Two of our nominees today have distinguished individuals here to introduce them. Senator Cotton and Senator Romney will be introducing Mr. Wong, and we are glad to welcome former Congressman Ed Royce and he will be introducing Mr. Burrier.

I also have a statement I will be entering into the record submitted by Leader McConnell in support of the Barber nomination.

[Senator McConnell's statement follows:]

STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, colleagues: Thank you for this opportunity to offer my support for Jennifer Yue Barber, of Kentucky, to represent our country at the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

As nations around the globe prepare to celebrate the U.N.'s 75th anniversary, American leadership is as important as ever. Alongside our fellow Kentuckian, Ambassador Kelly Craft, Jennifer has the experiences and talents to advance our national values on the world stage.

Jennifer and her family are a wonderful example of the promise of American opportunity. Her parents, Kenneth and Laura, left China as teenagers seeking a better, freer life in America. They found that opportunity in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Kenneth and Laura poured themselves into a small business. Through long hours and hard days, the Yue family built a new future. At age seven, Jennifer began pitching in and learning the rewards of hard work and never giving up.

She carried those virtues into every aspect of her life.

Jennifer went on to earn undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Kentucky. Then, she started making a name for herself in the Bluegrass State's legal community. She's won accolades as a "Rising Star," a member of a local publication's "Forty Under 40" list, and an "Enterprising Woman to Watch."

From constitutional tax issues to economic development, Jennifer is regularly called upon for her counsel and expertise. Her extensive writings have helped shape dialogues and build consensus. She's ably served on the boards of a bank, the Kentucky State Fair, and her alma mater.

While each of those organizations will surely miss her guiding contributions, I commend Jennifer for choosing a new path in public service.

On the Economic and Social Council and in the General Assembly, Jennifer will help promote opportunity, cooperation, and prosperity throughout the international community.

She'll work to empower women and girls and other previously underrepresented groups in an effort to advance global stability and peace.

This Council is also one of the principal U.N. bodies overseeing the global humanitarian response to the COVID–19 pandemic. Through the historic CARES Act, we provided support for vital international relief. Jennifer can be a strong voice for American leadership in these urgent efforts.

I'm grateful President Trump selected Jennifer Yue Barber to help tackle these issues and more on behalf of the United States. Through the course of this hearing, I expect you will find a serious and diplomatic nominee who is ready to step into this critical role.

So thank you again, Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez, for the chance to introduce Jennifer to this committee. I look forward to confirming another outstanding Kentuckian to serve our country.

The CHAIRMAN. I am going to postpone my opening statement and ask the ranking member to do the same until after the introductions are made by our distinguished guests.

So with that, Senator Romney, you are a member of this committee, and we will start with your introduction of Mr. Alex Wong. So, Senator Romney, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. MITT ROMNEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM UTAH

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today I would like to introduce Alex Wong to the committee. Alex is nominated to be the Alternate Representative of the United States to the sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations and to serve as the Alternate Representative of the United States for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations.

I have been fortunate enough to know Alex for many years since he served as the foreign and legal policy director on my 2012 campaign. My extensive firsthand interactions with Alex have led me to the following observations.

First, he is brilliant. His ability to focus, concentrate thinking, analyze complexities, organize disorder, and identify opportunities is of the highest order. It is no surprise that he graduated summa cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania and was an editor of the Law Review at Harvard.

He is loyal and dedicated to America. Alex's driving purpose is to see America strengthened, to see our values promulgated, and to see the enemies of freedom defeated.

He approaches tasks without preconception or bias. Instead, he preserves an open mind and considers the data as it is, not as he might like it to be.

Alex has the kind of confidence that requires no boasting, that fears no slights, and that compels straightforward expression. He

communicates succinctly and plainly without embellishment or self-aggrandizement, nor is he hesitant to express disagreement when he believes he is in the right.

I greatly value these things. It made me a better candidate, but as much or more, I valued Alex's character. He is honest, devoted to principle, kind to others, firm in resolve, and a true friend.

Now, since he left my campaign or rather since my campaign disappeared, Alex has gone on to distinguish himself as a diplomat, a public servant, and an expert in national security affairs particularly with respect to our relationships in the Indo-Pacific.

He has been at the State Department since 2017. He currently serves as both the Deputy Special Representative for North Korea and as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for North Korea. Accordingly, he is second in command to Deputy Secretary Biegun to negotiate for complete North Korean denuclearization. He has made multiple trips to Pyongyang in support of our summits.

Before assuming these responsibilities, he led the State Department's conceptualization of the free and open Indo-Pacific strategy, which was significant in shifting U.S. focus towards the Indo-Pacific, of course, to address growing challenges presented by China.

He was the first U.S. official to visit Taiwan after implementation of the Taiwan Travel Act, and he praised the strength of the U.S.-Taiwan relationship and the democratic path Taiwan has chosen.

He speaks with knowledge and proficiency about the challenges posed by an ascendant China, the significance of working together with our allies to achieve common goals, and about policies that support Iraq to ensure it has a more prosperous future.

He is one of the most talented foreign policy minds of his generation, and I have been fortunate over the years to be the beneficiary of his intellect and insights and judgment.

I ask my colleagues on the committee to report Alex's nomination favorably and hope that the Senate will confirm his nomination without delay so he can get on with the important business of representing our country at the U.N.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Romney.

Senator Cotton?

STATEMENT OF HON. TOM COTTON,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ARKANSAS

Senator COTTON. Chairman Risch, Senator Menendez, members of the committee, I am honored to introduce a friend, a trusted former aide, and a distinguished public servant, Alex Wong, who is the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations.

Alex is one of the most capable people with whom I have ever worked in the Senate and his resume reflects that fact. He was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard Law School where he was the managing editor of the Harvard Law Review. He clerked for Judge Janice Rogers Brown on the D.C. Circuit, and he was an attorney at Covington and Burling.

In the Senate, Alex served as my foreign policy advisor and general counsel. He helped to draft the original Hong Kong Human

Rights and Democracy Act, a bill that can now only be described as prescient since the Chinese Communist Party has cracked down in Hong Kong. That bill passed by unanimous consent last year and was signed into law by the President.

Alex then moved on to the State Department where he has contributed to our strategy for East and South Asia. He has strengthened relationships between the United States and Taiwan, and he has played a key role in our negotiations with North Korea.

That is Alex's resume, but it is only one part of why I think he is the right person to represent our country at the United Nations. Alex is also one of the most cheerful and helpful people I have ever met. He always has a lot on his plate, whether here or at the State Department, but he is never too busy to help a colleague in need.

Alex is also a family man. He and his wife Candice have two beautiful children, Chase and Avery. They obviously cannot join us today for obvious reasons, but I know they are very proud of him for good reason as he is of them.

Alex is a patriot who cares deeply for our country and its principles because he and his family are living embodiments of the American dream. His parents, Robert and Grace Wong, came to America more than 4 decades ago from Hong Kong. They rented a one-bedroom apartment in Queens and worked to make a better life for their family, and their American dream came true. Their son is sitting before you today ready to represent our country to the world at the United Nations.

I know Alex is a man of character and a dedicated public servant because he has proven it to me through his actions, and I know he will fight for America's interests at the United Nations because only in America would his story be possible.

I urge all of you to support his nomination, and I urge the Senate to move promptly on his confirmation so he can do the important work at the United Nations.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cotton.

We are now going to turn to former Congressman Royce. Congressman, we are glad to have you back with us today. It is good to see you, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. ED ROYCE,
FORMER U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA

Mr. ROYCE. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you. It is good to see you and the members of the committee, and it is good to be able to speak up here and a great honor to be able to introduce to you my former deputy staff director on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Edward Burrier.

Edward worked for me for 18 years, so he is not only someone I worked with, but someone that I am fortunate to call a friend. Edward first started in my office interning in the Africa Subcommittee, which I then chaired, and at the time, he was still in college at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, and every day he would make the long commute from Fredericksburg just to volunteer.

He then took a job in my personal office where he met his future wife, a fellow junior staffer, Gretchen. They now have a young son

William, and it has been a pleasure watching them grow personally and professionally.

Edward eventually rose to deputy staff director of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and over the years, Edward was essential in achieving so much, including efforts to prevent the proliferation of shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles to terrorists and major legislation sanctioning the regime of North Korea and Iran, which are dangerously pursuing nuclear weapons programs.

He found a niche in tracking international rogues, some of who are now behind bars for gun running and creating mayhem in part because of Edward's efforts.

He also produced important reports, including the path-breaking "Gangster Regime, How North Korea Counterfeits United States' Currency," and that is still relevant today.

And he wrote for me hundreds of foreign-intrigue blog entries, some of the most captivating foreign policy writing in Washington.

In short, Edward was involved in all the major foreign policy issues of the day, helping to make our country safer and more prosperous. He has continued these efforts first at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and now at the newly created Development Finance Corporation where he works to advance America's interests around the world and to lift the globe out of poverty. He understands the importance of U.S. engagement in the developing world, which is more critical now than ever as COVID–19 threatens a humanitarian crisis of enormous and tragic human consequence.

Edward Burrier not only has the experience required to be the Deputy Chief Executive Officer at the DFC, he also has the intellect. He has the knowledge. Most importantly, he has the heart. And I could not think of someone more qualified to help lead this organization at this critical time in history, and I am thankful that he is willing to serve.

And I thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Ed, thank you so much. We appreciate you coming to the committee, and we certainly appreciate your remarks and that information.

We will now proceed. I am going to make a few remarks and then turn it over to the ranking member.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

Let me say, first of all, welcome everyone. These are unique circumstances and in response to the unique times that we are living in, unique in many, many ways, not just one, but we adapt and we move along.

So we have got these five nominees. I am going to talk about each of them briefly here.

First is Ms. Jennifer Barber, who is nominated to be the U.S. Representative on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This position is tasked with advancing and protecting American interests related to the economic and social programs at the United Nations.

Ms. Barber currently serves as a member of the law firm Frost, Brown, Todd LLC.

Next we have Mr. Edward Burrier nominated to be Deputy CEO of the International Development Finance Corporation. This role assists the CEO in accomplishing DFC's objective of partnering with the private sector to finance solutions for some of the most critical challenges facing the developing world today. One recent development I support and would like to highlight is the DFC's decision to include nuclear projects in its portfolio.

Mr. Burrier has worked at the DFC since its creation and before that. He was a longtime staffer for the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

We turn now to our nominee to be Ambassador to Ukraine, retired Lieutenant General Keith Dayton. General Dayton served in the United States Army from 1970 to 2010, 4 decades of distinguished service. Retiring from the military, General Dayton has been the Director of the Marshall Center in Germany and most recently has served as the senior U.S. defense advisor to Ukraine.

Over the past year, the U.S.-Ukraine relationship was thrust into the national spotlight. This was unfortunate but it is time to move forward and make clear that Ukraine enjoys bipartisan support in implementing reforms countering Russian malign influence.

That is why I was glad last week to introduce the Ukraine Security Partnership Act, alongside Ranking Member Menendez and four other members of this committee. This bill will further assist the Ukrainian military in its battle against Russian-backed separatists and incentivize military reforms in line with NATO standards.

Our next nominee is Ms. Julie Fisher to be Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus. Ms. Fisher is a career Foreign Service officer. Most recently, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Europe and the European Union. She has also served as the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. mission to NATO. Ms. Fisher, your nomination marks an important step in our relationship with Belarus. If confirmed, you will be the first U.S. Ambassador to Minsk since 2008. I welcome your thoughts on the challenges that lie ahead in rebuilding the U.S.-Belarus relationship, encouraging reforms, and countering Russian and Chinese influence.

Finally, we have Mr. Alex Wong, nominated to be Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. This role is involved in overseeing U.N. peacekeeping operations, disarmament, and international security policies and programs. Mr. Wong currently serves as Deputy Special Representative for North Korea and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

With that, Senator Menendez, I am going to turn the floor over to you.

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to all of the nominees.

Before I address the nominees before us, I am just compelled to note that this is unfortunately another in a series of nominations hearings that have been noticed unilaterally over the objections of the minority and to a large extent without our input.

Additionally, two of the three hearings this week were noticed without securing a Democratic ranking member for the hearing, and one of them was noticed in violation of the committee practice under the 7-day rule, which is unfortunate.

I think clearly the chairman has the authority to run the committee in this manner, but it is a drastic departure from committee practice. It sets the precedent for how the committee will run under any future majority, Democratic or Republican.

And it is also disappointing the committee is holding five nominations hearings and a nominations-only business meeting this work period, but we have not marked up a bill since May. Nominations are an important committee function, but to be relevant, we need to be engaged and legislating on the issues that matter to Americans. I know many members of the committee, both Democrat and Republican, want this to happen, and I hope it can happen in the days ahead.

And finally, given the intense interest and sensitivity of the issues surrounding Ukraine, I had suggested that General Dayton should be on a panel by himself or at least at minimum with just one other nominee. Squeezing him in on a panel of five does not do justice on this set of issues. So, Mr. Chairman, I hope you will be generous in time, especially as we have to deal with all of these nominees in one panel.

Now, the committee has long been a stalwart champion for the relationship with Ukraine. As chairman, I led efforts on two laws that were passed in the wake of Russia's invasion of the country in 2014. And as the chairman mentioned, just last week, we joined together, Chairman Risch and I, to introduce legislation that will substantially increase FMF and IMET for the country.

The fact remains that Ukraine is under daily assault on the ground, on the seas, and in cyberspace from an aggressive Kremlin. Ukrainian service members that have selflessly and courageously fought Russian forces that seek to violate its sovereignty and disrupt the international order are constantly challenged.

President Trump significantly damaged our standing with Ukraine and undermines our own national security by holding security assistance hostage to his political agenda. That was a challenge to our relationship which led to impeachment proceedings. It is now more important than ever for the Senate to speak with one voice in support of Ukraine, especially in the provision of security assistance. And I am glad that we were able to send that clear message with our legislation.

General Dayton, if you are confirmed, you will have very big shoes to fill in Kyiv, those of Masha Yovanovitch and Bill Taylor. Both were not only exemplary diplomats and representatives of the United States but had the courage to speak truth to power. I hope that you will also be up to that task.

Rudy Giuliani and a cast of unsavory Ukrainian characters have not let up their efforts to use Ukraine to interfere in U.S. politics. Others in the Senate seem intent on amplifying their efforts. And I expect that, if confirmed, you would not engage in these games, and I would want your commitment towards that end.

Ms. Fisher, I am glad to have you with us today. You are the first nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Belarus in over a decade.

Your nomination comes at a critical time as Belarus' people are rising to demand democracy and respect for human rights in unprecedented numbers. The Belarusian Government's move away from Russia is important, but we cannot ignore the voices of the Belarusian people. The centerpiece of our policy on Belarus must be a commitment to democracy and human rights, and I look forward to hearing from you on what steps you would take, if confirmed, to support the aspirations of the Belarusian people.

Ms. Barber and Mr. Wong, welcome. At every turn, the Trump administration has unfortunately sought to undermine multilateral institutions. The administration's actions in my view do not make America great. They leave America alone. President Trump's announced intent to withdraw from the World Health Organization exemplifies a culture of blame-shifting and isolationism that is self-defeating for the United States. It is astonishing that during the height of a pandemic, the principal institution charged with leading and coordinating a global response will no longer receive U.S. support.

I am likewise deeply troubled by the attempts of the administration to limit gender equality and restrict the rights of women and girls. It is unacceptable that the U.S. Government representatives at the United Nations have sought to remove references to long-standing and agreed-upon language on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. We must lead the collective commitment to advance fundamental rights and freedoms for all rather than undermine the rights of some, and I look forward to hearing from the nominees on these issues.

Mr. Burrier, welcome. You seem well-suited for the job and rounding out the leadership circle at the DFC is incredibly important. However, I have some serious concerns with some of the DFC's actions that I need nominee's commitment to address. And that includes the authorities that were granted to the DFC under the Defense Production Act executive order signed by the President, as well as concerns with how the DRC is pursuing environmental and social policy. I know you were not there to make those decisions, but I want to hear how you would deal with it, if confirmed.

With that, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

First of all, I do want the record to be clear that the 7-day rule simply requires that I consult with the ranking member if I am going to hold the hearing in less than 7 days. As you know, as always, we consulted and we consulted to our staffs, but as frequently happens, we were unable to reach an agreement. So I noticed the hearing.

I share your concerns as far as marking up a bill. I love nothing better than to spend our time doing that with less time on the noms. Time is at a premium around here, and as you know, we consult on noms [inaudible]. The process is very slow, and after all, we have to stand up the Government before we can do anything else.

This week, we had four meetings, last week two meetings, the week before that, three meetings. We are not dragging our feet. Time is at a premium. But we will keep moving forward.

So with that, thank you, Senator Menendez.

And we will move to our first nominee, Ms. Barber. Your full statement will be included in the record, and without objection, we would ask you to keep your remarks to about 5 minutes and we will put your full statement in the record.

Senator Menendez referred to a request for the chairman's generosity in time. All of you who are on this committee know that the chairman is very generous notwithstanding the occasional abuse by members. But we will be generous with them. And I think Senator Menendez is right. We do have a number of people here, and it is [inaudible] to have the ability to ask questions.

So with that, thank you, and Ms. Barber you are up.

STATEMENT OF JENNIFER YUE BARBER, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE THE 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, DURING HER TENURE OF SERVICE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Ms. BARBER. Thank you. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am humbled to be considered for the role of U.S. Ambassador to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and, if confirmed, would be honored to have the opportunity to serve our country in this capacity.

A special thanks to Leader McConnell for his written statement that is submitted to the record and for his support.

I would also like to express my gratitude to President Donald Trump and Secretary Mike Pompeo for nominating me and to Ambassador Kelly Craft for the confidence and trust that she has placed in me.

In particular, I want to thank God for preparing this path. My husband Andy, thank you for your constant love and support. And our daughters, Molly and Lucy, the next generation for whom I am determined to make this world a better place. And the many members of my family and friends who are watching this right now. Thank you for the many meaningful ways that you have impacted my life.

I would also like to recognize my parents, Kenneth and Laura Yue, who emigrated here from China 50 years ago. My mother is one of seven children and one of four that my grandparents brought to the United States, making the difficult decision to leave three behind, to pursue freedom, opportunity, and the promise of America. She was reunited with her remaining siblings 19 years later when they emigrated to our country.

I grew up working alongside my parents and late grandfather, Sik Chee Yue, in our family's restaurant. Their daily example of sacrifice and hard work and their determination to provide greater opportunity is why it is possible for me to appear before you today.

And it inspires me to shine America's light brightly on the U.N. stage.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my colleagues at Frost, Brown, Todd for their support throughout my legal practice and now as I pursue public service.

And finally, I would like to thank the team at the State Department who helped guide me through this process.

It has been 75 years since that day in San Francisco when representatives of 50 nations, weary of the human toll of World War II, signed the U.N. Charter to create a new organization designed in part to solve problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character and to encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The United States remains central to those ideals, and if confirmed, I will proudly carry to the United Nations the unyielding American commitment to human rights, humanitarian response, and economic development.

As you know well, that commitment is tested frequently. Many U.N. member states work to undermine the values that shape the U.N. in order to advance their narrow agendas and elevate authoritarian ideals.

We see instances of this in some of our most pressing challenges today from the Chinese Communist Party's mismanagement of the COVID–19 crisis and its suppression of democracy in Hong Kong to the Russian and Chinese opposition to providing necessary humanitarian relief to besieged communities in northeast Syria.

If confirmed, I will use my voice and energy to advance the American vision for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I will also carry with me the determination to empower women and girls. It is vital that girls have access to education and that women have equal opportunity in the workplace. We must fuel entrepreneurship and diminish sexual violence and exploitation.

The United States must also continue to play a central role in sustaining the UN's humanitarian response system. That system, built around organizations such as UNICEF and the World Food Program, is extensive and, where permitted to operate, is effective, feeding millions daily and providing assistance to displaced populations.

The demands on that system are quickly growing, as the world tackles a record number of humanitarian crises and swelling populations of displaced people. I know the deep commitment of Congress in providing for those in dire need. There is no country more generous than ours. Yet, as those needs grow, so does the need for more nations to share in that responsibility.

Finally, I will note that American objectives at the United Nations will only be realized if the U.N. is efficient, effective, and transparent. Reform of U.N. agencies has been an American priority spanning decades, and I believe that considerable progress has been made. If confirmed, strengthening that progress will be among my priorities, as will advocating for robust civil society participation and private sector engagement.

Mr. Chairman, members of this committee, for the United Nations to be relevant for the next 75 years, it must remain true to the values that shaped its original purpose and also rise to meet

the needs of today. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly toward that goal and partner with you in Congress to further American values and interests.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Barber follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JENNIFER YUE BARBER

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee—thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am humbled to be considered for the role of U.S. Ambassador to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and if confirmed, would be honored to have the opportunity to serve our country in this capacity.

A special thanks to Leader McConnell for his introduction and support.

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We see this in some of our most pressing challenges today—from the Chinese Communist Party's mismanagement of the COVID–19 crisis and its suppression of democracy in Hong Kong to the Russian and Chinese opposition to providing necessary humanitarian relief to besieged communities in Northeast Syria.

If confirmed, I will use my voice and energy to advance the American vision for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I will also carry with me the determination to empower women and girls. It is vital that girls have access to education and women are given equal opportunity in the workplace. We must fuel entrepreneurship and diminish sexual violence and exploitation.

The United States must also continue to play a central role in sustaining the UN's humanitarian response system. That system, built around organizations such as UNICEF and the World Food Program, is extensive and, where permitted to operate, is effective—feeding millions daily and providing assistance to displaced populations.

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Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, for the United Nations to be relevant for the next 75 years, it must remain true to the values that shaped its original purpose, and also rise to meet the needs of today. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly toward that goal and partner with you in Congress to further American values and interests.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Barber.

And we will now turn to Mr. Burrier. Edward, you are up.

STATEMENT OF EDWARD A. BURRIER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION

Mr. BURRIER. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the first Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation.

I greatly appreciate Chairman Royce's kind introduction. I owe more than just my career to the chairman. As a young staffer on Capitol Hill, I met my incredible wife of 14 years, Gretchen. She and our son William are watching today, and I am grateful for their support. Like me, Gretchen has spent her career in government and knows the demands, responsibilities, and honor that come with being a public servant.

I grew up in Fairfax, Virginia, the youngest son of two talented musicians. My father served in the United States Army Band for over 30 years. Integrity, respect for others and—most of all—hard work were instilled in me by my parents. As a senior in high school, I volunteered for a local congressional candidate who went on to win a historic election. I was enthralled that I played a small part in that democratic process, even if it was just stuffing envelopes.

While at Mary Washington College, I did several internships on Capitol Hill and spent one summer interning for a member of Parliament in London. In my last semester, I took a commuter train from Fredericksburg, Virginia to intern at the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, then chaired by Congressman Royce.

After graduation, the Congressman offered me a job in his personal office, opening mail, answering phones, and giving Capitol tours to constituents from Orange County, California. Little did I know I would spend the next 18 years working for the Congressman. I worked my way up from the personal office to the committee and earned a master's degree in national security from the U.S. Naval War college along the way.

I became Deputy Staff Director of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 2013, a position I held for the next 4 and a half years. During that time, the committee worked—alongside this

committee—to advance U.S. interests abroad, bolster those yearning for freedom, solidify alliances, and even helped put a warlord or two behind bars. Those results were achieved by being consultative, solution-oriented, and working across the aisle.

I brought these qualities with me when I transitioned to the executive branch 3 years ago. As Vice President for External Affairs at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, I led OPIC's efforts both in the interagency and with this committee on the BUILD Act, the landmark legislation that created DFC.

I believe strongly in DFC's mission. Simply put, there are not enough government resources to tackle the challenges of the developing world. Through DFC, we can leverage the power of private capital to help meet demands, improve lives, and advance American interests.

I have seen firsthand the impact that U.S. development finance can have. I have met with Shrouq, an energetic woman in Amman, Jordan, who took a small loan to start a driving school to empower women. I have met with homeowners in Ghana, who achieved that dream thanks in part to DFC financing. And I have visited a DFC-financed power plant in Togo that is giving the country a chance to power its economy forward.

From microfinance to secure telecommunications to infrastructure, DFC support is critical in helping create opportunity and growth. The role of DFC is only expanding as the developing world grapples with the sobering economic outlook in the wake of the COVID–19 pandemic. Times like these are precisely when institutions like DFC are needed most.

Of course, this is also when our strategic competitors are looking to take advantage of the situation to advance their influence. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee to ensure that DFC maximizes its tools and is a robust alternative to authoritarian financing that can leave developing countries worse off.

Mr. Chairman, I am committed to U.S. leadership and engagement in the world. And I am convinced that DFC will be at the forefront of our country's development policy for generations to come. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the committee to strengthen DFC's foundations so that the bold vision you had in drafting the BUILD Act becomes a reality.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burrier follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EDWARD A. BURRIER

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for others—and most of all—hard work, were instilled in me by my parents. As a senior in high school I volunteered for a local congressional candidate who went on to win a historic election. I was enthralled that I had played a small part in that democratic process—even if it was just stuffing envelopes.

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Of course, this is also when our strategic competitors are looking to take advantage of the situation to expand their influence. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee to ensure that DFC maximizes its tools and is a robust alternative to authoritarian financing that can leave developing countries worse off.

Mr. Chairman, I am committed to U.S. leadership and engagement in the world. And I am convinced that DFC will be at the forefront of our country's development policy for generations to come. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the committee to strengthen DFC's foundations so that the bold vision you had in drafting the BUILD Act becomes a reality.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much. I appreciate those words.

General Dayton, you are up.

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL KEITH W. DAYTON, UNITED STATES ARMY, RETIRED, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO UKRAINE

Mr. DAYTON. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of this committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress to continue our strong bipartisan support

for the Ukrainian people, to enhance our already deep bilateral relationship, support Ukraine's reform agenda, counter Russian malign influence, and work to fully restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. These steps will be critical to advancing our shared goal of Ukraine joining the Euro-Atlantic community as a free and full member.

My name is Keith Dayton. I am married to Carol, my wife of almost 45 years. We have three married children, five grandchildren, and one more on the way.

I have dedicated the past 50 years of my life to public service. I retired from the U.S. Army as a lieutenant general in 2010, after more than 40 years in uniform, and for the past almost 10 years, I have been the Director of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, addressing regional and transnational security issues for both the United States and Germany.

Ukraine has been part of my life for 40 years. After I was commissioned in 1970 as a field artillery officer, I learned Russian and graduated from the U.S. Army Russian Institute in Germany as a Soviet foreign area officer. It was through the Russian Institute that I had the first opportunity to visit Soviet Ukraine in 1980. I will never forget the experience of meeting Ukrainians and recognizing the deep pride they have in their history and culture, while appreciating the incredible suffering inflicted on the Ukrainian people by foreign powers throughout their history.

As a Soviet Russia military specialist, I have had various assignments, culminating as the U.S. defense attache in Moscow as a brigadier general. As a lieutenant general, I served as the U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem from 2005 to 2010. I reported directly to the Secretary of State as I led a multinational team working with the Israeli Government and the Palestinians. As such, I operated at the most senior levels in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, as well as with Ottawa, London, and Washington. I was both a diplomat and a soldier.

After retiring from the Army in 2010, I continued to serve my country as the Director of the Marshall Center. The Revolution of Dignity brought Ukraine back to the center of my attention. Inspired by the fierce commitment to democracy and freedom by the protesters on the Maidan, I directed the Marshall Center to create a comprehensive program of seminars and assistance to Ukraine focusing on civil-military relations, civilian oversight of the armed forces, and security sector reform. The goal was to help Ukraine's new leadership adopt Euro-Atlantic principles of government and take the steps required to one day join NATO. I am proud to note that in this endeavor I have had the enthusiastic help of the U.S. Senate.

In October 2018, then Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis asked me to be the U.S. Defense Advisor to Ukraine. In this role, I chaired the Defense Reform Advisory Board composed of the United States, Canada, the UK, Poland, Lithuania, and Germany. We serve as strategic advisors to the Ukrainian defense minister and meet him often. I have come to know firsthand today's Ukraine and its many challenges, and I have developed relationships with supporters of

Ukraine in the U.S. Congress, at the Department of Defense, and the Department of State.

The Ukraine I encountered as a young man in 1980 was very different from the vibrant and hopeful country I work with as the Defense Advisor, but the fundamental challenges remain the same. Ukraine seeks to rid itself of Moscow's interference, eliminate corruption, and build a government that is accountable, transparent, and responsive to all its citizens. But one thing has not changed and will not change and that is that it is in the national security interests of the United States for Ukraine to overcome these challenges and achieve a future in which Ukraine is whole, democratic, and free.

There is much at stake here. Ukraine is trying to achieve a just and peaceful resolution to a conflict created and fueled by Russia that has left 13,000 dead and caused untold suffering. President Zelenskyy has made ending this conflict a cornerstone of his administration, and while the United States remains an advocate for a diplomatic resolution, we support Ukraine's right to defend itself against Russia's ongoing aggression in the east and resist Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea.

At the same time, Ukraine must continue on the difficult path of implementing rule of law, good governance, and economic reform. This is hard work. From the Orange Revolution to the Revolution of Dignity and the 2019 elections that brought President Zelenskyy and his party to power, Ukrainians have repeatedly demanded accountable leadership, an end to corruption, and transparent, independent judicial and law enforcement bodies that respond to citizens' needs over the demands of oligarchs and other interests.

And Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with Ukraine's leadership to ensure these reforms remain at the top of their national agenda.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to talk to you, and I welcome any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dayton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.) KEITH DAYTON

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of this committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States' Ambassador to Ukraine. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress to continue our strong bipartisan support for the Ukrainian people, enhance our already deep bilateral relationship, support Ukraine's reform agenda, counter Russian malign influence, and work to fully restore sovereignty and territorial integrity. These steps will be critical to advancing our shared goal of Ukraine joining the Euro-Atlantic community as a full and free member.

My name is Keith Dayton. I am married to Carol, my wife of almost 45 years. We have three grown children, five grandchildren, and one more on the way. I have dedicated the past 50 years of my life to public service. I retired from the U.S. Army as a lieutenant general in 2010 after more than 40 years in uniform, and for nearly 10 years I have served as director of the Marshall Center, addressing regional and transnational security issues for the United States and Germany.

Ukraine has been a part of my life for forty years. After I was commissioned in 1970 as a field artillery officer, I learned Russian and eventually attended and graduated from the U.S. Army Russian Institute. It was through the Russian Institute that I first had the opportunity to visit Ukraine in 1980. I will never forget the experience of meeting Ukrainians and recognizing the deep pride they have in their

history and culture, while appreciating the incredible suffering inflicted on the Ukrainian people by foreign powers throughout their history.

My subsequent military assignments took me far from Ukraine but immersed me in the world of diplomacy. I accepted several Foreign Area Officer deployments at our Embassies abroad, culminating in my assignment as the U.S. Defense Attaché in Moscow as a brigadier general. As a lieutenant general, I served as U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem from 2005-2010. In this role I reported directly to the Secretary of State as I led a multinational team in almost constant contact with the Israeli Government and Palestinian authorities. I routinely conducted liaisons at the most senior levels in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, not to mention Ottawa, London, and Washington.

After retiring from the Army in 2010, I was offered the opportunity to continue the practice of diplomacy and serve my country as director of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch, Germany. Not long after I joined the Marshall Center, the Revolution of Dignity brought Ukraine back to the forefront of my diplomatic responsibilities. Inspired by the fierce commitment to democracy and freedom by the protesters on the Maidan, the Marshall Center began a comprehensive program of seminars and assistance to Ukraine focusing on civil-military relations, civilian oversight of the armed forces, and security sector reform to help Ukraine's new leadership adopt Euro-Atlantic principles of government and take the steps required to join NATO. I am proud to note that this endeavor would not have been possible without support from within the U.S. Senate.

In October 2018, then Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis asked me to be the Senior U.S. Defense Advisor to Ukraine. In this role, I chair the Defense Reform Advisory Board composed of the United States, Canada, the UK, Poland, Lithuania, and Germany. We serve as strategic advisors to the Ukrainian Defense Minister. Before the COVID–19 crisis, I would visit Ukraine at least once every six weeks to provide strategic advice to the Minister of Defense and his deputies. As a result of these engagements, I have come to know and understand Ukraine and its many challenges, and I have developed relationships with supporters of Ukraine in the U.S. Congress, at the Department of Defense, and at the Department of State.

The Ukraine I encountered as a young man in 1980 is very different from the vibrant and hopeful country I work with as Senior Defense Advisor, but the fundamental challenges remain the same: Ukraine seeks to rid itself of Moscow's interference and build a government that is accountable, transparent, and responsive to its citizens. One thing that has not changed—and will not change—is that it is in the national security interests of the United States for Ukraine to overcome these challenges and achieve a future in which it is whole, democratic, and free.

Although the journey has not always been easy, Ukraine has made great progress. In the United States, Ukraine will always find a partner and friend. I come before this committee today honored and humbled to be nominated to head the U.S. diplomatic mission in Kyiv as Ukraine takes the next steps in its national project: ending aggressive Russian actions on its territory and making the necessary democratic reforms to establish itself as a modern European state and NATO member.

We must not forget what is at stake. Ukraine is trying to achieve a just and peaceful resolution to a conflict created and fueled by Russia that has left 13,000 dead and caused untold civilian suffering. President Zelenskyy made ending this conflict a cornerstone of his administration, and the United States has always been and will be an advocate for a diplomatic resolution.

I want to be clear, however, that the United States fully supports Ukraine's efforts to defend itself against Russia's ongoing aggression in eastern Ukraine. Russia is responsible for this conflict, and we are committed to working with our Ukrainian and European partners to continue to impose political and economic costs on Russia for its actions.

We are equally committed to supporting the complete restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including an end to Russia's blatant violations of international law in Crimea. To move forward productively and in good faith, Russia must honor and implement its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

At home, Ukraine must continue on the path of implementing rule of law, good governance, and economic reforms that ensure the Government is accountable to its citizens. From the Orange Revolution to the Revolution of Dignity to the 2019 elections that brought President Zelenskyy and his party to power, Ukrainians have repeatedly demanded accountable leadership and transparent, independent judicial and law enforcement bodies that respond to citizens' needs over the demands of oligarchs and other vested interests.

I have personally witnessed this passion for reform in my interactions at the Marshall Center with young staffers from the National Anticorruption Bureau of

Ukraine working to investigate individuals involved in corruption, and in the efforts of the National Bank of Ukraine to push back against political influence. However, vested interests continue to resist reform—particularly, reform of the judicial and financial sectors.

A strong, independent central bank has been critical to Ukraine's remarkable macroeconomic success over the past several years. Its continued independence is crucial to a post-COVID–19 economic recovery and to international confidence in Ukraine's economy. If confirmed as ambassador, I will work with Ukraine's leadership to ensure these reforms remain at the top of its agenda.

If confirmed, my priorities would be coordinated with Congress and the administration, but among them would have to be genuine reform of Ukraine's armed forces and defense industry. My military background and current role as Ukraine's Senior Defense Advisor provide me unique insight that I hope to leverage to assist Ukraine's armed forces become an increasingly effective fighting force. This includes helping Ukraine implement the interoperability reforms necessary to achieve NATO membership. NATO's recent decision to offer Enhanced Opportunity Partner status to Ukraine is a huge step in the right direction and the culmination of efforts I initiated at the Marshall Center in 2014 and advocated at the North Atlantic Council earlier this year.

Ukraine's defense industrial base is also in need of urgent attention and transformational leadership. Years of corruption and mismanagement have pushed Ukrainian defense firms to the brink of collapse. This neglect has made Ukraine's hard-earned intellectual property and defense technology vulnerable to Chinese exploitation and expropriation—something we cannot allow. We cannot turn a blind eye to China's malign intentions in eastern Europe. Ukraine's defense sector needs reform, but ultimately it should work for the people of Ukraine—not China.

Ukraine needs to ensure a level playing field through transparent economic institutions that deter vested interests and break the stranglehold of corruption. Only when international businesses have real confidence in their investments will Ukraine realize its full economic potential. Key to building that confidence is to make good on Ukraine's reform commitments.

Over the past five years, the United States has provided over four billion dollars in aid, and others in the international community have provided billions more. Meeting the conditions set forth by international financial institutions will ensure Ukraine continues to serve its people—and I mean everyone—not just a few individuals. Continued compliance with Ukraine's IMF and World Bank programs is the strongest signal the Government can send that it remains committed to reform.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General.

We will now turn to Ms. Fisher. Ms. Fisher, the floor is yours

STATEMENT OF JULIE D. FISHER, OF TENNESSEE, 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 BELARUS

Ms. FISHER. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, members of this committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the first American Ambassador to Belarus since 2008. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress to reestablish the bilateral relationship and to support Belarus' efforts to protect its sovereignty and independence in the face of political pressure aimed at undermining both.

I am joined today by my husband, Matthew Fisher. He has been a supporter of my career since the day I took the Foreign Service exam. And my achievements are due in large part to his unwavering support.

I am proud to hail from a family dedicated to our nation's service. My grandfather, my father, my sister all served as naval offi-

cers at times of war and peace. My family joins us virtually, and I am grateful for their support.

If confirmed, I look forward to building on the work of our exceptional team in Minsk to further reforms and promote a more ambitious bilateral relationship. I will bring to this position 25 years of experience, including service at our embassies in Kyiv, Moscow, Tbilisi, and at NATO. Most recently I was honored to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State focused on Western Europe and the European Union.

Our relationship with Belarus languished for more than a decade, but after Russia's illegal seizure and occupation of Crimea and its manufactured war in Ukraine's Donbas region, we began to see signs of interest from the Belarusians. Since 2018 and in line with the goals laid out in the National Security Strategy, we have advanced a more engaged approach that recognizes Belarus' right to chart its own future free from foreign dictates. Former Assistant Secretary Wess Mitchell initiated this outreach with his visit to Minsk in late 2018, and since then, we have seen increased engagement from both sides, culminating in Secretary Pompeo's visit to Minsk in February.

This Sunday, Belarus will hold its presidential election following an eventful and testy summer. Recent elections in Belarus have been neither free nor fair. Despite efforts to convince authorities to adopt OSCE recommendations, Belarus' 2019 parliamentary elections did not meet international standards. And neither the OSCE nor the Council of Europe will observe the upcoming elections. If confirmed, I intend to support the aspirations of the Belarusian people as they strive for democratic principles, including universal freedoms, civil liberties, and the rule of law.

We have encouraged Belarus to address pressing human rights priorities and implement the reforms outlined in the Belarus Democracy Act, which are essential for it to strengthen its international standing and fulfill its people's aspirations. Nonetheless, the Government continues to detain and pressure the opposition and impose restrictions on the press, civil society, and certain religious minorities. We have seen numerous incidents of such pressure during the ongoing election campaign, despite some modest improvements in the treatment of political opposition and independent civil society in recent years. In the face of insufficient progress on these issues, our relationship will continue to be bound by the constraints imposed by the terms of the Belarus Democracy Act.

However, there is encouraging progress in other areas. Belarus' young generation has a notable entrepreneurial spirit as evidenced in the dynamic growth of the information technology sector. Recent deliveries of American crude oil can help diversify Belarus' energy supply and support jobs here at home. Belarus is increasingly pursuing American investment and, if confirmed, I will support the creation of reciprocal business councils in Minsk and in Washington.

And we welcome Belarus' cooperation on priorities, including nonproliferation, law enforcement, and information sharing in fields such as border security, cybersecurity, and counternarcotics. If confirmed, I hope to build upon this foundation.

Embassy Minsk has grown in size since the Belarusian Government's decision to lift its cap on the number of American employees. And we are engaged in discussions to construct a new embassy compound. I have learned from experience in other fast-growing missions some of the risks of rapid growth, and I am committed to careful stewardship of taxpayer resources.

Finally, as Secretary Pompeo stated during his February visit to Minsk, we fully support Belarus' desire to make its own choices, pursue its own partnerships, and play a constructive role in the region. Belarus should not be forced to depend on any single nation, and we are not asking Belarus to choose between East and West. Countries, much like individuals, choose their friends but not their neighbors.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, members of this committee, in closing, let me say that we have a real opportunity in Belarus. But this opportunity is a two-way street, and we will move ahead at the appropriate pace as the Belarusians are willing, as our national interests dictate, and as our values permit. I look forward to working with you as we carry this effort forward.

I thank you very much for the opportunity to appear today, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fisher follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. JULIE FISHER

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, members of this committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the first United States Ambassador to Belarus since 2008. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress to re-establish and strengthen the bilateral relationship at a critical time and to support Belarus's efforts to protect its sovereignty and independence in the face of unprecedented political pressure aimed at undermining both.

I am joined today by my husband Matthew Fisher who served alongside me in Kyiv and Moscow and endured my long days in the office and even longer commutes to places like Tbilisi and Brussels. He has been a supporter of my career since the day I took the Foreign Service exam, and my success is due in large part to his unwavering support. I am proud to hail from a family dedicated to our nation's service: my grandfather, father, and sister all served as Naval officers at times of war and peace. My family is joining online today, and I'd like to thank them for their support for as well.

If confirmed, I look forward to building on the work of our outstanding team in Minsk to further reforms and promote a more ambitious bilateral relationship. I will bring to this position twenty-five years of experience at the State Department including service at our Embassies in Kyiv, Moscow, Tbilisi, and at NATO, as well as tours at the National Security Council and at State Department headquarters. I most recently served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, focused on the relationships with our closest Allies and partners in Western Europe and in the European Union.

Following the withdrawal of our ambassador in 2008, the bilateral relationship with Belarus languished for the better part of a decade. But after Russia's illegal seizure and occupation of Crimea and its manufactured war in Ukraine's Donbas region, we began to see signs of interest from the Belarusian side for increased diplomatic and commercial ties. Since 2018, and in line with the goals laid out in the National Security Strategy of advancing American influence in an era of renewed great power competition, State Department leadership has sought to re-center our bilateral engagement with Belarus and advance a more engaged diplomatic approach and presence that recognizes Belarus's sovereignty and right to chart its own future free from foreign dictates. Former Assistant Secretary Wess Mitchell initiated senior U.S. Government engagement with his visit to Minsk in October 2018, and since then, we have seen an increased level of senior attention from both sides, culminating in Secretary Pompeo's visit to Minsk in February, the first cabinet-level visit to Minsk in over a quarter century.

This Sunday, Belarus will hold its presidential election following an eventful and testy summer. Recent elections in Belarus have been neither free nor fair, based on international standards. Despite the international community's efforts to convince Belarusian authorities to adopt the OSCE's recommendations, Belarus's 2019 parliamentary elections did not meet international standards, and neither the OSCE nor Council of Europe will observe the upcoming election, which is a break from past precedent and a reason why it is so important that the United States remains engaged. We have urged the Government of Belarus to ensure the upcoming elections are free and fair and to demonstrate restraint in the event of protests. If confirmed, I intend to support the continued aspirations of the Belarusian people for democratic principles, including universal freedoms, civil liberties, and the rule of law.

Human rights in Belarus remain a challenge. The United States has encouraged Belarus to address human rights priorities and implement the pro-democracy reforms outlined in the Belarus Democracy Act, which are essential for it to strengthen its international standing and fulfill its people's aspirations. At the core of the Belarus Democracy Act is a desire for increased space for a diversity of voices in Belarus, including the political opposition, civil society, and independent media. Despite numerous incidents during the ongoing election campaign, we have seen a trend of modest improvements in the treatment of the political opposition and independent civil society since 2015. Nevertheless, we remain concerned the Belarusian Government continues to detain and pressure the opposition and impose restrictions on the press, civil society, and certain religious minorities. In the absence of progress on these issues, our relationship will be bound by the constraints imposed by the terms of the Belarus Democracy Act.

In the areas where we see progress, there are success stories to recognize and encourage. Belarus's young generation has a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit, as evidenced in the dynamic growth of the information technology sector, demonstrating the potential for economic transformation. Another bright spot is the recent delivery to Belarus of 600,000 barrels of U.S. crude oil, with another shipment on the way. These shipments can help diversify Belarus's energy supply and support jobs here at home. Belarus is increasingly pursuing American investment and, if confirmed, I will support the creation of an American Chamber of Commerce in Minsk and a Washington D.C.-based U.S. business council focused on Belarus. Such organizations will facilitate U.S. trade and investment, champion American companies doing business in Belarus, and create jobs and economic growth in the United States.

I want to thank Congress for its support in providing assistance to Belarus. This assistance prioritizes respect for human rights, a stronger civil society, and freedom of expression. U.S. assistance aimed at the private sector spurs the development of entrepreneurs, small businesses, and the middle class. Thanks to Congressional support, we committed over $7 million in 2019 to helping Belarus undertake and continue reforms.

The United States also welcomes Belarus's cooperation on key priorities including nonproliferation, law enforcement, and information sharing. Of note, Belarus has signed agreements to bolster efforts in fields such as border security, cybersecurity, and counter-narcotics. If confirmed, I hope to build upon this foundation and harness Belarus's desire to play a positive role in the region.

I'd like to note that since the Belarusian Government's March 2019 decision to lift its cap on staffing, the number of American employees at Embassy Minsk has already grown from ten to fourteen, and that number will grow further, commensurate with mission requirements. We are also engaged in discussions to construct a new embassy compound. I have learned from experiences in other fast-growing missions some of the potential risks of such growth, and I am committed to careful stewardship of taxpayer resources.

Finally, as Secretary Pompeo clearly stated during his visit to Minsk, we fully support Belarus's desire to make its own choices, pursue its own partnerships, and play a constructive role in the region. We respect its sovereignty and self-determination. Belarus should not be forced to depend on any single nation for its prosperity or security, and we are not asking Belarus to choose between East and West. Countries, much like individuals, choose their friends but not their neighbors.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, in closing, let me say that we have an opportunity in Belarus. For the sake of regional security and stability, we cannot allow this opportunity to pass us by. Cooperation is a two-way street, and we will move ahead at the appropriate pace as the Belarusians are willing, as our national interests dictate, and as our values permit. If confirmed, I will use my years of diplomatic experience in this region to pursue our country's overarching mission to create a safer, more democratic and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you; I welcome any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ms. Fisher. You certainly have challenges in Belarus. I think all of us were disappointed that the elections being held are being held under the circumstances they are and without the recognition of the international community. I think it is going to be difficult for the Belarus people to accept those elections. We will see how they handle it. But you have your challenges. Thank you for taking this on.

With that, we will turn to Mr. Wong.

STATEMENT OF ALEX NELSON WONG, OF NEW JERSEY, 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 ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. WONG. Thank you, Senator. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. And I am humbled by the confidence President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and Ambassador Craft have shown in me with this nomination.

And I want to particularly thank Senators Romney and Cotton not just for their kind introductions but for the outsized roles that they have played in my career.

There are so many other people to thank for bringing me to this point in my professional life: the late Ambassador Schweich, Judge Janice Brown, Lanhee Chen, the late Ambassador Rich Williamson, Paula Dobriansky, National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, Brian Hook, Ambassador Stu Eizenstat, and Deputy Secretary Steve Biegun. All of these distinguished statesmen and women gave me the opportunity to fail, succeed, and to grow as a professional. I am greatly indebted to them all.

All of these individuals took a chance on me, but it was my parents, Robert and Grace Wong, who took the biggest chance of all for my sake. They left Hong Kong 43 years ago. They settled into a single-room rental in Kew Gardens, Queens, with an infant, a bus pass for the commute to an arduous and unstable job, and a whole lot of belief in the United States of America. If I am so fortunate to return to the city that welcomed them to America to represent the country they so dearly believed in, it will vindicate that belief in a way they could have scarcely imagined as newly arrived immigrants.

And, Mr. Chairman, I am truly blessed to have three godsends who sustain me every day, who inspire me, and who give my life its meaning: my baby girl Avery, my dear son Chase, and my beautiful bride Candice.

Mr. Chairman, my professional life has been focused on advancing U.S. interests in the foreign policy realm. I joined the civilian surge in Iraq that was so necessary to complement the military surge. I had the opportunity to work as Senate staff to advise and support Senator Cotton on a range of national security matters. And 3 years ago, I returned to the State Department, first, to deepen U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific and, second to help realize the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea.

In all of these roles, I have been reminded of the importance of pragmatism in an arena as difficult and uncertain as foreign affairs. But I have also seen the overriding value of standing firmly and boldly for American principles. My late mentor, Rich Williamson, who held the very job I have been nominated for, would often say to me you have to be a realist to take steps in the everyday, but an idealist to know in which direction you are going. That is a philosophy I would bring to the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, many of the core functions of the United Nations are centered at the Security Council. The council has a weighty mandate to preserve international peace and security. But too often, it does not live up to it.

The world has no doubt entered into a period of heightened geopolitical competition. This is a time when the United States and our friends and allies in the free world are facing greater challenges and more dire threats. This heightened competition is manifesting itself at the Security Council and the wider U.N. system.

This is in large part why the council has not been able to take decisive action, as the U.N. Charter demands and as our conscience demands, to address conflict and human suffering in hotspots spanning the globe. Russia and China block discussion of Maduro's crimes in Venezuela. Because the Assad regime has two permanent P5 protectors, the council has never done right by the Syrian people in this decade of their suffering. And I must note that even in this year of 2020, well into the 21st century, our close and steadfast friend Israel still faces attacks in the U.N. system that echo the most sinister prejudices of centuries past.

Even though our work at the counsel may be harder in this era of great power competition, even though it may be frustrating, it does not mean it is any less important. In fact, I believe it is more important than ever. Strategic, principled, and tireless diplomacy at the council is needed to unify our partners, to blunt damaging initiatives, and to advance U.S. interests that benefit the world.

Now, there are functions of the council that, for the most part are working. U.N. peacekeeping is a vital institution for promoting international peace and security. To protect the credibility of that institution and, more importantly, to protect vulnerable populations around the world, the United States has demanded and successfully won increased scrutiny and reform of peacekeeping budgets, mandates, and accountability mechanisms for poor performance and misconduct. Our efforts, as well as the efforts of this committee, have resulted in new training, reporting, and accountability measures for sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeeping personnel. And we have succeeded in giving missions realistic and achievable mandates, as well as clear exit strategies to

keep them from remaining in place beyond their useful purpose, which was too often the case in the past.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, in an era of great power competition in which the values of the free world are under pressure, I believe it is vital for the United States to hold firmly to its position of leadership at the United Nations. It is American values, liberty, fundamental rights, and the sovereignty of a nation's people, that animate a just and workable international system. Those values will always be at the front of my mind if I am so fortunate as to be confirmed for this position.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wong follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALEX N. WONG

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, distinguished members of the committee, I'm deeply honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations. And I'm humbled by the confidence President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and Ambassador Craft have shown in me with this nomination.

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Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Wong. We appreciate your remarks.

We are going to do a 5-minute round of questioning now, and we are going to do it on a seniority basis since it impossible to keep track of who showed up first.

So the most difficult proposition here is the 5-minute clock. We are going to be on the honor system. Now, we all know that did not work so well when our clock was broken in the committee, but we are going to give it a go again. We are not completely on the honor system because I do have a 5-minute clock. As the ranking member pointed out, there are important things to explore here, and we will try to give everybody a shot at it and then come back again with another round for those that have other questions. And there are a lot of questions on [inaudible].

So with that, I will turn it over to Senator Menendez [inaudible] on the clock.

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

General Dayton, if confirmed, do you commit to not meet with Rudy Giuliani or his associates?

Mr. DAYTON. Senator, I am not going to commit to that because I believe that as an Ambassador I would have the obligation to meet with any U.S. citizen and hear them out if they come.

But let me assure you. I have spent 50 years in the service to this country, and the guiding principles of my life have been the triad of duty, honor, and country. And anything I would deal with Mr. Giuliani or any other person who approaches me will be guided by——

Senator MENENDEZ. You are aware, General, of why I even asked that question I assume. Correct?

Mr. DAYTON. I am aware of what I have read in the papers, Senator, but I had nothing to do with and I was not involved in any way in the episodes——

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that you were not engaged with it, but you are going to be, if confirmed, the Ambassador at an embassy, which has been rife with the use of political actors to try to influence and undermine the course of U.S. elections. I think that is a high calling and responsibility.

So let me ask you this. If confirmed, do you commit to report to the appropriate channels and to this committee if you become aware of any efforts to interfere in the November 2020 U.S. elections?

Mr. DAYTON. Senator, I think if that were to occur, that would be a very reasonable request on your part. I would, of course, consult with my State Department colleagues, but that sounds reasonable to me.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Let me refine the question. Would you tell members of the committee of jurisdiction, the one that you are before for confirmation, that you had become aware of efforts to interfere in the 2020 U.S. elections if that information came before you?

Mr. DAYTON. Again, I would have to know what the circumstances are, but I see no reason not to do that. It makes sense to me.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I am a little alarmed by your equivocation.

Let me ask you, should security assistance to any country be delayed in order to gain domestic political advantage?

Mr. DAYTON. No.

Senator MENENDEZ. Was it wrong for the President to withhold security assistance from Ukraine in 2019?

Mr. DAYTON. I am not sure what the exact circumstances were on that. I was not in Ukraine at the time. And I was not aware that this had affected any of our efforts that we dealt with on Ukraine at the time.

The President does what the President does, and I am there at the discretion of the President and I fully understand that. But I am also, if I am confirmed as Ambassador to Ukraine, I am at the disposal of the American public as well.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, when you take an oath, if you are confirmed, it will not be to the President of the United States. Correct?

Mr. DAYTON. I believe it will be the same oath I have taken all my life, which is to the Constitution of the United States.

Senator MENENDEZ. Correct, and Article I of the Constitution is the Congress of the United States.

And so I am deeply concerned when nominees equivocate on sharing information with the committee of jurisdiction, particularly with a history that we have in Ukraine.

Will you, if confirmed, remain vigilant and try to prevent individuals from interfering in our election process if that information comes before you?

Mr. DAYTON. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. Following attacks on Ambassador Yovanovitch and other career employees from the U.S. embassy in Kyiv, I remain concerned about the toll of those attacks on morale and other career public servants. What will you do to boost morale

and send a clear message that you support career employees, if you are confirmed?

Mr. DAYTON. For 50 years, Senator, I have been a team builder in the Army and here at the Marshall Center, and I will build a team that—a team is already in place. I think they are in pretty good shape. I have met with many of them over the last year and a half. But I will, indeed, build a team that is united in its efforts to advance American interests in Ukraine.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me turn to another question. Have you read the Ukraine Security Partnership Act that Senator Risch and I introduced last week?

Mr. DAYTON. I have not read it in detail. I have read what is the National Defense Appropriations Act, but I have not read the act that you refer to.

Senator MENENDEZ. What are your views on increasing FMF and IMET security assistance for Ukraine as it encounters Russian aggression?

Mr. DAYTON. I think it is a very good idea and it is something I support wholeheartedly especially with the recent experience I have had of the last 22 months as the defense advisor.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me turn to Ms. Barber for a moment. Ms. Barber, your career to date has been as a tax attorney. You have no experience in foreign policy, no experience in multilateral diplomacy, or expertise in economic and social issues. But should you be confirmed as the Ambassador to this position, you would be charged to help to coordinate the work of many U.N. specialized agencies, including the World Health Organization, which the President announced his intention to withdraw from. You also will be representing the U.S. Government in critical forums for global coordination on issues of gender and women's human rights, including the Commission on the Status of Women.

I have some serious concerns regarding the administration's attempts to restrict women's rights.

First of all, how are you going to meet these challenges of being in a multilateral organization but us withdrawing from multilateral organizations? And do you intend to use your position to bolster global cooperation and continue progress on gender and women's rights issues, or will you continue the efforts we have seen so far in the administration to weaken our commitments for gender equality?

Ms. BARBER. Senator, I believe that effective diplomacy is identifying shared values and developing personal relationships to reach those common goals. And if confirmed, I will take my experience and my expertise in negotiations and problem solving, litigation, and innovative thinking to try to tackle these various issues that you mentioned.

As it relates to the World Health Organization and other organizations that the United States participates in, I believe that global participation is important, but I think that it is also important that we see contributions from other member states that is not so disparate to the United States' participation and contributions. And if confirmed, I will work hard to bring likeminded partners to the table and try to expand resources and contributions from other states so that we can tackle some of the really rising humanitarian

needs and human rights issues that the United States has been a global leader on.

As it relates to women and girls, I am the first in my family to graduate from high school. So as I mentioned in my opening statement, it is a priority for me to see that girls have access to education and women have equal opportunity in the workplace. And for that reason, I will absolutely be focused on issues relating to women and girls. I have seen where Ambassador Craft has traveled to many places and from South Sudan to the Syrian border——

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate your lengthy answer, but let me get to the specifics of what I was trying to get with you, which is you are aware that the administration has taken unprecedented hardline positions against longstanding agreement upon language on gender-based violence, as well as sexual and reproductive health issues. What is going to be the position that you will advocate if you are confirmed on these issues?

Ms. BARBER. Senator, if confirmed, I will work hard to try to build consensus on resolutions that benefit women and girls. I think it is important that we have to empower them and unlock their potential.

And as it relates to some terminology that you are referencing that may prevent us from joining in, it is my priority to try to build consensus on clear terminology so that we can make most effective those resolutions for women and girls.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, the consensus—I will not belabor it because I want to not overstep the chairman's generosity. I will come back.

But the consensus has existed. So you do not need to build consensus. The consensus has existed over these longstanding, agreed-upon language on gender-based violence and what U.S. law has been and the Siljander amendment prohibiting the use of foreign assistance funds to lobby for or against some of these issues in multilateral organizations. So it worries me that you think you have to create consensus. The consensus exists. The question is what you are going to do on behalf of the United States to follow and to build upon that consensus versus trying to create a new consensus that will not help women with gender violence issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

We will now turn to Senator Johnson, and after Senator Johnson will be Senator Cardin. So, Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have got my own timer, so I will not abuse the time.

The CHAIRMAN. Good for you.

Senator JOHNSON. General Dayton, obviously, you have a great deal of experience in Ukraine. I actually want to get some real information out of you because of that.

Can you just update us in terms of the general assessment of where Ukraine stands militarily in eastern Ukraine, the Kerch Strait, Sea of Azov? Give me that basic military assessment. I kind of want to get your assessment of the politics as well, the political situation. But start militarily. Have we progressed over the last 3 and a half years? Have we made progress? General Dayton?

Mr. DAYTON. Senator, we have made a lot of progress. We have a lot more to do.

I hope this is working right. It looks like you and I may be talking on top of each other.

You hit a big point, though, which is the Black Sea, Sea of Azov, Black Sea. This is going to become a much more important strategic entity than it has been in the past. And where the Ukrainians need a lot more help is going to be with their navy. It is going to be with their air force. They have always had a ground forces-centric military. They need to outgrow that a bit.

Now, the situation in the east is stable. Could the Russians invade tomorrow? They could but they would take a very bloody nose to do it. And I think I would probably leave it at that. But we have a lot of work to do.

What I like is the fact that the Ukrainians have truly embraced defense reform in a way that when I started my advisory work 22 months ago, I did not think they were capable of, and they have really come around.

Senator JOHNSON. President Zelenskyy—first of all, I think he is a smart man. I think he understands the mandate he received from the Ukrainian people to rid the country of corruption. I think in one of his speeches before the High Anti-Corruption Court, he said we are just not going to reduce corruption. He plans to defeat it. It is very difficult in Ukraine. I keep talking about Ukraine having to get past the era of the oligarchs.

Can you give us your basic assessment in terms of how he is doing, what he is up against, just the challenges from a political standpoint? As we all recognize, the table stakes in any of these Eastern European countries is to reduce the level of corruption so they can attract investment and have a greater economic opportunity.

Mr. DAYTON. Senator, on the plus side, the Zelenskyy regime and the new parliament have done a lot in areas of agriculture, banking, health, education, good governance, law enforcement, and judiciary. That is on the plus side. They built institutions.

On the negative side, the oligarchs are still there. They are very powerful, and I think that this is going to be an area that I will have to deal with, if I am confirmed, in a very serious manner. You know, we have gone over a year without a U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, and I really do think that a U.S. senior presence will help President Zelenskyy deal with some of these issues. But the oligarchs—it is kind of like in Star Wars. The empire is trying to strike back. Zelenskyy is having some challenges now, and I think he needs a little bit of our help in a way that we have not been able do it in the last year.

Senator JOHNSON. One of the issues in Ukraine is, of course, the oligarchs control the media. We have billionaires control our media as well. But you have total control of the economy, as well as the media, and that is a significant challenge for any leader that is trying to rid the country of corruption.

Can you basically speak to that challenge?

Mr. DAYTON. It is a challenge, and you are absolutely right. Mr. Kolomoisky owns half of the radio and television stations in

Ukraine, and the ones he does not own are being broadcast into Ukraine by Russia.

We are working on this. I know the State Department has a program working on challenging disinformation that is coming not just from the Russians but from the oligarchs as well. But this is going to be a long-term project, and it is something that I will definitely get into, if I am confirmed.

Senator JOHNSON. So just real quick. President Zelenskyy won with over 70 percent approval, really a stunning electoral success. Has the media, have the oligarchs done a pretty good job of degrading that public support? Where does he stand publicly right now?

Mr. DAYTON. Senator, the last poll I saw he was still at least twice as popular among the public as anybody else, but his numbers are not at the stratosphere as they were before. Of course, they have come down. But again, you have to be careful of the polling there too. As you know, Senator, more than anybody, the disinformation campaigns in this part of the world are phenomenal, and even some of the polling is quite suspect. I think he is still pretty popular. I think if elections were held tomorrow, he would do very well and would be reelected. But—but—and I emphasize but—he needs some help because the bloom is off the rose here a little bit.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, thank you for your service and good luck to you. God bless you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

We will now move to Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me thank all of our nominees for their willingness to serve our country. We appreciate that very much, and we also send our thanks to your families, because we know this is a family commitment.

Ms. Barber, I want to follow up on Senator Menendez's points in regards to the advancement of American values. How do you see the sustainable development goals and our participation in that as a way to advance our goals?

Ms. BARBER. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

I think the sustainable development goals are an important framework from within which the U.N. member states need to work.

I also think that it may be best enforced locally versus globally. I understand that there is not member consensus on the goals and the prioritization of those goals. So I am interested in learning more about how the prioritization will evolve. And I do support them. I think that they provide a strong basis for targets for countries.

Senator CARDIN. Are you familiar with Goal 16, which deals with good governance?

Ms. BARBER. I am.

Senator CARDIN. It states basically we cannot hope for sustainable development without peace, stability, human rights, and effective governance based on the rule of law.

My point is this. The record on these goals has been pretty good. It is a universal commitment to deal with poverty, to deal with education, to deal with gender equity, to deal with health care and

to deal with good governance now. So it really is an international commitment to achieve these goals, and metrics are developed to show how well we are doing. We have a deadline. You are familiar with the date on which these goals are supposed to be met?

Ms. BARBER. Yes.

Senator CARDIN. So how will you use your office, if confirmed, to make sure that we in fact have demonstrable progress in meeting these goals? I could point to the fact that in 2019, 357 killings were reported of human rights defenders in 47 countries. That is a metric that needs to change. So how are you going to use that to advance human rights?

Ms. BARBER. Senator, I agree with you, and I will work with a strong team at the U.S. mission that currently exists. I believe that they are focused on the sustainable development goals and that they are working on making sure that the United States makes progress in these areas. So I will continue to build on the momentum that they have and work with them to see to it that we make improvement in these areas.

Senator CARDIN. I just would encourage you to work with our committee. There is strong support for holding countries accountable. This is an international commitment and effort. We have the private sector working with us, as well as governmental entities, to advance the end of dealing with poverty and education, but also good governance, which is the key contribution that I think that the United States can make in these efforts, and we will need you championing those issues.

Mr. Burrier, I want to just get to one issue. You said you helped develop the BUILD Act, which deals very much with the DFC. Part of that is a commitment that at least 50 percent of the business is done by small businesses. I mention that specifically because COVID–19 has had just a horrible impact on all businesses, but small businesses do not have the resiliency. So attention to small businesses is even more important now.

What commitment can you give us that you will work to make sure that goal is complied with?

Mr. BURRIER. Thank you very much, Senator. And obviously, thank you for your leadership on the BUILD Act. I remember working with you and your staff on that provision.

Like OPIC before it, we have a strong commitment to helping both small businesses here in the United States. I remember working with Ellicott Dredges on that project in Iraq. And as you put your finger on it, this support for small and medium-sized enterprises in the developing world is going to be absolutely critical. Much like our economy at home, the economies in the developing are powered and engined by these small businesses. And so we are having to shift our strategy a bit to make sure that we are working with financial institutions in the developing world that can lend quickly to these small enterprises to ensure that these economies can keep going.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Ms. Fisher, I will ask you one question on Belarus. It is exciting that we are going to, hopefully, have a confirmed Ambassador. I have been to the country.

Let us not mistake the move away from Russia as necessarily a move towards democracy because we have seen with the Government very little real progress in defending the human rights of the people who live in their country or free and fair elections. I know we have elections coming up. It will be challenging if they can meet the standards of free and fair elections.

So I hope that we can count on you to give us an honest account of how well Belarus is doing on the human rights and the good governance reforms, anti-corruption, et cetera, and not just try to remove them from Russia. We do not want them under Russia's umbrella, but quite frankly, Belarus has been pretty independent for a long time. It has not really been dependably by Russia for a long time.

So what is your game plan on trying to establish realistic goals that we can advance our values in Belarus?

Ms. FISHER. Thank you, Senator. I really appreciate the question because I think it is at the heart of the challenge that we face as we reestablish this bilateral relationship with Belarus.

I think a big part of the challenge for me in answering this question is that we have been really hobbled in our efforts to fully engage in Belarus with such a limited number of [inaudible] and such limited facilities in Belarus. Getting the story out, being able to communicate back what is happening on the ground is a particular challenge, and to be very frank, it is even harder in the current environment.

I will tell you I am committed to making sure that the story as we see it, as we observe it from the embassy, if I am confirmed, is what gets through to you, is what gets through to our partners in Congress, as well as across Washington. The goal of this process is not simply to send an ambassador so that we can move beyond the terms of the Belarus Democracy Act. It is to see whether our enhanced engagement can actually lead to greater results as we seek to support the aspirations of the Belarusian people.

So in my view, it will be a long-term effort. It will not be quick. It is going to take us time, and I really look forward to being on the ground and engaging directly because there is such a tremendous difference between what we can do from afar and across an ocean versus that personal engagement on the ground. And that is what I look forward to.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

We will now move to Senator Portman.

Senator PORTMAN. Did you say Senator Portman, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. I did. That is you.

Senator PORTMAN. Excellent. All right. Thank you very much.

And to all the nominees, I appreciate your willingness to step forward and serve your country at an important time in some really important roles.

Lieutenant General Dayton is a star, and Mr. Chairman, I think you know how I feel about him. I think he is the right person at the right time. He has a distinguished military career, and since he hung up his uniform, he has continued to serve as Director of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. And he has used that post effectively in my view to increase democracy

development in Europe and especially in Ukraine. And you saw, by the way, a number of seminars from members of the Ukrainian military and the Rada. My own staff at the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations has assisted with teaching some of those classes. That is where I first came to know General Dayton. And I believe he is knowledgeable, passionate about the issues as we have seen today, and has worked hard to make the Ukrainian military a more capable and credible force and one that does help fight corruption, that does have civilian control. That is a big accomplishment that I think he is largely responsible for.

He has got instant credibility in Ukraine. We need somebody who can hit the ground running right now.

So he has got my support, and I hope my colleagues will support him and continue to work with him.

We have got real threats right now in Ukraine, obviously. Russia continues to be aggressive on the eastern border. The devastating impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on all countries has also visited Ukraine unfortunately. And we need a confirmed Ambassador there badly.

So as I have said before, I think Ukraine is a critical strategic partner of the United States. They have come to us. You know, they have turned to the West, and we want to help them to build a more free, open, and democratic society. I think, although they have made strides, they are at a critical point again right now. And I think, General Dayton, you are the right person to help them continue on that path.

I do have a letter I would like to enter into the record by unanimous consent, which was written by the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America regarding General Dayton. Mr. Chairman, I have already sent that electronically to your staff.

The CHAIRMAN. That will be introduced into the record.

[The document referred to above can be found at the end of this hearing transcript.]

Senator PORTMAN. General, you talked briefly about the NDAA, and as you know, we have a requirement in there for a combined Department of Defense and Department of State capabilities report on gaps in the Ukrainian military and development of a multiyear strategy to address those issues. I think this report is important because it will pinpoint the equipment and resources that Ukraine needs to push back against the continued Russian aggression in the Donbas and Crimea, and frankly since we started assisting Ukraine in fiscal year 2016 budgets, I have been encouraged by some of the progress we have made, but I have been discouraged that we have not had this type of report for Ukraine to be able to put it all together.

By the way, I also support the legislation strongly that Chairman Risch and Senator Menendez have led with me and Senator Murphy and I believe others now, which would be an authorization bill. And Senator Menendez talked about that earlier.

But with regard to the NDAA report, could you comment on that, General Dayton? Do you believe that that report is appropriate? Do you believe it would be helpful?

Mr. DAYTON. Sorry, Senator. I had a problem with my computer for a second.

I think it is very important, and it is a great opportunity for us to get Ukraine to finish focusing on mapping out requirements and priorities with our help. We have been advocating a capabilities-based mid-term planning effort for the Ukrainians for the last at least 2 to 3 years. They have a new defense minister. He is taking a very deliberate approach to this problem. And what you have asked for in the NDAA is exactly the tool that I would have wanted to help them get to where they need to be. I think this is very important, and I look forward to reading both the Chairman and Senator Menendez's bill as well, which unfortunately I have not yet seen.

Senator PORTMAN. Great. Well, thank you.

The Ukraine Security Partnership Act is what it is called, and I think it is good because it standardizes the amount of security assistance that we have in a multiyear strategy. But I think that is important for long-term planning, I think you would agree, in dealing with the Ukrainian military. That is something that would be helpful to them.

One thing I will tell you in response to our legislation, we had a member of the Russian State Duma Committee—the chairman actually—say that Russia may now officially start supplying arms to the Donbas separatists. I thought that was kind of ironic since it seems to me it is pretty clear they have been doing that.

But can you comment on that?

Mr. DAYTON. Yes. I saw this comment by Mr. Kalashnikov. I will tell you it is really rich. Look, the Russians have about 2,300 people in the eastern provinces of Ukraine currently. They have given them more than 400 tanks, 700 field artillery pieces, mortars, drones, air defense artillery, small arms, crew-served weapons. This is ridiculous. Yes, sure, as if they are not involved.

You know, before the conflict started, these people had nothing, and the Ukrainian military had it all. And right now, this is a pretty formidable force that is facing the Ukrainian military, and they are, indeed, led and accompanied by Russian active duty troops.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, thank you for that. Having visited the contact line—as you know, I have been out there—it is a hot war and there are Ukrainians who are dying defending their country. And therefore, I am pleased to see that again the NDAA not only has that report, but also we provide through that the largest amount of lethal defensive aid the United States has yet provided.

So I appreciate you and my colleagues on this committee in a bipartisan way supporting that.

Mr. Burrier, can I ask you a quick question? First of all, I do think you are uniquely qualified for this position, having worked to help transition OPIC into the DFC.

My question to you has to do with what should the DFC be doing going forward. It has recently come into the spotlight because in order to help bring back domestic manufacturing capability in response to COVID–19, the President invoked the Defense Production Act to delegate loan authority under sections 302 and 303 of the act to the CEO of the DFC. This will allow the DFC to make loans targeted at reshoring domestic supply chain manufacturing of

PPE, something we all want to see. But because the DFC works now exclusively internationally, it seems a surprising move. And I understand the DFC has a lot of experience going into emerging markets and managing large investments.

That said, I am interested in your opinion as to why the DFC was chosen for this mission over other agencies that do operate in the United States with similar authorities.

Mr. BURRIER. Sure. No. Thank you, Senator, very much for the question.

As you noted, the President signed an executive order in May that married DFC's financing skills with the DPA lending authority with a focus on COVID–19 recovery and relevant domestic supply chains, which we all want to see bolstered. I think it is a sign of the unprecedented time that we are in that the President took such a step.

It is a time-limited 2-year authority. I feel very comforted by the fact and want to share with the committee that we have done a lot of work with DOD to wall that off so that these Defense Production Act loans are done under that authority, under DOD resources and do not impact the resources of DFC's core international mission. So our $60 billion for DFC is reserved for the international development mission. Our appropriations are reserved for our staff. And the DPA loans will be done under the DOD resources.

In regards to my role, if confirmed, as you pointed out, that executive order has placed that authority into the CEO. I have been nominated to be the Deputy CEO—my background is in foreign policy and development. And so, if confirmed, the CEO has asked me to make sure that my focus is going to be on the international mission to ensure that we are laser focused on that because the challenges in the developing world are just coming at us so hard. We are not going to take our eye off that ball.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, I appreciate that, and I am sure the chairman and others do as well. As an original cosponsor of the BUILD Act and someone who supported the DFC enterprise, changing our approach and consolidating and trying to be able to compete with China and others, we do not want you to be taken away from your statutory mission to invest abroad. So I appreciate that commitment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Portman.

Senator Shaheen, you are up next. I do not see your picture, but they appear to indicate you are with us. Am I right or am I wrong?

Senator SHAHEEN. You are correct. And hopefully, you will see me——

The CHAIRMAN. There you are.

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

And thank you to all of the nominees this morning for your willingness to come before the committee and testify and to consider being nominated for these roles.

I want to start with you, General Dayton. And I am sorry if you have answered this question because I was not able to get on the hearing until a few minutes ago.

But Kurt Volker, before he became President Trump's envoy in 2017, observed that the Minsk agreements were—and I quote—not

a solution but a problem as they essentially legitimized the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We know that this has been the underpinning of U.S. foreign policy in Ukraine to support the Minsk agreements. But since it has been 6 years, we have seen no progress, and in fact, what we have seen, as you pointed out so correctly, is the continued support that Russia gives to fighters in the Donbas. They are really directing that effort and the equipment and everything.

Should we consider trying to come up with a different agreement to address what is happening in Ukraine? One of the examples that I think is so telling is that the Kremlin issued up to 1 million Russian passports to Ukrainians in the last year. So do we think that it would make sense for us to play a role in trying to negotiate a new agreement to address what is happening in Ukraine in the Donbas?

Mr. DAYTON. It is a great question. And yes, it is not going well. As you probably know, the Ukrainians just put in their previous president, Mr. Kravchuck, to be the leader of their delegation now in negotiations. One gets the impression this could go on indefinitely and that the Russians are playing rope-a-dope with everybody as we go along.

Should the United States get involved? I do not know. I would have to examine that problem a lot more. Right now, the Ukrainians, under President Zelenskyy, think that they are in a fairly good place because they are not going to give into the Russians on territorial integrity issues or even special status for the Donbas.

But, you know, we have got our hands full in a lot of places. I would like to give it a shot myself first before I were able to give you a more coherent answer.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thanks. I appreciate that. I remember when the Minsk Agreement was being negotiated, that there was a lot of opposition from the Germans and from the Europeans basically to the United States providing more weapons to the Ukrainians to fight back against the Russians and a real ownership of that agreement in a way that they do not seem to continue to have. And so I do not know if you have been able to talk to anyone in the European community about Ukraine and whether they think it is time to look at trying to negotiate a new effort to end the fighting there and to address Russia's interventions.

Mr. DAYTON. I do talk to Europeans about this. As you know, I am resident here in Germany. Germany, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom are members of the group that I work with advising the defense minister. They all believe that we are doing the right thing. They all support the U.S. arming of the Ukrainians and trying to revamp their defense sector. They think this all makes a lot of sense.

The real question is politically where are these countries. And so far the European Union countries have been pretty steadfast in sanctions against Russia, and they have had plenty of opportunity to walk away and they have not done so.

So I think, like I said, I would like to take a good hard look at this, if I am confirmed, consult with the embassy experts that know about this, consult with the ambassadors of the countries that are involved in the Normandy process and take it from there.

I would add one other thing. I know that Secretary Pompeo, in front of this committee last week, suggested that it is a good time to kind of reactivate the former Kurt Volker position. I strongly agree with that. I think we could use the help.

Senator SHAHEEN. That makes sense to me as well, and I look forward to hearing your assessment once you have been on the job for a while and see if you think there are other things we could do to address what is happening there in terms of the fighting.

My next question is for Ms. Fisher. And like others, I certainly share the enthusiasm that we are now sending an Ambassador to Belarus for the first time since 2008. And I know that there are some actions that Belarus has taken which have meant that we feel like it is appropriate now to send an Ambassador back to the country.

But I want to follow up a little bit on Senator Cardin's question. As you look at the steps that Belarus would need to take in order for more robust engagement, what kinds of things do you want to see from Belarus in order to begin to see more openings for democratic initiative, more opportunity to engage with the rest of Europe and move away from Russia?

Ms. FISHER. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. I really appreciate the question.

In my view, there are a couple of elements of this, but it starts with Sunday. It starts with the elections on Sunday and not taking steps backward from the modest progress we have seen in recent years in terms of the climate for the political opposition and independent civil society.

The first component to ensuring that we can continue to grow this relationship is that we not see steps backward in the conduct of this presidential election.

Beyond that, I think it is incredibly important that we consult with our allies and our partners in the West, in Europe about where there are opportunities for us to continue to help Belarus build confidence that there is room, that there is space in Belarus for opposition voices, for civil society. Fundamentally I think the tenets of the Belarus Democracy Act, the requirements that are laid out in it, and what we are trying to get beyond is basically to ensure that there is space, to ensure there is space for more than one voice in this country. And it is important to me to understand the dynamics on the ground and what are the pieces. As we think about sequencing, as we think about the concrete steps, I do not want to sort of prejudge what that looks like from here at this point. But I will tell you I see this committee, I see the members, the staff as important partners in how we gauge our process going forward.

There is opportunity for us in Belarus. There is no question about it. And moving beyond the idea that this is a country that is looking only at one other capital or perhaps two other capitals is absolutely essential as we think about security in Europe in my mind. But we do not do that absent our own values and our own national interests.

Senator SHAHEEN. So I know that they are still in the middle of the pandemic in Europe as well, but will there be any independent monitors at the election this weekend?

Ms. FISHER. Unfortunately, the OSCE will not be on the ground nor will the Council of Europe. I do not know that I can say there will be none. Our embassy will have a limited number of teams. We have a limited presence on the ground. We will have folks observing on Sunday. There are already members of our team who are observing the early voting period, which has already started. But that is different from the fulsome observation effort.

So I think it will be quite difficult to draw conclusions absent those key information points, those key data points, which we generally look to to help inform our judgments about the conduct of elections.

Senator SHAHEEN. What about any civil society monitors?

Ms. FISHER. There has been a very interesting—I would like to characterize it perhaps as a grassroots sort of movement for individuals to report on what they are seeing in polling stations. There has been a reaction from the central election commission whether or not that is allowed. The way that precincts are being set up is a little different from how it was in the past. There has been a proposal for individual voters to record what they see in polling stations or even potentially their votes, and that is certainly not accepted by the central election commission and the authorities.

So as we think about the pre-election environment, we are also looking at—campaign rallies are authorized. They require permission. The cancellation, the late-breaking cancellation, of previously approved events is something that we do not need people taking photographs in precincts to understand those [inaudible]. So it is a part of the overall picture of the conduct of these elections.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I do not know how much time I still have.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, Senator, the chairman has been very generous with the time. You owe me some time right now, but these are important noms. We have people that are going to important places. So feel free.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I do have a couple more questions for Ms. Barber.

Ms. Barber, if confirmed, part of your role will be to represent the United States at forums, including the Commission on the Status of Women which functions under the Economic and Social Council at the U.N. Unfortunately, last year, the U.S. delegation is reported to have pushed for the removal of term "gender" in the final document outlining the priorities of the commission for the year.

Now, if confirmed, will you prioritize women's rights at the U.N., and will you work to reassert the role of the U.S. in promoting and protecting women's rights around the world?

Ms. BARBER. Yes, absolutely, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. And can you also talk about how you might use the position at the U.N. to do that, the kinds of actions that you would like to see happen to support the rights and empowerment of women around the world?

Ms. BARBER. Yes. Senator, thank you for this question because the empowerment of women and girls is critical, and I believe that it is important that we unlock the potential there.

There already exists many affiliates and U.N. agencies like the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women that you mentioned and then even within this administration here in the United States, WGDP and other organizations that are really coming together and doing a whole-of-government approach towards seeing to it that we empower women.

And so, if confirmed, I will work and build on that momentum that already exists and add my voice and energy to that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. We also have legislation that is before the committee right now that will encourage economic empowerment of women, and I am hopeful that we can move that legislation. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you done, Senator Shaheen? I guess so.

I have Chris Murphy. I do not see his picture but I see he is entered. Chris, are you there? Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. I am. Can you see me?

The CHAIRMAN. I cannot see you. There is a button on your computer that you can get your grandkids to push for you.

[Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY. I should be here.

The CHAIRMAN. You are on now.

Senator MURPHY. All right, great. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to all of our witnesses for your willingness to serve.

Just one very quick comment before I ask a few questions, and that is to Mr. Burrier. Thank you for your willingness to serve in an agency that we have given a wide-ranging mission to. I would agree with Senator Portman's concerns about the additional responsibilities that have been given to DFC. But I would note that amongst the countries that the DFC is involved in today is Lebanon, and our heart breaks for the explosion that has killed untold numbers of Lebanese. But I think it is a country now that DFC can double down on. There are some investments there that I think will be very, very important to the rebuilding and the economic stabilization of that nation. And so I just make that editorial comment at the beginning.

My questions, though, are for General Dayton. And I want to build upon the line of inquiry from Senator Menendez. I understand your answer to his specific question about whether or not you would meet with Rudy Giuliani. Your answer is that you would be open to meeting with any U.S. citizen. But I think the reason Senator Menendez asked this is that Rudy Giuliani was not in Ukraine as a private U.S. citizen. He was there representing the campaign interests of the President of the United States.

And so let me maybe ask the same question but more generally. Do you think it is appropriate for the Ambassador to Ukraine to be meeting with representatives of the President's reelection effort or the President's opponent's election efforts particularly months prior to an election?

Mr. DAYTON. Senator, the answer to that is the greatest strategic asset to Ukraine right now is the bilateral and bipartisan support that they enjoy from the

U.S. Congress. And as Ambassador, I would do my utmost to protect that bipartisan support and look at any requests for audiences and all that with a very critical eye because I believe that is the real jewel in the crown for Ukraine right now is bipartisan support for the country.

Senator MURPHY. So I approached this hearing very much like Senator Portman. I was enthusiastic about your nomination. You seemed to be the perfect person to fit the bill at this moment. But I will admit to being a little concerned about your inability to answer these questions directly.

Let me ask again. Do you think it is appropriate for the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine to be meeting with representatives of either Joe Biden's election campaign or the President's reelection campaign within 100 days of a presidential election?

Mr. DAYTON. Well, Senator, I am not quite sure what you are looking for. First of all, it would depend on what their agenda is. And I think that is something that I simply would have to find out. If they are there for very partisan purposes, of course not. It is not something the U.S. Ambassador should be advancing the interests of either of the parties just before a presidential election.

I would note that I do not think Mr. Giuliani ever met with the U.S. Ambassador. As a matter of fact, the concern was that he did not.

Senator MURPHY. That is a slightly more direct answer, but I think it was a pretty easy one, a lay-up in my mind.

Let me ask you a policy question. We have talked a lot about military aid, and I am a sponsor of the legislation that has been referred to several times. At the same time, I do not see Putin's aims as marching an army into Kyiv. Putin is trying to economically and politically break the country. And I fear that we have had a myopia in that we have sort of, I think, seen our role far too often in providing military support rather than political and economic support.

Do you agree with me that Putin's real aim ultimately here is not to march an army across eastern Ukraine? It is to try to create enough political and economic instability such that a government is installed in Kyiv that is once again friendly to his interests, like the Yanukovych Government was. And if that is the case, is it not just as important, if not more important, for us to be supplying economic and political and anti-corruption aid to Ukraine, as it is for us to be supplying security assistance?

Mr. DAYTON. I think you are right, Senator. And I do think the security assistance is important. But you are right. Putin's goal is to destabilize this country, and why fight if he can destabilize the country without fighting? And yes, economic and other kind of assistance is very important, but it needs to be tied to genuine reform on the Ukrainian side as well because all the assistance in the world not tied to reform probably does not do much good either.

Senator MURPHY. And lastly, General Dayton, as you mentioned, you are an expert not only in Ukraine but on Germany and U.S.-German relations. The President of the United States has said that Germany has done nothing for Ukraine. Do you agree with that statement?

Mr. DAYTON. I would tell you that the United States is overwhelmingly the supporter of Ukraine in most ways.

I work with a German colleague on my Defense Reform Advisory Board. He would be the first to admit to you that Germany is doing some things primarily in the area of medical assistance and how you build hospitals and things like that. But I guess in my view Germany could do more and perhaps will do more.

Senator MURPHY. Germany in fact has a sizable humanitarian commitment to Ukraine and a sizable democracy and governance commitment to Ukraine. Correct?

Mr. DAYTON. They do.

Senator MURPHY. So it is not true that Germany is doing nothing to help Ukraine.

Mr. DAYTON. Well, that is correct, Senator. I do not think I said that. I said I would like to see Germany do more. Little Lithuania does more for Ukraine, frankly, in my perspective than most countries.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Murphy. I appreciate that.

Just looking at the computer here, I think the only ones left are Senator Menendez and I. And before I turn back to Senator Menendez for some additional questions, are there any other members of the committee that are on that——

Mr. DUTTON. Senator Kaine is on.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. I did not see that. Senator Kaine, where are you? Oh, there you are. Senator Kaine, the floor is yours. We have a very strict 5-minute rule here.

Senator KAINE. I have been seeing how unstrict it has been.

The CHAIRMAN. Nuts. I was hoping you were not watching. Go ahead, Senator Kaine.

[Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. Many of my questions have been answered. I want to ask Alex Wong, if I could.

Mr. Wong, I really want to focus on the job that you are currently in because your work on the North Korea desk I think is important work, and I would sort of like to get a status update from you about what we might expect and how the committee can be helpful.

I have appreciated, when Steve Biegun has come to the committee, that he is pretty candid about efforts, but he does not oversell results. If there are not results, he does not try to convince us that there are. And this seems to be a very difficult problem, and I put that on North Korea's shoulders not on the administration's shoulders. I think we are making a lot of efforts, but as of yet, I have not really seen anything that I would consider a result to celebrate.

But share with me, if you will—we had a hearing yesterday about Venezuela. And I think a number of us—we are trying a lot of things, but we are not seeing the result that we liked. Just as we tried a lot of things in Syria, we did not see the result there that we liked.

The current dynamic with North Korea now testing out apparently, according to recent news, very small warheads, miniaturized warheads, they are moving forward at a rapid pace, and we have

not yet come up with the strategies in tandem with others to stop them.

Is there any reason that members of the committee should feel optimistic about that something is around the corner that might change the equation, or are we seeing a North Korea that is just dead set on doing what they want and there is little that the U.S. can do to alter their calculation?

Mr. WONG. Senator, thank you for the question and also thank you for your continued engagement, as well as your colleagues on this committee on this vital issue.

You are right. We have not yet, as is obvious, reached a final and fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, which is the objective of the President's policy and of these negotiations.

It is a difficult problem set. You mentioned these news reports of—the term is—miniaturization of warheads. That report—that is a U.N. POE report or a report on that report. That is not public yet. I have not had a chance to fully review it. But here is what we know.

For years, North Korea has been pursuing nuclear weapons. It has been pursuing missile technology to threaten the region, around the world, and to threaten the United States of America. But that is why it is so important for us to have the policy and strategy that we do. As you know, the strategy starts with an unprecedented international pressure campaign, one that arose from work at the U.N. Security Council but also from your committee and the broad not just sanctions but diplomatic isolation and overall cooperation with partners around the world to pressure North Korea, to show that there are costs for them departing from the international consensus on nonproliferation, but also to use those sanctions and that pressure to channel them into negotiations on a road map that will implement the complete denuclearization that Chairman Kim committed to President Trump.

Now, we are over 2 years on from the Singapore Summit. The good thing about the summit, the good thing about the work we have done at the leader level is that we have something we have not had before, which is leader level commitment to complete denuclearization of North Korea.

But I will be the first to tell you that we have not yet done the working level negotiations, the hard working negotiations that we need to do to develop the road map to realize that objective. What I will say is the U.S. is ready. You have been in discussions with Deputy Biegun, Special Representative Biegun, on this. We have a strong team here, an interagency team ready to negotiate, but we need to continue on the strategy, continue on the pressure, continue to galvanize the world behind the consensus strategy of using pressure again to channel North Korea into productive negotiations.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Wong, one more question to show my chairman that I am going to stick in my 5 minutes, and this will be my last question. And that is, to what extent do we still believe that an ultimate positive resolution of this set will involve significant involvement by China and how is the current U.S.-China friction making that necessary involvement, if you think that it is a necessary element, more complicated?

Mr. WONG. Senator, thank you for the question.

China does have a role to play here. And we have, obviously, a very complicated relationship across the board with China right now.

But one thing that they have consistently said to us is that they see North Korea as an area upon which we can build cooperation or continue to cooperate. Now, that is a good sentiment. That is a good message, and I do believe we have overlapping interests with China on the peninsula, perhaps not identical interests but overlapping interests. So we can grow that. But that takes work. That takes diplomacy and communication. And that does take real action and commitment from the China.

Now, you remember in 2017 at the U.N., China did come aboard with unprecedented sanctions and they have done a lot to implement those sanctions as far as taking down the two-way trade to really extremely low levels with North Korea.

But there continues to be more work that China can do, particularly on sanctions enforcement. And this is a continued conversation that we have with the Chinese that Deputy Secretary Biegun has specifically held with the Chinese. They can do more, but we need to keep the lines of communication open. We will not always agree but we should continue to communicate, continue to work together because again we do have overlapping interests on the peninsula.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Wong, thank you.

Mr. Chair, I cede back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Kaine. That was an important line of inquiry, and I appreciate you doing that.

Besides myself and Senator Menendez, are there any other members of the committee on the call?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. If not, Senator Menendez, I will recognize you again.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me go back to General Dayton. General Dayton, just so I understand, is it your view that, if confirmed, your responsibility as the U.S. Ambassador is to not only report and share information with the executive branch but also Congress?

Mr. DAYTON. Of course, Senator. I do believe that.

And let me clarify something for both you and Senator Murphy, if I may.

The questions originally came in about Mr. Giuliani, and I would like to put Mr. Giuliani off to the side for a second.

If I as the U.S. Ambassador in Kyiv have any indication that there is any kind of election interference going on using Ukraine as a lever to do that, I would, of course, report that directly to this committee. I think you have a right to know that. I think I have an obligation to report that to you.

I hope I did not make it unclear. What I was trying to say was that if somebody wants to see me, I will critically assess, but as far as the responsibilities of this committee, in a case like that, I agree with you on that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I appreciate that additional clarification. It is very helpful.

Let me ask you this on two substantive questions. If Congress was to pass additional legislation to increase security assistance for Ukraine, what sectors of the Ukrainian security forces would you propose be strengthened?

Mr. DAYTON. It is a great question, Senator. We are already working on it. The answer is the navy, and the answer is the air force. Those are the two sectors that need the most work. And we are already working on that. Largely through the generosity of your committee and the

U.S. Senate, the Ukrainians have the ability now to deal with some of the things in coastal control, maritime domain awareness, that are very, very important. And as I said earlier, the Black Sea in my view will become an increasingly important area for all of us to be looking at strategically.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay.

And finally, it is a developing democracy, and there remain significant reform challenges. If confirmed, what would be your priorities on reform and your plan to see them come to fruition?

Mr. DAYTON. I would tell you that it is probably what I would call rule of law and the judiciary. You are right. It is an emerging democracy. It is not there yet. It is working very hard. I get a lot of young Ukrainians here at the Marshall Center who are very idealistic, working in these areas of countering corruption and countering the old ways, and they tell me almost to a person that it is the judiciary that is the problem, that they can come up with cases to put before the judiciary and the cases are either dismissed or they are delayed for so long that they are no longer meaningful. This is an area that I think is very, very important, and it will be probably my number one priority, if I were confirmed.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you very much for those answers.

Ms. Barber, let me go back to you. On the issue of women's rights and empowerment, can you provide us with your understanding of whether women can meaningfully participate [inaudible] if they are not able to have autonomous control of their own bodies supported by comprehensive access to sexual and reproductive health?

Ms. BARBER. Senator, I will say that the United States has historically and continues to be the largest contributor for programs that help women and children, the health and wellness of women. And I believe that we continue to support women's health.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. You are a very capable attorney from what I am told. Let me repeat my question.

On this issue of women's rights and empowerment, the question goes to can a woman from your perspective as someone who is going to be at ECOSOC and be involved with these issues—can they meaningfully participate in the economy if they are not able to have autonomous control of their own bodies supported by comprehensive access to sexual and reproductive health? Yes, no?

Ms. BARBER. Senator, I would say that it is a difficult question to answer, but I believe that we need to help women find ways to meaningfully participate in their economies. And I think that they can. But I think in some countries, they need help. And if con-

firmed, I look forward to adding my voice to the United States' efforts that already exist to helping women.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I appreciate that. But here is the problem. You know, you are going to be in a position in which the issues that I have just raised with you are going to be a significant part of your portfolio. You may want to skirt them with me. You may not want to offend somebody who maybe has been part of your nominating process, but you will be representing the totality of the United States of America. And our law has been very clear in this regard. Our pursuits, our engagement has been very clear in this regard. So you leave me unnerved by your answer.

Let me ask you this. Will you commit to complying with the Siljander Amendment prohibition on lobbying for or against abortions in multilateral forums? I cannot hear you. Can you put your microphone on?

Ms. BARBER. Yes, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you. All right.

Let me turn to Mr. Wong. Mr. Wong, over the past several years, the U.S. has taken actions that have downgraded its engagement with a number of critical U.N. bodies and programs. It has racked up nearly $1 billion in arrears on its U.N. peacekeeping dues, withdrawn from the Human Rights Council, withheld funding from the U.N. Human Rights, abrogated its participation in other U.N. institutions and initiatives, including the Paris Agreement, most recently submitted paperwork to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization in the midst of the global pandemic. So as someone who is being nominated to participate in probably the premier multilateral forum, do you agree with these decisions to withdraw from key multilateral bodies at a time in which the world faces enormous global issues?

Mr. WONG. Senator, thank you for the question.

Let me just start by saying I think the U.N. is a vital institution. I think the U.N. system, largely due to U.S. leadership and U.S. funding over the decades, has developed a number of institutions to benefit not just U.S. interests but to support the U.N. Charter. I am mainly speaking of peacekeeping operations, World Food Program, UNICEF, counterterrorism bodies, the whole phalanx of bodies that we support, and we continue to lead and are the number one funder of.

Now, you talked about withdrawal from certain organizations. I do think when there is an organization that does not abide by the U.N. Charter, which does not live up—where reform or the path to reform is not available with continued U.S. participation, withdrawal should be considered because it is a strong incentive for reform to get those bodies up to again fulfilling the principles in their missions, as well as the U.N. Charter.

But putting aside withdrawal, which is a decision not to be taken lightly, we do need concerted diplomacy, concerted U.S. leadership to galvanize our likemindedness to blunt damaging initiatives, but also to reform and keep these organizations honest to the U.N. Charter.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, let me just take your explanation to [inaudible] United Nations.

Mr. WONG. Sir, thank you for your question.

I do not think that is the case with the grand majority of organizations that we support. Again, I do think the U.N. system is a vital institution that fulfills not just our interests but again the interests of our friends and allies and the interests of people around the world. That is in the U.N. Charter. So I do not think we are there with the grand majority of organizations.

But we will continue to do the work to ensure that the organizations across the U.N. system, but particularly in my portfolio in the security space, in the peacekeeping space, that those do remain faithful to the charter and those do advance global interests and do not compromise the principles that all countries signed up to when they signed up for the U.N. Charter.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I worry that when we recede, China accedes and ultimately fills in the space and seeks to mold the institution in its own desire. And so it is a real concern as we move forward.

But let me talk about peacekeeping since you just raised it, not particularly in your portfolio. Do you agree that peacekeeping operations are an important example of burden sharing by countries across the globe?

Mr. WONG. I do agree with that, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. And if confirmed, will you work to ensure that peacekeeping operations continue to primarily feature in the UN's efforts to mitigate conflict?

Mr. WONG. I do, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. But what happens when we promote those views, which I agree with you on—I agree with your answers—particularly to our allies when we fail to honor our financial commitments to missions that we ourselves have voted for on the Security Council?

Mr. WONG. Senator, thank you for the question.

I agree with you that peacekeeping operations have to be appropriately funded so they can complete their missions. They need to be effective to create stability in terms of security so we can hand it off to have ultimate political stability in these hotspots around the world.

Now, you have mentioned arrears. You have mentioned funding. I do want to note the United States remains by far the number one funder of peacekeeping operations around the world, but we do abide by the policy and I think a legislative policy that we should not fund more than one-quarter, or 25 percent, of the budget. I think our assessment, if my numbers are correct, is around 27.8 or 28 percent. So we are falling short of that. That is because of I think a very reasonable policy. We supply one-quarter of these funds. We do think other countries should step up. There are 193 member states of the United Nations. We do take on a lot of the burden because we are the world's leader. We are the world's only super power, but I think 25 percent is a reasonable number.

But, look, I look forward, if I am to be confirmed, sir, on engaging on this issue and continuing the consultation with you and you office, as well as this committee, on this important issue.

Senator MENENDEZ. I just think I have a real concern when we at the Security Council vote for peacekeeping operations and then we fall in arrears of our commitment. So even if we are the largest,

then if we think that a peacekeeping operation is in the national interests of the United States, then we have to see that its mission can be achieved. So I appreciate your global answer, but this is going to be a continuing issue as to how we cast our vote and then how we ultimately deal with the mission itself in terms of its funding.

Let me finally turn to Mr. Burrier and our nominee for Belarus. Mr. Burrier, do you believe it is appropriate for the DFC to be undertaking domestic supply chain interests?

Mr. BURRIER. Senator, as you know, the President signed an executive order to give us that limited 2-year authority. I am comforted by the fact that we have structured that so that that authority is going to take place under the Defense Production Act and not compete with the resources for the DFC and our international mission, which I am committed to.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes. Well, when I helped create the DFC, I can tell you it is not what I was supportive of creating to do. The DFC has an international development role. And I do not expect—not only was it not in its mandate, I do not expect that the staff and resources that are going to be used take away from the congressionally mandated mission. And so I am seriously concerned about that.

I am also concerned—you know, I successfully fought to include OPIC's environmental and social policy statement, to transfer it to the DFC. I need to understand how the DFC published a new ESPS that looks very different from the ESPS that section 606 of the BUILD Act was supposed to transfer. I need you to explain how these changes were made without violating section 606. And I do not have anything against nuclear power. It exists in New Jersey. But I am very skeptical of DFC's new policy to consider proposals to build nuclear power plants in developing countries regarding security, environmental concerns, long-term debt management, constraints at nuclear plants would be crippling to many developing countries. So explain to me what you all did as it relates to that provision and does not violate what the law actually says.

Mr. BURRIER. Yes. No. Thank you very much, Senator. And I worked with your staff on that provision. Section 1466 of the BUILD Act did transfer OPIC's environmental policy to the DFC.

Since that time, we did voluntarily notice for a period of public comment a proposed change to OPIC's nuclear policy. That was a voluntary effort on our end. We thought that it made sense that since the BUILD Act was part of modernizing our development finance capabilities, to see if it made sense to take a fresh look at that policy. We heard from many members of the committee, got a lot of support for that change to allow us to consider nuclear projects.

But I want to assure you that that does not change the countries that we would operate in or our developmental mandate. We believe strongly that energy is a key driver of economic development and see a role for the modern, small-medium reactors that are coming on line in the future and want to work closely with the committee as that policy develops to ensure that you have the information you need.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, if you are confirmed—we will follow up with the agency no matter what, but if you are confirmed, I definitely want to follow up with you to make sure that what was the law maintains not only in its actions, but then its spirit as well.

And finally, if I may, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Fisher, allow me to ask you. We rejoice in seeing the movement that Belarus is taking, but the President of Belarus may be moving away from Moscow, but he is clearly not moving towards democracy.

Do you agree with the principles that were laid out in the Belarus Democracy Act?

Ms. FISHER. Yes, sir, I do.

Senator MENENDEZ. How should the United States approach the issues of sanctions with respect to Belarus?

Ms. FISHER. Senator, I would urge that we approach them carefully. I would not support any hasty judgments to move on sanctions. I think they were put in place for specific concrete reasons. In the absence of progress in those areas, we should, I would suggest, consult very carefully between the administration and this committee, as to our assessments and our judgments, progress that we may or may not see with regard to those sanctions.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me phrase it this way. Do you agree with the current posture where sanctions are suspended but could snap back in the event of a regime crackdown?

Ms. FISHER. I think that the suspension of those sanctions has been a very useful tool in this moment. And I do believe that they are a very valuable tool for us, should we see steps backwards. It is very hard for me to predict when, if, what are the precise conditions under which we would do that, particularly given how challenging it will be to understand conditions on the ground in the coming days and weeks with the lack of observer missions, the limited number of people who will be observing these elections. But the suspension is a very useful tool for us. Yes, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. And finally, how do you intend to engage, if you are confirmed, with the Belarusian Government on issues like more competitive democratic elections and ending politically motivated detentions? What specific actions do you think we should prioritize and respond to each of those problems?

Ms. FISHER. I think, sir, my own experience in this part of the world tells me the most important thing we do is we have an honest and a direct conversation with a range of authorities. In Belarus, there is one person whose opinion matters most, but helping to build confidence to make progress in these areas and seeing this as a step that helps ensure Belarus' sovereignty and independence I think is an effort that takes time and it takes repeated engagement and conversations. I think the importance of a message that is unified from Washington—and I think out of Washington we have spoken very clearly I think with one voice, and that has been very useful. The statement from Senators Rubio and Cardin and Durbin on the conduct of the elections, in addition to Secretary Pompeo's statement, in addition to what our embassy in Minsk just put out, that is incredibly important as Belarus makes a calculation about its own standing.

Belarus has been very clear that they are seeking further engagement with the West. It is very clear how many strings are at-

tached to Moscow's engagement in Belarus. It is also clear the high costs of doing business with [inaudible]. But for us in the West and not just the United States, but for us in the West, seeing Belarus make progress in these areas is absolutely essential.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, you have been true to your word. You have been very generous with the time. I appreciate it, considering the size of the panel.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I want to comment just very briefly on your conversation with Mr. Burrier regarding the mission of the DFC and the way they are operating that. I think Mr. Burrier laid out really clearly—and I sincerely appreciate your concerns regarding the issues you raised. You know, the DFC's job is clearly spelled out.

There is nothing more important to development than electricity and energy. Right now, in my home State, the Idaho National Laboratory, which was the birthplace of nuclear power in the world, has built 52 different reactors. They are now in the process of building what they call the SMR, the small modular reactor. And even before that one is done, they have moved to the micro reactor that is actually portable. It is on a trailer. These things are going to be absolutely critical to development in difficult parts of the world.

So I applaud what DFC is doing in that regard, and I am not by that challenging your concerns about that. I think they are concerns that should be considered, but as we move forward, I think we all need to join together, particularly when we have the ability to do 123 agreements that hopefully will spread the use of electricity around the world and do it where we do not get proliferation. And we are the vendor instead of countries and vendors who do not care about nuclear [inaudible].

So those are just a few remarks that I have, but in no way do I demean your thoughts regarding the operation of the DFC. So thank you, Senator Menendez.

So with that, we are going to end the hearing, and thanks to our nominees. There is certainly some real talent here. And especially thanks to your families who will share in sacrifices that you make. We truly appreciate them. I want to extend our appreciation for that.

For the committee, the record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, and any questions that are asked, we would appreciate that those of you who are nominees get back very quickly, as quickly as possible.

Thank you and thanks to all for participation in the hearing.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:16 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO EDWARD A. BURRIER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Defense Production Act

Question. The President's delegation of Defense Production Act authority to the DFC is unrelated to the DFC's mission as established by the BUILD Act.

Answer. While I have not been involved in the efforts surrounding DPA, I have worked with the agency to supply the answers below. If confirmed, my focus will be on DFC's core international development mission.

Question. Do you believe that the DFC was created to help support or bolster domestic supply chains?

Answer. DFC has decades of experience and institutional expertise in lending. This experience and expertise is now being applied to domestic projects for a time-limited period to assist DoD in standing up an important loan program and help the country respond to and recover from the COVID–19 health crisis.

Question. How does the DPA delegation of authorities advance the DFC's purpose and mission, according to Sec. 1412(b) of the BUILD Act to mobilize and facilitate the participation of private sector capital and skills in the economic development of less developed countries . . . and countries in transition from nonmarket to market economies?

Answer. The DPA authority delegated to the CEO of the DFC operates in accordance with the purpose and mission of the DPA statute.

Question. What steps have been or will be taken to ensure that the activities under the DPA do not distract DFC from its core mission and to minimize the burden on DFC's staff?

Answer. DFC entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with DoD (which is publicly available at www.dfc.gov/dpa) to ensure all costs associated with implementing the DPA program are paid for by the DPA Fund. Time-limited staff to work on the DPA program are being hired so that DFC staff stay focused on the DFC mission. Staff is also working with DoD to assist them in developing expertise and capabilities to potentially operate a DPA loan program.

Question. Will the DPA funds the DFC is managing also cover salaries, overhead, and other operational expenses incurred by the DFC in executing the authorities the President is delegating to the DFC under the DPA?

Answer. Yes.

Question. The DFC's first announced DPA loan is to improve domestic supply of pharmaceutical ingredients. Does this loan support activities or improve capacity to prevent the current spread of COVID–19?

Answer. The project referenced is not yet a completed loan. The announcement was of a Letter of Interest following the successful completion of the initial screening phase. On Friday, August 7, 2020, it was publicly announced the loan application is not proceeding at this time.

Question. Is stopping (slowing) the spread of COVID–19, and preventing new infections of COVID–19 the top public health priority in the fight against this pandemic?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What deals, either domestically under the delegated authorities of the DPA or in the DFC's regular international work, is the DFC pursuing to combat the spread of COVID–19 and reduce COVID–19?

Answer. Under the DPA authority, the agency is pursuing multiple projects in the pharmaceutical, vaccine, PPE, and testing space. Internationally, DFC is working to identify innovative investments that will strengthen health systems in less developed countries. Such interventions might include financing innovative healthcare delivery models, digital health solutions, medical services, and manufacturing supply chain and distribution. DFC will seek to invest both in the near term for COVID–19 response, as well as to help address pressing long-term health challenges in the developing world.

Question. DFC has invited companies to apply for financing under the Defense Production Act for projects supporting domestic production of drugs, personal protec-

tive equipment and other medical supplies such as vaccines or virus testing materials. How many companies have applied for financing?

Answer. Fifty-four applications for DPA financing have been received.

Kodak

Question. The DFC recently announced its first Defense Production Act loan: $765 million to Kodak for production of pharmaceutical ingredients.

Answer. On Friday, August 7, 2020, it was publicly announced the loan application is not proceeding at this time.

Question. Why was the first announced loan under DPA authority for a project that will not directly contribute to the nation's COVID–19 response?

Answer. The project referenced is not an approved loan. The announcement was of a Letter of Interest following an initial screening phase. On Friday, August 7, 2020, it was publicly announced the loan application is not proceeding at this time.

Question. Does DFC plan to use its DPA authorities for projects that will directly contribute to the nation's COVID–19 response?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What steps were involved in DFC's "initial screening" process of Kodak?

Answer. The initial screening of Kodak followed the same steps as all other projects have or will follow. The DPA team conducted pre-application calls with the company to discuss the potential project (some applications are submitted directly without any pre-application calls, but the many if not most applications are preceded by pre-application, (or "pre-screening") calls). Kodak then submitted an application. A DPA loan officer was assigned to the application and developed a screening memo that was shared with interagency colleagues at DoD and HHS. Agencies then provided due diligence questions to the loan officer to be answered by the applicant, which was completed. The loan officer then came to tentative agreement on specific terms in a non-binding term sheet with the applicant. Following the term sheet negotiations, the LOI was signed.

Question. What will DFC's "standard due diligence" of Kodak, yet to be conducted, consist of? [1]

Answer. Standard due diligence for the Kodak project would be the same as any other project, including approval by the DPA credit committee, and legal, environmental, and other credit due diligence. This would include independent appraisal of collateral, Know Your Customer checks, independent validation of financial projections, and agreement of a final finance agreement including performance benchmarks among other conditions precedent to funds disbursement.

Question. Which other companies did DFC consider for the purposes of this loan?

Answer. Consideration of Kodak for DPA financing did not come at the expense of other companies. The DPA team is actively working with multiple other pharmaceutical companies, both pre and post application.

Question. Which other companies submitted proposals for financing to meet similar purposes of this loan?

Answer. The answer to these questions would disclose very sensitive business confidential and company strategy information and would jeopardize the DPA program's ability to obtain this necessary information on which the agency relies in evaluating loans under this program.

Question. Did Kodak attempt to obtain financing from the private sector before approaching DFC for the loan?

Answer. Eligibility for a DPA loan is dependent on an applicant not being able to raise capital from private sources on reasonable terms. Over the life of the loan origination process, DPA will continually attempt to work with an applicant on potential additional sources of financing.

Question. If yes, why did it not secure that financing? If no, why did it not try the private sector first?

Answer. Eligibility for a DPA loan is dependent on an applicant not being able to raise capital from private sources on reasonable terms. Over the life of the loan

[1] https://www.dfc.gov/media/press-releases/dfc-sign-letter-interest-investment-kodaks-expansion-pharmaceuticals

origination process, DFC will continually attempt to work with an applicant on potential additional sources of financing.

Question. How long will it take Kodak to repurpose its manufacturing lines and begin production of the proposed pharmaceutical ingredients?

Answer. The answer to this question would disclose very sensitive business confidential and company business strategy information and would jeopardize the DPA program's ability to obtain this necessary information on which staff relies in evaluating loans under this program.

Question. How much expansion will be needed and how much of those costs will this loan cover?

Answer. The answer to this question would disclose very sensitive business confidential and company business strategy information and would jeopardize the DPA program's ability to obtain this necessary information on which staff relies in evaluating loans under this program.

Question. Peter Navarro has stated that the federal government will purchase some of Kodak's production for a federal stockpile: how much of which ingredients is the federal government planning to purchase, and at what price? [2]

Answer. The answer to this question would disclose very sensitive business confidential and company business strategy information and would jeopardize the DPA programs ability to obtain this necessary information on which staff relies in evaluating loans under this program.

Question. DFC CEO Boehler and Peter Navarro have stated that "some drug companies plan to sign advance purchase orders for Kodak's ingredients." [3] Which companies have made these plans, how much of which ingredients do they plan to purchase, and at what price?

Answer. The answer to this question would disclose very sensitive business confidential and company business strategy information and would jeopardize the DPA program's ability to obtain this necessary information on which staff relies in evaluating loans under this program.

Question. Has DFC has implemented any additional safeguards to prevent potential insider trading related to DPA deals it is negotiating?

Answer. With respect to federal employees they must adhere to their ethics obligations and have been reminded of that obligation. In the context of a loan program, we cannot control private sector party actions, but we can ultimately decide to not proceed with a loan.

Environment and Social Policy and Procedures

Question. The Saving Provisions in Section 606(a)(2) of the BUILD Act (Section 1466(a)(2) of the BUILD Act as engrossed in the 2018 FAA reauthorization Act) states: that "Completed Administrative actions" of OPIC, which included "policies," would not be affected by the establishment of the DFC and would be transferred. With respect to the Environmental and Social Policy Statement (ESPS) specifically, on May 8, 2018 OPIC's Deputy General Counsel, Cameron Alfred, assured Congress that "As a result of the inclusion of the word 'policies'in Section 606(a)(2) of the BUILD Act, OPIC's ESPS will be transferred to the U.S. Development Finance Corporation. Accordingly, this will become the policy of the DFC."

In January, the DFC published a new Environment and Social Policy and Procedures that makes many changes to the language of the 2017 ESPS.

- What procedures did the DFC follow to develop and complete the changes and differences between the 2020 ESPP and the 2017 ESPS?

Answer. Senior career staff were tasked with publishing the 2020 ESPP for DFC. They were advised to make no substantive changes. Substantive changes are ones that would have enlarged or contracted the scope of transactions the DFC could support. In their professional opinion from a legal perspective and environmental perspective, all changes made to the document were non substantive in nature and would not result in the DFC being able to support a transaction that was prohibited when the agency was OPIC. We have provided a track change version of the ESPP to your staff and the change your staff believed was optically substantive was restored to the previous language.

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[2] https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/28/kodak-produce-pharmaceutical-ingredients/

[3] https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/28/kodak-produce-pharmaceutical-ingredients/

Question. Did the DFC include congressional consultations and public and stakeholder engagements on the development and completing of the changes and differences between the 2017 ESPS and the 2020 ESPP?

Answer. The intent was to only make non substantive updates to grammar, references and clarity without changes to policy. If the agency planned to make substantive changes it would have consulted with the relevant committees.

Question. What obligation do you believe Sec. 1466(a)(2) places upon the DFC to follow robust consultative procedures when changing (OPIC's) transferred policies?

Answer. There was no intent to change policies therefore we did not engage in consultation. Had the agency planned to make substantive changes, the agency would have consulted.

Question. It is my understanding that the DFC contends the changes to the ESPP were made as part of a broad housekeeping exercise and will not result in a substantive change in the execution of DFC policy. While it may be true that some of the changes are merely housekeeping matters, there are several changes that could be interpreted a significant policy changes.

- Will you commit to explaining how the differences between the 2017 ESPS and 2020 ESPP do not constitute substantive policy changes?

Answer. Yes, staff who made the changes and who implement the policies remain available to discuss.

Question. If the DFC in fact does not intend to interpret the differences in language between the 2017 ESPS and the 2020 ESPP, are you to reverting/restoring changed language that give me cause for concern?

Answer. DFC restored the language on August 4, 2020.

Question. I do not contend that Sec. 1466(a)(2) of the BUILD Act obligates the DFC to maintain the 2017 ESPS in perpetuity. However, will you commit to me that you will conduct robust consultative processes, that include engagements with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and non-governmental stakeholder organizations, when the DFC develops and proposes changes to the ESPS/ESPP?

Answer. As was evidenced by the way DFC conducted the proposed change to its nuclear policy, I support a consultative process whenever there is a substantive change that enlarges or contracts the scope of transactions DFC can support.

DFC's New Nuclear Policy

The DFC recently approved a new policy, which followed congressional consultation and public comment processes, to allow consideration of nuclear energy projects. I have no problem with nuclear power when it can be operated safely, securely, skillfully and provided affordably, as we do in New Jersey. I am less sure all of these essential criteria for successful nuclear power production is possible in much of the developing world.

Question. When considering loans and other supports for projects associated with nuclear power projects, will the DFC consider the following:

- How countries will responsibly manage, transport, store, and dispose of the nuclear waste generated?

Answer. Yes.

- What measures local operators will take to ensure the security of the nuclear power facilities to eliminate the isks of terrorist and insurgent attacks and other malevolent actors?

Answer. Yes.

- The capacity for countries and power providers to manage and operate these facilities over the long-term?

Answer. Yes.

- The long-term debt a country could be saddled with by operating a nuclear power plant?

Answer. Yes.

- Will the DFC seek assurances and require host countries and local proponents of nuclear projects to provide detailed plans for managing these risks?

Answer. Yes.

Question. The policy expressly aims to support "advanced small modular reactors".

- Are there any advanced small modular reactors in commercial operation?

Answer. To the best of my knowledge, no.

- When will advanced small modular reactors be ready for commercial deployment?

Answer. While estimates vary, DFC's policy change signals that its financing would be a possibility once this technology is safely available.

Overview of Expanded Development Mandate

Question. As you are aware, the United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has additional legislative mandates, like women's economic empowerment, a focus on lower income countries, and a stronger development focus. Please describe how you plan to ensure these and other new mandates are successfully implemented throughout the DFC, especially in a flat funding environment?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working to ensure DFC fulfills its development mission. I will empower the Chief Development Officer, the office of Women's Economic Empowerment and prioritize projects in low-income and low-middle income countries. We have also taken other process changes to meet these mandates. For instance, the agency's new "Impact Quotient" helps to evaluate projects for their development impact and projects are actively viewed with an eye towards their impact on women. I am pleased to report that DFC's 2X Women's Initiative has catalyzed more than $3 billion of investment in projects that meet the 2X criteria and has set ambitious targets for the future. Additionally, I actively supported the establishment of a new food security unit in cooperation with USAID and see the potential for other such initiatives.

Question. Do any of your plans require additional staff to ensure that the new DFC can successfully implement, monitor, and evaluate all the mandated areas?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with the committee to ensure DFC has adequate resources to fulfill its development mission.

Question. How will you ensure that the DFC is prioritizing higher-impact investments that potentially incur higher risk and lower reward?

Answer. In general, BUILD Act envisions DFC as being more forward leaning than OPIC. It is important that DFC take higher risk with the understanding that the developmental outcomes we want to see materialize will only come if a project is financially viable. Thus, there needs to be a reasonable expectation of return and lower return is the return on investment to the DFC and is not no return to the project. The DFC balances those considerations in every private sector project it supports.

Question. How do you plan on managing and prioritizing limited resources while also maximizing the potential of the new DFC?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with the committee to ensure DFC has adequate resources to fulfill its development mission.

Question. Will you commit to ensuring that Development outcomes drive the mission and agenda for the DFC?

Answer. Yes.

Question. How will you empower the Office of the Chief Development Officer?

Answer. I strongly support the BUILD Act's creation of the Chief Development Officer role at DFC. Earlier this year, we hired our first CDO, and if confirmed I will continue to support the office to ensure that the DFC advances developmental projects. In particular, I see a role for the CDO to help ensure we are prioritizing projects in low-income and lower-middle income countries; guiding our "Impact Quotient" development impact tool; solidifying interagency partnerships; convening and bringing new, non-traditional sources of capital and partnerships; and bolstering training for U.S. Government personnel in the field so DFC is a more readily available tool to advance U.S. development and foreign policy.

Economic State Craft

Question. I am increasingly concerned that the United States is not well-positioned to engage in economic statecraft for the twenty-first century, including promoting U.S. jobs, business and economic interests, engaging in development financing for infrastructure and other needs, including climate change-related resiliency, and setting standards for emergent technologies and the digital economy. Can you expand upon how you view your role and your institution's role, if you are confirmed, in helping to renew and replenish U.S. economic statecraft instruments?

Answer. We have a fundamentally different approach from the sort of economic diplomacy undertaken by authoritarian China. Rather than promoting quick-fix solutions that lead to shoddy projects or "debt trap" diplomacy, DFC will support investments that do not burden governments with debt they cannot afford, utilize local labor, are responsible and transparent, and respect a country's sovereignty. A fundamental difference is that we are not competing with China on a government dollar for government dollar basis. Rather we are leveraging the power and ingenuity of the private sector to advance our interests. This will help drive economies in the developing world forward through investments that are built for the long haul. That's the true alternative to authoritarian financing which can leave developing countries worse off. The flexibilities Congress provided DFC in the BUILD Act allow DFC to be more proactive and less reactionary than OPIC.

Question. Where do you see the biggest challenges? Biggest opportunities?

Answer. The lower the income of the country, the harder it is for the private sector to finance projects, which makes DFC's role more critical and additional. Hidden subsidies provided by strategic competitors in the technology sector pose a challenge, as many times DFC financing cannot put competing technologies on equal footing.

Question. Have you considered developing an internal incentive structure to reward staff for positive development outcomes and the avoidance of negative environmental and social impacts?

Answer. If confirmed, I would be willing to explore such a structure, consistent with U.S. law.

Question. The (BUILD Act) places an increased emphasis on development outcomes and impact. How do you plan to help guide this cultural shift?

Answer. I have actively supported the Chief Development Officer, and if confirmed, I will continue to support the office to ensure that development is infused throughout the organization. For instance, the agency's new "Impact Quotient" helps to evaluate projects for their development impact. Additionally, I actively supported the establishment of a new food security unit in cooperation with USAID.

Question. Have you considered developing an internal incentive structure to reward staff for positive development outcomes and the avoidance of negative environmental and social impacts?

Answer. If confirmed, I would be willing to explore such a structure, consistent with U.S. law.

Countering Chinese Development Influence

Question. The DFC is often cited as part of the administration's response to China's Belt and Road Initiative, but while the DFC can't compete with China's investments dollar for dollar, with the help of the DFC's enhanced toolkit the U.S. will be better positioned to offer an alternative to China's investment model-a key feature of which is opacity. Under provisions of the BUILD Act, the DFC will need to make public detailed project-level information, to the extent practical. Recognizing there are issues of commercial confidentiality to navigate, if confirmed, will you commit to working to ensure the DFC is best in class when it comes to DFI transparency?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Would that include considering publishing financial terms (even if on a time delay) or working with other DFIs to release anonymized contract data?

Answer. Certain financial terms are already published pursuant to current U.S. Law. The DFC is actively working with other DFIs on additional transparency, including anonymized data.

Equity Investment

Question. The BUILD Act granted the DFC limited equity authority, a key enhancement over its predecessor OPIC. How important is equity authority to achieving DFC's goals? What barriers to you see to deploying equity?

Answer. Equity opens a new category of potential support that OPIC couldn't access with debt alone. We will deploy equity—both into funds and directly—in highly developmental and highly strategic situations. Unlike debt, equity does not come with fixed principal and interest repayment requirements, so there could be companies or projects that are great investments with significant developmental and/or strategic impacts but the monetization of which is not completely predictable ahead of time, or where it makes sense to reinvest early profits rather than requiring them

to be paid to debt service. The use of equity is constrained by the amount of funds that are appropriated for such purpose.

Question. What can Congress do to ensure DFC has the tools it needs to fulfill its mandate?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with the committee to ensure DFC has adequate resources to fulfill its development mission.

Transparency

Question. The DFC must comply with the transparency requirements of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA), as well as the BUILD Act. What do you think about the need to balance commercially sensitive information with the importance of transparency?

Answer. Transparency is a bedrock principle of the United States and is an important tool to ensuring taxpayer funds are spent prudently. However, government programs that deal with commercially sensitive information must balance this against disclosing information that can cause the private sector project competitive harm.

Question. Will you commit to hearing, and providing forums for engagement and discussion, from all stakeholders with concerns about projects the IDFC is considering—well before any decisions are made by the IDFC's board to approve or reject proposals?

Answer. Like OPIC, DFC continues to hear from stakeholders about projects it is considering.

Question. Will you commit to ensuring the DFC complies with the Sunshine Act?

Answer. DFC continues to take transparency steps that go beyond the requirements of the Sunshine Act.

Interagency Cooperation

Question. The committee sees the mission of the DFC is enhanced when aligned with other government agencies and allies. Would you support having officers from other agencies, like USAID, serve details at the DFC?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Will you empower, encourage and assist USAID to use tools, like the Development Credit Authority?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What are your thoughts regarding partnership with agencies such as USAID, State, and MCC as well as partnering with the investment organizations of allies such as the Japan Bank for International Cooperation or JBIC?

Answer. All of the trendlines point to the increased use of development finance. For the United States to continue to be a leader of international development, it is imperative that DFC work closely with its interagency partners such as USAID and MCC. For example, I actively supported the establishment of a new food security unit in cooperation with USAID. Similarly, increased cooperation with peer development finance organizations of allies allows us to share burden and also sends an important diplomatic signal.

Women's Equality

Question. How do you plan to ensure that the DFC fully meets its mandate in the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act of 2018 (BUILD Act) [Sec. 1451 (f)] to "prioritize the reduction of gender gaps and maximize development impact by working to improve women's economic opportunities" throughout the DFC's entire portfolio?

Answer. I will continue to work to strengthen the Office of Women's Economic Empowerment. Like OPIC's before it, DFC's 2X Women's Initiative continues to set the standard for what it means to invest in women. All development indicators note the benefits of this approach as women invest back into their families and communities, resulting in more stable societies that are in United States' interests. DFC's focus on women and its benefits has been infused across the organization and I commit to continuing to bolster that work. For instance, projects are actively viewed with an eye towards their impact on women. I am pleased to report that DFC's 2X Women's Initiative has catalyzed more than $3 billion of investment in projects that meet the 2X criteria and has set ambitious targets for the future.

Question. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning are important components to ensuring that the DFC's projects positively impact on both men and women. The

BUILD Act [Sec. 1443 (b) (3) (A)], calls for gender-disaggregated data. How do you plan to ensure that this is consistently done across the entire portfolio and for all indicators or metrics that are about people?

Answer. The agency is working diligently to implement the various reporting requirements of the BUILD Act. DFC's new approach is more comprehensive and focused on understanding the different groups of individuals that our projects effect developmentally. Data on individuals is broken down by the following groups: Women, youth, low income, poor, ethnic minority (in that nation), disability status, rural vs urban, and other marginalized/disadvantaged groups. From an employment perspective, DFC will be collecting data on professional skill level, position level, and gender. This will be required for all projects in our portfolio.

Question. Ensuring women have equal access to economic opportunities has the potential to increase women's rights, power, autonomy, and also can be a catalyst for growth and change around the world. However, there can also be unintended negative consequences for women both in the community and the workplace. The DFC currently has a process to identify environmental and social risk and create plans to mitigate them, do you plan to build on and enhance these efforts to ensure that the wide array of risks to women are comprehensively included and monitored throughout the full project cycle and across the entire portfolio?

Answer. The DFC's current process of identifying environmental and social risk includes analysis for gender disaggregated impacts both in the affected groups and the workplace. For the workplace, DFC's requirements include the need for human resources policies to include those on sexual harassment and equal opportunity and the dissemination of clear wage requirements and rights of the workforce. Depending on the project-specific vulnerability analysis of the workforce, appropriate policies and procedures to manage vulnerable groups are also required, as well as monitoring by a third-party when deemed necessary. DFC also requires internal, workforce grievance mechanism that have appropriate channels for the specifics of their workforce, including an anonymous channel.

There are many good practices still being developed in this space and our social risk analysts keep abreast with their U.S. Government colleagues as well as fellow Development Finance Institution practitioners. As we expand our team, we seek out candidates with specific experience in gender analysis and risk.

Development Impact, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

Question. The BUILD Act includes an increase in the legislative mandates around monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, in part due to the conforming amendment that applies the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2015 (FATAA) [Title IV Sec. 1470-(l)] to the DFC. When evaluating projects, how important do you think it is for the agency to assess if the project holistically improved the lives of people in the intended communities, versus focusing on specific project outcomes like increasing the number of jobs available?

Answer. Comprehensive monitoring involves subjective as well as objective measures such as the number of jobs specifically because no one indicator alone can adequately evaluate a project.

Question. Due to the FATAA conforming amendment, 50% of the DFC's portfolio will now have to be evaluated. What are your plans to ensure this mandate is met? Will this go beyond having partners fill out a self-report questionnaire?

Answer. DFC is currently assessing remote monitoring to adapt to the new environment of less travel due to the COVID–19 pandemic. We are exploring various possibilities for environmental and social monitoring and DFC staff have participated in several virtual environmental and social monitoring visits of our existing portfolio. Currently, this process entails virtual meetings with the relevant staff that are managing the environmental and social performance of our projects and reviewing records and other evidences for said performance. We are in the process of contracting with an independent environmental and social consultancy to provide support with virtual monitoring.

Question. If yes, can you briefly explain what an evaluation at the DFC would look like under your leadership, and how lessons learned would be incorporated into future planning?

Answer. We are currently reassessing monitoring remotely to adapt to the new environment brought about by the COVID–19 pandemic. Future planning is always shaped by lessons learned.

DFC has an expanded focus on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and our strategy is inextricably linked to the implementation of the new performance measure-

ment system, Impact Quotient (IQ), as DFC will use IQ to monitor and evaluate projects it supports.

In addition, DFC has updated its Development Outcome Survey and is leveraging technology solutions to better position itself to monitor more projects than ever before. By collecting better baseline data from the onset of project financing to a more robust annual data collection strategy, the monitoring and evaluation program allows DFC to strategically send staff to the projects that needs it most.

As it did under OPIC, DFC will continue to conduct evaluations for policy compliance. By using the information gathered through IQ at the initial assessment of the project, analysts will perform site visits and assess if projects are achieving, or are on track to achieve, the development objectives initially identified.

In addition to DFC's new M&E approach, DFC is leveraging the global presence of the U.S. Government through our sister agencies, namely the Department of State and USAID. This cooperation allows DFC access to local expertise and relationships with the host country, bolstering our ability to monitor and evaluate more projects and better inform our peers of the work the agency is conducting around the world.

If confirmed, I would ensure that DFC continues to refine its portfolio evaluation based on lessons learned as we continue to collect data. Periodic evaluation will allow for incorporation of those lessons for future projects.

Question. What are the plans to address the gaps in monitoring practices identified in recent reports from USAID's Office of Inspector General (2019 and 2015), OPIC's Office of Accountability (2018), and the Government Accountability Office (2015)?

Answer. The recommendations of those offices have been implemented.

Climate Change

Question. Do you believe the scientific consensus that human activity from burning fossil fuels is driving global warming?

Answer. Yes.

Question. The DFC recently approved the Vaca Muerta fracking project in Argentina. The extraction and combustion of natural gas poses a myriad of problems for clean air, clean water, wildlife, landscapes and ecosystems, human health, local communities, and our climate. Leaking natural gas infrastructure is a source of unaccounted climate and toxic air emissions which creates emissions hotspots, negative human health impacts, and environmental justice issues. How can the DFC justify funding a project like Vaca Muerta if it poses a threat to the public health of local communities and lock them into decades of climate-warming pollution?

Answer. If confirmed, I'll work to ensure that projects that have significant environmental impacts continue to go through detailed analysis and assessment by the career professionals at DFC.

Question. The DFC continues to weigh approval of the Kosovo e Re lignite burner coal fired power plant. The World Bank has rejected financing for this project nearly a year ago out due to the greenhouse gas emissions that would be associated with this project. Do you believe that this project is the best and most responsible energy option for the U.S. to support in Kosovo?

Answer. In March, the potential sponsor of this project withdrew its support for the project.

Question. Do you believe that the World Bank made a prudent decision to withdraw from the Kosovo e Re lignite burner project as explained in the following statement made by Jim Yong Kim last year: "We are required by our by-laws to go with the lowest cost option and renewables have now come below the cost of coal. So without question, we are not going to [support the plant]."

Answer. I do not have the ability to comment on the World Bank's decision-making process. But if confirmed, I commit to ensuring that DFC's decision-making for energy projects appropriately weighs all relevant aspects, including development impact, footprint on the local community, a country's energy strategy, financial viability, and foreign policy considerations.

Question. Will you commit to working with the Kosovo Government, and investors interested in pursuing renewable and low carbon energy solutions for Kosovo, as means of finding energy alternatives to the Kosovo e Re lignite burner project?

Answer. Yes.

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the DFC will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that all projects are evaluated by DFC career officials without regard to political affiliation. 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. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. I agree that the federal government should not employ prohibited personnel practices. If confirmed, I will maintain a policy to ensure that prohibited personnel practices will not take place.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups at the DFC?

Answer. DFC is committed to building and advancing a diverse and inclusive organization in which the knowledge, skills and abilities of all employees are fully utilized to achieve the DFC's mission. Our workforce models diversity and professionalism in its daily interactions with individuals across the U.S. and around the world. By reflecting America's diversity, DFC can provide a wide range of ideas and innovative solutions, making us a stronger, more effective organization. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to continue to maintain a diverse, high-performing workforce.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to appear before this committee upon request, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the DFC, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

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.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. As the Deputy Staff Director for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I actively supported the committee's work advancing human rights, most notably in Africa and North Korea. Specifically, I am most proud of my efforts which contributed to arms dealer Viktor Bout being extradited from Thailand to the United States to face justice. Bout was responsible for fueling barbaric wars across the African continent that left a brutal wake of human rights abuses. I also actively worked on Congressman Royce's effort to ensure that Liberian dictator Charles Taylor saw justice in front of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for his brutal crimes against humanity.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. I believe that a flourishing private sector underpinned by transparency, rule of law, sanctity of contracts, and individual freedoms help drive democracy. These values are central to DFC's mission. If confirmed, I will work to ensure DFC continues to engage with countries and private sector actors who share these same values.

Answer. Authoritarian regimes largely do not share or honor these values. Developing countries often fall prey to "debt trap diplomacy" by such nations, which undermines their sovereignty and ties them to questionable actors. DFC offers an alternative to this authoritarian lending, which prizes a country's sovereignty, its people, transparency, and rule of law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society within host countries?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JOHN A. BURRIER BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. Do you support the International Development Finance Corporation financing coal, oil and natural gas projects?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Please list all of the current restrictions on financing of energy projects, including coal, oil and natural gas, at the International Development Finance Corporation.

Answer. The BUILD Act permits DFC to support financing of energy projects regardless of fuel source. Indeed, DFC recently changed a legacy OPIC-policy to permit consideration of nuclear energy projects.

Question. What is your strategy to eliminate all of the current restrictions on financing of coal, oil and gas projects at the International Development Finance Corporation?

Answer. The BUILD Act permits DFC to support financing of energy projects regardless of fuel source. Indeed, DFC recently changed a legacy OPIC-policy to permit consideration of nuclear energy projects.

Question. Please provide a list of the equity investments made by the International Development Finance Corporation under the new authority from the BUILD Act.

Answer. The following equity investments were approved by DFC's Board in June and notified to the committee:

EQUITY INVESTMENTS APPROVED BY DFC'S BOARD IN JUNE OF 2021

Africa Regional—AfricInvest; Equity (Finance and Insurance)	$35,000,000
Southeast Asia—Asia Partners I, LP; Equity (Finance and Insurance)	$25,000,000
Africa Regional—SPE; Equity (Finance and Insurance)	$25,000,000
India—South Asia Growth Fund; Equity (Finance and Insurance)	$30,000,000
India—Freshtohome; Equity (Finance and Insurance)	$20,000,000
Mexico/LatAm—Alta Growth Capital Mexico Fund III; Equity (Finance and Insurance)	$20,000,000

Question. What specific criteria is used by the International Development Finance Corporation to decide whether the United States should make an equity investment?

Answer. Each equity investment shall have a clearly defined development and foreign policy purpose taking into account the following objectives:

- The support for the project would be more likely than not to substantially reduce or overcome the effect of an identified market failure in the country in which the project is carried out.
- The project would not have proceeded or would have been substantially delayed without the support.
- The support would meaningfully contribute to transforming local conditions to promote the development of markets.
- The support can be shown to be aligned with commercial partner incentives.
- The support can be shown to have significant developmental impact and will contribute to long-term commercial sustainability.
- The support furthers the policy of the United States described in 22 U.S.C. section 9611.

Question. With the increased risks and exposure of equity investments, what requirements are being put in place to ensure adequate oversight and risk management?

Answer. A variety of governance mechanisms are in place to guard against the increased risk of equity investments. By statute, DFC can only provide up to 30 percent of the aggregate amount of all equity investment made to an individual project and not more than 35 percent of DFC's aggregate portfolio exposure can be equity. Further, the use of equity is constrained by the amount of funds that are appropriated for such purpose. The Board must review and approve all support for projects involving equity. The Chief Risk Officer will review and assess equity portfolio risk, risk mitigation and diversification across sectors, geographies, sponsors, risk categories and report regularly to the Board. Every DFC transaction over $10 million is notified to the committee.

Question. Do you believe the International Development Finance Corporation should provide equity investments in a foreign state-owned enterprise? If yes, under what circumstances?

Answer. DFC focuses on investments with private sector partners. DFC would only consider investments in foreign state-owned enterprises in highly developmental or highly strategic situations.

Question. Do you support the International Development Finance Corporation providing equity or investment financing to upper-middle income countries like Brazil, China, Mexico, Russia, and Turkey? If yes, under what circumstances?

Answer. DFC is permitted to support financing in upper-middle income countries and considers particularly if it would advance important objectives such as support

for U.S. businesses, women or strategic infrastructure. However, DFC does not invest in projects in Russia or China.

Question. What is the International Development Finance Corporation's strategy to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative?

Answer. We have a fundamentally different approach from the sort of economic diplomacy undertaken by authoritarian China. Rather than promoting quick-fix solutions that lead to shoddy projects or "debt trap" diplomacy, DFC will support investments that do not burden governments with debt they cannot afford, utilize local labor, are responsible and transparent, and respect a country's sovereignty. A fundamental difference is that we are not competing with China on a government dollar for government dollar basis. Rather we are leveraging the power, scale, and ingenuity of the private sector to advance our interests. This will help drive economies in the developing world forward through investments that are built for the long haul. That's the true alternative to authoritarian financing which can leave developing countries worse off. The flexibilities Congress provided DFC in the BUILD Act allow DFC to be more proactive and less reactionary than OPIC.

Question. In what ways is the portfolio of investment projects that the DFC supports similar to or different from that of OPIC, both in terms of location and sectors?

Answer. DFC prioritizes investments in low-income and lower-middle income countries and seeks to conduct at least 60 percent of its work in these markets. It is expected that the portfolio of DFC investments will change as a result of the COVID–19 pandemic. It is likely that DFC will increase its support to local financial institutions which can then on-lend to small and medium-sized enterprises as a means to continue to support these economies which are being profoundly impacted by the pandemic.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO EDWARD A. BURRIER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As the Deputy Staff Director for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I actively supported the committee's work advancing human rights, most notably in Africa and North Korea. Specifically, I am most proud of my efforts which contributed to arms dealer Viktor Bout being extradited from Thailand to the United States to face justice. Bout was responsible for fueling barbaric wars across the African continent that left a brutal wake of human rights abuses. I also actively worked on Congressman Royce's effort to ensure that Liberian dictator Charles Taylor saw justice in front of the Special Court for Sierra Leone for his brutal crimes against humanity.

Diversity

Question. 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. I firmly agree with the premise of the question: diversity of background, experience, heritage, and viewpoint will ultimately deliver a more thoughtful, dynamic, and inclusive result. I am proud to work at an agency that values diversity. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the hiring and retention of staff from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at U.S. International Development Finance Corporation are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. DFC is committed to building and advancing a diverse and inclusive organization in which the knowledge, skills and abilities of all employees are fully utilized to achieve the DFC's mission. Our workforce models diversity and professionalism in its daily interactions with individuals across the U.S. and around the world. By reflecting America's diversity, DFC can provide a wide range of ideas and innovative solutions, making us a stronger, more effective organization. In addition, DFC holds an Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE) certification to show our commitment to gender equality. EDGE is the leading global assessment method-

ology and business certification standard for gender equality. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to continue to maintain a diverse, high-performing workforce.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. No.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LTG KEITH W. DAYTON (USA, RET.) BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Since the events of 2014, the U.S. and its allies in Europe have spent a huge amount of money to help Ukraine achieve its stated goals of reform in all sectors of governance and economy, including energy distribution, land reform, reaching development goals, and building a working health system. How well do you believe the U.S. and its partners have done in making sure that our monies are well spent and are achieving their goals? What more could we do?

Answer. U.S. assistance is helping Ukraine to: increase resiliency to Russian aggression and malign influence; combat corruption and advance justice reforms; enhance energy security; bolster civil society and create responsive, responsible government; support independent media; advance a more transparent pro-business, investment-friendly economic climate; stabilize its financial sector; overhaul state-owned enterprises; and advance Western health care models and fight disease. Enhanced support in these areas will further bolster the positive outcomes we are seeing this year.

For example, the High Anti-Corruption Court, a U.S. assistance beneficiary, just handed down its 13th conviction and fifth prison sentence in its first year of operation. U.S. technical assistance supported development of the National Bank of Ukraine's 2025 Strategy for Financial Sector Development which will help ensure Ukraine's financial stability, build the institutional capacity of financial regulators, and bolster consumer and investor rights protections. U.S. assistance to local credit unions in economically vulnerable Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and the Azov region, all affected by Russian aggression, are making credit available to small businesses and producers in agriculture, beekeeping, and tourism.

Most recently, the United States' $41 million investment in Ukraine's response to COVID–19 has: combatted COVID–19 disinformation by supporting Ukraine's public broadcaster in producing an award-winning documentary on frontline workers and providing factual, unbiased and trusted government information on COVID–19; maintained an operation of essential government social protection services during the COVID-related lockdown by developing necessary online tools; and supported a second phase of healthcare reform by providing technical, organizational, and legal assistance to the National Health Service of Ukraine.

Question. In what sectors should the U.S. concentrate its development dollars for the best outcomes?

Answer. Following the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, U.S. development assistance has supported ongoing reforms in the health, judicial, criminal justice, and energy sectors, creating opportunities for small and medium enterprises, strengthening independent media, and helping further Ukraine's Western integration. Judicial sector reform and anti-corruption programming is critical to support equal access for all Ukrainian citizens and equal treatment of U.S. investors. U.S. military assistance continues to enhance defensive capabilities for Ukraine to monitor and secure

its borders, deploy its forces more safely and effectively, and make progress toward NATO interoperability. U.S. humanitarian assistance will continue to provide life-sustaining aid, including emergency shelters, provision and distribution of relief commodities, children and elderly protection, psychosocial support, repair to water infrastructure, and livelihoods and business development support for internally displaced persons.

Reforms in Ukraine

Question. Last year, President Zelenskyy won in a landslide on a strong anti-corruption platform. After initially pushing through several important reforms, his administration has recently seemed to falter on his reform agenda. He reshuffled removed several ministers with strong anti-corruption credentials from his Cabinet, and the head of the National Bank of Ukraine resigned citing political pressure, to name two. As Ambassador, how will you keep up the pressure on Ukraine and the Zelenskyy administration to continue making his promised reforms? Will you work with European partners to coordinate our messaging to the Ukrainians on reforms?

Answer. Corruption remains one of the most significant obstacles to Ukraine achieving its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. It undermines confidence in Ukraine's institutions, deters investment and economic growth, hinders further integration with the West, and offers an avenue for malign influence by Russia and China. As Ambassador, if confirmed, I will work closely with Ukrainian officials, civil society in Ukraine, and my European counterparts to press Ukraine to move forward with the reforms necessary to strengthen its democracy and rule of law, and ensure the integrity of its institutions.

Question. In your opinion, what are the most critical reforms Ukraine needs to make in the near term? In the long term?

Answer. The independence and integrity of core institutions is essential for Ukraine's long-term stability and prosperity. Ukraine should take steps to ensure institutions like the National Bank of Ukraine and the country's justice sector institutions maintain their independence and integrity and resist political pressure. As Ambassador, if confirmed, I will also work with my Ukrainian counterparts to continue to build on the reforms made in the agricultural, banking, health, education, governance, judicial, law enforcement, and energy sectors.

Chinese Activities in Ukraine

Question. In your opinion, does the Government of Ukraine understand the potential consequences of Chinese investment and purchases?

Answer. As Ukraine's trade with China grows, it has become easier for China to use this as a lever to make investment deals look attractive to a country facing budgetary constraints. But let me be clear—these deals may look nice at a glance, but they are not good deals. They lead towards a path of isolation and exploitation. If confirmed, I can shine a light on these deals and make their true intentions clear. I know the defense industry, and I know China is hungry for Ukraine's hard-earned intellectual property, not creating Ukrainian jobs.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with our European partners to encourage further Western investment into Ukraine, as a means to diversify its economy away from both China and Russia?

Answer. We have a wide range of programs that make it easier for Western companies to invest in Ukraine, and these programs are harmonized with our partners. But all of the support the West can offer means nothing if corruption keeps investors away. If confirmed, I will make it clear to vested interests that the only place for corruption in Ukraine is in the history books. Clear and coordinated action with our partners can make this happen. Taking corruption off the table will pave the way for a more dynamic, competitive economy that will attract the West and keep malign influences out. Reforms will accelerate, the economy will boom, and U.S. companies can help facilitate this growth.

Trade Issues

Question. Ukraine has a well-educated population, a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU, and a plethora of fertile agriculture land, but its economy consistently and dramatically underperforms. What do you assess are the reasons for this underperformance? Are there certain Ukrainian industries that you see as ripe for growth? If so, as Ambassador, how would you encourage the building of trade ties between U.S. and Ukrainian businesses.

Answer. Ukraine is a bountiful country that has a lot of potential. We must help Ukraine unleash this potential. Years of entrenched corruption have afforded vested

interests a grip on the economy, media, and in some cases the political system. Each economic policy that would help the Ukrainian people suffers push back by the few that are pilfering Ukraine's vast resources. If confirmed, as Ambassador, I will support reforms that make Ukraine's economy more inclusive for Ukrainians and more attractive to investors. The Ukrainian people want sound economic policies to efficiently use their resources, and these policies would open up much stronger business ties. U.S. companies can help forge new energy links in Ukraine and work with its agricultural sector to feed millions of people throughout the world. Ukraine has a wealth of industrial capacity in its defense sector, and a growing information technology (IT) sector eager to do business with the West. I plan to encourage trade ties by increasing the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, rooting out corruption, and supporting the reform process.

Question. How will you work to encourage Ukraine to reform its remaining Soviet-era property rights regime to incentivize investment and entrepreneurship in Ukraine?

Answer. Ukraine has a skilled workforce and burgeoning cultural scene. If confirmed, I want to help these industries grow, but this will not happen without policies to support this growth. If Ukraine creates the right policies to utilize its wealth of human capital, I see potential for its IT sector to grow substantially. But the country needs to respect intellectual property rights to incentivize this growth. Systems must be put in place to ensure that developers and artists get their fair share. If Ukraine is willing to show respect for our intellectual property rights, not only will I help the country get it right, but I will show U.S. and Ukrainian companies alike all the new business opportunities this opens up.

Press Freedom

Question. Recently, Ukraine has seen an uptick in violence and threats against journalists and activists alike. Last week an anti-corruption campaigner's house was burned nearly to the ground. As ambassador, what would you do to stand up for those who uncover and expose the schemes that have held Ukraine back?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work closely with Ukrainian officials and civil society to promote democratic values and human rights. I am concerned by recent suspected attacks on, and intimidation of, civil society activists and journalists in Ukraine, and urge Ukrainian law enforcement to thoroughly investigate these incidents and ensure those responsible are held to account. In democratic societies, people should be able to voice their opinions without concern for their physical safety.

Question. What more should the U.S. Government should do more to support free media in Ukraine?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador to Ukraine, I would seek to leverage U.S. support for independent media programming with our partners in Europe and Eurasia to build resilience against Russian pressure and both locally and externally produced disinformation. The United States supports independent media in Ukraine through programming to improve the public's access to independent, reliable, and balanced information: improve media literacy; and to support networks of investigative journalists and independent media outlets, and I would continue to support this programming if confirmed as Ambassador.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LTG KEITH W. DAYTON (USA, RET.) BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Do you commit to reporting to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee if you or Embassy staff in Kyiv meet with Rudy Giuliani or his associates?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I am committed to engage with Congress and this committee on matters related to the U.S.-Ukraine relationship.

Question. Please reaffirm the commitment that you made during the hearing to report any information regarding foreign efforts to interfere in the 2020 election to the U.S. Committee on Foreign Relations.

Answer. I reaffirm the commitment, and if confirmed, I am committed to engage with Congress and this committee on matters related to the U.S.-Ukraine relationship, complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If confirmed, would you advocate within the Department that all engagement with Congress be done without regard to political party? Would you advocate that any documents sent to the Congress regarding Ukraine policy be shared with this committee of jurisdiction on a bipartisan basis?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to engage with Congress and this committee on matters related to the U.S.-Ukraine relationship, without regard to political party.

Question. I was pleased to hear you highlight rule of law and the judiciary as priorities for reform in Ukraine in response to my question during your hearing. Along those lines, I am interested in your view of the needs around economic and corporate governance reform in Ukraine, which is necessary to tackle corruption and improve the rule of law. The IMF has given Ukraine several reform requirements, some of which it has fulfilled while others remain a work in progress:

- How do you assess Ukraine's progress on the IMF's reform requirements? In particular, how do you view its progress on the reform requirements in the natural gas sector?

Answer. Ukraine must continue on the path of good governance and economic reforms. Ukrainians have repeatedly demanded their institutions respond to citizens' needs over the demands of vested interests. The natural gas sector is no stranger to these challenges. Naftohaz, one of the largest state owned entities in Ukraine has shown us—and the IMF—what it is capable of with a modern management structure. Each state owned entity has a reservoir of potential once you drill past the vested interests, bring in experts, and operate them like a business. Reform in Ukraine comes in ebbs and flows. I see the momentum, I see the success stories, and I see where Ukraine can help its citizens by turning things around. Most importantly, if confirmed, I stand ready to work with the IMF, our allies, and all of the international financial institutions to help Ukraine where it needs it the most. I will remind Ukraine of why it cannot backslide, and remind it of the consequences of reverting to failed systems of corporate governance.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I and my team will be committed to advancing the United States' interests in Ukraine, in accordance with all U.S. laws and policies, including government ethics rules.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I agree that the federal government should not employ prohibited personnel practices. I agree that anyone found to have engaged in unlawful retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline in accordance with U.S. federal labor law and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. I am committed to supporting the excellent work of our Foreign and Civil Service professionals, as well as locally employed staff, and I hope to have many opportunities at Embassy Kyiv to support a diverse and inclusive environment. I know from my 40 years of experience in uniform, and 10 years at the Marshall Center, that diversity is a source of strength and resilience for any institution. I will endeavor to build a team that is strong and united in its efforts to advance U.S. interests in Ukraine.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. I have spent the past 50 years supporting and defending the Constitution of the United States, and inherent in my oath to serve, I include in that support for democracy and human rights. In my several field artillery commands in Europe, my units partnered with the militaries of the former Soviet Union, and in that partnership I emphasized human rights and democracy, with lasting impact. As the U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel/Palestine from 2005-2010, I created a training and monitoring program for elements of the new Palestinian security forces that emphasized democracy and human rights. To this day, this program survives in close coordination with the Israeli Defense Forces. Finally, in the almost ten years I have been Director of the Marshall Center, I have instituted a variety of educational programs for more than 5,000 security personnel from 100 countries (to include 300 from Ukraine). Each program emphasizes the principles of human rights and democracy. Judging from the feedback we get from our participants when they return home, these programs have had an impact that directly benefits the United States.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Ukraine? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The continued influence of oligarchs and other vested interests on Ukrainian institutions, particularly in the justice sector and media, threatens progress in building institutions and implementing key political, economic, and governance reforms over the past six years. Ukraine has a vibrant civil society that works to hold government actors and powerful economic interests accountable, and we must continue to support these efforts and stakeholders who drive participatory and accountable governance.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Ukraine? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, as Ambassador, I will work closely with Ukrainian officials and civil society to promote democratic values and human rights. I will also urge the Ukrainian Government to continue to focus on the reforms necessary to ensure Ukraine's long-term development and overcome the problems of corruption and oligarchic capture.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. The United States has long provided assistance to promote human rights, strengthen democracy, and support Ukraine's reform trajectory, and we will continue to do so. Building capable, trustworthy Ukrainian institutions that strengthen

rule of law, reduce corruption, increase government accountability, create jobs, and attract investment are key to ensuring Ukraine is able to achieve its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Ukraine? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage with civil society in Ukraine, amplifying their voices and calling out efforts to infringe on their rights.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will meet with representatives from across the political spectrum and will encourage parties to ensure their membership and representation in institutions reflects the diversity of Ukrainian society.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Ukraine on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Ukraine?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to promoting media freedom in Ukraine and will meet with independent, local media outlets.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. Yes. The United States is actively working with our Allies and partners in Europe to identify, recognize, and expose Russian disinformation and other malign influence tactics. We are committed to working with Ukrainian partners in government and civil society to increase media literacy programs that equip citizens with critical thinking skills to better identify disinformation and curb its spread. U.S. programming in Ukraine and elsewhere also helps to strengthen independent voices in the media sphere to build resilience against Russian pressure and disinformation.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Ukraine on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes, we will engage with Ukrainian officials and labor groups to promote the rights of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Ukraine, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Ukraine? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Ukraine?

Answer. Yes, I commit to use my position to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Ukraine, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBTQ individuals in Ukraine continue to face societal discrimination and violence, preventing them from exercising their human rights. As Ambassador, if confirmed, I will work to elevate the voices of LGBTQ people and staunchly defend their rights.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LTG KEITH W. DAYTON (USA RET.) BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As a general statement, my 50 years of faithful allegiance to the Constitution of the United States shows a career dedicated to the promotion of human rights and democracy. In particular, in my several command assignments in Europe, I had the opportunity to work with the new democracies that emerged from the fall of the Soviet Union, and advanced programs that have had a lasting impact on the new militaries of those countries. While serving as the U.S. Security Coordinator in Israel/Palestine from 2005-2010, I created and developed the Palestinian National

Security Forces and made sure they were well trained on human rights and democracy, a legacy which continues to this day. Finally, in the almost ten years I have been Director of the Marshall Center, I have instituted a variety of training programs for more than 5,000 security personnel from more than 100 countries, each of which emphasizes human rights and democracy. Judging from the results when our participants return home, we have had an impact that directly benefits the United States in these areas.

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

Answer. First and foremost, Russia's abuses in eastern Ukraine and Crimea, which include harassment, arrest, and abuse of civil society activists, independent journalists, and religious minorities, and severe restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and assembly, and religion and belief, are deplorable and must end immediately. Other significant human rights concerns in Ukraine include: a lack of judicial and law enforcement integrity; impunity for police abuses and attacks on civil society activists, journalists, and minorities; and restrictions on media freedom. As Ambassador, if confirmed, I will work with Ukrainian officials and civil society to address these concerns and to hold Russia accountable for its aggressive actions in eastern Ukraine and Crimea.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Ukraine in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Official corruption and the influence of oligarchs and other vested interests pose a significant threat to Ukraine's reform trajectory, and it undermines human rights because it weakens judicial independence, media freedom, and governance broadly. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Ukrainian officials and civil society to strengthen the resilience of the judiciary and other Ukrainian institutions to resist political pressure.

Question. 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 Ukraine? 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 meeting with a wide range of stakeholders, including U.S. and Ukrainian civil society actors. I will also actively work to ensure our security assistance promotes human rights, including by supporting active implementation of the Leahy Law and by educating Ukrainian security sector officials on international standards for human rights.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Ukraine to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Ukraine?

Answer. Yes, we will continue to engage on the cases of those who are the target of politically motivated prosecutions or who have been detained unjustly.

Question. Will you engage with Ukraine on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage with a wide range of stakeholders, both in the Ukrainian Government and civil society, on issues related to the promotion of human rights and good governance.

Question. 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. I hope to have many opportunities at Embassy Kyiv to support a diverse and inclusive environment. I know from my experience both in uniform and in the private sector that diversity is a source of strength and resilience for any institution. I will endeavor to build a team that is united in its efforts to advance U.S. interests in Ukraine.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Ukraine are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I have been a team builder for 50 years in the U.S. Army and most recently at the Marshall Center. I am committed to supporting the excellent work of our Foreign and Civil Service professionals, as well as locally employed staff, and I will have no tolerance for actions or attitudes that disrespect any of my colleagues.

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Ukraine?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence in Ukraine, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws.I also own stock in a few individual companies, some of which may have a presence in Ukraine. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Ukraine specifically?

Answer. Corruption has a clear impact on democratic governance and rule of law: it undermines confidence in Ukraine's institutions, deters investment and economic growth, hinders further integration with the West, and offers an avenue for malign influence by Russia and China. As Ambassador, if confirmed, I will work closely with Ukrainian officials and civil society to strengthen the rule of law and advance the reforms necessary to Ukraine achieving its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Ukraine and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Ukraine has enacted reforms in the agricultural, banking, health, education, governance, judicial, law enforcement, and energy sectors. By standing up anti-corruption institutions, implementing decentralization, and increasing transparency in government procurement, Ukraine has worked to make its institutions more resilient and its leaders more accountable.

These reforms are commendable, but Ukraine has more to do to cement progress, prevent backsliding, and reduce oligarchic influence, which remains significant. I remain concerned by the persistent efforts of corrupt interests to undermine progress on reforms, the continued culture of impunity for perpetrators, and the targeting of civil society actors whose work drives Ukraine forward. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work closely with Ukrainian officials and civil society to address these challenges.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Ukraine?

Answer. The United States works closely with Ukraine on a range of anticorruption and good governance programming, including programs that advance criminal justice sector reform, strengthen the rule of law, expand access to justice, and enhance civil society's capacity to hold government officials and powerful economic interests accountable. As Ambassador, if confirmed, I will strongly support these programs and advocate for the continued strength and independence of the institutions they assist.

Question. Are you aware of the ongoing debate in Ukraine concerning the rehabilitation of Ukrainian collaborators who fought alongside the Nazis during WWII? How do we ensure that the history of the Holocaust is not rewritten and distorted?

Answer. Like many other countries affected by the Holocaust, Ukraine must fully engage with its history surrounding World War II, including complicity of individuals in atrocities planned and carried out by Nazi Germany and collaborators who supported them, whether directly or indirectly.

This is not a problem unique to Ukraine—it is a challenge confronting many countries in Europe. I welcome President Zelenskyy's support for honoring the victims of the Holocaust in Ukraine. Consistent with our advocacy of historically accurate Holocaust remembrance and research, the Department endorsed a statement issued by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance on July 7, 2020, that condemns the rehabilitation of those individuals who were complicit in Holocaust crimes, saying "failure to remember truthfully demeans the living and disrespects the dead."

Question. The United States has a long history of supporting the preservation of heritage sites in Ukraine and the region. How can the U.S. Government and its citizens' work together with the Ukrainian Government to better protect and preserve Jewish cemeteries, mass graves, and other heritage sites that are being desecrated by neglect, vandalism, or construction?

Answer. The State Department, including U.S. Embassy Kyiv, works closely with Jewish communities in Ukraine to ensure Jewish heritage sites throughout the country, including cemeteries, are preserved and protected. The Department communicates directly with the Ukrainian Government and municipalities on these matters and collaborates with the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad on safeguarding Jewish cemeteries throughout the world.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO LTG KEITH W. DAYTON (USA RET.) BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. Is the Ukrainian Government fulfilling its International Monetary Fund reform requirements?

Answer. I think this is something the International Monetary Fund will have to decide, but I have to say Ukraine has come a long way since my first time in the country. Ukraine must continue on the path of implementing rule of law, good governance, and economic reforms that ensure the Government is accountable to its citizens.

Question. What is the status of Ukraine's reforms to the natural gas sector? What steps have been achieved and what still needs to be completed?

Answer. Ukraine has made significant progress introducing market-oriented reforms to its energy sector and increasing transparency. State-owned gas and oil giant Naftohaz, once a drain on Ukraine's budget, is now one of the largest contributors. Ukraine has also successfully unbundled its gas transit system operator from the rest of Naftohaz, moving closer to compliance with the EU's third energy package, and thus to greater integration with Europe. Ukraine has also made progress diversifying its gas and nuclear fuel away from Russia. These wins culminated in the successful negotiation of a new five-year gas transit contract with Russia at the end of 2019, which preserves robust gas transit through Ukraine.

Question. What specific assistance is the United States currently providing Ukraine in the energy sector?

Answer. Our efforts to prevent malign Russian influence throughout Europe have shielded Ukraine's energy sector from a multipronged attack against energy market dynamics. We have supported reforms at some of the largest entities in Ukraine's energy sector, and helped Ukraine turn an aging state enterprise into a real success story. Through USAID, we are providing more than $85 million to upgrade Ukraine's energy production, governance, and transportation. We are providing Ukraine with the technical expertise it needs to liberalize its energy markets, and are exploring support for new infrastructure projects that will enhance energy security throughout the region. Our Department of Energy provides technical expertise to keep Ukrainian nuclear reactors safe. U.S. companies see the opportunity this assistance is creating, and are anxiously looking for new deals—from building renewable production centers to providing fuel for nuclear reactors and exporting U.S. produced gas.

Question. What additional assistance and guidance do you suggest the United States provide to support reforms in Ukraine?

Answer. The United States has long provided assistance to promote human rights, strengthen democracy, and support Ukraine's reform trajectory, and we will continue to do so, working with both government institutions and civil society stakeholders. Building capable, trustworthy Ukrainian institutions that strengthen rule of law, reduce corruption, increase government accountability, create jobs, attract

investment, and have the trust of Ukraine's citizens are key to ensuring Ukraine is able to succeed as a country and achieve its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Question. What have been the main achievements and the remaining challenges for Ukraine in promoting good governance and anticorruption reforms?

Answer. Ukraine has enacted reforms in the agricultural, banking, health, education, governance, judicial, law enforcement, and energy sectors. By standing up anti-corruption institutions, implementing decentralization, and increasing transparency in government procurement, Ukraine has worked to make its institutions more resilient and its leaders more accountable. These reforms are commendable, but Ukraine has more to do to cement progress, prevent backsliding, and reduce oligarchic influence, which remains significant.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIE D. FISHER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. How will you ensure that, while the U.S. is sending an ambassador and reengaging with the Government after 12 years, that the importance of human rights is not diminished in our policy towards Belarus?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work diligently leading the team at Embassy Minsk to address human rights priorities and pro-democracy reforms outlined in the Belarus Democracy Act. This will include regular engagement on issues of democratic reforms and human rights, and directing U.S. Government assistance to an array of partners in Belarus, including all Belarusian democratic political parties, civil society, and independent media. Since 2015, Belarus has enjoyed some sanctions relief, but this is not irreversible and remains a source of considerable leverage. Progress on this front is critical for strengthening the bilateral relationship.

Question. Once ambassadors are exchanged, how do you expect to see U.S.-Belarusian relations change?

Answer. State Department leadership has sought to re-center our bilateral engagement with Belarus and to advance a more engaged diplomatic approach to encourage Belarus' to commit to reforms, improve its human rights record, and support Belarus's sovereignty-free from the dictates of Moscow or Beijing. If confirmed, the Department anticipates the exchange of ambassadors, representing a sustained high-level commitment, will improve inter-governmental communication, increase the incentives for reform, and foster a broadening and deepening of ties.

Question. What role will you, and other Western ambassadors, play during the post-election time frame in response to human rights violations perpetrated in the lead up to the election?

Answer. The Government of Belarus' activities during the presidential election period are concerning and represent a serious degradation of democratic progress and human rights in Belarus. If confirmed, I will work closely with our international partners to respond to the conduct of the presidential election as well as human rights violations committed in the election period by the Government of Belarus. I will engage directly with the Government of Belarus on its human rights abuses. While we do not seek to force Belarus into a false choice between East and West, such actions by the Belarusian Government are, in and of itself, self-defeating and self-isolating.

Question. Post-election, how will you engage with the winner to reform its authoritarian system, including the release of any remaining political detainees?

Answer. The Belarusian Government continues to detain, harass, and intimidate the opposition, civil society, the press, and certain religious minorities. If confirmed, I will engage with Belarusian counterparts to convey the benefits of improved international standing and partnership with the West. It is imperative Belarus demonstrate its commitment to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and permit civil society and the political opposition to engage in political discourse freely and openly.

Question. How do you plan to ensure that this growth—which will occur in a rather small space—is well managed?

Answer. We are engaged in discussions to construct a new embassy compound. I have learned from experiences in other fast-growing missions some of the potential risks of such growth, and I am committed to careful stewardship of taxpayer resources. The expansion of the U.S. footprint will allow us to engage more directly

with the Government of Belarus and a wide range of opposition politicians, civil society organizations, and our international partners in Minsk.

Question. How do you plan to avoid a "bunker mentality" and ensure that your people can get outside the embassy walls and interact with Belarusians?

Answer. Our expanding bilateral relationship and concurrent increase in staffing offers opportunities for growth in all aspects of our bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I will seek to broaden our engagements with all sectors of Belarusian society, including government, business, and civil society. Using public diplomacy and other outreach tools, I would seek to expand our efforts beyond Minsk and into smaller cities and towns nationwide. Greater resources in Belarus will enable us to do more to promote the interests of the American people, and I am committed to managing the expansion of our activities responsibly.

Question. Belarus has publicly floated the idea of engaging in joint exercises with NATO troops. There has also been increased interest in both NATO and Belarus to finalize a 1995 agreement on information sharing, and to deepen that relationship. What do you believe is the impetus behind this push?

Answer. Belarus joined NATO's Partnership for Peace in 1995, but Allies never certified a security agreement, which has limited its scope of engagement with NATO. Finalizing a security agreement would allow for the country's fuller participation in NATO partnership activities, including the possibility of joint military exercises. Through a closer relationship, NATO and Belarus could endeavor to build mutual confidence and ties to counter disinformation.

Question. Do you believe that NATO and Belarus should have a closer relationship?

Answer. The United States supports finalizing the 1995 security agreement between Belarus and NATO and closer cooperation between Belarus and NATO. Belarus is driving the effort to build closer ties, and Belarus' opening to NATO parallels a gradual rapprochement in U.S.-Belarus bilateral relations, including recent high-level visits to Minsk by U.S. officials, the decision to exchange ambassadors, and the resumption of bilateral military cooperation.

Question. What consequences—positive or negative—of such a move could you foresee?

Answer. Belarus' gradual rebalancing towards the West is a positive foreign policy development for the United States. We believe the potential positive outcomes of a closer relationship between NATO and Belarus outweigh any potential negative impacts. Allies have until August 31, 2020, to consider certifying an information sharing security agreement with Belarus. The NATO Office of Security review process, which includes a determination of what level of classification of information to share and other technical specifications, mitigates our information security concerns.

Question. In your opinion, does the Government of Belarus understand the potential consequences of this increase in Chinese investment?

Answer. I believe in recent months the Government of Belarus has become increasingly aware of the potential pitfalls of welcoming PRC investment, and already in mid-2019 the Government had stopped issuing sovereign guarantees to state-owned enterprises that tapped PRC lines of credit. Beijing operates through opaque, bilateral arrangements that undercut international standards. And in doing so—by lending hundreds of billions of dollars in a non-transparent way that breeds corruption, compromises institutions and erodes the rule of law in recipient countries—the PRC undermines the competitiveness of the local private sector and stifles sustainable development in the places that need it most. The United States offers a positive alternative—our transparent, private sector-driven model with a proven track record for delivering sustainable growth, reducing poverty, and fostering technological innovation.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with our European partners to encourage Western investment into Belarus, as a means to diversify its economy away from China and Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with European partners to deliver coordinated messaging to Belarusian Government and business counterparts on how to attract and keep Western investment. Embassy Minsk has been working to establish an American Chamber of Commerce in Minsk, which is slated to launch later this year. The establishment of this institution will help elevate the profile of Western businesses in Belarus.

Question. In your view, what is the balance between Western investment as a means of diversification from China & Russia and its use as a carrot for political reform?

Answer. The two are intertwined: political reform will logically lead to diversification of foreign direct investment away from Russia and the PRC. Accordingly, political reform will lead to greater economic independence from Russia and the PRC. If confirmed, this is a point I will make to Belarusian interlocutors at every opportunity.

Question. Do you view this as an area for growth in U.S.-Belarus relations?

Answer. Yes, and we have already seen a substantial amount of bilateral trade and investment activity in Belarus's burgeoning IT sector. This sector is part of the innovation-based economy, which has great potential for private-sector growth and for increasing the diversification of exports, thus decreasing Belarus' dependence on the Russian market.

Question. What other industries in Belarus could be supported by the U.S. to accomplish these objectives?

Answer. Supporting ongoing deliveries of U.S.-sourced oil to Belarus's refineries is one key industry where the United States can help Belarus decrease its economic reliance on Russia. The United States can also help foster a favorable legal environment for venture funding and build a community of private venture investors, while integrating Belarus into the international venture fund ecosystem.

Question. As ambassador, how will you work to promote media freedom in such a closed country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will address longstanding concerns regarding media restrictions with Belarusian authorities and actively engage with independent Belarusian and international outlets, and take an active interest in their work in Belarus. I will also continue to encourage U.S. programming assistance supporting independent media.

Question. What more should the U.S. Government do to support free media in Belarus?

Answer. The U.S. Government should support the capacity of independent media in Belarus, provide training to Belarusian journalists, and connect them to peers in the United States and European countries through professional development opportunities, exchanges, international conferences, and training.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JULIE D. FISHER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Prioritization of Democracy in Belarus

Question. How can the U.S. best support the people of Belarus in their aspirations for democracy, good governance, and respect for human rights? If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to do so?

Answer. The United States has encouraged Belarus to address human rights priorities and implement the pro-democracy reforms outlined in the Belarus Democracy Act, which are essential for it to fulfill its people's aspirations and realize the full potential of Belarus-U.S. relations. At the core of the Belarus Democracy Act is a desire for a greater diversity of voices in Belarus, including the political opposition, civil society, and independent media. We saw those voices emerge and multiply in the run up to Belarus' presidential election on August 9, 2020. However, the great concern we expressed about the regression in human rights during the election period, which included the detention, harassment, and intimidation of opposition candidates, activists, peaceful protesters, and journalists has grown in subsequent days. We remain concerned the Belarusian Government continues to detain and pressure the opposition and impose restrictions on the press, civil society, and certain religious minorities.

If confirmed, I will emphasize the United States' commitment to the Belarusian people and encourage Belarusian authorities to peacefully engage with opposition groups and protesters, conduct free and fair elections, permit a diversity of voices in Belarus, and support its active civil society. While we do have regular contact with these groups, I will increase our outreach efforts and advocate for continued growth.

Question. Under what circumstances should sanctions on Belarus be re-imposed?

Answer. Consistent with the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004 (BDA), President Bush initially signed Executive Order 13405 in 2006, blocking the property of ten individuals, including President Lukashenka. This came in light of actions and policies by members of the Government of Belarus and others to undermine Belarus's democratic processes and institutions,commit human rights abuses, and/or engage in public corruption. Today, sixteen individuals and nine companies—Belarus's largest petrochemical conglomerate and its subsidiaries—remain designated under E.O. 13405.

The ability to impose sanctions is a powerful tool and a key reason the United States continues to have influence with the Government of Belarus. I believe if actions to undermine democratic processes or institutions, commit human rights abuses, or public corruption are identified, it would be appropriate to consider imposing additional sanctions on specific individuals.

Question. There have been complaints that when official U.S. delegations visit Belarus they fail to meet with democratically-oriented political party leaders. These leaders say these omissions unintentionally send a message to the Government that the U.S. will tolerate their continued marginalization. How would you ensure this does not happen if you are confirmed to be Ambassador?

Answer. I understand the concerns of democratically-oriented political party leaders on this subject. Most recently, Under Secretary for Political Affairs David Hale met with opposition leaders during his September 2019 visit to Minsk, and Secretary Pompeo met with civil society leaders during his visit in February. They were each at the time the most senior administration officials to visit Belarus since 1994. If confirmed, I would endeavor to include opposition leaders in future visits at all levels.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

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. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to ensure my team understands there is no place for prohibited personnel practices in the federal government and it certainly would not be tolerated under my leadership. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. Supporting our people has been a core tenet of my Foreign Service career, and I am committed to supporting the work of Foreign and Civil Service professionals, as well as locally employed staff. I hope to have many opportunities at Embassy Minsk to support a diverse and inclusive environment. Diversity is a source of strength and resilience for any institution, and I will endeavor to build a team that is strong and united in its efforts to advance U.S. interests in Belarus.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising any concerns I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising any concerns I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. Over the course of my Foreign Service career, the promotion of democracy and human rights issues, particularly in the former Soviet Union, has been central to my work.

In Ukraine and in Russia in the mid-1990s, I maintained relations with key human rights activists and representatives of persecuted religious minorities. I promoted the rule of law in both countries and worked closely with colleagues from across the interagency to help educate prosecutors and train judges and judicial support staff.

In the case of Georgia, I served as the desk officer in Washington then subsequently as the Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs. As desk officer, I supported the work of then-Presidential Special Envoy James Baker, who led U.S. efforts to ensure free and fair elections in the fall of 2003. I assisted his efforts to negotiate a scorecard agreed by then President Shevardnadze and the opposition for assessing the conduct of those elections. And in the aftermath of the Rose Revolution in Georgia, and then following the Russian invasion of Georgia, I supported a broad range of efforts to ensure an ongoing commitment to the rule of law and democratic processes.

In these roles, I worked closely with colleagues in the Department's Trafficking in Persons office to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Our visible efforts to support the members of the local LGTBQ communities were also critical.

And in my assignments at NATO I had the opportunity to support efforts to ensure the Alliance worked aggressively to combat Sexual Violence against Women in combat and to ensure the inclusion of women in discussions related to Afghanistan's future.

As a Deputy Assistant Secretary in EUR, I engaged governments in Western Europe and at the EU on shared human rights concerns including decriminalization of homosexuality, Trafficking in Persons and support for religious minorities.In each of these roles I believe my efforts along with those of my interagency colleagues contributed to the promotion of individual liberty and the protection of vulnerable populations.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Belarus? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The most pressing challenges to democratic development in Belarus include: regulatory measures imposed by the Government to constrain civil society; restrictions on independent media, and the prohibition of legitimate political opposition; lack of free and fair elections; centralization of governmental and bureaucratic decision-making authority in Minsk; state administration and control over a majority of the economy, which makes a majority of Belarusians directly dependent on the State; Russian disinformation and malign Kremlin influence, including ongoing pressure for Belarus to cede sovereignty to Russia; and undue PRC economic influence, including debt financing.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Belarus? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support democracy in Belarus by advocating for the benefits of transitioning to a democratic model in my engagements with the Belarusian Government. I will similarly engage with civil society, political opposition, and a wide array of organizations and interlocutors throughout the country to foster and strengthen people-to-people ties, increase understanding of the United States in Belarus, and demonstrate U.S. support for democratic principles and fundamental freedoms in Belarus. I would do this in close coordination with our European partners. Potential impediments include repression of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Government of Belarus, reflexive opposition based on post-Soviet ideology, Russian disinformation, and/or malign PRC economic influence.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will utilize U.S. Government assistance resources, including the Development Fund Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support and promote initiatives that contribute to more open and competitive political and economic systems, good governance, and human rights. Beyond seeking robust funding for assistance programming, including international exchanges and professional networking programs, I will prioritize assistance to civil society organizations, local press outlets, and domestic social media. I will focus special attention on promoting public-private sector partnerships and facilitating positive changes in Belarusian legislation to help counter Russian influence.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Belarus? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with civil society members, human rights, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs and other members of civil society in Belarus. I will advocate to government interlocutors on behalf of these groups, collectively, and encourage access for them. I will also support the professional development of their members by including them as participants in U.S. Government assistance programs and/or international exchange programs. The embassy will engage with the Belarusian Government, in concert with the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), the Venice Commission, and/or other likeminded diplomatic missions in Minsk to advocate against legal or regulatory measures that restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically-oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meeting with democratically-oriented political opposition figures and parties. I will meet with opposition politicians and civil society activists, as well as encourage access and a seat at the table for women, minorities, and youth through engagement with the Government of Belarus and by facilitating their professional development, including participation in U.S. Government assistance programs, and/or international exchange and networking programs.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Belarus on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Belarus?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, the Embassy Minsk team and I will work to safeguard freedom of the press and counter any government efforts intended to restrict freedom of the press or punish journalists. If confirmed, I intend to meet with a wide spectrum of media representatives, including independent, local press in Belarus.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, the Embassy Minsk team and I will counter disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign or non-state actors in the country.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Belarus on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Labor groups face particular challenges in Belarus. If confirmed, the team at Embassy Minsk and I will meet with labor groups and monitor whether they encounter obstacles in efforts to organize.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Belarus, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Belarus? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Belarus?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use my position to defend the human rights and dignity of all people. LGBTQ people face widespread discrimination in many places, including Belarus, and law enforcement often fails to prosecute attacks against the LGBTQ community. The LGBTQ community deserves the support of the United States. If confirmed, I will ensure we make efforts to include LGBTQ and others who may be facing discrimination in events hosted or organized by the Embassy and be an active voice advocating for the human rights of LGBTQ persons.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIE D. FISHER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Over the course of my Foreign Service career, the promotion of democracy and human rights issues, particularly in the former Soviet Union, has been central to my work.

In Ukraine and in Russia in the mid-1990s, I maintained relations with key human rights activists and representatives of persecuted religious minorities. I promoted the rule of law in both countries and worked closely with colleagues from across the interagency to help educate prosecutors and train judges and judicial support staff.

In the case of Georgia, I served as the desk officer in Washington then subsequently as the Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs. As desk officer, I supported the work of then-Presidential Special Envoy James Baker, who led U.S. efforts to ensure free and fair elections in the fall of 2003. I assisted his efforts to negotiate a scorecard agreed by then President Shevardnadze and the opposition for assessing the conduct of those elections. And in the aftermath of the Rose Revolution in Georgia, and then following the Russian invasion of Georgia, I supported a broad range of efforts to ensure an ongoing commitment to the rule of law and democratic processes.

In these roles, I worked closely with colleagues in the Department's Trafficking in Persons office to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Our visible efforts to support the members of the local LGTBQ communities were also critical.

And in my assignments at NATO I had the opportunity to support efforts to ensure the Alliance worked aggressively to combat Sexual Violence against Women in combat and to ensure the inclusion of women in discussions related to Afghanistan's future.

As a Deputy Assistant Secretary in EUR, I engaged governments in Western Europe and at the EU on shared human rights concerns including decriminalization of homosexuality, Trafficking in Persons, and support for religious minorities. In each of these roles I believe my efforts along with those of my interagency colleagues contributed to the promotion of individual liberty and the protection of vulnerable populations.

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

Answer. First and foremost, the Government's activities during the presidential election period are greatly concerning and demonstrate a serious setback to any progress Belarus has made towards improving its human rights record. This in-

cludes the harassment, intimidation, and detention of political opposition figures, protesters, and independent journalists. Other significant human rights concerns in Belarus include a lack of free and fair elections, the treatment of religious minorities, and restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of expression, association, and assembly. Other concerns include: a lack of judicial and law enforcement integrity; impunity for police abuses and attacks on civil society activists, journalists, and minorities; and restrictions on media freedom. If confirmed, I will work with Belarusian officials and civil society to address these concerns and hold perpetrators accountable. I will encourage the Government of Belarus to uphold its OSCE commitments, hold legitimately free and fair elections, and improve its human rights record.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Belarus in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Highly centralized political control and decision-making, and political corruption, pose a significant obstacle to democratic processes in Belarus and undermine human rights as they restrict judicial independence, media freedom, and transparent governance. If confirmed, I will encourage Belarusian officials to respect the fundamental freedoms of their people, demonstrate their commitment to democratic reforms, including free and fair elections, and uphold Belarus' commitments to the OSCE and the international community. I will work with civil society to increase its ability to actively engage with its government and support initiatives to increase citizen input and participation in decision-making at all levels.

Question. 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 Belarus? 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 meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Belarus. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances U.S. national security. I believe it is essential to create and maintain strong security relationships with partners through diplomacy, measured assistance, and cooperation designed to reinforce human rights. The Leahy Laws are important tools that assist us in developing effective partnerships, and I fully support the laws and their continued rigorous implementation by the Department of State.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Belarus to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Belarus?

Answer. The release of all political prisoners in 2015 led to our renewed effort to improve bilateral relations and provide limited, temporary sanctions relief for nine state owned enterprises. The current detentions of opposition candidates and activists are concerning and a serious setback in the Government of Belarus' progress towards improving its human rights record. If confirmed, I will engage with the Belarusian Government on detentions of opposition candidates and activists.

Question. Will you engage with Belarus on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, Belarus' commitment to democratic processes and human rights are a crucial part of strengthening our bilateral relationship. As such, I am committed to engaging with Belarus on matters of human rights, civil rights, and transparent governance guided by the Belarus Democracy Act.

Question. 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. I hope to have many opportunities at Embassy Minsk to support a diverse and inclusive environment. I know from my experience in government, both serving overseas and in Washington DC, that diversity is a source of strength and resilience for any institution. I will endeavor to build a team that is united in its efforts to advance U.S. interests in Belarus.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Belarus are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I have been a team builder for over 25 years in the Foreign Service, whether serving at embassies abroad or in Washington. I am committed to supporting the excellent work of our Foreign and Civil Service professionals, as well as locally employed staff, and I will have no tolerance for actions or attitudes that disrespect any of members of the Embassy team.

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Belarus?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I also currently hold financial interests in a number of companies which have interests in various foreign countries. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Belarus specifically?

Answer. Political corruption undermines democratic governance and the rule of law. While we do not see corrupt actors creating independent power centers in Belarus as is the case for other countries in the region, Belarus has experienced authoritarian government for decades, and its institutions are underdeveloped and lack independence. Its parliament and judiciary serve effectively as arms of the executive branch.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Belarus and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. As Belarus has experienced a serious reduction in Russian energy subsidies and COVID–19 associated economic disruption, the country's leadership has turned increasingly to a small coterie of business leaders to assume responsibility for earning the hard currency the Government needs to avoid a balance of payments crisis. These non-transparent relationships increase the likelihood of corrupt deals. The Government should focus on improving the integrity of public procurement and real estate transactions. Improving the climate for independent media and independent civil society is essential to combatting these trends.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Belarus?

Answer. Good governance and productive efforts to counter corruption begin with recognizing and adhering to international standards, building strong and transparent institutions, and eliminating conflicts of interest. Civil society and journalists often play a crucial watchdog role, and it is necessary for them to operate freely. If confirmed, I will direct assistance programming to support efforts at both the national and grassroots level to promote good governance and safeguard fundamental freedoms.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JULIE D. FISHER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. If confirmed, will the nominee commit to meeting with the National Coordination Council as one of her first acts as Ambassador?

Answer. Yes. The Department is committed to Belarus's sovereignty and political independence, and we support the aspirations of the Belarusian people to choose their own leaders through free and fair elections. We commend the unwavering courage of Belarusian society, and are deeply troubled by reports of politically-motivated detentions, forced deportations, and kidnapping of political opposition members. If confirmed, I commit to strengthening our support for the Belarusian people, including through early discussions with the National Coordination Council and by encouraging a productive dialogue between the regime and the Coordination Council.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JULIE D. FISHER BY SENATORS JEANNE SHAHEEN AND CHRISTOPHER MURPHY

Question. Ms. Fisher, President Lukashenko has responded to those protesting Sunday's disputed election with a crackdown that is unusually brutal even for Lukashenko's 26-year rule. In addition to the Department's statement, what options are on the table to send a clear message to President Lukashenko that his brutal response to the people of Belarus is unacceptable? Given that the last U.S. ambassador to Belarus left Minsk as a result of sanctions applied to Belarusian entities and individuals for similar behavior, what is the message that the Department intends to send by sending an ambassador back to Minsk at this time?

Answer. The Government of Belarus' activities during the election period represent a serious degradation of democratic standards and human rights in Belarus. The August 9, 2020, election was neither free nor fair, and we strongly condemn ongoing violence against peaceful protesters.

The U.S. ambassador departed Minsk in 2008 because President Lukashenka reduced our staff to a maximum of five Americans and withdrew accreditation for an Ambassador, reducing the mission leadership in both Minsk and Washington to the level of Chargé. The bilateral relationship languished for the better part of a decade, limiting our influence. Lukashenka adjusted his view of the bilateral relationship after the 2014 Russian takeover of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine. Since 2018, we have sought to re-center our bilateral engagement with Belarus and advance a more engaged diplomatic approach, to compete for positive influence against Russia and China, and to further ties with the emerging new Belarus.

As the events of the past week clearly show, Belarus has changed since 2008. Ordinary Belarusians, particularly the younger generation, are calling for change. Economic frustration exacerbated by COVID–19 has rapidly accelerated this trend. Returning a U.S. representative in Minsk at the Ambassadorial level will greatly enhance our relationships with Belarusian civil society, allow us to more persuasively advocate for human rights and democratic reforms, and allow us to directly compete with Russia and China for influence. By returning an ambassador to Minsk, we will improve our ability to support the people of Belarus in shaping a democratic, prosperous future and deliver a clear message to the authorities that the path to an expanded relationship depends on the advancement of human rights in Belarus.

As Secretary Pompeo said recently in Europe, the administration is considering a full range of options and is consulting closely with like-minded allies and partners. That review will cover options including sanctioning officials involved in supervising the violence and vote falsification.

Question. Could you please provide us an update on what the Department has done to advocate for the release of U.S. citizen, Vitaly Shkliarov?

Answer. We have no higher priority than the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens abroad. U.S. diplomats in Minsk and in Washington have repeatedly raised concerns with the Belarusian Government, including the Foreign Minister multiple times, regarding Mr. Vitali Shkliarov's unjustified detention.

We press for consular access and his release. On August 13, 2020, our Embassy in Minsk was granted consular access, and a U.S. consular officer visited Mr. Shkliarov in detention. We will continue to press for his release, and until then for fair treatment, judicial transparency, and regular visits by U.S. consular officials. We will monitor Mr. Shkliarov's case closely and remain in close contact with his family and legal representation.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ALEX NELSON WONG BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. As I stated in the hearing, the U.S. has taken actions that have downgraded its engagement with a number of critical U.N. bodies and programs. It has racked up nearly $1 billion in arrears on its U.N. peacekeeping dues, withdrawn from the U.N. Human Rights Council, withheld funding for the U.N. Human Rights Office, and abrogated its participation in other U.N. institutions and initiatives, such as the Paris Agreement. At the same time, the role and influence of other countries—particularly China—has been growing at the U.N.. China is now the second largest financial contributor to U.N. peacekeeping, its assessment rate having increased to 15 percent this year from just over 3 percent ten years ago. It is also one of the largest troop contributors to U.N. peacekeeping operations, providing more uniformed personnel than the rest of the permanent members of the Security Council combined. And it has expanded its role in a range of U.N. agencies, with Chinese nationals currently holding the top job in four of the organization's fifteen specialized agencies: the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO):

- Does our diminished engagement give the Chinese Government an opening to shape the U.N.'s agenda to fit its own interests?

Answer. The United States remains committed to upholding the U.N. institutions that have fostered global peace and prosperity over the past 75 years. The United States remains an indispensable actor in the international system, including within the United Nations and its associated bodies. The United States continues to be the largest financial contributor to the U.N. system, providing over $12.2 billion in fiscal year 2019. The United States continuously works to ensure that the American values of human rights, the dignity and worth of individuals, peaceful resolution of conflict, sustainable economic prosperity, national sovereignty, transparency, and the rule of law are protected and upheld at the United Nations and related international institutions.

If confirmed, I will be a vocal advocate in supporting these values and the core pillars of the U.N. Charter—peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights. I will also advocate for reform at the United Nations and its organizations to ensure they are effective and accountable institutions of the 21st Century. The United States' support is critical for the United Nations to accomplish its mission. I will work to ensure that American leadership continues at the United Nations.

I share the concern over the People's Republic of China's attempts to use the United Nations to advance its narrow self-interests. If confirmed, I will seek to continue the administration's efforts to point out and push back against the PRC's problematic behavior within the United Nations and its related agencies. The United Nations should not be used as a tool to promote authoritarian ideology, the Belt and Road Initiative, or China's domestic agenda at the expense of the international system and the principles of the U.N. Charter.

Question. What implications does this have for U.S. national security interests and other foreign policy priorities, such as the promotion and protection of human rights?

Answer. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) behavior at the United Nations presents a challenge for all member states that seek to uphold the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter, including human rights. Oppressive governments often seek to coopt and use international institutions to distract from their attempts to compromise democratic values and human rights.

I am alarmed by the deteriorating human rights situation in the PRC, including in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and in Tibetan areas, as well as the PRC Government's efforts to undermine international organizations' ability to promote human rights around the world. The Chinese Communist Party holds thousands of political prisoners, routinely violates fundamental freedoms, including free-

dom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association; and seeks to erode the cultural heritage of minority communities. When the PRC attempts to change the rules to undermine international standards of human rights, the United States must work closely with likeminded partners to push back. The PRC Government must demonstrate respect for its own laws as well as its international obligations and commitments related to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. If confirmed, what actions will you take to address this issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working to ensure the U.N. upholds all three pillars of the U.N. Charter, including promoting human rights, and will strive to ensure that it serves the entire global community in an efficient, fair, and transparent manner. This includes pushing back in areas where the People's Republic of China (PRC) and other malign actors have attempted to alter norms, weaken institutions, or erode founding principles. There must be free, fair, transparent, and rules-based elections to leadership positions in U.N. agencies based on merit, and the United States will hold all leaders of U.N. agencies accountable to standards, results, and their commitment to act impartially in the interest of the institution. I understand the Department is also exploring how to increase U.S. participation and personnel in the United Nations, including in peacekeeping. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department to advance these goals if pursued.

I will work closely with likeminded partners at the U.N. to focus the international community's attention on the PRC's human rights violations and press the PRC to change course. I will also continue the Department's efforts to combat the PRC's insertion of its authoritarian ideology and references to the Belt and Road Initiative into U.N. resolutions and programming. I will ensure that that the United States regularly speaks about Beijing's egregious human rights record in all appropriate U.N. fora.

Question. You stated in your oral testimony that "when there is an organization that does not abide by the U.N. charter, which does not live up to its principles, where reform or the path to reform is not available with continued U.S. participation, that U.S. withdraw should be considered:"

- Is this the reason the U.S. is withdrawing from the Paris Agreement?

Answer. As President Donald Trump indicated in his June 1, 2017, remarks, he made the decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement because U.S. pledges under the Agreement unfairly burdened American businesses, workers, and taxpayers compared to costs borne by the United States' major competitors.

The United States is proud of its record as a world leader in reducing emissions, driving economic growth, and fostering resilience at home and abroad. The United States will continue to be a leader in assisting our partners to reduce emissions, protect natural resources, increase resilience, and respond to natural disasters.

Question. Do you believe the U.S. should withdraw from the Paris Agreement?

Answer. I support the administration's position. The United States supports a balanced approach to climate change that promotes economic growth and improves energy security while protecting the environment. The United States is a world leader in protecting the environment. Regardless of our position on one international environmental agreement, the United States continues to reduce all types of emissions, even as we grow our economy and ensure our citizens' access to affordable energy.

Question. What reforms has the U.S. pursued, and presumably failed at achieving, to the Paris Agreement justifying our departure?

Answer. As President Trump has indicated, the United States is withdrawing from the Paris Agreement because U.S. pledges under the Paris Agreement unfairly burden American businesses, workers, and taxpayers compared to the costs borne by our major competitors. The United States continues to work to level the playing field with our economic competitors, including on consistent and transparent emissions reporting.

Question. U.N. humanitarian agencies are playing an essential role in responding to the crisis in Yemen, where nearly 80 percent of the population is reliant on some form of humanitarian aid. Here, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) is working to reach 12 million people per month with food and nutritional assistance; UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) did critical work responding to a massive cholera epidemic, operating treatment facilities and vaccinating people across the country; and UNFPA has integrated nutrition assistance for pregnant women into its reproductive health and safe delivery services in the country. These activities have undoubtedly saved many thousands of lives, even as the country's brutal

civil war continues to grind on. Unfortunately, these efforts are experiencing serious funding gaps, which has led to the scaling back of certain services:

- What is the United States doing to address the funding constraints currently facing U.N. agencies on the ground?

Answer. The United States is the largest donor to the humanitarian response in Yemen this year. In May, Secretary of State Pompeo announced nearly $225 million in additional emergency aid to Yemen, which brings the total from the American people to more than $1.1 billion since Fiscal Year 2019. The Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) regularly engage U.N. agencies to discuss humanitarian funding in Yemen while also pressing Member States to increase funding and fulfill outstanding pledges. We continue to advocate that donors expedite their pledged contributions to the response in a transparent and coordinated manner. We also continue to call on other countries to step up their assistance to the Yemen humanitarian funding appeal, including by supporting the U.N. Global Humanitarian Response Plan addressing the humanitarian effects of COVID–19.

The United States has been working to clear hurdles that prevent humanitarian assistance, including the Houthis' ongoing attempts to interfere in aid operations. While this hindrance forced the U.S. Government, the World Food Program, and other organizations to suspend some aid programs in northern Yemen, the U.S. Government stands ready to support our partners wherever they can operate independently, and at levels that enable them to exercise adequate oversight over their programs.

Question. The U.N. Security Council voted to deploy U.N. peacekeepers to Mali in 2013, following a French military intervention targeting extremists—including groups linked to al-Qaeda—that had taken over the country's vast northern regions. Since then, the U.N. mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has played an important role in facilitating elections that restored Mali's democratic Government, and is currently working to build on these efforts to rebuild national institutions and extend state authority by training judges and supporting security sector reform. Moreover, MINUSMA has worked with French troops to prevent armed extremist groups—including regional affiliates of al-Qaeda and ISIS—from extending their reach in the area or reoccupying towns in northern Mali that they seized in 2012.

- Given the insecurity currently affecting Mali and the wider Sahel region, do you think it is important for U.N. peacekeepers to maintain a strong presence in northern and central Mali?

Answer. The administration supports the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA). It provides an essential level of security without which Mali and the Sahel region would be substantially destabilized. In parts of the center and north of Mali, MINUSMA is the primary source of stability, enabling humanitarian access and some protection for the population. MINUSMA plays a leading role in facilitating implementation of the 2015 Algiers Peace Accord. Counterterrorism operations in the region also rely on logistical support from MINUSMA, including the majority of France's 5,100 troops deployed as part of Operation Barkhane in the Sahel. MINUSMA also provides certain logistical and medical support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force on a cost reimbursable basis.

Question. In South Sudan, which was plunged into a devastating civil war in 2013, peacekeepers have been protecting more than 200,000 civilians who fled their homes and sought shelter at U.N. bases. Given the exceptionally brutal nature of the violence in South Sudan and the fact that civilians have been targeted on the basis of their ethnicity, it is likely many of these people would have been killed had the U.N. not intervened to protect them. While a peace agreement between President Salva Kiir and his former Vice President, Riek Machar, is currently in effect and being slowly implemented, there remains a risk of backsliding and renewed violence:

- Do you think it is important for the U.N. to continue its efforts to protect these civilians?

Answer. Yes. The United States strongly supports the U.N. Mission in South Sudan's (UNMISS) protection of civilian (POC) task, which includes protecting the internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in U.N. "Protection of Civilian" sites. UNMISS fulfills a critical role in protecting civilians, as well as monitoring and reporting on human rights, creating conditions for delivery of humanitarian assistance, and creating space for South Sudan's implementation of the revitalized peace process. During Security Council negotiations earlier this year, the United States successfully pressed to reinforce this core mission of UNMISS and supported its ef-

forts to be more mobile and responsive through patrolling in high threat areas. We also urged the Government of South Sudan to remove restrictions that impede UNMISS patrolling and its other activities, including human rights monitoring. At the same time, we are working closely with the Government of South Sudan and UNMISS to help create the conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified returns.

Question. What pressure are you exerting on parties to the conflict, and other countries in the region, to adhere to the peace agreement?

Answer. The Department is pressing the parties for full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), including persistent efforts by our Embassy in Juba and Special Envoy for South Sudan Ambassador W. Stuart Symington IV. Our officers in Juba and Special Envoy Symington engage their counterparts and stakeholders in South Sudan on these issues continually. The Department has also repeatedly worked to advance implementation of the peace agreement through the United Nations. In recent U.N. Security Council negotiations to renew the UNMISS mandate, the United States pressed to reinforce the mission's role in supporting the peace process. In May, the Department led the Security Council to renew the U.N. sanctions regime for South Sudan, which includes a territorial arms embargo and targeted sanctions on individuals who threaten peace and security in South Sudan. The Department also led negotiations and drafting of a Security Council press statement in July expressing grave concern about renewed violence. The Department continues to call on South Sudan's leadership to fully implement the R-ARCSS, prevent violence, protect civilians, and lift restrictions on UNMISS's freedom of movement.

Question. The U.N. peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) has been in the process of drawing down since 2018, and is set to exit Sudan by the end of the year. While last year's ouster of longtime dictator Omar al-Bashir and the country's transition to a civilian-military government have been hailed as signs of hope for a more stable and democratic future for Sudan as a whole, violence has continued in parts of Darfur. Indeed, last week alone, 60 people were killed in an assault on a village in West Darfur, the deadliest attack in months. There are also growing concerns that the country's democratic transition may be at risk. The Trump administration has used its seat on the U.N. Security Council—the body that possesses ultimate authority over the decision to withdraw UNAMID—to support the drawdown:

- Given recent developments, is there any thought being given to potentially pumping the brakes on that process?

Answer. In U.N. Security Council negotiations this year, the United States successfully pressed for an extension of the U.N.-AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) due to concerns about ongoing insecurity there. The Department also negotiated the inclusion of unarmed civilian protection tasks into the new special political mission, the U.N. Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). The United States has continued to monitor the situation closely and raised its concerns about the escalating violence in Darfur, most recently in a Troika statement on July 16, 2020. The Department is urging the United Nations and African Union to produce an honest and frank report on security conditions on the ground in Darfur in October, as mandated in the new UNAMID resolution, as well as a realistic timeline for drawdown of the mission that accounts for the recent violence, its protection of civilians responsibility, COVID–19 and the rainy season.

Question. What do you see as the necessary prerequisites for a withdrawal of U.N. forces, and does the current situation on the ground in Darfur meet those standards?

Answer. The United States believes it is important for Sudan's civilian-led transitional government to be able to credibly protect civilians in Darfur. The Department was encouraged to see the civilian-led transitional government's (CLTG) engagement with community leaders who have protested against the lack of security and accountability, as well as the CLTG's request for UNAMID's assistance with training, logistics, and equipment for a new joint security force deployed to Darfur, though any such assistance must follow the U.N.'s Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. The United States is encouraging the CLTG to go further and work closely with the new U.N. special political mission (UNITAMS), as well as the U.N.-AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID), to help implement the CLTG's national protection of civilians strategy and a peace agreement once it is signed.

Question. In a major shift from previous U.S. policy, the Trump administration blocked attempts to hold an official meeting in the U.N. Security Council on the human rights situation in North Korea in December 2018 and December 2019. This was reportedly done to prevent a rupture in the diplomatic opening between the

U.S. and North Korea on the nuclear file. Last September, Ambassador Robert King, former U.S. Special Envoy for North Korea Human Rights Issues, wrote in an opinion piece that, "The Security Council clearly is the U.N. body which receives the highest attention and holds the greatest clout, and it is also quite apparent that the North Koreans pay particular attention to its actions. North Korea has been attentive and outspoken in defending its policies when the Security Council is involved, and the modest improvements in its human rights record (for example, in treatment of people with disabilities) indicates the importance of pressing North Korea for progress." The administration has argued that U.N. human rights mechanisms like the Human Rights Council need to be more effective at confronting dictatorial regimes that systematically abuse human rights:

- Why then, did the administration not support a discussion of the human rights record of what is probably the most repressive regime in the world in the U.N.'s most important decision-making body?
- If confirmed, will you commit to working to return this issue to the Security Council's agenda?

Answer. The United States did not block discussion of the human rights situation in the DPRK. We have made the case for the U.N. Security Council to take strong, unified action on human rights as well as on the full range of DPRK issues we face, particularly in response to any major provocation by the DPRK that would undermine international security and violate multiple UNSC resolutions. The human rights situation on the Korean Peninsula warrants discussions, as does the DPRK's WMD and missile programs. Improving human rights in the DPRK remains a key administration objective.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working to return this issue to the Security Council's agenda?

Answer. We believe the DPRK is among the most repressive authoritarian states in the world and remain committed to addressing the human rights situation in the DPRK. We work with the international community to raise awareness, highlight abuses and violations, increase access to independent information, and promote respect for human rights in the DPRK. We will continue to seek ways to address in New York—including in the U.N. Security Council—the DPRK's human rights abuses regardless of the status of our relationship with the DPRK.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes. I agree that prohibited personnel practices is wholly inappropriate. I take allegations of such practices seriously and if confirmed, I will maintain a policy of no tolerance for prohibited personnel practices.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek—as I have throughout my career—every opportunity to strengthen diversity and encourage an inclusive, collaborative, and respectful workplace at the U.S. Mission to the United States.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. Advancing the cause of human rights and democracy has been an animating principle in my career. I worked to establish a just and impartial judicial system in Iraq to promote the rule of law and the equal protection of all Iraqis. In my work to conceptualize the Free & Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, key pillars included a focus on strengthening democratic governance in the region. In my time working for Sen. Cotton, I'm proud that I assisted him in drafting the original Hong Kong Human Rights & Democracy Act to protect the unique identity and liberties of Hong Kongers. That bill—largely unchanged since Sen. Cotton introduced it—was passed unanimously by Congress and signed into law by the President.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development that are under the jurisdiction of the United Nations? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Violations of human rights are a chief impediment to sustainable democratic development and those who commit human rights violations remain a menace around the world. Threats to religious liberty and property rights, among others, undermine fundamental freedom and human dignity, and often these threats cut across borders and negatively affect regional stability.

The Security Council is an appropriate forum to deal with human rights abuses and violations. Such violations are often not only the byproduct of conflict, but a bellwether for it. The Security Council should continue to address human rights through reporting on peacekeeping and special political missions, sanctions, and dedicated sessions on the worst human rights situations. It should also consider the connection between human rights and security more broadly. If confirmed, I will increase efforts to ensure that U.N. peacekeeping missions and special political missions continue to improve their efficiency and efficacy in fulfilling their mandates to protect civilians and monitor and report on violations and abuses of human rights.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy promotion at the United Nations? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. democracy promotion efforts at the United Nations through high-level engagements, coordination with partners, and messaging aimed at promoting democracy. The United States works very closely with civil society representatives and like-minded democracies, including European Union member states, Japan, Israel, South Korea, Canada, and Australia, in promoting democracy at the United Nations. This coordination and support manifests itself in all of the different U.N. fora, including in the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the General Assembly. The United States also remains a strong proponent of the U.N. Democracy Fund (UNDEF) as it

strengthens the voice of civil societies, promotes human rights, and encourages the participation of all in democratic processes.

There are many obstacles in furthering this goal at the United Nations, including the malign influence of Russia and the People's Republic of China in the Security Council and all other fora of the U.N. system. If confirmed, I will seek to continue the administration's efforts to push back against this problematic behavior. These efforts resist Russia and the PRC's attempts to use the United Nations as a tool to promote authoritarian ideologies and to advance narrow domestic agendas at the expense of the international system.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society at the United Nations? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with members of civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the United States, local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society at the United Nations. The United States is committed to promoting the effective involvement of NGOs in the work of the United Nations and other international organizations, as evidenced by our active engagement as an elected member of the U.N. NGO Committee. The NGO Committee, which was established by ECOSOC in 1946, is charged with evaluating and recommending consultative status for NGOs that apply for accreditation to allow them to participate in and otherwise access U.N. bodies and events. The United States will continue to defend the right of civil society organizations to attend meetings and speak, where appropriate. In particular, I commit to ensuring civil society members, human rights groups, and NGO's have an active role briefing and engaging with the U.N. Security Council.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use the platform provided by this position to uphold democratic values and support democratic institutions around the world, including through meeting democratically oriented political opposition figures. I will also continue the United States' strong track record of promoting women, minority, and youth participation at all levels of government, including in political parties. I stand by our commitment to advocate for their meaningful participation in political processes and to ensure their voices are heard.

Question. Will you and your team actively engage with U.N. counterparts on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press?

Answer. Yes. The United States has long championed freedom of the press and protection of journalists using relevant U.N. venues. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing that effort, which will include meeting with press as often as possible and appropriate.

Question. Will you and your team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors?

Answer. Yes. Civil society plays a crucial role in highlighting the dangers of disinformation and propaganda. If confirmed, I commit to being engaged with civil society and member state counterparts to identify these threats and take steps to counter them.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with U.N. counterparts on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Labor groups are important and credible voices in any vibrant civil society. If confirmed, I commit to being engaged in conversations about and with such groups at the United Nations.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face with respect to the work of the U.N.? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people through your role at the U.N.?

Answer. Promoting, protecting, and advancing the human rights of everyone—including LGBTI persons—has long been and should remain the policy of the United States. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to protect LGBTI persons around the world from violence, criminalization, discrimination, and stigma. Although most issues related to LGBTI human rights fall outside the scope of the Security Council and the other work related to my specific duties, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that proper attention is given when situations before the Security Council implicate the human rights of LGBTI persons.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ALEX NELSON WONG BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Advancing the cause of human rights and democracy has been an animating principle in my career. I worked to establish a just and impartial judicial system in Iraq to promote the rule of law and the equal protection of all Iraqis. In my work to conceptualize the Free & Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, key pillars included a focus on strengthening democratic governance in the region.

In my time working for Sen. Cotton, I'm proud that I assisted him in drafting the original Hong Kong Human Rights & Democracy Act to protect the unique identity and liberties of Hong Kongers. That bill-largely unchanged since Sen. Cotton introduced it-was passed unanimously by Congress and signed into law by the President.

Question. 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 seek every opportunity to strengthen diversity and encourage an inclusive, collaborative, and respectful workplace at the U.S. Mission to the United States.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will cultivate actively a diverse and inclusive team, and mentor supervisors in steps toward that goal, including open and transparent communication, clear and equitable expectations, and respect for all.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which may be based or have a presence overseas. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

CORRESPONDENCE SUPPORTING LT. GEN. DAYTON'S NOMINATION

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TESTIMONY
OF UKRAINIAN CONGRESS COMMITTEE OF AMERICA

SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

NOMINATION HEARING FOR LT. GEN. KEITH DAYTON
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO UKRAINE

August 5, 2020
Washington, DC

The Ukrainian American community is united in its support for the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. As Americans, we believe that a democratic and independent Ukraine is in the national security interests of the United States and consistent with our traditions of support for individual freedom and self-determination.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the opportunity for the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) to comment on the nomination hearing for Ambassador-designate to Ukraine, Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton.

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, an umbrella organization representing the interests of Americans of Ukrainian descent for 80 years, would like to express our community's gratitude to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for your continued support in supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity, strengthening that country's reform efforts, providing desperately-needed security assistance to Ukraine, and enhancing the bilateral relations between the United States and Ukraine.

The UCCA would also like to take a moment to express the Ukrainian American community's gratitude for our troops on the ground in Ukraine that are providing essential modern training methods to its military personnel. We pray for our soldiers' heroic tasks and the speedy and successful establishment of sovereignty and territorial integrity in Ukraine.

BACKGROUND

In the context of U.S. geo-strategic interests, the current situation in Ukraine cannot be understood without recognizing its far-reaching consequences for the world's security dynamics. The Russian Federation's outright invasion of Eastern Ukraine, illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea, the neo-colonialist policy of expanding a "Russkyi Mir" ("Russian World"), not to mention the multi-vectored, political, economic, social, cultural, and religious aggression directed against Ukraine's sovereignty, is a direct security threat to the Euro-Atlantic community. As a result, Russia's behavior towards Ukraine is rightly viewed with alarm by our NATO allies, most particularly by those in Central Europe. It is understood to be a threat to the stabilizing transnational, trans-Atlantic security framework that first emerged in the years after the Second World War.

For the United States and its allies, the post-WWII collective security model delivered the space to develop economic growth at a pace that the world had never before seen. That security model consisted of not only sustained military dominance, but the continued spread of democracy, further generating greater peace and prosperity. Today, the security components that made America great are being called into question by old allies, while a new set of partnerships, developed after the fall of the Soviet Union, have increasingly emerged as the potential stabilizing partners the United States has been seeking. Most notably, countries within the Euro-Atlantic alliance are proving to meet or exceed NATO's minimum defense spending criteria.

Europe's largest country – Ukraine – is on pace to field Europe's largest military, with spending levels also exceeding NATO's minimums. Furthermore, Ukraine already stands as the only non-NATO partner to have contributed actively to all NATO-led operations and missions for the past 20 years. As we commemorated the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in May 2020, nearly seven decades after the conclusion of that war, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 has resulted in over 13,000 people killed and over 1.5 million civilians displaced - the largest wartime displacement in Europe since 1945. The United States government has consistently supported Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and the inviolability of its borders since Russia's invasion, declaring as official government policy to "assist the government of Ukraine in restoring its sovereignty and territorial integrity in order to deter the government of the Russian Federation from further destabilizing and invading Ukraine and other independent countries."

The Ukrainian American community looks to the United States to not only live up to its public and binding security guarantees to Ukraine, but to further develop this strategic relationship as a buffer against rogue nations threatening the collective security order. As such, we strongly believe that the security of the U.S. lies in the expansion of democracy and mutual security guarantees, not in the appeasement of an imperial state. U.S. support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, ensuring the non-use of force by other nuclear states, or the use of economic coercion as a hybrid weapon, will eventually see a decrease in U.S. international deployments as Europe's pro-democratic East steps up to repay the faith invested in them.

* * *

Over the past several years, Russia's aggression toward Ukraine constitutes a fundamental challenge to the post-World War II order in Europe and jeopardizes every member of the international community. Their illegal seizure of Crimea, is the most blatant violation of international law and order – specifically a violation of the Budapest Memorandum, its commitments under the CSCE Final Act, the 1997 bilateral Ukraine-Russia Treaty, the United Nations Charter, to name a few – and threatens global security while undermining the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Although the United States responded appropriately to Russia's illegal behavior towards Ukraine by implementing sanctions against the NordStream2 pipeline (2019), the Crimean Declaration (2018), and the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act 2017 (CAATSA), the United States must not be deterred in countering continuing actions that threaten European security and stability. The United States, as a signatory to the 1994 Trilateral Agreement, has an obligation to assist Ukraine in defense of its national security and territorial integrity and in its efforts to institutionalize democratic and economic reforms. The national security interests of the United States lie in the fulfillment of that obligation, and constitute the very foundation upon which the existing relationship between sovereign nations rests.

Thus, the Ukrainian American community urges the United States to take the following actions:

- Uphold a clear, unified, steadfast, and explicit commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and independence by the United States and our European allies. Ukraine's territorial integrity is non-negotiable and any change to it cannot be discussed while parts of it are under threat and occupation.

- Reject all forms of recognition of Russian rule over the illegally-occupied Crimean Peninsula by adhering to objectives explicitly stated in the Crimean Declaration of July 2018;

- Demand the immediate withdrawal of covert and overt Russian forces and equipment from Ukraine and compliance with cease-fire agreements [prior to holding elections in Donbas, as per the Minsk agreement];

- Expand direct military assistance, including lethal defensive arms, naval and air force support, and additional military training programs;
- Continue the *"Open Door"* policy for eventual NATO membership for Ukraine by actively implementing the Enhanced Opportunity Program (EOP) for Ukraine;
- Maintain and strengthen targeted economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, including a possible ban on SWIFT banking, until it fully complies with its international obligations, including the Budapest Memorandum and Minsk agreement;
- Monitor and ramp up U.S. counter-narrative objectives to the Russian propaganda operation through the already-established Global Engagement Center (GEC);
- Freeze assets of, and deny visas to, elite Russians suspected of money laundering or involvement in the nefarious actions against the sovereignty of Ukraine; and,
- Enhance the U.S.-Ukraine Strategic Partnership to include comprehensive support of Ukraine's defense capacity, economic reform efforts, and foreign direct investment opportunities.

Recommendations:

It is clear that Ukraine is at a critical juncture in its true Euro-Atlantic integration. More than a year after Ukraine's presidential elections in May 2019, political parties are struggling to bring forth their issues to the electorate. It is essential that the international community, in particular the United States, remain actively involved and continue to advocate democratic principles and a strategic outlook for enhanced relations with that country. We have a chance to assist Ukraine maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity, to be a strong, democratic nation with all the methods and technologies to continue self-improvement.

Nearly 29 years of Ukrainian independence have brought eight U.S. ambassadors as envoys of American diplomacy. These envoys have secured a lasting partnership between our two countries, and we believe that President Trump's recent nomination of Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton, a career military officer, will only enhance our cooperation/partnership with Ukraine. At this time when more opportunities exist for the advancement of U.S. strategic interests in Central Europe, Lt. Gen. Dayton will be a great asset, given his experience working in the region and current capacity as Director of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America lauds the experience and commitment Lt. Gen. Dayton has shown in his years of service. Thereby, the UCCA supports the nomination of Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton as the next U.S. ambassador to Ukraine.

The Ukrainian American community praises the efforts and commitment of the previous U.S. ambassadors to Ukraine in ensuring that Ukraine develops into a truly democratic state grounded in international norms and principles of independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, ensconced in a prosperous market economy. It is our hope that Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton will continue assisting Ukraine at this most important junction of transformation into a state where people hold the power and elites serve and protect their interests.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2020 (pm)

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:15 a.m., via videoconference, Hon. Cory Gardner, presiding.

Present: Senators Gardner, Young, Cardin, Shaheen, Kaine, and Merkley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORY GARDNER, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator GARDNER. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order. Welcome all to today's full virtual committee. It is a full committee hearing, fully virtual as well, on nominations.

Today we have five distinguished nominees, including Mr. Erik Paul Bethel of Florida to be Ambassador to the Republic of Panama; and Mr. Jonathan Pratt of California to be Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti; Ms. Barbera Hale Thornhill of California to be Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore; Mr. Thomas Laszlo Vajda of Arizona to be Ambassador to the Union of Burma; and the Honorable Kenneth Weinstein of the District of Columbia to be Ambassador to Japan.

Congratulations to all of you and your families on your nominations and your willingness to serve. Thank you for being here today.

We have a couple people who wish to make some introductions. I will first turn it over to a distinguished member of the United States Senate, our former colleague, but nonetheless distinguished. It is a continued honor to have Senator Lieberman with us. Mr. Weinstein has a guest obviously, that being Senator Joe Lieberman from Connecticut who served in this body from 1989 to 2013. Senator Lieberman, the floor is yours.

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

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much. I am really excited to see my friends on the dais.

I am honored to——

Senator GARDNER. If I could just interrupt real quick, if you are not speaking, if you could hit the mute button, that would be great. Please continue, Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN [continuing]. Okay, thanks.

So I am honored to introduce Ken Weinstein to this committee as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to Japan.

As you know, it has been more than a year since the U.S. has had an ambassador in Japan. This is a critical bipartisan relationship for a long time, bipartisan and bilateral for a long time. And this year is a particularly important year with everything going on with COVID–19, with the increasing tensions between the U.S. and China, and of course, our continuing concerns about North Korea. So having an ambassador from the U.S. in Tokyo to strengthen this critical bipartisan relationship could not be more urgent, and frankly, I cannot think of a better nominee than Ken Weinstein.

He is extremely prepared to take on this responsibility by his own background in U.S.-China studies and relations. He is head of the Hudson Institute and through that has developed not only a great knowledge of the U.S.-Japanese relationship but very deep friendships and trusting relationships within Japan both in the Government and in the business community. And his nomination has been broadly applauded within Japan. And I know they are actually anxious for him to arrive.

It has also engendered an impressive and in these days unique response here in the United States, really across the board. When Ken was first nominated by President Trump, among the people who supported him were Senators Tom cotton and Sheldon Whitehouse, Kay Coles James, who is the President of the Heritage Foundation, and David Harris, President of the American Jewish Committee. In the last week or 2, about 50 what I have come to know as formers, former people in public service in Washington, sent a letter to your committee, Chairman Gardner, endorsing Ken and urging his confirmation soon. And it was really a remarkable group that included again very broad, very experienced, very involved in U.S.-Japanese relationships, including two former Vice Presidents, Mondale and Quayle, I cannot resist saying one almost former Vice President Lieberman.

[Laughter.]

Senator LIEBERMAN. And National Security Advisors Hadley and McMaster, Directors of National Intelligence Blair and Coates, Ambassador Nikki Haley, and a lot of others as well. And they all agree—and this summarizes it—that Ken's foreign policy expertise, experience, and his personal temperament will make him a superb Ambassador to Japan.

I want to say in conclusion very briefly that I am really thrilled with this nomination and really thrilled to have the chance to speak briefly to your committee because I not only know Ken through the Hudson Institute, which I have had relations with for a long time, and the years since I left the Senate, for the last 5 or 6 years, I have actually co-chaired a group out of the Hudson Institute, which is a bipartisan commission on biodefense with Tom Ridge, the former and first Secretary of Homeland Security.

But beyond that, I know Ken personally. He is a friend. During my years in Washington, we went to the same synagogue together, the Georgetown synagogue. His family and mine have become friendly. He has a wonderful wife Amy. [inaudible] extraordinarily gifted warm interest in children. So this is a person of real honor and integrity who meets people well, who is a real American pa-

triot based on his own life story and also is devoted to strengthening U.S.-Japanese relations.

So again, I thank you for holding this hearing, for giving me the opportunity to introduce him, and needless to say, along with the others who wrote that letter a short while ago, I urge you to confirm him and send him to Tokyo as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Lieberman, and thank you again for returning and joining us. I greatly appreciate your comments today and look forward to seeing you in person when we are able to do so again soon. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

I want to make a few brief comments—then I will turn it over to Senator Merkley—about the nominees this morning.

Obviously, there are three nominees, Ms. Thornhill, Mr. Vajda, and Mr. Weinstein, who we visit with our work in Asia. This committee has worked successfully on the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act. The legislation passed with bipartisan support unanimously several years ago to create that first-time generational strategy as it relates to China and the Indo-Pacific built on three pillars, economy, security, and rule of law, democracy, and human rights. That legislation has set the framework for the work that we do in things like the Defense Authorization Act, the Pacific Deterrence Initiative. So I very much look forward to hearing how the nominees today will be able to implement, utilize the tools and the full array of opportunities that the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act has provided in their duties they will be carrying out in Burma, Japan, and Singapore and certainly Djibouti and Panama. We know the concerns that have been expressed universally with regard to China and how that Asia Reassurance Initiative Act can affect our work even beyond the free and open Indo-Pacific.

So I very much appreciate all of your willingness to serve. The families who are joining us on the Zoom, welcome and know that we appreciate you being here today.

Senator Merkley, I will turn it over to you if you would like to make a few comments.

STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF MERKLEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the nominees for your willingness to serve.

I am pleased that even amidst the disruptions to normal Senate business, we are able to move forward and consider ambassadorial nominees to key countries. Each of the nominees would oversee critical bilateral relationships touching on key challenges such as economic development, human rights, climate chaos, military cooperation. All of them would have some role to play in navigating China's various challenges to U.S. leadership in the world.

Some of these nominees will represent the United States in countries that are regional leaders in Asia and are crucial to the implementation of our Indo-Pacific policy. Their work and influence would be instrumental in asserting U.S. leadership in Asia.

If confirmed, they would assume leadership roles during a global pandemic that has killed 700,000 people around the world, devastating the global economy, giving rise to tremendous global

health and humanitarian needs. It has exacerbated the risk of human rights abuse and violent conflict and harmed many of the world's most vulnerable people. And I look forward to hearing from each of you about your vision for strengthening the United States' ties with these countries and advancing U.S. policy leadership.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Merkley. I appreciate it.

I know Senator Cardin was on the call as well, but if you do not mind, unless anybody else wishes to jump in here, I will go ahead and turn it over to the nominees today.

I would kindly ask that you limit your verbal remarks to no more than 5 minutes and your full written statements, of course, will be made a part of the record. This is a little bit of the honor system here because the time clock, the shot clock does not necessarily display properly or at all in this case. So please keep your comments to 5 minutes. We will get your full statement into the record.

And we will begin with Mr. Bethel and then we will turn, of course, to Mr. Pratt, followed by Ms. Thornhill, then Mr. Vajda, and then, of course, Ken Weinstein. So thank you very much. Mr. Bethel, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF ERIK PAUL BETHEL, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

Mr. BETHEL. Thank you, Senator. Can you hear me?

Senator GARDNER. I can hear you great. Thanks.

Mr. BETHEL. Thank you.

Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the Foreign Relations Committee, it is a great privilege to appear before you here today. And I am honored that the President nominated me to serve as Ambassador to Panama, and I am grateful for his support and for the support of Secretary Pompeo.

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge my wife Michelle and my children, Ana Cristina, Nicolas, and Francisca, as well as my mother Diana who is an emigre to the United States from Cuba and also a local hire at the U.S. embassy in Havana in the 1950s. I would also like to acknowledge my late father, Paul Bethel, who spent a career in public service with State Department, and his legacy is critical to me being with you here today. I am especially grateful to have my wife Michelle in my life and for her continued support of my desire to serve our nation.

This is a tremendous privilege for me, and I cannot think of a greater honor than to serve our country in Panama.

My most recent experience was representing the U.S. at the World Bank, a position for which I was confirmed by the Senate in 2018. And previously for more than 2 decades, I worked at the intersection of finance and emerging markets. I have lived and worked in both Latin America and in Asia. I speak Spanish. I speak Mandarin. I speak Portuguese. If confirmed, I hope to utilize all of my experiences and skills to promote the mission of the State Department and to advance the interests of the United States.

Now, our relationship with Panama is one of great importance. For decades, Panama has been an enduring partner of the U.S., and Panamanians share our commitment to democracy, to human

rights, and to free markets. And if confirmed, I will work assiduously with the Panamanian Government and its people to deepen the relationship with the United States, given our shared history.

I am also aware, notwithstanding Panama's relative economic and political stability, that there are issues of concern. Transnational crime, inequality, and corruption pose an enduring challenge to the immense potential of Panama. If confirmed, I aspire to foster greater cooperation and work constructively with the Panamanian Government and its people to address these issues.

If confirmed, I would also seek to leverage the capabilities of all U.S. stakeholders so that our capacity can be used most productively to advance our nation's foreign policy interests. I will seek to work with Panama to further U.S. priorities such as safeguarding our significant expat population, promoting investment opportunities for U.S. businesses, and enhancing the integrity of our interconnected financial and banking systems.

And finally, if confirmed as Ambassador to Panama, I will work closely with the members of this committee and its staff and with other Members of Congress to perform my responsibilities as a faithful representative of the United States and the American people.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and other members of the committee, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bethel follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIK BETHEL

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the Foreign Relations Committee, it is a great privilege to appear before you today. I am honored that President Trump nominated me to serve as Ambassador to Panama, and I am grateful for the support and confidence of the President and Secretary Pompeo.

Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge my wife Michelle, my children Ana Cristina, Nicolas, and Francisca ("Panchita"), as well as my mother Diana, an emigre from Cuba and a local hire at the U.S. Embassy Havana in the late 1950s. I would also like to acknowledge my late father Paul Bethel who spent a career in public service with the U.S. Department of State. His legacy is critical to my being here with you today. I'm especially grateful to have my wife Michelle in my life, and for her continued support of my desire to serve our nation.

This is a tremendous privilege and I can think of no greater honor than to serve our country in Panama. I've long aspired to work in the public sector, especially in the capacity of diplomacy. I look forward to sharing my objectives as a nominee and to answering any questions involving my qualifications and experiences.

My most recent experience was representing the United States at the World Bank, a position for which I was confirmed by the Senate in 2018. Previously, for more than two decades, I worked at the intersection of finance and emerging markets. I have lived and worked in both Latin America and Asia, and speak Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin. If confirmed, I hope to utilize my professional experiences and skills to promote the mission of the State Department and further U.S. interests.

Our relationship with Panama is one of great importance. Panama has been a strong and enduring partner of the United States. Panamanians share our commitment to democracy, human rights and free markets. If confirmed, I will work assiduously with the Panamanian Government and people to deepen the relationship with the United States, given our shared history and common destiny. I am also aware—notwithstanding Panama's relative economic and political stability—that there are issues of concern. Cycles of corruption, inequality, and transnational crime pose an enduring challenge to the immense potential of Panama. If confirmed I aspire to foster cooperation and work constructively with the Panamanian Government and its people address these issues.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Panama, I would also seek to leverage the capabilities of all U.S. stakeholders so that our capacity can be used most productively to advance our nation's foreign policy interests. Furthermore, I will seek to work with Panama to further U.S. priorities such as safeguarding our significant expatriate population, promoting greater foreign direct investment opportunities for American businesses, and enhancing the integrity of our interconnected financial and banking systems. Finally, if confirmed as Ambassador to Panama, I will work closely with the members of this committee and its staff, and with other Members of Congress, to perform my responsibilities as a faithful representative of the American people.

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.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Bethel. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. PRATT. we will turn to you.

STATEMENT OF JONATHAN PRATT, OF CALIFORNIA, 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 DJIBOUTI

Mr. PRATT. Thank you very much, Senator.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary of State for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work with this committee and the Congress to advance our country's interests in Djibouti.

Mr. Chairman, my experience in Africa began as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guinea-Bissau 25 years ago. In the course of my Foreign Service career, I have participated in American efforts to resolve conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Sudan. I know that leading an embassy is a tremendous responsibility. If confirmed, I carry with me my experience as Deputy Chief of Mission at our embassy in Pakistan where I helped lead one of our largest overseas interagency teams, including colleagues from the armed services.

Throughout my career, helping develop the strength and effectiveness of the State Department and the Foreign Service has been a priority of mine. Please know that, if confirmed, I am committed to supporting the development of my institution and my colleagues, including the growth of a more diverse corps of professionals and leaders that truly reflects the strength and diversity of our great nation.

Over the last 5 years, Djibouti's economy has grown more than 5 percent per year, and the country is making sizable investments in its shipping, energy, and information technology sectors. If confirmed, I will work to build on the success of the current Ambassador to expand access for American companies and to ensure they are able to compete on a level playing field.

Since 2002, Djibouti has hosted the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa at Camp Lemonnier. Along with Chabelly Airfield, Camp Lemonnier is a crucial platform for our armed forces who are working to promote security through the region. They are now on the frontlines of our great power competition with China, which in 2017 opened its first foreign military base in Djibouti. En-

suring the long-term viability of American military installations in Djibouti is a national security priority, and if confirmed, I commit to extending my full support to our esteemed military colleagues who are based there.

We have a broad-based security partnership with the Government of Djibouti. The United States has helped train and equip Djiboutian peacekeeping troops deployed with the African Union Mission to Somalia. The United States has also supported President Omar Guelleh's effort to facilitate reconciliation between Somalia and Somaliland. If confirmed, I will continue to support these joint initiatives, which are vital to the security of the Djiboutian and American people.

Mr. Chairman, it is a great honor to sit here before you today. My maternal grandparents were Italian immigrants, and my mother was the first in her family to attend university here, later becoming a public school teacher and psychologist. My paternal grandfather contributed to our success in World War II as an engineer building aircraft engines. My father served in the U.S. Navy while studying nuclear medicine at the Bethesda Naval Hospital. It has been an honor to walk in their footsteps and dedicate my own life to public service.

My wife, Bridget Lines, is also a Foreign Service officer.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you for considering my nomination.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pratt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JONATHAN G. PRATT

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary of State for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work with this committee and the Congress to advance our country's interests in Djibouti.

Mr. Chairman, my experience in Africa began as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guinea-Bissau over twenty-five years ago. In the course of my Foreign Service career, I have participated in American efforts to resolve conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Sudan. I know that leading an embassy is a tremendous responsibility. If confirmed, I carry with me my experience as Deputy Chief of Mission at our embassy in Pakistan, where I helped lead one of our largest overseas interagency teams, including colleagues from the armed services.

Throughout my career, helping develop the strength and effectiveness of the State Department and the Foreign Service has been a priority of mine. Please know that, if confirmed, I am committed to supporting the development of my institution and my colleagues, including the growth of a more diverse corps of professionals and leaders that truly reflects the strength and diversity of our great nation.

Mr. Chairman, the administration's Africa Strategy, signed by the President, focuses on three core objectives: 1) advancing trade and commercial ties with key African states to increase American and African prosperity; 2) protecting the United States from cross-border health and security threats; and 3) supporting key African states' progress toward stability, citizen-responsive governance, and self-reliance.

Over the last five years Djibouti's economy has grown more than five percent per year and the country is making sizable investments in its shipping, energy, and information technology sectors. If confirmed, I will work to build on the success of the current ambassador and country team to expand access for American companies in these sectors and to ensure that they are able to compete on a level playing field with other global companies. China has financed many of Djibouti's recent infrastructure projects and now holds more than 70 percent of Djibouti's external debt. Promoting and protecting American access and influence in Djibouti, in spite of growing Chinese influence, is paramount to our national security. If confirmed, I will make it a top priority to ensure that American companies that want to do busi-

ness in Djibouti are able to do so, with the knowledge that American products and services are still the gold standard.

Since 2002 Djibouti has hosted the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, at Camp Lemonnier. Along with Chabelly Airfield, Camp Lemonnier is a crucial platform for our armed forces, who are working to promote security throughout the region. They are now on the frontlines of our great power competition with China, which in 2017 opened its first foreign military base in Djibouti. Ensuring the long-term viability of American military installations in Djibouti is a national security priority, and if confirmed, I commit to extending my full support to our esteemed military colleagues who are based there.

We have a broad-based security partnership with the Government of Djibouti. The United States has helped train and equip Djiboutian peacekeeping troops deployed with the African Union Mission to Somalia. The United States has also supported President Omar Guelleh's effort to facilitate reconciliation between Somalia and Somaliland. If confirmed, I will continue to support these joint initiatives, which are vital to security of the Djiboutian and American people.

In order to sustain Djibouti's economic and security gains, we must also support the development of Djibouti's democratic institutions. To that end, the United States has assisted Djibouti and its people to improve governance. Next year's presidential election provides an opportunity to encourage further progress.

Mr. Chairman, it is a great honor to sit before you here today. My maternal grandparents were Italian immigrants and my mother was the first in her family to attend university here, later becoming a public school teacher and psychologist. My paternal grandfather contributed to our success in World War II as an engineer building aircraft engines. My father served in the U.S. Navy while studying nuclear medicine at the Bethesda Naval Hospital. It has been an honor to walk in their footsteps and dedicate my own life to public service. My wife Bridget Lines, here with me today, is also a Foreign Service Officer.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you for considering my nomination.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Pratt. And thanks to all those you mentioned in your statement supporting you.

Ms. Thornhill, welcome to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. You may begin with your statement.

STATEMENT OF BARBERA HALE THORNHILL, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

Ms. THORNHILL. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is my honor and privilege to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be Ambassador to Singapore. I am grateful for the faith and confidence that President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo have shown in me.

If I may, I would like to introduce my family and friends that are important in my life. My son Hale; my new daughter Kelly; Oddie Nwobi, who is like a second son to me; my cousins, Fred and Fabian Thornhill; my long-time colleague, Rosie Segal, Janet Ramirez, and Evelyn Mangilet. Thank you.

I have come from a loving family in North Carolina, long known for its involvement in health care and charitable work. My mother, a pediatrician, was one of the first women to go to Duke Medical School, and my father, an ENT, invented the procedure known as the stapedectomy, an operation that led to the cochlear implant, a device that has helped hundreds of thousands of people hear again. But more than his skill as a surgeon, it was my father's commitment to treating underserved people and providing them with blessings that we so often take for granted that inspires me even now and motivates me every day.

My professional calling has not been medicine, however, but creating and succeeding in business. While at George Washington, I started an importing company selling grasscloth and silk wall covering from Korea and Japan to hotels and stores. The success of my first company led me to expand and create a design firm which managed many multi-complex projects from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to the Narita Hotel in Japan to the world clubs in Tokyo airport to Disney's five-start Mira Costa Hotel in Hong Kong.

The United States and Singapore respect the rule of law and have many shared values, including diversity, transparency, meritocracy, and innovation. Singapore has been very responsive and transparent with its efforts to counter the spread of the coronavirus, so it is no surprise that the U.S. and Singapore have collaborated and worked closely together on it.

For more than half a century, the United States and Singapore have forged an enduring relationship based on our essential principles.

One, Singapore is a vital economic partner for the U.S. The first bilateral free trade agreement that the U.S. signed with an Asian country was Singapore in January, 2004. In 2018, we had a trade surplus in goods and services which totaled more than $18 billion. There are more than 4,500 companies in Singapore supporting over 200,000 jobs in the U.S.

Number two, Singapore is one of America's strongest defense partners in the region. This bilateral defense partnership bedrock is built on a 1990 memorandum of understanding and other agreements that allow U.S. military access to Singapore bases, airfields, and ports. Singapore recently purchased four F-35B fighters. Singapore has the largest permanent foreign military training presence in the United States with over 1,000 Singaporean Air Force people here at one time.

Our President made it crystal clear that Singapore is a priority for our country by signing the renewal of the 1990 MOU with Prime Minister Lee in 2019.

Number three, our country has a robust law enforcement and homeland security partnership that works together on economy, smart cities, responsible and secure 5G implementation to strengthen our security cooperation.

And finally, our people-to-people ties with a focus on human rights that is near and dear to my heart. Let me share why. I had the honor to work with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta in 1994, lending an American heart and hands to the important work with children in orphanages and to the destitute and dying in the hospice known as the Home of the Pure Heart.

I participated in Operation Smile missions in Vietnam, Brazil, China, and elsewhere. These missions gave me an opportunity to see how one operation, one $250 operation, changed a life, a family, and a village.

In the United States, I have worked with the Boy Scouts of America and provided leadership to over 20,000 under-privileged adolescents.

I also worked with the Children's Institute in Los Angeles to provide basic needs and psychological counseling to over 28,000 children who have been abused and suffered other horrible traumas.

My social work experience motivates my interest in addressing human rights. Even though Singapore has moved from tier 2 to tier 1, I will work closely with the Singaporeans in combating human trafficking, if confirmed as Ambassador.

If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed as Ambassador, I promise you that I will be a steward of all aspects of the relationship. I will be a vocal proponent for the United States, our views on inclusiveness, our support for democracy, and for one of our most important, cherished partners in the world, Singapore.

Chairman Gardner and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today and giving my nomination your serious consideration.

I am pleased to answer your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Thornhill follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BARBERA HALE THORNHILL

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee. It is my honor and privilege to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be Ambassador to Singapore. I am grateful for the faith and confidence that President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo have shown in me.

If I may, I would like to introduce my family and friends with me here today. My son Hale, my new daughter Kelly, Oddie Nwobi, who is like a second son to me, my cousins Fred and Fabian Thornhill, and my long-time friends and colleagues Evelyn Mangilet and Rosie Segal.

Let me share a little about my background. I come from a loving family in North Carolina long-known for its involvement in healthcare and charitable work. My mother, a pediatrician, was one of the first women to go to Duke Medical School and my father, an ENT, invented the procedure known as "Stapedectomy," an operation that led to the Cochlear implant—a device that has helped hundreds of thousands of people hear again. But more than his skill as a surgeon, it was my father's commitment to treating underserved people and providing them with blessings that we so often take for granted that inspires me even now, and motivates me every day.

My professional calling has not been medicine, however, but creating and succeeding in business. While at George Washington University, I started an importing company selling grasscloth and silk wallcovering from Korea and Japan to hotels and stores. The success of my first company led me to expand and create a design firm which managed many complex projects from the Narita Hotel in Japan, to world clubs at Tokyo airport, to Disney's 5-star Mira Costa Hotel in Hong Kong. These were multi-complex jobs around the world in Japan, China, England, and Saudi Arabia. I believe I learned much from these experiences about fostering inclusion and crossing cultural divides that will be useful if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed as Ambassador.

My professionalism and respect for other cultures allowed me to overcome challenges and differences in order to successfully complete ventures in accordance with the highest business and personal standards. I believe that my personal and business background would serve me well should I be confirmed as Ambassador to Singapore—a country with a remarkable record of entrepreneurship and business success and the potential for an even brighter future.

As you know, for more than half a century, the United States and Singapore have forged an enduring relationship based on four essential elements: (1) mutual economic interests, (2) defense cooperation, (3) a vigorous commitment to security, and (4) ongoing people-to-people ties. Both countries respect the rule of law and have many shared values—including diversity, transparency, meritocracy, and innovation. Together we have partnered to address global threats and challenges including terrorism, transnational crimes, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. So it is no surprise that the United States and Singapore have collaborated in our efforts to counter and stop the spread of the ongoing COVID–19 pandemic.

Singapore has experienced a significant number of confirmed COVID–19 infections per capita compared to many of its Southeast Asian neighbors. In the face of this challenge, Singapore has been very responsive and transparent with its efforts to counter the spread of corona virus since the outbreak began in late January. The Government has taken aggressive and proactive measures to reduce the spread of

this virus, including by implementing robust detection, testing, surveillance, and contact monitoring procedures. U.S. and Singaporean entities have come together to address this crisis. For instance, a U.S.-based pharmaceutical company is currently working with the a joint medical school founded by the National University of Singapore and Duke University to develop a vaccine. Our governments have also exchanged information on best practices and discussed ways to keep medical supply chains open, including for personal protective equipment. Through such coordination, the United States and Singapore have worked closely through the COVID–19 crisis.

Singapore is a vital economic partner for the United States. The first bilateral Free Trade Agreement the United States signed with an Asian country was with Singapore. From the day the bilateral Free Trade Agreement entered into force in January 2004, the United States has had a trade surplus in goods and services. In 2018 that surplus totaled more than $18 billion. There are more than 4,500 American companies in Singapore and the United States has invested more than $200 billion dollars in Singapore. We are Singapore's largest trading partner in services, and the two-way trade of goods and services between Singapore and the United States reached more than $90 billion in 2018. More importantly, the robust trade relationship has supported over 200,000 jobs in the United States.

Singapore, this amazing city-state, is only 3.5 times the size of Washington, D.C., but one of America's strongest defense partners in the region. This bilateral defense partnership bedrock is built on the 1990 Memorandum of Understanding, the 2005 Strategic Framework Agreement, and the enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement of 2015 which allows U.S. military access to Singapore bases, airfields, and ports. We have an $8.1B active Foreign Military Sales portfolio with Singapore. Singapore also decided to purchase four F–35B fighters. Singapore has the largest permanent foreign military training presence in the continental United States, with more than 1,000 Singapore Armed Forces personnel training at any one time. President Trump made it crystal clear that Singapore is a priority for our country by signing the renewal of the 1990 MOU with Prime Minister Lee in 2019, and Secretary of Defense Esper and the Singaporean Ministry of Defense signed an MOU in December last year, allowing Singaporean Air Force fighters to have a training facility in Guam.

The United States and Singapore have benefited from a robust law enforcement and homeland security partnership that strengthens the security of our citizens, our companies, and our nations by addressing challenges including cybercrime, cybersecurity, and financial technology. The United States works with our very capable partner Singapore on digital economy, smart cities, responsible and secure 5G implementations, and supporting the free but secure flows of data.to strengthen our security cooperation, a third essential element.

Finally, the fourth essential element of our relationship, our people-to-people ties, such as educational exchanges and other public diplomacy programs, remain important. Focus on human rights is especially near and dear to my heart. Let me tell you a bit why that is so important to me.

I had the honor to work with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta in 1994, lending an American heart and hands to their important work with children in orphanages, ailing homebound families, and to the destitute and dying in the hospice known as the "Home of the Pure Heart."

I participated in Operation Smile missions in Vietnam, Brazil, and China and elsewhere. These missions gave me an opportunity to see how one operation, one $250 operation could change a life, a family, and a village.

In the United States I worked extensively with Scouts BSA formerly known as the Boy Scouts of America that has provided leadership and mentored youths to help them climb the ladder of personal achievement and prepare them for life struggles and challenges. This program has changed over 20,000 underprivileged adolescents.

I also worked with the Children's Institute in Los Angeles to help provide basic needs, early childhood education, psychological counseling, personal encouragement, and love for over 28,000 children who have been abused and have suffered many other horrible traumas.

My social work experience motivates my interest in addressing human rights and in particular human trafficking. Singapore has made significant strides in the fight against trafficking in recent years, including by expanding some protections within migrant labor recruitment systems and work conditions, and by identifying a higher number of victims. In November 2019, Singapore saw its first conviction of a labor trafficking case under the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act. Recognizing Singapore has moved from Tier 2 to Tier 1 in our annual anti-trafficking report, if confirmed, I will work closely with Singapore to encourage the Singaporeans to put even greater emphasis on this issue. I will work tirelessly on this effort.

The U.S.-Singapore bilateral relationship serves as one of our most important partnerships in the region . . . a relationship we should embrace and treasure. Thanks to our shared values and long history of cooperation, we work closely with Singapore on shared regional security and economic objectives. Cooperation ranges from providing capacity-building programs to ASEAN countries to reinforcing international law in the maritime domain.

If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed as Ambassador, I promise you that I will be a steward of all aspects of the relationship, including with these four essential elements—trade, defense, security, and people-to-people programs. I will be a vocal proponent for the United States, our views on inclusiveness, and our support for democracy and for one of our most important, cherished partners in the world—Singapore.

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Menendez, and, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today and giving my nomination your serious consideration.

I am pleased to answer your questions. Thank you.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ms. Thornhill. Thank you very much for that statement.

Our next nominee, Mr. Thomas Laszlo Vajda, of Arizona, nominated to be the Ambassador to the Union of Burma. Mr. Vajda, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS LASZLO VAJDA, OF ARIZONA, 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 UNION OF BURMA

Mr. .VAJDA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Burma and thank him for sending my name forward for consideration. I also thank Secretary Pompeo for his support.

I also want to express my deep gratitude to my wife, Amy Sebes, and our two daughters, Bette and Emily, for their support and their sacrifice. They have repeatedly changed jobs, changed schools, and been distant from family and friends so we could serve our country abroad. They have been outstanding representatives of the United States and have truly served their country.

I would also like to acknowledge my parents who came to the United States as penniless refugees from Hungary, escaping war and communism, and helped build a life for me here in this country.

Since 1991, I have had the privilege of serving as a U.S. diplomat, protecting the welfare of American citizens and advancing U.S. interests and values. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the opportunity to pursue that work in Burma, a country whose people we have supported for for decades in their efforts to overcome harsh military rule and achieve true democracy.

I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Rangoon from 2008 to 2011 and worked to support the early stages of the opening in Burma that led to the country's first credible national elections in over 50 years in 2015.

Since that time, the civilian government has made important progress in a number of areas, consolidating some reforms, combating transnational crime, fighting corruption, and opening Burma's economy. However, the ongoing marginalization of ethnic

groups, violence in ethnic regions, and the involvement of the Burmese military in the economy and in politics have underscored that meaningful change in Burma remains an ongoing effort. This was never more clear than when the Burmese military committed horrendous atrocities, including ethnic cleansing, against the Rohingya community in August of 2017.

The United States has repeatedly expressed our deep concern about the horrific violence against Rohingya and other human rights abuses. We have matched this concern with action. With thanks to Congress, we are the leading donor of humanitarian assistance in response to the Rakhine State crisis, providing more than $951 million to date.

We are also a leading voice in pushing for justice for victims and accountability for those responsible for atrocities, including by sanctioning top Burmese military officials. We must continue efforts to change the military's behavior and promote justice and accountability. We must also continue to push Burma to create conditions for the safe, dignified, voluntary, and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons.

It is also critical that we support Burma's efforts to resist malign foreign influences and challenges to its sovereignty by helping those in Burma who are pushing back on unfair investment practices and deals that provide little benefit to host communities.

I also want to highlight the importance of Burma's upcoming national election in November and acknowledge the significant funding that Congress has provided to support a free and fair vote.

In light of Burma's enormous challenges and our own interest in the country's democratic and free market development, U.S. engagement is essential to advancing reform and helping Burma protect its autonomy. If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States and working with the people of Burma to achieve the peace and prosperity they deserve.

Thank you again for your consideration.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Vajda follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS VAJDA

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Burma and thank him for sending my name forward for consideration. I also thank Secretary Pompeo for his support.

I also want to express my deep gratitude to my wife, Amy Sebes, and our two daughters, Bette and Emily, for their support and their sacrifice. They have repeatedly changed jobs, changed schools, and been distant from family and friends so that we could serve the United States overseas. They have been outstanding representatives of the United States and have truly served their country.

Since 1991, I have had the privilege of representing the United States and the American people as a U.S. diplomat. I believe strongly in public service and have worked throughout my career to protect the welfare of American citizens and advance U.S. interests and values. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to continue this work in Burma—whose people we have supported for decades in their efforts to overcome harsh military rule and work toward true democracy.

I know members of this committee follow Burma closely and understand the enormous challenges the people of Burma continue to face. For five decades, military or military-backed governments employed wide-scale repression and violence that left Burma with a long history of human rights abuses, civil strife, weak institutions, and an underdeveloped economy.

I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Rangoon from 2008 to 2011, and worked with Embassy colleagues to support the early stages of the opening that led to Burma's first credible national election in a half century in 2015. That led to improvements in a number of important areas. But as events have since shown, Burma continues to confront structural challenges to this day.

The current civilian government has made important progress in consolidating some reforms, countering transnational crime, fighting corruption, and opening Burma's economy. However, the pace of reforms has slowed and in some cases stagnated. The ongoing marginalization of ethnic and religious minority groups, violence and abuses in ethnic regions, and involvement of the Burmese military in politics and the economy have underscored that meaningful change in Burma remains an ongoing effort and an ongoing necessity.

This was never more clear than when the Burmese military committed horrific atrocities, including ethnic cleansing, against the Rohingya community in August 2017—three years ago this month. In a brutal response to attacks on its forces, the Burmese military massacred, assaulted, and raped thousands of Rohingya, driving more than 740,000 to flee across the border into Bangladesh and internally displacing thousands more.

The United States has repeatedly expressed our deep concern about the horrific violence against Rohingya and ongoing human rights abuses. We have matched this concern with action: with thanks to Congress, we are the leading donor of humanitarian assistance in Bangladesh and Burma in response to the Rakhine State crisis, providing more than $951 million to date.

We are also a leading voice in pushing for justice for victims and accountability for those responsible for atrocities and abuses, including by sanctioning top Burmese military officials. We must continue efforts to change the military's behavior, prevent future atrocities, and promote justice and accountability. We also must continue to push for Burma to create conditions for the safe, dignified, voluntary, and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons.

It is also critical that we support Burma's efforts to resist malign foreign influences and challenges to its sovereignty. While the United States and like-minded partners are urging more democratic, political, and economic reforms, there are others who work towards returning Burma to its closed and repressive past. To support Burma in this regard, the United States will need to continue helping government officials, economic reformers, and civil society actors who are pushing back on unfair investment practices and deals that provide little benefit to local communities.

I also want to highlight the importance of Burma's upcoming election in November—only the second nationwide democratic election after five decades of military rule—and acknowledge the significant funding Congress has provided for programs to help ensure a free and fair vote and promote continued reforms.

In light of Burma's enormous challenges and our own interest in the country's democratic and free-market development, U.S. engagement is essential to advancing these reforms and helping Burma defend against malign influences. Change in Burma will take time. It will take leadership and new ideas and hard-won progress; and the United States will have a critical role to play in supporting that process. If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States and working with the people of Burma to achieve the peace and prosperity they deserve.

Thank you again for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Vajda.

And next we will turn to the nominee to be Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Ken Weinstein. Thank you very much. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. KENNETH R. WEINSTEIN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO JAPAN

Mr. .WEINSTEIN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member. I am profoundly honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Japan.

I should note I am incredibly touched by the introduction by my friend, a great public servant, Senator Joe Lieberman. I am wondering why I am even bothering testifying after those remarks.

But in all seriousness, I would like to offer heartfelt gratitude to the President, to Vice President Pence, and to Secretary Pompeo, as well as to the officers at State and Mission Japan.

I would not be here today were it not for my inspiration and closest friend, my wife, Amy Kauffman. Our children, Raina, Harry, and Eden, are our pride and joy.

Hudson Institute, which I head, is an extraordinary organization privileged to work with so many members of this committee on both sides of the aisle. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues and our trustees, especially Sarah May Stern and Wally Stern.

Today, however, I think of those who have guided in life, most especially those who are no longer with us and in particular my parents who dedicated their lives to serving others. Dad, a physician in Brooklyn, made house calls until he was in his 70s. My mom, a refugee from Nazi Germany, taught in public schools in underserved communities. Mom knew totalitarianism firsthand and cherished the promise of America. She imbued this love in her students and in her five sons, and it is this dedication to service and love of a country that I will bring with me to Tokyo.

As a scholar and think tank leader, I built relations of trust with leaders in Japan and at home, and I am deeply grateful that so many distinguished former officials support my nomination.

The U.S.-Japan relationship is extraordinarily close, as we can see by the friendship and frequent communication between Prime Minister Abe and President Trump. The U.S.-Japan alliance is the cornerstone of peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. Japan hosts more American military than any other ally and key assets. Japan's national defense program guidelines are aligned with our National Security and our National Defense Strategy, and we share a vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, a concept developed by Prime Minister Abe and then adapted by President Trump.

If confirmed, I will encourage Japan to shoulder even greater responsibility in the face of the significant security challenges we face together in Northeast Asia, and it is essential that we leverage our joint capabilities through our allies and partners in line with the landmark Asia Reassurance Initiative. And I commend the chairman and this committee for sheperding this legislation through.

Our two countries represent nearly 30 percent of global GDP, and if confirmed, I hope to work towards a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement while expanding economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. Together we pursue new frontiers in 5G, quantum, and AI, and Japan is our lead partner in the U.S.-led effort to send humans back to the moon.

The trust embedded in the alliance, an alliance of strong and proud democracies, is critical to envisioning and realizing a secure post-pandemic world. And humanity as a whole looks to the 2020 Plus 1 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in what should be a celebration of our collective triumph over COVID–19.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the committee for your consideration of my nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your talented teams and our talented teams in Washington and at Mission Japan to advance our national interests through close collaboration with Japan. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Weinstein follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENNETH R. WEINSTEIN

I am profoundly honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Japan.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the President, to Vice President Pence, and to Secretary Pompeo, as well as to the talented officers at the State Department and especially the remarkable personnel, American and Japanese, from State and other agencies in Mission Japan for their incredible dedication during these challenging times.

I would not be here today were it not for my inspiration and closest friend, my wife of nearly twenty-four years, Amy Kauffman. Our three independent-minded children, Raina, 22, Harry, 21, and Eden, 18, are my pride and joy. If confirmed, all of us look forward to returning to Japan, a country we treasure, having visited multiple times as a family.

I am very grateful to friends and colleagues at Hudson Institute, the think tank that has been my professional home for nearly twenty-five of the twenty-nine years that I have been in the workforce. I have learned so much from our interactions and am proud of what we have built together.

Although Hudson founder Herman Kahn (1922-1983) passed away long before I joined the Institute, he stoked my interest in contemporary Japan through his path-breaking work on Japan's economy.

I am deeply grateful to our Board of Trustees, to our Chair, Sarah May Stern, and most especially as the inaugural Walter P. Stern Chair holder, to our Chair Emeritus, Wally Stern, for their friendship and support.

And I cannot thank COO John Walters sufficiently for taking on additional responsibilities as a result of this nomination.

Numerous teachers, mentors, friends and relatives are watching online today. I especially think of others who are not with us any longer but who have guided me throughout life—none more selflessly than my parents who dedicated their lives to serving others, and who serve as an example to my brothers and me.

My dad, Victor Weinstein, a physician in a working-class neighborhood in Brooklyn, made house calls until he was in his seventies; my mother, Hannelore Weinstein, taught for almost five decades in public schools in underserved communities in New York City.

When Mom arrived in New York in 1940 as a refugee from Nazi Germany, she and her family—including her brother, my beloved uncle Seligman Rosenberg, who passed away in late June—had high expectations for the United States.

Mom loved the promise of America with all her heart and imbued that love in her five sons and her students. And it is this love of country that I will bring with me to Tokyo.

The list of luminaries who have served as U.S. Ambassador to Japan is humbling, from the legendary Townsend Harris, our first Consul General in Shogun-era Japan, to Edwin Reischauer, Mike Mansfield, Howard Baker, Tom Foley, Walter Mondale and beyond.

I am not their equivalent in stature or credentials. Nonetheless, over the past two decades, as a scholar and think tank leader, I have watched the evolution of Japan's strategic culture in the face of growing challenges and played a small role in the transformation of the U.S.Japan alliance.

I have built relationships of trust with key government and opposition figures, business leaders, intellectuals and journalists in Japan, as well as their counterparts in the U.S., that leave me well poised to assume the position of Ambassador to Japan, if confirmed by the Senate.

Our relationship with Japan is extraordinary in its depth and breadth, as demonstrated by the friendship and unprecedented level of communication between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe.

The United States' relationship with Japan has never been stronger, broader, and more important to both countries than it is now. As never before, we work side by side to preserve peace, pursue prosperity, and push forward to new frontiers. The United States and Japan stand together for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, we promote sustainable economic development from Southeast Asia to the Pacific Islands, Africa, and Latin America, join hands in the fight against COVID–19, and in the journey back to the moon and beyond to Mars.

This deep and enduring partnership rests upon the bonds forged between our two peoples, arising ultimately from our shared commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. And with your support and counsel, there is

much more we can and must do in the face of immense challenges and extraordinary opportunities.

For six decades, the U.S.-Japan Alliance has served as the cornerstone of peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Japan hosts over 50,000 U.S. military personnel and advanced U.S. defense assets, including the U.S. 7th Fleet, enabling both countries to ensure peace and stability in the region and beyond.

I could highlight countless examples of our ever-increasing security cooperation. Most noteworthy is the close coordination of the strategic policy documents of both countries, the United States' National Security Strategy (2017) and the National Defense Strategy (2018), with Japan's National Defense Program Guidelines (2019).

The close coordination of these strategies, and our broad alignment on promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific—a concept first announced by Prime Minister Abe in August 2016 and then adapted by President Trump in November 2017—are indications that that the U.S.Japan security partnership is ever closer.

Japan is advancing our security cooperation in numerous ways, including expanding port calls and extensive participation in military exercises, completing Reciprocal Access Agreements and Acquisitions and Cross-Servicing Agreements with other U.S. allies, as well as renewing its commitment to coordinate information security across the whole-ofgovernment.

Japan, moreover, has increased its defense spending each of the past eight years. It has strengthened and modernized its defense capabilities, with a focus on state-of-art equipment, interoperability, cross domain capabilities, maritime domain awareness, and the emerging technologies of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

If confirmed, however, I will encourage Japan to strengthen its capabilities even further and shoulder greater responsibility within the Alliance. I would also work with Japan in its continued efforts to ensure the steady implementation of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, especially with respect to the Futenma Replacement Facility. Strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific requires all of us to do more.

I will also make every effort so that we and our Japanese allies successfully build a strong network of allies and partners to enhance our collective security in the Indo-Pacific consistent with the objectives of the important Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, and I applaud the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for shepherding through this important legislation.

This increasing convergence, and Japan's increasingly robust foreign and defense policies, have not occurred in a strategic vacuum. We face immense security challenges in Northeast Asia. The U.S. and Japan have worked in close partnership to meet the threat posed by North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile and related programs, including through increased cooperation on missile defense.

Japan is arguably our strongest ally in the pressure campaign against the DPRK through the full implementation of United Nations sanctions. The issue of the DPRK's abduction of Japanese citizens and their suffering in North Korea, moreover, is dear to the heart of the Japanese people; President Trump has personally raised this issue at both the Singapore and Hanoi summits.

As Beijing's military capabilities and technological prowess increases, the destabilizing actions of the People's Republic of China both in the Indo-Pacific region and globally are likely to grow as well. Beijing's unlawful maritime claims, disruptive behavior toward neighboring countries, and efforts to strong-arm neighbors—many of which are U.S. allies or close partners—and challenges to the liberal, rules-based order need to be called out and countered. In recent months, vessels from the People's Republic of China have harassed Japanese fishing vessels and engaged in other kinds of problematic behavior in waters around the Senkakus.

In the sustained effort to promote a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, Japan and the U.S. must intensify our multilateral and networked cooperation with other U.S. and Japanese allies and partners in the region. We also need to continue to work closely to assist our friends in Southeast Asia on a wide range of security and economic interests.

In addition to preserving the peace, the U.S. and Japan are close partners in pursuing prosperity, between our nations and beyond. The U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement entered into force on January 1, 2020 and provides an important new market access that benefits the United States and Japan. A separate U.S.-Japan Digital Trade Agreement entered into force the same day that parallels the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) as the most comprehensive and high-standard trade agreement addressing digital trade barriers ever negotiated. Trade is an area in which our two economies thrive in the global marketplace and where we can make more progress bilaterally, and work together regionally and multilaterally.

Pursuing Phase Two negotiations with Japan toward a comprehensive trade agreement provides the United States the opportunity to further deepen our critical

economic relationship. Together, our two countries comprise approximately 30 percent of global gross domestic product, and we are among each other's top trading partners, exchanging over $300 billion of goods and services each year. The United States is Japan's top source of direct investment, and Japan is the largest investor in the United States, with $644.7 billion invested across all 50 U.S. states.

The U.S.-Japan bilateral economic relationship is rapidly evolving into the paragon of broad economic cooperation to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

These days, pursuing prosperity means promoting connectivity, energy security, transportation and investment in infrastructure. Under President Trump's and Prime Minister Abe's leadership, we have been expanding our economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world, including through numerous whole-of-government efforts coordinated with Japan.

The Japan-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership and the Japan-U.S. Strategic Digital Economy Partnership are expanding cooperation with the private sector and third countries to support high quality infrastructure, energy, and digital connectivity projects. The Japan-U.S. Mekong Power Partnership helps support the Mekong region's pursuit of energy security, while encouraging bilateral and regional trade and integration in this sector.

If confirmed, I will strive for continued and expanded engagement with our private sectors which are at the forefront of efforts to preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific in the face of unfair competition from malign actors.

As part of these efforts, Japan and the U.S. have joined closely with Australia to identify and advance and certify quality infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific through the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network and the Blue Dot Network, offering a transparent alternative to the opaque lending terms and unsustainable debt burdens inherent to the Belt and Road Initiative, with the goal of signaling to developing countries that a healthier alternative to the PRC is available.

Our economic cooperation has led to close collaboration in science and technology, which is increasingly at the center of the U.S.-Japan relationship. The U.S. and Japan are working together to promote an open, interoperable, reliable and secure digital economy that will allow individuals around the globe to benefit from the promise of 5G technology, which will be critical to transportation, health care and education and the extraordinary progress of the Internet of Things moving forward.

The U.S.-Japan relationship, moreover, is pushing humanity forward to new frontiers. Japan, which has increasing space capabilities, has become the lead international partner in our collective effort to send humans back to the moon, and is eager to take part in efforts at human exploration of Mars.

Scientists at our national laboratories and universities, as well as engineers and corporate research teams, are driving advances in materials science, next-generation computing, commercial space exploration, and more. If confirmed, I will endeavor to leverage science and technology agreements, such as the landmark December 2019 U.S.- Japan quantum sciences cooperation agreement, to expand our shared scientific horizons.

Protecting our scientific and technological innovation and protecting our intellectual property is critical to our continued economic prosperity and national security. U.S. and Japanese firms are developing exciting new technologies, which often have sensitive security and military applications.

The theft of cutting-edge research and intellectual property—highlighted by FBI Director Christopher Wray in a recent speech on the threat posed by the People's Republic of China to economic and national security—has far reaching implications. As Ambassador, protecting emerging technologies and critical supply chains will be one of my top priorities. This will include strengthening our cyber defenses and coordinating information security practices to preserve our shared economic and defense advantages as well.

The close collaboration on our response to COVID–19, would not have been possible without the firm trust and genuine friendship between the United States and Japan. Researchers from Japan and the United States, from both academic and private sectors, are finding innovative ways to collaborate on COVID medical countermeasures. This includes the use of Japan's Fugaku supercomputer to analyze existing medications to prioritize clinical trials for potential treatments, as part of the U.S.-led COVID–19 High Performance Computing Consortium, an international effort to use supercomputing to help fight the COVID–19 pandemic. Both countries are also committed to strengthening future pandemic preparedness in the region through ASEAN initiatives. For instance, Japan is supporting the establishment of a new ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. The United States, through USAID, is supporting the creation of a Public Health Emergency Coordination System for ASEAN. Through these initiatives, the United States

and Japan are both committed to strengthening health capacity to address future health security threats in the ASEAN nations.

Japanese companies operating in the United States have contributed to our medical response by donating N95 respirators and redirecting their U.S. manufacturing capabilities to produce face shields and hand sanitizers. We are also sharing information and working together with partner countries to provide solutions and support throughout the Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I hope to build on our ongoing collaboration and experiences to better prepare for potential public health crises and natural disasters.

In addition, both Japan and the U.S. are taking critical measures to build supply chain resiliency through trusted vendors in the aftermath of the initial outbreak of COVID–19. I look forward to taking part in these conversations, if confirmed by the Senate, as the trust embedded in the U.S.-Japan relationship will be critical to the post-pandemic world.

Despite the disruption from COVID–19, the U.S.-Japan relationship continues to stand on a solid foundation of people-to-people relations. Japanese and Americans visiting, studying and investing in each other's countries are a tremendous cultural, economic, and strategic investment in the future health of the alliance. I am confident once the current situation settles, the robust exchange will continue stronger than ever and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that the U.S. citizens traveling or residing in Japan can safely and smoothly return to normality.

The next Olympic and Paralympic games in Tokyo will symbolize and celebrate our collective triumph over COVID–19 and, if confirmed, I plan to reinforce our embassy's efforts such as the "Go for Gold" campaign, to engage with young people across Japan. This initiative brings Olympians, Paralympians, and other athletes to local communities that will host Team USA, sends American diplomats into Japanese classrooms around the country, and empowers teachers in Japan through special training programs.

I am truly honored to be nominated to serve as Ambassador to one of our most dependable and dynamic allies around the world. I especially look forward to benefitting from the support of the talented Foreign Service professionals, both American and locally employed staff, at our Mission in Japan.

I would like to thank this committee for your consideration of my nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you to advance our national interests and address our greatest global challenges through close collaboration with Japan.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Weinstein. And in the interest of making sure that we get as many people asking questions as possible, I will reserve my time and turn to Senator Merkley, if you would like to begin with your questions.

Senator MERKLEY. Okay. Well, very good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will jump right in.

First, Mr. Bethel, I would like to have you give some sense of how we can combat the money laundering challenge that has been repeatedly identified in association with Panama.

Mr. BETHEL. Thank you, Senator.

The issue obviously involves status. Panama is back on the gray list. They were on the gray list earlier. But due to recent events, they were taken off.

There are a number of things that we can do to help Panama get off of the gray list, and I think this is one of President Cortizo's campaign promises or platforms. And to the extent that we can and if I am confirmed, I look forward to working with Panama and with different aspects of the U.S. Government, whether it is Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance or others, to help Panama get off the gray list.

And I think getting off the gray list will do a couple of things. It will bring in serious capital to Panama, whether it is from Fidelity or J.P. Morgan and so forth, and it will also create jobs in Panama and create an enabling environment that will allow the country to move beyond where it is today and to [inaudible].

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. I just want to emphasize that with your background in finance, international banking, you can bring a lot of policy expertise to bear on something that is very related to terrorist financing, drug financing, and therefore affecting the quality of life [inaudible] many ways.

Mr. BETHEL. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Senator MERKLEY. I wanted to turn to Mr. Pratt. And our relationship with Djibouti is heavily focused on security assistance. If you could increase and strengthen the partnership in other dimensions, what dimension would you really emphasize?

Mr. PRATT. Thank you, Senator.

As you said, we do have a very strong security relationship, and I hope to build on that. But I also hope to help develop our economic relationship with the country. Our current Ambassador there has done a very good job of helping U.S. companies get into the market, especially in energy and food processing sectors. So I will continue to do everything possible to build up our economic relationship with that country, recognizing that the United States offers a different model of economic engagement than China does. We are often the gold standard for business development.

Senator MERKLEY. So [inaudible] many places it is engaged in what some have referred to as debt trap financing. They have a lot of projects going in Djibouti. Do you have a sense of how America weighs in on that relationship between China and Djibouti?

Mr. PRATT. Thank you, Mr. Senator.

We are concerned about the over $1 billion in debt Djibouti currently has to China. China was able to offer a lot of assistance in building out infrastructure. That has been very important to Djibouti, including the railway, the road, and the water pipeline from Ethiopia. But that very large debt service is something that is of concern. And I plan to explore and I know that the State Department is already exploring the Debt Sustainability Initiative to help Djibouti as it is helping other countries look at the debt burden that it is servicing and how to make that more sustainable over the long term.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Ms. Thornhill, you have an extensive business background, an extensive philanthropic background. What do you feel in your life history prepares you for the complex relationship we have with Singapore?

Ms. THORNHILL. Thank you for the question.

I have had the privilege of working from Saudi Arabia to Japan and working in other countries around the world, but working in several countries as a single woman owning a business was a challenge, and I had to use determination, diplomacy, and listening a great deal understanding because when I stepped into the organization in Japan, I immediately realized there was resentment for a female-owned business. There was a place for me. So I realized in order to achieve my project, that I would have to use even more determination and understanding so it would be finished on time, on budget. I am pleased to say that doing this work and listening across the different cultures, we were able to complete the project under budget and in time, and the contractor asked me to do his next project.

So I feel that this diplomacy, this listening, as they say two ears, one mouth, this understanding will help me in promoting new businesses also with Singapore because Singapore, as you know, started out as a malaria trading post, manifested itself into the international hub, then a hub for finance around the world and business, is one of the most respected places to do business. So hopefully I will be able to work with American businesses and American universities to bring new ideas to help out with their economy and their investment in Singapore.

Thank you.

Senator MERKLEY. [inaudible] there is one piece I wanted to ask you about, which is your background as a donor to Project Veritas. Can you explain that to us?

Ms. THORNHILL. Yes. I think about 8 years ago, a good friend of mine called me to come to her home and be supportive. She was having difficulty. And I went to this party—I mean, dinner party late, participating, donating money, and left, and that was my first and my last interaction with Veritas. I only knew about the founder walking across the border as bin Laden. That is all I have dealt with. I mean, all I have ever connected with.

Senator MERKLEY. So you had said, when you were asked about it before, being a woman, I was very concerned about anything that seems to expose but not be the truth about abuse against women. I did not understand what you were trying to say by that.

Ms. THORNHILL. I am sorry, sir.

Senator MERKLEY. We lost the connection with you for a moment there.

Ms. THORNHILL. I am sorry.

Senator MERKLEY. You were previously quoted when you were asked about this as saying, being a woman, I was very concerned about anything that seems to expose but not be the truth about abuse against women. I think it sounded like that as an explanation of why you supported them, and I did not really understand what you meant by that.

Senator GARDNER. Senator Merkley, your time has expired, but, Ms. Thornhill, if you can give a brief answer. Senator Merkley, you can come back in a second round if you would like to ask. But, Ms. Thornhill, go ahead with a brief answer. Then we can move on. Thank you.

Ms. THORNHILL. I was referring to the fact that in certain countries that I worked, initially women were looked upon as second class citizens and their position was not to have a female-owned business. So I realized then that I would have to work much harder and be more determined to achieve my goal. And I feel that that has put me in a position of knowing how to deal with diplomacy and how to make things happen but in a very diplomatic way, and that is what I meant.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Merkley.

And just a reminder, there were 5 minutes in the question and answer, and we can come back around for a second round if people would like to do that.

Senator Young, I will turn to you.

Senator YOUNG. Can you see me? Can you hear me?

Senator GARDNER. Yes.

Senator YOUNG. My apologies.

Well, I will just dive right in. Mr. Dayton. Okay, I just stepped in here and I regret Mr. Dayton was in the morning session, and I will be submitting my answers to him.

So, Mr. Pratt, Djibouti was brought up earlier, and I am concerned about the increase in China's presence there. It has emerged as a base for the projection of Chinese influence in the horn of Africa and adjacent waters. As a career diplomat with service in multiple African capitals, what is your assessment of the strategic implications of rising Chinese influence in Djibouti and throughout Africa?

Mr. PRATT. Thank you, Senator.

I know that this is something that the State Department and the current Ambassador is looking very closely at. As I mentioned in my statement, China opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti in 2017.

Since then, we have been working very closely with the Government of Djibouti and with other international partners to make sure that all of the countries that have bases in Djibouti are playing by the same rules and respecting Djibouti's sovereignty. So I plan to continue to look very closely at any concerning behavior and any objectives that China may have in the region.

I am happy to report that the United States continues to have a really strong relationship with the Government of Djibouti. I believe that we are the security partner of choice in that country and in the region, and, obviously, we are helping to stabilize the horn of Africa and Somalia. So I hope to build on those relationships and support our armed services.

Senator YOUNG. What should we do, sir, to provide the African people with a counter-narrative that highlights the long-term risks of dealing with China and the long-term benefits of dealing with the United States and our partner nations who share more of our values?

Mr. PRATT. Well, sir, I think we offer a different model and frankly a better model, a more transparent model. China has offered things to Djibouti that we were not offering several years ago, very large infrastructure projects. But the United States offers many things economically in Djibouti right now that I believe we can continue to build on.

My colleagues in the U.S. Agency for International Development are training Djiboutians. We have a very large jobs sector program, which the Government of Djibouti and the people of Djibouti appreciate very much. We are working especially to improve services at their ports. Djibouti has a very high quality deepwater port that services the region, especially Ethiopia, and the people of Djibouti know that we are there helping to train their workforce, engaging with their people. On our military installations and at our embassy, we employ very large numbers of Djiboutian people. We have a very open and transparent relationship, and, as I mentioned in my statement, we have been working very hard to bring U.S. companies into Djibouti, including in the energy and food processing sector. So I think there is a lot we can build on there.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I thank you, sir, for your years of distinguished service. I regret that I have a conflict, Mr. Chairman, so I will yield back the balance of my time.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Young.

Senator Cardin?

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

And let me thank all of our nominees for their willingness to serve our country. We appreciate it. These are challenging times to be involved in global diplomacy, so thank you. And thanks to your families, because we know you cannot do this without a supportive family.

There is a common theme among all of the countries that are involved in today's hearing. One is the advancement of U.S. values as it relates to good governance, human rights, and related issues. Each of these countries have challenges in different degree.

The other common theme is the impact that China has on their relationship. China has been very aggressive in their investments in our own hemisphere, as well as their own region. And what impact is that having on U.S. security interests?

So for each for you, these are areas of concern.

I am going to start first, if I might, with Mr. Vajda in regards to Burma because, among all the countries, that country has its greatest challenge on human rights. And first of all, let me thank you for your career service, we appreciate that very much, and your dedication.

But with Burma, we have a unique challenge, in that the country was moving in the right direction towards civilian democracy with free and fair elections, electing a leader, only to find the military usurp power back in that country. Very disappointing. And of course, we had the horrendous issues in regards to the Rohingya population that still is a major global human rights challenge.

So just tell me briefly how you intend to advance those issues under the environment that we now see in Burma, how we can get them back on track to the type of reforms that would lead to a more democratic state.

Mr. VAJDA. Thank you for that question, Senator. And I agree with your assessment. Burma certainly suffers from significant challenges on governance and human rights. I think the reality is that it is still coming out of a period of 50 years of very harsh military rule where the military [inaudible] oppression and absolutely squelching all dissent.

There has been some progress. I think that is important to note, and you acknowledge that as well. Certainly there is greater free press. There is more activism among civil society. Political parties are able to form. There was a relatively free and fair election in 2015. We are headed for what we hope will be another one today.

I think the importance for us in the United States is to really build on our comparative strengths in that country. So we have been seen rightly as the longstanding supporter of the human rights and democracy activists in that country. We have, I think, tremendous influence in that regard. We have a very active assistance program, and for that, we thank Congress, which is largely geared towards empowering civil society, working with political

parties, building the institutions around governance and including with regard to the elections that are coming forward today.

And I think it is important that we remain actively engaged and present. I think those who are working towards a better and brighter future in Burma look to the United States as their strongest advocate and their strongest allies. And if I am confirmed as Ambassador, that would be a major priority for me, is to help move the country along on what has admittedly been a very difficult and challenging path towards democracy.

Senator CARDIN. You will have friends here in this committee that will do everything we can to help you advance that agenda.

If I can, let me turn to Mrs. Thornhill in regards to Singapore. One does not normally look at Singapore as a challenge on governance, but the 2019 Reporters Without Borders ranks Singapore 151st among 180 nations in its annual world press freedom index behind neighbors such as Cambodia and Burma.

So let me ask you what you will do to advance human rights in a country that we have a very strong economic tie to such as Singapore.

Ms. THORNHILL. Thank you for the question.

As I stated in my opening remark, Singapore, since the passage of the Prevention of Human Rights Trafficking in 2015, has made serious advances. In November of 2019, they had their first conviction of two laborers, and this enabled them to go from tier 2 to tier 1. They are making great strides to work hard on detection and more prosecutions.

If I was confirmed as Ambassador, I would work with the Singaporean task force in human trafficking called TIP to see what we could do to increase the prosecutions and help on the victim identification system.

Senator CARDIN. I would just urge you to work also with Reporters Without Borders in regards to the way that they handle free speech in that country. It is a challenge. And we recognize we have a strong economic tie. We recognize it is a relatively small country, but it has a major economic impact. They can do much better. And it is a difficult country for us to get our Western values, from the point of view of protection of freedom of speech and democracy. It is just a country that needs a strong U.S. presence on these issues. Do not be just misled by the economic realities.

I want to ask one more question, if I might, Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Weinstein. First of all, congratulations on getting such a widespread endorsement. So we are not going to hold it against you that you had Joe Lieberman before our committee. We always enjoy his presence.

But I think that does bode well for your diplomacy. If you can bring together these diverse views, it is important. Japan is a critically important country to the United States. And yes, we are going to have to deal with the relationship to strengthen, and we are moving in the right direction with Korea and Japan resolving their historic differences.

But with the United States not in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the trade issues are one that was mentioned. We got to look for ways that we can strengthen the U.S. presence in that region using countries like Japan to help us, because it is going to be important

for the commerce on the China Seas, as well as it will be for the economic tools used by China to try to influence the rules of engagement on trade.

So thank you for your willingness to put yourself forward. I hope you can bring about diverse views in that region as you have in our political system here for your support.

You can respond if you want and try to salvage Joe Lieberman.

Mr. .WEINSTEIN. Thank you, Senator.

As the third of five boys, you learn to be a bridge builder. [inaudible] in the Indo-Pacific region and thank you for the question.

In the Indo-Pacific region, I think it is absolutely critical that we continue the kind of economic cooperation partnerships that we built these whole-of-government approaches. We have learned from the Japanese in a sense. We were more defense focused. They were more development focused. And now our approaches have merged. And we are now working on whole-of-government approaches to promote, whether it be energy security through the Japan-U.S. energy partnership, whether it be through the digital economy partnership, whether it be through the Mekong energy partnership to work together to provide development assistance to facilitate our businesses, going into countries to make sure that China's Belt and Road with its confiscatory debt burdens, with its telecommunications systems that are an extension of Chinese authoritarianism, the kind of authoritarianism we have seen in Xinjiang and in Tibet, bringing these systems around the world through Huawei and ZTE. These are fundamental dangers to human rights, as China tries to export these models.

So I really look forward to deepening these kind of partnerships with Japan and also to trying to make further progress on the trade issue with Japan, which is critical clearly. We have had the stage 1 agreement and the digital agreement, but we really do need to go further particularly in the auto sector.

So I will leave it at that. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you for the response. Again, I really do applaud you for the endorsements. And it is always good to hear from Joe Lieberman.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

And Senator Shaheen. I know she was with us earlier. Senator Shaheen, are you there?

[No response.]

Senator GARDNER. Senator Kaine, if you want to go and we will come back to Senator Shaheen if she still wishes—actually, Senator Kaine, do you mind if I yield? I see Senator Shaheen just came back.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of the nominees today for your willingness to consider these very important roles at a particularly challenging time in foreign policy in the world.

I would like to start with you, Mr. Weinstein, because as you know, President Trump has said that he thinks Japan should increase its financial contribution to keep U.S. troops in Japan. As you know also, our presence there, our troop presence there is not welcomed by all Japanese. And so given this pressure and given

the increased military threat posed by China in the region, what are the consequences of raising this issue with an ally on the frontlines of China's aggression while at the same time, we have got some of the economic challenges that you mentioned with Japan? And what message would weakening our relationship with Japan send to China?

Mr. .WEINSTEIN. Thank you, Senator, for the question. It is an important one.

Japan and communities in Japan play an incredibly important role in hosting our armed forces. It is, after all, the largest contingent of American service men and women based in any ally around the world, key assets, including the Seventh Fleet. And the burden falls disproportionately. It certainly falls disproportionately upon Okinawa, which is 1 percent of Japanese territory. It has 70 percent of U.S. bases and half the troop presence.

But at the same time, as we engage in this strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific, all of us need to do more. We have seen China's increased aggressiveness around the Senkaku Islands where for over 100 days they have been sending missiles into the territory Japan administers.

So I think that the important role that I would seek to play as Ambassador on these issues would be to stress the importance of the alliance, stress the people-to-people exchanges, note that we all we need to do more, and to just really make the case that we are doing more, Japan needs to do more.

And Prime Minister Abe understands this. He understands this well. Japan has certainly significantly increased its purchases of U.S. military equipment, whether it be the F-35, whether it be the Hawkeye, whether it be the Global Hawk and the likes of. I think that I am optimistic that we will come to some sort of a fruitful conclusion for these host nation support negotiations.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I certainly agree with you about the threat that China poses. I think that is why our relationship with Japan is increasingly important, and we do not want to let any wedge get in between that relationship that is going to affect our security in the Pacific region.

Ms. Thornhill, as you know, Singapore elected a record number of women to parliament during the last election. You talked about your business relationship as a woman and some of the challenges that that presented. So as you think about the challenges facing Singapore, how can you interact with some of those women in parliament to encourage them to address some of the issues, the democracy issues raised by Senator Cardin, and some of the other challenges facing Singapore?

Ms. THORNHILL. As a woman, I was very encouraged by this last election where 27 women were elected to parliament. And, of course, even though she was not just elected, Halimah Yacob, who is the first female President of Singapore, has done an excellent job since 2017. I feel that Singapore is opening up and allowing women to do more and to take a part in the Government and in the ruling.

And may I also say that Cadet Chai just graduated from the U.S. Air Force as the first female Singaporean cadet to graduate. So I just want to plug all these women doing things because I do, as you

can tell, support women making roads for others and being supportive. And I feel that working with Singaporean and other likeminded societies, that I will be able to promote not only equal rights for all and our fundamental freedoms that we, of course, promote in America, but the importance of diversity and inclusiveness because Singapore is a melting pot also, and they have made great strides in everyone being Singaporean. And with that, I would try to increase more diversity and more inclusiveness of women and other people that have not had equal treatment.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ambassador Vajda, understanding that you cannot do much about the State Department's position on UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. Still, it is doing really excellent work with the Rohingya communities in Burma and Bangladesh. In Cox's Bazar, it has the trust of most vulnerable populations who are affected by violence there. One of my staff members had a chance to visit there last year, and she came back with both horrific stories of the violence perpetrated against so many of those women, but also of the good work that UNFPA is doing. And as we think about how we hold some of the people responsible for that violence accountable, the witness that UNFPA is providing is going to be very important in collecting that information.

And so I wonder if you would agree to commit to meeting at least with those representatives as you are trying to address some of those horrific issues around the genocide that is being perpetrated against Rohingya that has fallen disproportionately on women and girls.

Mr. VAJDA. Senator, thank you for that question and those comments.

I had the opportunity to visit the Rohingya refugee camps at Cox's Bazar myself in November 2017. So I was confronted personally and directly with the suffering that they had experienced and spoke to a number of them, many of them women, and I agree that many women suffered disproportionately and extremely during the atrocities undertaken by the Burmese military.

I will say that I think, as I noted in my comments, the United States is providing extraordinary levels of support for the Rohingya, primarily in Bangladesh, also in Burma, $951 million to date, and we are supporting a range of U.N. and other international organizations that are providing lifesaving work, health, humanitarian assistance, education, sanitation, et cetera.

The State Department also has undertaken its own very significant documentation process that has I think underscored the severity of the gross violations of human rights that took place, and we have shared those with a number of different domestic and international actors.

I think as Ambassador, my role would be to keep an open mind and speak with anybody who can share their perspectives and analysis on what is happening with regard to the Rohingya and that is happening in Burma and to help shape my own perspectives and make policy recommendations back to Washington.

I would like to just make a point of commending Bangladesh. Again, I think of the refugee camp there—just for their extraor-

dinary hospitality and generosity in supporting the Rohingya, but also just underscore that the onus really is on Burma in resolving this crisis and creating the conditions necessary for those refugees to return safely in dignity and voluntarily.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I appreciate both of those comments and your pointing out the willingness of Bangladesh to accept all of those refugees I think is important, particularly given the challenges that that country faces. But that is why the international community needs to do more to pressure Burma to take back the Rohingya and treat them fairly and recognize not only their rights but the rights of other Burmese citizens. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VAJDA. I agree with you entirely.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to my colleagues, Senator Shaheen asked exactly the question that I was going to ask Mr. Weinstein to open about the special agreement with Japan concerning Japan's payment for American military presence and how President Trump has indicated that as that comes up for renegotiation, he would want more. Both Senator Shaheen and I are members of the Armed Services Committee. The continuing presence of U.S. troops there I think is good for Japan, good for the United States, good for the region. And we have both the agreement about compensation, but also the status of forces agreement with Japan concerning the conditions of American troops there, and both of those are always under some review.

But I would just say, Mr. Weinstein, you have a very, very good background and a deep knowledge in these subjects. These combine diplomacy together with sort of a DOD set of necessities, and I hope you will keep not only the Foreign Relations Committee but also the Armed Services Committee informed about the status of those discussions.

Mr. Chair, this is an interesting group of five nominees because in each of the countries that are at issue here, the role of China is very, very important. It may not be a surprise for Burma with a border with China, Singapore with China, Japan, a neighbor with China. But Djibouti, the largest port in Africa has been built with Chinese money in Djibouti, and in Panama China has significant interests on both sides of the Panama Canal in a way that could significantly affect U.S. interests there.

So maybe I will start with Mr. Bethel. As you approach the position of potentially being our Ambassador to Panama, how would you deal with this issue of increased Chinese investment and how that might affect U.S. interests there?

Mr. BETHEL. Thank you, Senator.

When China switched its relationship—excuse me. When Panama switched its relationship from Taiwan to China in 2017, they signed something like 45 separate agreements with China. As you correctly mentioned, China and Hutchinson, known as Panama ports, has concessions on both sides of the canal. China Land Bridge has a very large concession over on the Atlantic side. And

China has made great inroads in Panama, and it is something for us to be aware of.

The first thing I would say is is this. We should welcome competition, and we should not be afraid of competition. However—and the caveat is—it has got to be on a level playing field where everybody plays by the rules. So I think it is important to bring in U.S. businesses to help strengthen institutions, not just in Panama but in other countries, to allow the rules to be played by everybody. And I think you can say a lot of good things about U.S. businesses, but among them, at least by comparative standards, we do things right. We follow the right environmental policies, social policies. We, by and large, have a very good governance system.

And so if I am confirmed, what I would like to do is to do two things: strengthen the institutions, work with the Panamanian people and the Government to strengthen institutions, while at the same time bringing U.S. businesses. And I think the combination of those two would be a good contrast to other actors in the region, including China.

Senator KAINE. That is a good answer, and that is the right strategy. It is hard to do it in reality, but you stated the right strategy.

I just noticed within the last 24 hours some news that was disturbing to me which is the U.S. has, I think, bent over backwards to try to accommodate Saudi Arabia [inaudible]. And within the last 24 hours, there has been an announcement that the Saudis have reached a deal with China to help accelerate the Saudi nuclear program. We had, before this committee within the last week, Marshall Billingslea from the State Department, and we asked him in our interactions with Saudi Arabia around these energy issues would we expect that the Saudis would comply with sort of 123 agreement principles and non-enrichment principles, and he said yes. The U.S. policy is still we can work with the Saudis, but they would have to meet a gold standard for us to assist the civilian nuclear program. [inaudible] yesterday is, well, China—maybe you would rather deal with China because they are not going to have these high expectations.

It would be great if we could insist upon a level playing field. It would be great if we could insist upon high standards. One of the challenges with the U.S.-China relationship in each of these countries that you represent and more generally is we can insist on the right standards, but if there are others who are willing to bend the standards, break them, have no standards, countries might find it in their short-term interests, not their long-term interests, to go with the low bid that does not put expectations on them.

That is my 5 minutes.

But each of you will grapple with this program in significant ways with this dilemma in very significant ways should you be confirmed. I see a lot of action with respect to China by the United States right now. I do not see a lot of coordination or strategy that connects those actions together. I think that is a matter for our committee to be in dialogue with the administration on.

Anyway, congratulations to you.

And, Mr. Chair, I will [inaudible].

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

And I do not believe there are any further Democrat or Republican Senators. If I am wrong, let me know.

Mr. .WEINSTEIN. a question for you regarding Japan. You know, obviously, we see North Korea's continued development of a nuclear weapons program. There was public reporting that they may have made some advancements in that nuclear effort.

But what would happen regionally [inaudible] Japan, as well as Korea and others in your opinion, should North Korea continue in its nuclear program develop a warhead of capable of traveling on an ICBM effectively? What sort of arms scenario do you see developing in Asia at that point?

Mr. .WEINSTEIN. Thank you for the question.

The North Korea nuclear program is a major challenge. It is a major challenge that we face together with the Japanese, and it is a challenge that requires us to be vigilant at the highest levels and to seek to promote both negotiations with the North Koreans but also to boost our deterrent capability to make sure that we do not get to the kind of scenario that you outlined.

I think the Japanese have been very clear. They have no interest in developing nuclear weapons whatsoever. But the danger of proliferation in the region to other powers certainly is a possibility. So that requires us to really continue our engagement with North Korea but to be absolutely firm boosting the deterrent and boosting our missile defense, working together with the Japanese, working together with the Republic of Korea and with our other allies to make sure that such a scenario does not come to fruition.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Weinstein.

Mr. Vajda, I had the opportunity to visit Burma in the days following the last election when Aung San Suu Kyi's government was able to secure some significant gains, and they had a countdown or I guess a count-up, so to speak, a ticker on the top of their newspapers saying that it is 50 days since this new government or 100 days since this new government. And they were talking about the results.

With the election coming up, has this government delivered the kinds of reforms or changes that the people of Burma had hoped for to help ensure success going forward and away from some of the military aspects of elections?

Mr. VAJDA. Thank you for that question, Mr. Chairman.

Obviously, the Burmese will render their own judgment when they go to the polls on November 8th. My own assessment is that there had been, in fact, some early progress under the new civilian administration. Obviously, there were tremendous expectations.

I think it is fair to assess, though, that there had been some slowing on some of those reforms and some stagnation as well. I think we are concerned that we still see some constraints on religious freedom, on freedom of expression, sometimes using some of the military or even colony era laws.

And I think one of the key elements I think looking ahead at the election is will it be free and fair. Will it be inclusive? And will it ideally usher in I think renewed momentum on the democratic and governance path? There is no doubt that with any government Burma faces enormous challenges of poverty, of ethnic strife, of

undue pressure from China next door. In that respect, I think Burma is really exhibit A for some of China's pernicious behavior.

But I think it is our role and our commitment to help support some of those institutions and help with progress towards creating better governance and helping to meet the aspirations of all of Burma's people. And that I think is the expectation we can levy of any government, any civilian government in Burma, and I think it then becomes our role to help assist it towards that goal.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you for that answer.

I think one of the tools that we provided within the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act for Burma was language similar to what we did in Africa with Power Africa. We created the Power Burma provisions because, you know, conversations about progress economically, stable electricity are very important to Burma, and we could help bring that expertise from the United States. So I hope that is a tool that we will utilize.

Ms. Thornhill, to Singapore, obviously they are a trade partner of the United States and certainly China, an incredibly important trade partner for Singapore as well. How does the United States assure that we are present and not allowing a tilt in the relationship toward China versus the United States but make sure that we are playing this on a—keeping this on a level playing field in relationships?

Ms. THORNHILL. Thank you for that question.

China's maritime assertiveness in the South China Sea is a challenge for the region and troublesome for all the region. The United States and Singapore both promote a unified ASEAN, and both look forward to a meaningful conclusion of the code of conduct between ASEAN and China taking into account international law and, of course, UNCLOS.

Singapore has openly stated that they respect the international law. In fact, of recent, there was a phone call between Secretary Pompeo and the foreign minister stating that they must respect international law, which is, of course, freedom of navigation and overflight with unimpeded lawful commerce.

Singapore is a city-state that is totally dependent on trade, as America is also dependent. But they know their entire livelihood is important. They are totally aware of the fact that $4 trillion worth of goods go by the South China Sea isles, and $1 million of that is U.S. goods. So I believe that we would work together. I would work behind the scenes with the Singaporean Government to help tilt them a bit more towards our direction.

Prime Minister Lee in his endangered Asian century article, made a comment that it was time for China to step up and not expect the privileges of a third world country anymore, to step up to global norms and abide by them, but not only abide but respect them and promote them because China has prospered so much by these that it is only right for them to do.

In his statement, I felt for the first time that Prime Minister Lee has tilted a bit towards America because he also stated what the U.S. has done for the region, how the U.S. has been open and sharing and given back in our business relations. So I know that my presence there, if I am confirmed—I would work very hard with the

Singaporean authorities to help them understand [inaudible] to take more of a stand [inaudible] in the South China Sea.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ms. Thornhill.

Quickly because I know I am running out of time here, to Mr. Pratt and Mr. Bethel. The obvious implications of the China relationship, what it means in the two countries that you will be serving in, mean a great deal, and the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act provides additional tools to our Indo-Pacific ambassadors. What more in the toolbox could you use to help address concerns with China in Panama, in Djibouti? Mr. Pratt? Mr. Bethel? I will turn to Mr. Bethel first, and then we will go to Mr. Pratt. But quickly. Thank you.

Mr. BETHEL. Thank you for the question, Senator.

We have a number of tools in our toolbox. We have a newly repurposed DFC, formerly known as OPIC. We have the U.S. Ex-Im Bank. We have trillions of dollars in financial assets around the world that could be—U.S. assets, pension funds and so forth that could be deployed to Panama. We have a robust private sector, and we have a very strong commercial business and cultural relationship with Panama. So I think if we were able to harness all of those tools, we could be extremely successful, not that we have not been, not that our relationship with Panama is strained at all, but perhaps there are ways to improve that relationship.

And I will reiterate what I mentioned earlier with respect to China. We should welcome competition. It has just got to be fair. Places where you have seen China enter are those like Venezuela and others are places that lack the rule of law and strong institutions. And if I am fortunate to get confirmed, I look forward to working with the Panamanians to strengthen all institutions and to help American companies, American businesses, American financial capital, and our own government institutions to be as successful as possible for the benefit of ourselves, obviously, but also for the benefit of the Panamanian people.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Bethel.

Mr. PRATT. quickly.

Mr. PRATT. Sir, thank you for the question.

As I said previously, we are very concerned about the debt sustainability, and so we will continue to look at this Debt Sustainability Initiative. I think the Power Africa initiative is also very important, and with our U.S. companies looking to get into that sector, two different companies are there now. I think that can be important. And I would not rule out maybe looking at the BUILD Act to look at potential for infrastructure. We do not want China to be the only partner of choice for infrastructure in Africa.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Pratt.

Senator Merkley, would you like to continue with a second round?

Senator MERKLEY. Yes. Yes, I would.

And, Mr. Weinstein, I wanted to ask you. Until recently, you were chairman of the board of governors of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which was recently disbanded. And in that effort, we hire foreign journalists who often are involved in writing stories that are not complimentary to their home countries, including Chinese journalists not doing complimentary stories about China.

Recently, the J-1 visas have not been renewed for those correspondents. Some of them are within days of having to return to their home country and are at risk of potential abuse by their home governments. Should those J-1 visas be renewed and protect those foreign journalists who are serving our country?

Mr. .WEINSTEIN. Well, thank you, Senator Merkley, for the question.

Let me note that I have immense respect for the journalists at the Voice of America and at the other entities of the U.S. Agency for Global Media. I had the honor of chairing the board for several years. These were dedicated professionals, many of whom come from challenging environments.

Let me just note that this is a decision that the CEO and the new management of the agency will make. The 2016-2017 legislation creating a Senate-confirmed CEO for U.S. International Broadcasting eliminated the Senate-confirmed bipartisan board. And so this is a decision that the new management will make, and I have, frankly, not been in touch with the new management since they have taken over.

Thank you.

Senator MERKLEY. Okay, but that does not really answer the question. You were deeply involved in this. You know the role of these journalists. You know the risk they are at. And we here in Congress can play a role on encouraging the administration to protect those journalists, not send them home. Is that something you would encourage us to do?

Mr. .WEINSTEIN. Look, it is a challenging question. I would encourage Congress to play the oversight role that it has to and to do it in a diligent manner and to do so, particularly as you feel strongly on this issue.

Senator MERKLEY. I think you are going to be a very good diplomat for the United States overseas.

I would just say to my colleagues of both parties let us take a look at this because this is a real concern for some who will be returned and possibly imprisoned or tortured for having served the United States in this journalistic capacity here in the United States.

I wanted to return back, Ms. Thornhill, just to be absolutely clear. I know we were interrupted by some technical difficulties and also by time. But it sounded like you were saying you did not know much about the organization that you donated to. You are probably aware that James O'Keefe hired a woman to try to discredit victims of sexual attacks, victims of Roy Moore. I am assuming you did not approve of that effort to undermine the reputation or legitimacy of those sexual assault victims and are not an advocate for Project Veritas. It was more or less almost an accidental donation. Is that accurate?

Ms. THORNHILL. I went to support my friend. I knew nothing about Mr. O'Keefe or the organization. I was supporting an old friend as I would normally do because she asked me to come. I went and supported and donated. And that was 7 or 8 years ago and have not had any contact, nor do I know anything of what you are referring to, sir.

Senator MERKLEY. And you did not support their use of fake videos or an effort to undermine sexual assault victims' legitimacy?

Ms. THORNHILL. No. I am a strong advocate for [inaudible]. As you know from my background, from human rights and, of course, the rights of women, that we promote everyone equal treatment for all.

Senator MERKLEY. I just wanted to help you put that on the record since it has been raised and we can clear that up and set that aside.

Mr. VAJDA. I am very concerned about the circumstances in Burma as many of my colleagues have raised it. As you know from our previous conversation, I led a congressional delegation to go and try to visit the areas in which Muslims are held and to look at the villages that were burned. Aung San Suu Kyi had invited the world to come and see and said they had nothing to hide, and then they blocked the world from seeing those sites.

Will you ask to be able to go to those sites yourself in your position, once confirmed?

Mr. VAJDA. Thank you for that question, Ranking Member, and I appreciate your interest in pursuing your own direct ability to observe what had happened in northern Rakhine State.

My understanding is that the U.S. embassy regularly seeks access to those areas, not just for themselves but importantly, for humanitarian agencies, [inaudible] access is critical and also for the media so that, as you note, the world can see what is actually happening. I understand, as you also noted, that that access is often denied.

It would absolutely be my intent to be able to get there and have members of my team get there, if I am confirmed and if I arrive in Burma, to be able to see for ourselves and to be able to report back accurately to Washington and to use what we see to be able to inform our policies so we can be as effective as possible and having the greatest influence in working towards our goals of human rights and return of the Rohingya under safe, dignified conditions and really working towards the long-term needs of that community as identified by the Annan Commission, which we support.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. I think even though it is likely you will be denied, I think it is important to ask for access because it is a horrific situation and we should not let—it continues—situations continue. The camps, the internally displaced person camps, are still a horrific situation for so many who are trapped in them, the denial of citizenship, the removal of former citizenship, the assaults and the abuse, and it is important that we continue to stand up for people who are treated in that manner.

I wanted to also encourage you to press hard on the upcoming elections and try to make sure that everyone who had been eligible to vote in previous elections will be allowed to vote in this next election, including the Rohingya.

Mr. VAJDA. Thank you. Thank you, Ranking Member. I share that goal. I think it is right this process—the election is as inclusive as possible and actually can speak to the political needs and interests of all the people of Burma. It will be hugely important.

Senator MERKLEY. It is often pointed out that despite the gravity of the situation, the U.S. never completed the process of declaring it a genocide. Should the U.S. complete that process?

Mr. VAJDA. Senator, I know you raised this also with Secretary Pompeo in his recent testimony. He has said that our main goal is to change behavior on the ground, to promote accountability and justice, and to avoid any recurrence of these widespread atrocities. And he has made clear that we will review our actions with that goal in mind.

I can simply affirm personally that my intention, if I am confirmed, would be to arrive in Burma, assess the situation, collect information, gather the advice of my colleagues, and make my best recommendations back to Washington how we achieve the goals of accountability and justice.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, thank you. I think it does undermine our credibility that we chose, despite the recommendation of numerous international organizations, [inaudible] to be a genocide. It seems to have been an effort not to offend the Government of Burma. I just think we have to speak truth to the situations. When genocide occurs, we need to call it out and all it what it is. And [inaudible] the United States has not done so, and I hope you will advocate for doing so once you evaluate the circumstances on the ground.

Mr. VAJDA. Thank you, Senator.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Merkley.

And thanks to all of the witnesses today for attending the hearing and for your willingness to serve and for providing us with your testimony and answers today.

For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business Thursday. That is tomorrow, August 6th, including for members to submit questions for the record.

I kindly ask the witnesses to respond as promptly as possible, and your responses will be made a part of the record.

With the thanks of the committee, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:44 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIK PAUL BETHEL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Panama hosts thousands of Colombian, Venezuelan, and Nicaraguan refugees and asylum seekers. Panama is also a transit country for extra-regional migrants, thousands of whom are stranded as a result of the COVID–19 state of emergency. If confirmed, what specific policies and programs will you prioritize regarding refugees and migrants in Panama?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the State Department's engagement with Panama to encourage lawful and humane alternatives to its "controlled flow" policy of allowing irregular migration through Panamanian territory and encourage the Government to deport irregular migrants after collecting relevant data and consistent with international law. I will also engage the State Department and the interagency to continue supporting, through our international humanitarian partners, migration management and asylum capacity building for the Government of Panama so that we may continue a shared, regional approach to addressing irregular migration and providing international protection to those in need.

Question. What is your assessment of the enduring impact of Panama's decision to sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan?

Answer. In June of 2017, under the previous administration of Juan Carlos Varela, Panama established diplomatic ties with Beijing. Over the following two years, Panama signed 45 bilateral agreements with the PRC and conducted negotiations towards a free trade agreement. The Cortizo Government has exercised greater oversight of PRC projects. Through its donations of medical supplies to support Panama's response to the COVID–19 pandemic, Taiwan showed its generosity, leadership, and continued reliability as a partner. If confirmed, I will urge Panama to approach relations with the PRC cautiously and to reestablish economic and cultural ties with Taiwan.

Question. What is your assessment of the implications for U.S. national security of the Government of China's increased investment in the region around the Panama Canal, including investment and construction of a new bridge over the canal?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge Panama to approach relations with China with greater caution and will push for international best practices in terms of governance and transparency. Panama and the United States must ensure that assets such as the Panama Canal, port terminals, energy transmission/generation, copper mines, and telecommunications maintain the highest standards and remain free of corruption for the Panamanian people. The Cortizo Government continues to engage with the PRC across a number of areas, but has taken important steps to re-examine and proceed more cautiously on projects. If confirmed, I plan to work to advance U.S. interests and as appropriate to question the motivations of the PRC in Panama.

Question. What is your assessment of the implications for U.S. economic security of the Government of China's increased investment in the region around the Panama Canal, including investment and construction of a new bridge over the canal?

Answer. Panama and the United States have a longstanding historical relationship centered on the Panama Canal. We are the Canal's top user with 68 percent of all transits are going to or coming from a U.S. port. The United States welcomes competition with China on a level playing field where all play by the rules and respect environmental, social, and labor standards. Opaque tenders, lack of transparency in the procurement process, and the perception of unfair treatment of western companies vis-a-vis China diminish the attractiveness of Panama as an investment destination. If confirmed, I commit to helping Panama enforce the highest standards of integrity and transparency to ensure a competitive environment for U.S. businesses.

Question. What is your assessment of Panama's participation in the Government of China's Belt and Road initiative?

Answer. The Cortizo Government continues to engage with the PRC across a number of areas, but has taken important steps to re-examine, and in some cases proceed more cautiously on, projects and other areas of engagement with the PRC. The United States welcomes competition with China on a level playing field where all play by the rules and respect environmental and labor standards. If confirmed, I will urge Panama to approach relations with China with caution and push for international best practices in terms of transparency.

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to encourage U.S. businesses to invest in Panama?

Answer. Panama and the United States enjoy a strong and longstanding trade relationship, which has only improved since the U.S.-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) entered into force in October 2012. Since then, U.S. exports have increased every year. The U.S.-Panama TPA supports American jobs, expands markets, and enhances U.S. competitiveness by guaranteeing access to Panama's dynamic services market. If confirmed, I will continue our whole-of-government work to catalyze private sector investment in infrastructure development under the America Crece initiative and work with the Government of Panama and USTR to further strengthen market access for U.S. companies and to ensure that U.S. products continue to be the preferred choice for Panamanian consumers.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes. I commit to ensuring that retaliation has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline in accordance with U.S. federal laws and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service?

Answer. Diversity makes teams stronger in terms of creativity and productivity. If confirmed, I intend to engage the resources of the State Department as well as my own experience to foster an inclusive and respectful environment that allows all voices to be heard. I also intend to continue the proactive approach to diversity that I modeled from my time in the private sector and at the World Bank, which included recruiting and mentoring individuals from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to advance multilateral strategies that support human rights and democracy. I dedicated my career to working at the crossroads of finance and emerging markets, most recently at the World Bank. While there, I worked to support human rights by vetting and approving over $80 billion worth of loans, grants, guarantees, and investments to promote the Bank's twin goals of eliminating poverty and promoting shared prosperity and their strong elements of promoting social and environmental sustainability and protecting vulnerable individuals. I worked intensely on projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Uganda to combat the abuse of women and girls.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Panama? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Panama is a strong partner of the United States, whose cooperation is vital to U.S. efforts to promote democracy throughout the region. In many ways,

Panama is a model for others in the region to emulate. Challenges remain, including corruption, freedom of expression (including by members of the press), and addressing economic inequality. The United States supports Panama's efforts to investigate and prosecute officials accused of corruption. Panama also needs to continue to strengthen its democratic institutions and to increase transparency and counter money laundering.

If confirmed, I commit to supporting democratic development in Panama through coordinated U.S. Government programs and outreach aimed at strengthening Panama's institutions fighting corruption, and bolstering civil society.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Panama? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Panama is a strong democracy and, in many ways, is a model for other countries in the region. Over the past 30 years, Panamanians elected five presidents from three political parties in free and fair elections. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that Panama's success is more inclusive and to assisting the Government to eliminate corrupt influences within its institutions. I will also seek to strengthen democratic norms in Panama through our diplomatic engagements with Panamanian authorities, public messaging, and U.S. assistance programs supporting anticorruption efforts and the rule of law.Question18:How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure U.S. assistance aligns with our important policy goals of supporting democratic institutions, fighting corruption, and upholding the rule of law in Panama. U.S. assistance is a key tool we can use to help strengthen Panama's judicial institutions and support President Cortizo's anticorruption efforts. If confirmed, I will make capacity building a key priority to help the Panamanian Government address these critical issues.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Panama? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to meet with such organizations, both in the United States and in Panama. I hope to strengthen efforts to build the integrity of public institutions and increase transparency. I will use my position to promote a safe environment that enables NGOs and other civil society actors to operate without fear.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will make it a point to meet with people from across the political spectrum and from all walks of life. As the United States Ambassador to Panama, it will be incumbent on me to establish contacts among the broadest group of interlocutors possible. If confirmed, I will not only engage with government and political parties but also with members of civil society, including independent media, community organizations, and labor, environmental, and human rights organizations and activists. I will also reach out to youth, minority, and women's groups on matters of interest and importance to the Mission.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Panama on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Panama?

Answer. Supporting an active and free press is a fundamental part of State Department engagement overseas. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work diligently across the Mission team to promote the importance of a free press with Panamanian officials, while using vehicles such as our International Visitor Leadership Program to share international best practices with Panamanian journalists. A free and fair press is critical to a healthy democracy, and I will continue the Mission's efforts to directly engage in the promotion of freedom of expression in Panama.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Panama?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Embassy team to engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering the disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state (or non-state) actors in Panama. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Panamanian Government to deter and counter malign influence by the PRC and other governments whose policies are inimical to U.S. interests, and to help Panama solidify its awareness of the pitfalls represented by increasing proximity to the PRC. I will also encourage Mission Panama to continue developing positive responses and information to use to counter disinformation and propaganda campaigns.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Panama on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Embassy team to engage diplomatically with the appropriate ministries in the Panamanian Government on labor issues, including the freedom of association for all, including independent trade unions. I believe active dialogue with labor organizations and activists, as well as accurate reporting on labor conditions, is an important responsibility of the State Department and, if confirmed, I will lead the Embassy in prioritizing both outreach and reporting.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Panama, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Panama? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Panama?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the State Department to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Panama. I am deeply committed to human dignity and respect for all people and will follow all State Department guidelines to address this issue with respect, tolerance, and compassion.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO ERIK PAUL BETHEL BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy?

- What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to advancing strategies that support human rights and democracy.

I dedicated my career to working at the crossroads of finance and emerging markets, most recently at the World Bank.

While there, I worked to support human rights by vetting and approving over $80 billion worth of loans, grants, guarantees, and investments to promote the Bank's twin goals of eliminating poverty and promoting shared prosperity, with strong elements of promoting social and environmental sustainability, and protecting vulnerable individuals.

I worked intensely on projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Uganda to combat the abuse of women and girls.

Question. What are the most pressing human rights issues in Panama?

- What are the most important steps you expect to takeif confirmedto promote human rights and democracy in Panama?
- What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Panama is a strong partner of the United States and has made significant strides to address human rights.

However, Panama still faces a number of challenges.

Panama should do more to protect indigenous communities, address gender-based violence issues, strengthen the rights of underserved people, and help curb human trafficking.

Panama's press appears hampered by politically motivated censorship and criminal libel lawsuits.

If confirmed, I will work diligently with the Panamanian Government and its people, as well as with all U.S. stakeholders, on these concerns.

Our relationship with Panama is based on our shared values, and continuing to partner with the Government of Panama to address these issues will positively impact our broader relationship.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Panama in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Although Panama has made significant strides in addressing human rights issues, challenges still remain.

Obstacles to addressing these issues may include underfunded institutions; entrenched interests that resist change; lack of economic opportunity that exacerbates Panama's wealth inequality; impunity and the rule of law; and corruption.

These are some of the obstacles to addressing the development of democracy and development of civil society.

If confirmed, I commit to working with the Panamanian Government, non-governmental organizations, and the many U.S. Government agencies that work in this area to overcome these obstacles and further strengthen Panama's human rights record.

Question. 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 Panama?

- 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, I commit to meet with such organizations, both in the United States and in Panama.

If confirmed, I hope to also strengthen efforts to build the integrity of public institutions and increase transparency.

I also commit to support implementation of the Leahy Law and to work with Embassy staff to make sure that the provision of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Panama to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Panama?

Answer. Political prisoners and the unjust targeting of individuals is of serious concern to the United States.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Embassy engages with the various elements involved with criminal justice in Panama, both governmental and non-governmental, to encourage further respect for rule of law, including with respect to human rights.

Question. Will you engage with Panama on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes.

I believe our engagement with Panama should be guided by our longstanding values of freedom, democracy, individual liberty, and human dignity.

Our engagement should seek to strengthen rule of law, combat corruption, and promote inclusive prosperity.

If confirmed, I will stand ready to assist the Government of Panama to continue to make positive improvements in these areas.

Question. 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. Diversity makes teams better in terms of creativity and productivity.

If confirmed, I intend to promote an inclusive and respectful environment that allows all voices to be heard.

I also intend to continue the proactive approach to diversity that I modeled from my time in the private sector and at the World Bank, which included recruiting and mentoring individuals from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Panama are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to promoting an inclusive work environment by holding the Embassy leadership team accountable for their conduct, in keeping with State Department values.

Question. 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. Yes.

I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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.

If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through the appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Panama?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes a broad range of asset classes, some of which may hold interests in companies with a presence in the Republic of Panama. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which may have a presence in the Republic of Panama. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Panama specifically?

Answer. I believe political corruption in the region prevents countries from achieving their economic potential.

Panama is no exception.

I understand that corruption remains a key concern for Panamanians.

If confirmed, I seek to support the Cortizo administration's efforts to fight corruption, uphold the rule of law, foster transparency, and promote good governance.

I understand that Panama has taken a leadership role in the region for its efforts to improve transparency by digitizing key administrative and regulatory practices.

If confirmed, I will continue to promote accountability and encourage the Panamanian Government to take action to prevent, investigate, and prosecute corruption.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Panama and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. My understanding is that although the Panamanian Government has made good progress in many areas, corruption remains a key challenge.

In 2019, Transparency International ranked Panama 101 out of the 180 countries in the perception of corruption ranking.

Corruption was also a major issue for voters in the May 2019 election, and I am encouraged to see that President Cortizo established new anticorruption controls in July to address transparency issues in COVID–19 related procurement.

We share Panama's goal of fortifying its institutions to detect, investigate, prevent, and punish corrupt acts, and I look forward to advancing our continued partnership with the Panamanian Government and people to address this important issue if I am confirmed.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Panama?

Answer. If confirmed, I will speak out against corrupt influences in Panamanian institutions through our diplomatic engagements with Panamanian authorities, public messaging, and regional U.S. assistance programs supporting anticorruption efforts and strengthening of the rule of law.

If confirmed, I will seek to offer continued support for efforts to improve transparency in Panama's judicial system to uphold rule of law.

In addition, I am committed to considering all appropriate deterrence tools at the State Department's disposal, including visa restrictions and Global Magnitsky Act

sanctions, to promote accountability for those involved in, and benefiting from, significant acts of corruption in Panama.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JONATHAN PRATT BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Djibouti stands at the crossroads of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the gateway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. Despite its small size, it's the recipient of considerable investment and attention from countries in Africa, the Gulf, Europe and Asia due to its strategic location. France, Italy, China and Japan all have bases there. The U.S. has more than 4,500 troops at Camp Lemonier. It's our only enduring military base on the continent, and with the President's abrupt decision to relocate troops from Stuttgart, the home of U.S. Africa Command, Camp Lemonier takes on an even great importance, especially with regards to its counterterrorism activities:

- What strategic interests does the United States have along the Red Sea Corridor?

Answer. The Red Sea is a critical region to global security and commerce. It is estimated that more than ten percent of world trade and roughly 15 percent of global oil production passes through the Red Sea on a yearly basis.

Russia, China, and other actors are working to increase their presence and influence in the region due to security and economic considerations. This complicates already challenging relations between the countries in the region. Stabilization in the Horn should remain a priority for the international community. We welcome recent initiatives by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Red Sea Council to bring together countries in the region to increase dialogue on challenges and opportunities in the Red Sea area.

Question. What is the administration's strategy to pursue those interests?

Answer. Our overall objective is to promote greater cooperation on regional security and economic issues among Red Sea nations, and to ensure continued stability and freedom of commerce and navigation. The Department of State has begun closer coordination between the African and Near Eastern bureaus on issues in the Red Sea arena. State also sent participants to the USIP and DoD organized Red Sea Forum events in Jordan and Washington, DC, which brought together regional and interested countries. Mission Djibouti's top priority is to continue to ensure unimpeded access for U.S. forces to the Djiboutian air and seaports so that U.S. forces can continue their important security and stabilization work in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf region. Our bilateral Ambassador to Djibouti also serves as our diplomatic representative to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Horn of Africa's regional organization. IGAD also plays a role in Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean issues.

Question. What priorities will you set in order to pursue them if confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize pursuing U.S. interests in the Red Sea region by working closely with colleagues across the U.S. inter-agency to include coordination with my counterparts at our embassies in the region. I will also pursue an active role in IGAD to the extent I am able to do so, including on issues related to the Red Sea, and I plan to support USIP and other initiatives that promote stability in the region.

Question. If confirmed, how will you balance U.S. strategic interests with the pursuit of greater respect for democratic principles and practices in Djibouti, where President Ismaël Guelleh has been criticized as both corrupt and authoritarian?

Answer. Advancement of democracy in Djibouti is a key component of our bilateral relationship. We assess that improved democratization in Djibouti will support its internal stability and also assure the long-term viability of our bilateral relationship and our military base. For this reason, our embassy and high-level U.S. Government officials regularly raise democracy and good governance concerns with Djiboutian officials, including detailed discussions about electoral reforms advocated by the African Union and the need for strengthened rule of law. Our embassy leadership and staff also maintain dialogue with the opposition and civil society to ensure that we remain in contact with all representative elements of Djiboutian society. If confirmed, I will continue this important work.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey have increased their military presence along the coast of the Horn of Africa, expanding and increasing activity throughout the Red Sea Corridor:

Question. What mechanisms are in place at the State Department to coordinate strategies, programs, and policies implemented by the Africa and Near-East-Asia bureaus relative to the Red Sea Corridor?

Answer. The Department of State has begun closer coordination between the African and Near Eastern bureaus on issues in the Red Sea arena. I was not involved but I understand the NEA and AF bureaus co-hosted a session during the 2020 Chiefs of Mission Conference to bring together U.S. chiefs of mission from the region to discuss and coordinate on Red Sea issues.

Question. How will you work with the two bureaus, as well as Ambassadors in countries along the Red Sea Corridor, if confirmed, to ensure you are fully informed on relevant policies and priorities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to build on AF's and NEA's coordination efforts to ensure that we develop collaborative approaches to Red Sea issues. Through annual and other periodic gatherings with Chiefs of Mission, I will strive to ensure that Red Sea issues are included in the agenda, and that there is increased information sharing and, where appropriate, joint reporting from our missions in the region. If confirmed, I will identify individuals within my mission to strategically include Red Sea issues as part of their portfolios to ensure that we are continuously engaged on these issues. I will also maintain our dialogue with IGAD's Executive Secretary, based at IGAD headquarters in Djibouti, on that regional organization's policies and activities regarding Red Sea issues.

Question. How would you evaluate the political atmosphere in the run up to elections, which are slated for next year—is there a level playing field for all political actors?

Answer. President Ismaël Omar Guelleh has led Djibouti since 1999. Near the end of his second term in 2010, parliament amended the constitution to abolish term limits. He has since won reelection two more times, despite vowing that his 2011 reelection would be his last. The 2016 election, which he won with nearly 88% of the vote, was marred by reports of government harassment of opposition supporters and restrictions on the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, including for members of the press.

Our embassy leadership has specifically engaged the Djiboutian Government on the arrests of human rights activists, as well as opposition members, a concerning issue which we will continue to raise in the future. Our embassy leadership has also raised with the Interior minister specific electoral reforms recommended by the African Union's observer mission following 2018 legislative elections.

Question. What programs and activities are currently underway to help support credible elections in Djibouti? What will you do, if confirmed, to support a credible election outcome?

Answer. Our embassy and high-level U.S. Government officials regularly raise democracy and good governance concerns with Djiboutian officials, including detailed discussions about electoral reforms advocated by the African Union. Our embassy leadership and staff also maintain dialogue with the opposition and civil society to ensure that we remain in contact with all representative elements of Djiboutian society. To promote better governance, our embassy works with civil society organizations to build operational capacity and to increase the participation of Djiboutians in public service delivery. We also support programs to combat gender-based violence and promote women's empowerment and to promote press freedom by building the capacity of Djiboutian journalists.

In early June, Mohamed Ibrahim Wais and Kassim Nouh Abar journalists working for La Voix de Djibouti, an independent media outlet, were arrested.

Question. Are the two men still in custody, and if so on what charges?

Answer. Mohamed Ibrahim Wais was released on June 10, 2020, and Kassim Nouh Abar was released on June 8, 2020. I am not aware that they are currently facing charges.

Question. What led to their arrest?

Answer. I understand both were arrested after seeking information about Lt. Fouad Youssouf Ali—a Djiboutian air force pilot who circulated videos critical of President Guelleh's government—and his conditions under detention. Lt. Fouad

Youssouf Ali is charged with attempting to steal a Djiboutian air force plane, and wrecking it in the process.

Question. What does their arrest indicate about the state of free media in Djibouti?

Answer. The Government does not support freedom of expression, including for members of the press. The dominant newspaper, television station, and radio station are all state-owned and operated. State-controlled media outlets generally does not criticize government leaders or policies. The Government's harassment and detention of journalists often results in widespread self-censorship. While intimidation tactics have not risen to the level of killings and disappearances, pressure tactics include extrajudicial arrests and the kidnapping of journalists. The vibrant public reaction to the arrests voiced on social media indicate that platforms such as Facebook and Twitter now offer a new outlet for the Djiboutian public and diaspora to openly voice their opinions.

Question. What programs and activities are State or USAID supporting in the area of media freedoms?

Answer. We support programs to build the capacity of Djiboutian journalists, including providing platforms for discussion with other local media, training on investigative journalism, capacity building, and support for journalism students. Additionally, we help Djibouti build regional and international relations with the committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Amnesty International, and other organizations.

Question. What steps will you take to support independent media if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will aim to support programming that promotes investigative journalism in Djibouti. I will continue to build on the Mission's engagement with the Djiboutian Government on the importance of press freedom. We will also support the growth of internet penetration in Djibouti and welcome open public discussion on social media platforms.

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

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. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. I commit to make clear to all employees that prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated under my leadership. I agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held accountable and subject to discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. As I have done in the past, I plan to recruit a highly diverse team and I plan to mentor and support all of the people on my team. Throughout my career I have put a particular emphasis on encouraging employees from diverse backgrounds to remain in the Foreign Service and in the Civil Service, part of which means supporting them to find the best possible onward assignments that will make them competitive for promotion and advancement. If confirmed, I plan to ensure that the entire embassy is focused on promoting and supporting diversity and that we have regular discussions on the tools we are using to achieve that goal. I plan to take all of these steps to support Foreign Service, Civil Service and locally-recruited employees. In regards to locally-recruited U.S. Government employees, I will review considerations of diversity in the Djiboutian context as they pertain to outreach programs in favor of underrepresented groups.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. Yes, I understand and value the importance of our nation's democracy and the essential role that elections play in it. I will report to appropriate authorities any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to report any such credible information to the appropriate authorities.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. The most important actions I have taken to support democracy and human rights in my career are helping reach a peace agreement in 2002 in the Democratic Republic of Congo during my first assignment in the Foreign Service, and helping implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement from 2007-2009 in Sudan. These peace agreements meant that villages in both countries that had previously changed hands multiple times during conflict, exposing these populations to repeated rape and other violence, could begin the long process of healing and rebuilding. The end to both wars also allowed elections to move forward in these countries at national and local levels. Later in my career, in Pakistan, I helped organize U.S. observation efforts of two successful elections, in a country previously ruled by military dictators. I also advocated regularly for the release of people falsely accused of blasphemy, as well as for reform of the blasphemy laws, and for improvements in Pakistan's labor laws to counter forced labor and child labor, in addition to its laws and enforcement to counter trafficking in persons. We were able to achieve incremental improvements in these areas, making a difference in the lives of those most affected.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Djibouti? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

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. A stable Djibouti is essential to the goal of ensuring unimpeded access for U.S. forces. Improved government institutions and economic gains are important to maintaining that stability; both of which require enhanced rule of law. The United States is committed to maintaining this long-term strategic partnership to counter regional terrorism and thus assure our enhanced security here at home.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Djibouti? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use my leadership and voice to underscore that respect for democratic rights is essential for Djibouti's future growth, prosperity, and security. I will engage Djiboutian authorities, international partners, civil society organizations, and business leaders to work together toward these goals. The United

States and Djibouti have a long and rich history of partnership; if confirmed, I look forward to further developing and deepening relationships with the Djiboutian Government, international and domestic partners and the people of Djibouti to ensure the tangible advancement of human rights, civil society, and democracy, and mutual prosperity. Bringing together multiple stakeholders, including Djiboutian Government officials, international partners, civil society, and business leaders, will likely be one of the most important steps and challenges.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. To promote better governance, our embassy works with civil society organizations to build operational capacity and to increase the participation of Djiboutians in public service delivery. We also support programs to promote women's empowerment and press freedom by building the capacity of Djiboutian journalists. If confirmed, I will continue this important work.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Djibouti? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Human rights, civil society organizations, and other non-governmental organizations, regardless of where they are registered or operate, all play an important role in advancing democratic governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assisting Djibouti to develop its democratic institutions. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting with any individual or entity that can be beneficial to U.S. goals.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, under my leadership the U.S. Embassy will continue to engage with representatives from across the political spectrum, including the ruling party and opposition parties.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Djibouti on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Djibouti?

Answer. The United States supports media freedom and is committed to strengthening journalistic professionalism. If confirmed, I will engage with like-minded missions, civil society, and international partners to underscore the importance of an independent, professional, and open media to a free and democratic society. I will press for the United States to continue its support to Djibouti's media and to encourage more independent media voices. Djiboutian journalists have participated in U.S. Government-sponsored professional exchange programs on reporting, safeguarding freedom of expression, and the media's role in strengthening democratic institutions.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Djibouti?

Answer. The United States supports media freedom and is committed to strengthening journalistic professionalism. If confirmed, I will engage with like-minded missions, civil society, and international partners to underscore the importance of a credible, independent, professional media to a free and democratic society.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Djibouti on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our embassy's efforts to promote labor rights. As the embassy noted in our 2019 Human Rights Report, the Djiboutian Government did not consistently enforce the law protecting collective bargaining. I would advocate for continued improvements in this area, and document progress in the Human Rights Report.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Djibouti, no matter their sexual orienta-

tion or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Djibouti? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Djibouti?

Answer. The United States continues to support upholding human rights and the dignity of all individuals in Djibouti, no matter their sexual orientation. I am committed to promoting human rights for all in Djibouti, including members of the LGBTQ community.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JONATHAN PRATT BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. My most meaningful achievements include helping reach a peace agreement in 2002 in the Democratic Republic of Congo during my first assignment in the Foreign Service and helping implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement from 2007–2009 in Sudan. These peace agreements meant that villages in both countries that had previously changed hands multiple times during conflict, exposing these populations to repeated rape and other violence, could begin the long process of rebuilding and healing. The end to both wars also allowed elections to move forward in these countries at national and local levels. Later in my career, in Pakistan, I helped organize U.S. observation efforts of two successful elections, in a country previously ruled by military dictators. I also advocated regularly for the release of people falsely accused of blasphemy, as well as for reform of the blasphemy laws, and for improvements in Pakistan's labor laws to counter forced labor and child labor, in addition to its laws and enforcement to counter trafficking in persons. We were able to achieve incremental improvements in these areas, making a difference in the lives of those most affected.

Question. 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; extrajudicial arrests of independent journalists; the Government's suppression of investigative journalism; and restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. I will continue our embassy's advocacy for the strengthening of democratic institutions and the adoption of democratic practices as the best guarantors of long-term peace, prosperity, and stability. The embassy, through USAID and implementing partners, works to strengthen the capabilities and organizing power of civil society groups so that they can work with government agencies to improve service delivery.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Djibouti in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Potential obstacles to addressing human rights and democracy in Djibouti include a nascent civil society, lack of viable opposition parties, a weak judicial sector, and traditions of personalized power rather than rule of law. The lack of strong opposition voices and independent media will also certainly present challenges. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our embassy, interagency colleagues, and international partners to overcome these challenges.

Question. 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. Human rights, civil society organizations, and other non-governmental organizations, regardless of where they are registered or operate, all play an important role in advancing democratic governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assisting Djibouti to develop into a 21st century partner of the United States. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting with any individual or

entity that can advance U.S. goals related to human rights, and to working to ensure that security forces do not receive U.S. assistance if there is credible information that they have committed a gross violation of human rights.

Question. 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. I am fully committed to engaging with the Government of Djibouti on guaranteeing political freedoms. As it does in all cases, the Department of State urges governments to ensure that all defendants are afforded fair trial guarantees for any crimes for which they have been charged.

Question. Will you engage with Djibouti on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Advancement of democracy and human rights in Djibouti is a key component of our bilateral relationship. We assess that improved democratization in Djibouti will support its internal stability and also assure the long-term viability of our bilateral relationship and of our military base.

To this end, our embassy and high-level U.S. Government officials regularly raise democracy and good governance concerns with Djiboutian officials, including detailed discussions about electoral reforms advocated by the African Union and public urging of strengthening rule of law. Our embassy leadership and staff also maintain dialogue with the opposition and civil society to ensure that we remain in contact with all representative elements of Djiboutian society. Our embassy leadership has specifically engaged the Djiboutian Government on the arrests of human rights activists as well as opposition members, a concerning issue which we will continue to raise in the future. If confirmed, I am fully committed to continuing this important work.

Question. 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. As I have done in the past, I plan to recruit a highly diverse team and I plan to mentor and support all of the people on my team. Throughout my career I have put a particular emphasis on encouraging employees from diverse backgrounds to remain in the Foreign Service and in the Civil Service, part of which means supporting them to find the best possible onward assignments that will make them competitive for promotion and advancement. If confirmed, I plan to ensure that the entire embassy is focused on promoting and supporting diversity and that we have regular discussions on the tools we are using to achieve that goal. Our embassy also considers diversity in the Djiboutian context as concerns underrepresented groups within our Djiboutian workforce. The embassy has outreach programs to these groups to encourage applications from members of underrepresented groups.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Djibouti are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to speak with my team both collectively and individually about our objectives for recruiting a diverse team and for promoting an inclusive environment. I will ensure that all employees complete any required diversity-related training and will seek engagement by the Office of Civil Rights on diversity and inclusion training. I will ensure that all of my staff know that diversity and inclusion are top priorities of mine.

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Djibouti?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Djibouti specifically?

Answer. In many countries, efforts to foster broad-based economic growth, improve the delivery of public services, and pursue effective development policies continue to be stymied by disparities in economic and political power and corruption. These dynamics undermine public confidence, participatory policy making and effective policy implementation and service delivery. Public corruption undercuts all democratic nations' governance and rule of law and can pose an existential threat to nascent or weak democracies.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Djibouti and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Corruption is a problem in Djibouti, and Djibouti ranks 126th out of 180 countries in the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International. If confirmed, under my Ambassadorship the United States will continue to advocate for a comprehensive, systemic approach to combat corruption that empowers the people and promotes inclusive democracy and economic growth in Djibouti. In recent years, some government ministers have been removed for corruption and some restitution of resources was apparently achieved, however political traditions prioritizing the distribution of patronage among various clans and identity groups too often protects both poor performing and corrupt government officials. The modest trend over the past 20 years has been toward greater competency and probity in government, but only consistent and objective application of the rule of law can cure this ill.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Djibouti?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the trend of our embassy and high-level U.S. Government officials regularly raising good governance concerns with Djiboutian officials. I will also continue our work with civil society organizations to build operational capacity and to increase the participation of Djiboutians in public service delivery. I will also support programs to combat gender-based violence, support women's empowerment, and promote investigative journalism.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO BARBERA HALE THORNHILL BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that prohibited personnel practices has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for hiring and retaining diverse talent. I will promote diversity and inclusion best practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. I worked with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta in 1994 in orphanages, supporting homebound families and helping the destitute and dying in the hospice "Home of the Pure Heart." I also worked extensively with Scouts BSA, formerly known as the Boy Scouts of America, an organization that has provided leadership and mentoring to more than 20,000 youths and underprivileged adolescents. I also helped the Children's Institute in Los Angeles to provide basic needs, early childhood education, and psychological counseling for more than 28,000 children who have been abused and have suffered many horrible traumas.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Singapore? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Singapore is ranked as one of the least corrupt countries in the world and one of the most transparent in Asia. Our shared values of good governance, transparency, and respect for the rule of law continue to anchor our dynamic and growing cooperation. Nevertheless, Singapore believes curbs on certain human rights and fundamental freedoms—including freedom of association, freedom of expression, including for the members of the press, and the right to peaceful assembly—are necessary to maintain stability and social harmony in a small, multi-racial,

and multi-religious country. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Singapore Government on the importance of human rights and fundamental freedoms to our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Singapore? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The United States and Singapore enjoy a deep partnership underpinned by our shared values of good governance, transparency, sovereignty, and respect for the rule of law. Nevertheless, Singapore believes curbs on certain human rights and fundamental freedoms—including freedom of association, freedom of expression, including for the members of the press, and the right to peaceful assembly—are necessary to maintain stability and social harmony in a small, multi-racial and multi-religious country. Domestic political and social issues are considered extremely sensitive topics in Singapore. To overcome this sensitivity, if confirmed, I am committed to building strong relationships that include open and frank discussion of the importance the United States places on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, across the globe, including in Singapore. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Government, partners and allies, and other stakeholders to stress the importance of these human rights and fundamental freedoms to our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. As a high-income country, Singapore generally does not receive assistance from the United States. The United States and Singapore enjoy a deep partnership underpinned by our shared values of good governance, transparency, sovereignty, and the rule of law. Singapore also is a primary contributor to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) initiatives to close the development gaps among ASEAN members. If confirmed, I will use U.S. foreign assistance resources to work with Singapore to promote governance goals in the Southeast Asia region, as outlined in the Indo-Pacific Strategy, with human capital development undergirding our efforts.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Singapore? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the United States, Singapore-based human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Singapore. If confirmed, I will also work with the Government to advocate for fair and transparent treatment of NGOs and civil society under the law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. The United States urges equal treatment for all and underscores our commitment to diversity and inclusion. If confirmed, I will work with the Singaporean Government, including with opposition figures and parties, on these important issues and will promote access and inclusivity for women, members of minority groups, and youth within political parties.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Singapore on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Singapore?

Answer. The United States promotes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, across the globe, including in Singapore. Promoting these rights are key priorities of the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Government, as well as independent, local press in Singapore, on the importance of these human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Singapore?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Singapore.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Singapore on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Singaporean Government, civil society, and other parts of the Singaporean economy on the issue of the right of labor groups to organize.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Singapore, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Singapore? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Singapore?

Answer. Although Singapore is a relatively tolerant society, LGBTI persons face legal challenges that hinder full inclusion. The rights of LGBTI individuals and persons are a topic of importance in our conversations with the Singaporean Government. If confirmed, I will continue to urge equal treatment for all and to underscore our commitment to diversity and inclusion by engaging not only with the Singaporean Government, but also with civil society organizations, the private sector, and like-minded missions.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO BARBERA HALE THORNHILL BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I worked with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta in 1994 in orphanages, supporting homebound families and helping the destitute and dying in the hospice "Home of the Pure Heart." I also worked extensively with Scouts BSA, formerly known as the Boy Scouts of America, an organization that has provided leadership and mentoring to more than 20,000 youths and underprivileged adolescents. I also helped the Children's Institute in Los Angeles to provide basic needs, early childhood education, and psychological counseling for more than 28,000 children who have been abused and have suffered many other horrible traumas.

Question. 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 Singapore? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Singapore believes curbs on certain human rights and fundamental freedoms—including freedom of association, freedom of expression, including for the members of the press, and the right of peaceful assembly—are necessary to maintain stability and social harmony in a small, multi-racial, and multi-religious country. The United States promotes respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms across the globe, including in Singapore. Promoting these rights, as well as media and internet freedom, is a key priority of the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Government on the importance of these human rights and fundamental freedoms to our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Singapore in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Domestic political and social issues are considered extremely sensitive topics in Singapore. To overcome this sensitivity, if confirmed, I am committed to building strong relationships that include open and frank discussion of the importance the United States places on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression. If confirmed, I will work with civil society,

the Government, partners and allies, and other stakeholders to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. 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 Singapore? 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 am committed to engaging with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in Singapore. Through such engagements, I will work to ensure that U.S. security cooperation activities with Singapore reinforce human rights. As a high-income country, Singapore generally does not receive assistance from the United States.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Singapore to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Singapore?

Answer. Singapore has prided itself in strong respect for rule of law, and we will continue to work with the Government to stress values of human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with Singapore to address cases of any key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted.

Question. Will you engage with Singapore on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Singaporean Government on the importance of human rights, civil rights, and good governance.

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and build a representative workforce. I will encourage promoting diversity and inclusion in the hiring process through recruiting efforts and standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized Exit Survey.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Singapore are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for hiring and retaining diverse talent. I will promote diversity and inclusion best practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and with an eye on how they can be strengthened.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Singapore?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes a broad range of asset classes, some of which may hold interests in companies with a presence in Singapore. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which may have a presence in Singapore. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Singapore specifically?

Answer. Corruption is toxic to democracy. The United States and Singapore enjoy a deep partnership underpinned by our shared values of good governance, transparency, sovereignty, and the rule of law. Singapore is consistently ranked as one of the least corrupt countries in the world and one of the most transparent countries in Asia. As one of our most reliable partners in the region, Singapore has worked with us to achieve the governance goals outlined under the Indo-Pacific Strategy, with human capital development undergirding our efforts.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Singapore and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Singapore is as one of the least corrupt countries in the world and one of the most transparent countries in Asia. Singapore prides itself on having a reputation for good governance and low corruption, which has helped attract thousands of U.S. companies and investors to do business there.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Singapore?

Answer. Singapore is consistently ranked as one of the least corrupt countries in the world and one of the most transparent countries in Asia. Our shared values of stability, prosperity, and the rule of law continue to anchor our dynamic and growing cooperation. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Singaporean Government to stress these shared values.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO THOMAS LASZLO VAJDA BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to making clear that prohibited personnel practiceshas no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of respect for diversity and inclusion. I will promote habits and practices that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I commit to promoting diversity and inclusion best practices for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance, and to supporting the review of existing mentoring programs to see how they can be strengthened.

More broadly, I commit to working and mentoring the talented and diverse members of the Foreign Service and Civil Service with whom I work to deepen the Department's ongoing diversity and inclusion efforts.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Rangoon from 2008 to 2011 and worked with Embassy colleagues to support the early stages of the opening that led to Burma's first credible national election in a half century in 2015. My colleagues and I made it a priority to meet with and support those in Burma who were striving, often at great personal risk, to bring democracy to the country. While this transition is far from complete, I am proud of the work the United States has done to support the people of Burma in their struggle for peace and prosperity.

In addition, as then-Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, I visited Cox's Bazar in 2017 to see the humanitarian crisis firsthand and shine a light on the horrific atrocities against Rohingya. I have worked with my colleagues in the Department to meet the humanitarian needs of Rohingya, push for accountability for those responsible for abuses, and address the underlying drivers of the crisis. While we have more to do, this work represents the highest calling of any diplomat.

I also served as the Director of the Middle East Partnership Initiative during the Arab Spring and worked with colleagues to target U.S. assistance to support civil society groups and activists working to advance human rights, political and economic reform, and women's empowerment throughout the Middle East and North Africa. At that time and since, the region has continued to face challenges, but I am proud of the efforts my colleagues and I undertook to provide support to those advocating for a more democratic and equitable future.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Burma? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The United States has partnered with the people of Burma for decades to strengthen democracy, expand civilian control of the military, responsibly develop the economy, resolve disputes, control illicit narcotics, fight trafficking in persons, combat corruption, promote human rights, and address the root causes of violence

and abuse in Rakhine State and elsewhere. Burma's historic 2015 election was rightfully seen as a milestone, but we have seen since that Burma cannot unwind decades of internal strife and military rule overnight. Three of the main challenges to Burma's transition are the lack of civilian control over the military, the political marginalization of members of ethnic and religious minority groups, and the weakness of institutions.

The military remains a significant impediment to further democratic growth, as shown by its veto this January over of any constitutional reform, and a focus of mine as Ambassador, if confirmed, will be to continue to push the military to undertake reforms and accept civilian control. More broadly, promoting ethnic and national reconciliation and building an inclusive civic identity are crucial for Burma to constructively address its legacy of violence and repression, and to ensure that all its people can participate fully in the democratic transition.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Burma? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The United States must maintain its policy of engagement with Burma to move the country in the direction of democratic civilian rule. If confirmed, I will work to support those elements of civil society, business, and government that seek reform and bolster institutions that promote democracy, good governance, rule of law, free markets, and respect for human rights, including religious freedom.

That includes strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations, political parties, women and youth activists, and ethnic groups to more effectively engage in the democratic process; empowering public servants to be responsive to their constituents; and encouraging responsible investment and businesses practices to shrink the space for corruption. Empowering Burma's democratic institutions, and reducing the role of the military in politics are key to addressing underlying challenges following five decades of authoritarian rule. Progress is also connected to the country's economic transformation—broadening economic participation and decreasing corruption and the military's role in the economy. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to expand opportunities for the next generation of leaders to continue reforms.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues to utilize U.S. assistance to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations, independent media, political parties, and ethnic groups to more effectively engage in the democratic process. We must also work to further strengthen the democratic institutions, empower public servants to be responsive to their constituents, encourage responsible investment and business practices to shrink the space for corruption, and expand opportunities for the next generation of leaders to continue needed reforms.

In addition, in the context of the upcoming election, if confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to continue to build capacity within Burma's election commission, train political parties and civil society organizations, counter hate speech and dis- and misinformation, strengthen election security, and educate the electorate on democratic principles, including five million first-time voters. In addition, if confirmed, I will continue work to strengthen the capacity of the criminal justice system to effectively counter transnational criminal organizations that undermine economic development, threaten democratic institutions, and aggravate violence.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Burma? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with civil society members, human rights organizations, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and Burma, as I did as Deputy Chief of Mission in Rangoon and in accordance with our long history of support to such groups. We must absolutely continue to strongly support those elements of civil society that seek reform and to bolster institutions that promote democracy, good governance, rule of law, free markets, and respect for human rights.

If confirmed, I will continue to raise the United States' concerns over the continued use of new and old laws to crack down on freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, religion and belief, and association. In addition, if confirmed, I will continue

and deepen our support to civil society organizations working to repeal, amend, or decriminalize these repressive laws.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with the full range of political leaders and parties, as I did as Deputy Chief of Mission in Rangoon and in accordance with our long history of support for democratic transition and politically and socially marginalized groups.

If confirmed, I will continue our longstanding efforts to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations, political parties, and ethnic and religious groups to more effectively engage in the democratic process, including assistance and programs that promote access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Burma on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Burma?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will work with my team to actively promote freedom of the press, and I will meet with independent, local press in Burma. If confirmed, I will continue to raise the United States' concerns over the use of old and new laws to crack down on freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, religion and belief, and association, including cases of journalists prosecuted for performing their jobs. In addition, if confirmed, I will continue and deepen our support to civil society organizations working to repeal, amend, or decriminalize these repressive laws.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Burma?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will work with my team to support the people of Burma in their efforts to consolidate and deepen democratic reforms, including efforts to counter disinformation and propaganda. This is particularly important in the context of Burma's upcoming election. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to continue to build capacity within Burma's election commission, train political parties and civil society organizations, counter hate speech and dis- and misinformation, strengthen election security, and educate the electorate on democratic principles. This effort includes ongoing engagement with Facebook, the dominant social media platform in Burma.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Burma on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will work with my team to promote the rights of workers in Burma. The United States has long promoted internationally recognized labor rights with a particular focus on freedom of association and collective bargaining, and strengthening core labor standards for members of traditionally neglected groups, such as women, youth, and informal sector workers. If confirmed, I will work closely with Congress and interagency partners to support protections for labor rights in Burma.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Burma, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Burma? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Burma?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the Department to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Burma, no matter their sexual orientation. If confirmed, I will support U.S. policy efforts that seek to protect the human rights of, and respect for, all Burmese people, including LGBTQ people. I would also seek to maintain a dialogue with LGBTI activists, and support accurate and timely reporting on LGBTI rights issues.

Question. Since Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected in December, he has placed individuals implicated in war crimes in senior government posts; withdrawn from the U.N. resolution on investigating war crimes; and increased persecution of members of civil society, journalists, and families of the civil war disappeared. Despite this, the State Department is apparently still debating whether to certify that the Sri Lankan Government is "taking effective and consistent steps" to meet the accountability and reconciliation certification criteria laid out in the

FY 20 appropriation law. No objective observer could claim the Government of Sri Lanka meets the certification criteria. Please provide a status update on your certification deliberations.

Answer. The Department shares concerns regarding Sri Lanka, closely monitors developments in the country, and continues to press the Government of Sri Lanka to uphold its obligations and commitments related to human rights, accountability, and reconciliation. The Department has repeatedly stressed to the Government of Sri Lanka at the highest levels that the character of our relationship will depend on the Government upholding its human rights obligations and commitments, and that further actions to allow those credibly accused of human rights violations and abuses without accountability will be detrimental to our relationship. The Department is taking into account all available information in order to make an informed decision regarding the certification requirement in the FY2020 appropriations act.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO THOMAS LASZLO VAJDA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Aung San Suu Kyi's government and the Tatmadaw have been accused of using Burma's oppressive laws to curtail the freedom of assembly and freedom of press. In addition, the Suu Kyi government has not used its supermajority in the Union Parliament to amend or repeal some of the more oppressive laws, and in some cases, has passed laws that critics claim further erode respect for human rights in Burma.

- In your view, are the Tatmadaw guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide?

Answer. The United States has repeatedly expressed its deep concern about the Burmese military's appalling abuses against members of ethnic and religious minority groups, including horrific atrocities against Rohingya in 2017. The Department of State concluded in November 2017 that the atrocities against Rohingya constituted ethnic cleansing. We have taken strong actions to promote accountability for these atrocities, including by sanctioning top military leaders for their role in serious human rights abuse.

Historically, determinations that certain acts may amount to genocide or crimes against humanity are made in the Executive Branch by the Secretary of State, who has expressed his outrage at these horrible abuses and stated he is focusing on pursuing policies that will promote accountability and change behavior. If confirmed, I will continue to assess all available information and make recommendations on how best to promote justice and accountability for atrocities and other human rights violations and abuses in Burma.

Question. Should the U.S. Government sanction more senior Burmese security officers and government officials for their role in serious human rights violations? Would you support additional restrictions on U.S. relations with businesses and companies owned or controlled by the Tatmadaw and its senior officers?

Answer. The United States continues to prioritize accountability for those responsible for serious human rights abuses and justice for victims as part of efforts to promote and defend human rights. The United States designated the Burmese military's Commander-in-Chief (CINC), deputy CINC, and seven other senior officers and two units under the Global Magnitsky sanctions program; designated the Commander-in-Chief, deputy, and four other senior Burmese officers for their role in gross violations of human rights under Section 7031(c) of the State Appropriations Act; and has strongly supported U.N. investigation mechanisms. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to consider all policy tools at our disposal to promote accountability, including additional sanctions, as appropriate.

In addition, if confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts to promote responsible trade and investment, which limit the influence of the Burmese military's economic interests, shrink the operating space for military-owned or operated businesses, and support economic reforms.

Question. Are there avenues for the United States to work with partners in nations outside Burma—in ASEAN or among Burma's neighbors in South Asia—to pursue goals of human rights and democracy in the country?

Answer. The United States has been working closely with our allies and partners across the globe to promote and strengthen human rights and democracy in Burma. The close relationship between the United States and ASEAN has advanced on the foundation of shared values, including openness, transparency, inclusiveness, and

respect for sovereignty and the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. ASEAN remains at the heart of our vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with my colleagues to generate additional support from international partners and countries in the region for human rights and reform efforts inside Burma. The Department regularly engages ASEAN countries and our key partners in South Asia in efforts to push Burma to create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees and those internally displaced. The Department is also working with many governments in the region to underscore their commitments to the 2016 Bali Declaration and their international legal obligations, including the provision of support, humanitarian assistance, and disembarkation to Rohingya and other displaced persons stranded at sea. The Rakhine State crisis demands a regional and global response, and if confirmed, I will continue such efforts.

Question. What is your view of The Gambia's pending International Court of Justice case against Burma and the International Criminal Court investigation?

Answer. The United States continues to be a leader in promoting accountability and behavior change, including through our support to multilateral accountability efforts. We have encouraged all parties to participate fully in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) proceedings and to respect the ICJ's provisional measures order. If confirmed, I will continue to call on Burma to respect the ICJ's order and to urge Burma to use these developments to pursue justice and greater respect for human rights.

The United States is working with our allies and partners to explore a range of options to promote justice for victims and accountability for abuses. Preventing the recurrence of atrocities, addressing the needs of victims as well as including their voice and agency in discussions, and ensuring those responsible are held accountable are all essential to resolving the Rakhine State crisis and to furthering Burma's transition toward becoming a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous state. Secretary Pompeo has been clear about U.S. views toward the International Criminal Court.

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Rangoon from 2008 to 2011 and worked with Embassy colleagues to support the early stages of the opening that led to Burma's first credible national election in a half century in 2015. My colleagues and I made it a priority to meet with and support those in Burma who were striving, often at great personal risk, to bring true democracy to the country. While this transition is far from complete, I am proud of the work the United States has done to support the people of Burma in their struggle for peace and prosperity.

In addition, as then-Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, I visited Cox's Bazar in 2017 to see the humanitarian crisis firsthand and shine a light on the horrific atrocities against Rohingya. I have worked with my colleagues in the Department to meet the humanitarian needs of Rohingya, push for accountability for those responsible for abuses, and address the underlying drivers of the crisis. While we have more to do, this work represents the highest calling of any diplomat.

I also served as the Director of the Middle East Partnership Initiative during the Arab Spring and worked with colleagues to target U.S. assistance to support civil society groups and activists working to advance human rights, political and economic reform, and women's empowerment throughout the Middle East and North Africa. At that time and since, the region has continued to face challenges, but I am proud of the efforts my colleagues and I undertook to provide support to those advocating for a more democratic and equitable future.

Question. 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 Burma?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with civil society members, human rights organizations, women and youth activists, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and Burma, as I did as Deputy Chief of Mission in Rangoon and in accordance with our long history of support to such groups. We must absolutely continue to strongly support those elements of civil society that seek reform and bolster institutions that promote democracy, good governance, rule of law, free markets, women's empowerment, and respect for human rights.

Question. 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 in Burma?

Answer. Reforming the Burmese military, ending its decades of impunity, and placing it under the control of the civilian government are essential for the long-term success of democracy and prosperity in Burma. Leahy Law restrictions are important tools to assist in this effort.

Congress currently prohibits the sale of military equipment and military assistance to Burma. Under the JADE Act, the United States is required to restrict visas for Burmese military leaders and their immediate family members. In addition, Leahy Law restrictions prohibit assistance to security force units credibly implicated in a gross violation of human rights until the Government of Burma is determined to have taken effective steps to bring the responsible security force unit members to justice. I am committed to fully support these laws and restrictions.

I understand there is an interagency process for reviewing certain engagements with the Burmese military to ensure that any such activity complies with all applicable legal restrictions and meets our strategic objectives with regard to promoting human rights. If confirmed, I will ensure we continue to apply stringent interagency review to military engagements.

Question. The escalating conflict between the Arakan Army and the Tatmadaw in Chin and Rakhine States poses several problems, including new allegations of war crimes, the internal displacement of over 160,000 people, and further complications to the possible dignified, voluntary, safe, and sustainable return of the Rohingya refugees currently in Bangladesh. The United States has been a major supporter of Aung San Suu Kyi's peace process, including providing funding for her Panglong Peace Conferences and her National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC).

According to some observers, that peace process is hopelessly stalled.

- What role, if any, do you see for the U.S. embassy in Burma to help address the civil war in western Burma, as well as in eastern Burma?

Answer. Promoting ethnic and national reconciliation, as well as building an inclusive civic identity, is crucial for Burma to credibly address its legacy of civil war and repression. This is true not only in Rakhine State but throughout areas in Burma affected by violence. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to continue to engage ethnic and religious groups and local communities and to empower civil society organizations working to improve their communities and better engage their government. Our assistance programs—from health to economic growth—are critical to our engagement with these communities and support efforts to pursue peace. There is also a role for public advocacy, as when the U.S. Embassy joined other local missions in June in calling for restraint ahead of a military offensive in Rakhine State.

Ultimately, progress depends on the people, government, military, and armed groups of Burma, but if confirmed, I will continue to prioritize ways to support efforts towards peace, justice, and reconciliation.

Question. As Ambassador, would you support the continuation of U.S. assistance to Aung San Suu Kyi's peace process and the NRPC? Would you consider pursuing alternative paths to peace, as China has done?

Answer. Progress toward a nationwide ceasefire agreement has stagnated. If confirmed, I will support the continuation of U.S. assistance to the peace process and efforts to end violence and abuse, including through assistance on ceasefire negotiations and monitoring, political dialogue, addressing violence, promoting respect for the human rights of all ethnic minority communities and humanitarian aid. If confirmed, I will lead my colleagues at U.S. Embassy Rangoon in continuing to evaluate the nature of our support and look for the most effective ways to encourage peace and reconciliation and move positively beyond the status quo.

Progress depends on the people, government, military, and armed groups of Burma. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize ways to support efforts towards peace, justice, and reconciliation. The Government of the People's Republic of China maintains significant influence with a number of Burma's ethnic armed groups. Constructive, good-faith engagement by governments in the region would be a positive step toward sustainable peace, but we cannot ignore PRC actions that have worsened this violence and prolonged instability. If confirmed, I will continue efforts to act as a friend to the people of Burma and a partner of those genuinely interested in building peace.

Question. Do you see a possible path for getting the Tatmadaw and all the armed ethnic groups to agree to an unconditional ceasefire to address the COVID–19 pandemic? Are you concerned that the COVID–19 pandemic could be used as justification for additional and prolonged restrictions on fundamental human rights?

Answer. Sporadic ceasefires between the Burmese military and ethnic armed groups (EAGs) in the context of the COVID–19 pandemic have not held. Violence in Rakhine State and Chin State, in particular, has escalated in recent months, killing dozens of members of local communities and displacing thousands. The United States continues to call on all sides to cease fighting, protect local communities, and pursue dialogue. If confirmed, I would work to redouble these efforts, as well as efforts to call on Burma to lift ongoing access restrictions that are preventing the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance and to remove a prolonged internet blackout, which cuts communities off from vital information during the pandemic.

I understand Embassy Rangoon and others have seen public health restrictions related to COVID–19 applied unequally, with harsher penalties falling disproportionately on religious minorities. There have also been complaints from workers' organizations that regulations affected their ability to protest in connection with labor strikes. Given the broad use of defamation and other laws to restrict freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, if confirmed, I will closely monitor the situation and address any possible effort to use COVID–19 restrictions for political, rather than legitimate public health, ends.

Question. In March 2020, the Tatmadaw blocked the passage of constitutional amendments proposed by the National League for Democracy in Burma's Union Parliament. Several of the ethnic groups have stated that they do not recognize the legitimacy of the 2008 constitution, and insist that a new constitution be drafted as a condition for peace:

- Do you think there is a viable means to amending the 2008 constitution that could constitute a step forward in ending Burma's civil war?

Answer. I was disappointed to see the Burmese military effectively veto efforts to amend the 2008 constitution in January. Such efforts are crucial to making Burma's constitution more democratic, strengthening Burma's democratic institutions, and reducing the role of military in politics.

At the same time, there are many actions the civilian government can take to better include ethnic groups in the process of democratic reform, rebuild government bodies responsible for ceasefire monitoring and political negotiations, and acknowledge legitimate ethnic minority group grievances. If confirmed, I will continue to engage ethnic groups and local communities to help them better engage their government and to support long-term efforts to pursue peace.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Burma specifically?

Answer. Political corruption hollows out democratic institutions, weakens the rule of law, and undermines public confidence in elected officials and the benefits of democratic governance. In Burma, the military or military-backed governments employed wide-scale repression and misrule for decades that left Burma with weak institutions, an underdeveloped economy, and a pervasive lack of trust in government entities. This misrule also contributed to legitimate political grievances by ethnic and religious minority groups, which fuel civic strife to this day.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Burma and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. The current civilian government has made important progress in consolidating some reforms, fighting corruption, and opening Burma's economy. This includes work by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and related legislation that have expanded government efforts to identify, investigate, and prosecute public corruption.

While the ACC has successfully prosecuted some senior officials in Burma, these efforts represent one part of broader reforms that the people of Burma have long sought. More work remains to be done, including with regard to removing the military from politics and the economy and promoting international trade and investment best practices. In addition, we must continue to empower government leaders and civil society to push back on businesses and entities that exploit Burma's natural resources and human capital while providing little benefit to local communities.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Burma?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support those elements of civil society, business, and government that seek reform and bolster institutions that promote democracy, good governance, rule of law, free markets, and respect for human rights.

That includes strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations, political parties, and ethnic groups to more effectively engage in the democratic process and

advance government accountability and transparency; empowering public servants to be responsive to their constituents and building their capacity to effectively investigate and prosecute corruption; encouraging responsible investment and businesses practices to shrink the space for corruption; and expanding opportunities for the next generation of leaders to continue needed reforms.

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and a diverse and representative workforce. I will encourage promoting diversity and inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will also learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized Exit Survey.

As the Senior Advisor in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), I have mandated similar policies and also supported and engaged with the Bureau's Diversity Working Group; created a new Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator for the Bureau; served as the liaison to the South Asian American Employee Association, one of the Department's Employee Affinity Groups; and undertaken outreach to other Department affinity groups to support greater diversity in SCA's recruitment and hiring. I will draw on these experiences to promote diversity and inclusion in Embassy Rangoon, if I am confirmed.

In addition, I understand Embassy Rangoon launched an Inclusion Strategy in August 2019 to build acceptance for full inclusion for colleagues of all backgrounds, including religions, ethnicities, disabilities, genders, and sexual orientations. Discrimination, especially that based on ethnicity, is a fundamental problem in Burma where it has fueled violence. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting this initiative.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Burma are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, it is my responsibility as Ambassador to create a culture of leadership that fosters an environment that is diverse and inclusive. Managers, I included, share the responsibility to articulate clearly our team's mission and how diversity and inclusion contribute to our goals. I will encourage individual growth, value and respect unique perspectives, enhance professional development, and strive to inspire all employees. If confirmed, I will also enable and encourage the good work of U.S. Embassy Rangoon's Inclusion Leadership Team, which brings together local staff from diverse backgrounds, as well as American supervisors, to institutionalize principles of inclusion across the mission.

I commit to promoting diversity and inclusion best practices for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance, and to supporting the review of existing mentoring programs to see how they can be strengthened.

Question. 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. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Burma?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes a broad range of asset classes, some of which may hold interests in companies with a presence in Burma. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which may have a presence in Burma. I am committed to following all applicable

ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO THOMAS LASZLO VAJDA BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. How will you press the Burmese Government to abide by the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in January 2020, including to prevent genocide and to preserve evidence of atrocities? Further, will you work to ensure Burmese authorities meet periodic reporting requirements on measures taken to implement this order?

Answer. The United States continues to be a leader in promoting accountability for human rights abuses in Burma and incentivizing behavior change to ensure such abuses do not happen again, including through our support to multilateral accountability efforts. We have encouraged all parties to participate fully in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) proceedings and to respect the ICJ's provisional measures order. If confirmed, I will continue to call on the Burmese Government and military to respect the ICJ's order and urge Burma to pursue justice and greater respect for human rights.

Preventing atrocities, addressing the needs of victims and ensuring they have a voice and agency in these efforts, and promoting accountability for those responsible for atrocities are essential to addressing the root causes of the Rakhine State crisis and to furthering Burma's transition to a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous state.

Question. Over the past months the Government of Burma has increased attacks and human rights violations in Rakhine and Chin states. Reports of abuses include burning villages, killing civilians, torture, forced displacement, and civilian detention and disappearance, which the former U.N. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar said could amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. Many of these same unlawful acts were committed in 2017 against Rohingya communities, which forced hundreds of thousands of people to seek safety in Bangladesh. What would be the most effective U.S. response and what are the lessons learned from how the U.S. handled the situation in 2017 that should inform how it addresses this latest spike in violence?

Answer. The Burmese military has a clear history of committing abuses across Burma, including in recent months in Rakhine and Chin States. The Department has publicly expressed deep concern about the escalating violence in Rakhine State and southern Chin State, where members of local communities have been killed and thousands have been displaced in recent months.

Embassy Rangoon joined other diplomatic missions in Burma in a statement pushing for a cessation of violence, peaceful dialogue, renewed efforts to protect communities, and access for humanitarian organizations. The Department has also underscored Burma's obligations under international law and the need for Burma to implement the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) provisional measures. If confirmed, I will use all the tools at my disposal to urge a cessation of violence in Rakhine and Chin States, justice and accountability for abuses, and unhindered humanitarian access, including through ongoing coordination with regional partners.

Question. Exacerbating the conflict in Chin and Rakhine States, the Burmese Government has instituted an internet blackout in as many as nine townships at various times since June 2019, impacting approximately 1 million civilians. As a further complication, the internet blackout carries a deadly weight during the pandemic. The Tatmadaw has recently defended these restrictions as a means to tamp down on the Rakhine-Bamar conflict and prevent the sharing of military-related information. While internet access restrictions were recently lifted in one townships (Maungdaw), violence has increased markedly since the restrictions were imposed. What will you do to raise concerns about increasing violence and rights restrictions like internet access?

Answer. The Department has publicly expressed deep concern about escalating violence in Rakhine State and southern Chin State, and called on all sides to cease fighting, protect local communities, and pursue dialogue. We have also called on Burma to lift ongoing access restrictions that are preventing the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance. Specifically, we have called on the Burmese Government—in public comments and in private settings—to end the prolonged internet blackout, which cuts off communities from vital information during the pandemic.

If confirmed, I will use all the tools at my disposal to continue calling for the restoration of full mobile data access in Rakhine and Chin States.

Question. In addition to the Rohingya, other ethnic minorities that live in Kachin and the northern Shan State, as well as the Karen people, are also victims of the Burmese military's brutality. If confirmed, how will you leverage your position as Ambassador to advance a broad, inclusive, and participatory peace process between the Government of Burma, the Tatmadaw, and ethnic armed organizations?

Answer. Promoting ethnic and national reconciliation, and building an inclusive civic identity, is crucial for Burma to constructively address its legacy of civil war and civic strife. A broad range of community voices, including those of victims of abuse, need to be part of any sustainable peace process. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to continue this engagement with all of Burma's ethnic and religious groups, including through strong support from Congress, to empower civil society organizations working to improve their communities; promote democracy, justice, and rule of law; and address the needs of victims of abuse. Our assistance programs—from health to economic growth—are critical to our engagement with these communities and support efforts to pursue peace.

If confirmed, I will also support the continuation of U.S. assistance to community-strengthening efforts and other intercommunal peace-building programs. If confirmed, I will also call on civilian and military officials to build an inclusive, rights-respecting, democratic society and to ensure that Burma's democratic advancement provides dividends to all its people.

Question. A blanket ban on humanitarian access remains in place across large parts of northern and central Rakhine State, as well as southern Chin State, where some of the most vulnerable communities in Burma are currently being denied life-saving assistance. What is your view on this policy of the Burmese Government, and what role should the U.S. and the wider diplomatic community in Burma play to address this situation?

Answer. The United States continues to push for the removal of restrictions on the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance and that unduly limit freedom of movement in Rakhine and Chin States, as well as other regions affected by violence. The situation overall remains unacceptable, although I understand there have been some small positive steps, including the delivery of World Food Program food aid to Chin State's Paletwa Township in early May and again in mid-July, the first such deliveries this year.

Embassy Rangoon joined other diplomatic missions in Burma in a statement pushing for a cessation of fighting in the region, peaceful dialogue, renewed efforts to protect local communities, and access for humanitarian organizations. If confirmed, I will continue to work with likeminded countries, regional partners, and the U.N. to use all the tools at our disposal to push for humanitarian access to vulnerable communities.

Question. There are significant concerns that the ongoing conflict in Rakhine and Chin States could be used to justify the closing of polling locations and undermine the ability for the populations of those States, including those displaced by conflict, to exercise their right to vote. Historically, Burma has used ongoing conflict as a justification to disenfranchise minority groups. What steps should the U.S. take to ensure the forthcoming elections will be free and fair, including ensuring that populations in conflict-affected areas will be able to participate in the political process? What steps can/should the U.S. take to ensure that the Rohingya in Burma and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh will be able to vote? More broadly, what benchmarks will the U.S. use to determine if the elections are free and fair?

Answer. With robust support from Congress, the United States is working to promote free and fair elections in Burma as part of ongoing efforts to consolidate democratic reforms. U.S. support builds capacity within Burma's election commission, trains political parties and civil society organizations, counters hate speech and dis- and misinformation, strengthens election security, and educates the electorate on democratic principles. The key benchmark in any election is the estimation that the results of the election broadly reflect the will of the people.

Concerns over potential poll closures are well-founded. An estimated 500,000 people were disenfranchised in the 2015 election due to poll closures in Shan, Kachin, and Karen States. The current violence in Rakhine and Chin States means this may be potentially an even more serious issue in 2020. If confirmed, I will urge the Burmese Government to ensure that all eligible citizens can cast a vote and will work with my team to monitor poll closures. The situation Rohingya people face is especially troubling, given the large-scale disenfranchisement and obstacles to voting as

a result of systemic discrimination. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to push on these issues.

Question. How will you ensure that U.S.-based social media companies, including Facebook, do not allow use of their platforms as vehicles for dangerous speech, hate speech, and political interference inside Burma?

Answer. I share your concern regarding the proliferation of online disinformation and hate speech in Burma. Our Embassy in Rangoon regularly engages with U.S. businesses operating in Burma, including social media companies, to encourage ethical business practices that promote good governance and human rights. This is particularly important in the context of Burma's upcoming election. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to continue to build capacity within Burma's election commission, train political parties and civil society organizations, counter hate speech and dis- and misinformation, strengthen election security, and educate the electorate on democratic principles. These efforts include ongoing engagement and coordination with Facebook to limit the harm from disinformation and hate speech on the platform. If confirmed, I will continue this important work.

Question. On September 24, 2018, the State Department published to its website a report entitled "Documentation of Atrocities in Northern Rakhine State." Is it accurate that this published report contains only part of the information, analysis, or conclusions compiled in relation to that investigation? Do you commit to providing to Congress a full, detailed version of that report, the data collected to support it, or any version circulated internally prior to publication of that report?

Answer. The Department of State conducted its own documentation report on atrocities in Rakhine State, which we have shared with relevant U.N. investigation mechanisms and others. While I understand privacy and identity and source protection concerns related to some data require precautions be taken to safeguard the security and dignity of victims, survivors, and witnesses, if confirmed, I will work with the relevant bureaus and offices to further provide information to Congress on this issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. KENNETH R. WEINSTEIN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that prohibited personnel practices has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I particularly look forward to working closely with Mission Japan's Council on Diversity and Inclusion.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that if confirmed, any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. Coming from a family that lost numerous relatives in the Holocaust, the promotion of democracy and human rights is a central and passionate focus for me. I was a college intern at the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs at the State Department, and my doctoral dissertation focused on the philosophical case for freedom of conscience.

Accordingly, I have helped assure that the organization I head, Hudson Institute, regularly provides a platform to dissidents from around the world, especially those who have personally suffered the indignity of human rights abuses. In recent years, these have included Uighur leaders; democracy activists from Hong Kong; opposition figures from Syria; Nigerian school girls kidnapped by Boko Haram; Iraqi Christians and Yazidis persecuted by ISIS; dissidents from countries including Venezuela, China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran and Central Asia; refugees from North Korea; and families—Japanese, Korean and American—of North Korea abductees. Hudson experts, moreover, have championed numerous initiatives to promote international religious freedom, including the efforts that led to the annual religious freedom ministerial at the State Department.

Hudson Institute also has a strong focus on exposing and fighting the pernicious impact of kleptocracy around the globe. I testified in 2015 before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations in favor of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, which later became law and has been an effective tool against numerous human rights abusers.

We have worked to end a tool often used by kleptocrats to hide their ownership stakes in the U.S.: the anonymous shell company. Legislation just passed in both houses with the support of the Trump administration to end anonymous shell company ownership. (I co-authored a June 2019 op-ed with Hudson fellow Nate Sibley on this subject.)

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Japan? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights, and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Japan is a liberal parliamentary democracy with established rule of law, a vibrant civil society, free and fair elections, and constitutionally protected freedom of expression, including for the press. Japan also shares our support for human rights and democratic institutions. If confirmed, I hope to work together with the Government of Japan to make further advancements in promoting democratic development and human rights in Japan and throughout the Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I plan to work closely with the Japanese Government and civil society on continued promotion of freedom of expression and greater protection against discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Japan? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Japan is a liberal parliamentary democracy with established rule of law and a vibrant civil society, and a long history of free and fair elections. If confirmed, I will continue to support and advocate for Japan's strong democratic system. The members of the Mission and I will engage both nationally and locally with government officials, civil society leaders, journalists and opinion makers, and activists to hear their views, share the American experience on issues of mutual concern, and identify areas of cooperation.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. Given Japan's high income, the United States Government generally does not provide assistance or financial resources to Japan. However, if confirmed, I hope to continue cooperating with Japan on various programs supporting democracy and governance in third countries, especially as part of our shared vision of promoting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Japan? What steps will you take to proactively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to meeting with civil society members, human rights, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and in Japan. Japan's legal framework provides strong protections for various forms of expression and, if confirmed, I will actively advocate for continued freedom of expression for NGOs and civil society.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, I will meet democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties. Japan is a liberal parliamentary democracy and recent elections have been considered free and fair. No laws limit the political participation of women and minorities. At the same time, the percentage of women in elected office remains low. The number of ethnic minorities who have served in the National Diet is difficult to ascertain, but widely assumed to be small. There are only two openly LGBTI members of the Diet. If confirmed, I will advocate for greater access and inclusivity for women, members of ethnic minority groups, and youth in political parties.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Japan on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory, or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Japan?

Answer. Japan's constitution provides for freedom of expression, including for the press, and the Government of Japan generally respects this freedom. Independent media are active and express a wide variety of views without restriction. If confirmed, I commit to actively engage with Japanese Government and non-governmental stakeholders on freedom of expression, including for members of the press, should there be any changes to that situation. If confirmed, I also commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press throughout Japan, and to working with

the Japanese Government to promote freedom of expression throughout the Indo-Pacific region in pursuit of our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Japan?

Answer. Yes. One local effort in Japan is the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs' countrywide speaker program on cybersecurity and countering disinformation. Through public talks throughout Japan, this program promotes vigilance among the Japanese public and strengthens the security partnership between our two countries. If confirmed, I commit to continue our robust efforts to counter disinformation and propaganda, in partnership with civil society and government counterparts.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Japan on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Japan is one of the most important trade and investment partners for the United States, and the U.S. Government is actively engaged with Japan across the spectrum of economic issues, including labor rights. If confirmed, I commit to continue this engagement. Overall, Japan has laws providing for the right of labor unions and collective bargaining and has been enforcing them effectively.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Japan, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Japan? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Japan?

Answer. I strongly believe in defending the human rights and dignity of all people in Japan, including LGBTI persons. Japan is a thriving, modern democracy but it, like many other democratic governments, has challenges dealing with LGBTI issues. As outlined in the latest Human Rights Report, Japan has no national law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identities, with only a small number of local governments having enacted ordinances banning such discrimination. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the Japanese Government and civil society to promote greater protection against discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. KENNETH R. WEINSTEIN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Coming from a family that lost numerous relatives in the Holocaust, the promotion of democracy and human rights is a central and passionate focus for me. I was a college intern at the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs at the State Department, and my doctoral dissertation focused on the philosophical case for freedom of conscience.

Accordingly, I have helped assure that the organization I head, Hudson Institute, regularly provides a platform to dissidents from around the world, especially those who have personally suffered the indignity of human rights abuses. In recent years, these have included Uighur leaders; democracy activists from Hong Kong; opposition figures from Syria; Nigerian school girls kidnapped by Boko Haram; Iraqi Christians and Yazidis persecuted by ISIS; dissidents from countries including Venezuela, China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran and Central Asia; refugees from North Korea; and families—Japanese, Korean and American—of North Korea abductees. Hudson experts, moreover, have championed numerous initiatives to promote international religious freedom, including the efforts that led to the annual religious freedom ministerial at the State Department.

Hudson Institute also has a strong focus on exposing and fighting the pernicious impact of kleptocracy around the globe. I testified in 2015 before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations in favor of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, which later became law and has been an effective tool against numerous human rights abusers.

We have worked to end a tool often used by kleptocrats to hide their ownership stakes in the U.S.: the anonymous shell company. Legislation just passed in both houses with the support of the Trump administration to end anonymous shell company ownership. (I co-authored a June 2019 op-ed with Hudson fellow Nate Sibley on this subject.)

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

Answer. Japan is a liberal parliamentary democracy with established rule of law and a vibrant civil society. Japan also shares our support for human rights and democratic institutions. If confirmed, I hope to work together with the Government of Japan to make further advancements in promoting human rights in Japan, including greater protection against discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Japan in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with all pertinent stakeholders in the Government of Japan and civil society to promote greater protection against discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

Question. 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??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 in the U.S. and in Japan. I am committed to supporting the Department's obligations under the Leahy Law and to ensuring the Embassy carries out robust vetting prior to providing any assistance.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Japan to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Japan?

Answer. According to the State Department's 2019 Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Japan, there were no reports of political prisoners or detainees. If confirmed, I will remain vigilant on this issue.

Question. Will you engage with Japan on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes. Governance is one of the three pillars captured by the administration's vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, and under this framework the United States and Japan have continued longstanding engagement on good governance that respects human rights and empowers citizens. If confirmed, I will continue our robust engagement with Japan on a variety of shared priorities, including human rights, civil society, and governance.

Diversity

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and a representative workforce. I will encourage promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized Exit Survey.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Japan are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leader-

ship that focus on inclusion as a key driver for recruiting and retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diversity and Inclusion best practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be strengthened. I particularly look forward to working closely with Mission Japan's Council on Diversity and Inclusion.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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, if confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Japan?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence in Japan, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I also currently hold a financial interest in a company which has a presence in Japan. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Japan specifically?

Answer. I strongly believe political corruption has a significant negative impact on democratic governance and the rule of law. Specifically in Japan, Japanese law provides adequate criminal penalties for corruption by officials. The Japanese Government generally implements the law effectively, and, if confirmed, I commit to continue working with the Government of Japan to maintain democratic governance and the rule of law in Japan and cooperating on anticorruption efforts throughout the Indo-Pacific.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Japan and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Japanese law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials and the Japanese Government generally implements the law effectively. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the Government of Japan on its continued efforts to eliminate corruption.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Japan?

Answer. Governance is one of the three pillars of the administration's vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, and under this framework the United States and Japan have longstanding engagement on good governance that respects human rights and empowers citizens. Effective anticorruption efforts are a critical part of good governance. If confirmed, I will continue our robust engagement with Japan on a variety of shared priorities, including human rights, governance, and law enforcement cooperation to combat corruption both in Japan and other countries.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF KENNETH R. WEINSTEIN'S NOMINATION TO BE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

US JAPAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

July 31, 2020

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairman
Senate Committee
on Foreign Relations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Ranking Member
Senate Committee
on Foreign Relations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports the nomination of Dr. Kenneth Weinstein, President and CEO of the Hudson Institute, to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Japan. As Executive Director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's U.S.-Japan Business Council, I have had the pleasure of working with Dr. Weinstein and highly recommend his nomination be approved by your committee.

It has now been one year since the United States has had an Ambassador in place in Japan. We believe that Dr. Weinstein's distinguished career, established leadership in foreign policy circles, knowledge of Japan and broader Asian regional dynamics and the esteem in which he is held globally, more than qualifies him to serve in this important role.

The mission of the U.S.-Japan Business Council is to advance U.S. business interests in Japan and promote stronger economic ties between our two countries. U.S.-Japan Business Council member companies collectively account for a substantial share of overall U.S. economic activity with Japan, and place high priority on doing business in Japan. To further strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance, we respectfully ask that the Committee favorably report Dr. Weinstein's nomination.

Sincerely,

Aiko Lane
Executive Director

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

August 4, 2020

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairman
Senate Committee
on Foreign Relations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Ranking Member
Senate Committee
on Foreign Relations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

I am writing on behalf of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) in support of the nomination of Dr. Kenneth Weinstein, President, CEO, and Walter P. Stern Chair of the Hudson Institute, for U.S. Ambassador to Japan and strongly recommend his confirmation by your committee.

Japan is one of America's most important allies and markets for U.S. business, with $303 billion goods and services trade in 2019. Having an Ambassador in-country is crucial to maintaining the long-standing bilateral partnership. Having in place an extremely well-qualified Ambassador like Dr. Weinstein, with extensive knowledge of Japan, vast trade and policy experience, and recognition and thought leadership in U.S. policy and business circles related to Japan, would greatly benefit the U.S.-Japan alliance. The U.S.-Japan relationship is at a critical stage going into the second phase of the bilateral trade negotiations, and Dr. Weinstein's confirmation will provide the continued strong leadership needed to ensure the partnership continues to move in a positive direction.

The ACCJ has been at the frontline for U.S. business in Japan for over 70 years, with over 3,000 members, representing 600 companies in the major U.S. industries in Japan. As the voice of American business in Japan, we thank you for your consideration of Dr. Weinstein's nomination and confirmation as U.S. Ambassador to Japan.

Sincerely,

Peter Fitzgerald
President
The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan

The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan / www.accj.or.jp

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August 3, 2020

Dear Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

We are foreign policy professionals, many of whom have served the U.S. government in various capacities over the past few decades. Some of us are Democrats; some Republicans; and others have no partisan affiliation. We write to you today to support the nomination of Kenneth Weinstein to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Japan.

The U.S.-Japan relationship is not just the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific but has become critical to America's global strategic posture. During the past twelve months, we have seen China's increasing crackdown in Hong Kong, growing assertiveness in the East and South China Seas, the global COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an ever more unstable North Korea with its nuclear capacity.

All of us know Ken Weinstein, are familiar with his foreign policy expertise, and believe he has the experience and temperament to be a superb ambassador to Japan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Walter Mondale
Vice President of the United States (1977-81)
U.S. Ambassador to Japan (1993-96)

Dan Quayle
Vice President of the United States (1989-93)

Daniel Coats
United States Senator (2011-17)
Director of National Intelligence (2017-19)

Joseph Lieberman
United States Senator (1989-2013)

Nikki Haley
U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (2017-19)

John V. Roos
U.S. Ambassador to Japan (2009-13)

J. Thomas Schieffer
U.S. Ambassador to Australia (2001-05) and Japan (2005-09)

Dennis Blair
Commander-in-Chief
U.S. Pacific Command (1999-2002)

Stephen Hadley
National Security Advisor to the President (2005-09)

Jason Hyland
Charge d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy
Tokyo (2017)

H.R. McMaster
Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution
National Security Advisor to the President (2017-18)

Kurt Campbell
Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (2009-13)

Robert M. Kimmitt
Deputy Secretary of the Treasury (2005-09)
U.S. Ambassador to Germany (1991-93)
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (1989-91)

Karen Kornbluh
U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2009-12)

Alfred H. Moses
Special Presidential Envoy (1999-2001)
U.S. Ambassador to Romania (1994-97)

Thomas C. Hubbard
U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines (1996-2000) and to the Republic of Korea (2001-04)

James Burnley IV
U.S. Secretary of Transportation (1987-89)

Charles Rivkin
U.S. Ambassador to France (2009-13)
Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State (2014-17)

Francis Fukuyama
Senior Fellow, Stanford University

Ryan Crocker
U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan (2011-12), Iraq (2007-09), Pakistan (2004-07), Syria (1999-2001), Kuwait (1994-97) and Lebanon (1990-93)

Elbridge Colby
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Force Development (2017-18)

Jamie Fly
Counselor for Foreign and National Security Affairs, Senator Marco Rubio (2013-17)
Director for Counterproliferation Strategy, National Security Council

J. Randy Forbes
United States Congressman (2001-17)
Chairman, Seapower and Projection Forces
Former Distinguished Senior Fellow U.S. Naval War College

Kurt Tong
U.S. Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau (2016-19)

Randy Schriver
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs (2018-19)

Stuart A. Levey
Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (2004-11)

Joseph S. Nye Jr.
Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus, Harvard Kennedy School
Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (1994-95)
Chair National Intelligence Council (1993-94)

Nelson Cunningham
Former Special Advisor to President Bill Clinton

Michael Green
Director for Asian Affairs, National Security Council (2001-05)
Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director for Asia

Lester Munson
Staff Director, Senate Foreign Relations Committee (2013-15)

Thomas S. Kahn
House Budget Committee, Democratic Staff Director (1997-2016)

Vance Serchuk
National Security Advisor to Senator Joseph Lieberman (2007-10)

Roger Zakheim
Former General Counsel and Deputy Staff Director of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Richard Fontaine
Foreign Policy Advisor to Senator John McCain (2004-09)

Alberto M. Fernandez
Vice President, Middle East Media Research Institute
U.S. Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea (2010-12)

Chris Brose
Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Staff Director, U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (2015-18)

Jeffrey Gedmin
Former President and CEO, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2007-11)

Daniel Twining
Member, Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff (2007-09)
Foreign Policy Advisor, Senator John McCain (2001-04)

Edwin Feulner Jr.
Founder and Past President
The Heritage Foundation

Craig Kennedy
Former President, German Marshall Fund of the United States

Charles Kupchan
Professor, Georgetown University
Special Assistant to the President for National Security (2014-17)

James Zumwalt
U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau (2015-17)

Victor Cha
Director for Japan and Korea Affairs, National Security Council (2004-07)

Randy Scheunemann
National Security Adviser to Senate Republican and Majority Leaders Bob Dole and Trent Lott (1993-99)

Richard Stengel
Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (2014-16)

Walter Isaacson
Author

David B. Shear
Acting Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense (2014-17)
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs (2014-16)
Former Ambassador to Vietnam (2011-14)

Thomas Wright
The Brookings Institution
(Signing in personal capacity only)

Jeff Shell
Chairman, Broadcasting Board of Governors (2013-17)

Christopher J. LaFleur
U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia (2004-07)

Marc Ginsberg
U.S. Ambassador to Morocco (1994-98) and Deputy Senior Adviser to the President for Middle East Affairs (1978-81)

Nancy Lindborg
Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, USAID (2010-14)

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2020

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:30 a.m., by videoconference, Hon. Todd Young presiding.

Present: Senators Young [presiding], Gardner, Menendez, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TODD YOUNG, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator YOUNG. Well, this hearing of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations will come to order. I want to thank each of our nominees today for their willingness to serve in these important roles and to my colleagues on this committee for joining this hearing.

One of this committee's most important tasks, I have discovered, is to review and evaluate the president's nominees to serve in critical posts around the globe, like those you aim to serve in.

These nominees serve as the world's window into America and to our universal values. The willingness of talented qualified individuals to serve has never been more valuable than it is today, as American leadership is crucial in bringing the world out of the shadow of COVID–19.

In advocating for American values, defending human rights, transparency, and economic freedom and in seeking to ensure a more secure, stable, and prosperous world where democracy and freedoms are able to flourish, we are all working towards that end.

And with that in mind, I wish to, again, thank our nominees for appearing and your willingness to continuing our nation.

Today, this committee will consider the nominations of six individuals to represent the United States of America. The nominees before us are Mr. William, or Doug, Douglass to serve as the U.S. ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas; Ms. Melanie Higgins to be the U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Burundi; Ms. Jeanne Maloney to be U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of Eswatini—apologies; Mr. Michael McCarthy to serve as the U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Liberia; The Honorable Manisha Singh to be U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development with the rank of ambassador; and Mr. James Story to serve as U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Venezuela.

Thank you all again for your willingness to serve this country. Before I turn to my friend and fellow senator, Bob Menendez, I wish to underscore for our nominees the need for a passionate defense of American values in your future positions.

If confirmed, each of you will be presented with immense challenges. I know all of you are committee patriots and I hope that you will direct that spirit towards the preservation of peace, the expansion of opportunity, and a fervent enthusiasm for your posts and for the values that you represent.

I look forward to hearing how you will seek to do that very soon. I now wish to recognize my distinguished colleague and friend, Senator Menendez, for his opening comments.

Mr. Menendez?

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

A moment before I address the nominees themselves, I am compelled to note for the record that this, unfortunately, is another in a series of hearings that Chairman Risch has noticed unilaterally.

It is also a violation of committee practice on Rule 3(d), which requires seven days notice and without a Democratic ranking member.

So while highly unfortunate, we have to acknowledge that the chairman has established a new set of precedents that will govern the running of the committee regardless of who is in the majority.

Senator YOUNG. If the gentleman will yield.

Senator MENENDEZ. Surely.

Senator YOUNG. I will respectfully note for the record also it is my understanding there was significant consultation between staffs before this hearing was noticed.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman.

Consultation, as someone who has been on this committee since I came to Congress 15 years ago—consultation is not the modus operandi of the committee.

It is consultation that, ultimately, arrives in an agreement between the chairman and the ranking member, whoever they may be. And so I appreciate that constant reference that has now been made to consultation. If there was a different majority, I am sure that consultation would take place the same way.

I am pleased, however, to see that we are considering today the nomination for our next U.S. ambassador to Venezuela.

As we heard at Tuesday's hearing on Venezuela, the situation in Venezuela requires our urgent attention. Despite the international community's unwavering support for interim President Juan Guaidȼ, the Maduro regime seeks to hold yet another fraudulent election.

A massive humanitarian crisis has displaced 5.2 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees. Armed groups, including Colombian guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug traffickers, and colectivos operate across Venezuelan territory with impunity, and the Governments of Cuba, Russia, China, and Iran have gone to significant lengths to prop up the Maduro regime and undermine American influence.

Against this incredibly complex landscape, I look forward to hearing from today's nominee about what steps the United States needs to take to better achieve our shared bipartisan policy objectives.

I am also pleased to see that the administration has reelected a new nominee for the Bahamas. Amidst the ongoing reconstruction related to the devastation from Hurricane Dorian last year, the U.S. must recommit to our bilateral partnership with the Bahamas and deepening the ties between our people to strengthening our work on maritime and counternarcotics issues to building on the economic links between our countries.

I look forward to hearing how the U.S. can expand our cooperations with the Bahamas.

Mr. Douglass, I understand you know the Bahamas well and we look forward to your insights today.

In many ways, Liberia is a success story. After decades of brutal civil war, President George Weah was inaugurated in 2018, making the country's first transfer of power between elected heads of state since 1944.

However, challenges remain. Liberia's economy has still not recovered from years of conflict. The devastating Ebola outbreak from 2014 to 2015 killed 5,000 people and plunged the country into recession.

Now Liberia is confronted with the prospect of a COVID–19 epidemic. If confirmed, Mr. McCarthy, your voice will have significant influence due to the unique relationship between the United States and Liberia, and I hope to hear today how you plan to use that voice to speak out on the issues related to transparency, good governance, and respect for political freedoms.

Ms. Higgins, the political situation in Burundi remains precarious. There have been allegations that this year's elections were marred by targeted attacks against opposition supporters, restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, hate speech, and widespread irregularities in the voting process.

More than 300,000 refugees remain abroad due to fears of violence and ethnic tensions remain high. The impact that COVID–19 is having on Burundi is unclear. But Burundi's weak health system, coupled with the Government's failure to impose a lockdown of any sort is cause for alarm.

Ms. Maloney, if confirmed—I am sorry, Ms. Higgins, if confirmed, you will serve in a country where civil and political freedoms are harshly circumscribed, press freedoms are severely restricted, where corruption and gender-based violence is rampant, and with the highest HIV/AIDS rate in the world.

So I look forward hearing from you as to how—both of you, actually—as to how you plan to meet the serious challenges ahead.

Finally, I also look forward to hearing from Ms. Singh about what she hopes to accomplish at the OECD, which has historically been an important tool for U.S. diplomacy and collaboration on global economic policy.

At a time of growing nationalist sentiment, we must nevertheless retain our leadership of international financial institutions and not cede them to China or Russia.

We must work with our allies to create a stronger, more inclusive global economy that benefits everyone and we must reinvigorate the instruments of economic diplomacy at home within Departments of State, Commerce, Treasure, and USTR to work in tandem to promote U.S. businesses and economic ideals across the globe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Senator Menendez, and I too look forward to hearing from all our nominees. We will do so momentarily.

I will say, as the powerful chairman of the Multilateral Institutions Subcommittee—I say that a bit tongue in cheek but I am, indeed, chairman of that subcommittee—the OECD is of particular interest.

Congratulations again to all of you on your nominations to these important positions. Thank you to you and to your families for the sacrifices you have made and will continue to make in service to our nation.

Without objection, your full written statements will be included in the record. Given the size of our panel today, I ask that you summarize your written statement in no more than five minutes.

We will hear first from Mr. Douglass, the president's nominee to serve as the U.S. ambassador to the Bahamas. Mr. Douglass has worked as a businessman and an investor for over 35 years. He has led his own investment firm from 1994 until 2015.

He has managed the international business of several prominent securities and business organizations. He is an avid philanthropist both in the United States and overseas including in the Bahamas, and he has won numerous awards for his entrepreneurial and philanthropic endeavors.

Mr. Douglass, thank you for your appearance today. Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM A. DOUGLASS, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

Mr. DOUGLASS. Mr. Chairman and Senator Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the president's nominee to serve as the next U.S. ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I commit to work closely with this committee and its staff and other Members of Congress to advance the national interest and deepen our already close partnership with the Bahamas.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family, my wife, Kristin, and children, Elizabeth and William.

For over three generations, my family has maintained connections to the Bahamas, its business leaders, and residents. The Bahamas is a proud independent sovereign nation, having gained its independence in 1973.

It is, therefore, one of the great honors of my life to be considered for the position of ambassador for the United States of the Bahamas.

The Bahamas were struck with back-to-back disasters of Hurricane Dorian and now the COVID–19 pandemic. Both are taking a severe toll on the Bahamian economy as well as affecting U.S. interests and pose severe economic and social challenges to the country.

The United States has proven itself a staunch and stalwart partner in assisting the Bahamas. If confirmed, I intend to continue working with the Bahamas to restore the country's economic strength and protect vital U.S. interests: trade, investment, tourism, and, importantly, security. It is in our interest that the Bahamas remains a strong and stable partner.

At its nearest point, the country lies just 45 nautical miles from the coast of Florida. Our countries have worked steadfastly together to intercept narcotics and reduce human trafficking.

If confirmed as ambassador, I will continue to advance these efforts. I have been visiting the Bahamas for more than 50 years. Over the past decade, I have witnessed firsthand China's efforts gaining a foothold in the Bahamas.

This has been a shared concern of both countries. China's presence is evident and has included road projects, port facilities, hotels, resorts across Nassau, and the use of their technology.

If confirmed as ambassador, I will not only seek to increase American investment and promote our countries shared values, but also clearly communicate the risks of dealing with China, which often comes with strings attached and limited employment value for Bahamian citizens.

The U.S. should be their country of choice for foreign investment. I strongly believe that American companies can compete when transparent regulations, practices, and the respect for the rule of law prevail.

In closing, I commit to you that I have the integrity, experience, and passion to lead our bilateral relationship with the people and the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

If confirmed, I pledge to uphold the tradition and high standards of public service expected of a U.S. ambassador.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Douglass follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM A. DOUGLASS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I commit to work closely with this committee and its staff, and other Members of Congress, to advance the U.S. national interest and deepen our already close partnership with The Bahamas.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family—my wife Kristin and children Elizabeth and William—for all their support over the years, which has made this opportunity possible. For over three generations, my familyhas maintained connections to The Bahamas, its business leaders and residents. The Bahamas is a proud, independent, sovereign Nation having gained its independence some forty-seven years ago. It is, therefore, one of the great honors of my life to be considered for the position of Ambassador of the United States to The Bahamas.

In recent months, The Bahamas was struck with the back-to-back disasters of September 2019's Hurricane Dorian, the strongest in the country's history, and the COVID–19 pandemic. Although it is true that Hurricane Dorian and COVID–19 have both taken a severe toll on the Bahamian economy, I'm glad to report that the

country is now reopening. Both posed severe economic and social challenges to the country, and in both cases the United States has proven itself a staunch and stalwart partner in assisting The Bahamas to recover. If confirmed, I intend to continue working with The Bahamas to restore the country's economic strength in order to maintain our strong bilateral ties and protect vital U.S. economic equities including trade, investment, and tourism. This will be critical to ensuring The Bahamas remains a strong and stable partner in protecting our homeland from illegal drugs and irregular migration and a partner in promoting our shared goals and values internationally.

Since gaining its independence in 1973, The Bahamas has been a steadfast partner with the United States. Our shared interests and values, strong people-to-people ties, trade, and integrated security cooperation are second to none. At its nearest point, the country lies just 45 nautical miles from the coast of Florida. In recent years, our countries have worked together to significantly increase narcotic interdictions and increase the interoperability of our security forces. If confirmed as Ambassador, I commit to continue and advance these efforts.

The Bahamas has also been a strong partner with the United States within the Caribbean Community on our efforts to restore democracy and human rights in Venezuela. It was the first Caribbean country to join the United States in recognizing president Guaidó. In March 2019, the Prime Minister of The Bahamas joined President Trump at Mar a Lago where he reinforced his country's commitment to democracy in the hemisphere. Since then, the country has led on regional issues at the Organization of American States and in the United Nations. If not for the pandemic, The Bahamas would have hosted the OAS's general assembly in June. The Bahamas is also a strong advocate for democracy and human rights issues with regard to Nicaragua.

I have been visiting the Bahamas for more than 50 years. Over the past decade I have witnessed first-hand China's increased interest in gaining a foothold in The Bahamas. This has been a concern of many Bahamians and should give us concern. China's presence is evident and has included multiple road projects, a port facility in North Abaco, mega-resorts and hotels across New Providence, and large-scale development grants for economic and technical cooperation. I recently saw the Chinese build a port facility near Cooperstown, Abaco three years ago, which cost the Bahamians more than 40 million dollars and is still not operational. In addition, many Bahamian telecommunications industry platforms utilize Huawei hardware. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will not only seek to increase American investment and promote our countries' shared values, but also clearly communicate the risks of opaque Chinese deals that so often come with strings attached and limited employment value for Bahamian citizens.

For over thirty-five years, I have been blessed to be successful in business. I believe my business and management experience is integral in running a successful U.S. mission in The Bahamas and has well prepared me for the duties of Ambassador there. If confirmed, I would look forward to leading the efforts of 11 sections and agencies at our mission in The Bahamas to coordinate a whole of government effort to advance U.S. national interests. I would also ensure our Embassy platform runs efficiently to support our dedicated public servants and their families serving there.

If I am confirmed, I will also promote greater economic ties between the United States and The Bahamas. The Bahamas remains an attractive destination for U.S. businesses, U.S. homeowners, and I will work with the Government to provide stable and transparent regulations for increased trade and investment.

I will utilize a whole-of-government approach to link U.S. businesses to the many investment and U.S. export opportunities in the Bahamas. I strongly believe that American companies can compete when transparent regulations, practices, and respect for the rule of law prevail. If I am confirmed, I will ensure that the United States remains the commercial partner of choice in The Bahamas.

One of the strongest bonds between the United States and The Bahamas continues to be our people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I will also seek to expand our educational exchanges. I will work to broaden our engagement under the administration's U.S.-Caribbean 2020 strategy and to identify ways to enhance the region's resilience to natural disasters. Finally, as a matter of the highest priority, I would like to emphasize that I will have no higher priority as Ambassador than to protect U.S. citizens in The Bahamas, including U.S. Mission personnel.

In closing, I commit to you that I have the integrity, experience, and passion to lead our bilateral relationship with the people and the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. If confirmed, I pledge to uphold the tradition and high standards of public service expected of a U.S. Ambassador. Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Mr. Douglass.

Next, we will hear from Ms. Melanie Higgins. Ms. Higgins is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of counselor. She served in the Office of Central African Affairs at the State Department as director since 2018.

Previously, she served as principal officer of the U.S. Consulate in Auckland, New Zealand, and as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Papua, New Guinea.

Additionally, in a career of over 20 years, she has served in Cameroon, Australia, Bosnia, and Indonesia, and filled many positions at the State Department here in Washington.

Ms. Higgins, thank you for your service and please proceed.

STATEMENT OF MELANIE HARRIS HIGGINS, OF GEORGIA, 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 BURUNDI

Ms. HIGGINS. Chairman Young, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. It is a great honor to appear as the president's nominee to be the next U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Burundi.

I would like to acknowledge my family members, especially my husband, Paul, who is a diplomatic security service special agent currently serving as the regional security officer at the U.S. embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia.

He may be half a world away right now in the African continent, but I know he is here with me in spirit and I could not ask for a more supportive spouse.

I would also like to mention my parents, Al and Jackie Harris, my sister, Heather Yates, brother-in-law Dave Yates, and nephews Justin and Ryan.

Mr. Chairman, I come from a family that believes deeply in service to the people of the United States of America. Nearly all of my relatives serve or have served in the military, law enforcement, or as teachers.

In early 1998, I chose the Foreign Service and was thrilled to get my first posting to the central African country of Cameroon, as you mentioned.

I have since loved every year that I have had the privilege of representing our country as well as representing my home state of Georgia.

I am grateful for the confidence President Trump and Secretary Pompeo have placed in me for this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with colleagues across the U.S. Government to advance and uphold U.S. strategic interests and ideals.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has important interests in the Republic of Burundi. This year on May 20th, they had elections in Burundi that were a significant step forward, though imperfect, because they represented the first time since Burundi's independence that a Burundian president entered office peacefully through a constitutional transfer of power.

I am inspired by the commitment of the Burundian people to peaceful elections. As we go forward, it is imperative that our bilateral dialogue and engagement respect Burundi's sovereignty and culture. But we must be direct in discussing our concerns, especially on human rights issues where the conversations can be difficult.

President Ndayishimiye's announcement of plans to fight corruption and COVID–19, and the dialogues he has launched with a broad range of political and civil society stakeholders are all positive signs that there is more work to do to bring the Burundian people the democracy they deserve.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Burundi's new government and all Burundians to advance mutually beneficial interests on behalf of the American and Burundian people.

Our interagency team in Bujumbura, together with our highly skilled and dedicated locally employed staff, are hard at work to advance America's interests. For example, the U.S. remains Burundi's key partner in addressing food insecurity and countering health crises.

If confirmed, I will be honored to lead embassy Bujumbura during a time when we will seek to redefine our bilateral relationship with Burundi.

I also promise that no goal will be more important to me than protecting the welfare of U.S. citizens living and traveling in Burundi. I will work closely with you and the members of this committee on behalf of the citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Higgins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MELANIE H. HIGGINS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. It is a great honor to appear as the President's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi.

I would like to acknowledge my family members, especially my husband Paul, who is a Diplomatic Security Service Agent currently serving as the Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia. He may be half a world away right now, but I know he is here with me in spirit. I would also like to mention my parents, Al & Jackie Harris, and my sister Heather Yates, brother-in-law Dave Yates, and nephews Justin and Ryan.

Mr. Chairman, I come from a family that believes deeply in service to the people of the United States of America. Nearly all my relatives serve or have served in the military, law enforcement, or as teachers. In early 1998, I entered the Foreign Service and was thrilled to get my first posting in the central African country of Cameroon. I have since loved every year that I have had the privilege to represent our country. I am grateful for the confidence President Trump and Secretary Pompeo have placed in me for this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with colleagues across the U.S. Government to advance and uphold U.S. strategic interests and ideals.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has important interests in the Republic of Burundi. I have seen first-hand during my career the impact the United States can have on people worldwide. In recent years in Burundi, we saw the promise of the 2000 Arusha Agreement for more peaceful political participation disintegrate during the April 2015 political and economic crisis. Despite every effort, the East African Community's Inter-Burundi Dialogue did not produce the results we had hoped for the Burundian people. Nonetheless, this year's May 20th elections in Burundi were a significant step forward for that country and represented the first time since Burundi's 1962 independence that a Burundian president entered office peacefully

through a constitutional transfer of power following a regularly scheduled election. As we see reflected in our own country, the road to freedom for all people is often not a linear path, but is rather a journey that requires constant vigilance and perseverance. I am inspired by the commitment of the Burundian people to peaceful elections, and if confirmed, look forward to working with Burundi's new government to advance mutually beneficial interests on behalf of the American and Burundian people.

Burundi sits in sub-Saharan Africa's Great Lakes region, which has seen much violence in recent decades. The United States remains Burundi's key partner in addressing food insecurity and countering health crises. Burundi is one of Africa's most densely populated countries, and Burundi's nearly 12 million people are mostly youth seeking economic opportunities that are imperative for Burundi's stability. A more prosperous Burundi and Central African region are in the strategic interests of the United States.

Burundi's new government has an opportunity to usher in a new, more vibrant era for the Burundian people. We look to the new government to fulfill the power sharing envisioned in the Arusha Accords and reverse the former government's lack of media freedom, political pressure exerted over civil society organizations, and quelling of dissenting voices. Under the previous government, opposition political parties and civil society faced restrictions, intimidation, harassment, arrest, disappearance, and even killings. The new government has an opportunity to demonstrate it will govern in a more just, open, and inclusive manner. President Ndayishimiye's announcement of plans to fight corruption and COVID–19, and the dialogues he has launched with a broad range of political and civil society stakeholders are all positive signs, but there's more work to do to bring the Burundian people the democracy they deserve. If confirmed, I will encourage government leaders to respect human rights and the rule of law. I will stress the importance of a dynamic civil society for national stability and how critical it is to strengthening our bilateral commercial ties.

Until 2015, the United States helped train and support Burundian peacekeeping troops deployed to Somalia as part of the African Union's operation there. It is in our interest to resume this much needed assistance to counter terrorism in Somalia to keep U.S. citizens safe. If confirmed, I will work with the Burundian Government to increase efforts to combat trafficking in persons as a necessary step to overcome Trafficking Victims Prevention Act restrictions.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is imperative that our bilateral dialogue and engagement respect Burundi's sovereignty and culture, but we must also be direct in discussing our concerns. If confirmed, I look forward to working with all Burundians to promote positive economic, political, and social developments in Burundi.

Our U.S. interagency team in Bujumbura, together with our highly skilled and dedicated Locally Employed Staff, are hard at work to advance America's interests. If confirmed, I would be honored to lead Embassy Bujumbura during a time when we will seek to redefine our bilateral relationship with Burundi. I also promise no goal will be more important to me than protecting the welfare of U.S. citizens living and traveling in Burundi, and I will work closely with you and the members of this committee on behalf of those citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you may have.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ms. Higgins.

Our next nominee is Ms. Jeanne Maloney, who is the nominee to the U.S. ambassador to the kingdom of Eswatini. Ms. Maloney is a career member of the senior Foreign Service, class of minister-counselor.

She currently serves as the foreign policy advisor for U.S. Army Africa. For nearly 30 years, she has held positions overseas in Kuwait, Portugal, Brazil, Iraq, and now in Italy.

She has led international security and counterterrorism efforts both here and in Washington and overseas, and has extensive experience in the Bureau of African Affairs.

Ms. Maloney, thank you for appearing today and please proceed.

STATEMENT OF JEANNE MARIE MALONEY, 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 KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

Ms. MALONEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as the president's nominee to serve as the U.S. ambassador to the kingdom of Eswatini.

I appreciate the confidence the president and the secretary of State placed in me through this nomination. I would also like to thank my family for their love and sacrifice in support of my career.

The United States has enjoyed good bilateral relations with Eswatini since its independence in 1968. Though a small country, Eswatini has pursued an independent foreign policy.

It is currently the only country in Africa that maintains diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Eswatini has benefitted from decades of political stability and limited internal conflict, but there are areas that merit attention.

Fifteen years ago, the country enacted a new constitution that enshrined broader political freedoms and expanded the roles of the legislative and judicial branches. Progress has been made but more is needed.

If confirmed, I will continue to engage broadly on the need for political reform, open discourse, transparency, and inclusivity. I will seek to expand dialogue with youth, who make up more than half the country's population.

A second key area concerns health. HIV/AIDS has had a devastating impact on Eswatini. The country has the highest HIV prevalence in the world and over half of women age 30 to 44 are HIV positive.

Eswatini has made significant progress, however, with support from PEPFAR. Tens of thousands of lives in Eswatini have been saved thanks to the generosity of the American people and strong bipartisan support for health programs.

If confirmed, I will continue to focus efforts towards sustainable epidemic control while promoting self-reliance.

Finally, Eswatini also faces economic uncertainties. Even before COVID–19, the country had a tenuous fiscal position and the percentage of its population living in poverty remains stubbornly high.

It will be important to coordinate with organizations like the IMF and World Bank as well as with like-minded partners. To help Eswatini stimulate broad-based economic growth and opportunities for U.S. trade and investment.

If confirmed as the next U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of Eswatini, I will continue to strengthen our partnership with the Government and the people of Eswatini in support of U.S. goals and interests.

I will promote an embassy team that reflects the diversity and the values of the United States and will prioritize the safety of our staff and U.S. citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Maloney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JEANNE M. MALONEY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Eswatini. I appreciate the confidence the President and the Secretary of State have placed in me through this nomination.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to recognize my husband, Andrew, a retired Foreign Service Officer, and our children, Kate and Daniel, who were part of our Foreign Service journey across four continents, for their love and sacrifice. I am grateful for the support of my brothers, Mike and Dan, and to my late mother and grandmother, who instilled in me the love of country and value of hard work.

In my 27 years in the Foreign Service, it has been a privilege to represent the American people and to support and protect American citizens and interests. Most recently, I served as foreign policy advisor to U.S. Army Africa. I've visited 17 African nations in the course of my work; I've witnessed the power of citizens to bring about positive change, and I've also seen the corrosive and dangerous ramifications of poor governance and human rights abuses and violations. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, I spent ten years in the private sector, which provided me broader perspectives on supporting U.S. businesses abroad. If confirmed, I will promote our national interests in Eswatini, and commit to working with you to that end.

The United States has enjoyed good bilateral relations with Eswatini—formerly known as Swaziland—since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1968. Although Eswatini is a small country, it has pursued an independent foreign policy; it is currently the only country in Africa that maintains diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

Eswatini has benefited from decades of political stability and limited internal conflict, but there are areas of concern that merit attention.

Eswatini is a monarchy, governed by a unique combination of parliamentary and traditional structures. Fifteen years ago the country enacted a new constitution that enshrined broader political freedoms and expanded the roles of the legislative and judicial branches. Progress has been made, but more is needed. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to engage broadly on the need for political reform, open discourse, transparency, and inclusivity. I will also seek to expand our dialogue with the country's youth, who make up more than half the population.

A second key area concerns health. In today's interconnected societies, communicable diseases can have global ramifications. HIV/AIDS has had a devastating impact on Eswatini: The country has the highest HIV prevalence in the world; approximately 45,000 children have been orphaned, and more than half of women aged 30-44 are HIV positive. Over the last decade, however, Eswatini has made significant progress with support from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). New infection rates have declined by a third, and the country has one of the highest treatment rates in sub-Saharan Africa. The generosity of the American people, including $490 million of health sector assistance, combined with bipartisan support for these programs, has saved tens of thousands of lives in Eswatini. This is not a time for complacency, however, and if confirmed, I will continue to focus our efforts on achieving sustainable epidemic control, while promoting self-reliance.

It is too early to tell what impact the COVID–19 pandemic will have on Eswatini, but thanks to PEPFAR's investments in health infrastructure, the country is better equipped to conduct testing and contact tracing.

Finally, Eswatini also faces economic uncertainties. Even before COVID–19, the country had a tenuous fiscal position, vulnerable to external shocks. The percentage of its population living in poverty remains stubbornly high. If confirmed, it will be important to coordinate with international organizations like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, as well as like-minded partners to help Eswatini create an environment that fosters broad-based economic growth and opportunities for U.S. trade and investment. I am committed to working to improve democracy, governance, and transparency, in order to help create an economic climate that benefits the entire population.

If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Eswatini, I will do my best to continue to strengthen our partnership with the Government and the people of Eswatini in support of U.S. goals and interests. I will promote an Embassy

team that reflects the diversity and values of the United States, and will prioritize the safety of our staff and U.S. citizens.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Ms. Maloney.

Next, we will hear from Mr. Michael McCarthy, nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia.

Mr. McCarthy is a career member of the senior Foreign Service, class of minister-counselor. He served as U.S. consul general at our consulate in Johannesburg, South Africa, since 2017.

Since 1990, he has additionally served overseas in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, Eritrea, India, Germany, and South Sudan, there as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy.

He first got a taste for international service as a Peace Corps volunteer nearly 40 years ago.

Mr. McCarthy, please proceed with your—with your statement.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL A. MCCARTHY, 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 LIBERIA

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the president's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia.

I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence that the president and Secretary Pompeo have placed in me with this nomination, and I welcome the opportunity to speak with you today, albeit virtually, from Pretoria, South Africa.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and your staff to promote and protect U.S. interests in Liberia.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to first express my deep appreciation for the love and support of my wife, Sandra Aceveto McCarthy, who is herself a Foreign Service officer.

I also want to acknowledge my deceased parents, John and Helen McCarthy, who raised seven children while serving in the Foreign Service for over 28 years, and my brother, Christopher, who served in the Foreign Service for 11 years before his untimely death.

It has been my great privilege in 34 years of public service to have worked as a Foreign Service officer, as a civil servant, and as a Peace Corps volunteer in Togo, West Africa.

I have served in South Sudan as deputy chief of mission and in other post-conflict countries in transition, and have worked on African issues for much of the past two decades, most recently as the consul general in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Mr. Chairman, Senators, I can think of no higher honor than to represent the American people as the ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Liberia, a country with which the United States shares a special bond rooted in our deep historical ties.

In 2017, Liberia achieved a new milestone in its post-conflict journey when it undertook the first peaceful transition of power between two elected presidents in over 70 years.

This achievement followed Liberia's success in combating the Ebola epidemic. Liberia is currently contributing military personnel to the United Nations' peacekeeping mission in Mali, making it symbolically an exporter of security and a contributor to regional stability.

These are tremendous achievements for a country still coping with the after effects of war and they signal the promise inherent in Liberia's democratic future.

If confirmed, I will lead our embassy's highly cooperative team of nine agencies to ensure that Liberia remains on a path to self-reliance and that ordinary Liberians see the benefits of private sector growth and accountable government.

I will work to attract private investment and technical assistance and I will strive to see that Liberia remains the United States' most steadfast partner on the continent of Africa.

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.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McCarthy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL A. MCCARTHY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence that the President and Secretary Pompeo have placed in me with this nomination, and I welcome the opportunity to speak with you today, albeit virtually from Pretoria, South Africa. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee—in-person or long-distance—and your staffs to promote and protect U.S. interests in Liberia.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to first express my deep appreciation for the love and support of my family, friends, and colleagues who have shaped me into the person before you today. I want to especially thank my wife, Sandra Acevedo McCarthy, who is herself a Foreign Service Officer, my stepchildren Arman and Farah, and my daughters Camille and Claire.

I want to also acknowledge my deceased parents, John and Helen McCarthy, who raised seven children while serving over 28 years in the Foreign Service, and my brother Christopher, who served in the Foreign Service for 11 years before his untimely death. I would also like to thank my surviving siblings for their love and support: Dr. William J. McCarthy, Anne Pearcy, and John R. McCarthy, Jr.

It has been my great privilege in 34 years of public service to have worked as a Foreign Service Officer in the Department of State, as a Civil Servant in the Executive Office of the President, and as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Togo, West Africa. I have served in South Sudan as Deputy Chief of Mission and in other post-conflict countries in transition, and have worked on African issues for much of the past two decades, most recently as the Consul General in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Mr. Chairman, Senators, I can think of no higher honor than to represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Liberia, a country with which the United States shares a special bond rooted in our deep historical ties, and preserved through our commitment to democracy, human rights, economic prosperity, and greater security in the West African region. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen all facets of our bilateral relationship and ensure that the United States remains a steadfast partner as Liberia grapples with the COVID–19 pandemic.

In 2017, Liberia achieved a new milestone in its post-conflict journey when it undertook the first peaceful transition of power between two elected presidents in over 70 years. This achievement followed Liberia's success, with the assistance of the United States, in combatting the Ebola epidemic. These are tremendous achievements for a country still coping with the aftereffects of war, and they signal the promise inherent in Liberia's democratic future.

But now another infectious disease, COVID–19, threatens democratic and development gains: schools were forced to close, endangering the educational gains nec-

essary for Liberia's next generation to succeed; an already-strained healthcare system is pushed to the brink, forcing difficult decisions between preventative and emergency care; and necessary lockdown measures have restricted hardworking Liberians from engaging in daily commerce, which could render half of the population food-insecure.

The Government of Liberia acted early to implement necessary emergency and mitigation measures. Critical investments by the United States and others in infection prevention and control measures to fight Ebola helped prepare Liberia to quickly ramp up testing, conduct thorough contact tracing, and isolate positive cases. In large part as a result of this legacy and these efforts, Liberia continues to have one of the lowest COVID–19 case-counts in the region.

Liberian public health authorities have cooperated closely with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Institutes of Health, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and others for years. These U.S. institutions bring a depth of experience, technical assistance and on the ground partnerships that cannot be replaced by other countries' public relations-driven donations. A protracted crisis poses very real risks to Liberia's ongoing development, both economically and democratically, but with continued support from the United States, Liberia's traditional partner, I believe the country will once again meet the challenge.

If confirmed, I will lead our embassy's broad and highly cooperative interagency team—which includes the aforementioned agencies, as well as the Department of State, Department of Defense, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the Peace Corps—to ensure that Liberia remains on a path to self-reliance, that ordinary Liberians see the benefits of private-sector growth and accountable government, and that the country remains the United States' most steadfast partner on the African continent.

The United States has invested more than $2 billion in rebuilding Liberia since 2003, including over $225 million in peacekeeping operations between 2005 and 2017. These investments in the Liberian security sector have promoted self-reliance and regional stability. Liberia has contributed military personnel to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and plans to increase its contingent this year—making it, symbolically, an exporter of security and a contributor to regional stability. Since the March 2018 departure of the U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Liberian law enforcement, with U.S. support, has successfully maintained internal security while also showing a consistent willingness to assist the United States in fighting terrorism, countering drug trafficking, and investigating war crimes.

These security gains are a necessary prerequisite to the country's success, but they are not sufficient, and challenges remain. A lack of funding and technical capacity, stemming from entrenched poverty and the legacy of war, continues to impede critically needed gains in health, education, and human rights. The next test will come this December, as Liberia organizes the funding and logistics necessary to hold constitutionally required senatorial elections delayed by the COVID–19 pandemic.

Longer-term, as the situation in Liberia normalizes, I will champion efforts to increase opportunities for U.S. businesses and promote inclusive economic development focused on job creation, which is crucial to securing Liberia's growth and providing much-needed opportunities for the country's growing youth population. I look forward to working with the International Development Finance Corporation and Prosper Africa in partnership with the private sector to encourage high-quality U.S. investment, a robust alternative to state-directed financing that often leaves countries saddled with debt. The Government of Liberia is focused on job creation and infrastructure development. If confirmed, I will promote these outcomes through, among other initiatives, USAID's five-year Country Development Strategy launched in June 2019. This strategy aims to foster Liberian self-reliance by spurring robust private-sector led economic expansion through job creation, especially for women and children, promoting greater accountability in governance, and achieving real gains in the health and education of the population.

At the same time, Liberia cannot and should not backtrack from the progress it has made to increase transparency and fight corruption, integral to establishing the conditions necessary for foreign investment. Liberia's growth and development will depend on increased trade and investment, which in turn will require that U.S. and international businesses are confident they can compete openly and fairly and that any concerns will find remedy in an honest and impartial justice system.

These same concerns will inform my approach to human rights, as the justice sector, strained by the pandemic, struggles to deal with reported cases of sexual- and gender-based violence, rape, child labor, and human trafficking. These abuses must

be confronted for their own sake, as well as to ensure a broader system of accountability, good governance, and rule of law.

If confirmed, I will also promote these objectives through the Millennium Challenge Corporation's five-year $257 million Compact, which entered into force in January 2016 and will close in January 2021. The Compact has brought electricity and water to many Liberians, while also promoting transparent business practices. The Liberian Government has signaled its interest in a second Compact but understands it will need to pass the Scorecard and demonstrate continued progress. If confirmed, I will work through these frameworks, and others, to support sustainable development and targeted reforms especially in the business climate to attract private investment and technical assistance and foster openness and transparency. Closer ties between the U.S. and Liberian private sectors will expand markets for goods and services and contribute to greater American and Liberian prosperity. If confirmed, I will strive to expand commercial trade and investment between the United States and Liberia.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and the other members of the committee, and look forward to your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Mr. McCarthy.

Our next nominee is the Honorable Manisha Singh, who has been nominated to represent the United States at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the OECD, with the rank of ambassador.

Ms. Singh has served as Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs since her unanimous confirmation in November 2017.

In that position, she has served as Acting Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment from September 2018 to June 2019.

She served in government both as an aide on Capitol Hill and formerly as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureaus of International Organizations and Economic Energy and Business Affairs. In between those roles, she has pursued a successful legal career.

Ms. Singh, thank you for your appearance before this committee and please proceed with your testimony.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MANISHA SINGH, OF FLORIDA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Ms. SINGH. Thank you.

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am very appreciative of the time from you and your dedicated staffs. I am deeply humbled to be considered to be the next permanent representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD.

I want to express my gratitude to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the trust and confidence they have placed in me. It has been the honor of my life to serve in my present position as the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

I am incredibly blessed to have a loving family and great friends. My parents are watching from home in the Sunshine State of Florida, where I grew up. My sister, her husband, and their two daughters are cheering me on from northern Georgia.

I am especially pleased to be considered for a role in an institution which can serve as a valuable platform to propel our global economic recovery.

If confirmed, I will ensure that we fully engage with the like-minded members of the OECD to return growth and employment to pre-pandemic levels.

The predecessor to the OECD was created out of American dedication to post-World War II economic recovery as part of the Marshall Plan. We will see an important milestone this December, the 60th anniversary of the signing of the OECD convention.

It is an ideal moment to review how we work within the OECD to create a level playing field for American workers, to solve issues preventing our companies from accessing markets, and most importantly, how to return to a sustainable working economy in light of the pandemic.

As a leading voice at the OECD, we consistently share our best practices with both members and nonmembers. To create new jobs here at home, we need to have equal opportunities to export to foreign markets.

If I am confirmed, I commit to advocating for market-based principles, which create free, stable societies, and for policies which include everyone in the benefits of economic growth.

Our leadership is needed now more than ever to ensure that international organizations focus on their original missions.

Another important event is the upcoming selection of a new OECD Secretary General. It begins in less than a month on September 1st.

As the original visionary for this organization, it is incumbent upon us to play a strong and central role in the selection of new leadership.

In 1948, this committee issued a report for the administration of aid under the Marshall Plan. The report stated that "Provision should be made for representation of the United States in such organizations as may be established."

If confirmed, I will ensure that my representation on behalf of our country reflects the historic magnitude of the public trust which is being placed in me.

My initial engagement with the OECD began when I was a staff member with this committee more than 15 years ago. It was there, under the mentorship of the great statesman, Senator Richard Lugar, that I learned how important it is for diplomacy to succeed.

I have remembered the sentiment as I worked for the last three years with a very talented team of civil service and foreign service officers in the Economic Bureau.

If confirmed, I will be as fortunate to work with the excellent team at the U.S. mission to the OECD, and I look forward to collaborating with you and your staffs to promote American interests in this organization.

Thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you and I welcome any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Singh follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MANISHA SINGH

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am very appreciative of the time from you and your dedicated staffs.

I am deeply humbled to be considered to be the next Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

I want to express my gratitude to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the trust and confidence they have placed in me. It has been the honor of my life to serve in my present role as the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

I am incredibly blessed to have a loving family and great friends. It is due to their support that I have been able to contribute as a public servant. My parents are watching from home in the sunshine state of Florida, where I grew up. My sister, her husband and their two daughters are cheering me on from northern Georgia. It is for American families that I am making sure our workers and companies can compete and succeed in the global economy.

I am especially pleased to be considered for a role in an institution which can serve as a valuable platform to propel a global economic recovery. If confirmed, I will ensure that we fully engage with the like-minded members of the OECD to return growth and employment to pre-pandemic levels.

The OECD is an institution created out of American dedication to sustainable economic recovery and prosperity in a time of crisis. In a 1947 address at Harvard University, Secretary of State George Marshall outlined a vision for cooperation among European nations to regain economic footing after World War II. During that time, Congress was considering funding and logistics for the economic aid we were providing to Europe. This committee, under then Chairman Arthur Vandenburg, issued a comprehensive report titled, "Administration of United States Aid for a European Recovery Program." This program would become known as the Marshall Plan.

The predecessor to the OECD, known as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, was established in 1948 to administer the Marshall Plan. By 1961, recognizing the interdependence of economies, the organization became the present-day OECD with the United States joining as a member. Our vision for the mission of the organization as well as the growth of the Trans-Atlantic economy both became more significant.

We will see an important milestone this December—the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the OECD convention. It serves as an ideal moment to review how we work within the OECD to create a level playing field for American workers, to solve issues preventing our companies from accessing markets and most importantly, how to return to a sustainable, working economy in light of the pandemic.

There are important tools at the OECD which we use to accomplish all of these goals. One is the Anti-Bribery Convention which enables our private sector to compete under fair circumstances. Signatories commit to stop bribery abroad by their companies and citizens. It provides us with an important foundation to combat corruption, money-laundering and other illicit practices which result in a tainted business environment.

As a leading voice at the OECD, we consistently share our best practices and policies with both members and non-members. This is another method through which we promote a global marketplace in which our companies can succeed. In order to create new jobs here at home, we need to have equal opportunities to export to foreign markets.

The OECD has expanded to include member nations from Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Its membership constitutes about 60% of global GDP. Yet it is still compact enough a forum that we can use it effectively to address issues impacting our workforce. Outcomes in the OECD also affect our economic relationships with non-members. The OECD does not strive for universal membership; it is relevant due to its global impact.

Our new global digital economy is borderless and poses increasing challenges for regulators. As the nation which produces the greatest innovations, we can have discussions in the OECD to ensure that regulations are applied on equal footing.

If I am confirmed, I commit to advocating for market-based principles which create free, stable societies and for policies which include everyone in the benefits of economic growth. I commit not only to U.S. engagement, but to a constructive, cooperative approach to our membership.

Our leadership is needed, now more than ever, to ensure that international organizations focus on their original missions and are accountable to their members. A

return to economic health requires us to seize every available platform which can drive us forward.

Another important event is the upcoming selection of a new OECD Secretary General. The process commences formally on September 1. As the original visionary for the organization, it is incumbent upon us to play a strong and central role in the selection of new leadership.

Our focus on the effective functioning of the OECD is critical. If confirmed, I would work with representatives from other nations to establish a member-driven agenda. I would also advocate for budget discipline, increased transparency, and external evaluations, as is USG policy with respect to all of our international organization memberships.

The 1948 SFRC report I referenced earlier discusses the need to develop continuing organizations to disseminate plans for a sustained economic recovery. The report further states, "Provision should therefore be made for representation of the United States in such organizations as may be established." If confirmed, I will ensure that my representation on behalf of our country in this organization reflects the historic magnitude of the public trust which is being placed in me.

My initial engagement with the OECD began when I was a staff member at this committee more than 15 years ago. It was here, under the mentorship of the great statesman Senator Richard Lugar, that I learned how important it is for diplomacy to succeed.

I have used that sentiment for the last three years to work with a very talented team of civil service and foreign service officers in the Economic Bureau at the Department as well as thousands of officers serving in posts overseas. I feel incredibly lucky to work with them, and if confirmed, I will be as fortunate to work with the dedicated team based at the U.S. Mission to the OECD. And I look forward to continuing to collaborate with you and your staffs to promote American interests in this organization.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator YOUNG. And I thank you.

Our last nominee this morning is Mr. James Story, who has been nominated to serve as the U.S. ambassador to Venezuela. Mr. Story is a career member of the senior Foreign Service, class of counselor.

He currently serves as the chargé d'affaires for Venezuelan affairs at the U.S. embassy in Bogotá, Colombia. He previously served as the U.S. consul general in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He has, additionally, served overseas in Mexico and Mozambique.

In Washington, he has spearheaded counternarcotics, conservation, in security assistance efforts at the State Department.

Mr. Story, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF JAMES BROWARD STORY, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 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 BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

Mr. STORY. Well, thank you—thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee.

I am greatly honored to appear before you today as the president's nominee to serve as United States ambassador to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

I deeply appreciate the trust and confidence shown by the president and secretary of state in asking me to take on this important responsibility to represent the American people.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress in advancing our goal of a peaceful restoration of freedom, democracy, and stability in Venezuela.

Achieving this objective is key to maintaining the Western Hemisphere as a hemisphere of freedom and vital to providing for the security of the United States.

The opportunity to appear before you today would not have been possible without the unconditional support of my wife, Susan, who has been my partner in diplomacy since she agreed to move our wedding date to accommodate the Department of State over 22 years ago.

She and our son, Mac, have served the American people with distinction, and I am eternally grateful to them.

I come before the committee after serving nearly two years as a chargé d'affaires for Venezuela. I have been blessed to work with incredible teams in Caracas, in Bogotá , Washington, and throughout the interagency.

I would like to assure the committee that your dedicated public servants working on U.S.-Venezuelan issues are staunchly committed to their responsibility of representing the United States.

The United States is one of the first countries to recognize the new Venezuelan republic in 1835. Long the regional champion for liberation and democracy, Venezuela now faces its own fight for freedom from tyranny.

Our commitment to the Venezuelan people and democratic ideals upon which the Venezuelan republic was founded is unwavering. A failed economic ideology championed by Chavez led to its inevitable political descent to totalitarianism.

Totalitarianism masquerading as populism, with the active interference and participation by the Castro regime in Cuba and other malign actors, led to vast corruption and mismanagement that destroyed nearly every institution in the country.

Before U.S. economic sanctions were introduced, Venezuela's ability to deliver basic services was already in freefall.

Today, more than 5 million Venezuelans have fled their country to others in the region, the largest forced displacement in the history of Latin America.

In addition, another 7 million Venezuelans face malnutrition and are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

I want to thank Congress for its recognition to this crisis, its support through legislation, the resources, and its continued commitment to the Venezuelan people.

Because of this support, the United States is the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan regional crisis, providing over $856 million in both humanitarian and development assistance to support programs inside Venezuela and in 16 neighboring countries.

While nearly all of Venezuela's institutions have been destroyed, the National Assembly of Venezuela, despite regime intimidation and the illegal and unconstitutional arrest of several of its members, continues to work to restore a fully democratic and representative government.

These efforts have been led by the president of the National Assembly and interim president of Venezuela, Juan Guaid¢, who was recognized by nearly 60 countries as the legitimate leader of Venezuela and who embodies the hopes and aspirations of all Venezuelans against the illegitimate Maduro regime.

I salute the bravery of interim President Guaidȼ and the members of the National Assembly, as well as journalists, NGOs, medical professionals, students, and others fighting for change.

Earlier this year, the United States proposed a pathway to resolving Venezuela's political crisis, the democratic transition framework.

A peaceful, political, democratic, and constitutional transition in Venezuela is in the interests of all Venezuelans, its neighbors, and the United States.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly with my team to ensure the transition is successful. I look forward to once again raising the American flag above our embassy in Caracas.

I pledge to continue to work diligently with our Venezuelan and international partners to uphold the democratic principles we hold dear in the United States and to proudly represent the American people.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I welcome any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Story follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES B. STORY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I am greatly honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. I deeply appreciate the trust and confidence shown by the President and Secretary Pompeo in asking me to take on this important responsibility to represent the American people. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work with this committee and Congress in advancing our goal of peaceful restoration of freedom, democracy, and stability in Venezuela. Achieving this objective is key to maintaining the Western Hemisphere as the "Hemisphere of Freedom" and vital to providing for the security of the United States. A hemisphere of free people, living in liberty, peace, and prosperity, engaging in mutually beneficial trade, working together to combat common problems such as transnational criminal organizations, is good for the Americas and good for the United States of America.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, as you and the members of the committee well know, our families are the keys to our successes in our professional and personal lives. The opportunity to appear before you today would not have been possible without the unconditional support of my wife, Susan, who has been my partner in diplomacy since she agreed to move our wedding date to accommodate the Department of State over 22 years ago. She and our son, Mac, have served the American people with distinction throughout these last 22 years—17 for Mac—and I am eternally grateful to them.

I come before the committee after serving nearly two years as the Chargé d'Affaires for Venezuela: first, at the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela, and then, following the March 2019 suspension of operations, of the newly established Venezuela Affairs Unit in Bogotá, Colombia. I have been blessed to work with an incredible team in Caracas, Bogotá, Washington, and throughout the interagency—a team that has worked tirelessly to advance American values abroad and to engender justice and freedom for Venezuelans who have long suffered under a brutal dictatorship. While, as a team, we have faced significant challenges, I would like to assure the committee that your public servants in diplomacy remain staunchly committed to their responsibility of representing the United States.

U.S.-Venezuela Relations

The United States and Venezuela have a long history. We were one of the first countries to recognize the new republic in 1835, were among the first to help in developing its oil industry in 1914, and we have since developed a deep cultural affinity for shared pastimes, from baseball to barbecue. Venezuela is not only the birthplace of Simón Bolívar, but it has a long history of being a strong supporter of struggling democratic movements throughout Latin America, and a history of welcoming migrants and refugees from all over the Western Hemisphere and Europe. As a

friend to the American people, the Venezuelan Government gave us the statue of Simón Bolívar, El Libertador, that continues to stand proudly on Virginia Avenue, near the Organization of American States headquarters building in Washington, D.C.Long the regional champion for liberation and democracy, Venezuela now faces its own fight for freedom from tyranny. Our commitment to the Venezuelan people and the democratic ideals upon which the Venezuelan Republic was founded is unwavering. This commitment is important, now more than ever, as the Venezuelan people and these ideals are in crisis.

Maduro's Man-Made Crisis

A failed economic ideology championed by Chávez during times of high oil prices led to its inevitable political descent to totalitarianism. Totalitarianism, masquerading as populism, with the active interference and participation by the Castro regime in Cuba and other malign actors, led to vast corruption and mismanagement that destroyed nearly every institution in the country. Before U.S. economic sanctions were introduced, Venezuela's ability to deliver basic services such as electricity, water, food, and medical care was already in free fall. Today, more than 5 million Venezuelans have fled their country to others in the region, the largest forced displacement in the history of Latin America. In addition, another 7 million Venezuelans face malnutrition and are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance inside Venezuela. Today, the Coronavirus poses yet another dire threat to a country without the ability to provide even basic medical care. However, due to the herculean efforts of our colleagues in the U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration, and other bureaus and agencies, we have been able to help Venezuelans across the hemisphere and within Venezuela deal in some measure with this man-made humanitarian disaster.

I want to thank Congress for its recognition of this crisis, its support through legislation and monetary assistance, and its continued commitment to the Venezuelan people. Because of this support, the United States is the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance for the Venezuela regional crisis. Over the last three years, the United States has provided more than $856 million in both humanitarian and development assistance to support programs inside Venezuela and in 16 neighboring countries. This assistance works to support our democratic partners in the hemisphere who are directly affected by Venezuela's forced displacement. Partners such as Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador have borne the brunt of caring for these refugees and other Venezuelans displaced abroad, but as good neighbors they have done so with generosity. Unfortunately, if left unchecked, the Venezuelan situation could prove destabilizing to the hemisphere: a dim prospect. In order to respond swiftly and effectively to life-threatening conditions, humanitarian organizations must be permitted full and unhindered access to reach all of the people in need in Venezuela. If confirmed, I will work with the international community and humanitarian assistance agencies of the United States to expand this reach to stabilize Venezuela.

I mentioned earlier that nearly all of Venezuela's institutions have been destroyed, yet throughout this entire struggle, a singular governmental structure has remained resolute in its support for democratic ideals, the National Assembly of Venezuela. Despite regime intimidation, the illegal and unconstitutional arrest of several of its members, and the forced exiles and attacks against their family members and friends, the National Assembly continues to work to restore a fully democratic and representative government. These efforts have been led by the President of the National Assembly and Interim President of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó. Recognized by nearly 60 countries as the legitimate leader of Venezuela, Interim President Guaidó continues to work with the National Assembly, the only remaining democratic institution in Venezuela, to represent the hopes and aspirations of all Venezuelans against the illegitimate Maduro regime. I salute the bravery of Interim President Guaidó and the members of the National Assembly. Together with all those who are fighting for change—journalists, NGOs, human rights defenders, teachers, nurses, students—these democratic actors count on our support and that of the broader international community to tell their story.

Framework for Change

In order to make true and lasting positive change in Venezuela, the country and government must be returned to the Venezuelan people—and the people must be allowed to participate in free and fair presidential elections. Earlier this year, the United States proposed a pathway to resolving Venezuela's political crisis that is rooted in a peaceful, democratic, negotiated transition. This framework reflects the efforts of dozens of countries and regional organizations, such as the Organization

of American States, Lima Group, and European Union in seeking a peaceful political resolution to the Venezuela crisis. It builds on the Oslo Process negotiations. Together, we have called, and continue to call, on all who are truly interested in the welfare of the Venezuelan people to support this framework as a peaceful path toward a better future. I believe this framework protects the interests and equities of all Venezuelans who desperately seek a resolution to this dire crisis. We will continue to work with our partners to increase support for this framework and to intensify international pressure against the illegitimate Maduro regime to ensure that it, too, sees this framework as the best option out of this crisis. Free and fair presidential elections, convoked by a transitional government that represents all political equities, offer the best pathway towards a peaceful transition.

While Maduro and his allies have denounced sanctions as blocking aid from people in need, that is far from reality. Our Venezuela sanctions program maintains broad exemptions and authorizations that allow for the provision of humanitarian assistance, and we are vigilant in working to prevent overcompliance issues and addressing any concerns that sanctions are preventing humanitarian goods or services from entering Venezuela. The sanctions are doing what they are designed to do: block Maduro and his allies from profiting off of their ill-gotten gains. Additionally, the U.S. Government has been clear that these sanctions policies are intended to change behavior and that we will consider lifting sanctions if there are concrete meaningful actions to combat corruption in Venezuela, end human rights abuses, and restore democratic order. The democratic transition framework explicitly lays this out. Yet Maduro has refused to address the original sin of the fraudulent May 2018 presidential elections and consider a path towards reestablishing democratic governance, instead choosing to tighten his perceived grip on power by any means. Until he relents and there can be truly free and fair presidential elections, Maduro's regime will continue the policies of oppression, human rights abuses, corruption, ineptitude, and mismanagement. A peaceful, political, democratic, and constitutional transition in Venezuela is in the interests of all Venezuelans, its neighbors, and the United States. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly with my team to ensure this transition is successful.

Following the institution of the transitional government and administration of free and fair presidential elections, the follow-on goal of U.S. policy is clear: to help Venezuelans return democracy and the rule of law to their country, and then bring mutual prosperity to our two nations. Recovery can only begin when the Government respects the rights of all Venezuelans, regardless of political party, economic status, or connections. When these conditions are met, Venezuela's talented population can retake its future and the millions of Venezuelans previously forced to flee their country will be able to return to their homeland—a land in need of healing, and open to opportunities and growth, refocused on its most important resources, its citizens.

If confirmed, I look forward to once again raising the American flag above our embassy in Caracas. In returning our full diplomatic presence to the country, it is my intent, in representing the American people, to promote democracy and the rule of law, to build respect for human rights, to facilitate U.S. support to the Venezuelan people through development and humanitarian assistance, and to assist Venezuela in its return to economic stability. I pledge to continue to work diligently with our Venezuelan and international partners to uphold the democratic principles we hold dear in the United States and to proudly represent the American people. In supporting a new, truly representative government in Venezuela to reopen its economy to the world market, U.S. companies will be able to reestablish their presence and be partners in building value for both countries. The scars left by the Chávez and Maduro periods will not heal quickly, but they can and will heal. And in the end, a truly free Venezuela, returned to its democratic traditions, as first espoused by Bolívar, can again be a stabilizing force in the region and a close friend and partner of the United States of America.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I welcome any questions you may have.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, and once again, thank you all for your careers of service and for your willingness to be nominated for these posts.

We will now open up for questions. I do need to announce that we have a vote coming. I am told it is around 11:30, so we will not recess this hearing. We will forge on and continue with questions.

When I depart to vote, we will adjourn this hearing. I would like to remind my colleagues that we will be doing five-minute rounds. But please keep in mind we will be using the honor system, given our virtual environment.

I will defer my questions and hand it over to my colleague, the senior Democratic member on the Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Menendez, to lead us off.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am so pleased to see so many career members of the Foreign Service up for these important positions.

Mr. Story, Section 151 of the VERDAD Act, which I wrote, called on the administration to lay out a coordinated international strategy to investigate assets stolen from the Venezuelan people by the Maduro regime—freeze those assets and recover them for the future reconstruction of Venezuela.

What is your understanding of the value of assets stolen from the Venezuelan people by Chavez, Maduro, and their cronies? Is it fair to say that it is in the tens of billions of dollars?

Mr. STORY. Senator, I believe it could be much more than that. Our assessment is hundreds of billions of dollars.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right.

And can you speak to the importance of these funds to the Venezuelan people, the hope that they be recovered?

Mr. STORY. Certainly, Senator. You are asking a very important question. We are working with the international community and others to locate these funds and protect these funds.

The reconstruction of Venezuela under a democratic government or through a transitional government will need these funds in order to rebuild the institutions that have been destroyed after two decades of dictatorship.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask this. What additional steps—we had a hearing on Tuesday from the Special Envoy or Representative and—on Venezuela.

What additional steps do you think we need to—since you have been on the ground and working on this issue both as the chargé and—in Colombia.

What additional steps do you think we need to take on in countering the Cuban regime's activities inside of Venezuela? How do we change the calculations for Putin's maneuvering in Venezuela, for Turkey's transactions in Venezuela in blood gold?

Those are some of the countries that are helping to prop up—of course, China is as well—helping to prop up Maduro.

How do you see the dynamics if the secretary of state, the administration, we, in the Congress were to say to you help us devise a series of steps? What would your suggestion be?

Mr. STORY. Well, Senator, I think that, as Special Representative Abrams pointed out on Tuesday and, certainly, the actions we have taken, we have increased costs for bad actors, malign actors, in Venezuela.

We have to continue to consider other ways to do that. We are very concerned about the transport of gold bars to Iran for purchases of which we are unaware. Certainly, free export of diesel and oil to Cuba, propping up the Castro regime.

At the same time that the Venezuelan people need these resources, and it is something that is hard to fathom, I believe that we have to consider all opportunities to go after companies.

We have done that in the case of Russia and other entities such as Rosneft and TNK. I think we have to continue to focus in on those opportunities where we have them to continue to constrict the access that Maduro and his cronies have to funds that should be going to the Venezuelan people.

I know that we are working very closely with Washington on these issues and continue to look at other ways we can have an impact.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. I think some of the messages we should be sending, particularly, to the Russians and the Chinese, is that the investments you made if you want to ensure—I am talking about monetary investments—to ensure that they are there in the future, you should not continue to support a regime that cannot guarantee them at the end of the day. A democratic regime could do that but it will look at what you have done to date.

One last question to you, Mr. Story. In the hearing on Tuesday the administration admitted that the United States should do more to protect Venezuelan women and children. I want to come back to this topic because I am so troubled by the fact that Venezuelan women and girls are suffering high rates of sexual and gender-based violence.

Are you—as you seek to expand humanitarian access in Venezuela, will you increase U.S. support for reproductive health care as well as efforts to address gender-based violence?

Mr. STORY. Senator, I was heartened to hear in the explanation as well from Assistant Administrator Hodges on Tuesday that all of our program has a gender component to it. I think we have to continue to do that. We have to do more of that, and I will commit to focusing on that.

I have been in the hospitals inside of Venezuela. I have been in the hospitals on this border—on the border inside of Colombia as well. In Cλcuta, for instance, 98 percent of live births are from Venezuelan women who have to flee into Colombia in order to receive health care.

I think these are areas in which we have to work across the humanitarian space. Certainly, the issues of gender are exceedingly important in Venezuela.

If confirmed, I commit to you that we will maintain that focus.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right.

Mr. Chairman, I have several more questions but I do not know what the time is. So I think I may be close to my five minutes.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I—there will certainly be an opportunity for you, Senator Menendez, for a second round, perhaps a third round. We are going to—we are going to have some opportunities here to go back and forth here.

So I would like to ask a series of questions for Ms. Singh, who is the nominee to serve as our representative at OECD, who also happens to have a Dick Lugar bullet point on her resume, which, in my estimation, does not hurt one's background, having served with—for Senator Lugar for a long period of time.

I have had several productive conversations with your colleague, Ms. Singh, over at E, especially Under Secretary Keith Krach, in considering what America's strategy should be as we think about competing with China through leaning into our strengths.

Your bureau's efforts on the future of innovation has been extremely valuable in this endeavor. I know my staff has enjoyed working with the entire team there.

To get us started, I introduced some legislation with Senator Schumer, the Endless Frontier Act, which will leverage America's technological expertise to invest in emerging technologies of the—of the future.

A major part of that legislation is working with trusted allies and partners to broaden the pool of knowledge and seek better outcomes at a faster pace and lower cost.

If confirmed, how will you seek to strengthen transnational science and tech partnerships within the OECD to increase the study and fielding of emerging technologies like AI, quantum computing, advanced biology, hypersonics, advanced manufacturing, material science, and so forth?

Ms. SINGH. Senator, thank you so much for that question, and I just wanted to say that I really appreciate the recognition of our joint service. I know that you are a mentee of Senator Lugar as well, and so I really—in his memory, I just wanted to thank you for that recognition.

And, Senator, when it comes to innovation and the economy of the future, this has been one of my priorities here in the Economic Bureau.

You may know, our bureau has held a series of innovation roundtables where we invite the technology industry in, whether it is artificial intelligence or robotics or quantum computing, advancements in 5G.

We have invited industry in to see how we, as government, can assist the private sector in providing the best platforms for them to be able to succeed.

We know that the best innovations in technology have come out of this country, and I want to make sure that it is American companies, and it is American workers at the forefront.

So these roundtables have been hugely successful. We have heard particularly from the private sector on what China has been doing that, basically, involves stealing our intellectual property, that involves forcing our technology transfer.

You know, they are advancing their 5G, their technology, with secrets that have been stolen from American industry. So we have made a strong effort to educate ourselves in the bureau and throughout the E line.

And, Senator, at the OECD, I commit to you that I would do that same sort of research and analysis, getting information directly from the private sector on exactly what we, as policy makers, need to know.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you.

What do you foresee, based on your experience, in leading the business and economic partnership initiatives of the department?

What are the greatest challenges that face our country so that we might spur more innovation in coming decades as it pertains to our interactions with other countries?

Ms. SINGH. Well, Senator, thank you for that question.

One of the things that we have strived to achieve is necessary, but not overly burdensome regulation. We would like to see a light-touch regulation atmosphere that enables our companies and our private sector to innovate.

We are also looking at regulatory burdens that have been imposed upon our companies by foreign countries. You may know, Senator, that many of the European members states have decided to impose a unilateral digital services tax, which unfairly targets American companies.

The OECD has been a forum where we can have a conversation with these member states so that we can solve this issue on a multilateral basis.

We are trying to find a consensus-based solution to this tax, which really does specifically target American technology companies, hampers their innovation, hampers their ability to succeed and hire more Americans.

I would ensure that this sort of conversation proceeds at the OECD.

Senator YOUNG. I think that is a really important priority, identifying some opportunities for regulatory harmonization, light touch regulation as it pertains to some of these frontier technologies.

Do you have any reflections on how we might, in certain circumstances, share data with trusted partners? You know, our data is the feed stock for machine learning and artificial intelligence, and, arguably, the Chinese, which do not have the same privacy inhibitions that our country does and the same limitations with respect to collecting data.

They might outpace the West as it relates to artificial intelligence, not because they have better engineers but because they have more data to run through their iterations.

So do you see opportunities there, Ms. Singh, to cooperate with our OECD partners in pooling data, assuming it is properly circumscribed and protected.

Ms. SINGH. Yes, Senator, absolutely. I think that we can encourage the free flow of data Free flow of data is exactly what has enabled our companies to innovate.

As you have correctly observed, we need the advantage of being able to share data while also finding that balance of privacy. And, of course, we do not want our consumers' information to be compromised by any government.

In particular, we do not want the Chinese Government to be able to acquire privacy information, personal information about our citizens.

I think that the OECD is the perfect forum for us to find that balance of how we can encourage a free flow of data in a productive manner while still finding a way to ensure the privacy of our consumers.

We have had many conversations with our European Union trading partners about this issue, and if I am confirmed, I commit to

you, I will find a way to have that conversation to come up with the right balance.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ms. Singh.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Story, one last question for you. On Tuesday, Special Representative Abrams confirmed for us that Colombian guerrillas, other criminal actors—ELN, dissident factions of the FARC, paramilitaries, drug traffickers, colectivos—are operating with impunity across Venezuela.

Is it—and a lot of that seems to be in an ungoverned space. Would it be your assessment that in the event of a potential transition a U.N. stabilization mission would be required in Venezuela, similar to what we have seen them do in the past in Haiti or Liberia, for example?

Mr. STORY. Well, Senator, you have asked a difficult important—and an important question. I have worked in ungoverned spaces as INL director in Colombia.

I ran INL programs—International Narcotics and Law Enforcement—for the Western Hemisphere. I served in Afghanistan. These are tough issues.

In addition to the state actors we talked about earlier, you do have all of these illegal armed groups inside of the country. We will—I will commit to you, if confirmed we will work directly with the interim government as well as with neighboring states, the international community, to come up with the best mechanism.

I do not know if it will be that mechanism or another mechanism that a newly democratically-elected government will come up with. But, certainly, it is an issue. It is a significant problem.

It affects not only inside of—the Venezuelans inside of Venezuela but, obviously, it is a—it is a danger to the neighbors and to the ultimate security of the United States of America.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yeah. I see large parts of ungoverned space with narco criminal activities and I see it is certainly a challenge for Venezuela and its future.

But I see it as a challenge within the hemisphere itself, and so we are looking forward to getting your continuing ideas as we move forward.

Mr. Douglass, you demonstrated generosity towards the Bahamian people after Hurricane Dorian devastated a significant part of the island.

You issued a statement calling on the administration to issue up to 10,000 work visas for Bahamians displaced by the disaster and I want to commend your compassion and willingness to speak in favor of common sense solutions.

I issued a similar statement and introduced legislation that would provide TPS to Bahamian nationals. Unfortunately, that has not advanced.

As I know that this type of principle stance has fallen out of fashion in the current area, can I have your personal commitment that, if confirmed, you will remain true to your beliefs and use your position as the U.S. ambassador to advocate for compassionate policies towards our Bahamian neighbors?

Mr. DOUGLASS. Absolutely, 100 percent.

Senator MENENDEZ. What efforts would you take to increase our support—our efforts in support of the Bahamians as they prepare for a response to future major storms and hurricanes?

Mr. DOUGLASS. So under the Caribbean Resilience Initiative that was started in 2016, we have given significant aid to the Bahamas to prepare for natural disasters, and following Hurricane Dorian we provided more than $35 million in support for the Bahamian people, which included everything from transporting people to USAID.

Senator MENENDEZ. And one final question to you. What steps do you think we need to take—we have been a long time engaged in the Bahamas, of care of the Bahamas—in strengthening their anti-money laundering framework?

Mr. DOUGLASS. I know that they are taking steps to try to become more compliant with U.S. standards and I would seek to try to persuade them that that is the right thing for them to do and that the U.S. should be their partner of choice.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mm-hmm. Well, I hope we can work with them more robustly to achieve that because at this point they are a, from my perspective, an information and transit point in that regard. So they have done some things but I think there is a lot more to be done.

Mr. DOUGLASS. Absolutely. You are correct on that point.

Senator MENENDEZ. Ms. Singh, let me ask you, what do you view as the major goals the United States should be pursuing through the OECD? What do you think is the administration's major policy objectives that should be accomplished through the OECD?

Ms. SINGH. Senator Menendez, thank you for that question.

I think a major goal we should be pursuing is cooperation with our like-minded partners at the OECD in creating a level playing field for American companies. The OECD is a nimble enough forum where we can have conversations with our European allies on regulatory standards which may hamper market access for our companies.

We want a free flow of goods and commerce, particularly in light of the COVID pandemic. We want to see uninterrupted supply chains.

We do not want artificial barriers erected for our companies and for our workers to be able to compete and succeed globally.

I also think, longer term, we should be working within the OECD to look at the economy of the future. The digital economy is not—I should say, not just the future, but it is here and now. We want the OECD to transition into a forum where we can have conversations with our allies about the technologies that will run the future.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I appreciate that. But as you may know, the administration has decided not to seek any funding for the OECD in fiscal year '21. So I do not know how one ultimately pursues a very valid mission that you just stated without any funds.

Are there reform efforts, to your knowledge, the administration is seeking at the OECD and should we be reconsidering a zero amount of money in the midst of a global pandemic?

Ms. SINGH. Senator, we are seeking reforms at the OECD and, in fact, many of our like-minded partners in the OECD would like to see similar reforms.

We would like to see accountability. We would like to see transparency. We would like to see an external evaluation of the OECD as is customary with all of our international organizations, and I think that the OECD will receive the support and resources that it needs from the United States Government.

I commit to you that I would work with our like-minded partners to make sure that the reforms make the OECD into a stronger, better organization for the American taxpayer.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yeah. I appreciate that. I would just simply say that at zero there is not much that cannot be done. I mean, we are for transparency. We are all for openness anywhere, any institution. But I am trying to determine whether there are specific reform efforts.

One final question, if I may, for you and then I will yield back to the chairman. I have other questions for other candidates but I will yield back to the chairman.

As the response to our pandemic crisis continues globally for the next several months and maybe even extending a year or more, how will you advocate that governments and international actors ensure that their responses to the COVID crisis are implemented according to international standards and best practices on social due diligence, human rights, and transparency in the midst of all of this?

Ms. SINGH. Senator, thank you. I think the OECD is an organization where the United States does share best practices, and we learn from our partners and member states on how they are handling the response to the crisis.

For instance, one of the things that we in the U.S. Government have been trying to do is restart international travel and tourism as a part—as an essential part of our economy.

At the OECD, I will plan to have conversations with our European member states on how we can get transatlantic travel and trade not just started again, but booming as it was before the pandemic.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right.

Mr. Chairman, I want to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a statement from myself with reference to today's hearing.

Senator YOUNG. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]

SUPPLEMENTAL STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ, RANKING MEMBER

I have twice raised the fact that today's hearing was noticed in violation of committee practice under Rule 3(d), which requires seven days' advance notice for committee meetings. Each time, the Majority has responded that Rule 3(d) requires only that the Chairman consult with the Ranking Member prior to waiving the 7-day notice rule. The Chairman indicated that he did consult with me but, when we were not able to reach agreement, he simply went ahead over my objection.

That is one way to run the committee, but it is not the way other SFRC chairmen, Democratic or Republican, have done so. While Rule 3(d) does speak only of "consultation," committee practice has been for chairmen of both parties to secure the agreement of the Ranking Member before waiving the 7-day rule. Moreover, the

Chairman seems to have taken this step without regard to the requirement under Rule 3(d) that there must be "good cause" to hold a committee meeting without 7 days advance notice. Like the broader unwritten rule of comity that governed our actions until the 116th Congress, committee practice under Rule 3(d) helped ensure that we worked together to advance committee prerogatives and U.S foreign policy.

The Chairman has the power to act unilaterally and to ignore committee practice and the views of the Minority. In doing so, however, the Chairman has set new precedent that will be used to run the committee by future Democratic and Republican chairwomen and chairmen.

Senator YOUNG. Ms. Singh, I would like to pick up on Senator Menendez's line of questioning. I, too, am interested in the OECD and its effectiveness, as are you. I noted it lacks strong enforcement mechanisms and compliance mechanisms.

So it is going to continue unless things change to rely on the power of persuasion to effect change. I think the OECD and every single multilateral organization of which the United States of America is a member and to which the United States sends taxpayer dollars ought to be scrutinized.

It ought to be scrutinized for its efficacy. It ought to be scrutinized for how it utilizes taxpayer dollars, opportunities for improvement, just as we would scrutinize domestic programs.

So I expect Senator Menendez and others who may be watching these hearings will agree that we need to scrutinize these multilateral organizations.

I happen to believe that the Multilateral Review Act is deserving of bipartisan support and, unfortunately, we have not received such traction.

But the Multilateral Review Act, once we receive a report, we look forward to implementing whatever recommendations might be forthcoming so that we can improve the OECD's operations.

So should that piece of legislation pass, Ms. Singh, do I have your commitment to work with me and other members of this committee to assess some of the recommendations and implement those that might improve the operation of OECD?

Ms. SINGH. Yes, Senator. Absolutely. You have my personal commitment. I share your view that multilateral organizations should be subject to scrutiny and to accountability.

Many of them have grown beyond their original mandate, and I think in order to make them more effective and a better use of time for all of the investment that we put in these organizations, we do need to review, and we do need to scrutinize them.

And that is why I mentioned the external evaluations that are United States Government policy with respect to the OECD and every organization.

You have my absolute commitment that I will work closely with you and the committee to ensure proper reviews of all organizations.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Furthermore, do I have your commitment, should I remain chairman of the Multilateral Institutions Subcommittee, to appear at a hearing pertaining to this very topic of reforming multilateral institutions pursuant to any reports we receive like those embodied and called for by Senator Risch's Multilateral Review Act?

Ms. SINGH. Yes, Senator. I commit to you that I will—I will do what I can to appear.

Senator YOUNG. Fair enough. Fair enough.

Mr. Douglass, The Bahamas risk being exploited by criminal enterprises, terrorist organizations, and state actors seeking to evade sanctions and financial regulations.

You know this is a problem because you have studied the country. You have made multiple visits to the country. How would you seek to work with the State Department and Treasury to ensure American interests are served through a more transparent financial sector in the Bahamas?

Mr. DOUGLASS. Thank you for the questions, and following up on Senator Menendez's question, I do realize that they need to really adopt our much stricter policies in the banking sector to account for, you know, money laundering, et cetera, and the irregular transfer of moneys that may be in those banks accounts there.

And so I would push for them to adopt our policies with greater strength.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, sir.

Pivot to China, a highly over utilized phrase, but one appropriate here. China's Belt and Road Initiative is coming to America's doorstep in the Caribbean Basin. Although Bahamas have not signed a cooperative agreement with China, to my knowledge, Chinese-controlled firms have undertaken major infrastructure projects, including the valuable container facility in Freeport.

Do you have any concerns about Chinese investments this close to home?

Mr. DOUGLASS. Absolutely. I think it is a significant concern for the United States' security. Freeport is the port of first entry for the United States of America. Having the Chinese funding and half own a port of first entry into the United States that is about 60 miles from our border is a concern.

Senator YOUNG. So how do you look at such issues? The fact that a port is being built I suppose it is not by definition a bad thing, right.

It is advantageous to the citizens in the Bahamas. It is advantageous to the Government. Is it the terms and conditionality of individual infrastructure investments that are of concern to you or is it—or is it just the fact that these investments are being made by China and that becomes a piece of a broader narrative that the Chinese are beneficent, good actors on the world stage when, in fact, they do not share our values and, in fact, their form of government is antithetical to the values in which we believe?

Mr. DOUGLASS. The problem is that the deals that have been done, which include the largest hotel complex, the Baha Mar, that was more than a $4 billion project, is wholly owned today by the Chinese.

The Hilton Hotel, which is across the street from Paradise Island and near our mission in downtown Nassau is wholly owned by the Chinese and funded by the Chinese Government.

They built a port in the northern sections of the Abacos and Cooper's Town, which cost the Bahamians $40 million and was built with Chinese workers, and it is still inoperable.

The port in Freeport is operable and is operating, but it is something for us to be aware that the Chinese do have probably significant interests in it.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Douglass.

My time has expired and we have been joined by Senator Kaine, who, if he is ready—he just—the nature of these jobs is we move from meeting to meeting. So——

Senator KAINE. Mr. Chairman, can you hear me?

Senator YOUNG. I can, indeed. I will defer to you, Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Young and Senator Menendez, and thanks to all the witnesses.

I have actually been viewing and hearing you for the last about 40 minutes. It is just that I was not able to be seen or heard by you, which is to your benefit.

It is all a plus that I can see and hear you and I can assure you it is a plus for you that you cannot see and hear me.

So, anyway, and the questions that both Senators Young and Menendez have asked have been fairly thorough.

Mr. Story, it is good to see you again. I think we worked together in the spring of 2019 and I just really want to follow up on one of the many tough issues dealing with Venezuela and that is the challenges that Venezuela posed to Colombia.

So just to state the reason that I am asking it this way, you know, I think Venezuela is almost a text case for the world that if you—if you align with authoritarian nations like Russia, China, Iran, Cuba, here is what your life is going to be like.

If you—if you allow an authoritarian to run things into the ground and just use the revenues of a, frankly, fairly wealthy nation to pad the pockets of the cronies that will then stick by you and everybody else suffers, then look what you are going to get and look who is aligned with Venezuela.

You are going to get the same thing in Iran, the same thing in Russia, the same thing in China, same with Turkey is also propping up Venezuela, as is Cuba.

On the other hand, right next door you have a perfect counter example. If you try to go down the path of democracy, solving tough internal issues like a longstanding civil war, if you try to invest more in parts of the country that had been disinvested in for decades, if you align with the democracies of the world like the United States in that effort, the path for you citizens is also going to dramatically change for the better.

We have made huge investments in Colombia, administrations of both parties supported by congresses under the control of both parties and we have achieved so very, very much, and I almost think that just a spotlight on Colombia and a spotlight on Venezuela is about all you need to know in order to decide which path you would rather pursue.

However, that means that the investments that we and other democracies have made in Colombia need to be continued and there are, certainly, vulnerabilities to Colombia's progress posed by the massive migration of folks from Venezuela and other challenges, including Venezuela allowing, you know, remnants of Colombian rebel groups to seek safe haven there.

So talk to me a little bit about sort of your role in Venezuela but also your understanding of this really important relationship between these two neighbors that are important in and of themselves but also painting such a clear distinction about life under

authoritarianism and life under democracies for the rest of the world.

Mr. STORY. Well, Senator, thank you very much for that question. I will try to be brief. I think this is one that we could spend a week talking about and not even scratch the surface.

And my job running the narcotics and law enforcement office here from 2010 to '13 was precisely just to help Colombia force the FARC into negotiations so they could get past over 50 years of civil war.

The investment by the American people in Colombia and how that investment has also allowed us to work with the Colombians in Central America and Mexico and other countries of South America, extraordinary opportunity, and I salute the Colombian people for their—for their ability, their working with us.

And now they are facing this difficult situation from Venezuela, that now home there in Colombia to over 2 million immigrants from Venezuela. I call them immigrants. I think it is—there is a better term for that.

They have been forcefully displaced from Venezuela in a very difficult environment right when Colombia is attempting to get past, you know, over five decades of internal strife. They are now met with having to figure out how to clothe and feed and provide schooling and hospitals, medical care for large numbers of people. And add onto that that without opportunities these become rich breeding grounds for illegal armed groups as well.

So I think Colombia has done an extraordinary job, very difficult circumstances. I applaud Congress and the U.S. Government for all we have done to support Colombia in other countries in the region dealing with the situation from Venezuela.

I can tell you the biggest impact we can have and the biggest help we could give to Colombia, the region, and to the United States is to restore democracy in Venezuela.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Story, thanks for that answer. I look forward to working with you on that matter together with my colleagues in both parties.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back to you because I have not voted yet.

Senator YOUNG. I have also not voted and we will soon be adjourning this hearing.

Okay. I want to give Senator Menendez and opportunity to ask another question and I will ask one pointed question to wrap things up. But we will each have to head down to vote very soon.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

So when you say adjourn, you are going to adjourn the hearing? Not recess it but adjourn it?

Senator YOUNG. I will adjourn and recess. I will do this at the same time. Yes. So it is——

Senator MENENDEZ. So come back here is what I am saying?

Senator YOUNG. No.

Senator MENENDEZ. Is the hearing going to continue or no, the hearing is not going to continue?

Senator YOUNG. No, the hearing will not continue. I regret—the parliamentary stuff I am still, you know——

Senator MENENDEZ. No, that is okay. I just want—I just want to——

Senator YOUNG. You wanted clarification. Yes, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. For our time frame.

Senator YOUNG. Yeah.

Senator MENENDEZ. So I am going to, evidently, have some questions for the record. I would just say to some of the nominees who I have not been able—will not be able to get to it is not for lack of affection for what you are—the post that you are going to but it is because of time.

So but I do want to go to Mr. McCarthy for a moment. President Weah's election marked the first transfer of power. He ran on an anti-corruption inclusive economic growth campaign but there is a lot of dissatisfaction with him, increasing scrutiny to high-profile scandals.

What is your assessment of the Government's willingness and capacity to address corruption and what would you do, if confirmed, to press the Government to adequately address the corruption issue?

Mr. MCCARTHY. Senator Menendez, thank you for that question.

Yes, it is a very important issue and I would approach that from a three-pronged approach.

Number one, we have embedded U.S. personnel experts, administrative experts, in various ministries throughout the Government of Liberia who are teaching their counterparts the proper administration of public funds.

At the same time, if confirmed, I would publicly recognize governmental and nongovernmental organizations that are focused on pushing for anti-corruption. This is the Anti-Corruption Commission of Liberia and the auditor general of Liberia, and hopefully support those organizations whenever feasible.

But third, and most importantly, I would highlight to the president and to the Government how essential it is to change the perception of corruption in Liberia not just for private investment but for also—for things like the Millennium Challenge Corporation if they are interested in additional compacts.

They are just wrapping up the first MCC compact, $257 million in Liberia that is doing the kinds of things that the president and the people have been asking for: additional electricity, additional fresh water, and new roads.

However, to get a new compact with the MCC they will have to pass the MCC's scorecard, which, as I am sure you are aware, they have not passed for the past two years.

So I would highlight the absolute essential importance of taking on corruption as a problem and resolving the problem and the perception of the problem if they wish to move forward.

Thank you, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right.

And so to you on free press issues there, Ms. Higgins, I have questions about the human rights abuses investigation that the U.N. Human Rights Council approved and what has been done in that regard, in your view, on sanctions, and in this regard I would like to hear some substantive responses from you on those.

And Ms. Maloney, I want to talk to you about the ban on political parties. Has it been lifted and what impact does the ban have on regards to people exercising political rights as well as women's rights in Eswatini.

So I will submit those for the record. If you would give me a substantive response I would appreciate it.

I now yield back to you.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

Ms. Higgins? Ms. Higgins is still with us?

Ms. Higgins?

Ms. HIGGINS. I just—yeah.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. I just have one line of questioning that will be fairly brief and then we will be adjourning this hearing.

I, too, will be submitting some questions for the record. Ms. Higgins, following the recent elections in Burundi that resulted in a new president, Évariste Ndayishimiye, and the death of former President Pierre Nkurunziza, you and the State Department have made a case for taking a hard look at rebooting the U.S.-Burundi relationship.

Does not the country's poor showing on the trafficking in persons reporting, for instance, preclude any real partnership in the near term? How do you envision this working?

Ms. HIGGINS. Thanks very much, Chairman Young.

The new president came in—election [Audio Glitch] last election in 2015. He is also the first time there has been a peaceful transfer of power in this country since its independence.

These are positive signs, but there is much that remains to be done. The new president has had several important steps such as talking about his willingness to fight corruption and fight COVID. We want to use those opportunities where we can find common ground to see how we can work together.

You are absolutely right, Chairman Young, that the trafficking in persons Tier 3 designations under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act precludes much of our assistance such as training of their military.

Nonetheless, there is a significant amount of USAID assistance that goes towards important programs such as our humanitarian assistance for refugees and internally-displaced people as well as health, which is very important not just in this COVID era but most recently to prepare for Ebola since there was a two-year Ebola epidemic just across the border, and also, as we look forward on fighting things like malaria since Burundi has the highest malaria rates in the entire world.

I do believe those kinds of assistance can continue and, yet, I do look forward, if confirmed, to working with Burundi to raise issues of human rights and especially trafficking in persons so they can do better on that very important issue.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you for being responsive to that line of inquiry.

Again, I will have some additional questions that I will submit to some of our nominees for what I hope is a fulsome response. I want to thank you again for appearing before this committee, for your desire to serve our nation in these important positions.

For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, Friday, August 7th, including for members to submit questions for the record.

Thanks again to each of you. Congrats to you and your family. This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:53 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM A. DOUGLASS BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The Constitution of The Bahamas does not allow women to transmit citizenship to their children born abroad on an equal basis with men. In May, the Bahamas' attorney general appealed the Supreme Court's decision allowing children born out of wedlock to Bahamian fathers and foreign mothers to acquire citizenship at birth. Gender discrimination in Bahamian nationality law is a persistent human rights challenge that puts children at risk of statelessness:

- If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to promote gender equality in the Bahamas, and to publicly encourage law reforms to ensure gender-equal nationality rights?

Answer. Recognizing that every nation has the inherent right to determine the qualifications for citizenship, I was disappointed last year when the Bahamas' attorney general supported the discriminatory scheme allowing Bahamian fathers to transmit citizenship to their children born abroad to foreign mothers, but disallowing Bahamian mothers from transmitting citizenship to their children born abroad to foreign fathers. If confirmed, I will work to promote gender equality in The Bahamas by inviting local civil society stakeholders to share with the Ambassador and the Mission their ideas for effecting change. I will also consider what role my team and I might play, along with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, in advocating for gender-equal nationality rights. I will draw on our Embassy's cultural and press outreach, social media campaigns, and exchange programs to show by example how the United States strives to overcome gender inequities.

Question. The Bahamas lacks an asylum law and, in the wake of Hurricane Dorian, allegations of mistreatment and abuse of migrants—especially Haitians—have increased. Particular concerns include the refoulement of Cubans, lack of due process in expedited removals, and poor conditions at the Carmichael Detention Center. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to improve protection of refugees and vulnerable migrants in the Bahamas?

Answer. I will do all I can to encourage the Bahamian Government to treat refugees and vulnerable migrants with respect, dignity, and compassion. Though there currently is no legislation outlining asylum procedures, I understand there is draft legislation—put on hold due to Hurricane Dorian and COVID–19—to address some of the gaps in the country's immigration laws. Currently, immigration officials follow a standard procedure to make a refugee status determination. If an individual does not qualify, the authorities forward his or her case to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in The Bahamas for its review. If confirmed, I would like to explore asylum training opportunities for immigration officers. This would assist the Bahamian Government in processing asylum seekers.

Question. It is increasingly evident that criminal organizations across the Caribbean are becoming more reliant on money laundering, which in the absence of an adequate anti-money laundering framework, facilitates their ability to operate and profit from drug trafficking. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to support the Bahamas in strengthening their anti-money laundering framework?

Answer. I understand that The Bahamas, as an international financial center, is vulnerable to money laundering in several sectors. The Bahamas has engaged with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to address deficiencies in its anti-money laundering regime, and has made progress in remedying these deficiencies. If confirmed, I will engage the Bahamian Government at the highest possible levels to ensure this progress continues. I will also offer the full support of the U.S. Govern-

ment to assist in achieving this important goal, including engagement with U.S. law enforcement entities to collaborate and provide guidance on preventing, investigating, and prosecuting money-laundering and other illicit transactions.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit that the U.S. Embassy will not take any such action. I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes. It is absolutely imperative the Mission be run in an open, respectful, collegial environment. I would have no tolerance for those who engage in retaliatory behavior. I commit to make clear to all Embassy employees that retaliation has no place in federal government and I would not tolerate it. If confirmed, I would hold accountable anyone found to have engaged in such retaliation in accordance with U.S. federal labor law and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. I am fully committed to promoting, mentoring, and supporting staff from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all members of my team have the support they need to perform to the best of their abilities. I will work with our leadership team to ensure Embassy Nassau remains a safe, productive, and inclusive work environment. It has been one of my life's great joys to have promoted, mentored, and supported staff of all backgrounds without prejudice in my career in the private sector and working with nonprofits.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be conveyed through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are averse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. My interest in democracy and human rights started when I was young, having seen the contributions my grandparents and parents made to society through their hands-on charitable endeavors: they were not only generous, but rolled up their sleeves. Through my own work and my own considerable charitable history, I have been a staunch supporter of those less fortunate and I have worked to guide them to a better station in their lives. I believe my contributions as part of the response following Hurricane Dorian are a recent example of my efforts to help others.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in The Bahamas? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The Bahamas has enjoyed a strong parliamentary democracy since its independence in 1973. Challenges remain with corruption within the Government and in the private sector, and with government transparency. I believe the last election, which resulted in the largest change in government in its history, with the opposition party taking 34 out of 39 Senate seats, was a referendum to tackle corruption. I believe further work needs to be done to improve the treatment of undocumented migrants, particularly of Haitian decent. Additionally, there is progress to be made on women's rights. Greater acceptance and protection are needed for persons in the LGBTI community.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in The Bahamas? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I would prioritize issues of democracy and good governance in our relations with The Bahamas. Working with my Embassy team, I would draw on the expertise and resources of the U.S. Government to support those efforts where appropriate. I would also work with civil society to promote transparency and good governance. I would ensure that the U.S. Embassy speaks out for and models democratic principles. My team and I would also focus on local issues including the separation of powers within The Bahamas' Government, corruption, and the role of civil society.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I would explore options to help bolster civil society and assist the Bahamian Government in addressing the issue of irregular migrants already in The Bahamas. The U.S. Embassy is already helping the Bahamian Government more aggressively address corruption—there are anticorruption bills under consideration—but there may be an opening to supplement existing U.S. Government programs.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in The Bahamas? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meet with civil society members, human rights, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOS, and other members of civil society in The Bahamas. I am not aware of efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society in The Bahamas. If I learn of such efforts, I will bring them to the attention of the responsible local officials and request that restrictions be removed so these organizations can carry out their missions.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes, I commit to meeting with democratically oriented political figures and parties. The Bahamas enjoys a vibrant multi-party system that allows its citizens to choose their leaders and representatives. If confirmed, I will ensure the Em-

bassy continues its dialogue with all members of the political society to ensure this democratic process continues. If confirmed, I will consistently and fairly engage actors and parties across the political spectrum. I will advocate access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties, and will encourage government officials and political figures to take the necessary steps to ensure a true democratic process.Question 18:Will you and your embassy team actively engage with The Bahamas on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in The Bahamas?

Answer. Yes to both questions. If confirmed, my embassy team and I will engage with The Bahamas on freedom of the press and address any government efforts to control or undermine press freedom. I commit to meeting with independent local press in The Bahamas.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in The Bahamas?

Answer. Yes. Embassy Nassau regularly engages civil society and government counterparts at the highest possible levels on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors. I understand that the entire staff, as directed by the Public Affairs Section, works tirelessly to counter disinformation and propaganda when detected. If confirmed, I will prioritize the dissemination of accurate and timely information, and provide whatever support my staff requires to ensure we adequately equip ourselves to immediately address any disinformation or propaganda disseminated in country.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with The Bahamas on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, my embassy team and I will actively engage with The Bahamas on the freedom of association, including the right of workers to form and join trade unions. U.S. Embassy Nassau regularly engages with the Bahamian Government and relevant stakeholders on labor rights, including for independent trade unions. The Bahamian Government maintains a robust dialogue with domestic labor groups, including trade unions, and regularly engages them on critical issues related to the rights and protections of Bahamian workers. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government to continue this dialogue, and support our Embassy staff in their efforts to engage with labor groups, as well as identify any issues that might require U.S. technical assistance and support.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in The Bahamas, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in The Bahamas? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in The Bahamas?

Answer. Yes. Promoting, protecting, and advancing the human rights of everyone—including LGBTQ persons—has long been and should remain the policy of the United States. LGBTQ people in The Bahamas face stigma and discrimination, and lack the protection of laws forbidding discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to protect LGBTQ persons from violence, criminalization, discrimination, and stigma.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO WILLIAM A. DOUGLASS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. My interest in democracy and human rights started when I was young, having seen the contributions my grandparents and parents made to society through their hands-on charitable endeavors: they were not only generous, but rolled up their sleeves. Through my own work and my own considerable charitable history, I have been a staunch supporter of those less fortunate and I have worked to guide them to a better station in their lives. I believe my contributions as part of the response following Hurricane Dorian are a recent example of my efforts to help others.

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

Answer. The Bahamas is a constitutional, parliamentary democracy with a long history of respect for the rule of law and human rights, and effective civilian control over the security forces. Nevertheless, several human rights issues deserve attention. If confirmed, I will engage with the Government on working to ensure due process for irregular migrants and rights of the Haitian community, judicial system reforms, improving conditions in prisons and detention centers, and ending gender-based violence.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in The Bahamas in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The Bahamas' challenge is to use its limited resources to promote respect for the rule of law while respecting human rights in a high-crime environment. If confirmed, I will work with my Embassy staff to augment existing training programs for Bahamian justice-sector officials. I would also champion existing Embassy and U.S. Government programs designed to promote human rights in the country.

Question. 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 Bahamas? 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 meeting with human rights, civil society, and nongovernmental organizations in the United States and The Bahamas. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances our national security. If confirmed, I would champion existing Embassy and U.S. Government programs designed to promote human rights in the country, as well as comply with all requirements under the Leahy Law.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with The Bahamas to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by The Bahamas?

Answer. Yes. The latest State Department's Human Rights Report states there were no political prisoners or detainees in The Bahamas in 2019. If confirmed, I will work actively with the Embassy team to address any cases that arise of political prisoners or persons unjustly targeted by government entities to ensure their rights and fundamental freedoms are respected.

Question. Will you engage with The Bahamas on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage with the Government of the Bahamas on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance.

Diversity

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and a representative workforce. I will encourage promoting Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options, similar to "boomerang talent" programs in the private sector. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform to encourage discussions on diversity and inclusion and the Department's new Centralized exit survey for employees leaving the Department.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in The Bahamas are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering an environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diver-

sity and Inclusion Best Practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in The Bahamas?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes a broad range of asset classes, some of which may hold interests in companies with a presence in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which may have a presence in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. I also own a personal residence in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in The Bahamas specifically?

Answer. Corruption saps economic growth, hinders development, destabilizes governments, undermines democracy, and provides openings for dangerous groups like criminals, traffickers, and terrorists. The Department has made anticorruption a national security priority and works across the globe to prevent graft, promote accountability, and empower reformers. The Bahamas faces continued challenges in addressing corruption and lack of transparency, and Prime Minister Hubert Minnis has indicated that anticorruption efforts are a priority for his administration. If confirmed, I commit to addressing this issue.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in The Bahamas and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception indices, the Bahamas ranks 29 out of 198. Prime Minister Hubert Minis of the Free National Movement won elections in a landslide in May 2017 on an anticorruption, pro-reform platform. The Prime Minister has stated his intent to instill greater transparency and accountability in government operations, reduce the debt and grow the economy, and improve citizen security. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Bahamian Government to implement needed reforms.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in The Bahamas?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with my country team to support these efforts, consulting with civil society where appropriate. I would ensure that U.S. Government anticorruption and governance programs in The Bahamas are well-managed, and that we properly monitor and evaluate programs in order to maximize their impact. I would continue to support efforts such as our International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) program with the International Development Law Organization to improve the prosecution of cases involving corruption, and training and mentoring for the Royal Bahamas Police Force to build their capacity to investigate complex financial crimes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO MELANIE HARRIS HIGGINS BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. In December 2015, The United Nations Human Rights Council approved an Independent Investigation on Burundi to look into violations and abuses of human rights in Burundi in the wake of the controversial 2015 election that was characterized by violence, and widely condemned by the U.S. and others as not credible. The investigation found "abundant evidence of gross human rights violations as well as human rights abuses by the Government and people whose actions can be attributed to the Government." It recommended a number of actions on the part of the Government, including participation in a genuine dialogue that could lead to a political settlement, disarming the youth militia, stopping use of police and intelligence for partisan purposes, and strengthening the independence of the judiciary:

- To your knowledge, have any of those recommendations been implemented?

Answer. No, not to my knowledge.

Question. Do they remain important?

Answer. The 2015 Independent Investigation on Burundi was created when the United States was an active member of the Council and was later replaced in 2016 with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi. The Commission is currently the only independent international mechanism investigating human rights violations and abuses in Burundi. Its findings were based on more than 1,200 statements of victims, witnesses, and alleged perpetrators of human rights violations. Although the United States withdrew from the Human Rights Council in June 2018, the State Department remains engaged with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi. With a new government recently elected, it will be important to see if the Imbonerakure, agents of the National Intelligence Service, the police, and local authorities continue to commit serious human rights violations and abuses in Burundi and act with impunity or if the new government will hold those responsible accountable, strengthen institutions, and support an independent free press and civil society.

Question. What more needs to be done, and how could you, if confirmed, lend your voice to seeing to their implementation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate publicly and privately for human rights and democracy as essential for Burundi's prosperity and stability with Burundian officials, international partners, civil society organizations, and business leaders. Consistent with applicable authorities and restrictions, including under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I will also seek to include efforts to promote human rights and democracy in U.S. programming and foreign assistance.

Question. The United States has had a variety of targeted financial sanctions and other aid restrictions in place since the 2015 political crisis. Eleven individuals have been targeted for sanctions under Executive Order. Burundi's eligibility for U.S. trade preferences under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has remained suspended since 2015. In FY2019 and FY2020, the administration fully applied legal restrictions on aid to Burundi under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

- Are those sanctions still justified?

Answer. The language in the renewal for Executive Order 13712 is the same language from President Obama's declaration of a national emergency with respect to the situation in Burundi by Executive Order 13712 on November 22, 2015 for the violent political repression that occurred in 2015 after the attempted coup d'état, and re-election to a third term, of then Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza. The new Burundi Government came into office less than two months ago; I will need more time observing and working with that government before I can properly evaluate the sanctions and their effects.

The recent inauguration of President Ndayishimiye was a historic moment for Burundi that demonstrated the continued commitment of Burundians to a peaceful transfer of power, but there were also election irregularities. For example, the State Department's June 5, 2020, statement on Burundi's elections called on the Government of Burundi to "address reports of electoral fraud and investigate and pursue accountability for all allegations of voter intimidation before, during, and after the elections. We also urge the release of any authorized party representatives and other election observers who were unjustly detained or arrested for engaging in election observation activities, including possessing voting information after polling stations closed, to promote electoral transparency." In our June 18, 2020, statement on the inauguration of President Ndayishimiye, we again called on the Burundian Government "to release members of political parties, civil society, and journalists arbi-

trarily arrested for election-related activities; and to investigate and pursue accountability for allegations of voter intimidation." The new government has an opportunity to usher in a new period in Burundian history. If confirmed, I will engage with the Burundian Government, including on efforts to address trafficking in persons, human rights, and other criteria related to African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) eligibility, foreign assistance restrictions, and financial sanctions.

Question. What actions should the Government take in order to obtain sanctions relief?

Answer. The State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report provides prioritized recommendations for how the Burundian Government can better meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's minimum standards. Some of the main priorities for the Burundian Government should be to implement the anti-trafficking law, significantly increase efforts to more effectively investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, and to develop a national-level data collection on law enforcement and victim identification efforts. If confirmed, I will prioritize engagement on TIP related issues with the Government to increase efforts to combat trafficking in country and abroad in order to meet the "minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking." The current Tier 3 ranking, "not meeting the minimum standards" has restricted nonhumanitarian and nontrade-related foreign assistance to the Government.

Other types of sanction relief are not solely determined by the State Department but would include demonstrated improvements in areas such as democracy and human rights. The political space to discuss human rights and opposition to government policies continued to shrink throughout the Nkurunziza presidency. If confirmed, I will advocate and press for the continued release of individuals detained for political activities during this and past election periods, for fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and the press, and the release of detained journalists. I will also continue to advocate for international nongovernmental organizations seeking reduced government interference in their activities to support Burundian civil society.

Question. In June, Human Rights Watch issued a statement that alleged that "Burundi's Government is failing to communicate fact-based information on the Covid-19 pandemic and preventing doctors and nurses from responding adequately:"

- Is there accurate information readily available about the spread of the corona virus in Burundi?

Answer. Not to my knowledge, but I welcomed President Ndayishimye's July 1, 2020, announcement declaring the coronavirus pandemic Burundi's "biggest enemy" and pledging to make testing widely available, which marked a significant change from previous government policy under then President Nkurunziza which called on Burundians to rely on prayers.

Question. What prompted the Government of Burundi to expel a World Health Organization official from the country?

Answer. The May 12, 2020, note verbale was sent to the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa and provided no explanation for the expulsion. The announcement came two days after the WHO sent letters to the Minister of Public Health requesting information on the COVID–19 response, reminding Burundi of its responsibilities as a State Party to the International Health Regulations, and pushing for implementation of adequate prevention measures.

Question. Can the healthcare system in Burundi handle an outbreak or an epidemic?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for and support U.S. Government initiatives to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and COVID–19 and support Ebola preparedness. The U.S. Government has invested in Burundi's capacity to respond to outbreaks through technical assistance to the Burundian Government to strengthen the health system and improve delivery of services. Since fiscal year 2012, through PEPFAR, the U.S. Government has invested over $95 million to support Burundi's HIV response and strengthen the country's health system. In 2017 and 2019, USAID funds supported responses to malaria epidemics, working to bring the epidemics under control and build systems to better prevent future epidemics. Previous Ebola preparedness efforts supported by the United States and others improved the country's ability to handle an outbreak or an epidemic, but there is more work to be done. The U.S. Government has provided more than $5.8 million in support of the COVID–19 response, including an additional $2 million to public health partners through USAID who have shifted their work from Ebola to COVID–19 preparedness; $1.5 million in humanitarian assist-

ance to support water, sanitation, hygiene, and protection activities; and $2.3 million in assistance to assist refugees and displaced persons vulnerable to COVID–19.

Question. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to press for accurate, transparent information?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to work with like-minded governments, organizations, and multilateral organizations to engage the Burundian Government and advocate for policies that support and advance U.S. interests. I will also continue to support accuracy in the Department's reporting and public reports such as the Human Rights Report and Trafficking in Persons Report.

Question. Will you advocate for the Government to allow the WHO to have full representation in the country?

Answer. To my knowledge, the World Health Organization (WHO) has not approached the United States seeking support to advocate on its behalf to allow the WHO to have full representation in the country. An interim WHO representative recently arrived in Burundi and is working closely with the Minister of Public Health and his staff to improve testing and treatment for COVID–19. If confirmed, I will continue to work with like-minded governments, organizations, and multilateral organizations to advocate for policies that support and advance U.S. interests, including good global public health.

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. If confirmed, I will comply with all relevant federal laws, regulations, and Department policies, and will raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels. As the Ambassador, I will take seriously my responsibility to set the highest professional standards for the entire mission. Under my leadership, prohibited personnel practices will not be tolerated. I will make sure this is communicated to employees by holding town halls, meeting with section chiefs, and other appropriate means. I will also encourage all employees to complete relevant State Department training, in addition to the mandatory training required for employees.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. I believe deeply in promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace environment, and as the most senior official within the Embassy, it will be my responsibility to set an example for fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive. If confirmed, fostering such values at Embassy Bujumbura will be a priority, and I will also make myself available to Embassy staff on this important issue. If confirmed, I will embrace opportunities to promote diversity and inclusion amongst our whole embassy team. I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will encourage promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. To the extent possible, I will promote workplace flexibilities in accordance with State Department overseas employment guidance. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new centralized exit survey.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to responding promptly to requests for information by Members of the SFRC through, and in accordance with, the guidance of the Bureau of African Affairs and State Department's Office of Legislative Affairs, and long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

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. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I will take seriously any allegations of attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, and 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. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

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.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. I have promoted human rights and democracy throughout my 22-year Foreign Service career, starting with my first posting in Cameroon where I engaged human rights leaders and religious activists countrywide and advocated with traditional rulers to stop Female Genital Mutilation. During my time at U.S. Embassy Jakarta (2010-2013), I was the key interlocutor for activists and religious leaders in the breakaway region of Papua and engaged in honest conversations with government officials about the need for accountability for human rights abuses and violations in that region.

As Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Port Moresby (2013-2015), I led a multi-agency team that advocated on preventing and eliminating gender-based violence, including a successful campaign by Embassy personnel to partner with religious and traditional leaders to prevent women from being accused of witchcraft and burned alive. Our integrated programming also strengthened non-governmental organizations advocating for survivors of gender-based violence and trained female candidates to successfully compete for seats in Parliament.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Burundi, I will uphold U.S. values and advocate for democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all Burundian citizens.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Burundi? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Since the 2015 political and economic crisis, there has been a clear decline in respect for human rights and the rule of law in Burundi, which affects all its citizens' rights and raises concerns about fair and transparent governance. The steady decline of civic and political space has been a source of critical concern. Per the State Department's 2019 Human Rights Report, reports of human rights violations and abuses include unlawful killings, forced disappearances, torture as well as substantial interference with the rights of freedom of expression and association, and the right to peaceful assembly.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Burundi? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advocate publicly and privately for human rights and democracy as essential for Burundi's prosperity and stability with Burundian officials, international partners, civil society organizations, and business leaders. Con-

sistent with applicable authorities and restrictions, including under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I will also seek to include efforts to promote human rights and democracy in U.S. programming and foreign assistance.

Bringing together stakeholders including those who fled the country in the aftermath of the 2015 political and economic crisis as well as building trust, and influencing change with few incentives, will all likely be challenges in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general. There are other international partners ready and willing to engage without advocating on human rights and democracy concerns, as we do. Despite the decline in bilateral engagement in the aftermath of the 2015 political and economic crisis, the United States and Burundi have a long history of partnership and cooperation. Recently elected President Ndayishimiye has expressed interest in improving relations with the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to deepening relationships with the Burundian Government, international and domestic partners, and all Burundians to advocate for tangible advancement in respect for human rights, empowerment of civil society, commitment to democracy, and the increased prosperity of both the United States and Burundi.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage publicly and privately with a wide range of stakeholders on matters of human rights, including civil rights, and governance and will offer support where appropriate. I will also seek to have the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura, in coordination with other foreign missions, lead advocacy on matters of human rights, democracy, anti-corruption, and good governance. Consistent with applicable authorities and restrictions, including under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I will also seek to include these efforts in U.S. programming and foreign assistance, especially in the areas of freedom of expression, including for journalists, and strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Burundi? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations all play important roles in advancing democratic governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addition to U.S.-based and Burundi-based organizations, many Burundi-focused organizations also operate from outside of the country. If confirmed, I will engage publicly and privately with a wide range of stakeholders on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance and will offer support where appropriate.

I will also seek to have the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura, in coordination with other foreign missions and international NGOs, lead efforts to continue to proactively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures, especially when those restrictions would place U.S. implementing partners in a position of potentially violating U.S. laws to comply with the restrictions. The State Department in coordination with USAID has closely tracked the measures first announced in 2017 for international NGO oversight and regulation, coordinated with donor organizations in Burundi, issued statements and raised it in multilateral fora, and engaged publicly and privately with the Burundian Government at the highest levels on this issue. If confirmed, I will continue to make this a priority.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's practice of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including political opposition figures and parties. Bringing together stakeholders including those who fled the country in the aftermath of the 2015 political and economic crisis as well as building trust, and influencing change with few incentives, will all likely be challenges in advancing political competition. The steady decline of civic and political space has been a source of critical concern. Recently elected President Ndayishimiye has expressed interest in improving relations with both domestic and international interlocutors, including the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to deepening relationships with the Bu-

rundian Government, international and domestic partners, and all Burundians to advocate for tangible advancement in respect to empowerment of civil society, including access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth, commitment to democracy, and the increased prosperity of both the United States and Burundi. Consistent with applicable authorities and restrictions, including under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I will also seek to include these efforts in U.S. programming and foreign assistance.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Burundi on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Burundi?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed along with the Embassy team to meeting with independent, local press in Burundi. If confirmed, I am also committed to coordinating with like-minded missions and to continuing to press the Burundian Government to address cases of key political prisoners, including journalists, and other persons who have been unjustly targeted by the Government. Most recently, the State Department has privately engaged through high-level discussions and publicly called for the release of persons, including journalists, unjustly detained during the May 2020 elections. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to engage with the Government of Burundi about our concerns, and I will ensure a dialogue on this and human rights remains a priority in our bilateral relationship. I will also collaborate with like-minded missions, multilateral organizations, and civil society to speak with a united voice that represents all Burundians committed to a democratic future for their country.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Burundi?

Answer. The United States believes that malicious activities in cyberspace can undermine national security and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will engage with like-minded missions, civil society, and international partners to respond to disinformation efforts and underscore the importance of a credible, independent, professional media to a free and democratic society.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Burundi on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our embassy's efforts to promote workers' rights. I would advocate for continued improvements in this area, and document progress in the Human Rights Report. As noted in the 2019 Human Rights Report, Burundian law provides for the right of workers to form and join unions with restrictions, but the Burundian Government did not effectively enforce applicable laws and placed excessive restrictions on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Burundi, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Burundi? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Burundi?

Answer. Since 2009, consensual same-sex sexual conduct and same-sex marriage between adults is illegal in Burundi. Same-sex sexual conduct is punishable by up to two-year imprisonment and a fine of up to 100,000 Burundian francs. The law does not prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ persons in housing, employment, nationality laws, and access to Government services such as health care and societal discrimination against LGBTI persons was common. In 2017, the Burundian Government passed an international NGO law, which imposed severe restrictions and scrutiny on the ability of LGBTI organizations to register and work effectively. If confirmed, I commit to engaging on human rights for all Burundians and will promote diplomatic and engagement efforts that are inclusive of all people, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. When engaging with civil society members, I will be cognizant of the risks faced by LGBTI persons in general.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO MELANIE HARRIS HIGGINS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have promoted human rights and democracy throughout my 22-year Foreign Service career, starting with my first posting in Cameroon where I engaged human rights leaders and religious activists countrywide and advocated with traditional rulers to stop Female Genital Mutilation. During my time at U.S. Embassy Jakarta (2010-2013), I was the key interlocutor for activists and religious leaders in the breakaway region of Papua and engaged in honest conversations with government officials about the need for accountability for human rights abuses and violations in that region. As Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Port Moresby (2013-2015), I led a multi-agency team that advocated on preventing and eliminating gender-based violence, including a successful campaign by Embassy personnel to partner with religious and traditional leaders to prevent women from being accused of witchcraft and burned alive. Our integrated programming also strengthened non-governmental organizations advocating for abused women and trained female candidates to successfully compete for seats in Parliament.If confirmed as Ambassador to Burundi, I will uphold U.S. values and advocate for democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all Burundian citizens.

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

Answer. Since the 2015 political and economic crisis, there has been a clear decline in respect for human rights and the rule of law in Burundi, which affects all its citizens' rights and raises concerns about fair and transparent governance. Per the State Department's 2019 Human Rights Report, human rights violations and abuses include unlawful killings, forced disappearances, torture as well as substantial interference with the rights of freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and association. If confirmed, I will advocate publicly and privately for human rights and democracy as essential for Burundi's prosperity and stability with Burundian officials, international partners, civil society organizations, and business leaders. Consistent with applicable authorities and restrictions, including under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I will also seek to include efforts to promote human rights and democracy in U.S. programming and foreign assistance.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Burundi in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. If confirmed, challenges in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general may include bringing together stakeholders including those who fled the country in the aftermath of the 2015 political and economic crisis, building trust among stakeholders, and influencing change in a context with an active and influential presence of international actors who do not share the same human rights and democracy concerns we do. The steady decline of civic and political space has been a source of critical concern. Recently elected President Ndayishimiye has expressed interest in improving relations with the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to deepening relationships with the Burundian Government, international and domestic partners, and all Burundians to advocate for tangible advancement in respect for human rights, empowerment of civil society, commitment to democracy, and the increased prosperity of both the United States and Burundi.

Question. 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 Burundi? 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. Civil society members, human rights organizations, and other non-governmental organizations all play important roles in advancing democratic governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addition to U.S.-based and Burundi-based organizations, many Burundi-focused organizations also operate from outside of the country. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with all individuals and organizations for the benefit of U.S. goals, development objec-

tives, and policy advocacy and to further deepen our partnership with the Burundian people and government.

The United States and Burundi have a history of security cooperation, for example with the AU Peacekeeping Mission to Somalia. Previous efforts focused on professionalization of Burundi's military and training, including human rights training, for the country's peacekeeping troops. The Burundian military has previously acted swiftly to address allegations of gross violations of human rights through proper AU and U.N. channels. Due to the current restriction on non-humanitarian, nontrade-related assistance under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, Embassy Bujumbura is limited on the kinds of further professionalization assistance it can provide at this time to address this important issue. The Leahy Law helps ensure that we do not furnish U.S. assistance to security force units where there is credible information that the unit committed a gross violation of human rights. If confirmed, I will act in accordance with our law and policy, and maintain existing processes at Embassy Bujumbura for Leahy vetting, and I will encourage the Burundian Government to continue to address credible allegations of gross violations of human rights through transparent investigations to ensure the perpetrators are held accountable.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Burundi to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Burundi?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging along with the embassy team to continue pressing the Burundian Government to address cases of key political prisoners, as well as journalists, and other persons who have been unjustly targeted by the Government. Most recently, the State Department has privately engaged through high-level discussions and publicly called for the release of persons unjustly detained during the May 2020 elections. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to engage with the Government of Burundi about our concerns, and I will ensure a dialogue on this issue specifically and on human rights more broadly, remain a priority in our bilateral relationship. I will also collaborate with like-minded missions, multilateral organizations, and civil society to speak with a united voice that represents all Burundians committed to a democratic future for their country.

Question. Will you engage with Burundi on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage publicly and privately with a wide range of stakeholders on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance and will offer support where appropriate. I will also seek to have the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura, in coordination with other foreign missions, lead advocacy on matters of human rights, democracy, anti-corruption, and good governance. Consistent with applicable authorities and restrictions, including under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I will also seek to include these efforts in U.S. programming and foreign assistance, especially in the areas of freedom of expression, including for journalists, and strengthening of civil society organizations.

Diversity

Question. 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 embrace opportunities to promote diversity and inclusion amongst our whole embassy team. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will encourage promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures. I will promote workplace flexibilities in accordance with Department overseas employment guidelines. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized exit survey.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Burundi are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I believe deeply in promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace environment, and as the most senior official within the Embassy, it will be my responsibility to set an example for fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive. If confirmed, fostering such values at Embassy Bujumbura will be a priority, and I will also make myself available to Embassy staff on this important issue. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently under-

taking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Burundi?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, including a foreign stock index fund, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Burundi specifically?

Answer. Political corruption negatively influences democratic governance, the rule of law, and efforts to foster economic growth, improve the delivery of public services, and pursue effective development policies in many countries. Corruption further undermines efforts to foster participatory policy making, implement effective policy, and facilitate service delivery. In Burundi specifically, the anti-corruption law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, but according to the 2019 Human Rights Report, the reluctance of police and public prosecutors to investigate and prosecute cases of government corruption and of judges to hear them in a timely manner resulted in widespread impunity for government officials, their supporters and proxies. I intend to engage with the Government of the newly-elected president of Burundi to advocate for improved governance and the rule of law.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Burundi and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. In 2019, Transparency International ranked Burundi 165 out of 180 countries, and it scored 19 points out of 100 on the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index. Since 2010, Burundi's Corruption Perceptions Index has remained in the 17-22 range. Burundi's late former President Nkurunziza enacted an anti-corruption policy in 2010, but corruption remained pervasive.

President Ndayishimiye was inaugurated on June 18, 2020. In a June 30, 2020, address to the Burundian parliament, the president announced his commitment to combat corruption in public services and embezzlement of public funds. As a first step to combatting corruption, citizens can now anonymously report corruption at suggestion boxes in local administrative offices. On July 3, 2020, the Minister of Finance announced new measures the Burundian Government plans to use to monitor the management of the state budget and revenue collection. If confirmed, as the U.S. Ambassador to Burundi, I will advocate for a comprehensive, systemic approach to combat corruption that empowers the people to report without fear of retaliation and promotes inclusive governance and transparency in Burundi's Government.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Burundi?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage publicly and privately with a wide range of stakeholders on good governance and anticorruption efforts and will offer support where appropriate. I will also seek to have the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura, in coordination with other foreign missions, lead advocacy on matters of human rights, democracy, anti-corruption, and good governance. Consistent with applicable authorities and restrictions, including under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, I will also seek to include these efforts in U.S. programming and foreign assistance, especially in the areas of freedom of expression, including for journalists, and strengthening of civil society organizations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JEANNE MARIE MALONEY BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. A 1973 decree bans political parties, and in December, police in Eswatini arrested the head of the largest opposition party along with several other politicians and activists, seizing electronic devices and other materials. The African Union called on Eswatini to lift the ban on political parties in the context of the 2018 parliamentary elections. Ambassador Lisa Peterson is on record calling for the same. To your knowledge, has the ban on political parties been lifted? What impact does the ban have with regards to people exercising political rights?

Answer. Political parties openly exist in Eswatini, but conditions for their operations, particularly in elections, are undefined, legally unclear, and/or culturally restricted. Although candidates from several political parties competed in the 2018 elections, the constitution requires candidates for public office to run on their individual merit, as independents. Political parties may not offer slates of candidates, and a candidate's party affiliation does not appear on ballots.

While government officials assert that the 1973 decree banning parties ended with the adoption of the new constitution in 2006, the Government has not issued any official declaration to clarify its assertion, and political parties and NGOs remain skeptical. Additionally, sociocultural taboos associated with overt political party affiliation (especially in rural areas) continue to limit organized political engagement. In 2019, political parties conducted the first national political marches and rallies in support of multiparty democracy since the 1973 decreebanning political parties. Later the same year, however, a town council prohibited a proposed political march.

Question. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to address the problems identified not only in the Freedom House report, but which to a large extent are echoed in the State Department Country Report for Human Rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage the Eswatini Government to define and expand the space for political parties to operate, including by encouraging the Government to take regulatory and/or legal action that removes the ambiguity surrounding the 1973 decree banning parties and establishes a clear framework clarifying both the ways in which political parties are permitted to operate and the manner in which party candidates may participate in elections. I will emphasize the importance of making measurable progress on these issues as a condition precedent to qualifying for Millennium Challenge Corporation assistance, to which Eswatini aspires, as well as maintaining its AGOA status. I will engage Swati authorities, international partners, civil society organizations, and business leaders to work together toward these goals.

Question. What is your assessment related to the status of women's legal and civil rights in Eswatini?

Answer. Despite significant progress in recent years, including a handful of recent court rulings and the 2018 enactment of the Sexual Offenses and Domestic Violence Act, women continue to occupy a subordinate role in society. Although the constitution provides for equal protection under the law and guarantees dignity for all persons, Eswatini's dualistic legal system, which incorporates common law and traditional Swati laws and customs, has tended to complicate the protection of women's rights. Recent court decisions have clarified and expanded women's rights.

Girls and women face heightened discrimination in rural areas, where Swati culture and tradition often receive primacy over constitutional freedoms and legal guarantees of rights. Boys receive preference in education, and women are more likely to be employed in the informal sector.

Question. What impact has this had on the HIV/AIDS epidemic? Does the United States have programs aimed at expanding and protecting the rights of women in Eswatini?

Answer. Studies show that improved gender equality and greater legal protection for women, especially adolescent girls and young women, correlate to reduced vulnerability to HIV infection. This correlation applies in Eswatini as well.

The United States supports several programs to expand and protect the rights of women in Eswatini, including by helping Eswatini to amend its Legal Practitioner's Act to improve access to justice for women and other underserved populations. The U.S. Government is also launching a women's economic empowerment project to assist with post-COVID recovery, and to mitigate restrictive economic, legal, and cultural barriers to facilitate women's meaningful participation in the economy.

Under PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief), the DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) program new HIV diagnoses among adolescent girls and young women have declined by 25-percent or more in nearly all of the areas where the program is taking place. Peace Corps supports similar objectives through its GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) clubs. Both of these programs help young women know their HIV status, learn how to negotiate safe sex, work on future aspirations and plans, and build financial literacy.

USAID's regional ARISA (Advancing Rights in Southern Africa) program also provides support to women in Eswatini to assist with land rights, and other access to economic activity.

Question. What do you plan to do, if confirmed, to advocate for greater rights for women in Eswatini?

Answer. If confirmed, I will leverage my position and my convening power to engage both publicly and privately to advocate for greater respect for the rights of women in Eswatini. I will explain and emphasize the fact that greater respect for women's rights is essential for Eswatini's future growth, economic diversification, and security. I am committed to working with the Eswatini Government, like-minded missions, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations to advance these important areas.

Question. What is your assessment of the state of media freedom in Eswatini?

Answer. Although the constitution and law guarantee freedom of expression, including for the press, the Government restricts media freedom, particularly on matters concerning the King and/or the monarchy. Self-censorship, harassment and intimidation of journalists who criticize the King, and reprisals are rampant.

Although Eswatini's two daily newspapers increasingly criticize government actors for corruption, inefficiency, and other transgressions, they strictly avoid criticizing the King and other members of the royal family. An independent monthly magazine occasionally criticizes the royal family, including the King, as well as the Government, but self-censorship remains a concern for all Eswatini-based journalists. Independent online media and blogs of widely varying degrees of credibility and professionalism, published primarily by individuals based outside of Eswatini, are harshly critical of the King, royal family, and government. Online media, including social media, is sometimes monitored but never disrupted or censored. Broadcast media remains firmly under state control. Most people in Eswatini obtain their news from radio broadcasts. Access to speak on national radio is generally limited to government officials, although the University of Eswatini has a radio license to broadcast university events.

Question. Does the U.S. currently have any programs to support media freedoms?

Answer. The USAID-funded regional program "Advancing Rights in Southern Africa" promotes media freedom in Eswatini.

Question. What if anything should the U.S. be doing to support journalists in Eswatini?

Answer. We can do more to support journalists through boosting professional exchanges, expanding targeted training programs, and increasing engagement with the Government, civil society, like-minded missions, and the private sector to address media freedoms and expand the space for professional journalists to operate. We could also consider trying to attract more international media attention for Eswatini, both through private media houses and respected U.S. institutions such as Voice of America. Shining a brighter light on Eswatini could improve understanding of its challenges and opportunities and, in doing so encourage better journalistic practices.

Question. As of 2018 in Eswatini, of those living with HIV, 92% knew their HIV status, 86% were on treatment, and 81% were virally suppressed. This puts Eswatini close to achieving the UNAIDS so-called 90-90-90 goals, which call for countries to achieve 90% for each of these measures. This is a remarkable achievement given that, as of 2018, Eswatini had the highest HIV adult prevalence rate in the world. However only 76% of children are on treatment. Do you have any idea what accounts for the disparity in terms of treatment rates for children? What should the U.S. be doing to address the disparity?

Answer. The disparity in treatment rates between children and adults is due to non-universal implementation of pediatric testing strategies and frequent changes in caregivers aside from the biological parent. This raises issues of consent for HIV testing and disclosure if the caregiver does not have legal custody. Additionally, there have been persistent issues with parental adherence to testing schedules for exposed children.

Owing to the successful implementation of the mother-to-child-transmission reduction program, PEPFAR support has facilitated Eswatini's approach to eliminating infant HIV. The number of HIV positive children under the age of five is now very low, and all are identified and on treatment.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to making clear that prohibited personnel practices has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. As a career foreign service officer, I have treated and will continue to treat all employees with respect and professionalism, and I will make that clear to all employees under my leadership. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will embrace every opportunity to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace. I would ensure the Embassy devotes resources to mentoring and support for all staff, including those from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups. Diverse teams are richer in creativity and perspective, and I believe all leaders should embrace a wide range of inputs, viewpoints, and backgrounds. I will make sure that employees understand this by holding town halls, meeting with section chiefs, and other appropriate means.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all federal laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. For the past five years of my career, I have prioritized the promotion of human rights in Africa. As Foreign Policy Advisor at U.S. Army Africa, I worked together with my military colleagues to impress upon African counterparts the imperative to observe the rights of individuals—and to transparently investigate and decisively act when an allegation of a human rights abuse or violation is made.

Previously, as the Director of the Office of Security Affairs in the Africa Bureau, I was responsible for ensuring that U.S. peacekeeping training and security assistance recipients were appropriately vetted in accordance with the Leahy law. Our programs included training on human rights, the protection of civilians, and countering sexual exploitation and abuse. With our support, troop performance improved.

Earlier in my career, while serving as Desk Officer for Angola, I worked to implement the Department's democracy and human rights priorities in our bilateral engagement. The Department continues to prioritize democracy and human rights, which has supported impressive reforms over the past few years. If confirmed as Ambassador, I look forward to advocating for human rights and democratic principles in Eswatini.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Eswatini? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The most pressing challenges to democratic engagement and development in Eswatini are lack of transparency, inclusion, and the freedom of expression. Lingering practical and cultural restrictions on political participation cause significant problems. While government officials assert that the 1973 decree that banned political parties ended with the adoption of the new constitution in 2006, the Government has not issued any official declaration to clarify its assertion, and political parties and NGOs remain skeptical.

While political parties exist in Eswatini, conditions for their operations are legally undefined, and/or culturally restricted. The constitution requires candidates for public office to run on their individual merit, as independents. Political parties may not offer slates of candidates, and a candidate's party affiliation does not appear on ballots. One result of the limited space for political party participation has been that lawmakers are hindered from forming coalitions around shared ideas, which fundamentally weakens the Parliament as a counterweight to the other two branches of government. While legal reform following enactment of the new constitution in 2006 has opened up some additional space for increased and improved political engagement, government officials, political actors, and civil society alike have been slow to transform democratic reforms on paper into tangible progress on the ground.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Eswatini? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage the Eswatini Government to define and expand the space for political parties, including by taking regulatory and/or legal action that removes ambiguity surrounding the 1973 decree banning parties and establishes a clear framework clarifying both the ways in which political parties are permitted to operate and the manner in which party candidates may participate in elections. I will emphasize both publicly and privately that respect for political rights and democratic engagement should be a critical component to Eswatini's efforts to improve its international reputation, attract foreign direct investment, and enhance its security. I will emphasize the importance of making measurable progress on these issues as a condition precedent to qualifying for Millennium Chal-

lenge Corporation (MCC) assistance, to which Eswatini aspires. I will engage Swati authorities, political parties, civil society organizations, business leaders, and international partners to work together toward these goals.

Potential impediments to progress are likely to come from Eswatini's deeply entrenched cultural and traditional institutions. By engaging with a wide array of actors, demonstrating respect for sociocultural traditions that are not antithetical to human rights, accentuating the human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed in the text of Eswatini's own constitution, and leveraging the eligibility criteria of flagship U.S. Government trade and development programs like MCC and AGOA, I hope to chip away at these impediments.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. U.S. Government assistance to Eswatini currently advances democracy and governance through several avenues, including by providing assistance to advance electoral reforms, enhance fiscal transparency and accountability, and promote increased participation by women in the political process. Additionally, the United States supports the introduction and expansion of good governance within financial administration and service delivery systems, which bolsters transparency, citizen participation, and accountability within planning and financial management processes. If confirmed, I will continue to engage within the Department and with interagency partners to support the establishment and continuation of complementary and expanded programs that advance U.S. interests in Eswatini. I also will emphasize the importance of making measurable progress on democracy and governance as a condition to both maintaining the country's AGOA eligibility and qualifying for Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) assistance, to which Eswatini aspires.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Eswatini? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Human rights NGOs—local, regional, and international—are active in Eswatini. Civil society organizations, regardless of where they are registered or where they operate, can be critical allies in advancing democratic governance, expanding human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assisting the United States to strengthen its bilateral and multilateral relationships. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging broadly to help advance these objectives. I will leverage our strong relationships in Eswatini to communicate privately or publicly (as the situation dictates) to proactively address efforts to restrict or penalize civil society through legal or regulatory measures.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Restrictions on political participation remain one of Eswatini's most enduring challenges. Although there has been measurable progress in recent years thanks to important legal reforms and expanded rights of assembly, speech, and association, much work remains to be done.

If confirmed, I will work with the King and his advisors, the host government, civil society, and like-minded missions to secure and expand upon this progress. I will emphasize the importance of promoting diverse viewpoints and supporting an open arena for peaceful, good faith discussions of political differences. I commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties, and I will advocate openly in support of human rights for all individuals in Eswatini, including women, minorities, and youth.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Eswatini on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Eswatini?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with media practitioners, like-minded missions, civil society, government, and international partners to underscore the importance of an independent, professional, and open media to a free and democratic society. I will seek resources to continue support to Eswatini's media, including profes-

sional exchanges, targeted training programs, and seminars to educate journalists and media stakeholders about their rights. Swati journalists have participated in U.S. Government-sponsored professional exchange programs on investigative reporting, safeguarding freedom of expression, and the media's role in strengthening democratic institutions.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Eswatini?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with civil society and government actors on countering disinformation and malign propaganda by foreign state and non-state actors. As Taiwan's last diplomatic ally on the African continent, Eswatini finds itself in a position that is particularly vulnerable to disinformation and malign propaganda campaigns. I will commit to working with like-minded partners in Eswatini to counter such campaigns.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Eswatini on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. The United States has a long and proud tradition of supporting the rights of workers, including to form labor organizations, internationally. If confirmed, I will commit to engage with unions, relevant government offices, and the private sector to support labor rights.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Eswatini, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Eswatini? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Eswatini?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Eswatini, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. I will seek ways to support the efforts of LGBTI NGOs in Eswatini, including through advocacy, leadership development opportunities, and programmatic support.

Eswatini has seen recent progress in this space, although clear challenges remain. While there are colonial-era common law prohibitions against sodomy, no penalties are specified, and there has never been an arrest or prosecution for consensual same-sex conduct. The law does not prohibit discrimination against LGBTI persons in housing, employment, nationality laws, and access to government services such as health care. Societal discrimination against LGBTI persons remains widespread, and LGBTI persons generally conceal their sexual orientation.

Despite these barriers, in 2019, the LGBTI community organized and held the country's second Pride Parade in as many years, both of which received positive media attention and occurred without incident.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JEANNE MARIE MALONEY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. For the past five years of my career, I have prioritized the promotion of human rights in Africa. As Foreign Policy Advisor at U.S. Army Africa, I worked together with my military colleagues to impress upon African counterparts the imperative to observe the rights of individuals—and to transparently investigate and decisively act when an allegation of a human rights abuse or violation is made.

Previously, as the Director of the Office of Security Affairs in the Africa Bureau, I was responsible for ensuring that U.S. peacekeeping training and security assistance recipients were appropriately vetted in accordance with the Leahy law. Our programs included training on human rights, the protection of civilians, and countering sexual exploitation and abuse. With our support, troop performance improved.

Earlier in my career, while serving as Desk Officer for Angola, I worked to implement the Department's democracy and human rights priorities in our bilateral engagement. The Department continues to prioritize democracy and human rights, which has supported impressive reforms over the past few years. If confirmed as Ambassador, I look forward to advocating for human rights and democratic principles in Eswatini.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in Eswatini are restrictions on the freedom of expression with respect to the monarchy and limitations on political participation. If confirmed, I will use my leadership and voice, both publicly and privately, to underscore that respect for human rights is essential for Eswatini's future growth, prosperity, and security. Additionally, I will engage political organizations, Swati authorities, international partners, civil society organizations, and business leaders to work together toward these goals.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Eswatini in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Regarding freedom of expression, members of the royal family and Eswatini Government officials continue to insist that Swati culture prohibits public criticism of the monarchy, making it difficult for local press or civil society organizations to hold members of the royal family accountable for practices that hurt the nation, such as exorbitant royal spending.

On political participation, the Government has been unwilling to publish an official record or statement making it clear that the ban on political parties contained in a 1973 royal decree is no longer in effect. Until it does so, doubts will continue among political parties, NGOs, and the people of Eswatini, and will inhibit the further development of political parties and the strengthening of Parliament.

If confirmed, I look forward to engaging with the King and his advisors, government officials, political organizations, international partners, civil society, and members of the press.

Question. 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 Eswatini? 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 meeting with human rights organizations, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations, regardless of where they are registered or operate. Such organizations can play an important role in advancing democratic governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assisting Eswatini to continue developing into a stronger partner of the United States. The Leahy Law helps to ensure that we do not furnish U.S. assistance to a security force unit where there is credible information that the unit committed a gross violation of human rights. If confirmed, I will support existing processes at Embassy Mbabane to ensure continued implementation of the Leahy law.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Eswatini to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Eswatini?

Answer. There is no question there have been a number of concerns related to good governance and respect for human rights in Eswatini. Our Embassy has engaged with the Government and a multitude of stakeholders to make progress in some of these areas. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to promote human rights for all individuals in Eswatini, including those who are members of vulnerable populations, journalists, and members of political parties. I am committed to working with the Eswatini Government, like-minded missions, civil society, and international organizations to address these important areas.

Question. Will you engage with Eswatini on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. The United States has been a strong advocate in Eswatini for the respect of human rights, including freedoms of expression and of association, and the rule of law. If confirmed, I am committed to speaking both publicly and privately with the Government of Eswatini about our concerns. I will partner with like-minded missions in Eswatini to speak with a united voice on this topic, will work with civil society to ensure our voice is joined by every-day citizens committed to the country's future, and will use my convening power to ensure a continued dialogue on human rights in Eswatini remains front and center of our agenda.

Question. 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. I agree with the research that indicates that diverse teams are richer in creativity and perspective, and I believe all leaders should embrace a wide range of inputs, viewpoints, and backgrounds.

If confirmed, I will pursue every opportunity to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace. I will ensure the Embassy devotes resources to mentoring and support for all staff, including those from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Eswatini are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive will be a priority. Proactively, I will make sure supervisors within the Embassy regularly complete diversity training. As the most senior official within the Embassy, it will be my responsibility to set the example for fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive.

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Eswatini?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, including a foreign stock index fund and global bond funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which may have a presence in Eswatini. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Eswatini specifically?

Answer. In many developing countries, corruption inhibits the delivery of public services by siphoning off limited resources and impeding economic growth. Members of the royal family continue to exercise undue influence on large contracts, foreign investments, and business ventures in the country, which creates fertile ground for corruption. While Eswatini offers businesses one of the most politically stable environments in the region, the Government must strengthen efforts toward providing a transparent and predictable economic environment that is attractive to foreign businesses and investors.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Eswatini and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Within weeks of taking office in 2018, the new Prime Minister announced that his priorities were to turn around the economy and to fight aggressively against corruption. Since then, Eswatini officials have had a mixed response to corruption, with clear progress in some circles counterbalanced by continuing problems in others. The current cabinet has condemned government fraud, waste, and abuse and has instituted accountability measures and reduced opportunities for corruption in several government offices. Earlier this year, authorities arrested a senior government official for alleged corruption and charged him with crimes that could lead to 20 years in prison.

Nevertheless, corruption remains a serious problem, most often involving personal relationships and bribes being used to secure government contracts on large capital projects. The Anticorruption Commission continues to lack the power to effectively investigate, prosecute, and punish corrupt acts.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Eswatini?

Answer. If confirmed, I will underscore the importance of controlling corruption and strengthening good governance. I will support existing and expanded USG-funded training programs and sector-specific engagements to improve transparency, accountability, and oversight. I will emphasize both publicly and privately that control of corruption should be a critical component to Eswatini's efforts to improve its international reputation, attract foreign direct investment, and enhance its security. I will encourage the Government to empower and fund the Anticorruption Commission in a manner that is proportional to its ambitious constitutional mandate.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO MICHAEL A. MCCARTHY BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. President George Weah's 2018 election marked Liberia's first peaceful transfer of power between elected heads of state since 1944. Weah, a former European football star, ran a campaign based on anti-corruption and inclusive economic growth. His efforts to fulfill those promises have come under increasing scrutiny due to high profile scandals, and his refusal to disclose his assets publicly. Dissatisfaction with Weah's performance have prompted large-scale anti-government protests in Monrovia.

- What should we be providing by way of technical assistance, or support for civil society watchdogs to help address corruption in Liberia?

Answer. Corruption is endemic in Liberia and affects nearly every facet of life. In 2019, Liberia ranked 137 of 180 countries and territories on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, falling from 120 in 2018. In 2012, Liberia ranked 75. To protect U.S. taxpayer assets, USAID maintains a robust monitoring and evaluation program. If confirmed, I will continue to reinforce U.S. values including the application of good governance, fiscal transparency, improved public financial management, and inclusive economic growth in my interactions with President Weah and other Liberian officials. These values are ingrained in U.S. programming and are the foundational elements of the assistance portfolio to Liberia. As we do in other countries, the United States will consider application of visa sanctions for corrupt officials—including those who use corrupt practices or ill-gotten influence to subvert Liberia's recently established democratic gains.

In January of this year, thousands of protesters joined demonstrations in Liberia's capital, Monrovia. Police reportedly dispersed the protesters with tear gas. The Committee to Protect Journalists reported that since March "Liberian security forces have attacked or intimidated at least four journalists covering the COVID–19 pandemic." The Liberian solicitor general was quoted as saying publicly that, "Any media institution that decides to spread fake news, we'll just move in and seize your equipment, we'll keep it and we'll ask for the revocation of your license until after the coronavirus. And even after that, there will be a contest in court and it would be difficult for you to get your license:"

Question. How would you characterize the state of political and media freedoms in Liberia? Has the Government taken advantage of the COVID–19 pandemic to restrict freedom of expression and assembly?

Answer. Recent editions of the Department of State's annual Human Rights Report note that restrictions on freedom of expression for members of the press are among the most significant human rights issues in Liberia. The Liberian Government has taken some steps to address these concerns, including passage in 2019 of the Press Freedom Act, which was an important step forward in decriminalizing defamation and promoting a freer press. Nevertheless, journalists sometimes perceive the Government's approach to them as antagonistic.

In high-profile cases of anti-government demonstrations in 2019 and 2020, the Ministry of Justice requested that organizers apply for permits before assembling, though the laws and regulations regarding permits remain unclear. Civil society and the international community have worked to encourage dialogue between all actors and to establish a transparent system that would respect the right to peaceful assembly while also providing for public safety.

If confirmed, my Embassy team and I will look into any allegations of use of the COVID–19 pandemic to restrict the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and advocate for transparent laws and regulations around the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, including for members of the press.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to advocate for respect for political and civil rights in Liberia?

Answer. Effective, accountable, transparent, responsive, and inclusive governance is fundamental to citizen-focused democracy and a free market economy. U.S. support for these objectives should focus on improving the ability of Liberian ministries' to use public resources in transparent and accountable ways, decentralizing service delivery to local authorities so that citizens can better access and monitor those services, strengthening Liberia's capacity to hold free and fair elections, fostering accountable political leadership, as well as strengthening capacity of civil society and media organizations as effective advocates for reform.

In terms of potential impediments, both the armed forces and civilian security agencies suffer from a perennial lack of funding, which leads to late payments of salaries and low levels of operational readiness. Good governance is also challenged by corruption and a political system that places disproportionate influence in individual actors rather than institutions or organizations. U.S. assistance to Liberia seeks to build democratic institutions, and shore up checks and balances, efforts I pledge to support, if confirmed.

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

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. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I agree that the federal government should not employ prohibited personnel practices. As a career Foreign Service Officer, I have treated and will continue to treat all employees with respect and professionalism. If confirmed, I will maintain a policy of prohibiting these personnel practices. I agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline in accordance with U.S. federal labor law and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will foster an environment that is open, diverse, and inclusive. Proactively, I will make sure supervisors within the Embassy complete diversity training on a regular basis. As the most senior official within the Embassy, it will be my responsibility to set the example for fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

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.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. In 2015, while serving as Charge d'Affaires in South Sudan, we publicly raised concerns about South Sudanese Government officials' human rights violations and abuses following the country's descent into crisis in December 2013. This effort put the Government on notice that the United States was monitoring the actions of government troops and their associated militias and that we were tracking events throughout the country. I believe our actions in this capacity inhibited further human rights abuses and violations. If confirmed as Ambassador, I intend to advocate for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Liberians.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Liberia? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Recent editions of the Department of State's annual Human Rights Report note that the most significant human rights issues in Liberia include violence against women, including widespread female genital mutilation and other harmful practices against women and girls; restrictions on freedom of expression for members of the press; harsh prison conditions and lengthy pretrial detention; and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons. If confirmed, I will use my unique platform and voice as the U.S. Ambassador, both publicly in my interactions with the Liberian people and privately with Liberian officials, on the importance of human rights and the rule of law in Liberia. I will engage like-minded missions, civil society, government and business leaders, and other relevant stakeholders to end these abusive practices.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Liberia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy in Monrovia has served as a powerful and consistent advocate for human rights, civil rights, good governance, and democracy in Liberia. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will speak with an authoritative voice—both publicly to the Liberian people and privately with Liberian officials—on the importance of making further progress on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance to Liberia's democracy and future prosperity. I will partner with like-minded missions, civil society, and other key stakeholders to ensure that the dialogue with the Government of Liberia on these critical issues remains at the top of our bilateral agenda.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. Supporting democracy and good governance are key priorities of our assistance programming in Liberia. U.S. support for these objectives focuses on improving the ability of Liberian ministries' to use public resources in transparent and accountable ways; decentralizing service delivery to local authorities so that citizens can better access and monitor those services; strengthening Liberia's capacity to hold free and fair elections, which are transparent; fostering accountable political

leadership; as well as strengthening capacity of civil society and media organizations as effective advocates for reform.

U.S. public diplomacy and outreach in Liberia supports Mission and Department goals through press outreach, small grants, American Center-based programs, digital video conferences, visiting speakers, exchange programs, and social media engagement. USAID provides support to promote free and fair elections, cultivate more representative political leadership, and enhance the ability of Liberians to hold their government accountable. USAID also supports transparent and responsible management of public resources, civil service reform, domestic resource mobilization, and decentralization. To mitigate conflict, USAID supports improved land tenure for traditionally marginalized groups and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. If confirmed, these are key efforts I will prioritize as Ambassador.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Liberia? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Organizations promoting human rights, civil society, and good governance are critical to any functioning democracy. If confirmed as Ambassador, I intend to meet with these and any other non-governmental entities in the United States and Liberia that promote and reinforce human rights and the rule of law. U.S. assistance was critical to rebuilding the Liberian security sector following the country's two civil wars, and we share a robust security relationship with Liberia today. The Leahy Law helps ensure that U.S. security assistance is not provided to a security force unit where there is credible information that the unit committed a gross violation of human rights. If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Monrovia's efforts to implement Leahy vetting and will ensure that our security assistance and cooperation activities reinforce human rights.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Our top priority in Liberia is a secure and stable country with effective rule of law, good governance, and strengthened human rights protections for all. If confirmed, my Embassy team and I will actively engage with Liberian officials to address cases of political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted for harassment or unjust detention by Liberia, specifically vulnerable populations such as women and girls, LGBTI persons, opposition politicians, and members of the press. As appropriate, I will partner with like-minded missions, civil society, and other key stakeholders to address our concerns with a unified voice.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Liberia on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Liberia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Liberia on freedom of expression and advocate against any government efforts to control or undermine press freedom. I commit to meeting with the independent local press in Liberia.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Liberia?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, the Embassy team and I will engage with civil society and government to counter disinformation and malign propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Liberia on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advocate for the right of workers to organize, including to form independent trade unions.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Liberia, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Liberia? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Liberia?

Answer. Discrimination against LGBTI persons remains a significant challenge in Liberia. The topic remains taboo, and the community has few safe spaces. The law prohibits consensual same-sex sexual activity; "voluntary sodomy" is a misdemeanor with a penalty of up to one year's imprisonment. LGBTI persons report instances of assault, harassment, and hate speech by individuals in communities where they live. If confirmed, I will call on the Government of Liberia to investigate allegations of violence and discrimination targeting LGBTI persons. I will partner with civil society and other human rights organizations and LGBTI stakeholders to work to improve the conditions for LGBTI persons in Liberia.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO MICHAEL A. MCCARTHY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. In 2015, while serving as Charge d'Affaires in South Sudan, we publicly raised concerns about South Sudanese Government officials' human rights violations and abuses following the country's descent into crisis in December 2013. This effort put the Government on notice that the United States was monitoring the actions of government troops and their associated militias and that we were tracking events throughout the country. I believe our actions in this capacity inhibited further human rights abuses and violations. If confirmed as Ambassador, I intend to advocate for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Liberians.

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

Answer. Recent editions of the Department of State's annual Human Rights Report note that the most significant human rights issues in Liberia include violence against women, including widespread female genital mutilation and other harmful practices against women and girls; restrictions on freedom of expression for members of the press; harsh prison conditions and lengthy pretrial detention; and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons. If confirmed, I will use my unique platform and voice as the U.S. Ambassador, both publicly in my interactions with the Liberian people and privately with Liberian officials, on the importance of human rights and the rule of law in Liberia. I will engage like-minded missions, civil society, government and business leaders, and other relevant stakeholders to end these abusive practices.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Liberia in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Sexual and gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced child labor remain widespread in Liberia, with high rates of violence committed against minors. These practices and the lack of accountability for those responsible are of serious concern. The Government of Liberia has undertaken a number of efforts to combat what it rightly perceives as major problems, including efforts to combat sexual and gender-based violence and forced labor, but there remains much to be done. Law enforcement and other civilian security agencies suffer from a perennial lack of funding, which leads to late payments of salaries and low levels of operational readiness. Good governance is also challenged by corruption and a political system that places disproportionate influence in individual actors rather than institutions or organizations.

Question. 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 Liberia? 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. Organizations promoting human rights, civil society, and good governance are critical to any functioning democracy. If confirmed as Ambassador, I intend to meet with these and any other non-governmental entities in the United States and Liberia that promote and reinforce human rights and the rule of law. U.S. as-

sistance was critical to rebuilding the Liberian security sector following the country's two civil wars, and we share a robust security relationship with Liberia today. The Leahy Law helps ensure that U.S. security assistance is not provided to a security force unit where there is credible information that the unit committed a gross violation of human rights. If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Monrovia's efforts to implement Leahy vetting and will ensure that our security assistance and cooperation activities reinforce human rights.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Liberia to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Liberia?

Answer. Our top priority in Liberia is a secure and stable country with effective rule of law, good governance, and strengthened human rights protections for all. If confirmed, my Embassy team and I will actively engage with Liberian officials to address cases of political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted for harassment or unjust detention by Liberia, specifically vulnerable populations such as women and girls, LGBTI persons, opposition politicians, and members of the press. As appropriate, I will partner with like-minded missions, civil society, and other key stakeholders to address our concerns with a unified voice.

Question. Will you engage with Liberia on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy in Monrovia has served as a powerful and consistent advocate for human rights, civil rights, good governance, and democracy in Liberia. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will speak with an authoritative voice—both publicly to the Liberian people and privately with Liberian officials—on the importance of making further progress on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance to Liberia's democracy and future prosperity. I will partner with like-minded missions, civil society, and other key stakeholders to ensure that the dialogue with the Government of Liberia on these critical issues remains at the top of our bilateral agenda.

Diversity

Question. 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 embrace every opportunity to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and encourage new perspectives whenever possible. I would ensure the Embassy devotes resources to mentoring and support for all staff, including those from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups. I agree with the research that indicates that diverse teams are richer in creativity and perspective, and I believe all leaders should embrace a wide range of inputs, viewpoints, and backgrounds because it is the right thing to do and the smartest management approach. As Director General Perez said in testimony recently, this is not just a moral imperative, it is a strategic imperative as well.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Liberia are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, fostering an environment that is open, diverse, and inclusive will be a priority. Proactively, I will make sure supervisors within the Embassy complete diversity training on a regular basis. As the most senior official within the Embassy, it will be my responsibility to set the example for fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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 fully with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 fully with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Liberia?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which may have a presence in Liberia. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Liberia specifically?

Answer. Effective, accountable, transparent, responsive, and inclusive governance is fundamental to citizen-focused democracy and a free market economy, including in Liberia. U.S. support for these objectives focuses on improving the ability of Liberian ministries' to use public resources in transparent and accountable ways, decentralizing service delivery to local authorities so that citizens can better access and monitor those services, strengthening Liberia's capacity to hold free and fair elections, fostering accountable political leadership, as well as strengthening capacity of civil society and media organizations as effective advocates for reform.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Liberia and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Corruption is endemic in Liberia and affects nearly every facet of life. In 2019, Liberia ranked 137 of 180 countries and territories on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, falling from 120 in 2018. In 2012, Liberia ranked 75. Liberia has several integrity institutions tasked to monitor and address corruption, but these entities lack resources and the political will necessary to carry out their mandates. If confirmed, I will press the Government of Liberia to reverse these trends and underscore that endemic corruption is a key impediment to attracting foreign investment and enhancing private sector-led growth.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Liberia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to reinforce U.S. values including the application of good governance, fiscal transparency, improved public financial management, and inclusive economic growth in my interactions with President Weah and Government of Liberia officials. These values are ingrained in U.S. programming and are the foundational elements of the assistance portfolio to Liberia. To protect U.S. taxpayer assets, USAID maintains a robust monitoring and evaluation program. USAID's direct financing agreement with the Ministry of Health is structured as a reimbursement agreement. Under this arrangement, USAID only reimburses the Ministry after verification, minimizing the risk of the diversion of U.S. Government assistance.

As we do in other countries, the United States will consider application of visa sanctions for corrupt officials—including those who use corrupt practices or ill-gotten influence to subvert Liberia's recently established democratic gains.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. MANISHA SINGH BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Mission will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to making clear that prohibited personnel practices has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline in accordance with U.S. federal labor law and regulation.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and accountability and ensuring that all members of my team feel empowered to contribute to our mission. I will ensure that we learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote best practices for inclusive hiring practices including standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will encourage greater connectivity for members of my team to share their experiences and their expertise.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. As Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, I have ensured the implementation of Global Magnitsky and other financial sanctions and visa restrictions to promote human rights and democracy are at the center of our sanctions policy. Under my leadership, the United States used sanctions authorities to protect democratic processes, disrupt and deter corrupt acts, and promote accountability for those who commit human rights abuses. For example, in July 2020 the United States designated Chinese Communist Party officials and entities under Global Magnitsky for their role in serious human rights abuses in Xinjiang. The United States also designated Chinese and Hong Kong officials in July 2020 for their involvement in undermining freedom and democratic processes in Hong Kong. In Venezuela, the United States has used E.O. 13884 to directly target the former Maduro regime and those who support its corruption and repression of democracy and human rights. In May 2020, the Department designated Iran's Interior Minister, Abdolreza Rahmandi Fazli and former head of its intelligence service (MOIS), Ali Fallahian, under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020, for involvement in gross violations of human rights. As a result of these actions, my bureau has ensured that the

United States continues to be a global leader in protecting citizens from malign regimes and governments that violate the rule of law.

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. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development at the OECD? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights, and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The OECD is a group of like-minded countries committed to a market economy and a pluralistic democracy. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the integrity of the OECD's peer review process to ensure that members live up to their obligations as OECD members. I also commit to working to ensure that potential new members demonstrate political commitment to core OECD values, including democratic principles, respect for rule of law, transparency, and human rights. Finally, I commit to encouraging the review of OECD engagement with non-members to ensure democratic principles remain key and that engagement is not merely done for the sake of engagement.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy at the OECD? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. OECD instruments, if implemented in a meaningful way, can open markets, develop economies, and help level the playing field for U.S. businesses. If confirmed, I will continue to engage with policymakers, experts, and stakeholders from like-minded, market-based democracies to disseminate our best practices and policy approaches to members and non-members. These efforts counter competing authoritarian models and bring value to the American taxpayer by helping create and expand legitimate investment and financing opportunities for U.S. businesses and promoting U.S. job creation.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the work of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The DAC is an international forum of 30 of the largest foreign assistance donors. It develops international principles and standards for development cooperation and monitors how donors deliver on their commitments. Through our participation in the DAC, the United States helps sets the standards for effective and transparent assistance, which in turn supports democracy and good governance.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with the OECD on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. The U.S. Mission to the OECD actively engages with the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), which serves as the interface for global trade unions with the OECD. It is important that the voice of organized labor be heard in the wide range of economic policy discussions at the OECD where evidence-based analysis serves as the basis for informing policy makers in each of the member states. If confirmed, my team and I will continue to actively engage TUAC and support its consultative status with the OECD and its various committees.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people at the OECD, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in the OECD? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in the OECD?

Answer. I come from an immigrant family, and therefore understand first-hand how much diversity contributes to our society. I am the first woman and first person of color to be confirmed for my current position, and it has been a priority for me to ensure opportunities for people from all backgrounds, including LGBTQ people. I am committed to listening and learning from others and understanding their chal-

lenges. In the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, I have established a Diversity and Inclusion Council composed of diverse senior leadership. We are working together to ensure advancement and support of underrepresented groups. I have held town hall meetings to solicit input on how the bureau can improve opportunities and actively recruit diverse candidates. If confirmed, I will continue these practices, specifically establishing a council with a focused mission of diversity and inclusion and holding regular meetings to hear views of the entire staff.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. MANISHA SINGH BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, I have ensured the implementation of Global Magnitsky and other financial sanctions and visa restrictions to promote human rights and democracy are at the center of our sanctions policy. Under my leadership, the United States used sanctions authorities to protect democratic processes, disrupt and deter corrupt acts, and promote accountability for those who commit human rights abuses. For example, in July 2020 the United States designated Chinese Communist Party officials and entities under Global Magnitsky for their role in serious human rights abuses in Xinjiang. The United States also designated Chinese and Hong Kong officials in July 2020 for their involvement in undermining freedom and democratic processes in Hong Kong. In Venezuela, the United States has used E.O. 13884 to directly target the former Maduro regime and those who support its corruption and repression of democracy and human rights. In May 2020, the Department designated Iran's Interior Minister, Abdolreza Rahmandi Fazli and former head of its intelligence service (MOIS), Ali Fallahian, under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020, for involvement in gross violations of human rights. As a result of these actions, my bureau has ensured the United States continues to be a global leader in protecting citizens from malign regimes and governments that violate the rule of law.

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. 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. I come from an immigrant family and understand first-hand how much diversity contributes to our society. I am the first woman and first person of color to be confirmed for my current position at the Department of State, and it has been a priority for me to ensure opportunities for people from all backgrounds. In the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, I established a Diversity and Inclusion Council composed of diverse senior leadership. We are working together to ensure advancement and support of underrepresented groups. I have held town hall meetings with the bureau to solicit views on how the bureau can improve opportunities and actively recruit and retain diverse candidates. If confirmed to be the Permanent Representative to the OECD, I will continue these practices, including establishing a council within the mission and promoting diversity and inclusion.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors under your direction at the OECD are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will establish a council on diversity and inclusion and make sure every supervisor understands this is a priority issue for the mission. I will also stay personally involved and ensure that everyone is actively creating a positive work environment for people from all backgrounds. I will hold my staff accountable to the highest standards of diversity and inclusion.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. My investment portfolio also includes stock in one company with a presence overseas. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO JAMES BROWARD STORY BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What is your assessment of specific states and/or territory in Venezuela that are not under the complete control of the Interim Government or the Maduro regime—i.e. ungoverned territory in Venezuela?

Answer. Venezuela's ungoverned territory is growing and disputed among armed actors. The illegitimate Maduro regime and local criminal organizations, and infrequently dissident forces, share control in many parts of the country. Regime control is probably weakest in Amazonas, Apure, Bolivar, Tachira, and Zulia because of their distance from the capital, the prevalence of illegally armed groups such as the ELN and FARC, the impact of illegal mining, and security force manpower shortages. In some instances, we've seen how the Maduro regime has actively empowered illegally armed groups, gifting them mines, weapons, or items such as medications to enforce their control over territory in exchange for political support. This landscape is constantly changing, in part depending on the regime's ability to fund and shield the groups and sporadic operations to bring them back under regime influence. Armed colectivos—armed groups that are largely regime sponsored—operate in 15 of Venezuela's 23 states, according to a 2019 InSight Crime report. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the interagency and Congress on transition scenarios, focusing on the challenges presented by these ungoverned territories.

Question. What is your estimate of the number of members of Colombia's ELN that operate in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. According to local and international media, ELN was present in 12 of Venezuela's 24 states (with particular strength in Anzótegui, Amazonas, Apure, Bolivar, Zulia, and Tchira states). The ELN's presence has expanded beyond its historic base in the border zone with Colombia. Colombian authorities estimate there are around 3,000 active members of the ELN in total, 1,400 of whom the Government assesses are camped across the border in Venezuela. Colombian authorities have also assessed there are 36 ELN camps strategically located on the Venezuela side of the Colombia-Venezuela border.

Question. What is your assessment of the operations conducted by Colombia's ELN operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. The ELN engages in narcotrafficking, illegal mining, money laundering, extortion, and kidnapping in Venezuela. Media reports indicate an increasing role for the ELN in regime-subsidized food distribution, contraband (gas, basic goods, meat), extortion, illegal mining, and recruitment propaganda, at times via control of radio stations. The ELN is increasingly recruiting vulnerable Venezuelans, including children and those seeking to migrate, to join its ranks. There were also reports noting sporadic activity by ELN in the areas of road/border checkpoints. The unwillingness or inability to counter the ELN's illegal activities, and the effect this has on regional stability, speak to the need for a democratic transition in Venezuela.

Question. What is your estimate of the number of members of former members of Colombia's FARC that operate in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia dissidents (FARC-D) are present in Venezuela, but we do not have reliable estimates of their numbers at this time, in part because Venezuela permits criminal groups to transit easily and to operate in the border regions. Maduro stated publicly in July 2019 that former FARC commanders Ivan Marquez and Jesus Santrich are "leaders of peace" and "welcome in Venezuela," shortly before the two announced a return to armed conflict as FARC dissidents. In 2019 in Colombia, an estimated 2,600 FARC dissidents who never demobilized, left the peace process, or are new recruits, continued violent attacks, primarily to enable narcotics trafficking and other criminal activities, particularly in border regions and areas previously controlled by the former FARC.

Question. What is your assessment of the operations conducted by former members of Colombia's FARC operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. The dissidents of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-D) engage in narcotrafficking, illegal mining, money laundering, extortion, and kidnapping in Venezuela. Financial ties with FARC-D and Venezuelan paramilitary groups facilitate the public corruption and graft schemes of the regime to include members of the armed forces acting at the behest of Maduro and his inner circle or in their own personal interest. Of concern, there were reports noting sporadic cooperation with FARC-D in the areas of road/border checkpoints, subsidized food distribution, recruitment and forced displacement of vulnerable indigenous communities, and trafficking of illegal narcotics and gold. These activities contribute to instability in the region—one of many reasons why a democratic transition is necessary.

Question. Is it your assessment that there are paramilitary groups operating in Venezuelan territory? If yes, please provide a description of their numbers, organization, and operations.

Answer. Yes, I assess there are paramilitary groups operating in Venezuela. The groups probably range in size from a few dozen to several thousand members, are typically hierarchical in structure, and often have some linkage to the Maduro regime or other armed groups through alliances or non-aggression pacts. A few of the larger groups are likely to oppose a transition from the Maduro regime because of their mutually beneficial relationship for maintaining power and money, even if there are no ideological ties. They most commonly fund themselves with extortion, drug trafficking, and illicit mining.

Question. What is your estimate of the number of members of colectivos operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. I understand there are roughly a dozen armed colectivos operating in the country with smaller groups operating within them. It is impossible to provide an estimate because the groups evolve and combine or divide frequently, depending on their loyalty or resistance to the Maduro regime and their ability to control territories.

Question. What is your assessment of the operations of colectivos operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. Armed colectivos are more likely to be legitimized and funded by the regime and be more ideologically consistent with it than other non-state armed groups. Some colectivo members have overlapping membership in a Venezuelan security service. Many are provided with identification cards by the Maduro regime and allowed to possess and carry firearms. They have been used to quell dissent and conduct operations that are too politically sensitive for the regular armed forces. The groups are the most powerful in Caracas and the greater capital district and near the border. While most armed colectivos operate in cahoots with regime authority, some are an expression of their community and may accept a transitional government if they are allowed full political participation.

Question. What is your estimate of the number of Cuban intelligence personnel (military and/or civilian) operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. The exact number of Cuban intelligence personnel is difficult to assess. Actual members of the military may reach several thousand and they provide key functions in protecting Maduro and in providing surveillance of the armed forces and security apparatus. Others may also be involved in providing intelligence inside of Venezuela. For example, media reports that the total Cuban presence, including medical doctors, may reach between 20,000 and 25,000. It is not just the number that is significant, however, but also their role. The Department assess Cuban ele-

ments are pervasive in Maduro's security and intelligence forces, and conduct training exercises and loyalty checks to root out anyone who is seen to be sympathetic to the opposition.

Question. What is your assessment of the operations of Cuban intelligence personnel (military and/or civilian) operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. Cuban military and intelligence advisors actively support Maduro through the provision of security forces, intelligence officers, and providing direction to Venezuelan authorities. They equip the regime with the tools they need to repress any domestic or internal dissent, including in the military. In its 2019 annual report, the Casla Institute, a Czech human rights body, revealed the "systematic repression and torture, Cuban influence, and significant changes in the methods of torture in Venezuela."

Question. What is your estimate of the number of Russian intelligence personnel (military and/or civilian) operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. According to media reports, as many as 100 Russian troops are present in Venezuela, without the constitutionally required consent of the legitimate National Assembly.

Question. What is your assessment of the operations of Russian intelligence personnel (military and/or civilian) operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. According to publically available sources, current Russian support for the Maduro regime includes military advisors and proxies, disinformation mechanisms, political influence on the world stage, and some financial backing. In return, Russia receives access to Venezuela as a potential military power projection platform in the Western Hemisphere, a foothold for disinformation and influence campaigns against the United States and our allies, and investment payoffs from foreign military sales and the exploitation of Venezuela's oil and other natural resources.

Question. What is your estimate of the number of Chinese intelligence personnel (military and/or civilian) operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. I do not have unclassified information on the number of People's Republic of China (PRC) intelligence personnel operating in Venezuela.

Question. What is your assessment of the operations of Chinese intelligence personnel (military and/or civilian) operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. We do not have unclassified information to suggest People's Republic of China (PRC) intelligence personnel operate in the country. However, of note, Chinese telecommunications firm ZTE has played a critical role in the illegitimate Maduro regime's "fatherland card," a national identification card program that enables the regime to control the population through the delivery of social services, purchases of gasoline, and voting. This social control of the Venezuelan people is most evident in its use to channel a subsidized food program to political supporters. More broadly, I assess that the PRC's support for the regime is grounded in protecting its economic interests.

Question. What is your estimate of the number of Iranian intelligence personnel (military and/or civilian) operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. I do not have unclassified information on the number of Iranian intelligence personnel operating in Venezuela.

Question. What is your assessment of the operations of Iranian intelligence personnel (military and/or civilian) operating in Venezuelan territory?

Answer. I do not have unclassified information on the operations of Iranian intelligence personnel operating in Venezuela.

Question. What is your understanding of the value of assets stolen from the Venezuelan people by the Maduro regime and the Chávez government?

Answer. Though it is impossible to precisely quantify how much public money has been stolen by these regimes, we currently estimate the total value of stolen and misspent assets is hundreds of billions of dollars.

Question. What is your understanding of the total value of blocked assets in the United States as a result of U.S. sanctions and/or legal cases against the Maduro regime, members of the regime, regime intermediaries, and/or legal entities related to the regime?

Answer. I refer you to the Department of the Treasury for details on U.S.-based assets blocked under our sanctions. I refer you to the Department of Justice for de-

tails on the disposition of any assets associated with legal cases involving members of the Maduro regime or its associated entities.

Question. What is your understanding of the total value of forfeited assets in the United States as a result of U.S. sanctions and/or legal cases against the Maduro regime, members of the regime, regime intermediaries, and/or legal entities related to the regime?

Answer. Assets are not forfeited as a result of our Venezuela sanctions program. I understand that the Fraud Section of the Department of Justice (DOJ) investigates and prosecutes foreign corruption through the enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and other corruption related statutes. Additionally, I understand DOJ's Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative investigates and prosecutes cases to seize and forfeit assets linked to foreign corruption which affects the U.S. financial system, and to prosecute individuals and entities involved where appropriate. I respectfully refer the committee to the Department of Justice for additional information on forfeited assets and legal cases.

Question. What is your understanding of the location of these forfeited funds and whether they are being held in Department of Justice accounts, Department of Treasury accounts, or any other location?

Answer. Under U.S. law, forfeiture orders may be sought in certain criminal cases subject to a number of procedural and practical limitations. If a case does result in forfeiture of and recovery of assets, those funds go into one of two forfeiture funds, one administered by DOJ and one by Treasury. I respectfully refer you to the Departments of Justice and Treasury for additional information on where forfeited funds may be held.

Question. What is your understanding of the intended use of these forfeited funds?

Answer. The Department of State understands that any funds forfeited as a result of the cases described above are and will be used in accordance with the rules governing the funds where the assets are maintained. The Treasury Forfeiture Fund (TFF) was established in 1992 for the purpose of managing cash and other resources seized as the result of civil or criminal asset forfeiture cases. The TFF is managed by the Treasury Executive Office of Asset Forfeiture (TEOAF) for the purpose of influencing the consistent and strategic use of the funds by law enforcement bureaus to disrupt and dismantle criminal enterprises. The Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 established the Department of Justice Assets Forfeiture Fund to receive the proceeds of forfeiture and to pay the costs associated with such forfeitures. The Fund may also be used to finance certain general investigative expenses. These authorized uses are enumerated in 28 U.S.C. §524(c). I respectfully refer you to the Departments of Justice and Treasury for additional information.

Question. Do you believe that, to the greatest degree possible, these funds should be returned to the Interim Government of Venezuela and/or the people of Venezuela for uses related the future reconstruction of their country and support for the Venezuelan people?

Answer. The Department of State believes to the greatest degree possible any funds subject to forfeiture, should be returned to the people of Venezuela for uses related to the future reconstruction of their country, provided doing so can be done in accordance with the operative U.S. laws, regulations and processes. I respectfully refer you to the Departments of Justice and Treasury for additional information concerning the processes for returning such funds.

Question. Are you aware of press reports suggesting that these forfeited assets may have been utilized for expenditures or obligations related to the construction of a border wall on the southwestern border of the United States?

Answer. I am aware of press reports suggesting that funds recovered in kleptocracy cases involving PDVSA, as well as current and former regime officials, have been used to fund the southern border wall.

Question. What is your understanding or whether any of these forfeited funds have been utilized for any expenditures or obligations related to the construction of a border wall on the southwestern border of the United States?

Answer. Any funds that were subject to forfeiture are held with other funds recovered in all other asset forfeiture cases and the funds are utilized according to the mandates for managing the funds established by Treasury and DOJ. I respectfully refer you to the Departments of Justice and Treasury for additional information.

Question. What steps are you taking to help the World Food Program negotiate access to deliver humanitarian assistance in Venezuela?

Answer. Along with my USAID and IO colleagues working the WFP relationship directly, I have actively supported WFP's negotiations for access to Venezuela for over a year. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for the Maduro regime to provide unrestricted and safe access to the global humanitarian community to deliver aid directly to those who need it, to assess humanitarian situations in real time, and to be able to monitor the results of aid delivery.

Question. Please describe the factors preventing NGOs from registering and/or expanding assistance in Venezuela and what specific steps the State Department and USAID are taking to address these challenges.

Answer. The illegitimate Maduro regime has made it extremely difficult for international NGOs to legally register and for humanitarian workers to obtain visas. This, coupled with ongoing logistical impediments and security concerns for our partners, prevents humanitarian organizations from responding at a scale commensurate with the needs created by this economic and political crisis. Notwithstanding, partners continue to provide life-saving assistance where possible, and we commend them for these efforts in such difficult circumstances. As long as it is possible for USG partners to operate on the ground inside Venezuela, we will continue to work to provide them with support to help save lives.

Question. The loss of livelihoods and evictions resulting from the COVID–19 crisis have prompted tens of thousands of Venezuelans to return from neighboring countries. Knowing the generalized conditions of deprivation and human rights abuses perpetrated by the Maduro regime and armed groups, what specific threats or challenges do returnees face in Venezuela? Please describe any humanitarian assistance the United States has provided to meet the needs of returnees in Venezuela.

Answer. COVID–19 prevention and mitigation measures in countries hosting Venezuelan refugees have contributed to an influx of returns to Venezuela, primarily from Colombia, as well as from Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru. As of late June, IOM reports that approximately 96,000 people have returned to Venezuela through formal crossings since mid-March. We are deeply concerned about the returnees making the voyage across the border region. Venezuelan returns should take place in conditions of safety and dignity. Conditions in Venezuela are not safe or conducive to large-scale assisted returns. On the Venezuela side of the border, returnees face a 14-day quarantine upon entry, and relief actors report that quarantined returnees require food, water, and shelter assistance. Due to limited access in border states and at the overcrowded and inadequate quarantine shelters managed by Maduro-aligned officials, humanitarian organizations that we support are already struggling to reach all individuals in need.

Question. What is your understanding of the estimated value and/or volume of illegally mined gold exported from Venezuela? What are the major countries of export?

Answer. By its nature, it is extremely difficult to estimate with any certainty the value, volume, or destination of illegally mined gold. Various sources estimate that 70% to 90% of the mined gold is smuggled out of the country illegally in operations often conducted in active cooperation with Maduro regime officials. Also, increased numbers of Venezuelans have turned to artisanal gold mining because of a lack of alternative economic opportunity. The private consulting firm Ecoanalítica, estimated the value of illegally mined gold smuggled from Venezuela in 2018 at $2.71 billion. The amounts have almost certainly gone up since that time. Gold is smuggled out both by land and by air to a wide range of countries. We believe that the countries that are the largest destinations for Venezuelan gold include Colombia, Brazil, Guyana, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

Question. Please provide a list of companies and/or officials the United States has sanctioned to date for involvement in the trade of illegally mined gold and minerals from Venezuela.

Answer. I understand the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has designated multiple persons pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13850, as amended, for operating in the gold sector of the Venezuelan economy, and has also designated, under other authorities, persons involved in the Venezuelan gold industry. Most notably, on March 19, 2019, OFAC designated CVG Compania General de Mineria de Venezuela CA, or Minerven, the Venezuelan state-run ferrous metals mining company, and its President, Adrian Antonio Perdomo Mata.

Question. What additional specific steps can the United States take, along with other international actors, to ensure that companies that purchase, sell, and trade

gold are following regulations and not unwittingly supporting illegally gold mining operations in Venezuela (Note: this question is not asking for a list of steps taken thus far by the U.S. Government)?

Answer. The United States could take additional steps to try and increase transparency in the global gold supply chain by promoting effective due diligence procedures and management standards to encourage the traceability and sourcing of gold and mercury (used to extract gold from ore), and discourage the use/sale/importing of gold that cannot be sourced transparently and responsibly to non-sanctioned, source countries. The United States could encourage, support and coordinate with NGOs and other civil society entities in efforts to expand ongoing work on gold in Latin America, and to promote best practices of Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM). The United States could increase work with and support OECD processes focused on promotion of supply chain due diligence for gold from Latin America. The United States could initiate an outreach campaign focused on all relevant industries/commercial sectors involved in gold supply chain, domestically and internationally, to urge increased supply chain management and uses of due diligence standards. The United States could also seek to make gold supply chain issues a larger part of the agenda in bilateral outreach with: countries suspected of or known to provide markets for Venezuelan gold, e.g. Turkey, UAE, Uganda, Switzerland; countries suspected of or known to provide transit and smuggling routes for Venezuelan gold, e.g., Colombia, Guyana, Brazil and Panama; and countries known to be a source of mercury used in illegal gold mining or in the mercury supply chain, e.g. Mexico, Indonesia and Bolivia.

Question. Does the U.S. need additional regulations to ensure that companies that purchase, sell, and trade gold are not unwittingly supporting illegally gold mining operations in Venezuela?

Answer. I do not believe that new regulations, if deployed, would be able to ensure that companies that purchase, sell, and trade gold are not unwittingly supporting illegal gold mining operations in Venezuela. However, new tools could assist in confronting the significant challenge presented by the gold supply chain. The Department of State has had discussions with interagency partners which suggest that new legislation, and possibly new regulatory authorities, could potentially help in the fight against illegal mining, smuggling and sales of Venezuelan gold.

Question. What is your assessment of the environmental impact of illegal mining in Venezuela? Please describe any U.S. diplomatic efforts and foreign assistance to mitigate or remediate this impact?

Answer. The illegitimate Maduro regime has allowed practices in Venezuela's Arco Minero that have wrought vast ecological damage to the vital Amazonian landscape, including the use of harmful toxins such as mercury. Mercury released to the environment harms human health primarily through eating fish with high mercury levels, and is also transported thousands of miles in the atmosphere to be deposited in other countries. Artisanal and small-scale mining without proper regulatory controls also leads to widespread deforestation, biodiversity loss, and contaminated waterways. In 2019, the Treasury Department announced sanctions against the Venezuelan state-owned gold sector company, MINERVEN and its president. We have also engaged our international partners to take a firm stance against illicit gold mining. We believe a swift political transition is the single best and most effective way to reduce these and other abuses and remain focused on uprooting the cause: the Maduro regime.

Question. What specific steps is the United States undertaking to combat human trafficking related to illegal mining in Venezuela, particularly among indigenous communities?

Answer. The State Department's Trafficking in Persons report notes the illegitimate Maduro regime does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making any efforts to do so; therefore Venezuela remains on Tier 3. Illegal mining operations exist in Venezuela's remote regions, including Bolivar state, where an estimated 45 percent of miners are underage and vulnerable to trafficking. In mining communities, traffickers exploit women and girls, including indigenous women and girls, in sex trafficking; traffickers force children to work in mines under dangerous conditions. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the international community and Venezuela's brave human rights advocates to promote the protection of those whose lives are affected by the illicit mining industry, including Venezuela's indigenous communities.

Question. In the absence of a political transition, what steps do we need to take to address the security threats—both to the United States and to regional partners,

including Colombia—posed by the armed actors operating in Venezuela's ungoverned territories?

Answer. The non-state armed groups operating with impunity within Venezuela's ungoverned territories present a significant security threat to the Venezuelan people, the region, and the United States. The Department is collaborating with our interagency partners to better understand the nature of the threat and identify strategies to mitigate these threats. If confirmed, I will work closely with Venezuela's democratic actors and our international partners to address the threat these groups pose to our country and region.

Question. What is your understanding of current U.S. policy on the deportation of Venezuelan nationals? We understand there are no direct flights to Venezuela from the United States, and we recently heard testimony from administration witnesses that the United States is no longer deporting Venezuelans.

Answer. As U.S. Special Representative for Venezuela Abrams stated, we understand that Venezuelans who have not committed crimes are not currently being deported. However, I would have to refer you to the Department of Homeland Security for more information as they manage the removal program.

Question. During your tenure as Chargé d'Affaires, are/were you aware of any incidents of the United States deporting, removing, or transferring any Venezuelan nationals on indirect flights through third countries (if yes, please provide details about the country and/or countries, and an estimate of the number of Venezuelan nationals)?

Answer. I was made aware of removals of some Venezuelan nationals through Trinidad and Tobago between January and March 2020. I refer you to the Department of Homeland Security for additional details.

Question. During your tenure as Chargé d'Affaires, are/were you aware of any incidents of the United States deporting, removing, or transferring any Venezuelan nationals on indirect flights to third countries (if yes, please provide details about the country and/or countries and an estimate of the number of Venezuelan nationals)?

Answer. I am not aware of any removals of Venezuelan nationals to third countries. I refer you to the Department of Homeland Security for additional details.

Question. What is your understanding of the number of Venezuelans that have been deported, removed, or transferred from the United States to date in FY 2020?

Answer. I refer your question to the Department of Homeland Security for any information held on these figures.

Question. What is your understanding of the last date when a Venezuelan national was deported, removed, or transferred from the United States to another country?

Answer. I refer your question to the Department of Homeland Security for any information held on these figures.

Question. What additional steps do we need to take to counter the Cuban regime's continued activities inside Venezuela?

Answer. The Department and White House have condemned Cuban interference in Venezuela, and if confirmed, I would encourage our partners to do the same. Among financial and visa restrictions on Cuban individuals and/or entities supporting the illegitimate Maduro regime, the U.S. Government has targeted firms, vessels, and Cuban state-owned enterprises engaging in transactions related to the provision of Venezuelan oil to Cuba, squandering a Venezuelan natural resource to the detriment of the Venezuelan people. If confirmed, I would also seek additional opportunities to implement appropriate measures in connection with Cuban individuals and/or entities responsible for funding or otherwise enabling the Maduro regime.

Question. What changes do we need to make to address Putin's continued maneuvering in Venezuela?

Answer. The Department and White House have condemned Russian interference in Venezuela and, if confirmed, I would encourage our partners to do the same. Moreover, the U.S. Government has targeted Russian firms, vessels, and state-owned enterprises engaging in transactions involving Venezuelan oil, including Rosneft Trading S.A. and TNK Trading International, to indicate that we no longer are merely messaging on Russia's interference, we are taking action. If confirmed, I would seek additional opportunities to implement appropriate measures in connec-

tion with Russian individuals and/or entities responsible for funding or otherwise enabling the illegitimate Maduro regime.

Question. What additional steps do we need to take to put a stop to Turkey's transactions in Venezuelan gold and oil?

Answer. The State Department, working with our interagency partners, has taken strong steps against the illegitimate Maduro regime, including on its ability to trade gold and oil. The Department of the Treasury last year designated a Turkish company that was used to facilitate payments made as a part of Alex Saab's corruption network for the sale of gold in Turkey. We are working to uncover other networks for disruption through sanctions and other actions. As we see evidence of inappropriate links between Turkey and the Maduro regime continuing, if confirmed, I will continue to work with our interagency partners to develop responses to break these links and coordinate with Department colleagues to engage diplomatically with Turkey on halting its inappropriate activities with Venezuela.

Question. What additional steps do we need to take to better counter Iran's support for Maduro?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue the Department of State's work with our partners to condemn, limit, and counter Iran's ability to support the illegitimate Maduro regime. The international business community should already be aware of the sanctions risk of transacting with the illegitimate regime. If confirmed, I would seek additional opportunities to implement appropriate measures in connection with Iran's ties to Maduro.

Question. How can we make it clear to Beijing that continued support for Maduro will not be overlooked and will come with a cost?

Answer. China's support for the regime is grounded in protecting its own economic interests. China could play a constructive role in helping end the humanitarian suffering in Venezuela, but declines to do so. Instead its actions are taking hundreds of millions of dollars from the Venezuelan people and providing the regime diplomatic support. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our regional allies to demonstrate China's support for Maduro comes at the cost of its long-term interests in the region, and will seek additional opportunities to implement appropriate measures to prevent China from further enabling the illegitimate Maduro regime.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. I support fully the Department's policy to vigorously protect employees' rights to engage in protected activities. If confirmed, I will make clear to my team that retaliating against employees who engage in protected activities is prohibited and that those who retaliate will be held accountable. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that any employee found to have engaged in unlawful retaliation will be held accountable for their actions.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. Throughout my career at the State Department, I have greatly benefited from the support and guidance of supervisors and colleagues who are committed to fostering a strong, diverse, and inclusive workforce at the Department. Having twice served as an Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor at posts abroad, I am committed to supporting a diverse workforce. If confirmed, I am committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and accountability at the Venezuela Affairs Unit and ensuring that all members of my team feel empowered to contribute to our mission. I will ensure that we learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will encourage greater connectivity for members of my team to share their experiences and their expertise with our Mission.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

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

Answer. Respect for human rights and democracy produces peace, stability, and prosperity—making it an integral component of U.S. foreign policy and U.S. national security. As a career diplomat, promoting human rights and democracy has been a central focus of my work throughout my career. As the INL Director in Colombia, we emphasized human rights training in our support of the Colombian National Police, as well as created scholarship programs for Afro-Colombians and Indigenous people to join the police in order to create a more representative police force. While the Director of INL for the Western Hemisphere, we created a series of programs with human rights and democracy as its focus, including from police vetting programs and citizenship kiosks in Mexico, to conducting placed-based initiatives in Central America to connect police to the community in a positive way. I personally met with numerous human rights and democracy NGOs throughout Central America to understand their concerns and participated in bilateral meetings focused on human rights. Support for human rights and democracy is a cornerstone of our foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing my current work to secure a peaceful transition to democracy in Venezuela, alongside the interagency and Congress.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Venezuela on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. I support working with labor groups to promote worker rights in Venezuela, including freedom of association to form and join trade unions, including independent trade unions. If confirmed, I will work with my Embassy, State, and interagency colleagues to advocate for protecting workers' rights.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Venezuela, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Venezuela? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Venezuela?

Answer. I am proud of my work defending the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people in Venezuela, including LGBTI persons. LGBTI persons in Venezuela often face violence, abuse, and discrimination in access to healthcare, employment, education, and the judicial system. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Department's efforts to protect LGBTI persons from these types of human rights abuses.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO JAMES BROWARD STORY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Respect for human rights and democracy produces peace, stability, and prosperity—making it an integral component of U.S. foreign policy and U.S. national security. As a career diplomat, promoting human rights and democracy has been a central focus of my work throughout my career. As the INL Director in Colombia, we emphasized human rights training in our support of the Colombian National Police, as well as created scholarship programs for Afro-Colombians and Indigenous people to join the police in order to create a more representative police force. While serving as Director of INL for the Western Hemisphere, I and my team created a series of programs with human rights and democracy as its focus, from police vetting programs and citizenship kiosks in Mexico, to conducting placed-based initiatives in Central America to connect police to the community in a positive way. I personally met with numerous Human Rights and Democracy NGOs throughout Central America to understand their concerns and participated in bilateral meetings focused on Human Rights. Support to Human Rights and Democracy is a cornerstone of our foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing my current work to secure a peaceful transition to democracy in Venezuela, alongside the interagency and Congress.

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

Answer. The existence of the illegitimate and authoritarian Maduro regime in Venezuela is the single source of the most pressing human rights issues in Venezuela. In 2019 and 2020, the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued reports on several grave human rights violations and abuses in Venezuela. The accounts include reports of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, political prisoners, impunity for human rights violations, the absence of free and fair elections, and the failure to respect basic rights, including the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of expression, including for the press. Human rights violations associated with illegal mining are pervasive across southern Venezuela, and frequently have a disproportional impact on women and children. If confirmed, I will work to ensure our Department bureaus and embassies remain engaged bilaterally and multilaterally on the importance of protecting human rights and defending democracy in Venezuela. I will continue to partner with Venezuelan collaborators and civil society interlocutors on pressing human rights issues, and to publicly express the need to strengthen an impartial justice system to prosecute those responsible for human rights violations and abuses and anti-democratic abuses in Venezuela. I will also engage through U.S. interagency programs to help build the capacity of Venezuela's human rights, civil society, and democracy advocates.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Venezuela in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. The current illegitimate Maduro regime is the most significant obstacle to addressing key human rights issues in Venezuela. Challenges include a relatively underdeveloped civil society in Venezuela that is actively threatened by a brutal regime and its allied criminal groups. I remain concerned with the ongoing manipulation of the judiciary system by the regime, which has stopped functioning as an independent branch of government. There are also no guarantees scheduled elections will adequately ensure electoral integrity or reflect the free will of the Venezuelan people. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Department of State's advocacy to establish a transitional government to oversee free and fair presidential elections that will promote and demonstrate respect for human rights, civil society, and the strengthening of democratic institutions in Venezuela.

Question. 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 Venezuela? 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 continue to build on the vigorous momentum gained from our diplomatic efforts engaging NGOs in the United States and Venezuela to uphold democracy and respect for human rights in Venezuela. At this time, the United States does not provide security assistance for Venezuelan security forces. If confirmed, I wholeheartedly commit to prohibit providing U.S. assistance to units of foreign security forces where there is credible information that such unit committed a gross violation of human rights. I will pro-actively work to ensure Leahy vetting compliance working with staff at the U.S. Embassy; the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in Washington, DC, the lead State Department bureau for vetting; the Department's Western Hemisphere Affairs regional bureau; and other government agencies as required.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Venezuela to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Venezuela?

Answer. Respect for and defense of human rights are a cornerstone of democracy. If confirmed, I will tirelessly seek the immediate release of all political prisoners and persons unjustly targeted for detention by the regime. Along with my embassy team, we will continue to work with our Venezuelan partners in the vital work of promoting the protection of human rights for all in Venezuela.

Question. Will you engage with Venezuela on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. A vibrant and thriving democracy requires respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including protection of civil and political rights, and transparent and accountable governance, all of which the illegitimate Maduro regime has brutally sought to repress. If confirmed, I will engage to help strengthen these key pillars of democracy and help the Venezuelan people restore respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. 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 work diligently to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. I will also work to encourage and promote Diversity and Inclusion in the hiring process through standardized interview procedures and recruiting from the broadest possible base of candidates. I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms such as the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized exit survey.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Venezuela are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. I have twice been an Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor and take issues of diversity and inclusion seriously. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for retaining diverse talent. I will promote Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. If confirmed, I will also support the review of existing mentoring programs and identify opportunities for improvements.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Venezuela?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes sector and diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence in Venezuela, but which qualify for exemptions from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Venezuela specifically?

Answer. Political corruption is caustic to democratic governance and the rule of law. Corrupt politicians and government officials become consumed with preserving power and amassing personal wealth rather than prioritizing the responsible stewardship of government institutions for the benefit of the people. This is definitely true in Venezuela, where Nicolas Maduro and his regime have damaged Venezuela's institutions, economy, and infrastructure through misappropriation of state funds and the abuse of state power. The resulting deterioration of economic and social conditions within Venezuela make Maduro increasingly unpopular with the Venezuelan people, prompting the regime to employ heavy-handed tactics to neutralize opposition and subdue the population. This behavior is the antithesis of democratic governance and rule of law. If confirmed, I will continue to use all available tools to promote democratic governance and rule of law in Venezuela.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Venezuela and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Since he came to power in 2013, Maduro has plundered the country's natural resources and driven a once prosperous nation into economic ruin with an authoritarian rule and socialist economic policies, all while enriching himself, his family, and his closest supporters. Venezuela has cash accounts existing outside of its national territory valued at several billions of dollars, and the illegitimate Maduro regime has sought to steal from them. Sanctions, diplomatic efforts, and internationally recognized best practices for foreign accounts have thus far prevented the Maduro regime from seizing these assets. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for tracking and preserving Venezuelan held assets in foreign countries. These funds belong to the Venezuelan people.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Venezuela?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our robust support of Venezuela's democratic actors as they seek to restore democracy to Venezuela. We will continue to lead international efforts to seek to compel Maduro and members of his regime to accept free and fair elections in Venezuela, organized by a broadly acceptable transitional government as proposed in the Democratic Transition Framework. I also will ensure that we support those investigating the regime's vast corruption and engaging with law enforcement entities to bring the kleptocratic members of the Maduro regime to justice. Activities such as these are essential in ensuring a stable, peaceful transition.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:50 a.m. in Room SD–106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Rubio, Gardner, Romney, Barrasso, Portman, Cruz, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Murphy, Kaine, and Booker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

The CHAIRMAN. As such with that, we will proceed to the hearing from nominees for three different positions. We have Mr. Ashok Pinto to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the Honorable William Todd, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Mr. Ueland to be Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights.

Senator Thune will be here momentarily and is going to make an introduction, but in any event, I think we will proceed and as soon as Senator Thune gets here, we will give him the courtesy of having the floor.

[Chairman Risch's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH

I welcome each of you to the committee. I thank each of you for your commitment to public service and for your willingness to appear in person in light of current circumstances.

First, we have Mr. Ashok Pinto, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Mr. Pinto is currently the Senior Advisor to the U.S. Executive Director of the IBRD. He previously served as Counselor to the Under Secretary for International Affairs at the Treasury Department He has also been a staffer for multiple committees in Congress.

Next we have Ambassador Bill Todd. Ambassador Todd currently serves as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Management. He has previously served as the U.S. Ambassador to Brunei and Cambodia.

Finally, we have Mr. Eric Ueland be Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (known at the Department as "J"). I'm glad to see this important position being filled, it covers a range of issues from civilian security, to refugees, to trafficking.

Mr. Ueland currently serves in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs at the State Department and recently served as Assistant to the President and Di-

rector of White House Legislative Affairs. He has also worked as director of the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources at the State Department and as a senior advisor to the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Prior to joining the Executive Branch, he served as staff director of the Senate Budget committee and as chief of staff to former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist.

With that, I recognize Senator Menendez.

Senator Menendez, any comments?

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me address the three nominees.

Ambassador Todd, I am eager to hear your vision for our relationship with Pakistan as the region goes through a potentially historic transformation with the peace process in Afghanistan. While we hope for forward progress with Pakistan, we must be clear-eyed by the significant challenges in the relationship, including the stubborn presence of terrorist groups in the country, tensions with India, treatment of religious minorities, and concern about Pakistan's growing nuclear stockpile.

I remain deeply concerned about the prevalence of terrorist groups in the country and their impact on the region. Progress has been made but Pakistan must take further action to address this insidious threat especially Lashkar-e-Taiba. For too long, this group has been able to operate in different forms over the years. If Pakistan wants us to take its counterterrorism commitments seriously, it must completely eradicate this group.

In addition, I have grown increasingly concerned about the plight of religious minorities in the country and called upon the Pakistani authorities to respect religious rights of all in the country.

Finally, I do feel compelled to note that your nomination has received some unusual attention for a career nominee. We have received some strong recommendations of support, and at the same time, others have voiced significant opposition based on your performance as a senior management official at State. And while we are not in a position to get to the bottom of all this at this time, I believe it is important for members of the committee to be aware.

Mr. Ueland, my impression is that you are an intelligent person, but that alone is not a qualification to be the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. I am sorry to say that Mr. Ueland's nomination appears to be another case of the Trump administration playing musical chairs with senior positions at the State Department. The President originally nominated Mr. Ueland to be Under Secretary for Management, but that nomination did not move forward because of concerns from then Chairman Corker. In August of 2018, the President nominated Marshall Billingslea to be Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, but that nomination failed due to Mr. Billingslea's support for torture. Now Mr. Billingslea is nominated for another Under Secretary position, and you, Mr. Ueland, have taken his place.

There is an element of farce to this, but I for one am not amused. These are serious jobs that require subject-matter expertise and experience. I recognize that you are well versed on budget matters, including a short stint at the State Department, but this is not a

budget job. This is about enhancing our own security by helping others build more just, more humane, and more democratic societies.

These very principles are under assault by autocratic leaders around the world, many of them coddled by President Trump. And as so many in this country and across the globe have witnessed with horror, the President is doing his best to trash them here at home too. We have learned that the President expressed approval of concentration camps in Xinjiang. His administration has intentionally separated migrant children from their parents, denied individuals their right to seek asylum, downplayed human rights abuses in countries like North Korea to the Persian Gulf, coddled a dictator who ordered the brutal murder of journalist and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi, actively rolled back reproductive health care at home and abroad, verbally attacked the principle of freedom of the press, assaulted peaceful protesters exercising their First Amendment rights, and undermined the rule of law in countless ways. Sadly, the list goes on and on.

So do you agree with these actions, Mr. Ueland? Is this your vision of America? If you are confirmed, you will be defending these atrocities and advancing others, all indelible stains on our national character.

Finally, I look forward to hearing from Mr. Pinto about he plans to use his position to advocate for the United States and ensure the continuation of the critical work that the World Bank does across the world, especially at a time when COVID–19 has ravaged the globe.

With that, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Thune, welcome to the United States Senate Foreign Relations distinguished and amiable committee as you can see. We are welcomed to have you. I understand you would like to make an introduction.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN THUNE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA

Senator THUNE. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can see you but you are a long ways away.

I want to say, Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez, thank you for the opportunity to introduce Ashok Pinto to the committee as you consider his nomination to serve as the Alternative Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. I strongly recommend him to the committee and hope that you will move quickly to confirm his nomination.

Ashok currently serves as senior advisor to the U.S. Executive Director, D.J. Norquist at the World Bank. Before that, Ashok served as counselor to the Under Secretary for International Affairs and counselor to the General Counsel of the Treasury Department.

During my tenure as chairman of the Commerce Committee, Ashok served on my Commerce Committee staff from 2015 to 2018. He led the Commerce Committee's consumer protection and investigation staff during that time. In this role, he helped lead numerous important legislative and investigative initiatives on a wide-

ranging set of issues under the jurisdiction of the committee, from aviation to cybersecurity to data protection matters.

The Commerce Committee is perhaps one of the more bipartisan committees in the Senate even with regard to the investigations conducted by the committee, and I am sure that you will find that many of the Democratic staff on the Commerce Committee enjoyed working with Ashok. Ashok is exceptionally bright and he is a friendly and kind-hearted individual of character who is very well suited for this position.

I wish Ashok and his family well as they embark on this new chapter in his career. Ashok and his wife Preeya have four children and a loving extended family who I am sure are all very proud of him today.

The Senate nominations process is not for the faint of heart, especially these days, and I applaud Ashok for the commitment to—his commitment, I should say, to serve the public. And I again urge this committee to support his nomination. This is a nomination that deserves strong bipartisan support.

I would also, as long as I am here, Mr. Chairman, like to add a word of congratulations to Eric Ueland who is also appearing before you today to testify regarding his nomination to be Under Secretary of State. Many of us have benefited from Eric's wise counsel during his years of service to the Senate and the executive branch.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again. Thanks to Ranking Member Menendez for the opportunity to introduce Ashok to the Foreign Relations Committee. I look forward to working with you to advance this nomination.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Thune. We appreciate you coming up and recommending Mr. Pinto, particularly your description of his kindness. This committee loves kindness.

Mr. Pinto, the floor is yours

STATEMENT OF ASHOK MICHAEL PINTO, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE UNITED STATES ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS

Mr. PINTO. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. And thank you, Senator Thune, for that kind introduction and for all you do for the people of South Dakota and our nation. I am extremely grateful to have served on the Commerce Committee under your exemplary leadership.

And I also want to, as a former Senate staffer, recognize and sincerely appreciate the hard work of your staffs in making this hearing possible.

It is the honor of a lifetime to be President Trump's nominee to be Alternate U.S. Executive Director to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a key component of the World Bank. I am grateful to Secretary Mnuchin, Deputy Secretary Muzinich, and Under Secretary McIntosh for their confidence in recommending me for this position. Also, the encouragement and assistance from my colleagues at the U.S. Treasury Department and the World Bank have been inspiring.

I would not be here today without the love and support of my family: my beloved wife Preeya and our four wonderful children, Seraphina, Lucy, John, and Joseph.

My parents also deserve special thanks for their unwavering support. They came to the United States as graduate students. Now they have been in this country much longer than their formative years in India. My parents instilled in me a spirit of service and an appreciation of other cultures. Because of their countless sacrifices and constant encouragement, my brother Jay, a physician; my sister Susanna, a journalist; and I have had every opportunity to excel in our chosen professions. Only in America.

I have been fortunate to have served in all three branches of government, including both houses of Congress. It is an amazing opportunity to continue my service at the World Bank. There is truly no nobler a goal than to end extreme poverty and foster income growth for the poorest people of every country. Indeed, helping the less fortunate is the objective that unites us in public service. A formative service project in Mexico during high school, as well as trips to India to visit extended family over the years, have made me appreciate the myriad of opportunities I have had and imbued me with a desire to help others.

The world now faces a challenge of an unprecedented scale affecting billions of lives and causing major setbacks in economic development. Millions are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, reversing the steady downward trajectory of the last 3 decades. The World Bank is playing a pivotal role in addressing the COVID–19 global pandemic, particularly by helping the poorest people around the world who are most vulnerable to the virus. We must persist because failure simply is not an option.

With already surging public debt levels, debt service suspension can provide swift and significant relief, allowing governments to channel these resources to support their citizens. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have supported a coordinated effort, to which the G20 and the Paris Club have agreed, by bilateral official creditors to suspend debt service payments for the poorest countries that request this assistance. The G7 is committed to implementing this initiative, which includes lending safeguards and debt transparency with significant emerging sovereign creditor and private sector creditor participation as key objectives.

In addition, the World Bank Group under the leadership of President Malpass has committed to deploy up to $160 billion through the end of its current fiscal year.

At the World Bank, the voice and voting power of the United States stand for independent accountability, budget discipline, and focus on the bank's core mission. While we must react quickly to help those in need, we must not let speed come at the expense of accountability, which includes quality and environmental and social safeguards. U.S. leadership is more important than ever to promote peace, stability, and economic growth.

If I have the privilege to serve as Alternate Executive Director, I will commit myself to focusing on the most vulnerable countries, maintaining comprehensive oversight, and ensuring the integrity and accuracy of World Bank data.

The United States was a leader in the foundation of the World Bank in Bretton Woods 76 years ago. And now, again faced with global adversity, the United States must show unwavering leadership in providing assistance where it is most needed, restoring momentum towards achieving our development goals, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the World Bank and American leadership therein.

Members of this committee provide valuable input regarding U.S. objectives at the World Bank. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your staffs.

Again, thank you, and I will gladly answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pinto follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ASHOK MICHAEL PINTO

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am extremely grateful to you for your many courtesies. And, as a former Senate staffer, I recognize and sincerely appreciate the hard work of your staffs in making this hearing possible.

It is the honor of a lifetime to be President Trump's nominee to be Alternate U.S. Executive Director to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a key component of the World Bank Group. I am grateful to Secretary Mnuchin, Deputy Secretary Muzinich, and Under Secretary McIntosh for their confidence in recommending me for this position. Also, the encouragement and assistance from my colleagues at the U.S. Treasury Department and the World Bank have been inspiring.

I would not be here today without the love and support of my family: my wife Preeya, and our four children—Seraphina, Lucy, John, and Joseph. My parents also deserve special thanks for their unwavering support. They came to the United States as graduate students. Now, they have been in this country much longer than their formative years in India, and they celebrated fifty years of marriage in 2019. My parents instilled in me a spirit of service and an appreciation of other cultures. Because of their countless sacrifices and constant encouragement, my brother Jay, a physician, my sister Susanna, a journalist, and I have had every opportunity to excel in our chosen professions. Only in America.

I have been fortunate to have served in all three branches of government, including both houses of Congress. It is an amazing opportunity to continue my service at the World Bank. There is truly no nobler a goal than to end extreme poverty and foster income growth for the poorest people of every country. Indeed, helping the less fortunate is the objective that unites us in public service. A formative service project in Mexico during high school as well as trips to India to visit extended family over the years have made me appreciate the myriad opportunities I have had and imbued me with a desire to help others.

The world now faces a challenge of an unprecedented scale, affecting billions of lives and causing major setbacks in economic development. Reviving the global economy while protecting individual health and safety is a daunting task with no easy answers. Millions are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, reversing the steady downward trajectory of the last three decades and jeopardizing the World Bank's twin aims of ending poverty and building shared prosperity. The World Bank is playing a pivotal role in addressing the COVID–19 global pandemic, particularly by helping the poorest people around the world who are most vulnerable to the virus. The Bank is now supporting COVID-related projects in more than 100 countries, and the work to provide health support, social protection, poverty alleviation, and policy-based financing is ongoing. We must persist because failure simply is not an option.

The COVID–19 pandemic has hit the world's poorest countries the hardest. With already surging public debt levels, debt service suspension can provide swift and significant relief, allowing governments to channel these resources to support their citizens. The World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund have supported a coordinated effort, to which the G20 and the Paris Club have agreed, by bilateral official creditors to suspend debt service payments for the poorest countries that request this assistance. The G7 is committed to implementing this initiative, which includes lending safeguards and debt transparency with significant emerging sov-

ereign creditor and private sector creditor participation as key objectives. We seek to promote growth through our assistance.

In addition, the World Bank Group under the leadership of President Malpass has committed to deploy up to $160 billion through the end of its current fiscal year. Of this amount, $50 billion will be in either grants or highly concessional terms from the International Development Association, which supports the world's poorest countries. Given the large amounts of these funds aimed at economic recovery, the United States will continue to exercise its oversight responsibilities to assure that support provided is free from waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement and benefits the intended recipients.

In representing the views of the United States at the institution, the primary goal of the Office of the U.S. Executive Director is to ensure that World Bank programs and initiatives are consistent with advancing U.S. development, foreign policy, national security, and commercial priorities, as well as rigorous standards and safeguards. At the World Bank, the voice and voting power of the United States stand for independent accountability, budget discipline, and focus on the Bank's core mission. While we must react quickly to help those in need, we must not let speed come at the expense of accountability, which includes quality and environmental and social safeguards. U.S. leadership is more important than ever to promote peace, stability, and economic growth.

If I have the privilege to serve as Alternate U.S. Executive Director, I will commit myself to focusing on the most vulnerable countries, maintaining comprehensive oversight, and assuring the integrity and accuracy of World Bank data. I will also make every effort to combat global corruption and fight human trafficking—to which this committee remains steadfastly dedicated.

The United States was a leader in the foundation of the World Bank in Bretton Woods 76 years ago. And now, again faced with global adversity, the United States must show unwavering leadership in providing assistance where it is most needed, restoring momentum towards achieving our development goals, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the World Bank and American leadership therein.

Members of this committee and other interested members of both the Senate and the House provide valuable input regarding U.S. objectives at the World Bank. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your staffs on the Bank's COVID–19 response and broader goals. Again, thank you, and I will gladly answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Pinto.

Mr. Todd, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM E. TODD, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

Mr. TODD. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, honorable members of the committee, I am humbled to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the trust and confidence they have placed in me through this nomination.

While they cannot be here in person today, I would like to recognize my wonderful family. Words are insufficient to express my love, my admiration, and my appreciation for my wife Ann and my parents, Jack and Marie Todd. I am very grateful for my four children: William, Chris, John, and Caitlyn. As a family, we have shared the excitement, the joys and sometimes the hardships associated with my career, and through it all, we have been richly blessed.

I come before you today as a career member of the Senior Executive Service. During 37 years with the U.S. Government, I have served in some of the most interesting and rewarding positions across six presidential administrations, including having been con-

firmed as a U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia and to Brunei, once in an ambassadorial rank position in Afghanistan as the Coordinating Director of Development and Economic Affairs, and once as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, and my current position, Deputy Under Secretary for Management.

Across my career, my highest priority has always been the safety and security of our team. At no other time in recent history has that been so challenged. Since January, I have had the distinct honor to lead much of the Department's mitigation and response to the COVID–19 pandemic, which has included the repatriation of over 100,000 Americans from over 135 countries, including 4,000 Foreign Service officers and 6,000 members of their family.

COVID–19 has also had a profound impact on Pakistan. It has greatly affected Pakistan's health and its economy. If confirmed, I will continue to make the U.S.-Pakistan COVID–19 partnership a priority.

Beyond COVID–19, this is an important and opportune time in the broader complicated U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Over the years, we certainly have had our differences, and many of those differences remain today. Nonetheless, we are also working together on many shared goals. Today our countries recognize that we share a common interest in a durable peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan has played an important role in helping to facilitate the ongoing Afghan peace negotiations in Doha. Looking forward, Pakistan has a more important role to play, supporting efforts that will lead to a political settlement that ends 40 years of war. This is a moment of opportunity for Pakistan to forge a new and better role in the region and, if confirmed, will be one of my highest priorities.

In terms of regional dynamics, although we have a strong relationship with India, it should not come at the expense of Pakistan. I believe that under the right conditions, we can have a strong relationship with both countries. Our hope is that both countries will take the necessary steps to reduce tensions, and as the President has offered, we will facilitate dialogue if both sides agree.

However, to truly reduce tensions, Pakistan must take sustained and irreversible action against terrorism. Pakistan has suffered terribly at the hands of terrorists and has committed publicly to ensure they cannot use their territory to operate. Pakistan has also taken important steps toward fulfilling this commitment, and if confirmed, I will work with the Government of Pakistan to continue further progress on these priorities.

Lastly, there are three other key priorities that I will focus on, if confirmed. First is human rights. Second, trade and investment. And third is youth engagement. These priorities will be challenging to fulfill, but will lead to a better future for Pakistan and a stronger U.S.-Pakistan relationship.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate that my highest priority has been and will always be the safety and security of all U.S. citizens. Recently, a U.S. citizen by the name of Tahir Naseem was murdered in a courtroom in Pakistan where he was about to be tried for blasphemy. Frankly, I was shocked, I was saddened, and I was outraged by this event. And if confirmed, I will

engage Pakistani authorities to hold the perpetrators fully accountable.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to working with you, this committee, and the entire Congress. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Todd follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM E. TODD

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and honorable members of this committee, I am humbled to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the trust and confidence they have shown in me through this nomination.

While they cannot be here in-person, I would like to recognize my wonderful family, who are watching this hearing virtually. Words are insufficient to express my love, admiration, and appreciation for my wife Ann and my parents Jack and Marie Todd. I am also grateful for my four children, William, Chris, John, and Caitlyn. As a family, we have shared the excitement, joys, and sometimes the hardships associated with this career and lifestyle, and through it all, we have been richly blessed.

I come before you today as a career member of the Senior Executive Service. During my 37 years with the U.S. Government and across six Presidential administrations, I have served in some of the most rewarding positions in government, including having been confirmed twice previously as U.S. Ambassador (Cambodia and Brunei). I served in an Ambassadorial rank position in Afghanistan as the Coordinating Director of Development and Economic Affairs, as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, and most recently as Deputy Under Secretary for Management.

Across all of these assignments, my highest priority has always been the safety and security of our team domestically and abroad. At no other time in our nation's recent history has the safety and security of our personnel and American citizens faced such an unprecedented challenge as we have with the COVID–19 pandemic. Since early January of this year, I had the distinct honor to spend most of my time leading and operationalizing much of the Department of State's preparedness, mitigation, and response efforts for the COVID–19 crisis.

It has been an honor and a privilege to be part of the team that facilitated the repatriation of 100,000 American citizens who were overseas when the COVID–19 pandemic occurred. We repatriated American citizens from 135 countries, on over 950 flights. To protect our Foreign Service team serving abroad, we approved the State Department's first ever Global Authorized Departure, bringing home over 4,000 U.S. Embassy American staff and over 6,000 family members from conditions that could have threatened their well-being. We put in place global medevac capabilities and assets to reach any location in the world within 24 hours.

This global COVID–19 pandemic had a profound impact in Pakistan, as it has around the world. The U.S.-Pakistan health partnership helped contribute to better-than-expected COVID–19 outcomes in Pakistan, from training health workers to upgrading emergency operations centers and delivering ventilators, a personal promise by President Trump. Nonetheless, the health impacts are real and the economic fallout for Pakistan is likely to be serious.Beyond the immediate COVID–19 crisis, this is an important time in the broader U.S.-Pakistan relationship. As you know very well, this is a longstanding and important, but always complicated and sometimes contentious relationship. We certainly have our differences, but Pakistan is an essential regional partner, and this is an opportune moment in our relationship to work together on shared goals. Peace in Afghanistan is in both our countries' best interests, and effective U.S.-Pakistani cooperation is essential to achieve that objective.

As Secretary Pompeo said when he visited Islamabad in 2018, we have an "opportunity to reset the relationship between our two countries across a broad spectrum—economic, business, commercial—the work that we all know that we need to do to try to develop a peaceful resolution in Afghanistan that benefits certainly Afghanistan, but also the United States and Pakistan." Today, our countries recognize that we share a common interest in a durable peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan played a critical role in creating the conditions that brought Afghan leaders and the Taliban to the historic start of Afghan Peace Negotiations. They have an even more important role to play in supporting efforts toward a negotiated political settlement

that ends 40 years of war. This is a moment of opportunity for Pakistan to continue to forge a new and better role in the region and if confirmed will be one of my highest priorities.

In terms of regional dynamics, although we have a strong relationship with India, that does not need to come at the expense of Pakistan. I believe that under the right conditions, we can have a strong relationship with both countries. Our hope is that both countries will take the necessary steps to reduce tensions, and as President Trump has offered, we are prepared to facilitate dialogue if both sides request it.

To truly reduce regional tensions, and rebuild a strong relationship with the United States, Pakistan must take sustained and irreversible action against terrorism. Pakistan has suffered terribly itself at the hands of terrorists and has committed publicly to ensure terrorists cannot use Pakistani territory to operate. Pakistan has taken important steps toward fulfilling that commitment but needs to continue that work. If confirmed, I will work with Pakistan to advance our shared interest in eliminating terrorism from its territory and advancing security in the region.

If confirmed, I will actively engage Pakistan on these issues, as well as strategic stability and non-proliferation, carrying a clear message on the threat that nuclear weapons pose to the United States, the region, and our allies and partners. Pakistan needs to demonstrate it is prepared to live up to international commitments on weapons of mass destruction.

Lastly, there are three other key priorities that I will focus on if confirmed. My first goal will be advancing human rights, particularly freedom of religion and expression. I was shocked and heartbroken that U.S. citizen Tahir Naseem was killed in a Pakistani courtroom in which he was facing an accusation of blasphemy. I grieve with the family of Mr. Naseem, and if confirmed, will engage Pakistani authorities on full accountability for the perpetrators. I am also concerned about increasing restrictions on civil society, including the growing harassment and disappearances of journalists without accountability, which undermines the exercise of the right of peaceful assembly and freedoms of expression and association.

Second, given Pakistan has the fifth largest population in the world, we need increased bilateral trade and investment. The President sees this potential and has personally called for a substantial expansion of our trade and investment relationship, which benefits both countries.

Third, with over 64 percent of Pakistanis being 30 years old or younger, we should expand youth engagement.Making progress on youth engagement, trade and investment, and human rights will be challenging, but necessary for a better future for Pakistan, and a stronger U.S.-Pakistan relationship. As the President has said repeatedly, "There is tremendous potential between our country and Pakistan." The choices that are made now will build a legacy for generations to come.In closing Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with you, this committee, and the entire U.S. Congress. If confirmed, I will dedicate all of my energy and experience to advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives in Pakistan, and to strengthening the relationship between our two countries. Thank you very much for considering my nomination. I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Todd.

Mr. Ueland?

STATEMENT OF HON. ERIC M. UELAND, OF OREGON, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. UELAND. Mr. Chairman, Senator Menendez, and members of the committee, thank you for the privilege of appearing today as President Trump's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human rights, the J family.

I am grateful to both President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for their confidence and hope to earn your support and Senate confirmation.

I would also like to thank my family whose support allows me the opportunity to continue my public service.

The role of the Under Secretary is to promote the ideals of the American people and contribute to their safety and security, and this is done best when the Under Secretary leads. And leadership

at J takes many forms, starting with a strong public voice. Whether it is calling out the Chinese Communist Party's behavior in Hong Kong, its efforts to erase the identity of the Tibetan people, and its sweeping human rights abuses in Xinjiang or spotlighting the illegitimate Maduro regime's continued denial of the Venezuelan people's democracy and their freedom or the regime in Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism inflicting shocking human rights abuses on its own people, spreading the vile poison of anti-Semitism around the globe, for all these and more, we must confront abuses, amplify the voices of the suffering and lead the international community in standing up to perpetrators.

If confirmed, I will deploy, as appropriate, tools from the entire suite of J family implements, including sanctions, designations, and determinations. I will highlight a large collection of public reporting on trafficking in persons, human rights, religious freedom, child soldiers, atrocities, terrorism, and narcotics. I will do all this to shed light on the actions of malign actors, promote accountability, and drive change.

Leadership at J is also about working to effectively alleviate suffering and provide lifesaving aid around the globe. The United States is the world's largest donor of humanitarian assistance. While assisting the vulnerable and distressed, we must also address causes of conflict and instability. So, for example, the United States leads the response to the challenge in Rakhine State, we press the Burmese Government to create conditions for the safe, secure, and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees, including by respecting human rights and holding accountable the perpetrators of atrocities.

J should approach humanitarian challenges in a holistic manner and protect against fragility growing into larger problems for us and our partners in the future.

Leadership at J also means broadening and deepening our international partnerships to curb opioid and drug flows to the United States, dismantle terrorist networks, end human trafficking, and disrupt transnational criminal organizations. The J family uses training and expertise to build the global partnerships which protect our citizens here at home, and we all know that ensuring the United States as the international partner of choice both influence foreign governments and reinforces our global leadership in an era of renewed great power competition.

Leadership too means setting agendas. For example, the Trump administration has put protecting freedom of religion or belief at the forefront, hosting two unprecedented ministerials to advance religious freedom and launching the International Religious Freedom Alliance.

If confirmed, I would utilize my skills working with multiple stakeholders to support this agenda and other priorities, expanding our coalition of likeminded nations.

Leading J does also mean careful stewardship of public funds. As the world leader in humanitarian and security partnerships, U.S. resources must be used effectively, efficiently, and responsibly. Ongoing evaluation of our programs will ensure we are accomplishing our goals and reflecting our values.

If confirmed, I will seek to ensure our programs are assessed by realistic, measurable outcomes. And with our international coalitions, I would continue to promote the President's burden sharing objectives.

Finally, leadership means directing highly capable public servants to accomplish the President's foreign policy agenda. I will put my management skills to work on issues which the J family handles, listening to and learning from incredibly distinguished public servants working in the J family to harness their passion for the work they do on behalf of the President and the nation.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Menendez, and members of the committee, I appreciate the chance to be here today, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee. Thank you for your courtesy this morning, and I welcome any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ueland follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ERIC M. UELAND

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee, it is my honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Donald J. Trump's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. I am humbled by the prospect of serving our great nation in this role and grateful to both President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for their confidence in me to serve in this capacity.

Before I begin today, I would like to take a moment to thank my family. Their selfless support inspires my public service and motivates my working towards a greater good and a better tomorrow.

I have had the honor to serve the American people for many years. Working as a member of the Senate staff, at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, as the Director of the Office of Foreign Assistance at the State Department, and through multiple roles at the White House, I saw first-hand the important work of the nine bureaus and offices for which the Under Secretary is responsible.

Today, I would like to share my vision for how the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, the so-called "J family," can promote U.S. values and support the safety, security, and prosperity of the American people.

Leadership is essential. This takes many forms, to include being willing to speak out and promote accountability for malign actors. For example, we see the Chinese Communist Party rolling back autonomy and liberty in Hong Kong, unlawfully detaining and carrying out sweeping human rights abuses against more than one million Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other Muslims in Xinjiang, and continuing its decades-long effort to eliminate the unique identity of Tibetans. The illegitimate Maduro regime continues to deny the Venezuelan people the democracy and freedom they deserve, holding hundreds of political prisoners and refusing to create the conditions for free and fair elections. The Islamic Republic of Iran remains the world's leading state-sponsor of terrorism, inflicting shocking human rights abuses on its own people, and spreading the vile poison of anti-Semitism around the globe. We must confront these realities, amplify the voices of those suffering, and lead the international community in standing up to perpetrators.

If confirmed, I would use the entire suite of J family tools. This includes sanctions, designations, determinations, and public reporting on trafficking in persons, human rights, religious freedom, child soldiers, atrocities, terrorism, and narcotics to shed light on the actions of these malign actors and promote accountability.

Leadership is not just speaking out against brutal regimes. It is also seeking to alleviate suffering and providing life-saving aid during times of crisis. Through the generosity of the American people and with support from Congress, the United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance and leading the global foreign assistance response to COVID–19. On an annual basis, the State Department provides billions of dollars in humanitarian assistance that benefits tens of millions of people, many of whom are displaced by violence and conflict.

While providing relief and refuge to the vulnerable and distressed has been an important hallmark of American foreign policy, we must address the causes of conflict and instability that often lead to humanitarian crises. For example, while the United States has led the humanitarian response to the challenge in Rakhine State, we also must continue to press the Burmese Government to create conditions for

the safe, secure, and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees—by respecting human rights and holding accountable the perpetrators of atrocities, which is essential to avoiding their recurrence and future crises.

If confirmed, I would seek to ensure the J family approaches these challenges in a holistic manner that prevents state fragility and societal fissures from growing into larger challenges. When crises do occur, I would make certain we provide humanitarian assistance in a manner that is both sustainable and incentivizes burden-sharing by our donor partners.

Leadership also means broadening and deepening our international partnerships in support of U.S. interests. These partnerships are vital to curbing the flow of opioids and other drugs into the United States, dismantling terrorist networks, ending human trafficking, and preventing transnational criminal organizations from operating across borders with impunity. With a proven track record of accomplishment, cutting-edge technology, and commitment to our values, the J family provides the critical tools, training, and expertise necessary to build the global partnerships needed to combat these transnational threats. This international cooperation is more important than ever in an era of great power competition. While our adversaries and competitors make unfulfilled promises and seek vassal states rather than genuine partners, ensuring the United States continues to serve as the partner of choice reinforces our global influence.

If confirmed, I would seek to leverage our counterterrorism, counter narcotics, and antitrafficking partnerships not only to fight immediate threats to our national security, but also to expand American influence with foreign governments unwilling or unable to combat illicit activity or terrorist threats.

Leadership also means agenda-setting. For example, the Trump administration has brought the crucial task of protecting freedom of religion or belief to the forefront of the international agenda, including by hosting two unprecedented Ministerials to Advance Religious Freedom and by launching the International Religious Freedom Alliance. These efforts demonstrate how U.S. leadership can catalyze the international community to address the plight of the marginalized and oppressed, even when the world has seemingly turned away.

If confirmed, I would utilize my previous experience working with a variety of stakeholders to support this agenda and expand our coalition of like-minded nations on this and other issues of vital importance.

Finally, the responsible stewardship of public funds has been a key objective of my career in government. If confirmed as Under Secretary, this would be one of my top priorities. While overseeing approximately $6 billion in foreign assistance each year, the Under Secretary must ensure that we are building partner capacity rather than dependency when we provide foreign assistance. As I mentioned, we are a leader in humanitarian and security partnerships, and with that comes the tremendous responsibility to ensure that U.S. resources are used effectively and efficiently. This means we need to commit to the ongoing evaluation of our programs to ensure we are achieving their original intent.

If confirmed, I would seek to ensure our programs are implemented by capable partners, and assessed by realistic, measurable outcomes. Simultaneously, through our expanded coalitions, I would continue to promote the President's burden-sharing objectives that not only encourages our partners to do more with their money but enables us to do more with ours.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with each member of the committee to advance our shared goals. I welcome any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Todd.

Mr. Ueland? I am sorry.

Mr. UELAND. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. You are very welcome, but you only get one bite of the apple here.

We are going to do a round of questions now, and I want to start, Mr. Todd, with you.

First of all, we know historically whenever things—there is upheaval in Afghanistan, we see a flood going into Pakistan particularly into the western provinces in Pakistan. It has caused us no end of grief during the time we have been engaged in Afghanistan.

What are your thoughts? What do you see in that regard? How do you see that playing out? However this peace process goes, whichever direction it goes, there is going to be movement across the border to the east out of Afghanistan. What are your thoughts on that? How do you see that playing out? How are the Pakistanis going to handle this?

Ambassador TODD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Right now, Pakistan has generously taken care of millions of Afghan refugees over the last several years. We have very active programs in country right now, both bilaterally and through various international organizations.

We believe that if the peace and reconciliation process goes as planned, over a period of time some of those refugees will want to go back. Currently the U.S. position is that it has to be conditions-based, that there needs to be basically safety and security first. It has to be voluntary, second. And third, that whatever is the mechanism, it should live up to the international norms of migration. And if I am confirmed, I assure you I will work with the refugees, civil society, and the Government of Pakistan to make sure it happens in the proper way.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Todd, I am dismayed that you are appearing at this hearing without having complied with the request by Chairman Engel and I, outstanding since February, to be interviewed on retaliation against career public servants. While I put the onus of the responsibility on the State Department, the failure to comply with a congressional request on critical oversight matters is also a reflection on you, one that I hope you can correct.

So I would like to ask you for a firm commitment on the record. Do you commit to appear for a transcribed interview regarding political retaliation, as was requested to you since last February?

Ambassador TODD. Thank you, Mr. Senator.

Yesterday, I had a very good and fulsome discussion about this with your team. To be candid with you, I am a 37-year career employee. In my entire career, I have never had the opportunity to be told that as a requirement of doing something I must do a voluntary transcribed interview.

Over the last several months, I have made multiple attempts to brief the committee, provide any answers for any questions that the committee has asked, and provide any information that the committee has asked.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, you are not answering my question. So your answer is no, you will not sit for a—you know, this is not something that can be covered in a courtesy meeting with my staff or Chairman Engel's staff. There are other members of the State Department, career people as well, who have sat for a transcribed interview, and I do not understand your reticence to do so.

Ambassador TODD. Well, again, Mr. Senator, I gave your team the reasons, but just to reduce it to very practical levels, for me to do a transcribed interview, I am going to have to hire an attorney. That attorney is going to cost $25,000 or $30,000. I am a career employee. You know how much I make.

Also, I would rather——

Senator MENENDEZ. I have to be honest with you. For you to raise the issue of private counsel for the first time more than 6 months after the initial request and following no response by the Department, it is hard to see that as a real obstacle. The Department has historically agreed to make witnesses available voluntarily for transcribed interviews. Dozens of officials have been interviewed for past requests, including for the Benghazi committee among others, and did so with agency counsel and no out-of-pocket costs.

Ambassador TODD. Sir, I have made multiple attempts to meet with your committee. I have offered probably two or three times a month for the last 6 months. I have been unable to get a meeting.

Senator MENENDEZ. You will be able to get a meeting if you want to be willing to submit to a transcription. For some reason, whatever it is that you have to say, you do not want to say in a transcribed proceeding. So I am not going to play rope a dope with you anymore. Your answer is not based upon the positions that you have taken here.

Ambassador TODD. Sir, I would like to come up and answer any questions you have voluntarily. That has been my position for 6 months.

Senator MENENDEZ. But not in a transcribed proceeding.

Ambassador TODD. I believe it is unnecessary. I am not an attorney. I do not have——

Senator MENENDEZ. A transcribed proceeding only creates a record of what you have to say. So I do not understand what the reticence is. If you are willing to say whatever it is as the answer to questions, whether they are transcribed or not, it should be the same answer—right—unless somehow you would deceive us in an un-transcribed process but in a transcribed process, you would tell us the truth.

So let me move on. I clearly have your answer by virtue of your unwillingness to do this.

Let me ask you with reference to the potential assignment you may have—I do not know if you are going to get there—how will you use your tools at your disposal to encourage Pakistan to take real action against Lashkar-e-Taiba and its leadership?

Ambassador TODD. Thank you, Mr. Senator. That is an important question.

LET, as you know, is a terrorist group that has created terror over the last several years. Pakistan has worked hard to prosecute the leadership of LET. The leader of that terrorist group was imprisoned approximately a year ago. Twelve of his subordinates were also imprisoned.

If I am confirmed, I will continue to press Pakistan to take sustained, irreversible action against terrorists. I also will work with them on the terrorist financing aspect of it. And again, if I am confirmed, I look forward to coming and briefing you and the committee.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I have a series of questions for Mr. Todd and Mr. Ueland. But in deference to our colleagues, I will wait for a final round.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso?

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Pinto, I had a couple questions, if I could.

And first, I want to start talking about an all-of-the-above energy strategy. You know, global philanthropist Bill Gates explains that increasing access to electricity is really critical to lifting the world's poor out of poverty. And worldwide, there are just short of a billion people who are today living without electricity. I know you are well aware of this. They cannot cook or heat their homes safely, cannot do it reliably. Nearly 3 billion people still rely on wood and waste for household energy. People living in poor and developing nations—they want and need a stable energy supply. It is about energy today for them. And they are looking for power generation that provides energy security. It helps create jobs and it improves their lives today.

And I believe traditional fuels are a vital tool to help people escape poverty. Yet, over the past few years, the World Bank has been imposing restrictions on the financing of traditional energy projects. Last year, I led a dozen Senators in a letter urging the World Bank to immediately lift these harmful restrictions. My letter, of course, was to the World Bank President, David Malpass. It was cosigned by Senators Boozman, Capito, Cotton, Cramer, Cruz, Enzi, Hoeven, Johnson, Kennedy, Murkowski, and Thune. Together, we pressed the bank to recommit to an all-of-the-above energy strategy. So to achieve its mission, the World Bank really I believe must embrace, not exclude affordable energy resources. Ultimately, the solution to energy poverty does not lie in limiting options, but in using all available options.

So if confirmed, will you commit to ensuring the World Bank is promoting all forms of energy projects across the globe, including oil, gas, and coal?

Mr. PINTO. Senator, thank you for the question. And I am certainly aware of your interest and your concern regarding this issue, and I appreciated the opportunity to discuss it with your staff.

Yes, I agree with you, and I believe that countries determine what energy mix is most appropriate to meet their needs and that an all-of-the-above approach ensures that the bank can truly make a dent in that nearly 1 billion number of people who lack access to electricity around the world.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

I want to turn to China's predatory lending. Through the Belt and Road initiative, the Chinese Communist Party offers countries the ability to borrow a lot of money for infrastructure projects. The problem is that these countries then accumulate large amounts of debt, debt to China. They are unable to pay it back and while still not achieving the development gains that many are seeking. So they borrow money, go into debt, cannot get done what they want to do, but they are unable to escape the massive debt that is owed to China. They face default or forfeiture of some of their strategic assets, their natural resources. And you have seen this happen around the globe.

So on top of the financial pressure, some countries are now also facing the economic hardships that have been caused by coronavirus. To me, this is a tragic recipe.

What actions do you believe the World Bank should take, and how would you ensure American taxpayers are not bailing out Chinese financial institutions and further enabling China's predatory lending policies?

Mr. PINTO. Senator, thanks also for that question, and I also recognize that is a serious concern.

The World Bank, as I mentioned in my testimony, is convening a debt service suspension initiative, and the importance of that is to make sure that all non-Paris Club creditors, including China, are at the table and are fully participating in that initiative.

I also think that it is important for the bank, as you noted, to reduce its lending to China, to promote graduation on the part of China. That is something that China should aspire to, given that is now a wealthy country with the second largest economy in the world. So we would like to continue to see a downward trajectory in lending to China from the bank, and we would like to see China become a net donor and no longer a net borrower because those resources are scarce.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, Mr. Pinto, just to add to exactly what you said, China is the second largest economy in the world. And as you point out, China still receives below market rates for projects financed with loans from the World Bank.

In December of 2019, the World Bank approved a new plan to provide China with between $1 billion and $1.5 billion in low interest loans annually through 2025. This is happening while the Chinese Communist Party, through its Belt and Road Initiative, is engaged in predatory lending practices that we just described. So I just am seriously concerned about the World Bank using American tax dollars to loan money to China while China is engaged in debt trap diplomacy in developing countries across the globe. So I appreciate your attention to that and your commitment to making sure that that declines, and I would like to have that decline at a rapid rate.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso. Well said.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me thank all three of our nominees for their willingness to continue to serve our country.

Mr. Ueland, I want to ask you a few questions in regards to the position that you have been nominated to fill. As Senator Menendez pointed out, you have experience in the budget areas. You do not really have broad experience in democracy building or human rights. Clearly we want to use our financial leverage to advance democracy and human rights. So I hope that that experience will help you in dealing with the bureaucracy within the State Department and the executive branch to advance democracy and human rights.

Freedom House recently reported that 25 of the 41 democratic states in the world have seen a decline in democracy, including the United States of America. And we have fewer democratic states today in Central and Eastern Europe than at any time since they have been doing their report, which started in 1995. So we have seen a decline of democracy.

Our values need to be how we conduct our foreign policy—wrapped in our values. How do you intend to stand up to the bureaucracy of the State Department, which has issues that they like to put the human rights or democracy building on the back burner as compared to other issues or the messaging that comes out of sometimes the executive branch that is very vague on our values? And I am putting that gently. Can we count on you to stand up for the important role for which this position was developed in order to promote democracy, to advance human rights, to stand up for American values, and to make sure it is incorporated in all of our foreign policy decisions?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for the question. And I think based on my experience, not only can I confidently say yes, but be able to explain why I have confidence in that answer.

My work here on the Hill and in the executive branch, which certainly has focused at points on financial matters, budget matters, and spending matters, gives me an appreciation of a simple fact that oftentimes resources are policy, and that in order to drive results, the need for appropriate resources to be applied to significant foreign policy challenges is paramount. The work inside the Department to build consensus with folks in the field, as well as regional bureaus, fellow under secretaries, assistant secretaries, and the like is something that I have some familiarity with having served as the Director of F and trying to prioritize our work in such areas as policy and priorities for refugee and migration flows, the work that we have done on humanitarian assistance to coordinate our efforts better both inside the Department of State, as well as with USAID, pioneering and spearheading our effort to ensure that how we follow through on the Trafficking in Persons Report for consequences out in countries that have qualified as tier 3, and suspending programs appropriately but with USAID, attempting to ensure that appropriate programs that need to continue actually do continue because they reflect our values.

Senator, I anticipate that if I have the opportunity to serve, if I am confirmed, I will be working quite intensely inside the Department of State, inside the interagency, with the Office of Management and Budget to ensure that resources match our policy.

Senator CARDIN. So let me ask you one specific question, if I might.

The Elie Wiesel Genocide and Prevention Act that I authored, along with Senator Young, has a strategy for us to try to prevent atrocities from occurring. The Early Warning Task Force is part of that process to determine countries that are at risk of atrocities.

Will you support the public release of countries identified at risk of atrocities so that we can put a spotlight on these countries in order to deal with preventing those atrocities from moving forward?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for that question. You raise an interesting point.

At times, as part of our public diplomacy, it is appropriate to release information and provide a spotlight on potential challenges. If you have more than 4 seconds, I am happy to expand a bit on the fact that, as you know, in the J family, the responsibility for serving as a secretariat for the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force actually resides in the CSO Bureau, and the work that CSO does,

in an effort to ensure that there are early warnings about potential atrocity situations and encourage and work with the interagency in ways to find throughout the Department, as well as perhaps with interagency partners, to intervene, to preempt atrocities from even occurring, is a significant responsibility that occurs in J at CSO. I anticipate——

Senator CARDIN. My time is running out.

Mr. UELAND. I understand, but I just again want to emphasize we have a wide suite of tools. There are moments when private engagement, moments when public engagement is appropriate in dealing with significant instances, including potential atrocities.

Senator CARDIN. I am going to respectfully disagree. I must go on the record. I respectfully disagree with the clarity here. I am the senior Democrat on the Helsinki Commission in the Senate, and naming and shaming has been the way that we have gotten so much progress internationally on advancing human rights. The Global Magnitsky bill. You need to be specific otherwise the issues get lost. So I would just urge you to reflect that if you do not have the courage to identify the bad actors, they will continue to be bad actors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to each of our nominees this morning.

Mr. Ueland, in your opening statement, you talked about a number of the human—the challenges that J faces that you would face if you are confirmed. But I did not hear you discuss the empowerment of women as one of the ways in which we could be addressing some of these challenges because what we know about empowering women is that it contributes to stability in communities and in countries.

So can you talk about how you might support the empowerment of women if you are confirmed in ways that would help advance the human rights agenda that you talked about?

Mr. UELAND. Well, Senator, thank you very much for that question. And I appreciate very much your focus on the empowerment of women, since that is one of about five priority areas that I anticipate spending significant time on, if confirmed as Under Secretary.

The work that the senior advisor in the White House has done, Ivanka Trump, on the issue of WGDP, the work done that I saw and experienced firsthand at Millennium Challenge Corporation about ensuring that women's rights and women's participation in MCC projects as multilateral efforts inside countries to advance their interests and their economic potentiality, the work we do with our foreign assistance that I saw at F to focus on ways to continue to empower women all will be one of those priority areas that I will focus on during my tenure at F in addition to Internet freedom, religious freedom, and trying to pioneer ways to focus on the rights of the elderly and handicapped.

Senator SHAHEEN. To go back to the Global Magnitsky Act that Senator Cardin raised, I have seen reports that during your time at Goldman Sachs, you worked to help the firm lobby against the

Magnitsky Act which, as we know, helps identify and punish the most serious human rights abusers around the world.

So if confirmed, would you seek to uphold the spirit and principles of the Magnitsky Act, and can you give us examples where you think we should be looking at using it to address specific events or individuals who are responsible for oppression?

Mr. UELAND. Thank you very much, Senator, for the question. And as I explained last week to committee staff on the Democratic side, our responsibilities to provide information about what we were doing as lobbyists, including information about what was just occurring up here was what triggered our responsibility to file on what was going on in terms of Senator Cardin's and others' efforts to bring the Magnitsky Act into existence.

It is the law of the land, Senator, and I anticipate, as we discussed last time I was before the committee, taking care that laws be faithfully executed.

As you know, this administration has stepped forward very aggressively to use the Global Magnitsky Act repeatedly and consequentially against individuals who have committed wrongdoing and qualify for sanction under the Global Magnitsky Act.

I am not prepared today to make policy from the table by indicating individuals or situations where there might be qualification for the Magnitsky Act, but if confirmed as Under Secretary, the Under Secretary and institutions in the under secretariat play a significant role in evaluating who might qualify for sanction under the Magnitsky Act, making recommendations to the Secretary about the Magnitsky Act, and then in a public way talking about the use of the Magnitsky Act if ultimately the President decides to go ahead and utilize it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I appreciate that. I hope you will continue to support the use of the act in ways that are important to our national security.

Ambassador Todd, you talked about the role of Pakistan in the negotiations that are currently going on between the Taliban and Afghanistan. What more can we do to urge Pakistan not just to support those negotiations with the Taliban, but to encourage the Government of Afghanistan to be a critical player? I thought the point that some people are looking at those negotiations and seeing four participants that does not include the Government of Afghanistan in any meaningful way—so what could you do as Ambassador to try and move an agenda that actually includes the Afghan Government? Because if we are going to have any kind of long-term peace in Afghanistan, they certainly need to be part of that effort.

Ambassador TODD. Well, thank you, Senator.

As I mentioned in my testimony, Pakistan is playing a very important role in the peace and reconciliation process. They have been very helpful facilitating meetings. They have been helpful reducing tension. They have been very, very helpful in terms of getting the logistics and other things done that have helped us do what we needed to do.

Right now, as you know, in Doha, it is an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned discussion and negotiation. But frankly, it is a long process between where we are today and where we need to go. For Pakistan, I think the most important role moving forward is facilitating

and sustaining peace and reconciliation, which will formally result in a political settlement that will end the 40-year war.

Also, Pakistan needs to continue to put extreme pressure on the various terrorist groups that live and reside inside Pakistan. And if I am confirmed, that will be my highest priority because getting to peace is extremely important not only for Afghanistan, but also for Pakistan. And frankly, no other country, other than Afghanistan, benefits more from peace than Pakistan.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

My time is up, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And congratulations to the witnesses for your nominations.

Mr. Ueland, I want to just direct my comments to you.

Mr. UELAND. Yes, sir.

Senator KAINE. I feel sorry for you. You have had a distinguished career and you are nominated for a position that is a really important one. And your opening comments suggest that there is a long agenda of things that we need to attend to that you would like to.

But the reason I feel sorry for you is this. The United States' ability to set an example on human rights issues is deeply compromised by activities of the President, and since he is the person who has the loudest microphone of any American, the work that you do to try to promote human rights around the world is something that is going to be very, very difficult. I mean, I know you will make a good faith effort, should you be confirmed.

But just recent examples. Last night at a rally, the President has continued to repeat things he has done in early rallies, leading crowds and chanting "lock her up" or "lock them up" about political opponents.

At a rally over the weekend, the President spoke to an audience in Minnesota and praised police for firing a rubber bullet at a reporter, Ali Velshi, of MSNBC, peacefully covering a peaceful protest. There is no dispute about that. The President said that was a beautiful example of law and order. Press freedom is part of the portfolio of the State Department sections you will work with.

Saudi Arabia imprisoning women for activism for women's rights, murdering a Virginia journalist, Virginia resident journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, and in a recent interview with an accompanying audio tape, the President basically said I saved his ass about the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia who the U.S. intelligence largely believes was responsible for the assassination. And he bragged about I got Congress to leave him alone. I got Congress to stop efforts toward accountability.

You talked in your opening about the need to fight for human rights in Iran and we need to, or fight for human rights in other jurisdictions and we need to. But again and again and again, the President is willing to undermine human rights in this country and elsewhere and protect dictators and authoritarians.

One recent example—I think we would all agree that human rights include racial equality. The President for some reason has been on a tear attacking a member of this committee. Senator Booker was in here earlier. In tweets and in speeches and on tele-

vision, the President has been saying that Senator Booker will lead an effort to destroy suburbia. Now, this started a couple of months ago. There are no facts to support it.

I have listened with interest to see if one—and I mean if one—of my Republican colleagues in the Senate would speak up on behalf of a Senate colleague and say that that is a lie, that there is no basis in fact. The President would not say it, but Senator Booker is a valuable colleague. I have not heard one member of the majority of this body speak up on behalf of their colleague to say that this kind of lie, which is rooted in racism, is wrong.

My reading of human history suggests when bad things happen in societies, there are the perpetrators of those things and then there are the resistors of bad. But those ultimately at fault, I have come to conclude, are the bystanders. There are perpetrators and they do bad things, and there are resistors. You stand up against them. But no perpetrators are ever successful—they are never successful—without huge groups of people who are willing to be bystanders and say nothing in the hopes that if they keep their head low, maybe they will not be a target or a subject. And what I see, as I look at our profession that we want to set a human rights example, is those words, though sincere when they are said by many, are dramatically undercut by the current leadership of this country and dramatically undercut by so many who are willing to be bystanders and allow these abuses to pile on one after another. And the examples I have given you are only examples from the last couple of weeks.

Let me ask you two things. If you are confirmed, will you do what you can in your work with the Saudis to get them to better treat U.S. citizens or U.S. residents like the Virginia residents that have been subjected to prison terms and trials for women's rights activism?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, as appropriate, my role as Under Secretary of J in conversations with the Saudi Arabians, as well as with our diplomats—happy to discuss these issues with them directly.

Senator KAINE. And second, there is a U.S. resident who lives in Texas. He is a Belgian Rwandan citizen, Paul Rusesabagina. He received from President George W. Bush I think one of the highest civilian honors a President can give, the Presidential Medal of Freedom for saving lives during the Rwandan genocide. He has also been given an award by a group established by Congress, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Award. He has been involuntarily detained in Rwanda unable to talk with lawyers of his choosing or his family and brought up on charges that suggest he is a political opponent and may be involved in some significant activity, including potential violent activity against the Government. The State Department has repeatedly said that Rwanda trumps up charges against political opponents.

Will you do what you can from the State Department to make sure that Mr. Rusesabagina, while in detention, is treated safely and that any proceeding against him is done in an open and transparent manner so that the world can determine whether any charges against him are valid or not?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, I appreciate that question as well. And while I have received no briefings in relation to the imprisonment of this individual, I anticipate that, in the event of confirmation, working with colleagues in the Department to make sure that our opinions about what is going on there are clearly expressed directly and, if necessary, publicly.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ueland, last year—I am going to ask you a series of questions. I want to understand how you would approach this job, if you are confirmed.

President Trump reportedly said regarding North Korea that, quote, I think Kim Jong-un or Chairman Kim, as some people say, is creating a nation that has great strength economically. I talked to him a lot about it. He is very much into that fact.

Do you agree that Chairman Kim's desire to create a country with, quote, tremendous economic potential deserves praise when his regime has enslaved over 2.6 million of its own people, according to the Global Slavery Index, crushing human potential and systematically human rights, including through starvation, rape, and sexual violence of women in detention, among other gross violations of human rights?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for the question.

I think the President's instinct when it comes to relationships with such countries as North Korea is rooted in a grounding about a strong appreciation of human rights and that one of the strongest ways to advance the cause of human rights is economic improvement in countries. We are often called at J to work in collaboration and cooperation——

Senator MENENDEZ. So we promote economic improvement at the cost——

Mr. UELAND [continuing]. Inside the Department as with other——

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. I want to understand. I want to understand how you are going to——

Mr. UELAND. Sure, but in order to understand, Senator——

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. I want to understand—I am not going to let you filibuster. I know you learned that at the State Department.

Mr. UELAND. No, sir, I did not learn it at the State Department. I am trying to fully answer your question——

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, then you have learned it here at the Senate.

Mr. UELAND [continuing]. No, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. We promote economic rights at the cost of all human rights. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. UELAND. No, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. Because at the end of the day, are you going to speak up about human rights violations in places like North Korea? Yes or no. Yes or no because that is a simple question.

Mr. UELAND. Sir, absolutely. As you know, the J family works hard to——

Senator MENENDEZ. I am asking you what you would do, if you are confirmed. Will you speak up vigorously about violations of human rights in places like North Korea? Yes or no.

Mr. UELAND. And as a confirmed Under Secretary for J, part of our responsibilities include focusing on human rights challenges in countries such as North Korea, which J is already ensuring are brought into a spotlight and explicated before the world.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this.

Mr. UELAND. Yes, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. If you are confirmed, your role will be to serve as one of the United States' leading voices in promoting and advancing internationally recognized human rights and democratic norms. Would you say that promoting respect for press freedom and support for independent media is one of those?

Mr. UELAND. Absolutely, Senator. As I explained to your staff, this is an area of particular interest, and as I mentioned earlier, Internet freedom will be something that I——

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. So if that is the case, in over 600 tweets President Trump has targeted specific news organizations, including one that he normally likes, Fox News, the "New York Times," the "Washington Post," using slurs like fake, phony, nasty, disgraced, failing, calling the press the enemy of the people, do you agree with those statements by the President?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, I have not tracked all 600 tweets, but I do know that part of my advocacy is to ensure that there is as large as possible civil society and as vigorous as possible public square——

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, how do you promote freedom of the press abroad when it is attacked as the enemy of the people here at home? Can you explain that to me?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, it is pretty straightforward. The ability of anybody from the President to the most junior individual in our country to express an opinion about the media is one of our core freedoms and our core opportunities here in the United States and a value that I would look forward to promoting abroad.

Senator MENENDEZ. Secretary Pompeo is going to host a meeting at this year's U.N. General Assembly to remind member states of their commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which includes the right to seek and enjoy asylum that has been codified in U.S. law by the Refugee Act of 1980. I believe that the Trump administration is failing to adhere to U.S. laws that implement this important human rights framework with its asylum ban, its transfer of asylum seekers to Guatemala, and other policies.

Do you agree that access to asylum is an obligation under U.S. law?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, I have not examined either the treaties or the legislation that you have identified to come to a conclusion on that. I am happy to look into that, in the event that I am confirmed.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, let me ask you this. I am consistently shocked and alarmed by the administration's actions to undermine

basic human rights for the world's most vulnerable groups. When Secretary Pompeo announced the formation of the Commission on Unalienable Rights last year, he stated that a proliferation of human rights claims had called into question which rights are entitled to respect.

In July, at the launch of the commission's report, the Secretary stated that property rights and freedom of religion are foremost rights, and the report itself dismisses LGBT-plus rights, sexual and reproductive health rights as, quote, divisive social and political controversies. He insisted early on that the commission's report would be divorced from policy for which the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor was created.

Yet, commission members are traveling to the U.N. and other locations on the taxpayers' dime presenting their report to other countries, and Secretary Pompeo is pushing the report in town halls and cable traffic.

How do you explain this dichotomy? Precisely what should our country's role be in urging respect for LGBT-plus populations abroad, as well as to reproductive rights and others that we have considered part of the human rights portfolio?

Mr. UELAND. Senator, thank you very much for the question.

The Secretary's charge to the commission was to examine and see if there was a common understanding of first principles that inform our perspective on human rights and the evolution of our understanding of human rights over the past 2-plus centuries, as well as the contribution that we made to international fora when it comes to the question of human rights.

There is absolutely, to your point, no policy that is contemplated or directed as a result of the commission's report, instead a challenge to all of us at the State Department to understand—to see if we can understand how the work that we do every day relates to those fundamental first principles that really calls the United States to action inside the J family.

I do not see an inconsistency at all for standing up for the rights of all around the world, including minorities, including sexual minorities, including LGBT people, I people, and those individuals and push for decriminalization and the work and thought leadership reflected in the Commission on Unalienable Rights.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I have to say that I do not get a sense that in one of the most important positions, at least from my perspective as a 28-year practitioner of foreign policy in Congress between the House and the Senate, that you are going to be an advocate for the type of global human rights and democracy norms that we, on a bipartisan level for the most part, have embraced. What I think you are going to do is basically explain away our human rights standing in the world by justifying whatever it is—press is the enemy of people, LGBTQ are divisive issues not to be promoted as human rights. That to me is not who I want see in the person who is going to be—supposed to be, within the State Department other than the Secretary himself, the strongest advocate for human rights and democracy in the world.

Mr. UELAND. Well, Senator, I respect your perspective, and I look forward to proving you wrong.

Senator MENENDEZ. If you get the chance.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. UELAND. I will.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And thank you to all of our nominees for providing us with the benefit of your testimony and responses.

For the information of the members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, September 24th, including——

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Chairman, can I ask——

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, yes. Senator Shaheen, did you wish to——

Senator SHAHEEN. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, you do. Okay. Have at it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Sorry. Thank you.

This question is for Mr. Pinto. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development tends to work mainly with middle income countries, countries which often have high amounts of poverty that disproportionately affect women and girls. Yet, statistically if women were able to fully participate in economies in those countries, the global GDP would increase by $12 trillion in the next 5 years.

So can you tell me, if confirmed, what you could do in your position to support and improve the focus of the bank's projects on improving the lives of those women and girls and giving them that opportunity to fully participate in the economies of the countries where they are?

Mr. PINTO. Thanks for the question, Senator Shaheen. You have highlighted a critically important issue that the COVID–19 global pandemic has made glaringly apparent.

Women are badly—well, let me say that the informal economy is particularly hard hit by the global—by the pandemic, and that is in many countries predominantly women. So the bank's hard work to address the challenges that countries face from COVID–19 needs to focus on women. And Executive Director D.J. Norquist has made this a huge priority, and we are partners—if confirmed, we would be partners together in addressing that.

And I would also like to just mention that we have also placed a great emphasis on the We-Fi initiative which supports female entrepreneurs particularly in developing countries and the challenges they face. And so those are just a few of the initiatives that, you know, if confirmed, we would continue to push using the voice and voting power of the United States at the bank.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I would point out that these were issues before the pandemic. I appreciate the focus on what is happening because of the pandemic, but it is clearly a broader concern than that.

We have all seen the reports of China's efforts to put officials in positions of influence in international organizations, whether it is WHO, but the World Bank is on that list. And what happens, given this administration's withdrawal from many international organizations and from a commitment to multilateralism? What kind of opportunity does that open for China to replace American influence and interest in many of those international organizations?

Mr. PINTO. Thanks for that question, Senator. It is something that we take very seriously, and certainly any retreat at the World

Bank of—the United States, as you know, is the largest shareholder. So any retreat of our influence at the bank does allow China to assert greater influence. So we do have a robust engagement at the bank, and that will continue. And if I am confirmed, I will certainly support that. It is certainly something that we take very seriously.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I would hope it is something that you also share with other members of the administration so that the President understands the critical nature of ensuring the United States' continued influence in those international organizations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, September 24th, including for members to submit questions for the record.

With thanks of the committee to our witnesses, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:58 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO ASHOK MICHAEL PINTO BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the IBRD will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. Diversity is of particular importance to me as an Indian American and the son of immigrant parents. If confirmed, I will promote, mentor, and support members of the staff from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Office of the U.S. Executive Director, including foreign service officers, career civil servants as well as international Bank staff. I also strongly support diversity of viewpoints as part of an open and collaborative office environment.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to appear before this committee upon request, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in your office, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. At the World Bank, I have consistently worked to promote human rights and democracy. Specifically, I have underscored U.S. support for the Bank's oversight components, including Integrity, the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO), Group Internal Audit, the Independent Evaluation Group, and the Inspection Panel (IPN). I have also supported recent reforms that strengthen CAO and IPN. Through each of these complementary functions, the Bank seeks to uphold the highest human rights and democratic standards in Bank projects and operations. Emphasizing independent accountability, transparency, and respect for the individual ensures that human rights are paramount. In addition, focusing on the world's poorest and most vulnerable people advances human rights by providing better health care, education, sanitation, and sources of energy. Throughout my career, I have worked to promote oversight, transparency, and accountability in U.S. Government programs. If confirmed, I will use the voice and voting power of the United States to make sure that the Board of Executive Directors upholds the highest standards of human rights and democracy in all projects it approves.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The World Bank's twin goals are to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. Democracy is a closely interconnected element of these development goals. The Bank's work to promote justice and the rule of law is of crucial importance in delivering favorable development outcomes. Among the most pressing challenges are strengthening public institutions, eradicating corruption and encouraging private sector job creation—all of which foster democratic development and prosperity. The COVID–19 global pandemic presents the most pressing challenge to democracy of our lifetime, causing tens of millions of people to fall into extreme poverty and reversing years' worth of progress in this area. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Bank's COVID–19 assistance is narrowly tailored to meet these objectives and is free from waste, fraud, and abuse.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy abroad? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. As previously stated, working to meet the Bank's twin goals is the best way to support democracy in the countries it supports. The ultimate goal of Bank projects is to foster economic growth and capacity of public institutions such that a particular country is on the path to graduating from needing Bank loans and then the funds can be used in other countries in need. Attracting private sector investment and fighting corruption—both exacerbated by COVID–19—will facilitate progress in these areas.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to support projects that come before the Board of Executive Directors with the highest standards of governance and the best devel-

opment outcomes. Furthermore, I will prioritize projects that support the citizens of the world's poorest countries.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society? What steps will you take to proactively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. The Office of the U.S. Executive Director maintains an open dialogue with a broad range of civil society organizations (CSOs), all of whom provide valuable insights about the efficacy of Bank programs and their effects on local communities. They are our eyes and ears on the ground and are an important outside accountability mechanism. If confirmed, I expect to continue this practice as well as to support the ability of these organizations to operate without restrictions in the countries in which they operate. In particular, I will continue to work with CSOs to gain critical information regarding the implementation of the Bank's COVID–19 support.

Question. Will you and your teams actively engage on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Well-functioning labor markets in countries in which the World Bank provides support are essential to boost economic growth and promote the well-being of workers. If confirmed, I will work to support all elements that help all workers prosper.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people?

Answer. LGBTQ people are entitled to the same protections as all other people, which the United States works to uphold. For example, the U.S. Executive Director objected to the recent Tanzania Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) due to insufficient protections for pregnant girls and LGBTQ people, among other concerns. If confirmed, I will use the voice and voting power of the United States to defend human dignity without exceptions or limitations.

COVID–19

Question. COVID–19 has decimated economies around the globe—especially in the developing world. Does the World Bank have sufficient resources to respond to the COVID–19 pandemic? Should the United States support mobilization of additional resources, and if so, through what mechanisms?

Answer. In aiming to assist one billion people impacted by COVID–19, the World Bank Group has committed to deploy up to $160 billion over the 15 months since the pandemic started earlier this year. Of this amount, $50 billion will be in either grants or highly concessional terms from the International Development Association (IDA), which supports the world's poorest countries. This level of assistance would not be possible absent the support of Congress for the 2018 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Finance Corporation capital increase—to which the United States was the largest contributor at $1.2 billion—and the IDA19 replenishment of $3 billion. Bilateral debt service suspension is also helping governments provide critical assistance to the world's most vulnerable people.

Question. The U.S. commitment to IDA-19 is about 9% lower than the U.S. commitment to IDA-18 and more than 20% lower than the U.S. commitment to IDA-17. Why is the administration cutting U.S. commitments to IDA, especially at a time when the Bank will need it to recover after COVID–19? How does a smaller U.S. contribution to IDA shape U.S. influence at the World Bank, particularly as other donor countries such as China have increased their contributions?

Answer. As previously mentioned, the United States was the largest contributor to the Bank's recent capital increase. In fact, the U.S. contribution of $1.2 billion was nearly double that of the next-largest contributor. The U.S. contribution to the IDA-19 replenishment makes the United States the third-largest donor. The United States maintains significant influence at the World Bank given its status as a founding member and the largest shareholder. The Bank sought an increased contribution from China due to the size of its economy and the need for it to pay its fair share and make progress towards graduation.

Question. In response to the COVID–19 crisis, the World Bank Group has pledged to make billions of dollars in grants and financial support available to help developing countries respond to the health, social, and economic impacts of Covid-19.

These relief packages are unprecedented in scale and speed of distribution. Although these packages will provide necessary support to developing economies around the world, the rate at which these funds are dispersed creates the risk for gaps in human rights and environmental due diligence. How will you ensure that World Bank Group abides by its due diligence standards during this time? How will you ensure that the measures designed to address the COVID–19 crisis incorporate community feedback?

Answer. World Bank assistance to countries attempting to recover from the COVID–19 global pandemic now reaches more than 100 countries and will total up to $160 billion. Comprehensive oversight is more important than ever. If confirmed, I will use the voice and voting power of the United States at the World Bank to promote the work of its oversight components, ensure the implementation of necessary reforms—including enhanced stakeholder feedback—and support projects with the highest standards designed for strong development outcomes.

Question. A major disappointment of the World Bank Group's initial COVID–19 financial package is that no funds have gone to support communities who have been harmed by pre-COVID projects, including by projects found to be out of compliance with the World Bank Group's environmental and social policies. It is disappointing because negative project impacts, including damage to water sources, labor violations, and displacement, can make individuals more vulnerable and thus less able to deal with the effects of the pandemic. How will you ensure that the World Bank Group includes initiatives to address the vulnerabilities of project-affected people in its COVID response?

Answer. Comprehensive oversight of World Bank projects is the best way to make sure that adequate measures are in place to protect vulnerable people. Negative project impacts damage the Bank's reputation and hinder its ability to assist vulnerable populations. The Bank needs to admit when it makes mistakes and to remedy them; it exists to help, not hurt, people. If confirmed, I will use the voice and voting power of the United States to continue to support the important work of the Bank's oversight components. Only through constant attention and support can focus on environmental and social policies to protect vulnerable people be maintained.

Economic Statecraft

Question. I have been working on legislation that would reinvigorate the tools of our Economic Statecraft. How does participation in the World Bank affect U.S. security interests and leadership role in the global economy?

Answer. In representing the views of the United States at the institution, the primary goal of the Office of the U.S. Executive Director is to ensure that World Bank programs and initiatives not only enhance development for its client countries but also are consistent with advancing U.S. foreign policy, national security, and commercial priorities, as well as upholding America's rigorous standards and safeguards. At the World Bank, the voice and voting power of the United States stand for independent accountability, budget discipline, and focus on the Bank's core mission. Robust engagement and leadership at the World Bank help to achieve these objectives.

Question. China has emerged as a major creditor in recent years, but the terms of its lending are opaque. Does the World Bank have sufficient access to the information needed to assess the financing needs of developing countries and emerging markets? Would any World Bank assistance be used to pay off China debt in certain countries?

Answer. Accurate data is essential to inform policy decisions and manage risk. There are, however, significant data gaps. For example, much more information is needed about public debt related to state-owned enterprises. There is also significant room for improvement in data quality, which will go a long way to address debt vulnerabilities in low-income developing countries. Debt transparency and public disclosure of debt data are key elements of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), spearheaded by the Bank and International Monetary Fund, which aims to help the world's poorest countries assist their citizens during the pandemic by allowing them to postpone debt payments to use that money for COVID healthcare, social support, etc. Providing additional granularity and facilitating creditor and debtor debt data reconciliation are integral steps in assessing the financing needs of developing countries. To support the DSSI and promote improved debt transparency, the Bank has released data on the public and publicly guaranteed debt stocks and projected debt service due, for the 68 DSSI eligible countries, by creditor type. This data is publicly available on the Bank's web site: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/covid-19-debt-service-suspension-initiative.

Only China's full participation in the World Bank's DSSI will ensure that DSSI relief from the United States and other bilateral creditors does not "bleed" to China. Although China, as a member of the G20, claims to support this initiative, more work is necessary to ensure full participation, and the G7 recently took steps to do so, again. Bank assistance should not be used to pay off such debt.

Environmental and Social Safeguards and Due Diligence

Question. As a substantial shareholder across the multilateral development banks (MDBs), the United States has long played a critical role in shaping the banks' priorities and promoting investments that fulfill a development mandate and reduce global poverty. Our Government has led efforts to ensure that these public institutions have strong social and environmental safeguards, provide the public with access to information regarding their investments, and uphold robust accountability frameworks. How will you continue and build on this tradition of leadership to advance the values of transparency, accountability, and strong standards that the U.S. Government has championed across MDBs, including at the World Bank Group?

Answer. As previously stated, the voice and voting power of the United States at the World Bank stand for independent accountability, budget discipline, and focus on the Bank's core mission. While we must react quickly to help those in need, we must not let speed come at the expense of accountability, which includes quality and environmental and social safeguards. This is particularly important as the world responds to the COVID–19 global pandemic. U.S. leadership is more important than ever to promote peace, stability, and economic growth. Indeed, the United States has taken a leadership role in supporting the recent reforms instituted within the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman and Inspection Panel components of the World Bank Group. If confirmed, I will work to uphold this tradition of leadership.

Accountability and Remedy

Question. In 1993, Congress leveraged U.S. support for the World Bank to catalyze the creation of the Inspection Panel—an independent accountability mechanism that can investigate allegations by communities of the Bank's failure to follow its own policies and procedures. On March 5, 2020, the World Bank Group Board of Directors approved a set of sweeping changes to the Panel's toolkit and the World Bank's accountability framework. While some of these reforms are long overdue—such as the creation of a dispute resolution function that exists at almost every other development finance institution—they were largely created without robust public consultation and will only prove effective if properly implemented. How will you work to ensure that these historic changes are operationalized in a way that reflects community voices and does not compromise the independence and effectiveness of World Bank accountability?

Answer. The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors recently established the World Bank Accountability Mechanism and approved an updated Resolution for the World Bank Inspection Panel. This action was the result of a three-year review process designed to improve the Bank's accountability framework, which received input from a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the newly established dispute resolution function provides an adequate option to communities who feel that Bank projects have negatively impacted them. This engagement will lead up to the Board's review in three years of these enhancements to assess their effectiveness, efficiency, and operational and development impact.

Question. Even with the best risk management, harm to communities may still occur. In such cases, meaningful redress can enable people to productively move forward, which furthers the World Bank Group's development mandate and strengthens its institutional legitimacy. The World Bank Group's accountability mechanisms, the Inspection Panel and the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman, are important tools for strengthening accountability at the World Bank Group and addressing community grievances. However, even in the event of confirmed harm, which can include environmental damage and lost livelihoods, remedial measures identified through an accountability process often go unimplemented due to a lack of readily available resources. A remedy fund would help ensure that resources would be available to remediate negative impacts after an accountability mechanism process. Will you promote and support efforts to create a remedy fund at the World Bank Group to ensure that negative project impacts can be effectively remediated?

Answer. The World Bank's efforts to address fragility, conflict and violence are part of its twin goals to reduce extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. Indeed, the Bank estimates that by 2030, FCV countries will be home to up to two-thirds of the world's extreme poor. Operating in FCV countries involves greater risk.

As part of the International Finance Corporation's goal of promoting private sector investment and job creation, it also encourages those private enterprises to have appropriate risk mechanisms in place. If confirmed, I would work closely with all relevant stakeholders and consider ideas to strengthen the provision of remedies to individuals or communities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO ASHOK MICHAEL PINTO BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. The COVID–19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented retreat by international lenders from the developing world, leaving international financial institutes often the last option standing as governments struggle to cope with the economic and human cost of the pandemic. Does the World Bank have sufficient resources to respond to the COVID–19 pandemic? Should the United States support mobilization of additional resources, and if so, through what mechanisms?

Answer. In aiming to assist one billion people impacted by COVID–19, the World Bank Group has committed to deploy up to $160 billion over the 15 months since the pandemic started earlier this year. Of this amount, $50 billion will be in either grants or highly concessional terms from the International Development Association (IDA), which supports the world's poorest countries. This level of assistance would not be possible absent the support of Congress for the 2018 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Finance Corporation capital increase—to which the United States was the largest contributor at $1.2 billion—and the IDA19 replenishment of $3 billion. Bilateral debt service suspension can also help governments provide critical assistance to the world's most vulnerable people.

Question. Developing countries face a variety of financing needs, including funding the immediate public health response, broad budgetary support, and liquidity support. How should the international financial institutions prioritize their financial assistance? How should World Bank lending be allocated across countries?

Answer. World Bank support must prioritize saving lives, protecting the poor and most vulnerable people from economic and social impacts, preserving jobs and fostering business growth and job creation, and strengthening institutions for a resilient recovery. The World Bank should continue to make assisting the world's poorest countries its primary objective, including through bilateral debt service suspension, which can provide swift and significant relief, allowing governments to channel these resources to support their citizens during the COVID–19 global pandemic. Continued emphasis on graduation strategy is also a key element in prioritizing financial assistance. Countries such as China that have succeeded in developing need to become net contributors to the Bank, not borrowers of resources that are needed elsewhere.

Question. What reasons are there for the World Bank to continue to lend to dynamic large emerging market economies such as China, which often have their own active aid programs? Do you believe that the World Bank should stop lending to China?

Answer. China is the world's second largest economy. The Bank should accelerate the pace of its reduction in lending to China, so that it can lend more to developing countries with greater needs and less ability to finance them. The United States has been the largest advocate of reducing lending to China and other countries above the graduation threshold, and this was agreed as part of the capital increase package. Congress has enacted several restrictions on MDB lending to China and the U.S. Executive Directors forcefully adhere to those restrictions. If there is continued World Bank lending to China, it should be aimed at it graduating from all Bank loans, especially given that it has its own development banks. Any continued loans should be targeted to China's most vulnerable groups, state-owned enterprise (SOE) reform, financial sector reform, and global public goods that create value beyond its borders—projects that remediate damage that China does to the rest of the world from which we all can benefit. Reducing state involvement in the private sector, encouraging greater competition, and fostering a more level playing field are key objectives on which Bank lending must be based. In fiscal year 2020, the United States did not support any projects that involved lending to China.

Question. China has emerged as a major creditor in recent years, but the terms of its lending are opaque. Does the World Bank have sufficient access to the information needed to assess the financing needs of developing countries and emerging markets?

Answer. Accurate data is essential to inform policy decisions and manage risk. There are, however, significant data gaps. For example, much more information is needed about public debt related to state-owned enterprises. [DA5]There is also significant room for improvement in data quality, which will go a long way to address debt vulnerabilities in low-income developing countries. Debt transparency and public disclosure of debt data are key elements of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), spearheaded by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which aims to help the world's poorest countries assist their citizens. Providing additional granularity and facilitating creditor and debtor debt data reconciliation are integral steps in assessing the financing needs of developing countries. To support the DSSI and promote improved debt transparency, the Bank has released data on the public and publicly guaranteed debt stocks and projected debt service due, for the 68 DSSI eligible countries, by creditor type. This data is publicly available on the Bank's web site: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/covid-19-debt-service-suspension-initiative.

Question. We have spent a lot of time on this committee discussing the perils of Chinese debt trap financing. Has World Bank assistance been used to pay off Chinese debt in certain countries—such as those that participate in the Belt and Road Initiative? Should the World Bank be used for such activities?

Answer. No. Only China's full participation in the World Bank's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) will ensure that DSSI relief from the United States and other bilateral creditors does not "bleed" to China. Although China, as a member of the G20, claims to support this initiative, more work is necessary to ensure full participation, and the recent G7 Finance Minister's statement makes that point clearly. Bank assistance should not be used to pay off such debt.

Question. What do you see as the key reform priorities at the World Bank?

Answer. At the World Bank, independent accountability, budget discipline, and focus on the Bank's core mission are key reform priorities. If confirmed, I would use the substantial experience I have gained throughout my career in promoting comprehensive oversight at the Bank. The capital increase package includes comprehensive and transformative reforms that World Bank Group will implement to promote stronger global economic growth and sustainable poverty reduction. These reforms include focusing development resources on needier countries with less access to other sources of finance, incentivizing countries to mobilize other resources for financing their development, and creating a more financially-disciplined World Bank Group. In addition, renewed focus on graduation, transparency in the procurement process, and modernization of its policy on information and communications technologies are vital.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO ASHOK MICHAEL PINTO BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. At the World Bank, I have consistently worked to promote human rights and democracy. Specifically, I have underscored U.S. support for the Bank's oversight components, including Integrity, Compliance Advisor Ombudsman, Group Internal Audit, Independent Evaluation Group, and Inspection Panel. Through each of these complementary functions, the Bank seeks to uphold the highest human rights and democratic standards in Bank projects and operations. Emphasizing independent accountability, transparency, and respect for the individual ensures that human rights are paramount. Indeed, I have focused on comprehensive oversight, transparency, and accountability throughout my career. In addition, focusing on the world's poorest and most vulnerable people advances human rights by providing better health care, education, sanitation, and energy. If confirmed, I will use the voice and voting power of the United States to make sure that the Board upholds the highest standards of human rights and democracy in the projects it approves.

Diversity

- 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. Diversity is of particular importance to me as an Indian American and the son of immigrant parents. If confirmed, I will continue to promote, mentor, and support members of the staff from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Office of the U.S. Executive Director. I also strongly support diversity of viewpoints as part of an open and collaborative office environment.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. At the World Bank, the Office of the U.S. Executive Director is a leader in diversity and inclusion initiatives. For example, the United States is a member of the Gender Working Group, which seeks to ensure the Board of Executive Directors is both gender aware and representative in the way it carries out its governance of the World Bank Group. Promoting these issues is more important than ever given the global pandemic. The Gender Working Group also seeks to identify ways to make the Board more inclusive, through diversity of voices and experience as well as gender balance. The United States has one of the most diverse offices of any Board member. If confirmed, I would work to continue that track record.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention 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. 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. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. I maintain one bank account in the United Kingdom from my study abroad program in Oxford more than 25 years ago. The balance is substantially below the minimum for the financial disclosure statement. I do not have any other foreign financial interests.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. WILLIAM E. TODD BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. How will a diminished U.S. presence in Afghanistan impact our interests in Pakistan? If we indeed draw down to zero troops in Afghanistan by next year, what is your vision for our relationship with Pakistan?

Answer. Pakistan's continued and constructive engagement in a successful Afghan peace process, leading to a durable, negotiated political settlement, is a necessary condition for stronger U.S.-Pakistani ties. The United States will continue to hold the Taliban to all of their commitments under the U.S.-Taliban agreement. While reaching a negotiated political settlement that includes a comprehensive ceasefire will be challenging, I understand that the Department believes this milestone could enable a more robust and multi-faceted U.S.-Pakistan relationship, including through expanded trade and commercial ties.

Question. I understand that Pakistan has taken important steps to support the peace process in Afghanistan and bring the Taliban to the table.

Answer. Yes. Pakistan has taken certain helpful steps to advance the Afghan peace process, including the release of a senior Taliban negotiator, which assisted in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table. Notably, Pakistan also helped to facilitate the release of a U.S. hostage in Afghanistan in November 2019.

Question. How would you characterize Pakistan's commitment to the peace process in Afghanistan?

Answer. Besides Afghanistan, no country would benefit more from peace in Afghanistan than Pakistan. President Trump and Prime Minister Khan have agreed that a negotiated political settlement in Afghanistan offers the best way to end more than 40 years of war in Afghanistan. Pakistan has played an important role in creating the conditions that brought Afghan leaders and the Taliban to the historic start of Afghan Peace Negotiations, including through the release of a senior Taliban negotiator and facilitating the release of two Western hostages. Helping to facilitate Afghanistan Peace Negotiations that conclude in a political settlement is an opportunity for Pakistan to forge a more constructive role in the region.

Question. What more should Pakistan be doing that they are not currently doing to support the peace process in Afghanistan?

Answer. Pakistan has played an important role in creating the conditions that brought Afghan leaders and the Taliban to the historic start of Afghanistan Peace Negotiations. If confirmed, I will work closely with Ambassador Khalilzad to press Pakistan to continue to engage constructively throughout the process, including by using its influence with all parties, including the Taliban, in support of a durable negotiated political settlement.

Question. Religious minorities in Pakistan including Ahmadi Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, and Christians have long faced societal and legal discrimination in addition to violence at the hands of extremist groups. Members of these groups increasingly face accusations of blasphemy, which is punishable by death.

- Do I have your commitment to meet with representatives of Pakistan's religious minority communities if confirmed?

Answer. As my previous experience as Ambassador to Cambodia shows, I am committed to engaging robustly with civil society, including representatives of religious communities. I understand that our Embassy in Pakistan meets regularly with representatives of religious minority groups in Pakistan. If confirmed, I would ensure that this robust engagement continues; I commit to meeting with representatives of these communities myself and directing my staff to do the same.

Question. I am deeply concerned by the ongoing persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, which is demonstrated by the Government of Pakistan's refusal to acknowledge them as Muslims and resulting prosecution of Ahmadis who describe themselves as Muslims.

- Will you urge the Government of Pakistan to abide by its international commitments on respecting religious freedom?

Answer. Pakistan is designated by the Department as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for having engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom, including the discrimination and violence against Ahmadi Muslims which you note. The Department's International Religious Freedom Report addresses these issues, and the Department speaks out about them and opposes laws that impede individuals' freedom of religion or belief, such as blasphemy, apostasy, and anti-conversion laws. The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Pakistan is a party. As such, the Department urges all countries, including Pakistan, to protect this right in practice. If confirmed, I would prioritize engagement with all parties to support improved respect for religious freedom

Question. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to help protect Ahmadi Muslims and ensure that they can experience their full human and civil rights? What will your strategy be for engaging with the Government of Pakistan on this issue?

Answer. The Department regularly raises with the Government of Pakistan the importance of upholding human rights, including those of Ahmadi Muslims, both bilaterally and in the context of our annual Human Rights report and International Religious Freedom report. If confirmed, I will continue to make this a priority, and would emphasize that Pakistan needs to address systemic discrimination and violence against the Ahmadiyya community among critical actions required to be removed from the Country of Particular Concern (CPC) list. In addition, if confirmed, I would engage the Government of Pakistan on ensuring citizens' basic rights to practice their religion freely, and to pursue legal reforms that better protect religious freedom, including reforming blasphemy laws that are disproportionally used against religious minorities and Ahmadi Muslims.

Question. What measures will you take, or encourage the administration to take, to ensure that extremists in Pakistan who incite violence against Ahmadi Mus-

lims—and Pakistani politicians who openly support them—face appropriate U.S. sanctions including but not limited to travel bans?

Answer. Existing regulations, including the Immigration and Nationalization Act and Presidential Proclamation 8697, provide appropriate tools that the Department applies to prevent travel to the United States by foreign government officials who have participated in or are responsible for particularly severe violations of religious freedom. As Ambassador, I will encourage consular officers to continue to apply these regulations appropriately to anyone involved in inciting violence against religious minorities in Pakistan, including Ahmadi Muslims.

Question. On April 13th the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) issued a statement highlighting reports of Hindus and Christians being denied food aid, which is especially critical given the economic and health consequences of the COVID–19 pandemic.

- If confirmed, how will you engage with the Government of Pakistan on ensuring that Hindus, Christians, and other religious minorities have access to the COVID–19 assistance it distributes?

Answer. As stated in my testimony, the U.S.-Pakistan COVID–19 partnership is one of my highest priorities, and part of that is ensuring Pakistan distributes COVID–19 assistance fairly, equitably, and to those most in need. I understand from civil society and human rights NGOs and Pakistani media that some minority communities are having difficulty accessing assistance. I also know that vulnerable communities frequently face the brunt of the impact from COVID–19.

There have been credible reports of two incidents in which private Muslim charities in Karachi either denied aid to Hindus or refused to accept aid across Sunni-Shia sectarian lines. The first group changed its stance after public backlash.

If confirmed, I will strongly encourage Pakistani officials and aid organizations to protect their minority communities and ensure they are afforded the same assistance that all citizens receive amid this pandemic.

Question. How will you ensure that U.S. assistance, including COVID–19 assistance, reaches religious minorities in Pakistan?

Answer. I understand State and USAID make every effort to ensure religious minority groups, such as Ahmadis, Christians, Parsis, Hindus, and Sikhs, are being supported through our programming, and if confirmed, I commit to do the same. USAID collaborates with local organizations that are former small grant recipients in Karachi, southern Punjab, and northern Sindh on addressing the challenges of getting relief items to minority communities. For example, USAID partner organization Thar Education Alliance is conducting COVID–19 awareness sessions in southern Pakistan, primarily with the Hindu community, about the importance of social distancing and adopting precautionary measures. Another USAID partner, Bargad, is collaborating with the Punjab provincial government's Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Department to ensure minorities are not excluded or discriminated against during the pandemic. USAID collaboration on the Pakistani Government's Ehsaas cash transfer program includes initiatives working on outreach and access to more marginalized populations (including religious minorities). This is an important priority of mine, and one I will pay close attention to if confirmed.

Question. Organizations that implement U.S. assistance programs have faced significant bureaucratic obstacles to legal registration in Pakistan.

- Do I have your commitment to advocate for American aid implementers that seek to register in Pakistan?

Answer. U.S. implementers are conducting important development work in Pakistan, and if confirmed I pledge to support them. But the situation in Pakistan is troubling. In late 2017, at least 20 international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), nine of which are U.S.-based, reportedly received notification that their registration applications were rejected and that they were to cease operations within 60 days. In August 2018, at least 21 additional INGOs received similar notifications. Following diplomatic engagement by the international community, which I would continue, the Government created an appeals process that allowed INGOs to operate while their rejections are appealed. Yet the appeals process remains opaque and lengthy.

Pakistan's security institutions have long been suspicious of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international and domestic, and their work in areas Pakistan's military deems sensitive, including religious freedom, human rights, and media freedom. There are also credible reports that authorities regularly intimidate and harass NGOs.

There are signs the operational environment is slightly improving, however. In February 2020, nine INGOs which were previously rejected were invited to re-apply. The Ministry of Finance's Economic Affairs Division and the Ministry of Interior recently eased INGO restrictions for INGOs implementing COVID–19 relief programs. Although this is a welcome effort, I will continue to raise this issue if confirmed.

Question. A constructive and positive work culture is critical at our Embassies around the world. This is especially important in Pakistan, which is a difficult operating environment for our diplomats.

• How would you describe your management style?

Answer. I am a hands-on leader who leads by example, but am sensitive to staff's needs and morale. Above all, I value honesty, integrity, and seek trusted relationships with my staff. I prioritize diversity in the work place and am a vigorous supporter of the State Department's affinity groups and Women's Executive Leadership Program. Throughout my tenure in government, I have been pro-active in ensuring professional development for both junior and senior staff, and have promoted several programs, including the Pickering and Rangel Graduate Fellowship Program and Pathways Internships, to cultivate a strong and diverse workforce.Questions for the Record submitted to

Question. If confirmed, do I have your commitment to remain engaged with this committee on maintaining the morale of the Embassy staff and a positive work culture in Islamabad?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to maintain the morale and positive work culture in Islamabad and will work with the committee on this important issue.

Question. How would you characterize your support of career State employees during your tenure, and how would you seek out their expertise and support them at the Embassy if confirmed?

Answer. It is my highest priority to recruit, retain and develop the best and brightest for the Department of State, and coach its future leaders. I am deeply committed to improving and developing all levels of the Foreign and Civil Service, from Ambassadors to entry level officers. As the acting director general, I directed many Department of State mentoring programs and executive leadership programs, and over my career have mentored numerous members of the foreign service and civil service. As the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in SCA, I was responsible for the executive leadership of the day-to-day operations of the Bureau, including its nine embassies.

I seek out the expertise of career State employees, being one myself, and will continue to support them, including in their development. Throughout my career, I have promoted a "one team one mission" philosophy, and if confirmed, I would do the same for Embassy Islamabad and its constituent consulates.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that prohibited personnel practices have no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make a priority of encouraging the recruitment and professional development of a diverse staff that represents the United States. Working with my staff, I will encourage the recruitment of a diverse, qualified group of applicants for each job opening, and I will work to expand our mentoring program for new officers to include entry-level specialists and eligible family member employees.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes. I will provide timely responses organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that my appearances would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

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. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

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. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

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

- What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Pakistan? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. As noted in my testimony, a key priority for me, if confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, will be to advance human rights, for which I have a strong track record in my career. While serving as Ambassador to Cambodia during highly contentious national elections and ensuing months of political crisis, including Cambodia's worst civil upheaval in 15 years, I reached out to government and opposition leaders to promote peace and non-violence. Security forces largely acted with restraint, even when confronted with violence. I also created an NGO Advisory Council comprised of leading members of Cambodia's human rights community. This pioneering and inclusive approach gave me the opportunity to create a more cohesive and effective voice for human rights, democracy, and good governance in Cambodia.

I am concerned about impingements on religious freedom in Pakistan, threats to media freedom, and restrictions on civil society, in addition to the growing harassment and disappearances of journalists, activists, and civil society advocates. These restrictions undermine the right of peaceful assembly and the freedoms of expression and association which are vital for any democracy. Regarding media freedom in particular, I am concerned that media and content restrictions, as well as the lack of accountability for attacks against journalists, undermine the exercise of freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, and damage both Pakistan's democracy and image.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Pakistan? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Inadequate protections of individual freedoms, inequitable application of the rule of law, corruption and impunity, weak civilian government, and increasing restrictions on civil society all remain challenges for Pakistan's democratic development. These challenges, particularly in regard to human rights and religious freedom, remain sensitive subjects in Pakistan, and when raised by outsiders often arouse negative public sentiments. Nevertheless, these issues are ones for which the Department advocates both regionally and globally, including citizens' ability to worship freely and the importance of a vibrant press and informed citizenry.

If confirmed, I would continue to closely engage Pakistani officials (civilian and military) on upholding the rule of law and the rights afforded to Pakistanis by their constitution and under its international obligations, and on strengthening Pakistan's civilian democratic institutions. I also will work alongside the Government of Pakistan in fully implementing our assistance programs as authorized by Congress, including on issues of democratic governance like strengthening the rule of law, encouraging good governance, building respect for human rights, and supporting democratic and accountable processes in the country.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. The State Department and USAID believe that Pakistan's continued democratic development is important for the country's long-term stability and prosperity. If confirmed, I will engage the Government of Pakistan and civil society on democracy and governance challenges, and ensure continued emphasis on democracy and governance assistance programs. I plan to prioritize assistance that strengthens the rule of law, builds respect for human rights, and supports democratic, accountable processes in the country.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Pakistan? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. As my previous experience as Ambassador to Cambodia shows, I am committed to engaging robustly with a wide slate of human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) both in the United States and my postings abroad. If confirmed as Ambassador to Pakistan, I will meet regularly with such groups and will stress to the Pakistani Government the importance of a vibrant civil society to any democracy.

I understand the Department still has concerns regarding the operating environment for civil society in Pakistan, including a burdensome registration process for international NGOs and the restricted ability of domestic NGOs, including those working on important human rights and humanitarian issues, to receive any foreign funding. If confirmed, I will continue to stress to the Pakistani Government the importance of a vibrant civil society to any democracy, and the value of allowing civil society organizations to help deliver vital assistance to Pakistan's most vulnerable communities, including women, children, and religious minorities.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, I will meet with democratically-oriented parties from across the political spectrum, and ensure that Embassy staff maintain our tradition of broad engagement. As noted, I will also urge the Pakistani Government to uphold the rule of law and the democratic freedoms, including the freedom to participate in the political process, afforded to the citizens of Pakistan as enumerated in the Pakistani constitution.

I understand that protection of the rights and freedoms of vulnerable communities, including women and minorities, is an essential part of the Department's work globally and within Pakistan. I share this focus and, if confirmed, will advocate for the rights of these groups in Pakistan and their ability to participate in the political process.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Pakistan on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Pakistan?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed the embassy team and I will continue to engage the Pakistani Government on issues of press freedom, and I commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Pakistan to understand dynamics in the media environment. The Department has received a growing number of reports of restrictions on media outlets and civil society in Pakistan and of detentions of journalists. The Government of Pakistan has used threats (such as withdrawing advertising funds or imposing regulatory sanctions) to incentivize more favorable media coverage, has censored media by cutting live broadcasts of coverage it does not find

favorable, and limited the public's access to broadcasters to punish media for straying from government guidelines.

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize to the Government of Pakistan that a vibrant press and informed citizenry are essential for any free nation. I will also express that the Department is concerned that media and content restrictions as well as the lack of accountability for attacks against journalists undermine freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and damage Pakistan's image.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed the embassy team and I will continue to actively engage with civil society and Pakistani Government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Pakistan on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. I understand that the Department continues to have concerns regarding the operating environment for civil society and labor groups in Pakistan. Challenges posed by widespread forced and bonded labor, despite laws prohibiting the practice, create additional obstacles to the development of organized labor groups. According to the 2019 Pakistan Human Rights Report, the Pakistani Government "routinely interferes with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association" and Pakistani police often use force to break up labor protests and arrest union organizers. The report notes that labor law enforcement also remains weak due largely to resource constraints and lack of political will. If confirmed, my embassy team and I will continue to stress to the Pakistani Government the importance of enforcing laws prohibiting forced or bonded labor as well as the development of a vibrant civil society as critical to any democracy, and the value of allowing civil society organizations to advocate for labor rights and unions. Such advocacy can help improve Pakistan's labor policies, rendering the Government more attuned and responsive to the needs of a large and vulnerable working population and more attractive to international business.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Pakistan, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Pakistan? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Pakistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I would advocate for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people in Pakistan without discrimination based on their race, religion, gender identity, age, ability, or sexual orientation.

I understand that, as documented in the Department's Human Rights Report for Pakistan, there remain criminal provisions in Pakistan against consensual same-sex sexual conduct. In addition, violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) persons in Pakistan continues, and police generally take insufficient action when receiving reports of such violence or discrimination. If confirmed, I would meet with advocates from these communities to determine how to best advocate for their interests. I also will ensure that the U.S. Embassy continues to effectively implement programs that provide emergency support for LGBTQ persons or assistance for relevant civil society organizations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. WILLIAM E. TODD BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. The Trump administration's 2018 National Security Strategy warned, "The prospect for an Indo-Pakistani military conflict that could lead to a nuclear exchange remains a key concern. . . . " I am particularly worried about a conflict growing on the border between India and China and potential nuclear implications there. How can the United States manage nuclear competition in South Asia?

Answer. I am concerned by the current levels of increased tension between India and Pakistan and the challenges that accompany their growing nuclear stockpiles, particularly tactical nuclear weapons that are designed for use on the battlefield. These systems lower the threshold for nuclear use and pose an increased risk that a conventional conflict between India and Pakistan could escalate to a nuclear ex-

change. If confirmed, I will encourage dialogue and confidence-building between both countries and urge a reduction in tensions to improve prospects for lasting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. In addition, I would reinforce what the President and Secretary Pompeo have emphasized to their Pakistani and Indian counterparts on the importance of dialogue and the need to reduce bilateral tensions, including along the Line of Control (LoC).

Regarding the current India-China border tensions, the onus remains on China to deescalate and return to the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). We support both countries utilizing bilateral channels to arrive at a peaceful resolution through dialogue. Beijing's provocative actions along the LAC are part of a broader pattern of aggressive behavior across the region.

Question. Has the administration's suspension of most security-related aid to Pakistan led to any improvements in bilateral relations? What developments might you point to that would indicate Pakistan has responded favorably from the perspective of U.S. policy goals? To what extent, if any, does the reduction of U.S. aid to Pakistan over the past five years risk a loss of U.S. influence there? Does China stand to gain influence in this context?

Answer. The President's 2018 suspension of security assistance allows for narrow, case-by-case exceptions, contingent on positive Pakistani actions, for programs that support vital U.S. national security interests. The suspension has clearly communicated to Pakistan that it must play a more constructive role in the region if it wants a good relationship with the United States, built first and foremost on joint efforts to end the war in Afghanistan and to address the presence of terrorists on its territory that threaten regional stability. If confirmed, I would continue to press this agenda strongly.

Pakistan has taken steps to advance the Afghan peace process, such as the October 2018 release of the Taliban's lead negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Barader for the Doha talks, and facilitation of the Taliban's November 2019 release of Western hostages. In addition, we have seen high-level Pakistani political commitment and genuine progress to address strategic deficiencies in Pakistan's counter terror-financing and anti-money laundering regimes through the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) review process. If confirmed, I will prioritize following through on these commitments.

The China-Pakistan defense relationship is longstanding and has been expanding. If confirmed, I will support defense sales that advance U.S. national security interests, promote U.S. industry, and, when possible, offer an alternative to Chinese platforms.

Question. What is your view of Chinese investment projects underway in Pakistan? Is Chinese investment in the region a net positive or do you foresee negative outcomes? What would you do as Ambassador to facilitate greater U.S. investment in Pakistan?

Answer. China has committed billions of dollars to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), primarily consisting of massive financing (whether in the form of loans or joint ventures with Pakistani debt commitments) to facilitate PRC-built infrastructure upgrades. The Department has expressed its concerns on CPEC, particularly related to the sustainability of Pakistan's debt to Beijing, CPEC's lack of transparency, reliance on Chinese labor, and inflated project costs benefiting PRC state-owned enterprises at the expense of Pakistan's private sector and Pakistani taxpayers. The Department's position is that any infrastructure projects, including those through CPEC, should apply the highest international standards of openness, inclusivity, transparency, environmental mitigation, and governance. If CPEC's problems remain unaddressed, Pakistan could be deeply burdened by debt and face diminished long-term growth. If confirmed, I would continue advocacy for greater transparency on Beijing's economic activities in Pakistan to seek to ensure that costs are controlled, that debt is sustainable, and that there are long-term employment benefits for Pakistanis, not just PRC-state firms. To help diversify the Pakistani economy away from Beijing, I would also seek to strengthen U.S. trade and investment ties with Pakistan, partnering with U.S. economic agencies, such as the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, Export-Import Bank, and USAID, and to press Pakistan to ensure a level playing field for U.S. businesses.

Question. Should a negotiated settlement between the United States, the Afghan Government, and the Taliban proceed to its logical conclusion, will a resurgent, legitimized Taliban serve as a strategic victory for the Pakistani Government and military in Afghanistan?

Answer. Besides Afghanistan, no country benefits from peace in Afghanistan more than Pakistan. President Trump and Prime Minister Khan have agreed that a nego-

tiated political settlement in Afghanistan is the best means to bring the conflict to a close, and is an outcome which would avoid further violence and suffering for the Afghan people as well as international partners. While we continue to have concerns with aspects of Pakistan's behavior and relationships with terrorist groups, Pakistan has played a helpful role in advancing the Afghan peace process. The Department has been clear with the Pakistanis that the foundation for stronger U.S.-Pakistan ties will be built on continued and constructive engagement in a successful Afghan peace process, including a durable, negotiated political settlement. Throughout the process, the United States will continue to ensure the Taliban adhere to their obligations as agreed upon in the U.S.-Taliban agreement.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. WILLIAM E. TODD BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. As noted in my testimony, a key priority for me if confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan will be advancing human rights, and I have a track record of doing so in my career. For example, while serving as Ambassador to Cambodia during highly contentious national elections and ensuing months of political crisis, including Cambodia's worst civil upheaval in 15 years, I reached out to government and opposition leaders to promote dialogue, security force professionalism, and nonviolent protest. Security forces ultimately largely acted with restraint, even when confronted with violence including Molotov cocktails. I also created an NGO Advisory Council comprised of leading members of Cambodia's human rights community. This pioneering and inclusive approach gave me the opportunity to create a more cohesive and effective voice for human rights, democracy, and good governance in Cambodia. If confirmed, I will continue to promote human rights and democracy as some of my top goals in Pakistan.

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

Answer. As noted in my written testimony, one of my top goals in Pakistan, if confirmed, would be to advance human rights, particularly freedom of religion and freedom of expression. The killing of U.S. citizen Tahir Naseem in a Pakistani courtroom while on trial for blasphemy was an outrage. If confirmed, I will press Pakistani authorities to ensure the suspects in Mr. Naseem's killing are prosecuted to the full extent of the law. I also will advocate for legal reforms to guarantee religious freedom, including regarding blasphemy laws.

I am also concerned about the increasing restrictions in civil society in Pakistan, including the growing harassment and disappearances of journalists, activists, and civil society advocates. Authorities continue to put burdensome requirements on—and in several instances have expelled—non-governmental organizations. These restrictions undermine the right of peaceful assembly and the freedoms of expression and association, and limit the ability of such actors to help deliver vital assistance to Pakistan's most vulnerable communities.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I would engage closely with federal and provincial authorities in Pakistan, as well as with other stakeholders, on such issues. Already, the Department regularly raises with Pakistan the importance of upholding human rights, both bilaterally and in the context of our annual Human Rights report and International Religious Freedom report. If confirmed, I would continue to make this a priority.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Pakistan in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Religious freedom, the role of civil society, and media freedom remain sensitive subjects in Pakistan, and when raised by outsiders often arouse negative public sentiments. Nevertheless, these issues are ones for which we advocate both regionally and globally, including the ability to worship freely and the importance of a vibrant press and informed citizenry. If confirmed, I would continue to closely engage Pakistani officials (civilian and military) on upholding the rule of law and

the rights afforded to Pakistanis by their constitution and under its international obligations, and on strengthening Pakistan's civilian democratic institutions.

I understand that these conversations are not easy, whether in public or private settings, but I would continue to press Pakistani counterparts on both the need for, and value of, protection of human rights in ensuring Pakistan is a responsible party in the community of free nations. I would calibrate the venue and audience to achieve maximum effectiveness. I would also ensure that all Embassy staff are empowered to thoroughly and appropriately document human rights abuses in the compilation of Congressionally-mandated reports such as the Human Rights Report, the International Religious Freedom Report, and the Trafficking in Persons Report.

Question. 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 Pakistan? 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 my previous experience as Ambassador to Cambodia shows, I am committed to engaging robustly with a wide slate of human rights, civil society, and non-governmental groups both in the United States and my postings abroad. If confirmed as Ambassador to Pakistan, I will meet regularly with such groups and will stress to the Pakistani Government the importance of a vibrant civil society to any democracy.

If confirmed, I will ensure continued support of our Leahy, Blue Lantern, Golden Sentry, and End Use Checks on provisions of U.S. assistance to Pakistan. In addition, I will ensure that all U.S. security assistance to Pakistan will continue to be vetted in accordance with Leahy provisions, to prevent security force units and members credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights from receiving applicable assistance.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Pakistan to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Pakistan?

Answer. As indicated in my testimony, one of my first goals in Pakistan, if confirmed, will be to advance human rights, including those of political prisoners or persons who are unjustly targeted by Pakistani authorities. As the Department does globally, I will also strongly oppose any laws that curtail human rights and fundamental freedoms and actively engage with the Pakistani Government to ensure the rule of law and due process is equally applied across society, as provided for in Pakistan's constitution and Pakistan's international obligations.

Question. Will you engage with Pakistan on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. As indicated in my testimony, one of my first goals in Pakistan, if confirmed, will be to advance human rights, particularly freedom of religion and freedom of expression. As the Department does globally, I will strongly oppose any laws that curtail these human rights. Further, I will continue the Department's work in raising with Pakistani interlocutors the values of accountability, fairness, and transparency, which are key attributes to a healthy and well-governed democracy. I will also urge the Pakistani Government to uphold the equal application of the rule of law and the rights afforded to Pakistanis by their constitution and under Pakistan's international obligations.

Question. 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 make it a priority to encourage the recruitment and professional development of a diverse staff that represents the United States. Working with my staff, I will promote a diverse and respectful workforce, encourage the recruitment of diverse and qualified applicants for each job opening, and expand our mentoring program for junior officers to include entry-level specialists and eligible family member employees.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Pakistan are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will communicate to Embassy senior staff that I have zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment. In addition, ahead of our annual personnel selection season, I will communicate my expectation that we invite and consider applications from the broadest possible slate of qualified candidates to ensure

that we foster a diverse and inclusive team. I will ask our supervisors to reinforce these principles with their American and Pakistani staff to ensure we set appropriate expectations.

Question. 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. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Pakistan?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence in Pakistan, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Pakistan specifically?

Answer. As the Department has underscored globally, political corruption erodes the basic principles of democratic governance and the rule of law. I believe that Pakistan's continued democratic development is important for the country's long-term stability and prosperity, and corruption remains a serious challenge to Pakistan's democratic development. If confirmed, I would press the Pakistani Government to promote open and accountable governance, and to implement its international anticorruption commitments in a way that equally applies the law across society.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Pakistan and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Corruption and impunity remain serious challenges in Pakistan. Both national and provincial government entities have taken actions that indicate a focus on tackling the problem; however, I remain concerned that some anti-corruption efforts are not applied evenly in Pakistan. As noted, if confirmed as Ambassador, I would press the Pakistani Government to promote open and accountable governance, and to implement its international anticorruption commitments in a way that equally applies the law across society.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Pakistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to continue the Department's work in encouraging Pakistan to uphold the rule of law and the various democratic freedoms afforded to the citizens of Pakistan as enumerated in the Pakistani constitution. I will also work alongside the Government of Pakistan in fully implementing our assistance programs as allocated by Congress, including on issues of democratic governance like strengthening the rule of law, encouraging good governance, building respect for human rights, and supporting democratic and accountable processes in the country. I expect to continue such programming through both USAID and the State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR ROBERT MEMENDEZ

Question. It is clear to me that the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor's concerns have been largely ignored by the Political-Military Affairs Bureau in its consideration of proposed arms sales to countries of human rights concern. Consequently, I understand that DRL often censors itself, asking to see sales only to the most egregious human rights abusers to comment upon. Moreover, the recent

Inspector General's report on the May 2019 sales to Saudi Arabia and UAE pointedly noted that human rights considerations were not adequate regarding the sale of 60,000 precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia: If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to increase DRL's input to and impact upon PM's arms sales process?

Answer. I understand human rights concerns are one of several factors considered in the arms sales process, together with the implications of such sales for U.S. and regional security, bilateral relations, and U.S. commercial interests. If confirmed, I will ensure that the arms sales process gives appropriate weight to human rights concerns raised by any bureau.

Question. What particular issues and/or regions and countries within DRL's broad mandate would you direct the DRL Assistant Secretary to prioritize?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to use a range of tools and work with a range of partners to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms abroad. This includes bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, foreign assistance, public reporting, visa restrictions, and economic sanctions, as appropriate. I will prioritize working for the release of political prisoners as well as promoting accountability for human rights violations and abuses in countries such as the People's Republic of China, Iran, Venezuela, and Nicaragua. If confirmed, I will also prioritize helping partners such as Nigeria with critical challenges in governance and human rights and ensuring DRL's continuing support for nations such as Sudan that are undergoing transition to democratic rule.

Question. How would you help ensure that democracy and human rights issues are adequately prioritized in our relations with other countries?

Answer. The promotion of democratic ideals and human rights is at the core of U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will support the use of a range of tools to promote democracy and human rights abroad. This includes bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, foreign assistance, public reporting, visa restrictions, and economic sanctions, as appropriate, as well as strategic cooperation with like-minded partners. The United States should continue to use its voice and position on the world stage to draw attention to violations and abuses of human rights.

Question. How do you view DRL's role within the broader State Department and its relation to the regional bureaus?

Answer. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) plays a key role by leading the State Department's efforts to promote human rights, which is in the best interests of the United States. DRL champions American values, including the rule of law and the rights of individuals, which contribute to strong, stable, prosperous, and sovereign states. American security is advanced in the struggle against authoritarianism and terrorism when we stand for the freedoms of religion, speech, association, and the press, and the rights of people to assemble peaceably and to petition their government for a redress of grievances. If confirmed, I will support DRL continuing to play this vital role, including in its relationships with regional bureaus and embassies.

Question. The world is in the midst of a "democratic recession," with evidence of democratic erosion within existing democracies while key non-democracies such as China are arguably becoming both more repressive internally and more influential internationally. How would you direct DRL to respond to these developments?

Answer. If confirmed, I will direct DRL to continue to engage bilaterally and multilaterally to address challenges to democracy, respond to rising autocracy, support emerging democracies, oppose restrictions on the operation of civil society and media, protect human rights defenders, combat corruption, and promote conditions necessary for free and fair elections. I will also support DRL's efforts to foster informed and engaged societies worldwide by bolstering freedom of expression, safety of journalists, and resilience to disinformation.

Question. What implications, if any, do these trends have for DRL policies and programs?

Answer. I believe DRL's programs and other engagements are critical for addressing challenges to democracy, responding to repression within authoritarian countries, and asserting U.S. leadership and influence around the world. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that DRL's diplomatic and programmatic efforts continue to strengthen democratic institutions and processes under duress, and respond to challenges posed by authoritarian regimes. I also will work with others in the Department to ensure that all possible avenues are explored to address such challenges.

Question. Leahy Laws: DRL is responsible for vetting foreign security forces under the "Leahy Laws," which prohibit assistance to those security forces that have committed a gross violation of human rights: Does DRL have sufficient funds and personnel to conduct an adequate vetting process?

Answer. I understand Congress allocates funds on an annual basis to DRL for human rights vetting which the bureau uses to fund full-time Leahy vetter positions for every region, develop and maintain the global International Vetting and Security Tracking cloud-based vetting system, and provide support to Department regional bureaus and posts to fund additional full-time Leahy vetters.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure our Leahy Law implementation programs continue to be fully resourced.

Question. To what extent do the Leahy Laws benefit or hinder the State Department's ability to conduct foreign policy?

Answer. The Leahy Laws support the U.S. foreign policy objective of promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Our national security benefits when partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, promote and protect human rights, hold human rights violators accountable when necessary, and support fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State's continued rigorous implementation of the Leahy Laws.

Question. Are there circumstances under which the Leahy Laws could hamper our pursuit of our national security interests?

Answer. Promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms advances our national security interests. Our most valued, dependable, and effective partner governments and security forces around the world uphold democratic values, respect and protect human rights, and hold human rights violators accountable. The United States must continue to create and maintain strong security relationships with such partners through diplomacy, appropriate assistance, and frequent and ongoing cooperation. The Leahy Laws are important tools that aid us in this effort, and, if confirmed, I will support their continued rigorous implementation.

Question. INL has contributed to the U.S. Government's efforts to shine a light on foreign corrupt practices around the world: Please assess how INL's anti-corruption programming has contributed to U.S. foreign policy efforts and what more, if any, can INL do to ensure U.S. priorities in this area are achieved.

Answer. Corruption undermines the rule of law, fair conditions for U.S. business competition, and the resilience of U.S. partners to malign foreign influence. INL anti-corruption programs help foreign government partners deploy the modern legislative frameworks, professional capacity, and international cooperation necessary to tackle this pernicious crime, building cooperation with U.S. authorities and stemming graft before its impact reaches U.S. shores. As a result, our foreign partners are increasingly able to deny transnational criminal organizations this key means of facilitating drug trafficking and a range of other criminal activity. If confirmed, I will ensure INL retains combating corruption among its core anti-crime assistance priorities.

Question. Given that the State Department plays a key role in providing foreign policy guidance for our sanctions programs, can you please explain why the administration hasn't utilized the tools in the Fentanyl Sanctions Act, and can you detail what steps you will take to ensure its implementation?

Answer. The Department continues to coordinate closely with Treasury to combat drug trafficking globally through implementation of sanctions programs such as the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act and the Fentanyl Sanctions Act. Such actions promote accountability and make it harder for these criminals to operate with impunity. The Department is also committed to actively working within the Commission on Combatting Synthetic Opioid Trafficking to develop a consensus on a strategic approach to combating the flow of synthetic opioids into the United States. These efforts complement the Department's bilateral counterdrug programs and other work abroad to stop flows of synthetic opioids into the United States.

Question. There is an ongoing national debate in the United States about the use of force by law enforcement officers at the federal, state, and local levels, and the importance of policing strategies that take into account issues of race and ethnicity. If confirmed, what steps would you take to review programs conducted by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and ensure that INL overseas training initiatives include standards on the appropriate use of force and address issues of racial and ethnic bias?

Answer. I condemn any misconduct by law enforcement, criminal justice, or government officials. In this context, I fully support the President's Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities and will support INL's mission to promote criminal justice systems in foreign countries that serve all citizens equally and balance public safety and the rule of law with respect for human rights and individual freedoms. If confirmed, I will also support INL's ongoing efforts to carefully screen its state and local law enforcement partners that participate in foreign assistance programming, and I will ensure INL training and capacity building programs uphold the highest standards of policing and reflect U.S. values.

Question. What do you believe is the future of the U.S.-ICC relationship in meeting the mutual goals of holding perpetrators of atrocity crimes accountable for their actions?

Answer. Since even before the conclusion of the negotiations over the Rome Statute, there have been longstanding, bipartisan objections to the possibility that the ICC could attempt to assert jurisdiction over U.S. personnel. In 2017, when the ICC requested authorization to investigate the "situation in Afghanistan," which includes investigation into the activities of U.S. personnel, U.S. cooperation with the ICC ended. If a permanent solution to U.S. objections is found, cooperation can resume. Regardless, the U.S. commitment to holding perpetrators of atrocity crimes accountable is undeniable and unwavering; no other actor on earth has been as committed or done as much to advance the cause of justice and accountability as we have.

Question. Please comment on how adequately the TIP Office is resourced to carry out its mission. What issues would you direct the TIP Ambassador to prioritize within its broad mission?

Answer. Both the White House and the State Department have demonstrated that combating human trafficking is a priority. I know the Secretary is committed to making sure the TIP Office has the resources it needs to continue the Department's critical work on this front. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and Department colleagues to address any needs while making the most efficient use of the resources the Office already has.

I will also work closely with Ambassador Richmond to continue the excellence of the TIP Report, State's year-round diplomatic engagement and role supporting the President's Interagency Task Force to coordinate interagency anti-trafficking efforts, and our international programming.

Question. Will you support efforts to ensure that the tier rankings accurately reflect efforts to combat human trafficking in each country?

Answer. Combating human trafficking is a priority for this administration and will be a priority of mine at the Department, if confirmed. From my work at the Department and in Congress, I know the Department's Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report) to be the gold standard in assessing government efforts to monitor and combat trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that the TIP Report tier rankings are based solely on whether a country meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking set forth in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Question. How will you help ensure the TIP report is seen as credible and objective?

Answer. The Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report) reflects the U.S. Government's commitment to global leadership on this key human rights and law enforcement issue. If confirmed, I will work closely with Ambassador Richmond and Department of State experts to ensure that the TIP Report is as credible, objective, and accurate as possible, based solely on whether a country meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking set forth in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. I know the Department has had robust engagement with this committee on the TIP Report, and, if confirmed, I look forward to this continued partnership.

Question. The United States has been a leader for decades in promoting human rights and ensuring the protection of human rights defenders across the world. In accordance with this leadership, we've been gratified to see the Department's use of Global Magnitsky designations to hold individuals and entities who commit serious human rights violations or who engage in acts of corruption accountable by freezing their assets and denying their visa requests to the United States: Do you support the use of Global Magnitsky designations and calling out human rights abusers as a tool of foreign policy in order to hold individuals and entities to account?

Answer. Yes, I support the use of Global Magnitsky and calling out abusers as a tool of foreign policy. The Global Magnitsky sanctions program represents the best of the United States' values by taking impactful steps to protect and promote human rights and combat corruption around the world.

Question. Do you agree that that there should be additional resources provided to those who review Global Magnitsky designations in order to ensure a more robust sanctions regime that targets the worst human rights abusers?

Answer. Targeted sanctions for human rights abuses and corruption are a proven tool to discourage malign actors, promote accountability, and peacefully address situations that may threaten international peace or security. If confirmed, I will work with State Department colleagues and with the Treasury Department to ensure sufficient resources support the Global Magnitsky sanctions program.

Question. What role do you see the 7031(c) authority playing in upholding human rights abroad?

Answer. I believe that by shining a light on human rights violators and corrupt officials from foreign governments, we take impactful steps to protect and uphold human rights and combat corruption globally. If confirmed, I will continue to support use of available sanctions and visa ineligibility authorities, including 7031(c), which are powerful tools to deter and promote accountability for human rights abuses and corruption.

Question. U.N. human rights mechanisms have been vocal in calling out abuses committed by the Iranian Government in recent months. In one recent report, the U.N. special rapporteur on Iran-a position originally created by the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2011 with strong U.S. backing-noted increasing restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, the right to a fair trial, and the right to freedom of association and assembly. The special rapporteur also found that Christian converts risk arbitrary arrests, detention, and interrogation about their faith and have faced specious charges. The special rapporteur has also been vocal in calling on Iran to release human rights defenders from prison due to the COVID–19 pandemic: Does the administration support these statements?

Answer. Yes. The Iranian regime has violated human rights for 41 years, and, if confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to press Iran to end these abuses.

I understand the administration shares the Special Rapporteur's concerns regarding the continued repression of members of religious minority groups, including Gonabadi Sufis, Baha'is, and Christian converts, who face severe treatment because of their beliefs, including harsh jail sentences. The United States agrees with her call to release human rights defenders.

The regime's continued restrictions on the rights of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, particularly during the November 2019 protests, is concerning. If confirmed, I will continue to call for investigations into the November 2019 killing of protestors.

Question. Given that the administration has decided to withhold assessed contributions from the U.N. Human Rights Office, how do you plan to support the work on Iran being carried out by the special rapporteur?

Answer. I understand that it is administration policy for continued cooperation with U.N. special procedures. If confirmed, I will prioritize engagement that maximizes the promotion of U.S. objectives, such as U.S. participation in interactive dialogues with the special rapporteur on Iran during the UNGA Third Committee. I also will support U.S. calls for Iran to allow the special rapporteur access to carry out her mandate through a country visit.

If confirmed, I plan to continue administration policy for the State Department's close coordination with the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, while reviewing our engagement with individual human rights mandates and processes to ensure our funding strategically supports U.S. national interests and administration priorities, and to continue our practice of not supporting mandates that do not advance U.S. interests.

Question. Now that the administration has withdrawn from and defunded the [Human Rights] Council, what is it doing to support the work of this body?

Answer. The United States resigned from its seat as a member of the Human Rights Council on June 19, 2018. We do not participate in Human Rights Council sessions, nor do we engage in the negotiation of resolutions put forward by the Council. We continue to engage on human rights issues in other U.N. fora, such as the General Assembly, and we continue to participate in the Universal Periodic Re-

view process. We also continue to engage with a wide range of special procedures mandate holders, including special rapporteurs, independent experts, and commissions of inquiry that cover human rights issues.

Question. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues: In 2002, Congress passed the Tibetan Policy Act and institutionalized U.S. political support for Tibet, including formalizing the institution of the position of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. Since the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, all Special Coordinators for Tibetan Issues have been at the Under-Secretary level. At a time when the situation in Tibet (and in China) is worsening and when there is no indication of a Chinese desire to resolve the Tibetan issue, the United States should be strengthening its efforts on Tibet, including through elevating officials handling Tibetan issues. At this crucial moment, if the U.S. State Department lowers the position to be held by an Assistant Secretary, it will signal to the Chinese Communist Party a weakening of United States' resolve and commitment to the Tibetan issue. Should you be confirmed as Under Secretary, will you commit to seek to be dual hatted as the United States Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, just as your J predecessors have done for over 15 years?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging on Tibetan issues, and will review this further. I support continued efforts by the Department on Tibetan issues and acting consistent with the Tibetan Policy Act.

Question. What will your priorities be for the CT Bureau?

Answer. If confirmed, counterterrorism would be one of my top priorities. While the United States has made real progress, the threats from ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and Iran and its proxies are far from behind us. I believe the State Department—and in particular, the Counterterrorism Bureau-has been and remains central to any successful counterterrorism strategy and approach. If confirmed, I will work with the Counterterrorism Bureau to fully leverage the Department's diplomatic, foreign assistance, and sanctions tools, among others. While the United States will continue to lead the global campaign to defeat terrorist groups, this is not a battle that we can win on our own. If confirmed, I will also work closely with the Counterterrorism Bureau to ensure our partners are doing their part, and appropriately sharing the burden, which is an administration priority outlined in the 2018 National Counterterrorism Strategy.

Question. Based on your knowledge of the Counterterrorism Bureau's missions and activities, in what areas does it perform well?

Answer. The Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) is instrumental in the United States' efforts to promote counterterrorism cooperation, strengthen partnerships, and build partners' civilian capacity to counter the full spectrum of terrorism threats. CT's role in implementing the National Strategy to Counterterrorism (2018) has been extremely important to the U.S. Government's counterterrorism successes in recent years. CT has rallied the international community to increase pressure on Iran through terrorist designations and sanctions, as well as enhancing international information sharing that has led to the prosecution of Hizballah facilitators. CT is also helping lead the international coalition to defeat ISIS, as it expands its focus beyond Iraq and Syria to defeat its branches and networks across the Middle East, Asia, and especially Africa.

Question. What counterterrorism policies or activities may need to be reassessed or improved?

Answer. While our partners around the world have taken significant steps in recent years to address the terrorist threats confronting the international community—particularly in countering the rise of ISIS—significant gaps remain. Some countries still lack the basic counterterrorism tools mandated by U.N. Security Council resolutions (UNSCR), including UNSCR 2396 on terrorist travel, which the State Department was instrumental in conceiving and adopting. The State Department can and is assisting countries on the front line to build these capabilities. However, these partners must be equally committed to this effort. If confirmed, one of my top priorities would be working to ensure that our partners are doing their part.

Question. How do you envision CT/CVE informing and supporting the work of the other bureaus and offices you will be leading?

Answer. CVE is an essential aspect of our counterterrorism approach. CVE efforts must include proactive actions to counter efforts to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize terrorists, and to address the specific factors that enable terrorist radicalization and recruitment. The Department and USAID leverage diplomatic, development, and

foreign assistance tools to prevent and counter terrorist radicalization and recruitment, both online and offline, regardless of ideology. The Department has many bureaus and offices that can bring their expertise and programming to bear, in support of CVE. The CT Bureau guides and coordinates the Department's CVE policy, assistance, and programming which is carried out by a range of Department bureaus and offices including those that, if confirmed, I will be leading. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department works collaboratively to bring all of its resources to bear on CT and CVE.

Question. How do you see the role of the National Security Council (NSC) in supporting the activities of the Bureau of Counterterrorism?

Answer. The NSC staff plays a critical role in coordinating among inter-agencies' counterterrorism policy, strategy, and approach. The State Department works closely with the NSC staff in this effort. For example, the State Department was integrally involved in the development, drafting and implementation of the NSC-led National Strategy for Counterterrorism. The NSC's interagency Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG), in which the State Department participates, serves as the key venue to coordinate counterterrorism policy, through which CT Bureau and our Chiefs of Mission ensure foreign policy and counterterrorism efforts remain aligned around the world. The CSG, along with the Deputies and Principal Committee, are fora where the Department can ensure their counterterrorism efforts are aligned to broader U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Question. Do you believe that the resources and funding dedicated to U.S. counterterrorism programs at the State Department are adequate?

Answer. The funds Congress provides to the Department allows it to sustain assistance in the highest priority areas and make gains in civilian capabilities with some of our most important partners in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, the Philippines, Somalia, Tunisia, and beyond. The State Department has improved the capabilities of key front states to identify, disrupt, prosecute and detain terrorist operatives; prevent terrorist travel; bolster aviation and border security; and address terrorist recruitment and propaganda. The Department has developed a comprehensive program review and budget planning process to ensure that it knows where the threats and needs are, can account for where every dollar is being spent, and evaluate the effectiveness of those programs. If confirmed, I will support the Department's budget request and am confident that it will request resources necessary to execute the President's strategy.

Question. What is being done to win the "hearts and minds" of individuals and groups that may be susceptible to the influences and teachings of radical Islamic fundamentalists?

Answer. CT and USAID have worked to implement a multi-pronged approach to offer alternatives to individuals who may be susceptible to the influences and teachings of radical Islamic fundamentalists. These efforts include promoting messages to counter terrorist propaganda, improving governance and strengthening communities to resists violent extremist incursions, and building a global prevention architecture by bringing together governments, civil society, and the private sector to build resiliency to terrorist ideologies. If confirmed, I will work with host and affected governments where Islamic fundamentalists and other terrorist groups may be propagating problematic influences and teachings to implement this multi-faceted approach.

Question. How does the State Department assess the effectiveness of efforts to counter violent extremism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to conduct regular and comprehensive evaluations of CVE programs. The State Department has a robust system in place for measuring the effectiveness of CVE programs. The CT Bureau employs third-party contractors to perform the majority of CT and CVE evaluative work, ensuring objective and professional results. CT evaluations have wide-ranging impacts, from refining projects and replicating successful approaches, to revising both internal and external processes that have informed program design, implementation, and strategy. The findings and recommendations from these evaluations lead to more effective programs, more productive and analysis-driven processes, and more efficient management and execution.

Question. What lessons has the Department learned?

Answer. Through the decades-long counterterrorism fight, the Department has learned that it is not enough to react to terrorism, we must prevent it as well. Our countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts work to ensure that terrorist groups like

al-Qaida, ISIS, and many others cannot recruit, radicalize, mobilize, reconstitute, or inspire acts of terrorism. The Department's key strength in CVE is its unique ability to support partner governments in their efforts to prevent the rise of terrorism, through bilateral and multilateral diplomatic channels as well as by helping local actors build resilience to terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

If confirmed, I will work to build off of several lessons the Department has learned while implementing CVE programming: First, a comprehensive approach to address the drivers of terrorism is critical to advancing the United States' national security and overall foreign policy goals. Second, if confirmed, we must counter the intolerant ideology that helped to give rise to ISIS and other groups. Third, CVE efforts must be guided by ongoing analysis of the context, drivers, and most effective responses. The range of possible drivers of terrorism can vary significantly from individual psychological factors to community and sectarian divisions and conflicts. Fourth, programming must be community driven. If confirmed, we need to work in neighborhoods and empower locally resonant voices to address the local issues that make some vulnerable to terrorist recruitment.

Question. What are the current and prospective roles of the Counterterrorism Bureau with respect to addressing international cybersecurity concerns?

Answer. The National Counterterrorism Strategy and the National Cyber Strategy highlight terrorists and other adversaries' interest in attacking physical, information, and communication infrastructure. Working with the Office of Coordinator for Cyber Issues, DHS, the FBI, and others, the CT Bureau broadens international awareness of physical and cyber threats and vulnerabilities, promotes U.N. Security Council Resolution 2341 on the protection of critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks, and facilitates exchange of best practices. In 2019, the CT Bureau and DHS/CISA jointly produced "A Guide to Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience" (CISR) to explain the U.S. approach for domestic and international partners. CT-funded Anti-Terrorism Assistance CISR courses promote cyber and infrastructure security. Our Terrorist Use of the Internet efforts focus on countering terrorist radicalization and recruitment while respecting human rights and the free flow of information. We partner with the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism and others to share information on tactics, recruiting, propaganda, and financing methods with the private sector, thus facilitating Terms of Service enforcement. The CT Bureau also works with the Global Engagement Center to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts aimed at undermining U.S. national security interests. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to support this vital national priority.

Question. Please comment on PRM's response capacity and contingency planning. To what extent does the current level of staffing of the PRM bureau adequately address its fundamental areas of responsibility?

Answer. During my time as Director of F, I was briefed on several internal and external organizational assessments of PRM over the past decade, which repeatedly recommended changes to support response capacity, contingency planning, and the evolving landscape of the work within the Bureau. If confirmed, I will use my management experience to examine these important questions.

Question. How would you describe the Trump administration's foreign policy goals in these areas?

Answer. The President's National Security Strategy (NSS) clearly outlines the U.S. commitment to champion American values by reducing human suffering. The United States continues to lead the world in humanitarian assistance even as we expect others to share the responsibility. The NSS seeks to support displaced people close to their homes to help meet their needs until they can safely and voluntarily return home. I look forward, if confirmed, to being part of State Department efforts to provide protection and achieve durable solutions for the millions of forcibly displaced people across the globe, to strengthen the global humanitarian architecture, and to help ensure respect for international humanitarian laws and norms.

Question. How would you describe the degree of interagency coordination between USAID and the State Department on humanitarian assistance activities?

Answer. The State Department and USAID bureaus primarily responsible for U.S. humanitarian assistance maintain regular and close coordination in field locations where both are implementing programs and between regional and policy offices in Washington. These bureaus are also working together through the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Council (HASC), which I helped establish during my tenure in the Department's Office of Foreign Assistance (F), to advance the administration's goals of optimizing humanitarian assistance programs. This is aligned with the

President's objective to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of all federal agencies. If confirmed, I look forward to participating in this forum again.

Question. What are ways that PRM can engage the donor community, increase global burden sharing, and help guard against donor fatigue, particularly in protracted crises?

Answer. No single donor can meet the growing need for humanitarian assistance worldwide. The United States seeks to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of global humanitarian assistance and to expand the share of government-provided humanitarian assistance borne by other nations. This year's U.N. General Assembly side event, hosted by Deputy Secretary Biegun on September 24, 2020, highlighted the United States' humanitarian leadership and called for broadening the humanitarian donor base. Such initiatives help focus attention on the importance of humanitarian assistance and allow us to call for other donors to increase contributions or start contributing. If confirmed, I would ensure that these important efforts continue, as the United States fulfills its role as a leader and catalyst for efficient and effective humanitarian response.

Question. What is your view of the role of the United States in global fora, such as the global compacts on refugees and migration? What do you see as the key drivers for the U.S. withdrawal from participation in the Global Compact on Migration?

Answer. The United States engages in global fora to advance our interests and encourage greater burden sharing among U.N. member states and other stakeholders, including development actors, refugee-hosting countries, and the private sector. The administration values much of what is contained in the Global Compact on Refugees, but I understand that the United States did not support the Global Compact on Migration because it contained goals and objectives that are inconsistent and incompatible with U.S. law and policy.

Question. What do you see as the U.S. role in refugee resettlement? In past years, the United States has sought to ensure that at least 50% of all refugees referred by UNHCR were considered for U.S. resettlement. In your view, is this still a U.S. goal? The U.S. refugee ceiling is historically low and access to asylum has been slashed. Why has the U.S. abandoned its proud tradition as a champion for refugee resettlement? Do you think the United States should continue to slash slots for the resettlement of refugees? Why or why not?

Answer. The President authorized the admission of up to 18,000 refugees for FY 2020. I understand that the agencies responsible for refugee admissions have worked with the national security and intelligence communities to strengthen the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program's security measures, the operational realities of which are reflected in this year's ceiling. In line with the National Security Strategy (NSS), the United States continues to champion American values by reducing human suffering, including through resettlement of the world's most vulnerable refugees. The United States continues to lead the world in humanitarian assistance and seeks to support displaced people close to their homes to help meet their needs until they can safely and voluntarily return home.

Question. Do you agree that the U.S. Refugee Admissions program should be responsive to global resettlement needs without discrimination? Yes or no? With governors and mayors across all 50 states expressing strong support for the Refugee Admissions program, what is the rationale for further cuts reported to be under consideration for FY 2021?

Answer. The United States continues to operate one of the largest refugee resettlement programs in the world. It is consistent with the President's National Security Strategy and our foreign policy goals of providing resettlement to the most in need while assisting refugees as close to home as possible. I understand that the United States is also the single largest donor of international humanitarian assistance, and last year delivered nearly $9.3 billion in life-saving aid around the world. If confirmed, I commit to working with other donor governments, international organizations, and the private sector to ensure the needs of refugees are met globally. I am neither aware of, nor would be able to comment on, discussions regarding the FY 2021 refugee admissions program.

Question. Rohingya Refugee Crisis: The United Nations Fact Finding Mission, the U.S. Government, and several non-governmental organizations have documented the Burmese military's killing of tens of thousands of Rohingya, cases of summary executions, mass rapes, and burnings of villages, which led to the displacement of over 700,000 to neighboring Bangladesh. As of August 2019, over 900,000 Rohingya re-

side in refugee camps in Bangladesh: As Undersecretary, will you commit to more funds and focus going to these refugees through PRM?

Answer. I understand the United States has led the donor response to the Rohingya/Rakhine State crisis since its escalation in 2017, providing nearly $966 million in humanitarian assistance to affected populations in Burma and Bangladesh since August 2017. If confirmed, I will commit to continued U.S. leadership in the humanitarian response to the crisis, as well as to support efforts in developing durable solutions. It is important for the international community to continue providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations affected by the Rakhine State crisis, while durable solutions are being pursued, given that conditions in Rakhine State are not yet conducive for voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable returns of the Rohingya.

Question. How will you ensure that the basic human rights of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are met, including rights to food, livelihood, health care and education?

Answer. The United States is the single leading contributor of humanitarian assistance in response to the Rakhine State crisis, having provided nearly $966 million since the escalation of violence in August 2017, of which nearly $806 million has supported programs in Bangladesh. These programs save lives. They provide protection; emergency shelter; water, sanitation, and hygiene; healthcare; psychosocial support; food and nutritional assistance; non-food items; site management and development; education; and access to livelihood opportunities to approximately one million beneficiaries in Bangladesh. The programs also support the related needs of Bangladeshi host communities, and other vulnerable populations affected by the crisis. If confirmed, I will work with the international community to support efforts of the United Nations and its partners to promote respect for human rights of Rohingya refugees and ensure that all participating share the burden to meet their humanitarian needs as we pursue durable solutions to the crisis.

Question. Additionally, given that the most effective way to permanently resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis is by restoring their citizenship in Burma and ensuring safe, dignified and voluntary repatriation process, how do you propose employing the Department's resources to resolving the Rohingya refugee crisis in a more permanent manner?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support PRM to lead the humanitarian response efforts and work towards developing durable solutions for communities displaced by the Rakhine State crisis, in close coordination with other bureaus and agencies. I understand PRM's role is invaluable in working with U.N. bodies, other international and local humanitarian organizations, like-minded countries, and communities affected by the Rakhine State crisis to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection to those in need. Through diplomatic engagements since the beginning of the crisis, the U.S. Government-with PRM's lead-effectively pressed Bangladesh to take a principled humanitarian approach to addressing the refugee influx. I understand PRM's longstanding relationships with U.N. agencies and international organizations, in both Burma and Bangladesh, led to an effective humanitarian response since the outbreak of violence in August 2017. I also understand PRM works with other bureaus and international actors to work toward durable solutions to the crisis. If confirmed, I would continue these efforts.

Question. What do you see the role of PRM during this process?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support PRM to lead the humanitarian response efforts and work towards developing durable solutions for communities displaced by the Rakhine State crisis, in close coordination with other bureaus and agencies. I understand PRM's role is invaluable in working with U.N. bodies, other international and local humanitarian organizations, like-minded countries, and communities affected by the Rakhine State crisis to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection to those in need. Through diplomatic engagements since the beginning of the crisis, the U.S. Government—with PRM's lead—effectively pressed Bangladesh to take a principled humanitarian approach to addressing the refugee influx. I understand PRM's longstanding relationships with U.N. agencies and international organizations, in both Burma and Bangladesh, led to an effective humanitarian response since the outbreak of violence in August 2017. I also understand PRM works with other bureaus and international actors to work toward durable solutions to the crisis. If confirmed, I would continue these efforts.

Question. Please prioritize what you see as the most critical displaced population challenges and describe U.S. strategy and efforts to address these situations.

Answer. With nearly 80 million forcibly displaced people around the world, including from Burma, Syria, South Sudan, and Venezuela, global needs far exceed the capacity of any single government to fulfill. The President's National Security Strategy prioritizes the alleviation of human suffering and reaffirms U.S. leadership as the largest provider of humanitarian assistance worldwide, even as we expect others to share the responsibility. Through reliable contributions to multilateral humanitarian organizations, the U.S. Government maintains an outsized influence in the humanitarian community, shaping international responses to humanitarian crises, encouraging greater burden sharing, and driving humanitarian reform.

Question. What do you assess are the major trends in the humanitarian area? Similarly, what are the key protection and assistance needs of today's refugees and IDPs? If confirmed, how would you recommend that PRM marshal its resources to address these challenges? What countries or regions should PRM prioritize?

Answer. The COVID–19 pandemic is exacerbating existing protection and assistance needs of refugees, IDPs, and other persons of concern. Political instability continues to contribute to displacement as well. Humanitarian partners are reporting an increase in gender-based violence; xenophobia and stigmatization; and discrimination in access to health, food, water, education, and legal services for vulnerable groups. If confirmed, I would recommend that PRM continues to lead the State Department's humanitarian assistance response in the most effective and efficient manner possible to address humanitarian needs while also using all of the J family tools to prevent and end instability, especially in countries such as Venezuela, the Sahel, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, among others.

Question. Please comment on the degree of interagency coordination within the U.S. Government in its humanitarian assistance activities. Do you expect a change in this relationship, particularly in light of proposed restructuring at USAID? What would be your top priority related to coordination within the U.S. Government? With U.N. system entities and private sector organizations?

Answer. I understand that the State Department and USAID are continuing to work together through the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Council (HASC), which I helped establish in 2018 to advance the administration's goals of optimizing humanitarian assistance programs. USAID's Associate Administrator for Relief, Response and Resilience (R3) co-chairs the HASC with the J Under Secretary. USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and the Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration are integral parts of the HASC. If confirmed, I look forward to co-chairing this forum to ensure that the HASC is able to achieve its objective of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid, including within the U.N., and to promote burden sharing, including from the private sector.

Question. What impact do you think the current debate over budget cuts might have on burden sharing and the percentage of overall assistance the United States is prepared to provide to humanitarian crises worldwide? What are the potential short-term implications of such cuts for implementing partners? How might this impact PRM's role in working with donors and any outreach efforts? What are ways that PRM can engage the donor community, increase global burden sharing, and help guard against donor fatigue, particularly in protracted crises?

Answer. There are more forcibly displaced people in the world than at any time in modern history. At the same time, there is a gap between humanitarian needs and funding provided to humanitarian response. The United States is the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance but cannot meet increasing needs alone. I understand the United States has worked through initiatives like the Grand Bargain to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of global humanitarian assistance, organized several donor conferences for specific responses, and led donor discussions to address these global trends, most recently on the sidelines of UNGA. Such efforts are particularly important in times of constrained budgets worldwide, as donors work together to meet humanitarian need.

Question. In your view, is U.S. humanitarian assistance an effective tool for building good will? How do you think the United States is perceived by its allies in terms of any moral obligation to help respond to humanitarian crises? Please describe any alternative ways to balance the need for aid reform and cost effectiveness with a robust humanitarian response.

Answer. The United States is the single largest humanitarian assistance donor and continues through its principled leadership to catalyze international humanitarian response. Top humanitarian donor nations expressed appreciation for the United States' leadership in this area at the UNGA side-event hosted by the Deputy Secretary on September 24, 2020. Simultaneously, the United States recognizes the

need to ensure humanitarian assistance is effective and efficient. If confirmed, I would use my extensive experience in budget and policymaking, including as former Director of the Office of Foreign Assistance, to support efforts that I understand are underway to promote burden sharing and the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, while ensuring our other strategic policy priorities are also met.

Question. For the past two years, the President's budget request has included deep cuts to humanitarian assistance, including drastic reductions in the Migration and Refugee Assistance account, despite bipartisan support for these life-saving programs. If confirmed, will you seek to maintain robust funding for humanitarian assistance through the MRA account?

Answer. The President's National Security Strategy prioritizes the alleviation of human suffering and reaffirms U.S. leadership as the largest provider of humanitarian assistance. While the United States is the single largest supporter of humanitarian action around the world, we cannot and should not do it alone. If confirmed, I would support U.S. Government requests for the resources needed to continue to fulfill the United States' role in humanitarian assistance and to ensure other countries do their part, while pursuing partnership with and contributions from the private sector and civil society.

Question. Do you support continued participation of the United States in the Global Compact for Refugees? Why or why not?

Answer. I support much of what is contained in the Global Compact on Refugees, including its focus on improving responses to refugee crises by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as well as facilitating the work of UNHCR in refugee hosting countries. I support a basis for a predictable response to refugee situations and greater burden sharing among U.N. member states and other stakeholders, including development actors, refugee-hosting communities, and the private sector. The Global Compact on Refugees is not legally binding, and states retain the sovereign right, subject to their international legal obligations, to determine their own immigration laws, policies, and practices.

Question. Yemen continues to experience the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, with nearly 80% of the population reliant on some form of aid. U.N. humanitarian agencies like the World Food Program (WFP), U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), and U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) are playing a central role in the response. For example, WFP alone is working to reach 12 million Yemenis each month with food and nutrition assistance. Unfortunately, these efforts are critically underfunded; the UN's Yemen response plan for 2020 has only received 37% of the funds it requested from member states. Of course, this is happening at a time when the COVID–19 pandemic and climate change have exacerbated food security challenges around the world. This past week, former South Carolina Governor David Beasley, WFP's Executive Director, warned that countries like Yemen could slip into famine and more than 30 million could die of hunger worldwide if his agency does not receive the funding it needs to carry out its operations. The U.S. is the largest contributor to U.N. humanitarian relief operations in the world, but clearly more can be done: How is the administration working to address these funding challenges and ensure that lifesaving aid reaches the Yemeni people?

Answer. The United States has provided nearly $607 million in FY 2020, with additional funding planned, making the United States the largest donor responding to the crisis in Yemen. We have consistently urged other donors to contribute and were pleased to see Saudi Arabia recently commit pledged funding. Funding alone cannot solve all of Yemen's problems. Houthi authorities routinely interfere in aid operations, including most recently the closure of the Sana'a airport, which prohibited the entry of key supplies to fight COVID–19 and polio. While interference is most egregious in the north, there are also access challenges in the south. We will continue advocating in support of the UN's efforts with all parties to provide unfettered access for aid workers. Ultimately, only a political solution can end the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Question. The U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) provides a number of key services, including education, medical care, and food aid, to impoverished Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. In 2018, the Trump administration cut off all U.S. funding to UNRWA, citing a desire to use the withdrawal of aid as leverage to win Palestinian acceptance of the administration's then-nascent peace efforts. Two years later, UNRWA continues to operate at the edge of a financial cliff: while donations from other member states have helped partially fill the gap, the agency is facing new pressures brought about by the pandemic, and is facing the possibility of having to close or

reduce services: Given these realities, what exactly is the administration hoping to accomplish by continuing to withhold funding for UNRWA?

Answer. The administration announced in 2018 that the United States will no longer provide financial contributions to UNRWA. UNRWA's business model remains unsustainable and Palestinians deserve better than a service provision model that operates in permanent crisis mode. The United States works with a range of actors to address the needs of Palestinian refugees.

The United States is leading the world's humanitarian and health assistance response to the COVID–19 pandemic, including by providing $5 million to support health services in the West Bank. I support continuing to assess how U.S. assistance can best be used to alleviate human suffering while advancing U.S. foreign policy and providing value to U.S. taxpayers.

Question. Neither Israel, nor the Palestinian Authority, nor countries in the region like Jordan have demonstrated the capacity or willingness to absorb these activities, so who will perform them in UNRWA's absence?

Answer. The Department made it clear when providing the final contribution of $60 million in 2018 that the United States would no longer bear a disproportionate share of UNRWA's costs, and other countries must step up and do their part to advance regional security and stability. UNRWA continues to operate with an unsustainable business model, tied to an expanding community of beneficiaries. The Department continues to work closely with Israel and key regional partners on ways to improve economic and humanitarian conditions. Regarding Gaza, Hamas is primarily responsible for those conditions, having put its own interests above those of Gaza's residents.

Question. One of the key objectives of U.S. policy in Iraq is not only to defeat ISIS but to rebuild the country and address the urgent humanitarian and development needs of the Iraqi people. Such measures are critical to both the long-term stability of Iraq and efforts to prevent ISIS from reconstituting itself. Over the last five years, U.N. agencies have helped millions of displaced return home and initiated an infrastructure program to stabilize areas taken by ISIS and give the local population a sense of progress. In particular, the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and U.N. Development Program (UNDP) have helped foster the return of 4.6 million Iraqis; completed 2,373 infrastructure projects, which have provided water and electrical service to millions; employed 35,000 people, including many women, with cash-generating jobs; enabled 39,000 children to go back to school; and rehabilitated tens of thousands of houses, benefitting over 130,000 Iraqis: How does the U.S. plan to work with the U.N. and other partners to ensure that the gains of the last few years are not rolled back?

Answer. The United States has worked closely with UNHCR and UNDP to foster the return of 4.6 million Iraqi IDPs and, based on administration policy, intends to continue support and collaboration with U.N. agencies to implement durable solutions for the 1.3 million Iraqis who remain displaced. Advancing effective durable solutions for IDPs that meet international standards, a necessary measure to achieve Iraqi national stability and security, remains a key U.S. priority.

Question. After nearly a decade of civil war, the humanitarian situation in Syria remains dire. Beginning in 2014, the U.N. Security Council authorized U.N. humanitarian agencies to conduct cross-border relief operations into rebel-controlled areas of Syria, in order to circumvent significant obstacles to access put up by the Assad regime. This program allowed several million Syrians in areas outside of government control to access food, medicine, shelter, and other critical forms of humanitarian aid. Unfortunately, since late last year, the Council has voted twice, with U.S. support, to circumscribe these relief operations, due to strong pressure from Russia and China, including the use by both countries of their veto powers. Currently, only one border crossing into Idlib is permitted for cross-border relief deliveries, out of four that were originally in operation. Secretary-General Antθnio Guterres and other senior U.N. officials have repeatedly called on Security Council member states to keep the cross-border relief efforts alive: How is the administration working with U.N. humanitarian agencies and other partners to continue to provide aid to Syrian civilians?

Answer. Deputy Secretary Biegun announced at the U.S.-hosted UNGA event on Humanitarian Leadership on September 24, 2020, an additional $720 million in humanitarian assistance for the Syrian people, bringing the total U.S. humanitarian commitment since the start of the conflict to over $12 billion. We are the largest single donor to the response to the Syrian conflict.

I support this continued commitment to ensuring the Syrian people receive the humanitarian relief that they need, including through cross-border assistance. I also support efforts to encourage others to increase humanitarian support to the Syrian people despite the Syrian regime's efforts to starve its population into submission.

Question. Criminalization of LGBTQI: In countries around the world, there are criminal penalties associated with exercising sexual and reproductive health and rights. LGBTQI people are criminalized for who they love and are regularly prosecuted or incarcerated for consensual same sex sexual conduct or in places like Indonesia, Chechnya and Egypt. There are also women who are in jail in places like El Salvador and Senegal for having miscarriages or abortions. These are gross human rights violations. As Undersecretary, do you commit to raise concerns about laws that criminalize same-sex relationships and women's personal health decisions in public and private diplomatic settings?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to protect and defend the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons, including women and LGBTI persons. This has long been and remains the foreign policy of the United States.

Consistent with President Trump's remarks at the United Nations General Assembly this year, I will champion ongoing U.S. efforts to support the repeal or elimination of laws that criminalize LGBTI status and/or conduct around the world, and I will advocate for the human rights of women across the globe.

Question. Furthermore, do you commit to instructing DRL to report on LGBTI rights and access to sexual and reproductive health services in the Human Rights Report?

Answer. The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (HRR) include information on respect for the human rights of LGBTI persons. I understand that the HRR subsection entitled "Reproductive Rights" by the previous administration was renamed "Coercion in Population Control" consistent with the requirement of U.S. law to report "wherever applicable, practices regarding coercion in population control, including coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization." Additional material on maternal mortality, access to contraception, and similar issues is available via hyperlink in the text of each country chapter and in an appendix to the HRR. If confirmed, I will ensure that the State Department continues to comply with statutory reporting requirements and delivers objective, evidence-based, and rigorous human rights reports.

Question. What is your assessment of the scope of risks to women and girls during humanitarian emergencies, such as sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and domestic violence, and the status of efforts to address them? Please discuss the impact of the programs PRM is funding and how they are linked to early recovery efforts.

Answer. Humanitarian crises pose many risks, specifically to women and girls, including all forms of gender-based violence (GBV). The Department of State through its many programs and initiatives works to address these risks by responding to violence against women from the start of a humanitarian emergency, and ensuring survivors receive support. One example of this programming is the Safe from the Start initiative, which demonstrates that with well-trained and dedicated humanitarian workers, a relatively low-cost financial investment can make a significant difference in the protection of women and girls. In addition, PRM ensures implementing partners incorporate GBV risk mitigation into all PRM-funded activities.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. I fully support the Department's policy to vigorously protect employees' rights to engage in protected activities. Retaliating against employees who engage in protected activities is prohibited and those who retaliate will be held accountable. Penalties should be strong enough to deter misconduct, and when misconduct is proved, I fully support appropriate penalties, up to and including separation. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that any employees engaging in retaliation will be held accountable for their actions.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote efforts in the J family to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. To promote and retain the Department's diverse workforce, I will apply best practices of actively encouraging hiring managers to engage in broad outreach to attract the best and most diverse talent and then apply standardized interview procedures to eliminate unconscious bias. Additionally, as the Secretary determines, I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options. Consistent with appropriate laws, regulations, and directives, I will also look for opportunities to encourage bureaus and offices to be diverse, encourage mentoring and sponsorship relationships, and host conversations about hiring, promotion and mentoring.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. ERIC M. UELAND BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Do you accept the legitimacy of the international human rights regime?

Answer. The United States has been clear about its support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and that States should adhere to their international human rights obligations and commitments. If confirmed, I will continue long-standing U.S. efforts to advance human rights around the world and condemn those who violate them.

Question. Secretary Pompeo created the Commission on Unalienable Rights with the stated purpose of reevaluating which human rights the U.S. should prioritize in our foreign policy based on foundational American principles. Might countries like China and Russia not interpret this approach as license to pick and choose rights to respect based on their national ideologies?

Answer. Secretary Pompeo did not ask the Commission to single out "which human rights the U.S. should prioritize in our foreign policy." The Commission explicitly rejected a selective approach in its report, which asserts that "it defies the

intent and structure of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights] to pick and choose among its rights according to preferences and ideological presuppositions while ignoring other fundamental rights." Furthermore, the report stresses that the UDHR's "openness to legitimate pluralism" does not mean that any "claim of cultural specificity ought to be accepted as an excuse for violating human rights." If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Commission report in detail and the challenge the Secretary has placed before the Department to assess how the work we are called to do is grounded in the unalienable rights tradition that the United States, including the Department, have advocated for since our nation's founding.

Question. Do you agree with Secretary Pompeo's assertion, made at the launch of the Commission on Unalienable Rights report, that "Many [rights] are worth defending in light of our founding; others aren't"?

Answer. The United States is committed to preserving and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms contained in the instruments to which the United States is a party. The United States takes the assumption of such obligations very seriously, and the United States' longstanding commitment to protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people is well-known. The United States stands by our foundational ideal that certain principles are so fundamental as to apply to all human beings, everywhere, at all times.

Question. Do you believe that women's rights and the rights of LGBTQ individuals are rights worth protecting?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work to protect and defend the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people—including women, girls, and LGBTI persons. This has long been and remains the foreign policy of the United States.

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career 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. 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.

Over its existence, the Office has worked doggedly on the issue of religious freedom internationally, under both Republican and Democratic administrations. The level of focus on international religious freedom issues by the U.S. Government, including 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.

During my tenure as Director of the Office of Foreign Assistance Resources at the Department of State, at the direction of the Secretary I worked to stand up the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Council (HASC), a cooperative effort between the Department and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to improve coordination on humanitarian issues between the Department and USAID, optimize the work each does on such matters, clarify and enhance the core competencies each can bring to these challenges, and work to find solutions to what faces refugees and host governments face during a refugee crisis. I was gratified to see that through the efforts of the HASC an understanding between the Department of State and USAID was reached in January 2020 that strengthens what each institution can bring to bear and ensured both know what is expected of them and what they can do in varying circumstances. This will ensure in the future that as humanitarian challenges unfold, the United States will be able to act directly and strongly when it engages on refugee crises.

Question. 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 support and promote efforts in the J family to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. To promote and retain the Department's diverse workforce, I will apply best practices of actively encouraging hiring managers to engage in broad outreach to attract the best and most diverse talent and then apply standardized interview procedures to eliminate unconscious bias.

Additionally, as the Secretary determines, I will promote the expansion of workplace flexibilities, including telework and alternative work schedules, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) options. Consistent with appropriate laws, regulations, and directives, I will also look for opportunities to encourage bureaus and offices to be diverse, encourage mentoring and sponsorship relationships, and host conversations about hiring, promotion and mentoring.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at U.S. Department of State are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, consistent with applicable Federal laws, regulations, and rules, I will support and promote efforts in the J family to foster a culture of inclusion and representative workforce. If confirmed, I will support efforts the Department has underway to ensure leaders under my direction reflect leadership habits and practices that focus on recruiting, retaining and nurturing talent from a wide variety of backgrounds and perspectives.

Question. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention and to that of 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. My investment portfolio also includes security interests, including stocks, in companies, some of which may be based or have a presence overseas. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2020

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:08 a.m., via videoconference, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Menendez, and Cardin.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

The CHAIRMAN. Well, good morning everyone. I apologize for the delay. We had a goodbye celebration for Senator Alexander on the floor today that Senator Menendez and I were participating in, but he is quicker at getting back to his office than I am. In any event, welcome to all of you.

Today we are going to hold a nomination hearing for five important overseas posts. Our nominees today are all career members of the Senior Foreign Service. In the COVID days, this is how we have to do it. They are awkward and difficult, but nevertheless, it has to be done.

First of all we have Mr. Kevin Blackstone, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste; Ms. Cynthia Kierscht, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania; Mr. Brian D. McFeeters, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador to Malaysia; The Honorable Geeta Pasi, Class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; and The Honorable David Reimer, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone.

These are some important assignments that need to be done, and obviously there is at least one country in here that we have very significant concerns about. That, of course, is Ethiopia.

In any event, with that, before I recognize each of you to make your statements, I am going to recognize the Ranking Member, Senator Menendez.

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to see such a qualified panel of nominees before us today, with two former ambassadors as well as experienced State Depart-

ment personnel with sterling records of service, and I want to thank you and your families for your service to our country.

Ambassador Pasi, I look forward to hearing your views on Ethiopia, a country in the midst of a historic political transition whose outcome is of great consequence to U.S. interests. Like many others, I was impressed by the landmark political reforms implemented by Prime Minister Abiy, and while I still maintain hope that Ethiopia can build a stable, prosperous democracy, recent events raise some serious concerns.

Even before the conflict in Tigray, which I have condemned on the Senate floor, the levels of violence in Ethiopia were alarming. Political space has been closing for some time. Journalists and political opposition figures have been jailed, along with thousands of others. Ethiopia has a once-in-a-generation opportunity at democratic transformation, and the U.S. must do what it can to support a course correction.

Unfortunately, our diplomatic efforts thus far have been insufficient. I think we have to renew our efforts. We have to talk about how we are going to approach the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which has a series of related countries that are also in the issue. And I would love to hear from you a fresh set of ideas how we engage with Ethiopia to advance both the interests of the United States and Ethiopians.

Ms. Kierscht, I love your background. It looks like an extension of your persona, the painting. You have been nominated to serve in a country that is making some notable progress. In 2019, Mauritania's president stepped down, making him the first Mauritanian leader to adhere to constitutional term limits. Mauritania was recently upgraded from tier three to tier two watch list, due to the Government's new anti-trafficking national action plan, as well as the conviction of five slaveholders. And remarkably, there has not been a terrorist attack in the country since 2011, considering that other countries in the subregion are experiencing significant increase.

However, challenges remain. There is still discrimination against the Haratin ethnic group and black Mauritanians. Slavery remains a significant problem despite government efforts, and according to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index, terrorism is falling in some regions but it is rising in the Sahel. I hope you will provide us today with an overview of what the administration's strategy will be for combatting terrorism in the Sahel. In addition, I would like to know what steps you will take to improve democratic governance in Mauritania and to combat slavery. So I look forward to hearing from you.

Ambassador Reimer, I am glad that we will be spending such an experienced diplomat to Freetown. Sierra Leone is a country that one can deal with cautious optimism. With the help of the U.S. and the international community, Sierra Leone has made real progress in the end of its bitter civil war, including the fair and peaceful election of President Bio in 2018.

But the advent of the COVID–19 pandemic has tempered my optimism. Sierra Leone faces increasing economic pressures, which would make it more difficult to combat poverty and corruption and improve access to health care and education. I look forward to

hearing how the United States can help President Bio navigate these challenges.

I also look forward to hearing from Mr. McFeeters about how he plans to lead our embassy in Kuala Lumpur at a time when many countries in the region, including Malaysia, are looking to the United States for help against an increasingly aggressive China.

And finally, Mr. Blackstone, I have heard good things about your leadership at the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs during the COVID epidemic. I look forward to hearing from you about Timor-Leste, and particularly on the subject of development challenges, consolidating democratic institutions, and the risks posed by increased Chinese influence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez. We will now turn to our nominees. Your full statement from each of you will be included in the record, so if you could keep your remarks to about five minutes we would greatly appreciate that. And that will give us the opportunity to ask questions.

With that, let us start with Mr. Blackstone. Mr. Blackstone, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF C. KEVIN BLACKSTONE, 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 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR–LESTE

Mr. BLACKSTONE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to be sure you can hear me before I begin.

The CHAIRMAN. I can. I cannot see your picture but I can certainly hear you. That is all right. I had the same problems. There you go. Now you are back. I usually get one of my grandkids to come in and help.

Mr. BLACKSTONE. Okay.

The CHAIRMAN. Now you are off again. That is all right. We can hear you.

Mr. BLACKSTONE. Okay. Sorry. I am switching windows here. I apologize for that. I just have my notes with me.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to advance our relationship with Timor-Leste, a young democracy and a promising friend of the United States.

With the Chairman's permission, I would like to begin by thanking the family, friends, and colleagues who have supported me through my nearly 30-year career. My wife, Alexandra, also a State Department employee; son, Benjamin, who has continued our family's tradition of public service as a U.S. Army officer; and daughter, Olivia, a college student, deserve equal credit for my professional success as we shared in the joys and challenges of the Foreign Service as a family. I also thank colleagues from the Department and across the interagency for their professionalism and support.

Mr. Chairman and members, the United States and Timor-Leste have enjoyed strong bilateral ties since Timor-Leste gained its sovereignty in 2002, and we remain committed to the success of Timor-Leste and celebrate its embrace of democracy. Our relationship is bound by mutual respect, shared values, and common interests.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed I look forward to leading the dedicated mission team of Americans and local Timorese who work tirelessly to advance our bilateral relationship, and if confirmed I pledge to be a careful steward of the resources provided by Congress, both for the operation of our diplomatic platform and funds appropriated for development assistance.

Timor-Leste has shown that it is possible for a new country to emerge from years of conflict to establish a nation founded on democratic principles and a respect for human rights. The United States partners with Timor-Leste to strengthen security, governance, economic growth, health, agriculture, justice, and law enforcement. We implement our efforts through USAID, military-to-military engagement, the Peace Corps, Department of Agriculture, and a new Millennium Challenge corporation compact. The Timorese Government and people value U.S. assistance and welcome our cooperation and partnership.

The United States has also provided almost $1.6 million for health assistance to the Timorese Government in its efforts to combat COVID–19, which has helped to limit the pandemic's impact there.

Our growing security partnership with Timor-Leste is focused on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime and border security, and professionalizing Timorese defense forces. For example, a rotating U.S. Navy Seabees detachment provides critical humanitarian assistance and infrastructure support to the Timorese people. In 2019, the Seabees marked their 100th construction project in the country. These projects benefit thousands of Timorese citizens and bolster the standing of the United States. As well, the Timorese recently joined the National Guard State Partnership Program, and the U.S. trains Timorese law enforcement personnel at our International Law Enforcement Academy in Thailand.

The U.S. and Timor-Leste enjoy strong people-to-people ties. With 74 percent of its population under 35 years of age, positive engagement with young people is essential to our future bilateral relationship. State Department-funded exchange programs, including the International Visitors Leadership and Fulbright programs, and the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, YSEALI, help shape a positive image of U.S. society and culture, especially among youth. If confirmed, I will continue to build these crucial people-to-people ties.

We recognize Timor-Leste's growing engagement on a wide range of key regional and global issues. In 2019, Timor-Leste and Australia ratified a historic maritime boundary treaty using a mechanism that could be a model for other countries seeking to solve such differences. Timor-Leste has applied to join ASEAN and the World Trade Organization, and seeks to strengthen its regional and global ties. Timor-Leste supports the rules-based order which is

fundamental to the region's security and prosperity and to a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

If confirmed, I will continue to underscore U.S. support for the sovereignty and dignity of Timor-Leste. During my Foreign Service career, Mr. Chairman, 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 as we continue to promote our interests in Timor-Leste and in the broader Indo-Pacific region.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today, and I am happy to answer questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Blackstone follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF C. KEVIN BLACKSTONE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to advance our relationship with Timor-Leste—a young democracy and promising friend of the United States.

With the Chairman's permission, I would like to begin by thanking my family, friends and colleagues who have supported me through my near 30-year career. My wife Alexandra, also a State Department employee, son Benjamin, who has continued our family's tradition of public service as a U.S. Army officer, and daughter Olivia, a college student, deserve equal credit for my professional success as we shared in the joys and challenges of the Foreign Service as a family. I also thank colleagues from the Department and across the interagency for their professionalism and support.

The United States and Timor-Leste have enjoyed strong bilateral ties since Timor-Leste gained its sovereignty in 2002. We remain committed to the success of Timor-Leste and celebrate its embrace of democracy. Our relationship is bound by mutual respect, shared values, and common interests.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to leading the dedicated Mission team of Americans and local Timorese who work tirelessly to advance our bilateral relationship. And if confirmed, I pledge to be a careful steward of the resources provided by Congress, both for the operation of our diplomatic platform and foreign assistance.

Timor-Leste has shown it is possible for a new country to emerge from years of conflict to establish a nation founded on democratic principles and a respect for human rights. The progress of this young nation reflects the national spirit and determination of the Timorese people.

The United States partners with Timor-Leste to strengthen security, governance, economic growth, health, agriculture, justice, and law enforcement. We implement our efforts through USAID, military-to-military engagement, the Peace Corps, Department of Agriculture, and a new Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact. The Timorese Government and people value U.S. assistance and welcome our cooperation and partnership.

The United States has provided almost $1.6 million for health assistance to the Government of Timor-Leste in its efforts to combat COVID–19, which has helped limit the pandemic's impact there.

Our growing security partnership with Timor-Leste is focused on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime and border security, and professionalizing Timorese defense forces. As one example, a rotating U.S. Navy Seabees detachment provides critical humanitarian assistance and infrastructure support to the Timorese people. In 2019, the Seabees marked their 100th construction project there. These projects benefit thousands of Timorese citizens and bolster the standing of the United States. The Timorese recently joined the National Guard State Partnership program and the United States trains Timorese law enforcement personnel at our International Law Enforcement Academy in Thailand.

The United States and Timor-Leste enjoy close people-to-people ties. With 74 percent of the Timorese population under 35 years of age, positive engagement with young people is essential to our future bilateral relationship. State Department-funded exchange programs—including the International Visitors Leadership and Fulbright Programs, and the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI)—

help shape a positive image of U.S. society and culture, especially among youth. If confirmed, I will continue to build these crucial people-to-people ties.

We recognize Timor-Leste's growing engagement on a wide range of key regional and global issues. In 2019, Timor-Leste and Australia ratified a historic maritime boundary treaty using a mechanism that could be a model for other countries seeking to solve such differences. This is an important example for the region of countries peacefully settling boundary disputes according to international law.

Timor-Leste has applied to join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—ASEAN—and the World Trade Organization and seeks to strengthen its regional and global ties. Timor-Leste supports the rules-based order which is fundamental to the region's security and prosperity and contribute to the preservation of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will continue to underscore U.S. support for the sovereignty and dignity of Timor-Leste.

During my Foreign Service career, Mr. Chairman, 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 as we continue to promote our interests in Timor-Leste and the broader Indo-Pacific region.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and am pleased to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Blackstone.

We will now turn to Cynthia Kierscht. Ms. Kierscht, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA KIERSCHT, OF MINNESOTA, 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 ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

Ms. KIERSCHT. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. I appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary of State have placed in me through this nomination.

Mr. Chairman, I would first like to express my deep appreciation for the love and support of my family, friends, and colleagues. In particular, I would like to recognize my mother, Marcia Kierscht, who has been an excellent role model and friend, and my late grandmother, Cynthia Selland, who, as a North Dakota public school teacher for 45 years, taught geography, and from whom I no doubt got much inspiration for this journey. I am also grateful for the love and support of my brother, Matthew, and his family.

In my 30 years of public service, it has been a privilege to represent the American people abroad. My experiences in North Africa, in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, have prepared me to recognize the strategic nature of Mauritania's unique geography, situated between the Maghreb and the Sahel, and its potential impact on our economic and security interests.

In my recent service as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, I have witnessed the power of citizens to bring change at the ballot box and the impact this can have on good governance, the rule of law, and human rights.

When I look at Mauritania I see potential, the potential for transformational progress on democratic governance, inclusion, and human rights; the potential for economic prosperity through bilateral trade and investment; and the potential to be a regional leader in security and counterterrorism. If confirmed, promoting Mauri-

tania's potential in these areas will be my primary objective, because it is in our interest to have a stable, democratic, and accountable Mauritania as a partner in the region.

Let me start with human rights. For far too long, Mauritania had a poor record on human rights that it hesitated to address. This is no longer the case. Since President Ghazouani's 2019 inauguration, Mauritania has made significant strides to address its legacy of slavery. The country is on the right track, and our engagement serves to encourage their better inclinations.

Tools provided by Congress, in the form of the African Growth and Opportunity Act eligibility criteria, and the trafficking in persons ranking restrictions help demonstrate the costs of undermining human rights. The Mauritanian Government's recent approval of new anti-trafficking legislation, establishment of a ministerial committee charged with implementing the TIP recommendations, and a doctrine of an anti-trafficking national action plan demonstrate its political will to address this issue.

Today we seem to have a partner in the Ghazouani administration to make real headway on longstanding human rights concerns, and if confirmed, I will seek to ensure this progress continues.

With progress on human rights comes the potential for increased economic prosperity through bilateral trade and investment. It is no secret that U.S. companies not only produce and sell high-quality goods and services, but they also improve the commercial climate when it comes to business ethics, transparency, and the development of local talent. Some of our hydrocarbon companies are already exploring opportunities in Mauritania with great success. U.S. businesses have also invested in the agricultural sector, but more can be done. Mauritanian fisheries are a potential market for U.S. investment and an area ripe for export to the United States. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. interagency and private sector to promote mutual economic prosperity.

Finally, Mauritania has demonstrated great potential on the key issues of security and counterterrorism. A founding member and current president of the G5 Sahel and success story in countering violent extremism, Mauritania is willing and able to take on a leadership role to share its lessons learned within the region. In February, Mauritania hosted the FLINTLOCK exercise, comprised of 1,500 troops from 30 countries, working together to strengthen the ability of partner nations to counter violent extremist organizations, protect their borders, and provide security for their people.

Mauritania also recently joined the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, strengthening the coalition's efforts to ensure ISIS's enduring defeat in the region. Mauritania's whole-of-government approach to combatting terrorism has garnered U.S. support for both its military and law enforcement agencies tasked with pursuing terrorism.

If confirmed, I will continue to build on a relationship with the Mauritanian security forces and deepen collaboration with the G5 Sahel's secretariat, based in Nouakchott. Having served two tours in the Bureau of Counterterrorism, I understand the stakes at hand. I can also assure you that, if confirmed, the safety and security of all American citizens in Mauritania would be my highest priority.

In closing, Mauritania is a land of potential, both for its citizens and for the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the embassy team, the interagency, Congress, American businesses, and nongovernmental organizations and our Mauritanian partners to ensure that this potential is fully realized to the benefit of all.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kierscht follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA KIERSCHT

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. I appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary of State have placed in me through this nomination. Mr. Chairman, I would first like to express my deep appreciation for the love and support of my family, friends, and colleagues. In particular, I would like to recognize my mother, Dr. Marcia Kierscht, who has been an excellent role model and visited me at every post, and my late grandmother, Cynthia Selland, who, as a North Dakota public school teacher for 45 years taught geography, among other subjects, and from whom I no doubt got much inspiration for this journey. I am also grateful for the love and support of my brother, Matthew, and his family.

In my thirty years of public service, it has been a privilege to represent the American people and to support and protect American citizens and interests abroad. My experiences in North Africa—in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco—have prepared me to recognize the strategic nature of Mauritania's unique geography, situated between the Maghreb and the Sahel, and its potential impact on our economic and security interests. In my recent service as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, I have witnessed the power of citizens to bring about positive change at the ballot box and the impact this change can have on the important issues of good governance, the rule of law, and human rights.

When I look at Mauritania, I see potential: the potential for transformational progress on democratic governance, inclusion, and human rights, the potential for economic prosperity through bilateral trade and investment, and the potential to be a regional leader in security and counterterrorism. If confirmed, promoting Mauritania's potential in these areas will be my primary objective because it is in our economic and security interest to have a stable, democratic, and accountable Mauritania as a partner in the region.

Let me start with human rights. For far too long, Mauritania had a poor record on human rights that it hesitated to address. Not only was it the last country in the world to outlaw slavery, but government officials continued to deny its very existence until fairly recently. This is no longer the case. Since President Ghazouani's 2019 inauguration, Mauritania has made significant strides to address its legacy of slavery. The country is on the right track and our engagement serves to encourage their better inclinations. Tools provided by the U.S. Congress in the form of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) eligibility criteria and the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) ranking restrictions helped demonstrate the costs of undermining human rights. The Mauritanian Government's approval of new anti-trafficking legislation, establishment of a ministerial committee charged with implementing the TIP recommendations, and adoption of an anti-trafficking national action plan demonstrate its political will to address this issue. Today, we seem to have a partner in the Ghazouani administration to make real headway on longstanding human rights and governance concerns and, if confirmed, I will seek to ensure this progress continues.

With progress on human rights comes the potential for increased economic prosperity through bilateral trade and investment. It is no secret that U.S. companies not only produce and sell high-quality products and services, but they also improve the commercial climate when it comes to business ethics, transparency, and development of local talent. Some of our hydrocarbon companies are already exploring opportunities in Mauritania, with great success. U.S. businesses have also invested in the agricultural sector, but more can be done. Mauritanian fisheries are a potential market for U.S. investment and an area ripe for export to the United States. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. interagency and the U.S. private sector to promote mutual economic prosperity.

Finally, Mauritania has demonstrated great potential on the key issues of security and counterterrorism. Regional efforts to ensure stability should focus on countering violent extremism and recruitment in the Sahel and denying terrorists a base of operations from which they can pose a threat on a more global scale. A founding member and current president of the G5 Sahel and a success story in countering violent extremism, Mauritania is willing and able to take on a leadership role to share its lessons learned with the region. In February, Mauritania hosted the FLINTLOCK exercise, comprised of 1500 troops from 30 countries, working together to strengthen the ability of partner nations to counter violent extremist organizations, protect their borders, and provide security for their people. Reaffirming its commitment to countering terrorism, Mauritania recently joined the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, strengthening the coalition's efforts to ensure ISIS's enduring defeat in the region. Mauritania's whole-of-government approach to combating terrorism has garnered U.S. support for both its military and law enforcement agencies tasked with pursuing terrorism. If confirmed, I will continue to build upon the relationship we have with the Mauritanian security forces and deepen collaboration with the G5 Sahel Secretariat based in Nouakchott. Having served two tours in the Bureau of Counterterrorism, I personally understand the stakes at hand. I can also assure you that, if confirmed, the safety and security of all American citizens in Mauritania would be my highest priority.

In closing, Mauritania is a land of potential, both for the Mauritanians and for the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Embassy team, the interagency, Congress, American businesses and non-governmental organizations, and our Mauritanian partners to ensure that this potential is fully realized to the benefit of all.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much. We appreciate that.

Now we will turn to Mr. McFeeters, the nominee for Ambassador to Malaysia.

STATEMENT OF BRIAN D. McFEETERS, 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 MALAYSIA

Mr. MCFEETERS. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Malaysia.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to recognize my wife, Melanie, who has not only worked at the posts where we have served but has also ensured that our three children thrived, including when we were evacuated and during periods when I was serving overseas unaccompanied. I would also like to recognize my parents, my father, James, who served as a U.S. Air Force officer for 30 years, including leading a fighter squadron in Vietnam, and my mother, Nancy, who taught elementary school for 30 years.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Malaysia, I will draw on my 29 years of experience as a Foreign Service Officer, including leadership positions as Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad and Jakarta, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, and Senior Advisor to the Counselor of the Department.

In recent years, Mr. Chairman, the United States and Malaysia have greatly expounded defense and law enforcement cooperation to promote the safety and security of citizens in both of our countries. We cooperate in combatting terrorism and transnational crime, and countering violent extremist narratives to keep both our

borders and our skies safe. If confirmed, I intend to work with Malaysia to deepen our close security and law enforcement cooperation, particularly in shared priority areas such as maritime security, counterterrorism, and cybersecurity.

The United States has recovered and assisted in the recovery of more than $1.2 billion in assets associated with the 1MDB international money laundering and bribery scheme. The Department of Justice continues to trace and recover these stolen assets so that they can be returned to the benefit of the Malaysian people. If confirmed, I intend to continue supporting our mutual commitment to combat corruption.

The United States is among Malaysia's largest foreign investors. Last year, bilateral trade reached nearly $60 billion, and Malaysia produces important PPE supplies and components used in our health sector. We are grateful for Malaysia's efforts to keep vital supply chains open during the global pandemic, and the fact that they facilitated export of critical PPE to U.S. frontline workers earlier this year.

The United States promotes the rule of law, transparency, and good governance, and freedom of expression in Malaysia. Human trafficking, including forced labor, remains a significant issue in Malaysia, and the Government has much work to do. If confirmed, I will urge Malaysian Government officials to significantly improve anti-trafficking efforts and investigate and prosecute allegations of forced labor. I will also coordinate with Malaysia and UNHCR regarding the safety and security of nearly 180,000 refugees and asylum seekers, including 100,000 Rohingya.

Our public diplomacy programs demonstrate the strong connection between the United States and Malaysia. The Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative is a vibrant part of our engagement, with nearly 500 emerging Malaysian leaders participating in programs last year. If confirmed, I intend to continue support for these people-to-people programs.

While Malaysia maintains close relations with China, Beijing is increasingly encroaching on Malaysian-claimed maritime areas in the South China Sea. The PRC's assertive and provocative activities are hampering Malaysia's longstanding efforts to pursue its interests in exploiting natural resources off its coast. The United States is concerned about China's actions and destabilizing presence in the South China Sea, and rejects Beijing's unlawful South China Sea maritime claims. If confirmed, I will support Malaysian and regional efforts regarding freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce in the South China Sea. I will also encourage Malaysia to pursue open and transparent investment in infrastructure deals to avoid negative Chinese economic influence.

Malaysia is a regional leader in combatting COVID–19, and has taken proactive measures to respond to the pandemic. As a result, the country is working to contain the spread of the virus. If confirmed, I will engage with the Government of Malaysia to partner on bilateral and regional initiatives to mitigate the spread of the disease.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McFeeters follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRIAN D. MCFEETERS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Malaysia.

With your permission Mr. Chairman, I would like to recognize my wife Melanie, who has not only worked at the posts where we have served but also ensured that our three children thrived, including when we were evacuated and during periods when I was serving overseas unaccompanied. I would also like to recognize my parents: my father James, who served as a U.S. Air Force officer for 30 years including leading a fighter squadron in Vietnam, and my mother Nancy, who taught elementary school for even longer, both examples of public service whom I have sought to emulate.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Malaysia, I will draw on my 29 years of experience as a Foreign Service Officer, including leadership positions as Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad and Jakarta, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, and Senior Advisor to the Counselor of the Department.

In recent years, the United States and Malaysia have greatly expanded defense and law enforcement cooperation in order to promote the safety and security of the citizens of both our countries. We cooperate on combatting terrorism and transnational crime and countering violent extremist narratives to keep our borders and skies safe. If confirmed, I intend to work with Malaysia to deepen our close security and law enforcement cooperation, particularly in shared priority areas such as maritime security, counterterrorism, and cybersecurity.

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Our public diplomacy programs demonstrate the strong connection between the United States and Malaysia. The Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, or YSEALI, is a vibrant part of our engagement with nearly 500 emerging Malaysian leaders participating in programs last year. The Fulbright English Teaching Assistant program places recent American college graduates in underserved public schools throughout Malaysia to teach English. If confirmed, I intend to continue support for these people-to-people programs.

While Malaysia maintains close relations with China, Beijing is increasingly encroaching on Malaysian-claimed maritime areas in the South China Sea. The PRC's assertive and provocative activities are hampering Malaysia's longstanding efforts to pursue its interests in exploiting natural resources off its coast. The United States is concerned about China's actions and destabilizing presence in the South China Sea and rejects Beijing's unlawful South China Sea maritime claims. If confirmed, I will support both Malaysian and regional efforts regarding freedom of navigation and overflight, and unimpeded lawful commerce in the South China Sea. I will also encourage Malaysia to pursue open and transparent investment and infrastructure deals to avoid negative Chinese economic influence.

Malaysia is a regional leader in combating COVID–19 and has taken proactive measures to respond to the pandemic. As a result, the country is working to contain the spread of the virus. If confirmed, I will engage with the Government of Malaysia to partner on bilateral and regional initiatives to mitigate the spread of the disease.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and the other members of the committee. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

We will now turn to The Honorable Geeta Pasi, who has been nominated for the ambassadorship to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, certainly a country that is on all of our radars these days. So, Ms. Pasi, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. GEETA PASI, OF NEW YORK, 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 FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

Ambassador PASI. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear as the nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have shown in nominating me for this position. If confirmed, I will work with this committee and the Congress to advance our country's interests in Ethiopia.

I would like to recognize my sisters, Usha and Rita, and my brother, Sunil Kumar, and their families, and thank them for their love and support. I am a naturalized American who came here as a child of immigrants. Serving my country as Ambassador is the highest honor. I would like to thank my friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues who have helped me reach this point.

Mr. Chairman, during more than 30 years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have had a variety of assignments, including in countries in transition. I have had the honor to serve as Ambassador twice, to Djibouti and Chad. Throughout my career, helping develop the strength and effectiveness of the State Department has been a priority, including when I served in the Bureau of Human Resources and now as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs. If confirmed, I will commit to continuing to support the development of my institution and my colleagues, including by recruiting and promoting the careers of a corps of professionals and leaders that reflect the strength and diversity of our great nation.

Mr. Chairman, our interests in Ethiopia are primarily in the areas of peace and security, democratic governance, and economic development, as well as promotion of U.S. business. The crisis in the Tigray region of Ethiopia is grave, with risks to life, Ethiopian and regional stability, and our national interests. The Government of Ethiopia has announced the end of military operations. The United States remains concerned about ongoing hostilities and the risks the conflict poses.

Throughout this crisis we have cautioned against creating an ethnic conflict, and have encouraged the Government of Ethiopia to engage with moderate to grand leaders to restore peace. The United States, the African Union, and other international partners are ready to assist with dialogue and reconciliation. We also con-

tinue to urge protection of civilians and facilitation of free, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, which prioritizes safety and protection of American citizens in Ethiopia.

This is a critical moment for Ethiopia. Prime Minister Abiy made sweeping changes and made progress addressing longstanding democratic concerns, including human rights and press freedom. The complex issues that impede transition in Ethiopia include land tenure, ethnic tensions, and youth unemployment. The current Tigray crisis poses a threat to Ethiopia's reform agenda and national unity.

Also at risk is Ethiopia's leadership in promoting peace and stability and countering violent extremism in the region. Africa and the world need a stable, secure, and peaceful Ethiopia. If confirmed, I will work hard for peace and stability in the Horn.

The United States maintains strong relations with Ethiopia and aims to strengthen our partnership. While the security of Ethiopia and the region is front and center in our bilateral relationship, we also seek to promote democracy and good governance. If confirmed, I will also advocate for full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

U.S. national interests lie in supporting Ethiopia's economic progress as well. 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 American businesses.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, my top priority will be the security interests and welfare of American citizens, whether by ensuring responsive consular services or strengthening partnerships against terrorism, this priority will drive the Embassy's agenda.

Ethiopia is a dynamic nation with an extraordinary history. I am honored by your consideration of me to serve in such an important posting. I will draw on my experience to navigate our engagement with the current challenges, and as Ethiopia begins its next chapter, one that holds unlimited potential for Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa, and the United States.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today. I welcome any questions you might have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Pasi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON, GEETA PASI

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear as the nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have shown in nominating me for this position. If confirmed, I will work with this committee and the Congress to advance our country's interests in Ethiopia.

I would like to recognize my sisters, Usha and Rita, and my brother, Sunil Kumar, and their families and thank them for their love and support. I am a naturalized American who came here as a child of immigrants. Serving my country as ambassador is the highest honor. I would like to thank my family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues who have helped me reach this point.

If confirmed as ambassador, I will promote and protect U.S. interests and values in Ethiopia. I would look forward to working closely with members of this committee and your staffs in that endeavor.

Mr. Chairman, during more than thirty years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have had a variety of assignments, including in countries in transition. I have had the

honor to serve as ambassador twice—to Djibouti and Chad. Overseas, I served in Ghana when the country had its first democratic elections and in Romania shortly after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu. I was in Bangladesh when the caretaker government declared a state of emergency and helped steer the country to democratic elections. In Washington, I was the Afghanistan Desk Officer on September 11, 2001. I had covered the country for about six weeks when our country was attacked by the Afghan-based al Qaida network. I served as Office Director for East African Affairs with broad policy and program responsibility for East Africa, including the Horn of Africa. Throughout my career, helping develop the strength and effectiveness of the State Department has been a priority, including when I served in the Bureau of Human Resources and now as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to support the development of my institution and my colleagues, including by recruiting and promoting the careers of a corps of professionals and leaders that reflects the strength and diversity of our great nation.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to leading our embassy in Ethiopia in advancing the interests of the United States. Our team in Addis Ababa consists of Foreign Service and Civil Service personnel, military staff assigned to the Embassy, and the invaluable Foreign Service National employees. Our interests in Ethiopia are primarily in the areas of peace and security, democratic governance, and economic development, as well as the promotion of U.S. business.

The crisis in the Tigray region of Ethiopia is grave, with risks to life, Ethiopian and regional stability, and our national interests. While the Government of Ethiopia announced on November 28 the end of military operations, the United States is still concerned about ongoing hostilities and the risks the conflict poses.

During his call with Prime Minister Abiy on November 30, Secretary Pompeo called for a complete end to the fighting and constructive dialogue to resolve the conflict. Throughout this crisis we have cautioned against creating an ethnic conflict and have encouraged the Government of Ethiopia to engage with moderate Tigrayan leaders to restore peace. The United States, the African Union, and other international partners are ready to assist with dialogue and reconciliation. We also continue to urge protection of civilians and facilitation of free, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access. To date, more than 45,000 Ethiopian refugees have entered Sudan, stretching humanitarian operations there. We continue to work closely with our partners in the region to ensure the safety and protection of American citizens in the Tigray region.

This is a critical moment for Ethiopia. Popular desires for greater political freedom and civil liberties led to the selection of Abiy Ahmed as prime minster in 2018. Abiy made sweeping changes to Ethiopia, and made progress addressing longstanding democratic concerns, including human rights and press freedom. The complex issues that impede transition in Ethiopia include land tenure, ethnic tensions, and youth unemployment. The current Tigray crisis poses a threat to Ethiopia's reform agenda and national unity.

Also at risk is Ethiopia's leadership in promoting peace and stability and countering violent extremism in the region, if an outflow of refugees from Ethiopia, a stalled political process, and violence continue unabated. Africa and the world need a stable, secure, and peaceful Ethiopia. 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 are at stake. Ethiopia also contributes to regional stability as the third-largest host of refugees in Africa. If confirmed, I will work hard for peace and stability in the Horn.

The United States maintains strong relations with Ethiopia and aims to strengthen our partnership. While the security of Ethiopia and the region is front and center in our bilateral relationship, we also seek to promote democracy and good governance. If confirmed, I will work with you to represent the interests and values of the American people to the Government and people of Ethiopia at this critical juncture. I will also advocate for full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as for reforms that strengthen democratic institutions. Ethiopia's respect for these values we share will enhance our partnership.

U.S. national interests lie in supporting Ethiopia's economic progress as well, because a sound business and investment environment can drive the growth needed to underpin 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.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, my top priority will be the security, interests, and welfare of

American citizens. Whether by ensuring responsive consular services, promoting American values, advocating for U.S. businesses, or strengthening partnerships against terrorism, this priority will drive the Embassy's agenda.

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 and I will draw on the depth of my experience to navigate our engagement through the current challenges facing Ethiopia.

If confirmed, I will welcome input and advice from you and your staff on any aspect of the multifaceted 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.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today. If confirmed, I would welcome the challenge of protecting and advancing the interests of the United States in Ethiopia: It is a duty and responsibility I would be honored to accept. Thank you and I welcome any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Pasi.

Finally, we will turn to David Reimer, who has been nominated to Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone. Mr. Reimer, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVID 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 SIERRA LEONE

Ambassador REIMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and for your consideration of my nomination 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 Pompeo for their trust in me to lead the U.S. Embassy and to maintain our strong relationship with Sierra Leone. If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, I will uphold that trust.

At this point I would like to recognize my wife, Simonetta Romagnolo, currently listening in, along with her family, in Italy—Simonetta is an employee of the U.S. Consulate in Milan—as well as my parents, Richard and Lois Reimer, in Kansas; my brother, Paul, and his family, in Illinois; and my sister, Sue, and her family, in Pennsylvania.

Sierra Leone has demonstrated progress, despite extreme adversity, in maintaining peace, strengthening democracy, and working toward an environment suitable for economic growth. The people of Sierra Leone have demonstrated resiliency and the capacity to rebuild after crises, including a devastating decade-long civil war, which ended in 2002, and the Ebola epidemic of 2014–2015, during which roughly 14,000 individuals contracted the disease and nearly 4,000 died.

Now Sierra Leone is responding to the COVID–19 pandemic and its severe health and economic impacts. The COVID–19 pandemic has tested the resilience of the Sierra Leonean people, and the U.S. Government is a primary partner in their response efforts. The pandemic is having a devastating impact on Sierra Leone's small and fragile economy. The GDP growth rate is projected to drop from +5.1 percent to -3.1 percent by the end of 2020. Lives and

livelihoods have been lost. And just as we stood with the Sierra Leoneans during the Ebola crisis, the United States will support Sierra Leone's recovery from COVID–19.

Even prior to the onset of COVID–19, Sierra Leoneans faced social and health challenges. The country ranks near the very bottom, at 181 out of 189 countries, on the UN's Human Development Index, with high rates of maternal mortality, child malnutrition, and malaria. 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.

If confirmed, I will continue our focus on strengthening democratic institutions and combatting corruption. Since 2002, Sierra Leone has held four successful presidential and legislative elections that were broadly judged to be free, fair, and transparent. Sierra Leone has an important presidential election in 2023. I will make it a priority in my first months to engage with political parties, civil society, and other stakeholders to advocate for continued dialogue and a free, fair, and peaceful election.

The Government has made progress in establishing a market-based economy and taken steps to protect worker rights. If confirmed, I would advocate to improve the investment climate for U.S. and foreign businesses, which would contribute to Sierra Leone's private sector growth and development. 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 to spur prosperity both for Americans and Sierra Leoneans. As an Economic-coned officer, this is an area of particular professional and personal interest.

We are starting off on a strong footing with our relationship with Sierra Leone. We have many shared goals, and if confirmed, I will enhance our strong bilateral relationship, while maintaining our principles of promoting democratic governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

In addition to these policy aims, I hold paramount the safety and security of the 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 everything within my power to ensure the security of our Mission and oversee its smooth operation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Reimer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID REIMER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and for your consideration of my nomination 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 Pompeo for their trust in me to lead the U.S. Embassy and to maintain our strong relationship with Sierra Leone. If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, I will uphold that trust. I would like to recognize my wife, Simonetta Romagnolo, who is listening in from Italy today. Simonetta is an employee of the U.S. Consulate in Milan, Italy. I would also like to recognize my parents, Richard and Lois Reimer, in Kansas; my brother Paul and his family in Illinois and my sister Sue and her family in Pennsylvania.

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much. We want to thank all of you for the sacrifices and willingness to serve in these difficult positions, and particularly your families who share in that sacrifice. So our thanks to all of you.

On a note here, we have got voting starting in a little bit. We are going to stick with this as long as we can, maybe take a break if we have to, but now we are going to get the questions from members of the committee. And we will start with Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, did you call upon me? You faded out at some point.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry. I did call on you. I told everyone, of course, we have votes starting, but we are going to go through questioning, and you are first.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you very much. Thank you all for your testimony.

Ambassador Pasi, as you know the Horn of Africa is undergoing potentially tectonic shifts, given the possible transitions in Sudan and Ethiopia. That has significant implications for the strategic Red Sea Corridor, where the United States has an important set of national security interests.

In that vein, let me ask you the following. Does the administration have a comprehensive policy for the Red Sea Corridor, and if so, can you discuss with me what it is?

Ambassador PASI. Thank you, sir. We have an approach toward the Red Sea, and that is, actually we have engaged with the U.S. Institute for Peace and others in efforts they have had to discuss the Red Sea. We are engaging with our colleagues in the Near East and Near East Asia Bureau, because, of course, our interests are not—the Red Sea is not limited just to the Africa Bureau. We also have discussions with all of our chiefs of mission. We had a mission conference in February. I would say that we have an approach. We do not have a formal written document, but we definitely are focused on it. Similarly, we are looking other issues beyond the Red Sea, like China, and doing the same thing with East Asia Pacific.

Senator MENENDEZ. But an approach is not a comprehensive policy. Should we have a comprehensive policy for the Red Sea Corridor?

Ambassador PASI. Well, Senator, if I might speak frankly, I think it would be really very good. In the past, the State Department has often—the U.S. Government has often looked at countries bilaterally. But, you know, if you are the investor you only care about Djibouti, perhaps, but you cannot anymore, in 2020. We have issues with China or Russia. We are doing a great job, I think, on things like maligned influences from Russia or China or other countries, which I do not need to name. You are well familiar with them. But where we could do more, I think, is formalize this and start to think more broadly. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Is there—well, I appreciate that, and I think we should have a policy, and I look forward to working with the State Department to see if we can develop one. What formal mechanisms exist in the State Department to develop and coordinate policy and priorities between the African Bureau and the Near East Affairs?

Ambassador PASI. Senator, we interact very regularly on specific issues. For example, we have a special envoy for Sudan, as you know, Ambassador Donald Booth, when he travels to the region, and then he also goes to places like Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. Somebody from Near East Asia travels with him and supports that trip, because we realize that Sudan is on the border of Africa and Near East Asia, and there is a lot of dialogue that is important to take place, that must take place, not just in Washington, in Khartoum, but also in Dubai and other places.

Similarly, we are very coordinated on China with our colleagues in East Asia Pacific area. We meet regularly. We coordinate with our Under Secretary for Political Affairs and others. We even have people who are Chinese experts assigned to our Embassies. We have one now and we are adding two more this year who are going to be serving in African posts. One will be in Djibouti and one is in Kenya, a third is in West Africa, to help bring us closer together,

because there is a lot of expertise about these countries that we may not have in the Africa Bureau. But certainly NEA or EAP or our sister bureaus would have that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you a country-specific question. As you know, in November, serious armed conflict broke out in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, which pitted federal and allied forces against those of the Tigray People's Liberation Front. And while the full course of that conflict remains unclear, it is but the latest round of violent unrest that has beset the country since 2018, and exacted a serious humanitarian toll on the Ethiopian people.

On the floor of the Senate I have called upon the United States to take urgent diplomatic action to address this escalating conflict. What, in your view, are the drivers of this violence? What political issues have to be addressed in order to bring an end to the ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia and lead to a sustainable peace?

Ambassador PASI. Thank you, sir. We really appreciated your statement. I think that Ethiopia is a country that for many years was ruled by one small group, the Tigray, under the TPLF. The group that you mentioned has been in conflict with the federal government. It is hard to make a transition, I think, where a country was controlled by a small group and have an inclusive process.

I think the main issue that, if confirmed, I would stress to my interlocutors in Ethiopia, and I would hope that others in Washington would be raising this to you at different levels and through other channels, that the process of democracy cannot be about one person. It has to be about the institutions, civil society, all the group. So despite some groups feeling like they do not have certain rights or privileges, they have to be included in the democratic process.

Other issues that are really significant in Ethiopia are lack of ability to own land. Land tenure is a huge issue. Unemployment. Ethiopia has a very significant growth rate, over 6 percent, and down to about 3.5 now because of COVID, like many countries. But all that success is not reaching average Ethiopians. You know, we have talked about the fact that you cannot get in touch with the Tigray region because communications are cut off or do not work, but even every day of the week, every day of the year, communications are a problem, with lack of internet and so on.

I think economic progress is going to be essential, but not just a high growth rate but economic progress that really improves the lives of average Ethiopians. A lot of the frustration is about groups that feel like they have not gotten what they feel they deserve, and there is this lack of inclusiveness, which I think the prime minister welcomed when he first came. He has faced a lot of challenges now with Tigray and some other groups. I believe that we can help him work toward the democracy that he wants, the democracy that we want, and what is needed in Ethiopia. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I have questions for the other nominees but I see other colleagues. Let me just end, if I may, with one last question to you, Ambassador. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has been a source of conflict between Egypt, Ethiopia, and others. How do you see—what role do you see the United States—I know the role that has played so far, so far it has

not been very, I do not know if we can say it is constructive. What role do you see us playing in order to end up in a peaceful resolution of the issues?

Ambassador PASI. Thank you. It is complicated, you are right, and it involves Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia. We have played largely an observer role, and to date we have not reached the result that we had hoped for. I think we can encourage the parties, encourage Ethiopia, Sudan, as well as Egypt to work together. It cannot just be done from Addis. It has to be done with all parties, to try to get them to see the value.

South Africa has taken the lead on hosting meetings, and there have been a number of them, not just the meetings—there have been meetings over several months. But we have not moved forward. I think, ultimately, these three countries need to see the value in this for themselves. There is tremendous energy potential, water potential. I mean, it is a win-win for all the countries. I think we can recommend, we can suggest, we can ask other partners in the world who they might listen to, to help encourage. And I think that is what we can do right now to help move this process. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ms. Pasi, I am going to jump in real quick with a question on that subject, since it has been raised. As I meet with people from the region, almost all of them are unanimous in saying that the United States should weigh in more heavily on trying to resolve the issues surrounding the dam. Frankly, as I listen to the parties and listen to what their positions are, I am not sure that would be helpful. But what is your view on that?

Ambassador PASI. Thank you, sir. Well, we have weighed in, you know, and the foreign ministers have met the President of the United States on several occasions with the three countries. We have had high-level weigh-in.

I think, obviously, the current crisis in Ethiopia has sidetracked any possibilities to have meaningful talks with other countries for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Really it is focused on the struggle right now in Tigray. I think we can encourage. I am not sure how you can force three countries, because it is not just Ethiopia, as I said. If I am confirmed as Ambassador to Ethiopia I commit that I will press them to do this. It is in their interest and the interest of the other countries. But, of course, there are two other parties involved in this equation.

So I think perhaps rethinking and trying to narrow down exactly what the issues are. There have been different issues of concern at different times. In recent discussions, I saw that Sudan raised concerns. You know, it is not just Ethiopia that might have concerns. So it is a three-way event and it is going to require a lot of coordination. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. One of the reasons I reached the conclusion that I did that I am not sure it would be helpful is that reading between the lines of these people's requests, what they really mean is they want us, the United States, to take their side in the dispute. I think that is a code that they are using when they say they want us more involved in this. I agree with you it is complicated and certainly delicate, and thank you for your efforts.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me just thank all of our nominees. You all have given your careers to public service, and we know that it is a sacrifice for your family and we thank you for very distinguished careers and your willingness to serve in challenging places around the world. And certainly these countries that are in today's hearing all have challenges. They are all trying to move towards more democratic states, and, therefore, our missions in these countries are going to be particularly important.

In regards to the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia, I agree with the Chairman. The United States has to be somewhat neutral in how to resolve—how the issue should be resolved, but that it needs to be through consultation and negotiations between the affected states. And, of course, Ethiopia took some direct action, and then President Trump rolled in and said maybe Egypt should just bomb the dam. That, I do not think, is looked at as being neutral.

So I think we have some challenges to get to that position where we can facilitate a resolution of the conflict that is in the region. And I appreciate your diplomatic responses to both the Chairman and Ranking Member, but it is an issue that needs to be resolved for the stability in that region.

My question, and I think I will first direct it to Ethiopia but also in regards to Malaysia—these are countries that are attempting to move towards more democratic governments. And the question is how does our mission in country facilitate the type of progress being made in these countries towards democratic institutions, and how do we wrap our priorities around our mission to the values of good governance, and respect for human rights, respect for civil societies? How are you going to make that a priority? First of all, will you make that a priority, how are you going to make that a priority, and will you work with the members of our committee that are directly interested in expanding rights in each of these countries?

Ambassador PASI. Thank you, Senator. Yes, Ethiopia is certainly a country in transition, moving towards democracy. Ethiopia receives assistance from the United States that we use to support civil society, ensuring there is a platform for people to discuss their political views in the run-up to an election, which we believe will take place in mid 2021. It had been postponed because of COVID.

So I believe that the Embassy, as I see it from my position here in Washington as PDAS, is engaging in many, many ways, through USAID funding. There are many, many things that do that, either to provide funding, to provide platforms. When I visited Ethiopia, accompanied with Secretary, we met with the religious leaders in Ethiopia. They are very influential. They had a lot of views about human rights and democracy.

So there are many, many ways that the Embassy is currently engaging, and if I am confirmed, I commit that I will continue and look at ways that we can expand those efforts to reach areas that perhaps we are unable to reach as easily.

Senator CARDIN. Can I just follow up on that quickly? Will you ensure that our mission will always welcome civil societies that are

standing up for progress on human rights on behalf of the people of Ethiopia within Ethiopia?

Ambassador PASI. Yes, sir, I can confirm that I will do that. That is something I have always done in other posts and something that is very important in Ethiopia. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. And, Mr. Chairman, if I could get a response in regards to Malaysia I would appreciate it.

Mr. MCFEETERS. The focus on democratic accountable government is something that I would clearly emphasize if I were confirmed. It is something that the Embassy has worked on.

I think as you know, Senator, Malaysia has a dynamic democracy. They have high voter participation. They have largely freedom of the press, although we have some concerns about pushback on freedom of the press lately, so that is an area where we would focus on.

On human rights, human rights in general are very important, particularly in Malaysia. The issue of human rights surrounding trafficking in persons is high on the list. More generally, issues surrounding foreign workers in Malaysia, about 20 percent of the workforce is foreign workers. Something 2 to 4 million of them undocumented, which makes them vulnerable. They have been exploited. There have been horrific crimes against these workers.

These are all areas that we support through our people-to-people programs, through our advocacy. We try to connect people with leaders on these issues back in the United States, through the International Visitor Leadership Program. So it is a central priority for U.S. mission in Kuala Lumpur now, and it would be if I were confirmed, to continue that.

Senator CARDIN. And I would just ask the same question I just previously asked as to our mission being available for civil societies so that they can represent the concerns about progress being made in the country in regards to human rights.

Mr. MCFEETERS. Yes, sir. When I served in Malaysia about ten years ago we had a number of close relationships with civil society organizations. They are great partners for what they do, and they also tell us a lot about what is going on in the country, so that would certainly continue.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I do not see any of our other members logged in. We had a number of members who have attended this meeting that were logged in. Anybody want to claim some time here? I do not see any.

Senator Menendez, anything else for the good of the order?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Kierscht, what would you describe as the administration's strategy for the Sahel?

Ms. KIERSCHT. Thank you for the question, Senator. As I understand, in response to the growing instability in the region, the Department of State adopted the diplomatic engagement framework earlier this year for the Sahel, which the goal is to improve internal and external coordination. Through that there was the appointment of the Special Envoy for the Sahel, Ambassador Peter Pham, who is charged with deepening engagement on the issues.

If confirmed, I would look forward to working with him as the Ambassador to Mauritania closely on Mauritania's role in promoting peace and security in the larger Sahel, particularly since Nouakchott hosts, of course, the G5 Sahel Secretariat, and currently holds its presidency.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. Let me ask you, Mauritania—how active has Mauritania been in the G5 Sahel counterterrorism operations, and what accounts for their level of engagement?

Ms. KIERSCHT. We have a very active partnership with Mauritania as regards to counterterrorism within the Sahel. We share the common goal, obviously, of countering terrorism and denying conditions that are ripe for recruitment and radicalization.

I am very pleased to announce that Mauritania was just the most recent partner country to join the global coalition to defeat ISIS, on November 10th. They became the 83rd participant. And we look forward to engaging with them in order to work further on defeating ISIS in West Africa. They also have been a very strong partner with us in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, which is working within the Maghreb and the Sahel to improve security sector capabilities, border security, address the underlying issues of counterterrorism, as well as promoting moderate voices in vulnerable populations.

In particular, with Mauritania, we have worked through the TSCTP to help them monitor their border with Mali, and have sustained professional units during operations against al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Through TSCTP we have also worked on skills training for Mauritanian youth that are vulnerable to extremism.

But as you point out, regional cooperation is crucial for defeating terrorists, as they know no borders, which is why we also support the G5 Sahel Secretariat, which, as I mentioned, is located in Nouakchott, as well as the G5 Sahel Joint Forces, as an African solution to African issues. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Ambassador Reimer, President Bio ran on a promise to combat corruption, which is endemic in the Sierra Leone. Recently, former President Koroma was interviewed by an anti-corruption agency as part of an investigation into corruption during his tenure. How would you assess Bio's record on combating corruption?

Ambassador REIMER. Thank you for that question, Senator. I think the record so far is pretty good. I would say corruption is probably one of the biggest obstacles that Sierra Leone faces. In terms of economic and social development transparency, international ranked Sierra Leone, I think it was 119 out of 198 countries in the world, which is not very good. However, it is an increase in ten places over last year. As well, the MCC scorecards that come out every year, the last two years Sierra Leone has passed the corruption grades.

So I think it is fair to say that Sierra Leone, under President Bio, has made progress, but I also think it is fair to say that there is a lot more room to improve, and if confirmed, I look forward to working on that issue. Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. One other question for you. Women and girls continue to face violence and severe discrimination in Sierra Leone. A shocking 86 percent of women have undergone some form of fe-

male genital mutilation. What is the U.S. doing to combat gender-based violence in Sierra Leone? How serious is this new administration, meaning the Bio administration, about confronting GBV?

Ambassador REIMER. Thank you, Senator. Just recently I saw an interview with the President—I think it was just about two weeks ago—where the President, he himself brought it up during the interview as one of the priorities of his administration. So that is very encouraging to see that the Government gets it and the Government understands it.

My understanding, as well, is that USAID has been involved in funding efforts to prevent this practice, and again, as you say, this is a very important, very prevalent, and something that, if confirmed, I would continue to work on.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I hope those last two issues we discussed will be some of your focus upon your confirmation to the country.

And one last question. Mr. McFeeters, how would you analyze the current relationship between Malaysia and China?

Mr. MCFEETERS. China and Malaysia have longstanding ties, particularly on the economic side. China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner for the last 11 years. Their total trading with Malaysia is roughly twice the size of the U.S., so we just have to treat that as reality.

I would comment on two other areas. In terms of South China Sea, Malaysia is sort of equally concerned as we are about these illegal incursions by China into the waters. And because of our security cooperation, Malaysia has gotten better about defending its own interests. So they are able to pick up illegal fishermen, and they are able to block so-called Coast Guard vessels from China or fishing vessels from China that are harassing oil platforms.

So Malaysia, strong relationship with China, but Malaysia is increasingly speaking up for its own interests, with our help.

Senator MENENDEZ. So with that economic disparity that exists in terms of Chinese economic influence in Malaysia, how do you meet the challenges of promoting U.S. interests there?

Mr. MCFEETERS. It is a challenge, but on the U.S. side we have a very strong hand to play. We have 700 U.S. firms that are active in Malaysia, 250 members of the American Chamber of Commerce. Malaysia is the 38th largest economy in the world, but it is the U.S.'s 15th largest export site, because of high income.

So on the U.S. side we have a good story to tell, which is high-tech companies that are both exporting to Malaysia and invested in Malaysia, and we have, you know, high international standards in terms of lending and, you know, transparent business practices. So I think we can tout that at every opportunity.

I was proud that American companies or the American Chamber of Commerce in Malaysia raised $7 million this year for COVID assistance to Malaysian society. So that is the kind of—I think, modeling those best practices is something that we can amplify from the Embassy's point of view.

Senator MENENDEZ. And if I may, Mr. Chairman, one final question. Mr. Blackstone, I do not like you to feel no affection here in terms of attention. Speaking in the same context, how would you assess Timor-Leste's relationship with China, and the risks of Chi-

nese investment in Timor-Leste, and what actions should we take in that regard?

Mr. BLACKSTONE. Thank you, Senator Menendez. I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on that.

So as I understand it, China, the People's Republic of China, has an active diplomatic presence in country. They have also provided development assistance, primarily to date in the form of infrastructure, building some Timorese Government facilities and in some road building. I will just note that the U.S. focus so far in our program, around $20 million a year, has been on promoting governance and what we believe are sustainable programs that the Timorese can carry forward themselves later.

Now as in regard to Chinese investment, I expect that you are referring to what is called the Tasi Mane, or South Coast development project. This is a multi-billion-dollar proposal that would bring onshore processing of liquified natural gas. And it has strong support from some elements of the Timorese leadership. However, Timor-Leste's petroleum investment partners and others, including diplomatic partners, have encouraged greater analysis of the potential economic viability of it.

The China piece, to my knowledge, involved a 2019 planned agreement between a Chinese state-owned entity and the Timorese Government for about $1 billion. However, that plan was never implemented, and to my knowledge it has not progressed. The current governing coalition has taken a more skeptical approach to the entire complex, and has welcomed U.S. Government offers of assistance through our various tools, such as Asia EDGE or the Transaction Advisory Network for Infrastructure.

So I think the Timorese are appropriately wary, in particular, of obtaining large loans, single-country loans, in cases where it would require them to collateralize significant national infrastructure, and if confirmed, I will continue to keep a close eye on this, report on this, and, of course, engage senior Timorese Government leadership.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I will submit the rest of my questions for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Blackstone, for that report. That kind of an issue is happening all over the world, as we know, and it is good to have that kind of a granularity on one particular one. Indeed, there is some good news there, because we have certainly had lots of bad news over recent years.

Well, are there any other members of the committee on the call?

There being none, first of all, let me say that it is an honor to be able to preside over a meeting with five people with such in-depth credentials and deep understanding of each of the areas that you are going to, and long, long years of dedicated public service that you do on a nonpartisan basis, and carrying America's values to these far-flung places that do not see us as closely as they are going to see you. So thank you for that. Thank you for carrying those values for us, and we sincerely appreciate it. Again, we appreciate the sacrifice that you know is necessary in serving in these places, and that is especially true to your families. Whether they are with you or whether they are separated, they share in that sacrifice and we all appreciate that.

So with that, for the information of all members of the committee, the record will remain open until the close of business on Friday, December 4th, including members to submit questions for the record. When you get those, we would appreciate getting them back as quickly as you can get them back. And with that we will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:11 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO C. KEVIN BLACKSTONE BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

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. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that prohibited personnel practices has no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that anyone found to have engaged in prohibited personnel practices should be subject to accountability and discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for recruiting and retaining diverse talent. I will promote diversity and best practices and tips for inclusive recruiting practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and how they can be bolstered. I will promote and encourage all employees to take courses on fostering an inclusive workplace.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

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. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

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.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. I served as a Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader in Wasit, Iraq from 2009-2010. In this role, I successfully advocated for increased funding for local NGOs that promoted Sunni-Shi'a reconciliation. I also engaged with provincial leadership on issues of religious freedom, helping to promote respect for human rights in a region of Iraq that had a large population of both Shi'a and Sunni.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Timor-Leste? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The Timorese people are strongly committed to their young democracy and the United States, through USAID and other programming, has worked closely with the Government to support the rule of law, strengthen electoral and parliamentary systems, and strengthen democratic institutions to help ensure access to justice and services for all Timorese citizens. Long delays in trials and alleged mistreatment by police erode public confidence in the institutions intended to safeguard human rights and democratic principles. If confirmed, I would continue to support U.S. efforts to strengthen the rule of law and capacity of law enforcement officials.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Timor-Leste? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Timor-Leste is a young nation committed to democracy and developing strong democratic institutions. If confirmed, my priority would be to continue U.S. assistance to government institutions responsible for protecting access to justice and human rights for all Timorese citizens. I would also prioritize continued U.S. support to civil society. An active and vibrant civil society is an important check on government's power. Development of human capacity will take time, but building a strong foundation for Timorese success is critical.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. The U.S. Government has played a key role in promoting democracy and governance in Timor-Leste, primarily through USAID. With USAID assistance, Timor-Leste held peaceful elections in 2017 and 2018 without international supervision and parliamentarians are learning best practices to effectively represent their constituents. If confirmed, I will use U.S. foreign assistance resources to continue this important work with Timor-Leste to promote governance goals in Timor-Leste, in alignment with the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Timor-Leste? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the United States, Timor-Leste-based human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Timor-Leste. If confirmed, I will also work with the Government to advocate for fair and transparent treatment of NGOs and civil society under the law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. The United States urges equal treatment for all that underscores our commitment to diversity and inclusion. If confirmed, I will work with the Timor-Leste Government, including with opposition figures and parties, to encourage political competition and will promote access and inclusivity for women, members of minority groups, and youth within political parties.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Timor-Leste on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Timor-Leste?

Answer. The United States promotes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, around the world, including in Timor-Leste. Promoting these rights are key priorities of the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Government, as well as independent, local press in Timor-Leste, on the importance of these human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Timor-Leste?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Timor-Leste.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Timor-Leste on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Timor-Leste Government, civil society, and other parts of the Timorese economy on the issue of the right of labor groups to organize.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Timor-Leste, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Timor-Leste? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Timor-Leste?

Answer. Although Timor-Leste is a relatively tolerant society, LGBTI persons do not enjoy legal protections, which hinders full inclusion. The rights of LGBTI individuals and persons are a topic of importance in our conversations with the Timorese Government. If confirmed, I will continue to urge equal treatment for all and to promote diversity and inclusion by engaging not only with the Timorese Government, but also with civil society organizations, the private sector, and like-minded missions.

Development

Question. What will you do to help Timor-Leste achieve its development goals?

Answer. The United States is a strong supporter of Timor-Leste's development and has sought to partner with them on government priorities identified in the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030, including projects focused on health, education, water and sanitation, rural development, agriculture, and economic growth. USAID has led U.S. efforts to support Timor-Leste in achieving its development goals. Other U.S. Government agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, also play key roles in meeting the country's development goals.

If confirmed, I would prioritize the United States' robust support of Timor-Leste's development goals as a means to ensuring Timor-Leste's prosperity, development, and economic sovereignty for future generations.

Question. What areas of the Timorese economy offer the best prospects for development and how can the United States help?

Answer. The Timorese Government recognizes the critical need to diversify its economy to create jobs and economic opportunities for its citizens, as well as to generate revenue beyond the oil and gas sector. USAID has supported Timorese efforts to sustainably develop its agricultural, tourism, and information and communication technology sectors, as well as improve the efficiency of trade and transit by supporting reform to Timor-Leste's customs systems. Strengthening the Timorese pri-

vate sector and business enabling environment would further unlock the country's development and economic potential. By continuing support for technical and foreign assistance, the United States supports the Government and private sector to help ensure Timor-Leste builds a strong framework for domestic and foreign investment.

Question. What can the United States do to assist Timor-Leste in developing its economy in a sustainable manner?

Answer. Timor-Leste is a young nation and like many nations recovering from conflict, human resource capacity is a challenge. Through targeted technical assistance programs, the United States has helped strengthen the private sector while building the capacity of Timorese authorities. If confirmed, I will support programs that help develop Timor-Leste's economy and will explore the use of additional U.S. technical assistance tools, such as the Transaction Advisory Fund and AsiaEdge, to meet this goal.

Chinese Influence

Question. How do you assess Timor-Leste's relationship with China and the risks of Chinese investments in Timor-Leste? What actions would you take to mitigate such risks?

Answer. Timor-Leste maintains good relations with countries throughout the region, including China, which has active diplomatic engagement in Timor-Leste. China has longstanding foreign assistance programs in health and agriculture in the country, and PRC state-owned enterprises companies build roads and other infrastructure. Last year, China also announced it would digitalize Timor-Leste's national radio and television network.

Timor-Leste is a democracy, which underpins our shared commitment to good governance and human rights. U.S. engagement focuses largely on sustainable development and economic diversification as well as democracy and governance programs to bolster the country's democratic and economic institutions. This engagement helps strengthen our long-term bilateral partnership.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO C. KEVIN BLACKSTONE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I served as a Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader in Wasit, Iraq from 2009-2010. In this role, I successfully advocated for increased funding for local NGOs that promoted Sunni-Shi'a reconciliation. I also engaged with provincial leadership on issues of religious freedom, helping to promote respect for human rights in a region of Iraq that had a large population of both Shi'a and Sunni.

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

Answer. The most significant human rights issues in Timor-Leste include violence against women and forced child labor. We also have concerns about corruption. The United States promotes respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world, including in Timor-Leste. The Timorese share our values of promoting democracy and human rights. These values form the foundation of U.S. assistance to Timor-Leste.

Promoting these rights and freedoms is a key priority of the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative. If confirmed, I would continue to work with government leaders at the highest levels, as well as civil society and other advocates of freedom and democracy so that the bilateral relationship advances human rights for all people in Timor-Leste.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Timor-Leste in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. I believe a primary challenge will be strengthening Timor-Leste's institutions that are designed to protect human rights, as well as increasing awareness

about what constitutes human rights so that society and government can work together to safeguard them.

If confirmed, I will lead the Embassy's efforts to raise awareness about human rights in Timor-Leste and work with the Government and civil society to strengthen institutions to protect those rights. I commit to conveying the importance the United States places on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will work with civil society, the Government of Timor-Leste, partners and allies, and other stakeholders to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. 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 Timor-Leste? 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. Vibrant civil societies are critical to healthy democracies, prosperous economies, and stable societies. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and Timor-Leste, bringing attention to the challenges they face in Timor-Leste and advocating for their protection and empowerment. I will also ensure that all U.S. security assistance to Timor-Leste is provided consistent with applicable law, including the Leahy law, and that all security cooperation activities with Timor-Leste reinforce human rights and the rule of law.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Timor-Leste to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Timor-Leste?

Answer. Timor-Leste boasts a multi-party democracy and active civil society in which opponents of the Government are able to express their political views openly. If confirmed, I will work with the Timor-Leste Government and civil society to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to further strengthen Timor-Leste's developing institutions striving to protect those rights. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with the Timorese when democratic values are undermined, including those involving political prisoners.

Question. Will you engage with Timor-Leste on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with civil society and the Government of Timor-Leste on the importance of human rights, including civil and political rights, and good governance.

Diversity

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and build a representative workforce. I will encourage promoting diversity and inclusion best practices, including recruiting efforts and standardized interview procedures, which are practices I have followed carefully in my previous positions within the State Department. I also commit to working with our locally employed staff to ensure their viewpoints and concerns are heard. I will learn from and listen to employees using mechanisms like the Open Conversations platform and the Department's new Centralized Exit Survey. I will promote and encourage all employees to take courses on fostering an inclusive workplace.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Timor-Leste are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure supervisors under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for developing and retaining diverse talent. I will promote diversity and inclusion best practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and with an eye on how they can be strengthened. I will support a requirement that all hiring managers to take, as appropriate, courses on fostering an inclusive workplace.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Timor-Leste?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, including foreign stock funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Timor-Leste specifically?

Answer. Corruption undermines democracy, good governance, and the rule of law. Transparency in political processes and government procedures are critical to the citizenry's confidence in its democratic institutions and the rule of law.

Timor-Leste is a young democracy that continues to develop and strengthen its democratic foundations. Further supporting these efforts and promoting transparency will be one of my top priorities if confirmed.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Timor-Leste and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Timor-Leste took an important step this year to address corruption by passing anti-corruption legislation. The new law provides the Anti-Corruption Commission with additional tools to more effectively combat corruption in Timor-Leste. This includes expanding the list of officials required to disclose their financial records.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Timor-Leste?

Answer. Our shared values of democracy, promotion of human rights, and upholding the rule of law continue to anchor our bilateral relationship. U.S. development assistance in Timor-Leste is targeted to help promote these ideals. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with civil society and the Timorese Government to stress these shared values.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CYNTHIA KIERSCHT BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. According to the Global Terrorism Index, while deaths from terrorism have fallen every year for the past five years, "Seven of the ten Countries with the largest increase in terrorism were in sub-Saharan Africa." That same report indicates that Burkina Faso, a member of the G5 Sahel, had the largest increase in terrorism. Mauritania has not suffered a terrorist attack since 2011:

- How much money has the U.S. provided to Mauritania over the past four years for counterterrorism assistance, and what specific activities are the funds supporting? Are these the correct activities? If not, where should we be investing?

Answer. Mauritania's relative success compared to its neighbors in confronting its domestic terrorism threat over the past decade is due first and foremost to Mauritanian initiatives, but the partnership with the United States and the support provided by programs from the State Department, USAID, and DOD have helped enable these positive results. The Government of Mauritania relies on a multi-fac-

eted counterterrorism approach that includes community outreach initiatives, religious dialogue, capacity improvements for security forces, and activities aimed at securing the country's borders. Over the past four years, the United States obligated more than $31 million to provide counterterrorism and related security assistance to Mauritania through the U.S. Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), and Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA). Through these programs, we work to increase Mauritania's security sector capacity, address the drivers of terrorism, increase the capacity of the criminal justice system to prevent and prosecute terrorists acts, and strengthen the voices of mainstream leaders to positively influence populations vulnerable to radicalization and violence.

If confirmed, I will commit to ensuring our counterterrorism and related assistance remains relevant to evolving terrorist threats in the region and will lead U.S. Government efforts to help Mauritania export its relative success to other countries in the region.

Question. What, in your view, accounts for the differing experiences of Burkina Faso and Mauritania in terms of the number and frequency of terrorist attacks? Is there something that Mauritania has done correctly that Burkina Faso has not, or is it simply a matter of luck?

Answer. Mauritania has not suffered a terrorist attack since 2011. With support from the United States and other international partners, Mauritania has focused on promoting development and good governance as foundations of state legitimacy while increasing its efforts to effectively secure its borders. Mauritania's cooperation with regional partners has also been crucial to disrupting attacks and denying terrorist groups the capability to plan and carry them out in the future. Its counter-radicalization efforts have been consistently applied. Mauritania recently joined the Global Coalition to Defeat-ISIS, showcasing its commitment in the battle against terrorism and willingness to help to defeat ISIS and other AQ-affiliated terrorist groups across West Africa and the Sahel. If confirmed, I will continue our partnership with Mauritania to address the drivers of terrorist radicalization and recruitment and strengthen its institutional capacity.

Question. When President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz stepped down in 2019, it was the first time a leader left office in accordance with constitutional requirements without being overthrown. That in itself represents a significant step in the country's political evolution. However, opposition figures were thrown in jail after protesting the election results, and the internet was shut down. Though opposition politicians were later released, their arrest was a worrying sign. Freedom House in its Freedom of the World 2020 report categorizes Mauritania as only 'partly free:'

- Do you agree with Freedom House's characterization of Mauritania? What steps could be taken to expand democratic space in Mauritania?

Answer. Mauritania's 2019 presidential election led to the country's first democratic transition from one elected leader to another. The election marked a true turning point in Mauritania's history and is an important example for other democracies. While this was an historic step, Mauritania has a strong authoritarian tradition which presents challenges to its democratic development. The Government must make concerted efforts to broaden the space for opposition politicians and civil society so that Mauritania can reap the benefits of a robust democracy. Encouraging further democratic and governance reforms will be among my highest priorities if confirmed.

Question. How much money has the United States invested in democracy and governance work in Mauritania over the past four years, and in what areas have we focused that investment?

Answer. The United States has used a wide range of tools to advance our democracy and governance agenda in Mauritania, including bilateral diplomacy, multilateral engagement, and public outreach. While some of our programming was limited by restrictions under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020, U.S. programs have supported strengthening civil society, both by advancing legislation to remove restrictions on the activities of non-governmental organizations and working with certain prominent NGOs which have traditionally worked to change past restrictions. We have also invested in programs to support greater political participation by women and youth. With TVPA restrictions now lifted for FY 2021, if confirmed, I intend to seek greater U.S. Government support to help with efforts to professionalize Mauritanian Government institutions, including nascent local and regional elected bodies.

Question. Can political parties operate freely in Mauritania? How would you characterize media freedoms in Mauritania? What activities to support press freedom

has the United States supported this year? Is there space for civil society to carry out its work?

Answer. Mauritania has committed to expanding the political space, but much work remains to be done. After largely boycotting the previous two presidential elections, opposition parties participated in the 2019 elections, leading to Mauritania's first peaceful transfer of power from one elected leader to another. Nevertheless, they continue to face obstacles. Despite the country's vibrant media landscape, with several privately owned newspapers, television stations, and radio stations in operation, journalists can still encounter restrictions. Through initiatives such as the International Visitors Leadership Program, the United States has provided crucial opportunities and support for Mauritanian journalists.

We are encouraged the Government of Mauritania has taken steps to revise and update the 1964 Associations Law on NGOs and has signaled its intent to secure parliamentary approval this fall. If confirmed, I will commit to supporting Mauritania's ongoing efforts to become a freer and more open society.

Question. Mauritania abolished slavery by decree in 1981, but the practice was not criminalized until 2007. The constitution was amended in 2012 to declare slavery a crime against humanity, and parliament adopted a new anti-slavery law in 2015. However, few criminal cases have been brought to court:

- Does slavery still exist in Mauritania today? What assistance have we provided to help Mauritanians investigate and prosecute this crime?

Answer. Slavery and slavery-like practices, which typically flow from hereditary slavery, still exist in Mauritania.

While much work remains to be done to ensure that all citizens can exercise their legal protection against forced labor, Mauritania has made significant strides to address its legacy of slavery since President Ghazouani's 2019 inauguration. Under the President's leadership, the country no longer denies that slavery exists. In November 2019, President Ghazouani created a new institution to intensify the Mauritanian Government's efforts to address the social and economic conditions that have left many citizens vulnerable to forced labor. This year the United States funded the participation of judicial and law enforcement officials in training to combat human trafficking and collaborated with the Mauritanian Government on the National Action Plan to address Trafficking in Persons (TIP) issues.

In 2020, the country's Human Rights Commission organized two "caravans" to travel to isolated regions of the country to educate citizens, local NGOs, and local officials directly about anti-slavery laws; these efforts had full government support and encouragement. Mauritania's conviction of five defendants involved in three separate slavery cases from previous years is another step in the right direction. The Government of Mauritania continues to take concerted actions towards ending the practice of slavery, including increased engagement with civil society groups.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Mauritanian Government to support Mauritania's progress to eradicate slavery, a crime under international law.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to help Mauritanians end this horrific practice for once and for all?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Mauritania to support its eradication of slavery. This requires a sustained, and collective effort by the Government, religious, law enforcement, judicial, tribal, and civil society leaders, together with all Mauritanians. The Government must also address economic dynamics that sustain the vulnerability of communities to de facto servitude, and the deep social divisions that are the legacy of centuries of slavery and that, as President Ghazouani has stated, threaten the country's development and stability. If confirmed, I will work to leverage programs and tools provided by the U.S. Congress, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) eligibility criteria and the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) ranking and associated restrictions, where possible. I will encourage the Mauritanian Government to prosecute all individuals found to be supporting slavery practices to send a message that Mauritania is serious about eradicating this practice. I will also work with my State Department colleagues to identify additional programming to address this issue now that the TVPA assistance restrictions have been lifted.

If confirmed, I will work with all partners-the business community, local and international NGOs, and other donors-to provide active encouragement to meet the Government's stated intention to address the reality of hereditary slavery.

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

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. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to make clear to all employees that prohibited personnel practices have no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under my leadership. I agree that any employee found responsible for engaging in a prohibited personnel practice should be held fully accountable, and subject to discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will endeavor at every opportunity to promote diversity in the workplace by recruiting and supporting a diverse team, promoting excellence, and mentoring staff of all backgrounds—including Foreign and Civil Service as well as locally engaged staff—on my team. Throughout my career, I have put particular emphasis on encouraging and supporting employees from diverse backgrounds, as I understand firsthand the many benefits of a workplace that represents diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups and welcomes the views of all. If confirmed, I intend to lead by example and guide by encouragement, ensuring all of my staff know that diversity and inclusion are top priorities of mine. I will also ensure that supervisors at the Embassy are appropriately trained with regard to Equal Employment Opportunity, diversity, and inclusion, and are accountable. I will also make certain they know I am an advocate and available resource.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise any concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. Promotion of the U.S. human rights and democracy agenda has been a key component of my career. Looking back, I assess my most meaningful achievements to be the following:

During my tour at U.S. Embassy Rabat, Morocco, King Mohammed announced sweeping changes to the family law greatly impacting women's rights and, in particular, their legal status regarding marriage and divorce. As leader of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Democracy pillar, I advocated for and managed a series of successful grant programs designed to inform (mostly illiterate) women of their newfound rights, including working with our Public Affairs section to reach the broadest possible audience. One particular program—an innovative play, which we sent throughout the country, explained how the reforms put women on par with men in matters of marriage, divorce, child custody and property ownership—became a model for other MEPI programs.

In Libya, as one of the first human rights officers to serve in the country following our restoration of relations in 2004 after a 25 year hiatus, I established (and reestablished in some cases) relationships with key human rights interlocutors, and used their insights to provide some of the very first analysis of the tragic human rights situation in Libya. I also made the first-ever visit by a U.S. official to the African detention camps in Libya, highlighting a major human rights issue for the Department. Reaching out to key religious figures, I also authored the first International Religious Freedom report from Libya, providing the State Department with the first real assessment of religious freedom on the ground.

In Colombia, where Afro-Colombians continue to face significant economic and social discrimination, I worked to support social inclusion goals by designing programs to elevate the issue of diversity. My Culture Series program, which reached two million Colombians in 11 cities, was highlighted as a best practice at the U.S. Colombia Action Plan for Racial and Ethnic Equality.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Mauritania? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Mauritania's main democratic challenges include its strong authoritarian tradition, which presents challenges to its democratic development, its legacy of hereditary slavery, and corruption. Too often in the past, coups d'état have served as the primary means of changing Mauritania's Government. However, the country is at a turning point. Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani's election in 2019 as Mauritania's president marked the first democratic transition of power between two elected presidents since the country's independence in 1960. Both the United Nations and African Union observers considered the election to be relatively free and fair. While challenges to Mauritania's democratic development remain, early indications show that President Ghazouani is committed to strengthening democracy and democratic institutions.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Mauritania? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize human rights and democracy as fundamental parts of my job and the embassy's mission. Human rights, civil rights, and good governance will be key elements of my engagements with the Mauritanian Government. Mauritania stands to benefit greatly when its people are empowered, its civil society is encouraged, and its security forces are trusted because they uphold the rule of law.

Mauritania's human rights challenges stem from the legacy of centuries of slavery; deep-rooted divisions along ethnic, linguistic and tribal lines; and gender inequality. Improvements require strong political commitment—which President Ghazouani appears to have—as well as justice sector reform and increased resources to ensure the rule of law. A stronger civil society is also needed, and a new NGO law currently pending parliamentary consideration will be an important step. Mauritania will also need the support and encouragement of partners like the United States to help overcome these obstacles and achieve the president's stated goals of promoting national unity and access to justice and economic opportunities for all citizens.

If confirmed, I will reaffirm the United States' support for human rights and democracy and leverage programs and tools provided by the U.S. Congress in the form of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) eligibility criteria, and the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) ranking restrictions as appropriate. Moreover, if confirmed, I will work with the Government, civil society, and NGOs to improve the space for civil society to operate and thrive so that all Mauritanians can reap the benefits of a robust civil society.

My hope is that this, in addition to U.S. Government programming, will lead to sustained progress on human rights, good governance, and democracy

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead the U.S. Government in its efforts to strengthen the capacity of Mauritania's national and local governments to be more inclusive and responsive to public needs and to improve service delivery so as to address the underlying grievances and cultural drivers that can lead to insecurity. I will work with the Department and USAID to identify and program all funding available to support democracy and governance in Mauritania, including utilizing the Department's Small Grants program.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Mauritania? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights non-governmental organizations in Mauritania. I will continue to engage civil society actors that seek to hold government institutions accountable for improved governance and rule of law and discourage the Government from restricting or penalizing NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to meeting with the broad range of democratically-oriented political parties and actors, to include the main opposition parties. If confirmed, I will encourage the ruling government to continue to engage the opposition as it aims to implement comprehensive economic and political reforms based on social inclusion. If confirmed, I will advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Mauritania on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Mauritania?

Answer. Mauritania ranks 97 out of 180 according to the 2020 World Press Freedom Index. If confirmed, I will continue to lead our Embassy in advocating for press freedom in Mauritania and discourage any effort to control or undermine press freedom. If confirmed, I will also commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Mauritania and using public opportunities to defend and protect freedom of expression, including for members of the press, as a necessary tenet of a healthy, functioning democracy.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Mauritania?

Answer. Disinformation and propaganda disseminated by violent extremist organizations and foreign governments are an issue across the Sahel region. If confirmed, I will direct my team to track, monitor, and counter any such disinformation and propaganda campaign disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Mauritania. If confirmed, I will also actively engage with civil society and government counterparts to counter such disinformation and propaganda.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Mauritania on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Protecting workers' rights, especially the freedoms of association and collective bargaining, is essential to building durable democracies, as well as achieving sustainable growth and a level playing field for prosperity. If confirmed, I will commit to engaging with Mauritania on these important rights. Our efforts to advance good governance and democracy align with the Government of Mauritania's efforts to address long-standing human rights issues and root out corruption. Under President Ghazouani's leadership, the country is on the right track and our engagement serves to encourage their better inclinations. The current political environment makes Mauritania a natural partner for the United States.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Mauritania, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Mauritania? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Mauritania?

Answer. Mauritania does not formally recognize lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) persons and as a result, they are not legally protected in Mauritania. LGBTQ persons live in perpetual fear of being driven out by their families and rejected by society in general. As a result, they do not publicly attend or participate in public activities due to fears of retribution and violence. If confirmed, I commit to using my position to defend human rights and dignity for all Mauritanians including to protect members of the LGBTQ community from harmful societal stigmas.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CYNTHIA KIERSCHT BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promotion of the U.S. human rights and democracy agenda has been a key component of my career. Looking back, I assess my most meaningful achievements are the following:

During my tour at U.S. Embassy Rabat, Morocco, King Mohammed announced sweeping changes to the family law greatly impacting women's rights and, in particular, their legal status regarding marriage and divorce. As leader of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Democracy pillar, I advocated for and managed a series of successful grant programs designed to inform (mostly illiterate) women of their newfound rights, including working with our Public Affairs section to reach the broadest possible audience. One particular program—an innovative play, which we sent throughout the country, explained how the reforms put women on an equal par with men in matters of marriage, divorce, child custody and property ownership—became a model for other MEPI programs.

In Libya, as one of the first human rights officers to serve in the country following our restoration of relations in 2004 after a 25 year hiatus, I established (and reestablished in some cases) relationships with key human rights interlocutors, and used their insights to provide some of the very first analyses of the tragic human rights situation in Libya. I also made the first-ever visit by a U.S. official to the African detention camps in Libya, highlighting a major human rights issue for the Department. Reaching out to key religious figures, I also authored the first International Religious Freedom report from Libya, providing the State Department with the first real assessment of religious freedom on the ground.

In Colombia, where Afro-Colombians continue to face significant economic and social discrimination, I worked to support social inclusion goals by designing programs to elevate the issue of diversity. My Culture Series program, which reached two million Colombians in 11 cities, was highlighted as a best practice at the U.S. Colombia Action Plan for Racial and Ethnic Equality.

Question. 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 2019 inauguration of President Ghazouani has presented an opportunity to make real positive change on longstanding human rights and governance concerns in Mauritania. If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with the Government of Mauritania, which has already made strides to address the vestiges of

slavery, and to making progress on our mutual democracy, human rights, and governance priorities-to include combatting trafficking in persons, rooting out corruption, reforming the judiciary to improve access for all Mauritanians, and increasing economic opportunities for all historically marginalized groups.

If confirmed, I will reaffirm the United States' support for human rights and democracy and leverage both development assistance programs and tools provided by the U.S. Congress, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) eligibility criteria and the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) ranking and associated restrictions, as appropriate. Moreover, if confirmed, I will work with the Government, civil society, and NGOs to improve the space for civil society to operate and thrive so that all Mauritanians can reap the benefits of a robust civil society. My hope is this will lead to sustained progress on human rights and democracy.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Mauritania in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. Since the August 2019 inauguration of President Ghazouani in the country's first fully democratic presidential transition, U.S. cooperation with Mauritania on human rights issues has improved. Mauritania's human rights challenges stem from the legacy of centuries of slavery, which despite Mauritanian Government efforts, has not been entirely eradicated, plus deep-rooted divisions along ethnic, linguistic and tribal lines, as well as gender inequality. Improvements require strong political commitment—which President Ghazouani appears to have—as well as judicial reform and increased resources to ensure access to justice for all Mauritanians. A stronger civil society is also needed and a new NGO law currently pending parliamentary consideration will be an important next step. Mauritania will need the support and encouragement of partners like the United States to help overcome these obstacles and achieve the president's stated goals of promoting national unity and justice for all citizens.

Question. 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. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights non-governmental organizations in Mauritania.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Embassy continues to vet all potential candidates for U.S. assistance. In doing so, I will aim to ensure no U.S. assistance is provided to any security forces unit where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights, as required under the Leahy Law. It is imperative the United States make clear that respect for human rights is a prerequisite for U.S. security assistance and participation in security cooperation activities.

Question. 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. Yes, if confirmed I will actively engage with the Mauritanian Government to address cases of individuals who have been unlawfully or arbitrarily detained in Mauritania.

Question. Will you engage with Mauritania on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage on the issues of human rights, civil rights, and governance with the Government of Mauritania and other stakeholders. I will ensure that embassy personnel and U.S. Government programming addresses and promotes these issues as well.

The United States plays a critical role in advocating for democracy and human rights in Mauritania through diplomatic and other engagement, which I will ensure continues if confirmed as Ambassador.

Diversity

Question. 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 endeavor at every opportunity to promote diversity in the workplace by recruiting and supporting a diverse team, promoting excellence, and mentoring staff of all backgrounds on my team. Throughout my career, I have put particular emphasis on encouraging and supporting employees from diverse backgrounds, as I understand firsthand the many benefits of a workplace that represents diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups and welcomes the views of all.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Mauritania are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to lead by example and guide by encouragement, ensuring all of my staff know that diversity and inclusion are top priorities of mine. I will ensure that supervisors at the Embassy are appropriately trained with regard to Equal Employment Opportunity and diversity and inclusion and are accountable. I will also ensure they know I am an advocate and available resource.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Mauritania?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Mauritania specifically?

Answer. Political corruption erodes state legitimacy and ultimately degrades the rule of law. Corruption can also undermine support for democracy and must be addressed in order to consolidate Mauritania's democratic gains, attract additional U.S. investment to Mauritania, and encourage economic growth.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Mauritania and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Corruption continues to be a problem in Mauritania and throughout the region. In late January 2020, Mauritania's parliament launched an investigative committee to review longstanding allegations of corruption and embezzlement concerning ten major government tenders that occurred during the tenure of former President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. In late July 2020, the parliament completed its well-documented report and submitted it to law enforcement for further action. The ongoing investigation is a positive sign that the current Ghazouani administration is focused on rooting out corruption within its system.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Mauritania?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Mauritania to intensify its efforts to address systemic corruption and to continue its good governance and anti-corruption efforts. If confirmed, I will also leverage development assistance programs and facilitate business connections to motivate Mauritania to address corruption within its system. This will enhance the economic environment and make it more attractive to U.S. companies seeking to do business in Mauritania.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO BRIAN D. MCFEETERS BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

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. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. Yes, I commit to making clear that prohibited personnel practices have no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated. I agree that those found to have engaged in unlawful retaliation should be subject to accountability and discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for recruiting and retaining diverse talent. I will promote diversity and inclusion best practices, including inclusive recruiting practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the enhancement of existing mentoring programs and Embassy Kuala Lumpur's robust Diversity and Inclusion Council.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

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. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

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.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. When I served as Political Counselor in Kuala Lumpur nearly 10 years ago, I worked with the Embassy team to develop strong relationships with the Malaysian Government and civil society organizations to support Malaysia's democracy and human rights. In addition, while serving as Deputy Political Counselor in Seoul in an earlier assignment, I worked with South Korean Government officials to ensure North Korean defectors were treated well.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Malaysia? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Human trafficking, including forced labor, remains a significant issue in Malaysia, and the Government has much work to do to improve protections for trafficking victims and to hold traffickers and complicit officials accountable. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to urge Malaysian Government officials, at all levels, to significantly improve anti-trafficking efforts, including investigating and prosecuting allegations of forced labor. I am also concerned about the erosion of press freedom in Malaysia, as national security and media laws are at times used by the Government against journalists, media outlets, and Malaysian citizens exercising their right to freedom of expression. If confirmed, I will engage with civil society and the Malaysian Government on the importance of human rights and fundamental freedoms to our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will support programs under USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives that aim to increase the effectiveness and role of civil society and citizen voices in the Malaysian political environment.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Malaysia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The United States promotes the rule of law, transparency and good governance, and freedom of expression in Malaysia. If confirmed, I pledge to continue the United States' partnership with Malaysia underpinned by our shared values and importance we place on good governance, respect for sovereignty, democratic institutions, and the rule of law. I am committed to engaging with civil society, the Malaysian Government, and other stakeholders to stress the importance of these democratic norms.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. The USAID Office of Transition Initiatives is supporting efforts by the Government of Malaysia, civil society, and other stakeholders to enhance good governance and improve transparency, accountability, and public responsiveness. The Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative also encompasses over 200 programs developed by a range of U.S. Government agencies focused on anti-corruption and fiscal transparency, democracy assistance, youth and emerging leader development, media and internet freedom, and protecting fundamental freedoms and human rights. If confirmed, I will use U.S. foreign assistance resources to work with Malaysia to promote governance goals in the Southeast Asia region, as outlined in the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Malaysia? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the United States, Malaysia-based human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Malaysia, and raise the profile of their efforts, where appropriate. If confirmed, I will also actively work to address any efforts to intimidate, restrict, or penalize NGOs or civil society.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. The United States urges equal treatment for all and underscores our commitment to diversity and inclusion. If confirmed, I will work with the Malaysian Government, including with opposition figures and parties, on these important issues and will promote access and inclusivity for women, members of minority groups, and youth within political parties.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Malaysia on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Malaysia?

Answer. The United States promotes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, across the globe, including in Malaysia. I am concerned about the erosion of press freedom in Malaysia. National security and media laws are at times being used by the Government against journalists, media outlets, and Malaysian citizens exercising their right to freedom of expression. Promoting these rights are key priorities of the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Government, as well as independent, local press in Malaysia, on the importance of these human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Malaysia?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Malaysia. Embassy Kuala Lumpur already has programs aimed at countering this problem and if confirmed, I will support and enhance these efforts.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Malaysia on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Malaysian Government, civil society, and other parts of the Malaysian economy on the issue of the right of labor groups to organize.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Malaysia, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Malaysia? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Malaysia?

Answer. Same-sex sexual conduct between consenting adults is illegal in Malaysia, and courts have sentenced both men and women to jail and caning as punishment. If confirmed, I will continue to urge equal treatment for all in Malaysia, including LGBTI individuals, and to underscore our commitment to diversity and inclusion by engaging not only with the Malaysian Government, but also with civil society organizations, the private sector, and like-minded missions.

Development

Question. What will you do to help Malaysia achieve its development goals?

Answer. The United States and Malaysia have strong economic ties, and Malaysia is our third largest trading partner in Southeast Asia, with bilateral trade in goods and services last year reaching nearly $60 billion. Moreover, the U.S. Government implements many capacity and technical assistance programs with Malaysia, including in the areas of judicial training, public health, and anti-trafficking efforts that directly contribute to Malaysia's development goals. If confirmed, I will work with U.S. businesses and the Malaysian Government to strengthen our trade and investment relations and help Malaysia achieve its development goals.

Question. What areas of the Malaysian economy offer the best prospects for development and how can the United States help?

Answer. There are many key economic sectors where American firms provide a positive presence in Malaysia, including energy, financial services, healthcare, high tech manufacturing, R&D centers, artificial intelligence and cloud computing. American firms are widely-known in Malaysia to be excellent business partners, highly-regarded employers, and models of corporate social responsibility. The United States and Malaysia enjoy a strong and cooperative trade relationship, including through the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. If confirmed, I plan to work with U.S. businesses and the Malaysian Government to strengthen our economic relationship.

Question. What can the United States do to assist Malaysia in developing its economy in a sustainable manner?

Answer. The United States, through its Indo-Pacific Strategy, advances fair and reciprocal trade and promotes commercial engagement that follows international best practices of transparency, environmental and occupational safety standards, and financial sustainability. Over 700 U.S. companies are operating in Malaysia and modeling these best practices. If confirmed, I plan to work with U.S. businesses and the Malaysian Government to strengthen our economic relationship.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO BRIAN D. MCFEETERS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Diversity

Question. 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 support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to foster a culture of inclusion and build a representative workforce. I will encourage diversity and inclusion best practices, including through targeted recruiting efforts and standardized interview procedures.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Malaysia are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support and promote the efforts the Department is currently undertaking to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I will promote habits and practices among the leadership that focus on inclusion as a key driver for recruiting, developing, and retaining diverse talent. I will promote diversity and inclusion best practices and tips for inclusive hiring practices and standardized interview guidance. I will support the review of existing mentoring programs and with an eye on how they can be strengthened.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Malaysia?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, including a foreign stock fund, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Malaysia specifically?

Answer. Corruption is toxic to democracy and is an issue of concern in Malaysia. If confirmed, I pledge to continue the United States' partnership with Malaysia underpinned by our shared values and importance we place on good governance, re-

spect for sovereignty, democratic institutions, and the rule of law. This will help achieve the overarching governance goals outlined under the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Malaysia and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. The United States and Malaysia share a commitment to fight against corruption, and Malaysia has been working to strengthen democratic governance. If confirmed, I would continue to underscore the importance of transparency, accountability, and adherence to the rule of law, all key to ensuring confidence in Malaysia's judicial system, democracy, and economy.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Malaysia?

Answer. The principles of good governance, the rule of law, and economic opportunity continue to anchor our partnership with Malaysia. The USAID Office of Transition Initiatives is supporting efforts by the Government of Malaysia, civil society, and other stakeholders to enhance good governance and improve transparency, accountability, and public responsiveness. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with civil society and the Malaysian Government to further these efforts.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO BRIAN D. MCFEETERS BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. The current Government of Malaysia promised to repeal the much-abused sedition act, a broadly-worded law that continues to be used against those voicing criticism of Malaysia's royalty or unpopular opinions on topics related to race and religion. However, after over two years in office, they have yet to fulfill on that promise or other commitments to repeal oppressive laws. As Ambassador, how will you advocate for the Government to repeal the sedition act and fulfill other human rights promises which have yet to be addressed?

Answer. I am concerned about the erosion of press freedom in Malaysia as national security and media laws are at times being used by the Government against journalists, media outlets, and Malaysian citizens exercising their right to freedom of expression. If confirmed, I will engage the Government and civil society on the importance of human rights, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms, including for members of the press.

Question. Over 150,000 refugees and asylum seekers, most of whom come from Burma, are registered with the United National Commission for Refugees in Malaysia. In most cases, asylum seekers have not been granted legal status and remain unable to work, travel or enroll in government schools while their cases are being processed. The country has taken little action to investigate mass graves found in remote jungle camps, and human rights organizations report on police abuse of refugees. As Ambassador, how would you engage with the Government of Malaysia to ensure that refugees in Malaysia are safe and have access to the rights guaranteed under the UN's Refugee Convention?

Answer. The United States has expressed concerns about the treatment and status of refugees and asylum-seekers in Malaysia. We work closely with Malaysia, other ASEAN members, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and like-minded nations to advocate for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in the region, ensure access for NGOs and the U.N. to persons of concern, and to advocate for the safe disembarkation of Rohingya refugees traveling on boats in the Andaman Sea.

If confirmed, I will continue to make accountability and protection a priority and will work tirelessly to maintain pressure on Malaysia to address serious concerns about trafficking in persons, release the Royal Commission of Inquiry report on the horrendous mass graves at Wang Kelian on the Malaysia-Thai border, and hold culpable officials accountable.

Question. China has become the largest investor into Malaysia's manufacturing and infrastructure sectors. Given the sheer volume of projects and amounts of capital flowing into Malaysia right now, how can the United States and other donors stay competitive and relevant? In addition to monitoring the flow of capital, how would you direct your team to monitor and push back on the sheer volume of information and disinformation that China is pushing into the Malaysian marketplace?

Answer. Malaysia maintains robust economic relationships with both the United States and the PRC. While Malaysia shares some of our concerns about the PRC's behavior in the region, as a nation heavily dependent on trade, it balances these

concerns with its extensive economic and investment ties to China. The United States, through its Indo-Pacific Strategy, advances fair and reciprocal trade and promotes commercial engagement that follows international best practices of transparency and financial sustainability. The over 700 U.S. companies operating in Malaysia model these best practices, many in high value-added industries that create skilled jobs. If confirmed, I will engage with Malaysian counterparts at all levels, both government and non-government, to discuss our concerns about the PRC's malign influence and how we can work together to counter it.

If confirmed, I will also encourage Malaysia to pursue open and transparent investment and infrastructure deals to avoid malign Chinese economic influence. If confirmed, I will also work with U.S. companies to highlight the benefits and best practices responsible investors bring to Malaysia.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. GEETA PASI BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Do you believe that Prime Minister Abiy remains committed to democratic reform and inclusive governance? If so, why? If not, what policies can the United States pursue to ensure that Ethiopia's citizens' aspirations for reform that precipitated Prime Minister Abiy's rise to power are met?

Answer. The United States supports Prime Minister Abiy's efforts to implement a reform agenda to align Ethiopia with democratic and free market principles that will pay long term dividends for the Ethiopian people and strengthen our bilateral relationship based on common shared values. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. policies that support these long-term goals.

Question. Can free and fair elections be held in Ethiopia next year as Prime Minister Abiy has suggested, notably when many of the most prominent political leaders have been arrested or otherwise detained in the last six months? What is the United States doing to press for these prisoners' release?

Answer. Despite delays, Prime Minister Abiy and the electoral commission have publicly and privately committed to holding national elections with broad political participation as soon as possible. The United States believes that holding free, fair, credible, and inclusive elections is critical to Ethiopia's democratic future. The United States continues to provide the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, civil society, and the media with resources and training to support the planned elections in 2021. The United States continues to press the Ethiopian Government to ensure that all prisoners are treated in accordance with Ethiopian law and that the Government support elections with inclusive and broad political party participation.

Question. Ethnic targeting has increased at an alarming rate. U.S. citizens of Tigrayan heritage have been detained and prevented from leaving the country. What is the United States doing to address the rise of ethnic targeting, including of American citizens?

Answer. The safety and security of U.S. citizens around the world is the top priority of the U.S. Government. U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa worked closely with Ethiopian authorities to ensure those detained at Bole airport because of their Tigrayan ethnicity-including American citizens-have been able to board their flights and depart Ethiopia safely.

The United States is deeply concerned about the reported targeting of Tigrayans or those of Tigrayan origins by the Ethiopian authorities, and has repeatedly warned against casting this crisis as one grounded in ethnicity. The United States has called for the protection of civilians at the highest levels of Ethiopia's leadership and has made clear that targeting civilians of Tigrayan origin will undermine the Government's stated goal of "winning the peace" once the conflict ends. We have urged the Government to reject publicly and firmly all such action based on ethnicity, and to respect all obligations under international law.

Question. There are credible reports of Eritrean ground forces participating in Tigray's military campaign against the TPLF. What degree of influence do you believe Eritrea now exerts in Ethiopia, and how does this affect the prospects for genuine democratic reform in the country?

Answer. The United States is aware of reports that Eritrean ground forces are participating in the conflict in Tigray.

Question. There are reports of Amhara militia having fought alongside the ENDF, and refugees in Sudan have suggested these militias have committed atrocities. How do you assess the role these militia played? What does the U.S. intend to do to ensure accountability for the abuses committed by all sides?

Answer. The United States is aware of reports that Amhara militia fought alongside the ENDF and allegations that they committed atrocities. We have categorically protested against all human rights violations or abuses. We have called on the Ethiopian Government to request and support independent investigations into these alleged atrocities. The U.S. Government interagency Atrocities Early Warning Task Force is evaluating appropriate measures to support international efforts to investigate and respond to any such allegations. The United States is prepared and committed to work with the international community to promote accountability for those culpable in these attacks.

Question. The Ethiopian Government has removed ethnic Tigrayans from its AU and U.N. deployments in Somalia and South Sudan and a civilian security officer at AU. It has leveled severe allegations at WHO Director-General Tedros and requested a list of ethnic Tigrayans at the WFP.

- Do you regard this as a threat to multilateralism and a potential human rights violation, as suggested by an UNMISS spokesman? What steps will you take to protect these institutions and prevent a dangerous precedent from taking hold?

Answer. The United States is deeply concerned about the reports that Tigrayan personnel attached to African Union (AU) and United Nations (UN) deployments in Somalia and South Sudan have been relieved of their duties. We have urged the Government of Ethiopia to avoid punitive or arbitrary action based on ethnicity and actions that could undermine stability in other parts of the Horn of Africa, including Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan. The Ethiopian Government has indicated that it will continue to deploy forces in support of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its other regional security commitments. If confirmed, I will publicly and privately encourage respect for human rights and advocate strongly against targeting of any ethnic group including ethnic Tigrayans.

Question. Given the ongoing assistance pause, which effectively has put a stop to obligations of previously appropriated funds intended to support Ethiopia's fragile democratic transition, do you believe it is appropriate to divert frozen democracy assistance toward broader "countering China" initiatives?

Answer. The United States is committed to supporting Ethiopia's democratic transition using a myriad of tools. Some of these tools counter Chinese influence while simultaneously meeting some of our broader goals such as job creation.

Question. In your role as PDAS for the AF Bureau, you would have direct knowledge of the role the Bureau played in the decision to pause unobligated, non-life-saving foreign assistance to Ethiopia. Kindly explain in detail the role AF Bureau leadership played in making this decision. Do you believe the policy process considered the AF Bureau's input, and how was this reflected in the final decision? Did the U.S. Mission in Addis Ababa have input into this decision? If so, what specific input did they provide? If not, why not?

Answer. The Secretary of State decided to pause temporarily certain assistance for Ethiopia until Ethiopia makes demonstrable progress working with Sudan and Egypt to reach agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in a manner beneficial to all parties. Notably, the Secretary approved certain exceptions to the pause, for the continuation of certain humanitarian aid, assistance for HIV/AIDS, assistance related to the provision of ventilators in response to the COVID–19 pandemic, and certain funding for the Development Finance Corporation.

Question. What is the impact of the Ethiopia assistance pause on food security? The U.S. invested billions of dollars in boosting resilience and lessening dependence on lifesaving humanitarian aid? What is the impact of the assistance pause on the enabling environment for economic growth?

Answer. The temporary pause on certain foreign assistance for Ethiopia does not apply to humanitarian assistance, which continues unabated in order to ensure food security and to assist those affected by conflict, drought, displacement, COVID–19, and other challenges. Funding for non-humanitarian agriculture programs that was not obligated before the pause is subject to the pause.

Question. How has the conflict in Tigray affected U.S. military cooperation with the ENDF, both generally and in Somalia's operations? Has the U.S. conveyed to the Government of Ethiopia that reports of shelling of civilian areas in Tigray, and

other abuses attributed to government-aligned forces, could affect security cooperation?

Answer. Lines of communication remain open between the United States and the ENDF about military-to-military cooperation in general and on Somalia operations specifically. Ethiopia remains an essential troop contributing country to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). On August 22, 2020, Secretary Pompeo approved a temporary, partial pause on the obligation and sub-obligation of certain foreign assistance funds for Ethiopia, including the related reprogramming of expiring resources planned for Ethiopia for other activities, and authorized communication of this decision to relevant stakeholders, including Congress and the Government of Ethiopia.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. GEETA PASI BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Ms. Pasi, as you know, in November, serious armed conflict broke out in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, which pitted Federal and allied forces against those of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). While the full course of that conflict remains unclear, it is but the latest round of violent unrest that has beset the country since 2018 and exacted a serious humanitarian toll on the Ethiopian people. On the floor of the Senate, I have called on the administration to take urgent diplomatic action to address this escalating conflict.

- At this stage, what role should the United States play in terms of conflict prevention and resolution? What strategies should we pursue? More specifically, how can we foster dialogue between Ethiopia's rival stakeholders?

Answer. To achieve an end to the conflict in Tigray, there must be a complete end to fighting and the parties must engage in constructive dialogue. The United States has been working with the international community, the African Union, and regional leaders to urge Ethiopian authorities and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to immediately de-escalate the conflict, end the current fighting, and undertake dialogue. We have called on all parties to ensure full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to facilitate rapid supply and delivery of life-saving assistance, the protection of civilians, and an immediate restoration of communication services to the region. We have also strongly stressed the need to avoid ethnicization of the situation. U.S. officials continue to urge neighboring countries to keep their borders open to asylum-seekers and avoid internationalization of the hostilities. If confirmed, I would ensure that Embassy Addis Ababa remains intensely engaged to support dialogue between the GOE and TPLF, including urging the Ethiopian Government to work with Tigrayan leaders to ensure that there is constructive, credible Tigrayan governance in the region, and to press for the protection of civilians and refugees and full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access.

Question. I have a number of questions about the trajectory of democratization efforts in Ethiopia. As I noted earlier, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed initiated a number of laudable reforms when he took power in 2018, which did much to broaden political space in the country. But we have seen backsliding for the last year, with the arrest of opposition leaders and journalists, and reports of abuses by security forces.

- How concerned are you about the trajectory of democratization efforts in Ethiopia? Is the country on track for free and fair polls next year and the establishment of a viable multi-party democracy?

Answer. The ability of the Government of Ethiopia to successfully implement political reforms and hold national elections, sustain its important role in promoting regional stability and countering terrorism, and its strong potential to serve as a key partner for U.S. commercial engagement in Africa, rests upon Ethiopia's ability to maintain its own internal stability and development as a strong democratic partner. This, in turn, is contingent upon Ethiopia's capacity to address public pressure for greater democratic inclusion, civil liberties, and economic opportunity. Despite delays, Prime Minister Abiy's administration and the electoral commission have publicly and privately committed to holding national elections with broad political participation as soon as possible. Prime Minister Abiy recently met with political parties and the Government has stated elections will take place in mid-2021. The United States is supporting the National Election Board of Ethiopia and training political parties, as well as civil society and the media to play a constructive role in the electoral process. We also continue to message publicly and privately our support for free and fair elections.

Question. What would be the consequences of a reversion to autocracy-for Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa region, and U.S. interests?

Answer. Ethiopia, with a population of over 100 million, is the second most populous nation in Africa. Ethiopia is strategically positioned in the Horn of Africa, where threats by al-Shabaab and violent extremist organizations associated with ISIS are present, and our engagement with the Government of Ethiopia allows us to reduce the United States' direct military role. Ethiopia also hosts hundreds of thousands of refugees, enhancing regional stability. Democratic backsliding in Ethiopia would be detrimental for the Ethiopian people, the Horn of Africa and broader U.S. policy in the region. Prime Minister Abiy has pledged to oversee democratic reforms and under his administration, and we have seen an opening of democratic space for the political opposition, the media, and civil society. His ambitious reform agenda has the potential to transform Ethiopia into a more democratic country, with a Western-style, free market economy that would afford opportunities to the people of Ethiopia, and would align more closely with our values and policy interests. As such, if confirmed, I would prioritize continued U.S. engagement to encourage continued attention to good governance, democracy, and promotion of human rights and continued advancement of political and economic reforms in Ethiopia.

Question. What have been the limits of our approach to Ethiopia since the country's political transition began in 2018, specifically as it relates to supporting democracy?

Answer. Ethiopia's political and economic reform agenda will take time to fully implement, given the years of political repression and corruption. Our efforts to support reforms must occur at all levels of government, society, and communities in Ethiopia, and must include support for government efforts that improve democracy and governance. One major obstacle to Ethiopia's political transition has been the capacity of civil servants in new government offices created to advance those reforms when Prime Minister Abiy took power. Since 2018, we have provided training and support to ministries responsible for justice, security and public finance management and the National Election Board of Ethiopia. We have also supported nascent civil society organizations, and political parties, as well as the Ethiopia Human Rights Commission. Although many positive changes have happened at the federal level as a result of this support, this has not yet been the case at the state and local levels. We are working with local community leaders and civil society organizations at the local level to encourage civil participation and promote dialogue to mitigate long standing ethnic tensions.

Question. As I noted earlier, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed initiated a number of laudable reforms when he took power in 2018, which did much to broaden political space in the country. But we have seen backsliding for the last year, with the arrest of opposition leaders and journalists, and reports of abuses by security forces.

- What can the U.S. Government do to better support democracy and human rights in Ethiopia in the coming years?

Answer. This is a critical moment for Ethiopia. The United States has strong partnerships with Ethiopia to support health, education, food security, and economic growth. Popular desires for greater political freedom and civil liberties led to the selection of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minster. Prime Minister Abiy made sweeping changes to Ethiopia, many of which addressed long-standing issues, including press freedom and other human rights issues. The complex issues that impede transition in Ethiopia remain and include land tenure, ethnic tensions, and youth unemployment. Discontent with the reforms and growing ethnic tensions may jeopardize the gains of the past as the current government has relied at times on the heavy-handed tactics it sought to erase. 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. I will also encourage the development and capacity building of civil society organizations which can now take advantage of legislation that has lifted constraints to their functioning and activities that were in place until recently. Such steps would not only support Ethiopian's own aspirations for stability and development, as well as its efforts against violent extremism in the region, but they would also strengthen the foundation for the U.S.-Ethiopia partnership in areas of vital interest to both nations.

Question. I have a number of questions about the trajectory of democratization efforts in Ethiopia. As I noted earlier, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed initiated a number of laudable reforms when he took power in 2018, which did much to broaden political space in the country. But we have seen backsliding for the last year, with the arrest of opposition leaders and journalists, and reports of abuses by security forces.

- Can I have your commitment to place democratization and human rights at the forefront of your engagement with Ethiopian authorities, and to take a firm stand when you see behavior inconsistent with democratic practice and norms?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to place democratization and human rights at the forefront of my engagement with Ethiopian authorities and to take a firm stand when I see behavior inconsistent with democratic practice and norms.

Question. How involved has State Department been in the GERD negotiations to date?

Answer. While Treasury has been the lead agency within the U.S. Government for GERD negotiations, the State Department has coordinated closely with Treasury. The Department has remained engaged with Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt throughout all GERD negotiations to date, including the most recent set of discussions coordinated by the African Union (AU).

Question. What is your assessment of the current state of the GERD talks and the main impediments to a deal?

Answer. Our understanding is that the AU-sponsored talks are now paused due to Sudan's decision not to participate without a change in format, particularly with regard to allowing AU experts to play a more active role in facilitating negotiations. We encourage all three countries to find a compromise that would allow negotiations to resume.

Question. What have been the consequences of our pause on development assistance to Ethiopia, in terms of the bilateral relationship?

Answer. Our substantial investment to Ethiopia over the past year made the United States, once again, Ethiopia's largest bilateral development partner. We continue to engage with the Government of Ethiopia on areas of mutual interest, including the country's ambitious political and economic reform efforts, and continue to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to populations in need. The GERD is only one aspect of our relationship with Ethiopia.

Question. What, in your view, are the elements of a U.S. Government strategy for supporting successful GERD negotiations?

Answer. The U.S. Government has consistently taken the position that it is up to the three countries involved—Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt—to negotiate an agreement that meets the needs of all three countries. The United States should continue its role as a neutral party and press all three countries to return to good-faith negotiations in order to reach an agreement on the GERD.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to complying with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to make clear to all employees that prohibited personnel practices has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under my leadership. I also agree that anyone found to have engaged in prohibited personnel practices should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. As I have done in the past, I plan to recruit a highly diverse team and to mentor and support all the people on my team. Our embassies must have a workforce that reflects the rich composition of our citizenry. If confirmed, I commit to an inclusive workplace in which every employee is treated with dignity and respect and feels empowered to serve the American people. I will outline my expectations clearly to my Country Team members, hold them accountable, and lead by example. Throughout my career, I have put a particular emphasis on encouraging employees from diverse backgrounds to remain in the Foreign Service and in the Civil Service, part of which means supporting them to find the best possible onward assignments

that will make them competitive for promotion and advancement. If confirmed, I plan to ensure that the entire embassy promotes and supports diversity and inclusion, and that the entire embassy has regular discussions on the tools we are using to achieve that goal. This includes diversity in the Ethiopian context, by ensuring the inclusion of underrepresented groups among our locally engaged staff members.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

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. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

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

Answer. The most important actions I have taken to support democracy and human rights in my career relate to political transitions. Bangladesh risked becoming an ungovernable space in 2007. As Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., my public and private messages encouraged the caretaker government to restore democracy, promote respect for human rights, and hold free and fair elections. In Ghana from 1995 to 1997, I promoted political discussion between multiple political parties in advance of its first democratic elections, providing necessary space for political dialogue. After the fall of Ceausescu in Romania, I documented the challenges faced by ethnic and religious minorities, especially the Roma, providing a roadmap for the new Romanian Government to improve its performance in this area. As Ambassador, I showcased the human rights aspects of our significant assistance to professionalize Chad's security forces and stressed the need to hold security personnel accountable for violations. When reporters were detained for asking questions about the deaths of prisoners being transported by police, I led the effort among like-minded ambassadors to issue a joint statement that publicly expressed our concerns, leading to the release of the reporters. As PDAS in the Africa Bureau, I have coordinated our efforts to support elections and promote human rights across the continent.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Ethiopia? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The most serious impediments to democracy or democratic development in Ethiopia include ethnic divisions, repression of independent media, certain restrictions on political participation, weak national and regional governance institutions, and the lack of capacity of civil society and government security forces and unemployment. The detention of certain political party members and journalists by

security forces has been a source of critical concern, both inside and outside the country. If confirmed, I will use my leadership and voice, both publicly and privately, to make clear that respect for human rights is essential for Ethiopia's future prosperity, stability and security. I will engage Ethiopian authorities, international partners, civil society organizations, and business and religious leaders to work together toward these goals. I will also ensure strong U.S. Government engagement with human rights activists and civil society in Ethiopia, as well as organizations and agencies charged with advancing and protecting human rights such as the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Ethiopia? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage leading government officials, including the Prime Minister on U.S. Government concerns about governance and human rights issues. I will meet regularly with leadership from domestic and international human rights organizations, political opposition groups and their leaders, and civil society organizations working on issues of democracy and governance. I will also engage with all levels of government in Ethiopia and actively seek out views of local civil society representatives. Additionally, I will use public platforms to voice support for democracy, respect for individual freedoms and good governance. I will also ensure that U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa officers meeting regularly with representatives of Ethiopian civil society and human rights organizations and that the U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa prioritizes support for good governance and human rights in its Integrated Country Strategy and related programming.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. U.S. assistance to Ethiopia advances democracy and governance, both through funds dedicated specifically for those issues and through cross-sectoral programming in areas such as health or education. Through our development assistance, the United States improves the resilience and capacity of nascent civil society organizations in the face of, at times limited, democratic space, supports Ethiopian partners to advance their advocacy priorities related to human rights, enhances the professionalism of independent media, and seeks to improve the transparency of democratic processes. Additionally, the United States supports the introduction and expansion of good governance, which bolsters transparency, citizen participation, and accountability within the justice sector. To complement and expand these efforts, I will continue to engage within the State Department and with USAID to ensure appropriate resources are available to advance U.S. interests in Ethiopia.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Ethiopia? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in Ethiopia and the United States. Human rights, civil society organizations, and other non-governmental organizations, regardless of where they are registered or operate, play an important role in advancing democratic governance, and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging with any individual or organization that supports U.S. values, and will do all I can to support and promote their efforts to strengthen Ethiopia's democracy.

I will also speak out publicly about U.S. values including respect for human rights, and continue to support the Ethiopian Government's efforts to reform its legal framework to ensure respect for human rights, including as the freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meeting with diverse representation of democratic political figures and parties. I will ensure that U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa continues to engage with representatives from diverse political and ethnic perspectives, including government and opposition parties. I will advocate for demo-

cratic values and extend support through existing instruments to organizations that promote the active participation of women, youth, and other marginalized populations in political activities. I will also support all Mission programs and activities that support voter education and citizen engagement in the democratic process.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Ethiopia on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Ethiopia?

Answer. Freedom of expression, including for members of the press, is fundamental to an open, just, and democratic society. If confirmed, the embassy team and I will actively engage with the Ethiopian Government on press freedom. I will speak openly and honestly with the Government and civil society about any efforts designed to control or undermine freedom of expression, including blocking Internet and mobile communications, and commit myself to meeting regularly with independent and local press in Ethiopia in support of their efforts.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Ethiopia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage my Embassy team to actively engage with civil society and government counterparts, as well as with local media, to counter disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Ethiopia on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will proudly engage on matters of labor rights with leadership in government and civil society. I will engage U.S. companies and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to encourage the Government to adopt and enforce practices and legal reforms that uphold workers' freedom of association, collective bargaining, acceptable working conditions, and the right to a minimum wage.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Ethiopia, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Ethiopia? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Ethiopia?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens, including historically marginalized populations. Homosexuality is illegal in Ethiopia, and LGBTI communities continue to face discrimination. If confirmed, I will support the development of local voices in support of LGBTI rights. I will also raise LGBTI issues in the context of larger human rights concerns wherever possible.

Of course, the safety and security of LGBTI people, as well as all individuals, is of the utmost importance; therefore, if confirmed, I will ensure our approach in Ethiopia, first and foremost, does no harm. I will regularly engage with local LGBTI community and civil society partners so that we can avoid sending messages or taking actions that might be counter-productive or dangerous to the community.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. GEETA PASI BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. 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. As I have done in the past, I plan to recruit a highly diverse team and to mentor and support all the people on my team. Our embassies must have a workforce that reflects the rich composition of our citizenry. If confirmed, I commit to an inclusive workplace in which every employee is treated with dignity and respect and feels empowered to serve the American people. I will outline my expectations clearly to my Country Team members, hold them accountable, and lead by example. Throughout my career I have put a particular emphasis on encouraging employees from diverse backgrounds to remain in the Foreign Service and in the Civil Service, part of which means supporting them to find the best possible onward assignments that will make them competitive for promotion and advancement. If confirmed, I

plan to work to ensure that the entire embassy promotes and supports diversity and inclusion, and that we have regular discussions on the tools we are using to achieve that goal. This includes diversity in the Ethiopian context, ensuring the inclusion of underrepresented groups among our locally engaged staff members.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Ethiopia are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to speak regularly with my team-both collectively and individually-about our objectives for recruiting a diverse team and for promoting an inclusive environment. I will ensure that all employees have participated in relevant training and will consult with and seek a visit (or a video conference for all staff) by the Office of Civil Rights and the Bureau of Global Talent Management's Diversity and Inclusion Unit. I will encourage the workforce to engage in inclusive conversations on and efforts to promote diversity and inclusion. I will ensure that all my staff know that diversity and inclusion are top priorities of mine and welcome input from them on how to improve diversity and inclusion efforts.

Question. 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 have through appropriate channels.

Question. 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 have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Ethiopia?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, including foreign stock funds, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but which are exempt from conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Ethiopia specifically?

Answer. Corruption undermines democracy and rule of law, destabilizes nations, hinders economic growth, and provides openings for dangerous groups, such as traffickers and terrorists. Anticorruption efforts seek to 1) make it harder for criminality and terrorism to take root and spread, 2) promote more stable and accountable governments, and 3) level the playing field for U.S. business to compete in every region around the world. In Ethiopia, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's efforts to build Ethiopia's capacity to protect democratic inclusion, promote civil liberties, and build economic opportunities are being challenged by opposition groups, including former officials who have been charged with corruption. In the past, the lack of democratic traditions and values, as well as restrictions on the operations of nongovernmental organizations and civil society, have hampered democratic reforms and development in Ethiopia. Long held grievances and anger at the central government have fueled protests and civil unrest and have undermined Ethiopia's democratic transition. However, Ethiopia's recent reform efforts have made positive strides to provide a greater voice to civil society, establish a more professional and independent justice sector free from political interference, and strengthened the security sector by building the capacity of police and security forces.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Ethiopia and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. While corruption remains an issue in Ethiopia, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has made tremendous strides to modernize and establish a more professional and independent justice sector free from political interference. Prime Minister Abiy has opened and broadened political space, pursued justice sector reform, and strengthened adherence to the rule of law. In 2019, the investigations and over forty charges brought against former Director General of the National Intelligence and

Security Services (NISS) Getachew Assefa, and 25 additional former officials and staff at NISS, is a testament to the Government's seriousness in combatting corruption.

The Government has also undertaken important legal reforms, including changes to the laws governing the activities of civil society and protections for media and commercial sector. In February 2020, the Ethiopian Attorney General's Office opened a new and consolidated Anti-Corruption Directorate to recover "stolen assets and fight corruption." The plan is to have the Directorate oversee not only the investigation phase but the subsequent trial and conviction phases, as well as the recovery of assets or ill-gotten gains. The goal is for Ethiopians to understand these reforms and help the populace perceive the judiciary as being efficient, independent, fair, and accessible.

Prime Minister Abiy's reforms are slowly becoming more entrenched at the federal level, but challenges to implementing Prime Minister Abiy's reformist vision at the regional and local levels remain.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Ethiopia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the interagency members and explore further opportunities for increased U.S. engagement on good governance and anticorruption programming. I plan on continuing U.S. support to Ethiopia's Attorney General's office, Supreme Court, and other rule of law actors at the national level to draft, adopt, and implement policy legal and justice reforms, as well as build investigation capacity to advance the Government's anticorruption efforts, human rights, and counterterrorism investigations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. GEETA PASI BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. The United States has long depended on Ethiopia as a net contributor to regional stability, a role clearly in question now. If not contained soon, what impact might the ongoing fighting around Tigray have on the Horn of Africa region? What actions would you take as Ambassador to ensure that Ethiopia maintains its stabilizing role?

Answer. There must be a complete end to fighting and constructive dialogue to resolve the crisis in Tigray. Ethiopia contributes to regional stability through a host of ways. Ethiopia is the third-largest host of refugees in Africa. Ethiopia is a significant contributor to regional peacekeeping and counterterrorism efforts and is a key partner in the African Union Mission in Somalia's peacekeeping and counterterrorism efforts and to the United Nations' peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan. Ethiopia also plays a leading role in the South Sudanese peace process. The United States is gravely concerned about the situation in Tigray. Ethiopia's role in promoting peace and stability in the region and countering violent extremism will be undermined if the Tigray crisis does not end. If it persists, Ethiopia risks creating instability and further ethnic violence, which could derail development and market reforms and stall progress on democracy. If confirmed, I would work hard for stability in the Horn of Africa and in Ethiopia by continuing to urge the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front to restore peace and pursue reconciliation. I would also continue to work to advance Ethiopia's efforts to regional peace and security and engage with partners on ongoing security reform efforts in Ethiopia to mitigate and prevent conflict and promote political and economic reforms

Question. Many international voices are calling for dialogue between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigrayan rebels to end the current conflict. What is the role of the Embassy in promoting dialogue and ensuring access for humanitarian actors? How would you approach fulfilling that role, given the current push-back from both sides of the conflict?

Answer. There must be a complete end to fighting and constructive dialogue to resolve the crisis in Tigray. U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa and the Department have been working with the international community, the African Union, and other regional leaders to urge Ethiopian authorities and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to immediately de-escalate the conflict and end the current fighting. U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa has been in communication with the Government of Ethiopia and TPLF leaders and called on all parties to ensure full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to facilitate rapid supply and delivery of life-saving

assistance, the protection of civilians, and an immediate restoration of communication services to the region. The United States has also stressed the need to avoid ethnicization of the situation. Embassy and Department officials continue to urge neighboring countries to keep their borders open to asylum-seekers. If confirmed, I would ensure that U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa remains intensely engaged to support dialogue between the GOE and TPLF, including urging the Ethiopian Government to work with Tigrayan leaders to ensure that there is constructive, credible Tigrayan governance in the region, and to press for humanitarian access and protection of civilians.

Question. Human rights organizations have expressed concern that the Ethiopian Government is using COVID–19 restrictions as a pretext to restrict the rights of citizens, including curtailing freedom of speech and internet access. How has the United States responded to the uptick in arbitrary arrests and prosecutions of journalists and government critics? How would you continue to address this issue as Ambassador?

Answer. U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa and Department officials continue to urge Ethiopia to support fundamental freedoms and rights, and principles of good governance. For example, U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa and Department officials have expressed grave concerns to Ethiopian officials over the recent communication blackout in the Tigray region and pressed for the restoration of these services, particularly as the lack of services has hampered our ability to communicate with U.S. citizens and coordinate humanitarian response with international partners. We also continue to work with human rights groups to call for transparent and independent investigations into human rights abuses and violations in Ethiopia. U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa continues to support the efforts of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and has been in close contact with Commissioner Daniel Bekele since his tenure began in 2019. We supported the promulgation of recent legislation that gave the EHRC more autonomy and more funding to perform investigations. The United States has pressed the Ethiopian Government to undertake transparent, fair judicial processes in accordance with Ethiopian law for all those detained, including the recent arrest of journalists in Ethiopia. If confirmed, I will continue to call for respect for freedom of expression, including that of members of the press. I would also continue supporting and collaborating with the EHRC and civil society organizations to ensure the rights of all Ethiopians are respected and upheld.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. GEETA PASI BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. The most destabilizing external actions in the Horn of Africa and those that undermining prospects for successful democratic transitions in Sudan and Ethiopia are not in fact U.S. adversaries like Russia and China, but U.S. allies and security partners in the Middle East, who have exported their rivalries into the Horn.What is the U.S's strategy for mitigating the destabilizing influence from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar on the Horn?

Answer. Strengthening security and stabilization are core components of the administration's Africa policy. The Horn of Africa is of great strategic importance to the United States and we work with our partners to bring stability, peace, and prosperity to the region. In Somalia, for example, we provide significant support for the Federal Government and Member States as they create Somali-led election model that will be critical for stability. The U.S. Government also created the Friends of Sudan to help stabilize that country, and included the participation of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Qatar, and Ethiopia. We will continue to encourage countries to invest productively in the region in a manner that promotes stability and peace.

Question. Is there an effort underway involving not just the Africa Bureau but the Near East Bureau and other relevant offices to develop a multi-year regional strategy for the Horn that accounts for the increasingly aggressive influence of Middle Eastern countries in this important region?

Answer. The administration's Africa strategy supports efforts to counter threats to American and African Security. The Bureaus of African Affairs (AF), Near East Affairs (NEA), and Counterterrorism work closely to coordinate our engagement in the Horn of Africa that advance our overarching U.S. national security interests. This approach allows us to respond flexibly as needs arise to balance our foreign policy priorities. In recognition of the increased overlap between AF and NEA and to elevate coordination, while I served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for

AF, we co-hosted a joint session with NEA during the 2020 Chiefs of Mission Conference to discuss Red Sea issues among our ambassadors. Further, when crises emerge between our regions as was the case during the 2019 political crisis in Sudan, our Special Envoy to Sudan and a NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary made a joint trip to the region to shore up a unified regional position. We also seek the input from the think-tank community as the State Department sent an AF Deputy Assistant Secretary to the USIP and National Defense University-organized Red Sea Forum events in Jordan and Washington, DC, which assembled regional and interested countries and non-governmental experts.

Question. The humanitarian situation created by the crisis in Ethiopia is deteriorating. The U.N. estimates that two million people are in need of assistance in and around Tigray, and one million have been displaced by the fighting. Forty-four thousand refugees from Ethiopia have flooded into Sudan, which is dealing with its own precarious political transition. UNHCR has said that approximately 96,000 Eritrean refugees in Tigray camps have essentially run out of food. Ethiopia and the U.N. have reportedly agreed to a deal by which U.N. air workers will be granted "unimpeded" access to government controlled areas of Tigray.

- What can the United States do to ensure the Federal Government of Ethiopia lives up to its end of this agreement?

Answer. The U.N. and Government of Ethiopia (GOE) have signed a coordination framework that affirms humanitarian principles and the importance of access, and establishes a UN-GOE committee that creates a clearance and approval processes for humanitarian activities. We will monitor the implementation of this agreement closely and strongly press for a streamlined process and full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access. Significant barriers remain to full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access. Most notably, fighting continues throughout parts of the Tigray region, and access will likely remain limited until humanitarian organizations can successfully negotiate access with all parties to the conflict or until the fighting ends.

The United States is closely aligned with other donor governments in this regard and is engaged at all levels to advocate for safe, sustained, and unhindered access to ensure that those impacted by this conflict can receive the assistance they need. We are steadfast in our support for the U.N. and humanitarian partners to provide assistance as access improves.

Question. What remedies would the United States propose if the TPLF refuses to allow the same levels of access to areas it controls?

Answer. It is vital that continued advocacy and engagement for safe, sustained, and unhindered access take place at all levels to ensure that those impacted by this conflict can receive the assistance they need. We are aligned with other donor governments in these efforts and in supporting the U.N. and our partners to provide assistance as humanitarian access and the security situation improve. We will also explore options for coordinating with moderate actors within the Tigray's People Liberation Front (TPLF) to secure greater access by humanitarian works to vulnerable and impacted communities. The United States is also exploring a variety of potential actions and tools available if parties to the conflict jeopardize Ethiopian citizens by refusing humanitarian access.

Question. What resources should the U.S. provide to Sudan to enable local communities to absorb refugees, and enable a safe return back to Ethiopia?

Answer. The United States was the largest humanitarian donor to Sudan in FY 2020 providing over $320 million to a number of international partners. U.S. humanitarian assistance provides refugees and IDPs in Sudan with shelter, access to clean water and sanitation, health care, food, and other lifesaving support. Our partners are already deploying some of this assistance to respond to the urgent needs of the newly arrived Ethiopian refugees. The U.N. released an Inter-Agency response plan for the Ethiopian refugee influx in East Sudan in late November, which called for $147 million to respond to an anticipated Ethiopian refugee population of up to 100,000 over the next six months. We are currently evaluating this appeal to determine our contributions. We are looking to provide additional funding to support USAID emergency in-kind food assistance in Sudan.

Question. International humanitarian organizations have credibly reported that both federal government forces and the TPLF have committed serious human rights abuses during the conflict, including the indiscriminate killing of civilians and possible war crimes.

- What steps is the U.S. Government prepared to take to help investigate these potential abuses and crimes?

Answer. We have subject matter experts embedded with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and are assisting in the development of action plans and investigations into reported abuses and atrocities. Through the Atrocities Early Warning Task Force, we are also developing an action plan to respond to reports of human rights violations or abuses of civilians or refugees. Along with our international partners, we have called for transparent, independent investigations into these reports. We have also called for the restoration of communication services to better support civilians and refugees in the Tigray region. The U.S. Government is also prepared to support the work being done by the Office of the High Commission of Human Rights (OHCHR) who is gathering information and incident accounts from refugees who have fled to Sudan. We are also deeply concerned about the reports of Ethiopian authorities taking actions against Tigrayans, such as reported detentions and harassment based on their ethnicity. U.S. diplomats in Washington and Addis Ababa raised the need for the protection of all civilians with the highest levels of Ethiopia's leadership, and made clear that taking action against civilians of Tigrayan origin based on their ethnicity will undermine Ethiopia's stated goal of "winning the peace" once the conflict ends. We have urged the Government to reject publicly and firmly all such action based on ethnicity, and to respect all its obligations under international law.

Question. The U.S. Government has placed a great deal of effort, time, and money into rebuilding our relationship with Ethiopia and with Prime Minister Abiy in particular. PM Abiy, however, has shunned diplomatic efforts to mediate the conflict, including those of the United States.

- How will the U.S Government respond if the Federal Government of Ethiopia is found to have committed serious human rights abuses?

Answer. The U.S. Government, including the Atrocities Early Warning Task Force, has closely review and examined the conflict as it has evolved and is determining options the U.S. Government might take to advance the goal of ensuring the protection of civilians, including refugees. The United States is also exploring a myriad of 'carrots and sticks' that may be used to respond as reports of human rights violations and abuses are being investigated, to include enhanced diplomatic engagement and potential consequences. This includes actions that could be taken against individuals implicated in human rights abuses and violations. Perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations must be held accountable. Promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms is a high U.S. priority, as are preventing atrocities, protecting civilians, and ensuring accountability.

Question. Has PM Abiy done irreparable harm to the U.S.-Ethiopia relationship? Is he not the leader the world thought he was when he won the Nobel Peace Prize and was being lauded for seeking to take Ethiopia in a new direction?

Answer. The United States-Ethiopia relationship is important, complex, and focused on our shared interests. PM Abiy's efforts to implement much needed political and economic reforms should be lauded. However, a failure to peacefully resolve the Tigray conflict and address the ongoing humanitarian concerns and protection of civilians will undermine his reform efforts.

Responses to Additional Questions for the Record Submitted to Hon. David Reimer by Senator James E. Risch

Question. Honoring commercial contracts is an essential element of the rule of law, which Sierra Leone must strengthen to develop its economy, as we'd all like to see. According to international arbitration rulings, a U.S.-funded company, SL Mining, is in an active dispute with the Government of Sierra Leone, which has violated its contract with SL Mining. The administration has rightly made aggressive commercial diplomacy a priority, but promoting U.S. trade and investment in Africa has been a longstanding, bipartisan priority. What would you do as ambassador to advance the rule of law in Sierra Leone, mainly as it affects this U.S.-funded company? How would a potential Millennium Challenge Corporation compact impact your advocacy for Sierra Leone?

Answer. Although the Government of Sierra Leone has a generally favorable attitude toward foreign direct investment and generally treats foreign companies in a non-discriminatory fashion, investors face obstacles, including corruption, low human capital development, poor infrastructure, and intermittent contract enforcement challenges stemming from the weak enforcement of the rule of law. Ultimately, a country's success will depend to a large extent on its ability to foster an

environment for the private sector to drive economic growth and opportunity. I understand that the Embassy continues to engage on investment climate issues broadly and this case specifically. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate with the Government of Sierra Leone—both bilaterally and with others in the international community—for the types of policy actions needed to maintain the country's improved performance on the Millennium Challenge Corporation scorecard and advancement in the World Bank's Doing Business rankings, which specifically includes dynamics related to the enforcement of contracts. If confirmed, my team and I will continue to support the interests of U.S. firms, including engaging on the SL Mining case directly with the Government of Sierra Leone, to improve on these investment climate issues to strengthen Sierra Leone's economy and make the country a more attractive location for American investment.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. DAVID REIMER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Sierra Leone is facing a possible recession amid the global economic downturn, with the IMF predicting in June that GDP will contract by 3.1 percent.

- How will this affect development in Sierra Leone?

Answer. The COVID–19 pandemic has tested the resilience of the Sierra Leonean people and is negatively affecting economic development in Sierra Leone's small and fragile economy. However, just as we stood with the Sierra Leoneans during the Ebola crisis, the United States will support Sierra Leone's recovery from COVID–19. The U.S. Government is a primary partner in the response efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone. If confirmed, I will work with USAID and international donors to support Sierra Leone's economic recovery. I will work with USAID and CDC to implement sustainable investments across the health sector and encourage the Government of Sierra Leone to invest more heavily to create the jobs necessary to boost the economy and combat poverty.

Question. What can the United States do to reduce poverty and promote private sector investment?

Answer. Sierra Leone's economy has significant potential, with abundant mineral resources, large areas of fertile land, well-stocked fisheries, and beautiful beaches. If confirmed, supporting U.S. companies for the benefit of both Americans and Sierra Leoneans would be among my top priorities to capitalize on the significant potential of the Sierra Leonean economy. As an economic-coned officer, this is of particular interest to me.Although the Government of Sierra Leone has a generally favorable attitude toward foreign direct investment, investors face obstacles, including corruption, low human capital development, and poor infrastructure. If confirmed, I would urge the Government of Sierra Leone to improve on these investment climate issues to strengthen their economy and make it a more conducive environment for private sector-led growth and a more attractive location for U.S. firms. I would continue the Embassy's work with the private sector and relevant Government of Sierra Leone leaders to help diversify Sierra Leone's economy and encourage U.S. investments and the growth of small and medium enterprises that can employ Sierra Leone's burgeoning youth population.

Question. Are you concerned about Chinese investment in Sierra Leone?

Answer. Yes. I understand that Chinese engagements in Sierra Leone are expanding. If confirmed, I would encourage socially responsible foreign investment—particularly U.S. investment—in Sierra Leone that promotes sustainable development and respect for human rights of all individuals. I would also encourage investments in line with internationally accepted best practices, such as those spelled out in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. I would not hesitate to speak out if I saw Chinese investment or business practices that exploit or are not in the best interest of Sierra Leone.

Question. Although there have been at least 74 deaths from COVID–19 in Sierra Leone, the country does not seem to have suffered as serious an outbreak as other African countries. Still, the pandemic remains a serious health threat-one among many in Sierra Leone. The country became a focus country for the Presidential Malaria Initiative in 2017, and was the epicenter of the West Africa Ebola outbreak:

- Among the many health challenges facing, Sierra Leone, which should be the priority for United States assistance?

Answer. Even prior to the onset of COVID–19, Sierra Leoneans faced serious health challenges. The country ranks near the very bottom, at 181 out of 189 countries, on the UN's Human Development Index, with high rates of maternal mortality, child malnutrition, and malaria. 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. I would encourage continuation of the U.S. health initiatives and continued engagement with Sierra Leonean officials to address health threats both thought focused attention on specific maladies as well as more generalized improvements to strengthen health systems.

I understand that the Government of Sierra Leone's ability to respond effectively to COVID–19 is largely due to the sizable investment from the U.S. Government during and after Ebola, particularly under the Global Health Security Agenda. If confirmed, I would continue to use our strong public health presence and resources to help the Government of Sierra Leone respond to the numerous of health challenges facing the country.

Oversight

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that under your leadership, the U.S. Embassy will not take any action to support, promote, or participate in any matters related to, or that could be perceived as benefitting, the Trump Organization?

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. Do you commit to make clear to all employees that retaliation of any kind has no place in federal government and will not be tolerated under your leadership? Do you agree that anyone found to have engaged in retaliation should be held fully accountable, up to and including losing their job?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to make clear to all employees that prohibited personnel practices have no place in the federal government and will not be tolerated under my leadership. I agree that anyone found to have engaged in prohibited personnel practices should be held fully accountable and subject to discipline consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and Department policy.

Question. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have worked to promote diversity in the State Department workforce. I have personally mentored Foreign Service and Civil Service employees from diverse backgrounds to strengthen retention and make them competitive for promotion and advancement. I intend to continue this practice if confirmed as Ambassador to Sierra Leone. As an example of my efforts, at my current post as Ambassador to Mauritius and the Seychelles, I directed our Deputy Chief of Mission and one other Embassy Officer to personally interview every single applicant for which we have open positions. This is an involved process due to the volume of applicants; however, I believe that it is essential to ensure that everyone gets a fair and equal opportunity to serve and that no one is overlooked. I intend to take this practice to my next post, if confirmed.

Question. Do you commit to respond promptly to all requests for information by members of this committee?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such response would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to appear before this committee upon request?

Answer. Yes, with the understanding that any such appearance would be organized through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any credible allegations of foreign interference in U.S. elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and rules and to raising concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to report to appropriate authorities, including the FBI, Inspector General, and Congress, any attempts by foreign or private individuals to improperly influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly if you have reason to believe those efforts are adverse to U.S. interests?

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. If you become aware of any suspected waste, fraud, or abuse in the Department, do you commit to report it to the Inspector General or other appropriate channels?

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.

Democracy/Human Rights

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

Answer. During my career, I have taken advantage of many opportunities to promote democracy and human rights, most notably during my time as the Director of the Office of West African Affairs and while serving in Mauritania, Iraq, and Haiti. I believe my most meaningful achievements occurred while serving in Baghdad, Iraq as the Embassy's Senior Refugee Coordinator. In that job, I had the opportunity to hear directly from refugees and non-governmental organizations and elevate their concerns to the senior levels in the Iraqi Government. I advocated repeatedly with the minister in charge of refugee affairs to provide better treatment of internally displaced persons and to treat all internally displaced persons equally, regardless of whether they were Sunni, Shia, Christian, or Kurd. I believe that through my advocacy efforts, we were able to increase Iraqi Government attention and assistance to these victims of conflict.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Sierra Leone? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. The most pressing democracy and human rights challenges in Sierra Leone are official corruption; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; and criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct. Other concerns include: insufficient access to justice; violence and societal discrimination against women and girls, including female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C); early and forced marriage; and discrimination against persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons.

If confirmed, I will continue our embassy's advocacy in support of democratic institutions and governance, as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. I will engage directly with the Government to strengthen democracy and will build strong relationships with all stakeholders from a diverse range of perspectives, including civil society, the media, and marginalized groups. I will do so in order to better understand their challenges, promote the free and open exchange of ideas, and advocate on their behalf.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Sierra Leone? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. I understand that democracy concerns in Sierra Leone derive in part from limited government capacity to enforce the rule of law or ensure access to justice. Widespread corruption also poses a major challenge. If confirmed, I would work with our embassy, interagency colleagues, and international partners to help overcome these challenges by building the capacity of Sierra Leone's democratic institutions. Our efforts would continue to help Sierra Leone to improve democratic governance through targeted investments in civil society and persistent engagement in support of democracy, respect for human rights, and access to justice. I recognize that addressing endemic corruption is a long-term challenge. If confirmed, I would engage the Government of Sierra Leone and civil society to capitalize on President Bio's stated commitment to fighting corruption and recent progress to address this pressing issue.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other

sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. The United States has a robust assistance partnership with Sierra Leone. If confirmed, I would continue this partnership to promote development in Sierra Leone for the benefit of Sierra Leoneans and Americans alike. Our ongoing democracy and governance activities work to progressively build the capacities of civil society, media and government, informing and empowering citizens, especially women, to advocate effectively for their interests while holding officials accountable for their performance. These, and other lines of U.S. effort, will continue contributing toward Sierra Leone's democratic growth and good governance.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Sierra Leone? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations all play an essential role in advancing democratic governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assisting Sierra Leone to develop into a stable, secure, and prosperous partner for the United States. If confirmed, I commit to meeting with any individual or entity that can advance U.S. goals related to human rights. It is essential that non-governmental organizations and civil society are afforded freedom to express their opinions and conduct their activities. If confirmed, I would advocate this position to government, non-governmental, and civil society leaders. I would also facilitate connections between government and civil society organizations to build trust and mitigate unhelpful restrictions on civil society or non-governmental organizations.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, the United States Embassy will continue to engage with representatives from across the political spectrum, including the ruling party and opposition parties, under my leadership. I understand that the Embassy has joined international partners in calling for an increased commitment to issues-based politics and dialogue and cooperation among political parties on issues of national interest. If confirmed, I will continue this practice as well as the Embassy's advocacy for access and inclusivity for women, minorities, and youth within political parties.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Sierra Leone on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Sierra Leone?

Answer. Yes. I am committed to supporting media freedom and strengthening journalistic professionalism. If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's practice of engaging with the media, like-minded partners, civil society, and non-governmental organizations to underscore the importance of an independent, professional, and open media to a free and democratic society. If confirmed, I would also support expanded educational and exchange opportunities for local media. I understand that in the past, the embassy has hosted these exchanges to raise awareness on trafficking in persons, domestic violence, gender-based violence, child abuse, and children's education. If confirmed, I would seek to continue those efforts as soon as public health conditions permit.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in Sierra Leone?

Answer. Yes. The U.S. Embassy in Sierra Leone supports media freedom and is committed to strengthening journalistic professionalism, integrity, and accuracy. If confirmed, I will engage with like-minded missions, civil society, and international partners to counter disinformation and propaganda. If confirmed, I will continue to underscore the importance of a credible, independent, professional media to a free and democratic society.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Sierra Leone on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our embassy's efforts to promote labor rights. I understand that the Government of Sierra Leone generally protects the right to bargain collectively. If confirmed, I would advocate for continued improvements in this area as well as fair and consistent enforcement of labor laws.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Sierra Leone, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity? What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Sierra Leone? What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Sierra Leone?

Answer. Some of the greatest challenges facing the LGBTI community in Sierra Leone include the criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct and social discrimination against LGBTI persons. The U.S. Embassy continues to support upholding human rights and the dignity of all individuals in Sierra Leone, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. I am committed to promoting human rights for all in Sierra Leone, including members of the LGBTI community. If confirmed, the U.S. Embassy under my leadership will engage with civil society organizations working to advance equal rights, opportunities, and protection for LGBTI people to understand their priorities and identify measures how the United States can support our shared objectives and lead international partners in such efforts.

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

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. During my career, I have taken advantage of many opportunities to promote human rights and democracy, most notably during my time as the Director of the Office of West African Affairs and while serving in Mauritania, Iraq, and Haiti. I believe my most meaningful achievements occurred while serving in Baghdad, Iraq as the Embassy's Senior Refugee Coordinator. In that job, I had the opportunity to hear directly from refugees and non-governmental organizations and elevate their concerns to the senior levels in the Iraqi Government. I advocated repeatedly with the minister in charge of refugee affairs to provide better treatment of internally displaced persons and to treat all internally displaced persons equally, regardless of whether they were Sunni, Shia, Christian or Kurd. I believe that through my advocacy efforts, we were able to increase Iraqi Government attention and assistance to these victims of conflict.

Question. 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. The most pressing human rights issues in Sierra Leone are official corruption; trafficking in persons; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct; and child labor. Other human rights concerns include: insufficient access to justice; violence and societal discrimination against women and girls, including female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C); early and forced marriage; official and societal discrimination against persons with disabilities; and discrimination against LGBTI persons.

If confirmed, I will continue our embassy's advocacy in support of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. I will build strong relationships with all stakeholders from a diverse range of perspectives, including civil society, the media, and marginalized groups, to better understand their challenges, promote the free and open exchange of ideas, and advocate on their behalf. I will use my, and the Embassy's, positions of influence to raise awareness, advocate for improvements, and target assistance resources to build capacity and systems to help improvements last.

Question. If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Sierra Leone in advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general?

Answer. I understand that some human rights concerns in Sierra Leone derive from limited government capacity to enforce human rights legislation or hold to account individuals responsible for human rights violations and abuses. If confirmed, I would work with our embassy, interagency colleagues, and international and local partners to help overcome these challenges by building the capacity of Sierra Leone's democratic institutions. I would continue to help Sierra Leone to improve democratic governance through targeted investments in civil society and persistent engagement in support of democracy, respect for human rights, and access to justice.

Question. 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. Human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations all play an essential role in advancing democratic governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assisting Sierra Leone to develop into a stable, secure, and prosperous partner for the United States. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting with any individual or entity that can advance U.S. goals related to human rights, improving livelihoods, and human dignity. I am also committed to working to ensure that security force personnel or units do not receive U.S. assistance if there is credible information that they have committed a gross violation of human rights.

Question. 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. I am fully committed to engaging with the Government of Sierra Leone on guaranteeing political freedoms. As it does in all cases, the Department of State urges governments to ensure all defendants are afforded fair trial guarantees and timely due process for any crimes for which they have been charged.

Question. Will you engage with Sierra Leone on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Promoting greater respect for human rights, civil rights, and democratic governance in Sierra Leone is a central component of our bilateral relationship. I believe that improved governance and respect for human rights in Sierra Leone supports the country's stability and assures the long-term viability of our bilateral relationship. To this end, our embassy and high-level U.S. Government officials regularly stress the importance of democracy and good governance, access to justice, and economic and political inclusion with Sierra Leonean officials, opposition groups, civil society, the media, and the general public. If confirmed, I would continue to highlight the vital importance of democracy and human rights as instrumental to fostering long-term peace, stability, and equitable economic growth.

Diversity

Question. 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. Throughout my career, I have worked to promote diversity in the State Department workforce. I have personally mentored individuals from diverse backgrounds to strengthen retention and help my staff to find the best possible onward assignments that will make them competitive for promotion and advancement. I intend to continue this practice if confirmed as Ambassador to Sierra Leone. In my current position as Ambassador to Mauritius and the Seychelles, I have directed our Deputy Chief of Mission and one other Embassy Officer to personally interview every single applicant for which we have open positions. This is an involved process due to the volume of applicants; however, I believe that it is essential to ensure that everyone gets a fair and equal opportunity to serve and that no one is overlooked. I intend to take this practice to my next post, if confirmed.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Embassy in Sierra Leone are fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to speak out early and often about the importance I place on diversity. In my current post, I discussed my belief in inclusion, diversity, and respect at the very first Country Team meeting I chaired. I have reinforced these themes in subsequent Country Team meetings and individually with my staff. Additionally, I have held Embassy Town Halls focused specifically on the importance of diversity in our workforce. If confirmed, I would continue this practice to actively promote diversity and inclusion from the outset and direct my staff to do the same to strengthen our workforce.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. 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. 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. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in Sierra Leone?

Answer. My investment portfolio includes diversified mutual funds, including a foreign stock index fund, which may hold interests in companies with a presence overseas, but are exempt from conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations.

Corruption

Question. How do you believe political corruption impacts democratic governance and the rule of law generally, and in Sierra Leone specifically?

Answer. In Sierra Leone, as is the case in many countries, efforts to foster broad-based economic growth, improve the delivery of public services, and pursue effective development policies continue to be stymied by corruption and disparities in economic and political power. These dynamics undermine public confidence, participatory policymaking, effective policy implementation, and service delivery. Public corruption undercuts all democratic nations' governance and rule of law and can pose an existential threat to nascent democracies. Although Sierra Leone has made improvements, corruption continues to pose a major challenge.

Question. What is your assessment of corruption trends in Sierra Leone and efforts to address and reduce it by that government?

Answer. Although corruption poses a major challenge in Sierra Leone, the U.S. Government's efforts to promote transparency have made advances. The country ranked 119 out of 198 in Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index, an improvement of 10 places from 2018. Sierra Leone passed the "Control of Corruption" indicator on MCC's annual scorecards in 2020, 2019 and 2018, after failing in 2017. Recognizing that addressing endemic corruption is a long-term challenge, if confirmed, I would work closely with the Government of Sierra Leone and civil society to capitalize on President Bio's stated commitment to fighting corruption and his administration's progress to address this pressing issue.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to strengthen good governance and anticorruption programming in Sierra Leone?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the trend of our embassy and high-level U.S. Government officials regularly raising good governance and corruption concerns with Sierra Leonean officials. If confirmed, under my Ambassadorship the United States will continue to advocate for a comprehensive, systematic approach to combat corruption that empowers the people and promotes inclusive democracy and economic growth in Sierra Leone. I would continue to engage with the Government of Sierra Leone on strengthening their state institutions and implementing legislation to empower existing entities to once and for all establish a culture where corruption is not tolerated. I would press the Government of Sierra Leone to enact and enforce the statutes necessary for a transparent business investment climate that would encourage more U.S. business investments for the benefit of both the United States and Sierra Leone.

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